



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT reiterates concerns of UN Special Rapporteur on status of Tsongon Tsering

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Yesterday, multiple UN Special Rapporteur offices made public a joint communication to the Chinese government, in the form of an allegation letter, related to the summoning and interrogation of environmental human rights defender Tsongon Tsering (also spelled “Tsogon Tsering”) and his subsequent detention for his work protesting sand mining in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous) Prefecture, Sichuan.

In their [letter](#), dated January 21, 2025, the Special Rapporteur highlights Tsering’s work as an environmental activist leading a volunteer initiative of around 50 members who work to clean up their local environment and their activities to prevent future pollution.

As ICT [previously reported](#) in December, the incarceration of Tsongon Tsering related to the protests of illegal sand and gravel mining in Tsaruma village, Kakhong County follows a trend of punishment for those exposing environmental neglect by the CCP in Tibet and specifically, inaction of party officials in protecting critical water sources in Asia – functions that fell victim to [larger issues of corruption](#).

The letter referenced videos from Tsering and said, “Mr. Tsering’s video showed him holding his ID card while describing the alleged human rights violations committed in Tsaruma. This reportedly follows a common Chinese practice of publicly reporting and calling attention to abuses by officials or companies suspected of corruption, bribery, dereliction of duty, and abuse of authority.”

Upon his initial detention, Tsering and his family were detained and interrogated for two days before being released. One day later he was again detained and held incommunicado until his hearing at which his family reported, “They were notified that the ID information of any individuals attending his trial would be collected. Individuals intending to attend his trial were instructed to send photos of their IDs (front and back) to the County Police Office before their appearance. Upon arriving for the trial the next day, an officer verified attendance by cross-checking the photocopies of the IDs that had been submitted earlier.”

Because of this, the letter continues, “[...], many of Mr. Tsering’s relatives reportedly did not attend the trial, due to concerns that the collected ID information could later be misused to deny them access to essential services. On the same day, Mr. Tsering was convicted on the charge of “disrupting social order” and sentenced to eight months in prison by the Kyungchu County People’s Court.”

Since the initial sentencing, Tsongon Tsering’s 8-month sentence has been extended by an additional 8 months because he has refused to plead guilty to his charges. There are fears that his now 16-month prison sentence may be further extended to punish his defiance and send a cautionary message to other Tibetans, ICT came to know.

Questions put to the Chinese Mission:

Specifically, the allegation letter requires the Chinese government to respond to the allegations included in their findings, as well as these five questions:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please also provide confirmation of the location where Mr. Tsogon Tsering is detained, as well as detailed information about the conditions of his imprisonment and his access to legal assistance.
3. Please provide detailed information with regard to the arrest, charges and conviction of Mr. Tsogon Tsering and indicate the measures undertaken by the Chinese authorities to ensure the application of due process and the effective protection of his rights before the law. Please further indicate how this detention is in line with the right to freedom of expression under international law.
4. Please indicate further information regarding Mr. Tsogon Tsering's family and relatives prolonged interrogation, and whether they have been provided with updated information regarding the charges brought against him and his detention. Furthermore, please provide information as to whether they have been granted or will be granted access to his place of detention. Please provide assurance that his family and relatives will not be subject to any kind of reprisals in connection to this case.
5. Please provide information regarding the mining operations conducted by Anhui Xianhe Construction Engineering Company Ltd, in the Tsaruma village, including in relation with the alleged dredging of the Rdangchu River, as well as information regarding the process to evaluate the environmental impact of such activities and the status of the applicable licensing or permits of such activity

"We appreciate this communication from three Special Rapporteurs addressing their concerns in this question of justice. The Chinese government must respond to these questions promptly, truthfully and in whole. ICT will continue to monitor the case of Tsongon Tsering and urges that the UN keep a close eye on the treatment of Tsongon Tsering and more generally, human rights violations against all Tibetans," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. "We hope that the Chinese government will respond accordingly to this report and immediately release Tsongon Tsering and end their persistent attacks on the basic human rights of all Tibetans."



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