

U.S. GOVERNMENT:

ICT Report: High level U.S. visit shows commitment to Tibetan refugee issues in Nepal: On February 13, Under Secretary of State Maria Otero, who serves concurrently as U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and U.S. Ambassador Scott DeLisi visited the Tibetan Refugee Transit Center in Kathmandu as part of a high-level visit that included meetings with government and UN officials. Todd Stein, Director of Government Relations at ICT said, "Her visit signals that concerns for Tibetans, both the refugees and vulnerable long-staying population, remain a key interest in U.S. relations with Nepal." Under Secretary Otero and Ambassador DeLisi talked with new arrivals from Tibet and also met with Tibetan community leaders to hear of the challenges they face in Nepal. Her visit to Nepal is part of a trip to South Asia that included a visit to the Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement in south India on February 8-9. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/high-level-us-visit-shows-commitment-tibetan-refugee-issues-nepal>

Otero raises Tibet refugees ID issue: On February 15, visiting U.S. Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero, who concurrently serves as U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, met with Nepal Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal and expressed concerns about the problems faced by Tibetan refugees in Nepal, including the issue of lack of identity cards and also urged the government to treat Tibetan refugees as per international human rights obligations. Otero told the media, "We made it clear that this is an important issue for us and that we are concerned about. And we will proceed to look at it very carefully." The Prime Minister's foreign relations advisor Milan Tuladhar, quoted the Prime Minister saying, "We will deal with the issue taking into account the concerns of our immediate neighbors – China and India." http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=28268

NEPAL:

ICT Report: Nepal police seize ballot boxes in Kathmandu's Tibetan community for the second time: On February 13, Nepalese police in riot gear shut down local elections for the leadership of a Tibetan community group, Chushi Gangdruk. ICT sources in Kathmandu said that the police raided three locations where voting was taking place: Swoyambhu, Jawalakhel and Boudha. Regular elections in the organization have taken place for many decades, and the local police in Boudha who checked on the gathering when voting began at 9:00 a.m. voiced no objection to the proceedings. Nonetheless, around 10:00 a.m., police wearing riot-gear, guns and batons, arrived accompanied by a truck that is typically used to take people away for detention. In recent times, Nepal's "one China policy" is frequently invoked by authorities as the reason to shut down activities in the Tibetan community that had previously been allowed. The link between China's aggression against Tibetans and Nepalese police actions has contributed to an environment of fear and insecurity in Nepal's Tibetan communities. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/nepal-police-seize-ballot-boxes-kathmandu-tibetan-community-second-time>

INSIDE TIBET:

Protests against China's rampant mining in Shigatse continues: Monks from Lingka Monastery and general public in Tamo township protested against mining work as officials and workers from a government-owned mining department. The local government of Shethongmon sent riot police to disrupt the demonstrations, which led to verbal confrontation. Later, a large contingent of Public Security Bureau and armed personnel were sent from Shigatse, resulting in many protestors being severely beaten and arrested. Among those arrested are 5 monks and 12 lay Tibetans, out of which two were released. The exact whereabouts of the detainees remain unknown. <http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=2129.&articletype=flash&rmenuid=morenews&s&tab=1#TabbedPanels1>

OBITUARY:

Jigme Norbu, nephew of the Dalai Lama killed during "Walk for Tibet": Jigme Norbu, nephew of the Dalai Lama, was killed on February 14 in Palm Coast, Florida after being struck by a car. Following in his father's footsteps, Jigme was in Florida participating on a 300-mile "Walk for Tibet." Jigme's father, Thubten Jigme Norbu, a former professor of Tibetan and religious studies at Indiana University, was co-founder of the International Tibet Independence Movement and began "freedom walks" to highlight the Tibetan cause. He passed away on September 5, 2008. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/jigme-norbu-nephew-dalai-lama-killed-during-walk-tibet>