

INSIDE TIBET:

ICT Report: Monk in Tibet sets himself on fire; shot by police during protest: On February 25, Tapey, a monk from Kirti monastery in his mid-twenties was shot today by security personnel when he set himself on fire as a form of protest after prayer ceremonies at his monastery were cancelled, according to several sources in the area. It is not known if Tapey, is still alive as he was surrounded by police after he fell to the ground. He had been holding a home-made Tibetan flag that had at its center a photograph of the Dalai Lama. The monks at Kirti Monastery were told by the local authorities that they were not allowed to observe Monlam, a traditional prayer festival that is held after Tibetan New Year (Losar). The crackdown in this region has been particularly severe following a major protest involving monks from Kirti monastery on March 16 last year, and the presence of troops in the area has been stepped up more recently. At least 10 Tibetans - including 16 year old schoolgirl Lhundup Tso - were shot dead last year after police opened fire on unarmed Tibetans who joined the spontaneous protest after a morning prayer session at Kirti monastery on March 16, 2008.

<http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/inside-tibet-reports/monk-tibet-sets-himself-fire-shot-police-during-protest>

The Chinese state media Xinhua has confirmed that a monk, from Kirti Monastery in Aba, Sichuan province, had set himself on fire in a local street. It cited the local Communist Party chief, Shi Jun who said the police put out the fire, and that the man was taken to hospital with burn injuries to his neck and head. Unofficial reports received from the area over the weekend confirm that Tapey was shot by People's Armed Police troops after he set himself alight. His current condition is not known although the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported that he is now in hospital. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/inside-tibet-reports/new-protest-today-ngaba-after-officials-ban-prayer-ceremony>

ICT Report: Authorities surround monastery; issue 48 hr ultimatum for organizers to “surrender” after latest protest in Tibet:

Around 100 monks from Lutsang monastery staged a candle-lit vigil and protest outside the government headquarters in Mangra county, in Qinghai on February 25, the first day of Tibetan New Year (Losar). A former Lutsang monk who is now in exile told RFA that the monks raised four main points: "First, China should understand the aspirations and thoughts of the younger Tibetan generation. Second, China should understand that this year's boycott by Tibetans of Losar celebrations could be more widespread than last year's protests." They also said that they were holding the candle-lit vigil in memory of the people killed during the Chinese authorities' crackdown on the protests last year, and as a "New Year's gift to Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet." The images, which can be viewed on ICT's website at: www.savetibet.org depict monks from Lutsang monastery holding candles in memory of Tibetans killed in the ongoing crackdown following protests across Tibet since March 10, 2008. The monastery is now surrounded by armed police, with an ultimatum issued for the organizers of the protest to "surrender" within 48 hours, and for any monks who own a portrait of the Dalai Lama to be expelled from the monastery. There are now serious fears for the welfare of monks at Lutsang, at a time of deepening tension in Tibet due to sensitive upcoming anniversaries and the Chinese government's headline response to any expression of views that may run counter to those of the state.

<http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/inside-tibet-reports/authorities-surround-monastery-issue-48-hour-ultimatum-organizers-surrender-after-late>

ICT Report: Protest after officials ban prayer service in Ngaba county, Tibet: On March 1, several hundred monks from Sey monastery in Ngaba, the Tibetan area of Amdo, held a protest march after officials prevented them from marking a major prayer festival. The monks marched from the monastery calling to be allowed to celebrate the Monlam prayer festival, and for the authorities to release all Tibetan prisoners from the area. According to one of the sources, the protest was dispersed when armed police and officials confronted the protestors and troops are now surrounding the monastery. The ban on Monlam Chenmo reported at Kirti and Sey is a further example of the way in which state repression of religion has created deepening tension in Tibet, the opposite of the 'genuine stability' the Chinese government states it is seeking in Tibet. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/inside-tibet-reports/new-protest-today-ngaba-after-officials-ban-prayer-ceremony>

U.S. GOVERNMENT:

U.S. State Department Human Rights Report finds “severe cultural and religious repression” in Tibet: On February 25, the US State Department issued its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008, in which it found that human rights in Tibet had "deteriorated severely during the year," and that "official repression of freedoms of speech, religion, association, and movement increased significantly." The Tibet section is dominated by an accurate account of the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chinese authorities during the crackdown on the overwhelmingly peaceful protests beginning in March 2008. The report cites credible information that more than 200 people were killed, that hundreds were detained or imprisoned amid concerns of torture, and that more than 1000 other people are still unaccounted for. The report also notes that there was no progress in the three rounds of discussions held during 2008 between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama. The report is issued several days after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton returned from a visit to Asia, which including a stop in China, where she reportedly said that human rights concerns "can't interfere" with other issues, such as cooperation on climate change and economic concerns. The entire section on Tibet can be read on the US State Department's website at

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm#tibet>

<http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-press-releases/us-state-department-reports-severe-cultural-and-religious-repression-tibet>