

INSIDE TIBET:

China detains 59 Tibetans over “reactionary rumours”: On December 25, BBC cited a Chinese state report that said China has detained 59 Tibetans for spreading “rumours” and trying to stir up racial hatred and incite violence. The term “rumours” is often a euphemism for anti-government views in China. The report said police had been searching the markets of Lhasa looking for people selling “reactionary songs” downloaded from the internet and sold in compact disc and MP3 format. Xin Yuanming, the deputy police chief in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, said that since March, police had cracked 48 cases of “rumour-mongering” as well as detaining 59 people.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7799552.stm>

China relocates over 300,000 Tibetans in 2008: On December 26, Chinese state-controlled Xinhua news agency reported on the controversial government led program to relocate farmers and herders to permanent housing. The report said, “Another 312,000 farmers and herders from 57,800 families moved from shanty homes into new solid brick houses in Tibet this year under a government-subsidized housing project aimed at improving living conditions.” The report said that the five-year housing project was started in 2006 with a plan to build “solid homes for 220,000 families” and that to date, 860,000 farmers and herders from 170,000 families have moved into the new houses. Government statistics show and that once finished, it would mean housing for 80 percent of the region's farmers and herders by the end of 2010. Human rights groups say that forcing nomadic Tibetan herders to abandon their traditional lifestyles to settle in towns have driven many to frustration and despair, unable to cope up with the pressures of earning their livelihood through means alien to their traditions and upbringing. US-based Human Rights Watch, in its June 2007 report said that resettlement often involve the slaughter of animals belonging to the mostly nomadic herders, relocation to poorly built accommodation and inability to find work due to lack of skills.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=China+relocates+over+300%2C000+Tibetans+in+2008%3A+Report&id=23524>

OUTSIDE TIBET:

Tibetans support “Charter 08”; and join call for Liu Xiaobo’s release: On December 26, Tibetan exile groups launched a signature campaign in support of Charter 08, a public appeal made by over 300 Chinese citizens for human rights, democracy and legal reform in China. “Charter 08” has now been signed by over 5000 intellectuals lawyers, journalists, writers, scholars, artists including the prominent Tibetan writer Woeser. Liu Xiaobo, a prominent signer of the charter was arbitrarily arrested from his home on December 8th just prior to the launch of Charter 08 and remains in custody. Ngawang Woebar, President of ex-political prisoners movement for Tibet said, “We are launching this campaign to endorse “Charter 08” – an inspiring movement for democratic reform and the respect of basic human rights in China – and to appeal for immediate release of Liu Xiaobo.” Liu Xiaobo was also a key figure behind the “Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibet Situation,” released in March, in which he and other prominent intellectuals called on the Chinese government to respect the Tibetan people's right to freely express their views and for China's leaders “to hold direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=Tibetans+Support+%22Charter+08%22%2C+Join+Call+for+Liu+Xiaobo%27s+Release&id=23508>

TIBET – CHINA DIALOGUE:

YaleGlobal: A coordinated international response over Tibet might soften Chinese intransigence over Tibet:

In the second of a two-part YaleGlobal series on divergence in foreign policy between the West and China, law professor Michael Davis addresses China’s tension over Tibet which led to the Chinese cancellation of the summit with the European Union in protest to Sarkozy’s meeting with the Dalai Lama. He notes that the march uprisings in Tibet pushed Chinese officials to reopen discussions with the Dalai Lama, but now the Chinese are back to showing indifference and the talks have stalled and China has since threatened to shun any international leaders who meet with the Dalai Lama. Davis says that despite questions over different treatment for areas like Hong Kong, China is intent on maintaining unity in what it regards as its sovereign territory. He says China must recognize that punitive actions like boycotts of European goods will only invite retaliation, and isolation of Tibetan exiles only makes the demands and difficulties more pronounced. He stresses that unless there is an coordinated effort by national leaders worldwide to maintain an open door to the Dalai Lama, rejecting Chinese efforts to isolate him accompanied by constructive efforts to help China to better understand its international obligations to this indigenous national minority, it may not bode well for either Tibet or China’s relations with the world. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/tibet-news/a-coordinated-international-response-might-soften-chinese-intransigence-over-tibet>