

**INSIDE TIBET:**

**ICT Report: Influential Tibetan Lama sentenced to eight and a half years in prison:** On December 23, Phurbu Rinpoche, a Tibetan Lama from Kham, has been sentenced to eight and a half years in prison. It is the first sentence known to have been handed down to an important and influential lama in Tibet since protests broke out across the plateau in March, 2008. Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche, a highly respected religious leader from Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) prefecture in Sichuan province (the Tibetan area of Kham) was detained in May 2008 and initially charged with illegal possession of weapons and ammunition, and charges relating to allegations he misappropriated a government-owned building. According to sources in Tibet, Phurbu Rinpoche was sentenced on December 23, 2009 by the Dartsedo (Chinese: Kangding) People's Intermediate Court. The same source reported that his wife and son were allowed to attend his sentencing but the two Chinese lawyers who had previously represented Phurbu Rinpoche were denied access and were replaced by a lawyer appointed by the local government. The sentencing of Phurbu Rinpoche coincides with ongoing protests and high tensions in Nyagchuka (Chinese: Yajiang) and Lithang (Chinese: Litang) counties, over the continued imprisonment of another highly respected religious leader, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, who is serving a life sentence following conviction in 2001 on highly dubious charges alleging involvement in a string of bomb attacks on local government targets in 2000 and 2001.

<http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/influential-tibetan-lama-sentenced-eight-and-half-years-prison>

**U.S. GOVERNMENT:**

**Experts say U.S. – China relations to face strains in early months of new year:** Experts say that the U.S.-China relations are headed for a rough patch in the early months of the new year. The Obama administration is expected to approve the sale of several billion dollars in Black Hawk helicopters and anti-missile batteries to Taiwan early 2010 and the president is also preparing to meet with the Dalai Lama. But the White House is hopeful that the damage will be limited. Ben Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser said, "The U.S.-China relationship is now far broader and deeper than any one issue alone. We will have disagreements .... but we have demonstrated that we will work together on critical global and regional issues, such as economic recovery, nuclear proliferation and climate change, because doing so is in our mutual interest." But still, Administration officials say they are sure China will react negatively to the arms sales and the meeting with the Dalai Lama and that at a minimum, U.S. officials expect that President Hu Jintao will not attend a planned nuclear security summit scheduled for April.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/02/AR2010010201751.html>

**DALAI LAMA:**

**Statement by the Dalai Lama on Chinese writer Liu Xiaobo's prison sentence:** In a statement released on December 28, the Dalai Lama said he is saddened by the Chinese Government's sentencing of Liu Xiaobo, a well-known Chinese writer to an 11yr jail term. He said, "By forcefully sentencing Liu Xiaobo, and others like him, who use freedom of expression to publicly articulate their opinions, the Chinese Authorities have not only violated the binding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also the freedom of expression mentioned in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China." He offered his regards and prayers to Liu Xiaobo and his family and urged the Chinese Government for the release of Liu Xiaobo and others who were jailed for exercising their freedom of expression. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/tibet-news/his-holiness-dalai-lama-saddened-liu-xiaobos-prison-sentence>

**NEPAL:**

**China pledges to bolster aid and trade in Nepal; as Nepal's PM says anti china activities will not be tolerated:** On December 30, Chinese State media reported that China pledged to bolster aid and trade in Nepal as the Nepalese Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is on a six day trip to China, said that his government would not tolerate anti-china protests in the Himalayan nation. In comments reported on Chinese state television, Nepal told Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, "The Nepalese government ... believes that Taiwan and Tibet are inalienable parts of Chinese territory, .... [Nepal] will not allow any forces to use Nepalese territory to engage in anti-China activities." Nepal is home to about 20,000 exiled Tibetans and in recent months, the Tibetan exiles say their lives have become increasingly difficult as Nepal -- reportedly under heavy pressure from Beijing -- has sought to restrict their activities and Nepalese authorities have arrested dozens of Tibetan exiles who tried to hold anti-China protests over the situation in Tibet.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j9HrcXrOxzR8LAkWoJfr32bYdHNw>