

TIBET SELF-IMMOLATIONS:

ICT Report: Two Tibetans self-immolate at monasteries during prayer festival in Amdo: As the 15-day period of Tibetan New Year (Losar) drew to a close, two Tibetans set fire to themselves near monasteries and died on February 24 and 25. Large numbers of religious pilgrims had gathered at both monasteries for prayer ceremonies. Harrowing images depict Tsesung Kyab ablaze outside Shitsang Gonsar monastery in Luchu as pilgrims look on. Phagmo Dundrup self-immolated on February 24 evening at Chachung monastery in Bayan Khar (Chinese: Hualong) Hui Autonomous County, where hundreds of Tibetans had gathered for a traditional prayer and presentation of butter-lamps. Many Tibetan self-immolations have occurred with some religious context - some have died with their hands clasped in prayer and others have done so outside a monastery or reliquary (stupa). <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/two-tibetans-self-immolate-monasteries-during-prayer-ceremonies-amdo>

UNITED KINGDOM:

UK House of Lords Question on Tibet: On February 26, 2013, during question time in the House of Lords, Baroness Warsi, the Senior Minister of the State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth office responded to questions asked on Tibet – on self immolations, on human rights in Tibet, on dialogue, on China respecting the Dalai Lama as a religious leader and on the disappearance of the Panchen Lama. Baroness Warsi stated that the UK remains deeply concerned about the large number of self-immolations in Tibet and regularly raises concerns with the Chinese authorities and continues to encourage for resumption of substantive dialogue as a means to address the Tibetan concerns and to relieve tensions. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130226-0001.htm#13022665001148>

CANADA:

Sikyong Lobsang Sangay testifies in Canadian Parliament: On February 26, 2013, Tibetan political leader Sikyong Lobsang Sangay appeared as the key witness at a hearing titled “Human Rights Situation in Tibetan Areas of China,” held before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in the Canadian Parliament. Speaking to the current situation in Tibet, and the 107 cases of Tibetan self-immolations, Sikyong Sangay said, “The cause of the self-immolations are occupation of Tibet and repression of Tibetans.” He urged for Canada to stand with the Tibetans, and support endeavors for the Chinese government to enter into dialogue to solve the issue of Tibet peacefully. <http://tibet.net/2013/02/27/sikyong-dr-lobsang-sangay-in-ottawa-invited-to-testify-in-canadian-parliament/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT:

State Department Daily Press Briefing Question on Tibet: The U.S. State Department spokesperson Mr. Ventrell, responding to a question about the Tibetan self-immolations said that the United States remained concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibetan areas, including the numerous tragic self-immolations and the related reports of detentions and arrests. He said the US is aware of the self-immolations in Nepal and said, “We continue to call on the Chinese Government to permit Tibetans to express grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution. And we urge Tibetans to end self-immolations.” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2013/03/205542.htm>

ICT Report: The United States recognizes Tibetan writer and activist Tsering Woeser with prestigious International Women of Courage Award: The U.S. State Department on March 4, announced that Tibetan writer and blogger Tsering Woeser is a winner of the 2013 International Women of Courage Award. Presenting this year’s award at the March 8 ceremony will be Secretary of State John Kerry and special guest First Lady Michelle Obama. Tsering Woeser is a writer, blogger, and poet who, while living under virtual house arrest in Beijing, Woeser has used technology and her own creativity and resilience to overcome the obstacles imposed by Chinese censors and report on the Tibetan situation in contemporary People’s Republic of China. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-press-releases/united-states-recognizes-tibetan-writer-and-activist-tsering-woeser-prestigious-internat>

CHINA:

ICT Report: Prominent Chinese call for human rights progress: The China Media Project (CMP), a journalism and media studies center at the University of Hong Kong, is reporting the circulation on Chinese social media of an open letter calling on China’s National People’s Congress to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) at its upcoming meeting in March. The open letter may be more significant at this time as an expression by prominent progressive Chinese voices. As an international instrument, the ICCPR would have no binding legal force in China, although its ratification could signal openness to the principle of universality of human rights. <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/prominent-chinese-call-human-rights-progress>