

## Tibetan survivors of self-immolation: repression and disappearance

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A new ICT report reveals how Tibetans who survived self-immolation have faced violent treatment and disappearance, with some families unaware of whether their relative has lived or died years after they set themselves on fire.

The report, 'Tibetan survivors of self-immolation: repression and disappearance' documents cases of 20 Tibetans who survived self-immolation in Tibet, and three in exile. One hundred and thirty-seven Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the PRC since 2009, and seven in exile, representing one of the biggest waves of self-immolation as political protest in the last 60 years.

In most cases, Tibetan self-immolators in Tibet have died either on the scene, or afterwards in hospital - some go to great lengths to ensure that they will not survive, such as wrapping barbed wire around their body and drinking or covering themselves with kerosene. ICT's report documents how the Tibetans who survive self-immolation and remain alive face extreme physical and psychological suffering due to repressive measures against them by the Chinese authorities.

Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, said: "Due to the political sensitivities around the act of self-immolation in Tibet, those who survive have generally been held by the authorities in conditions of extreme secrecy and isolation. In some cases, families have only become aware of their relative's situation when they have been shown in Chinese state media propaganda blaming the Dalai Lama for their actions.

"We have published this report as we are profoundly concerned about the treatment of self-immolators in Tibet who survive, based on reports of enforced disappearance and denial of medical care, or medical treatment such as amputation without families being fully informed. The Chinese government should account for the whereabouts of those Tibetans who survived self-immolation, and for the disclosure of their medical treatment and care."

The report is published on March 19 (2015) and is available for downloading at:

<http://www.savetibet.org/newsroom/tibetan-survivors-of-self-immolation-repression-and-disappearance/>

The context of the treatment of survivors of self-immolators is an intensified wave of repression in Tibet, with those allegedly "associated" with self-immolators, including friends, families and even entire communities, being punished by the authorities.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Footnotes

[1] ICT report, 'Acts of Significant Evil: The Criminalisation of Self-Immolations', <http://www.savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Acts-of-significant-evil-073114.pdf>