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Latest Up dates on Tibet

1 message

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Tue, Mar 18, 2008 at 5:46 AM

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Dear Fellow Tibetans and FOT Members

It is with great sadness that we watch things unfold in Tibet and lets hope that the International pressure on China will result in the release of those who have been arrested during these demonstrations.

I urge all our members to write to the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister to call on the Chinese Ambassador and tell them that the New Zealand people are abhorred at the action taken by the Chinese government on the peaceful demonstrators in Tibet and it must stop and release all those arrested without harm.

Please support the Vigils Happenings on Wednesday in Dunedin, Wellington and in Auckland.

I am sure you would have received email from your local branch.

Please find the updates on the latest in Tibet supplied by Kate Saunders, Communications Director, ICT

Best wishes and Tashi Delek

Thuten

Please find the Protests spread throughout Tibet: thousands gather in towns and monasteries

Statement of Dalai Lama's Special Envoy on events in Tibet

ICT report, March 16, 2008

An unprecedented wave of protests swept monasteries and towns in eastern Tibet as violence and crackdown continued in Lhasa today.

More than a thousand monks were joined by laypeople in a major protest at Kirti monastery and town in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, this morning, which led to at least eight, possibly many more, people being killed, according to several sources. Three were named as Norbu, a 15-year old high school student, 30-year old Tsering, and Lobsang Tashi, 35. According to one reliable report, eight bodies had been on display outside the police station in Ngaba, in an act that appeared to intend the local populace from further acts of protest.

According to one eyewitness report, the paramilitary armed police had been carrying out drills in the town in a display of force which appears to have angered Tibetans. After a morning prayer ceremony, monks reportedly joined laypeople in a spontaneous protest, shouting slogans of Tibetan freedom and in support of the Dalai Lama before

armed police fired into the crowd. An eyewitness report from the area said that the local government run hospital was refusing to treat the wounded.

A crackdown may now be beginning in the county town of Machu (Chinese: Maqu), Gansu province, after an estimated 1500 Tibetans gathered this morning, calling for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet and shouting pro-independence slogans. Some were carrying Tibetan flags and images of the Dalai Lama. Around 11 truckloads of armed police were seen approaching the protestors by one eyewitness, according to a new report received by ICT.

Information of new protests in the region has emerged today so quickly that full confirmation of all details is not possible. Sources reported that despite high levels of fear and intimidation, and the shock of witnessing people being killed in front of them, Tibetans still had the courage to report on what they had seen. Unlike in Lhasa, where there has been an ethnic element to protests, the demands of demonstrators in monasteries and towns of eastern Tibet appeared to be entirely political, focusing on Tibetan freedom and independence, the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and concerns about the Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who has been in Chinese custody since 1995. In one demonstration, protestors reportedly called for the dialogue between the Dalai Lama's representatives and Beijing to be supported.

The atmosphere at Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) monastery in Gansu province is tense today after protests broke out with monks and laypeople calling for independence while marching with the Tibetan flag, according to eyewitness reports by Western observers and Tibetan sources. More than 30 troop carriers of the paramilitary People's Armed Police arrived in Labrang late on Friday (March 14) - the day the Lhasa protests dramatically escalated - after a march from the monastery to local government offices. More monks and laypeople than usual were gathered at Labrang due to a religious festival, Nyipi Tsogchen, and reports indicated that hundreds were involved in the protest, which was broken up by police firing tear-gas. Large numbers of monks were carrying the banned Tibetan snow lion flag. At least one monk was severely beaten, and it is likely that the authorities are now collecting evidence, which could include photographs published online of monks bearing the banned Tibetan flag, with the aim of detaining individuals later.

In the town of Lithang, the monastery has been encircled by armed police and there have been at least two detentions in the town following two demonstrations, according to reliable reports. There has been a military crackdown in the town since a nomad from a nearby village, Runggye Adak, was jailed for eight years after he took to the stage during the Lithang Horse Festival on August 1 last year and called for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. The expressions of support among Tibetans for Runggye Adak's statements at the horse festival led to the launch of an intense 'patriotic education' campaign throughout Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in present-day Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Kham), including Lithang. (See ICT report at <http://www.savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1186>).

Emerging reports also indicate a major demonstration by monks from Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) monastery today. Details could not be confirmed, but the monastery was already under tight control with monks subject to stringent patriotic education sessions, and consequences were likely to be severe.

Radio Free Asia reported a small demonstration of 12 monks in Rebgong, Malho prefecture, Qinghai (Amdo) despite an already repressive

atmosphere following protests and detentions of monks at a prayer festival in February (see http://www.rfa.org/english/news/2008/02/22/tibet_clash/). Other reliable reports indicated that today monks in Rebgong were burning incense and shouting slogans of support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan freedom.

A small demonstration on Friday in Shigatse (Chinese: Xigaze), the second city in the Tibet Autonomous Region, was broken up quickly by police, and there were reports of a protest too in Phenpo County, close to Lhasa.

Mary Beth Markey, Vice President of the International Campaign for Tibet, said: "For some time, Tibetans, analysts, even Chinese scholars have been expressing the view that China's hardline, confrontational strategies only risk creating the very dissent and unrest that Beijing fears. These policies do not support China's wish for genuine stability in the region. We are now witnessing the terrible outcome and the suffering of the Tibetan people before our eyes."

Crackdown underway in Lhasa prior to Monday midnight deadline for protestors

Gunfire was still heard in Lhasa today and house to house searches began after initially peaceful protests escalated on Friday in Tibet's capital. According to the official Chinese press, ten people have been killed in the violence in Lhasa, a figure that is likely to be a low estimate of those dead. Witnesses reported to various agencies that there were a number of dead bodies on the streets, but reliable figures were impossible to confirm. (Eyewitness reports to be published by ICT shortly).

The Chinese government has issued an ultimatum to the Tibetans who have been demonstrating in Lhasa and other areas to surrender by Monday, March 17. A directive from the Tibet Autonomous Region High People's Court, published on www.tibet.gov.cn on March 15, 2008, stated: "Those who on their own volition submit themselves to police or judicial offices prior to midnight on March 17 shall be punished lightly or dealt mitigated punishment; those who surrender themselves and report on other criminal elements will be performing meritorious acts and may escape punishment. Criminal elements who do not submit themselves in time shall be punished severely according to law."

Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari, Special Envoy to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, said in a statement today: "We are watching unfolding events in Tibet with deep concern and anxiety. I salute the courage of those Tibetans in Tibet who have risked their lives to peacefully express their legitimate concerns and grievances.

'China's President, Hu Jintao, who presided over the imposition of martial law after protests by monks and laypeople in Lhasa in 1989, has a dark legacy in Tibet. The question is whether he will break with precedent and engage with the genuine Tibetan concerns that have led to these protests, or whether he will allow the hardliners to dominate the Tibet issue and follow the path he has taken in the past of violent reprisals. This is an unprecedented historic opportunity for Hu to leave behind a positive legacy on Tibet. The world now knows of the Tibetan people's suffering, and the world is watching."

This report can be read online at <http://savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1221>.

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