

ACTION: Two teenage monks jailed for peaceful protests

[17 December 2015] Two young Tibetan monks have been sentenced for up to four years in prison for undertaking peaceful protests earlier this year. The two monks from Kirti monastery in Ngaba staged independent protests in March and were sentenced in separate trials in late October and early November.

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Gendun Phuntsok (pictured right), 18 years old, staged a peaceful protest on 8 March 2015 in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) county, Amdo (now incorporated into China's Sichuan province) Sichuan province). According to reports, he walked down the main street carrying a portrait of the Dalai Lama with a traditional Tibetan yellow khatag (scarf). He shouted slogans including "Freedom and equality for Tibet" and "Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet". He was quickly apprehended by Chinese security forces and taken into custody.

Gendun was held incommunicado until his trial in late October. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, however, further details of the trial and charges remain unclear. It is known the trial took place in Tashiling (Ch: Li) county, Ngaba prefecture and he was subsequently taken to Mianyang prison near Chengdu.

Lobsang Kalsang (pictured right), 19 years old, undertook his own peaceful protest less than two weeks after Gendun, on 17 March 2015. His protest was similar in that it took place on the main street in Ngaba, he carried a portrait of the Dalai Lama and called for "freedom in Tibet" and for the "long life of the Dalai Lama". Lobsang also threw prayer flags into the air before he was arrested.

As with Gendun, Lobsang was held incommunicado until his trial, which was held in Tashiling county on 2 November 2015. Lobsang was sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment. No further details are known of his trial or charges. Lobsang is also understood to have been taken to Mianyang prison.

Both Gendun and Lobsang joined Kirti monastery at a young age. Gendun was studying Buddhist philosophy and culture and Lobsang was training in Buddhist studies. Kirti monastery has seen numerous monks arrested and sentenced for peaceful demonstrations in recent years and at least 14 Kirti monks have self-immolated in protest against China's harsh policies.

As with all trials in Tibet for alleged political crimes, it is feared there was a lack of due process in Gendun and Lobsang's cases. Many Tibetan defendants are not allowed legal representation of their own choosing, torture is routinely used to extract confessions and trials are often held behind closed doors.

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Take Action

Write to the Chinese Ambassador in the UK, Mr Liu Xiaoming, urging the Chinese government to:

- ° immediately release Gendun Phuntsok and Lobsang Kalsang, two teenage monks from Kirti monastery in Sichuan, given they were arrested for simply peacefully expressing their views, a right guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- ° ensure Gendun Phuntsok and Lobsang Kalsang are not ill-treated or subject to torture whilst in prison;

- ° allow regular visits by family and friends whilst they remain in prison and have access to their lawyers;

- ° disclose the charges brought against Gendun Phuntsok and Lobsang Kalsang;

- ° ensure trials are held in accordance with international judicial norms, held in an open and transparent manner and defendants allowed legal representation of their own choosing.

Chinese Ambassador to the UK

Ambassador Liu Xiaoming

Chinese Embassy

49-51 Portland Place

London W1B 1JL

Email: ambassador@chinese-embassy.org.uk (Note: this email is currently bouncing. Please try press_uk@mfa.gov.cn.)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Outside the UK: check the Chinese government's webpage listing embassies for contact details of your nearest ambassador and embassy.

Note: The Chinese government occasionally disables email addresses (so your email is returned). If that happens please try press_uk@mfa.gov.cn. If these fail please send a letter.

If you receive a reply to your email or letter, please send a copy to Tibet Society, as this helps us to monitor the situation. [Click here for Tibet Society contact details.](#)

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