

Tibetan language advocate's detention epitomises China's brutal regime

[27 January 2017] Tibet Society's press release on the first anniversary of Tashi Wangchuk's detention.

TIBET SOCIETY PRESS RELEASE

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Tibetans and supporters to hold peaceful protest in London

[London] On the first anniversary of the detention by Chinese authorities of Tibetan language advocate, Tashi Wangchuk (pictured right), Tibet Society calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

"The brutal nature of the current Chinese regime is epitomised by the continued detention of Tashi Wangchuk, a man who simply wants the Tibetan language taught in Tibetan schools," said Paul Golding, Campaigns Coordinator for Tibet Society.

"Tashi Wangchuk's actions were peaceful and abided by China's own constitution. That he is deemed a threat to the state, not only exemplifies how deep Xi Jinping's crackdown on civil society runs, but also the Chinese Communist Party's extreme level of paranoia," Mr Golding added.

One year ago today, Tashi Wangchuk, a 31-year old Tibetan shopkeeper, was arrested by Chinese police in Jyekundo (Chinese: Yushu), in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham (now part of China's Qinghai province). He was charged with "inciting separatism" and has been held in detention since. [1]

Tashi's arrest came after The New York Times featured his efforts to file a lawsuit against local officials over the lack of Tibetan language education in schools. [2]

Tashi was indicted earlier this month and his trial is now imminent. There are fears he will not receive due process, could face up to 15 years in prison and is at risk of torture.

Amidst China's current crackdown, Tashi Wangchuk's case is an example of how Tibetans face additional persecution for any activity perceived as a threat to Chinese rule, through charges of "separatism".

In China, defendants are almost always found guilty once a case is brought to court. The conviction rate in 2015 was 99.92% according to official statistics. [3]

A peaceful protest will be held this evening outside the Chinese Embassy in London, calling for Tashi Wangchuk's release.

Date: Friday 27 January 2017

Time: 6.00pm - 8.00pm

Venue: Opposite the Chinese Embassy, 49-51 Portland Place, London W1B 1JL

The protest is jointly organised by Tibet Society, Free Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet UK and Tibetan Community UK.

[end]

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Notes:

[1] Background on Tashi Wangchuk's case:

<http://www.tibetsociety.com/content/view/593/#background>

[2] New York Times articles:

Tibetans Fight to Salvage Fading Culture in China (28 Nov 2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/29/world/asia/china-tibet-language-education.html>

A Showcase of Tibetan Culture Serves Chinese Political Goals (19 Dec 2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/20/world/asia/a-showcase-of-tibetan-culture-serves-chinese-political-goals.html>

[3] Amnesty International:

https://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/fi07916_1.pdf

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