



Free Tibet Campaign's *Stop the Torture in Tibet* initiative will highlight persistent torture and maltreatment in Tibet's prisons, detention centres and labour camps. Since 2002 China has released at least 14 political prisoners early as a result of pressure from governments and individuals worldwide, thereby demonstrating sensitivity to international criticism of its human rights record. By highlighting individual political prisoners who have experienced torture, we aim to both contribute to their early release from prison and to bring to an end the practice of torture in Tibet.



Sonam Gyalpo

Sonam Gyalpo, 50, a former political prisoner, and his wife Tsamchoe are both tailors who sell garments on a small stall in Barkor Street, Lhasa. Upon their return home after closing their stall on 28 August 2005, 16 agents from the Tibet Autonomous Region Secret Service waited for the couple. Sonam was forced to sign an arrest warrant. Shortly after, four agents took him away while the remaining 12 thoroughly searched the home for three hours. The agents discovered religious materials including videotapes and photos of the Dalai Lama, a few books and printed materials, which were confiscated.

Sonam Gyalpo's family suffered harassment and persecution due to their religious and social status since the Chinese occupation in 1959. Sonam was first arrested in 1985 along with 21 monks from Drepung Monastery (Lhasa) following a peaceful demonstration against the Chinese occupation and for pasting posters against the Chinese Reformation policy. He served three years in Drapchi Prison and was released on 20 September 1990.

In 1993 Sonam travelled to Kathmandu to meet his younger brother Tashi Wangdrak and to India to receive a blessing from the Dalai Lama. As an ex-political prisoner, he was not issued with travel documents by the Chinese authorities and therefore travelled illegally to Nepal. Upon his return his hotel room was searched by Chinese border security personnel who confiscated a few packets of herbal pills blessed by the Dalai Lama.

On 23 July 1993, five months after his return from Nepal (Saga

Dawa day), Sonam was arrested by local Chinese security at his home. He was detained at Setru Prison, Public Security Bureau Centre, for a few days. Later he was transferred to Nyari Prison in Shigatse without any knowledge of his family and he was denied of his right for visitors. After six months in Nyari Prison, he was imprisoned for an additional six months in Sangyip Prison in Lhasa, where he could see his wife and relatives.

There is no information about Sonam Gyalpo's whereabouts or the reasons for his detention. His family

Name:	Sonam Gyalpo
Age:	50
Arrested:	28 August 2005
Reason:	Unknown- religious materials were confiscated from his house after his arrest.
Sentence:	Unknown
Expected release:	Unknown
Prison:	Unknown

is extremely concerned about his well being and safety as political prisoners are targeted for abuse and systematic torture.

(Sources: Free Tibet Campaign, Human Rights Watch.)



ActionActionActionActionAction

Write to the Chinese authorities listed, with the following demands:

- Call on the authorities to publicly clarify the current whereabouts of Sonam Gyalpo and provide immediate guarantees for his safety.
- Urge the authorities to ensure that Sonam Gyalpo has access to his family, a lawyer and medical treatment while he remains in detention.
- Demand the authorities release Sonam Gyalpo unless he is charged or convicted of a recognizable criminal offence.
- Urge China to fulfil its obligation under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Addresses

1. Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Government

Name: Guo Jinlong

Address: 1 Kangangdonglu

850000 Lasashi

Xisang Zizhiqu Tibet

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 68014 FAOLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

Telegram: Chairman, Regional People's Government, Lasa, Xizang Zizhiqu, China

Salutation: Dear Chairman

2. Minister of Justice

Name: Zhang Fusen Buzhang

Address: Sifabu 10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyang Qu

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