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Asia - China

Incommunicado

Enforced disappearance of three Tibetan monks following arrest

4 January 2013

Reporters Without Borders is concerned about three Tibetan monks – **Sungrab Gyatso**, **Yeshi Sangpo** and **Draksang** – of whom there has been no news since their arrest in early December in Gonghe (Chabcha in Tibetan), a county in the northwestern province of Qinghai, for providing information about a demonstration.

At the same time, **Wang Dengchao**, a policeman and a pro-democracy activist, has been sentenced to 14 years in prison in Shenzhen, in the southeastern province of Guangdong.

“Jail sentences and holding detainees incommunicado are radical measures but they are used routinely against human rights activists who try to disseminate information that the regime wants to suppress,” Reporters Without Borders said.

“We are outraged by these practices, which show that the People’s Republic of China not only censors messages about freedom and justice but also continues to target those who transmit them. We call for the immediate release of the three monks and the policeman and the withdrawal of all the charges against them.”

According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, the three monks were arrested for sharing information about a student demonstration on 26 November in Gonghe County. Many Tibetan monks have been [arrested and jailed in recent months for circulating information about protests and cases of self-immolation](#).

Sungrab Gyatso was arrested by members of the Public Security Bureau on 1 December. Since then, no information has been provided about the conditions in which he is being held or even his location.

The other two monks, Yeshi Sangpo, 37, and Draksang, 26, have been missing since 3 December, when they went to the headquarters of the local government in response to a summons to report for interrogation.

Members of the People’s Armed Police (PAP) had gone to Khyamru monastery the night before to arrest them, but the monks inside refused to open the gates. The PAP responded by barricading the gates from the outside and denied access to other monks who arrived at the hour of prayer the next morning, suggesting that they address their complaints to the local government.

Around 150 monks quickly set off but were stopped by members of the local Tibetan population, who feared an outbreak of violence. Government officials later arrived with special forces and, according to witnesses, said they had a list of 10 Tibetans for arrest, but for the time being just wanted to talk to Yeshi Sangpo and Draksang.

As with Sungrab Gyatso, it is still not known where or in what conditions they are being held.

Wang Dengchao (王登朝), the 38-year-old policeman held in Shenzhen, was given the 14-year jail sentence on charges of embezzlement and obstructing officials. Arrested in March, he had close links with several dissident bloggers and [often visited online forums, where he posted pro-democracy messages and criticized China’s judicial and political systems](#).

Photo : Diptendu Dutta (AFP)

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