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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Severe restrictions on religious freedom and freedom of expression in the Tibetan autonomous region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live

The human rights situation in the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live continues to remain a major concern. Spate of self-immolation protests since 2009 and demonstrations in the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live defy the position of the Chinese government that the Tibetan Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live are stable.

Arbitrary arrests, detentions and imprisonments have continued throughout the Tibetan Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live. Intensive patriotic re-education sessions pressuring the Buddhist monks and nuns to study communist ideologies and denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama have exacerbated rather than calmed the volatile situation.

Tibetans are increasingly but peacefully showing their resistance to the continued suppression by the Chinese authorities. Kirti monastery in the Sichuan province, Nyitso monastery and Mamae Dechen Chokhorling nunnery, and Karma monastery are the four places where self-immolation protests took place. These areas are under intense surveillance by the Chinese security forces.

Since 2009, 23 Tibetans have self-immolated. Ten self-immolations took place in January 2012. There are over 830 known political prisoners in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and adjacent regions where Tibetans live.

On 23 and 24 January 2012, the Chinese police fired indiscriminately on hundreds of Tibetans who had gathered peacefully to protest against the deteriorating situation and denial of their basic rights in Drakgo, Serthar, Ngaba, Gyarong and other neighboring areas where Tibetans live. Five Tibetans were killed by the Chinese police's gunfire. Over sixty were injured, some critically. Many more were arrested.

Two abbots and seven other monks were arrested from Karma Monastery in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) County of the Tibet Autonomous Region by Chinese security forces around 29 October, 2011. The monastery has been facing severe repression after an unoccupied, newly built local government office was bombed in the area on 26 October 2011. The Chinese government accused the monks of the monastery of being behind it.

One of its former monks died after setting himself on fire on 1 December 2011 due to the repression. The former monk had a son enrolled at the monastery and was the first in the Tibet Autonomous Region to immolate himself in the recent wave of such protests in Tibetan areas.

The abbots – Lodoe Rabtsel and Namsey Sonam – were arrested after they refused to cooperate with the Chinese officials conducting a patriotic education campaign at the monastery. Tortuous questioning and intimidation led the monks to flee the monastery, leading to its dialectics school which had over 120 monk students, to close down.

The former monk Kalsang Tsultrim, pen name Gyitsang Takmik was given a four-year jail sentence by the Gannan (Tibetan: Kanlho) prefectural court in Tsoe (Chinese: Hezuo) County of Gansu Province on 30 December 2011 for having circulated a VCD in which he talked about the situation in the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live and urged the international community to "act swiftly on behalf of the Tibetan people" to end the repression against them.

The young author of Miyul la Phulwey Sempa (English: My thoughts presented to the outside world) was arrested on 16th December 2010, just a month after release from an earlier arrest on July 27, 2010 over the issue. He is a former monk of Gyitsang Gaden Choekorling Monastery in Sangchu County, Gansu Province.

Tsering (aged 26), a former monk of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County of Sichuan Province was arrested in April 2010. He lived in Raru Village after leaving Kirti in 2007. The Ngaba County Court sentenced him for five years on 29 November 2011 for being an alleged ring leader of 2008 Tibetan uprising protest.

Another two monks of Tashi Chokorling monastery in Gansu Province, both named Tenzin Gyatso, were recently jailed for 13 and 15 years respectively. The older monk, 40 years old, was sentenced to 15 years. He is detained in a prison in Lanzhou (capital of Gansu). More than 300 out of the monastery's 500 monks, including the two monks, had taken part in the uprising protest in 2008. Many were ill-treated, including "severe torture" and beatings, while in detention.

Lobsang Dhargye (aged 22) and Tsekho (aged 30), were sentenced for two and half years each while Dorjee (aged 16) was given a three-year sentence by the Prefectural police authorities (known as the Public Security Bureau). They were all monks of Ngaba Monastery and were arrested around 12 April 2011.

Earlier, on 29 and 30 August, the county court jailed three other monks of Ngaba Monastery for ten to 13 years jail terms for alleged "intentional homicide" and for having "plotted, instigated and assisted" in the monk's death. Local Tibetan sources had said the jailed monks had wrested the severely burnt and protesting monk named Phuntsog from the police who were subjecting him to continuous merciless beating after putting out the fire.

Tabey, the young monk of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County of Sichuan Province who self-immolated on 27 February 2009 in Ngaba town while protesting against the Chinese repression, lies crippled in a Chinese army hospital. He carried a picture of the Dalai Lama and shouted slogans on the main road of Ngaba town. After Tabey had poured inflammable liquid on his body and set himself on fire, the paramilitary armed police personnel had shot on his legs to prevent him from moving about. The troops then put out the flames and took him away in a van. He carried out the protest action after the local authorities disallowed his monastery from holding its annual great prayer festival (Monlam Chenmo). Tabey is now being held in a military hospital in Barkham (Chinese: Ma'erkang) County of Ngaba Prefecture. Both of his feet have become useless and even his arm has become next to numb.

Tabey's mother is reportedly looking after him but is forbidden from leaving the hospital or talking with outsiders. The only person allowed to visit him is an uncle.

A former monk in his forties, Tenzin Phuntsog succumbed to burns in a hospital in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) County, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). He was the first in the TAR to set himself on fire.

The Karma monastery was under severe crackdown by the Chinese authorities which accused its monks of being responsible for an explosion which severely damaged a local government building on Oct 26, 2011. The self-immolation took place near the monastery.

His son Choying Nyima was said to be among a group of young monks expelled by the authorities from the monastery after the imposition of the crackdown, which on 8 December, 2011, also saw some 70 monks being arrested. The expelled young monks continued to be harassed at their homes by the Chinese police who subjected them to constant questioning and threats. Phuntsog had distributed a number of leaflets around town expressing solidarity with the area monks and criticizing Chinese rule.

Thapkey Gyatso, aged 34, a monk from Labrang Monastery in Sangchu County of Gansu province serving a 15-year jail term after arrest during the 2008 Tibet uprising. He is half-paralyzed and has impaired eyesight due to years of torture. A friend who visited him in July 2011 in a prison in Dianxin, located 100 kilometers from the provincial capital Lanzhou discovered that his serious health condition.

Yeshe Tenzin, a monk of Sog Tsenden Monastery in Sog County of Nagchu Prefecture in northern Tibet Autonomous Region died on 7 September 2011, some 10 months after his release in December 2010 after a 10-year jail term. Due to his poor health after years of ill-treatment in prison, his family took him to various hospitals on his release. But he failed to recover from his illnesses and died.

He was arrested with some friends in 2001 for copying and distributing posters calling for freedom for Tibetans. He was also accused of having attended the Dalai Lama's Kalachakra teaching in Sikkim, India. He was reported to have been tortured, forced to undergo hard labor and severely beaten in prison, resulting in serious physical illnesses.

Society for Threatened Peoples urges the Human Rights Council to urge the government of the People's Republic of China:

- to allow unhindered access to independent observers, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or arbitrary executions to the areas where shooting took place;
- to provide immediate medical treatment for gunfire victims of incidents;
- to immediately end the patriotic re-education campaigns in monasteries;
- to withdraw military and police forces from the monasteries;
- to respect the freedom of expression, opinion, assembly and association as guaranteed in the Chinese constitution and in major international human rights instruments;
- to implement all recommendations of the United Nations Treaties bodies and Special Procedure mandate holders including the Committee against Torture and the Committee on Rights of Child with regards to the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live;
- to engage in sincere, results-based negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives on a solution to the Tibet issue.