

Lobsang Jamcan  
Chairman  
People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region  
No. 1, Kangang East Road  
Chengguan District, Lhasa City  
Tibet Autonomous Region, 850000  
People's Republic of China

Dear Lobsang Jamcan

I am contacting you to raise the case of Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche [邦日仁波切], currently serving a 19 year sentence in Chusul Prison, TAR. I call on you to take all measures within your power to secure his release from prison as a matter of urgency. Like other monks and nuns imprisoned in Tibet, he is a peaceful individual who has stood up for his religious beliefs, his community and his culture. Such actions should not be criminalised.

Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche was detained in 1999 and "confessed" to attempting to split the country, reportedly under torture. He was originally sentenced to life in prison. He and his wife, Nyima, had founded an orphanage for Lhasa's deprived children and were well-respected pillars of the community.

Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche's conviction is believed to be related to his relationship with a man who allegedly tried to raise a Tibetan flag and detonate explosives at the 1999 National Minority Games. The state has provided no evidence that his conviction was based upon due legal process or principles of justice established in international law. The province authorities must seek an immediate review of his conviction and imprisonment, with a view to his release as soon as possible.

Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche's case reflects concerns about the imprisonment of monks and nuns across Tibet. As you know, Article 35 of the Chinese constitution guarantees freedom of speech, assembly, association, procession and demonstration. Article 36 guarantees religious freedom. Monks and nuns must be free to exercise their religious freedom and freedom of speech across the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

Abuse of these freedoms is a source of significant distress and resentment to Tibetans and is a legitimate trigger for protest. Authorities must not interfere in any way with the religious activities inside or outside monasteries or prevent monks and nuns serving their communities. Monks and nuns must be free to travel within the TAR and Tibet as a whole, including on pilgrimage and for religious festivals or teachings. In addition, there is no justification for shows of force and heavily-armed security forces at religious events and religious authorities. Ordinary Tibetans must be able to practice their religion without fear.

I call on you to take immediate action in regard to Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche and to ensure that the religious freedom and freedom of expression of all citizens of the TAR are protected by your regional government.

Yours sincerely