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Tibetan Self-Immolations mount, spread geographically as CPC Congress Nears

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Sun, 10/28/2012 - 10:47

Paper No. 5269

Dated 28-Oct-2012

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As the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China scheduled to take place in Beijing on November 8, 2012, approaches, members of GenNext of Tibetans are desperately taking to more and more self-immolations in an attempt to awaken the conscience of the international community to the plight of the Tibetans.

2. The fact that during the recent three Presidential debates in the US, neither President Barack Obama nor his challenger Mr. Mitt Romney made even a reference in passing to the human rights situation in the Tibetan areas of China has added to their desperation.
3. In the perception of young Tibetans, only the US political leadership and public opinion are in a position to exercise moral pressure on the Chinese leaders to address the human rights concerns of the Tibetans. The almost total absence of any reference to this issue during the current election campaign in the US is driving more young Tibetans to self-immolation.
4. This week has seen seven self-immolation attempts---- the largest number in a week since self-immolations started in the beginning of last year. Six of them proved fatal--- the largest number of fatalities in a week. Till now, the total number of self-immolations has reached 62 in all the Tibetan areas put together.
5. While the self-immolations continue to be concentrated in the Sichuan province where monks of the Kirti monastery rose in revolt last year against Chinese suppression by taking to self-immolation, it has been spreading to other Tibetan areas too affecting many youngsters who are not monks. It is no longer a protest movement confined only to the monks.

6. Of the seven incidents reported this week, five were in the Gansu province and two in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). On October 25, 2012, two young Tibetan cousins aged 20 and 25 resorted to self-immolation in front of the local school in Driru (Biru in Chinese) in the Nagchu Prefecture (Naqu in Chinese) of the TAR.

7. According to Radio Free Asia, there have been seven self-immolations so far in the TAR—three in Driru, two in Lhasa and one each in Chamdo county's Karma township, and in the town of Damshung, just outside Lhasa. Tibetans in Driru have been in the forefront of opposition to Chinese rule in the TAR.

8. The same day, two other young Tibetans aged 21 and 25 committed self-immolation in the Gansu province.

9. The Chinese authorities seem to suspect that the spreading self-immolations across the entire Tibetan belt are not spontaneous, but are being co-ordinated by some clandestine organisation. They have announced a reward of US \$ 32000 to anyone giving information as to who are behind the self-immolations.

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