

## **International support led Golok Jigme free**

Dharamsala 22 April, 2009: Association of Tibetan Journalists (ATJ) has received information from a reliable source that Golok Jigme, the monk who had assisted Dhondup Wangchen in making the groundbreaking film, "LEAVING FEAR BEHIND" was released on 20 April 2009 in Labrang, Sangchuk Dzong (Chinese: Xiahe), Eastern Tibet.

Tashi Wangchuk, President of ATJ said, "We welcome Jigme's release. It is a culmination of efforts put forth by international rights groups, Tibetans under His Holiness' leadership and above all the courage and determination of Jigme himself."

<http://www.tibetanjournalists.org/pressreleases/>  
<http://www.leavingfearbehind.com/>

ATJ has learned that a heavy monetary fine of several thousand Yuan was levied on Jigme at the time of his release by the Chinese authorities who accused him to disseminating information to the outside world. This, ATJ said, is simply a violation of freedom of expression. "Therefore, we urge the Chinese authorities at higher level to investigate into the matter and take necessary action as per the law," he added.

Golok Jigme was first arrested in March 2008 for secretly shooting video but was later released in October. He was arrested again last month, kept in custody for about 40 days. Jigme had sensed international pressure on the Chinese officials who interrogated him and was treated unusually better than other prisoners.

"We urge the Chinese government to also release Kunga Tsangyang, Kunchok Tsephel, Dhodup Wangchen, Dolma Kyab and many others, who were put behind bars for simply expressing their views through films, blogs, poems, articles and essays etc," said Tashi.

China continues to bar foreign media from Tibetan areas in and outside the TAR. Sources indicate that many journalists had to face authorities' harassment in the last one year. "Therefore, we call on Chinese government to lift the restriction and let media freely exercise their journalistic duties in the region."

ATJ strongly appeals to the Chinese government to open Tibet to the media from all over the world, especially exile Tibetan journalists to independently observe the situation.