

Press Statement, Delhi, August 8, 2008

Wife and brother of in Tibet arrested Filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen appeal to the IOC and the Chinese government

Lhamo Tso (35) and Dorjee Wangchen (31), the wife and the brother of detained Tibetan activist and filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen (37), appealed to the IOC and the Chinese government to release the Tibetan filmmaker. Wangchen was arrested by Chinese authorities on March 26, soon after completing filming of the documentary film *Leaving Fear Behind*. The film documents Tibetan views from inside Tibet on the XXIX Olympic Games in Beijing, the current situation in Tibet and the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet.

“Dhondup Wangchen spent most of his time helping the needy and serving the community. He's a very good husband and also a good father to our four children. I appeal to the Chinese Government to release Dhondup. I urge the IOC to use their influence on China so that the host of the Olympic Games remains true to its promises of freedom of expression to the people”, said his wife Lhamo Tso, who escaped from Tibet with other family members to India in 2007.

“What he has done is a very courageous act”, said Dhondup Wangchen's brother Dorjee Wangchen. “We had been in a great dilemma as the screening of this film may lead to my brother and his friend Golog Jigme being put behind Chinese bars for many years. But after watching the film and seeing my brother's strong determination, we had no choice but to show to the world the real feelings of Tibetans inside Tibet. I especially appeal to Tibetans to work for the release of my brother and his friend”.

The pseudonym that Dhondup Wangchen worked under during the course of filming, Jigme, means “fearless” in Tibetan. His courage, along with the courage of all those associated with this project, inspired the film's name Jigdre, which translates to the film's English title, *Leaving Fear Behind*.

Both Dhondup Wangchen and Golog Jigme remain in detention as of today. Dhondup Wangchen was last seen in detention in Guangsheng Binguan in Xining (Qinghai province) and Golog Jigme, in a detention center in the town of Lingxia (Gansu province).

Their video tapes were sent to Switzerland where the footage was compiled by Gyaljong Tsetrin, Wangchen's cousin, who escaped from Tibet in 2002. Tsetrin founded Filming For Tibet to produce his cousin's film.

The final cut of *Leaving Fear Behind* was screened to international press in Beijing on August 6th 2008. The public screening in a Beijing hotel was disrupted by plain-clothed Public Security Bureau agents, who pressured hotel management to stop the screening. There were later reports that the hotel was shut down.

Today's press event and the film's first full public screening were hosted by the Association of Tibetan Journalists in the Press Club of India in Delhi.

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