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**CHINA**

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Luxembourg, January 2012

Your Excellency,

I was informed by the human rights organization ACAT (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture) in Luxembourg of the alarming number of Tibetan nuns, monks or former monks who have set themselves on fire in the Ngaba region (Sichuan) in the last months. At least seven of them are believed to have died. Others were taken away by security forces and their current condition and whereabouts remain unknown.

These self-immolations, although disapproved by Buddhism, are the ultimate call to draw attention to the Tibetans' dramatic human rights situation and in particular to the severe restrictions on the exercise of religious freedom imposed on their monasteries. Very harsh punitive security measures were taken following the March 2008 protests across the Tibetan plateau, including intimidating raids against monasteries, arbitrary detentions of monks, a heavy security presence in and around religious institutions and compulsory political indoctrination for monks and nuns. These policies have intensified in response to the current wave of desperate acts of protest, further adding to the resentments and despair of the Tibetan people.

I call on the Chinese government to put an end to these policies, to respect Tibetans' religious freedom as enshrined in Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and to engage in meaningful dialogue with the Tibetan community on their long-standing grievances and human rights concerns. I urge you in particular to:

- provide information about the whereabouts and condition of the Tibetan nuns and monks who have attempted to set themselves on fire and were removed by security forces;
- provide information about all the other monks who were detained in 2011, including 300 of them from Kirti monastery;
- put an end to the heavy security presence in and around monasteries and to the practice of forcing monks to undergo "patriotic education";
- allow independent monitoring by United Nations Special Procedures of the human rights situation in Tibetan areas of China.

I thank you for considering my appeal.

Yours sincerely and respectfully

Name, surname:

Address :

Signature