

China Says Dalai Lama Rewarding Self-Immolators With Money

"Self-immolation is fundamentally immoral and inhumane behavior," Padma Choling, the Chinese appointed head of Tibet's rubber stamp legislature, told reporters on the sidelines of China's annual meeting of parliament.

"Instead of being against this, and putting a stop to this, they are encouraging it and using other means, such as giving financial compensation, to continue to instigate incidents like these. I think this is even less humane," he added, referring to the Dalai Lama and other exiled Tibetans.

Beijing considers the **Dalai Lama**, who fled from China in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule, a violent separatist. The Dalai Lama says he is merely seeking greater autonomy for his Himalayan homeland.

He has called on **China** to investigate the self-immolations. He has said he is not encouraging them but has called them "understandable".

Padma Choling said he had evidence to prove the Dalai Lama's involvement, though he did not provide it.

"There is some evidence that is not convenient to disclose here," he said.

China has tightened already strict controls in Tibet since the **self-immolations** began two years ago and has all but banned visits by foreign journalists.

Tibet's new governor, Lobsang Gyaltsen, appointed in January, signaled there would be no letup to the heavy security.

“We will always place maintaining stability as our top priority and keep up crackdowns on all secessionist forces and sabotage activities,” he said. “We cherish ethnic unity and stability as we cherish our own eyes.”

China has defended its iron-fisted rule in Tibet, saying the mountainous region suffered from dire poverty and brutal exploitation until 1950, when Communist troops “peacefully liberated” it.

Tibet has also been a cause of considerable diplomatic friction, especially with the United States, where meetings between the Dalai Lama and U.S. presidents have infuriated China.

This week Tibetan writer and activist **Tsering Woeser** was named an International Woman of Courage by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, drawing a sharp rebuke from China.

“Woeser has frequently published articles distorting facts about Tibet that vilify China’s ethnic policies, incite ethnic separatist feelings and destroy China’s ethnic unity,” Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a daily news briefing.

“The United States giving this kind of person an award is the same as public support for her separatist speech, and clearly violates its frequent promises to recognize Tibet as part of China.”

Woeser is banned from leaving China and has been under house arrest in Beijing for the last two days.

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