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## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S POSITION ON ALLEGED ABUSES AGAINST WORSHIPPERS OF TIBETAN DEITY DORJE SHUGDEN**

Amnesty International (AI) has received and studied a large amount of material alleging human rights abuses against worshippers of the Tibetan Buddhist deity Dorje Shugden. These alleged abuses are reported to have happened largely in Tibetan settlements in India.

None of the material AI has received contains evidence of abuses which fall within AI's mandate for action such as grave violations of fundamental human rights including torture, the death penalty, extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention or imprisonment, or unfair trials.

While recognizing that spiritual debate can be contentious, Amnesty International cannot become involved in debate on spiritual issues.

AI campaigns on the grave violations of human rights in Tibet, as well as the rest of the People's Republic of China. In 1997 a widespread crackdown on Tibetan nationalists and religious groups continued. At least 500 Tibetans, most of them Buddhist monks and nuns, were reported to have been detained during the year for peacefully exercising fundamental freedoms. A continuing "patriotic reeducation campaign" in monasteries and nunneries has led to expulsions and arrests. Prison conditions remain harsh in Tibet and prisoners are often treated for minor infringements of prison regulations. /ENDS