

2 more Tibetans arrested at Nepal - Tibet border

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Dharamsala, January 22 - The Nepalese authorities Tuesday have arrested two more Tibetans at the Nepal-China border in Dolakha for entering Nepal 'illegally' .

According to DSP Dhiraj Pratap Singh of DPO Dolakha, they were arrested by a mobile police team from Banchare at Lamidanda. He said that the two Tibetans were handed over to the Department of Immigration in Kathmandu for 'necessary action'.

Nepal arrested seven Tibetans in July, eight in October and ten in December last year.

Another group of 10 Tibetans were arrested on Jan 17, 2010 in Dolakha for entering Nepal and later handed over to the United Nations by the Department of Immigration.

Past estimates indicate between 2,500 and 3,000 Tibetans escape Tibet and enter Nepal each year after a perilous journey over the Himalayas on their way to Dharamsala, the seat of Tibetan Government-in-Exile in north India and home to the Dalai Lama. The number has slowed down dramatically since last year after Nepal beefed up security along its border with Tibet following Chinese pressure.

Tibetans exiles in Nepal in 2008 staged some of the most dramatic and sustained demonstrations in Kathmandu, targeting the Chinese embassy, its visa office and the United Nations after unrest against Chinese rule in Tibet faced brutal Chinese military crackdown.

Tibetan demonstrations were routinely stopped by Nepali police, often using excessive force. The demonstrators regularly faced arrests, intimidation and in some cases individual threats and arbitrary detention.

In the midst of protests, China sent a flurry of high-level official delegation and repeatedly forced Nepal to effectively curb "Free-Tibet activities" while promising to increase assistance to the crisis-stricken country in return.

Nepal stopped issuing refugee papers to Tibetans in 1989. By then, almost 23,000 Tibetans had received refugee status, according to UNHCR data.

Nepal recently announced its decision to tighten Tibet border by deploying armed police along its northern Mustang-Tibet border, raising criticism that the move was prompted by pressure from China.

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