

## **Kunchok Tsephel (m)**

**Adoption Status:** Not Adopted

**Country:** China

**Occupation:** Official in a Chinese government environmental department and the founder of the first Tibetan literary website, Chodme or Butter Lamp.

**Detained Since:** February 26, 2009

**Charges:** Disclosing state secrets.

**Sentence:** 15 years in prison



**Additional:** Kunchok's website, with assistance from poet Kyabchen Dedrol, was founded in 2005 for the purpose of promoting Tibetan literature and culture in China. The Chinese government actively monitored the website since its beginnings, and on several occasions, authorities have shut down public access to the website. In March 2008, the Chinese authorities began to crackdown in the Tibet Autonomous Region following the anti-government protests in Lhasa and other areas. On February 26, 2009, Chinese authorities targeted and detained Kunchok. For nine months, the government failed to inform Kunchok's family about his arrest and condition. Then on November 12, 2009, his family was summoned to attend the trial at the Intermediate People's Court of Kanlho, only hear that he had been sentenced to 15 years in prison on the charges of disclosing state secrets. Kunchok trial was conducted behind closed doors and he was denied access to a lawyer.

Many believe that published content on his website, especially information regarding the 2008 protests that occurred across the Tibetan plateau, led to his arrest and conviction.

**Not Adopted**