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March 17, 2008 Immediate Press Release:

China has set a deadline of Monday midnight for all the protesters to surrender. Since March 10 this year, Tibetans all over Tibet have been holding a series of peaceful demonstrations to voice their resentments over the prolonged repressive policies of the Chinese government. We are gathered here at the United Nations in solidarity with our brave Tibetans inside Tibet and their call for freedom and independence.

We condemn in the strongest term the brutal killings of Tibetan demonstrators by the Chinese security forces in which over 100 Tibetans are feared to have died, with at least 80 confirmed deaths according to an independent human rights organization and International Media outlets such as BBC.

The latest reports suggest that the entire city of Lhasa is under curfew and the Chinese security personnel are conducting manhunt to arrest protesters. The People's High Court, Regional People's Procuratorate and the Regional Public Security Bureau of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" have issued notices warning *"criminals who do not surrender themselves by the midnight of Monday will be sternly punished and those who harbor or hide them will also face harsh treatment."*

The latest protest occurred on Sunday in Ngaba County of Amdo Province where thousands of Tibetan monks spontaneously rose up against the Chinese rule.

Due to strict restriction on flow of information from Tibet, it is difficult to ascertain the actual severity of the situation. However, we believe that the prevailing situations in many parts of Tibet are far worse than what we get to hear from these limited sources. It is feared that several hundred Tibetans have been arrested and imprisoned in connection to these peaceful demonstrations.

We welcome the statement of Ms Louis Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in which she called upon the Chinese authorities to allow demonstrators to exercise their right to freedom of expression and assembly, and urged the Chinese government to refrain from any excessive use of force while maintaining order and to ensure those arrested are not ill-treated.

Given the Chinese Government's past record of ruthless crackdown on peaceful protesters, we are deeply concerned and worried about the plight of these Tibetans whose only crime was exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of speech and opinion.