

Report: Hundreds detained in Tibet after self-immolations

By msnbc.com staff and news services

BEIJING - Hundreds of Tibetans in Lhasa have been detained by Chinese security officers after two self-immolation protests against Chinese rule over Tibet, according to U.S.-funded broadcaster, stoking concerns of spreading unrest among Tibetans in China.

Locals detained are being held in detention centers in and around Lhasa while many of those from outside the Tibet Autonomous Region have been expelled,

On Sunday, two Tibetan men set themselves on fire in Lhasa, state news agency Xinhua said, the first time in four years of a major Tibetan protest against Chinese rule. One of the men died.

China has branded the self-immolators "terrorists" and criminals and has blamed exiled Tibetans and the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for inciting them.

At least 35 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2011 in protest against China's six-decade rule over Tibet, according to Tibetan rights groups. At least 27 have died.

Video captured a landslide burying a major highway in Tibet last week. Msnbc.com's Dara Brown reports.

Hao Peng, head of the Communist Party's Commission for Political and Legal Affairs in the Tibet Autonomous Region, has urged authorities to tighten their grip on the Internet and mobile text messaging, reflecting government fears about unrest during a month-long Buddhist festival which started last week.

The move is the latest in a series of measures the government says are intended to maintain stability.

Beijing considers the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule, a separatist. The Dalai Lama says he merely seeks greater autonomy for his Himalayan homeland.

Reuters contributed to this report.

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