

TIBET - Groups say 2 dead after police shooting

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Two people have died in a Tibetan region of southwestern China after they were injured by police gunfire while protesting the detention of a local leader, overseas Tibetan rights groups said.

One protester committed suicide Sunday in police custody in the town of Louxu while another died that same day from untreated wounds, the British-based group Free Tibet and the U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet said Monday.

Police in Ganzi prefecture, where Louxu is located, did not answer phone calls yesterday. The Communist Party office there would not comment on the reports.

The International Campaign for Tibet identified the protester who committed suicide as Lo Palsang and said he was denouncing a crackdown on local Tibetans. The group said police opened fire Aug. 12 on about 100 protesters who were upset about police treatment of people in the region. It said police have also been rounding up young men in the region, which has been site of repeated violence.

Such reports are difficult to confirm in the tightly controlled area, but Ganzi, also known as Garze in Tibetan, appears to be seeing more unrest, said Barry **Sautman**, a social science professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology who studies ethnic minorities in China.

However, a wave of protesters in Tibetan areas setting themselves on fire appears to be diminishing, he said.

"It probably means that Garze continues to be an area where there's the most likelihood of confrontation between the authorities and local people," **Sautman** said. "In the Tibet Autonomous Region, there's nowhere near the level of manifested discontent as there is in Garze." AP

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