

URGENT ACTION

UYGHUR WOMAN HELD INCOMMUNICADO FOR 2 YEARS

Buzainafu Abudourexiti continues to be held in incommunicado detention after she was suddenly detained in March 2017 and sentenced in a secret trial to seven years in prison. There is still no information about the charges against her, but it is believed that it may be part of a wider crackdown on Uyghur students who studied abroad. Buzainafu Abudourexiti returned to China in 2015 after studying in Egypt for two years. She is at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping

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Dear President Xi,

*It is of grave concern that **Buzainafu Abudourexiti**, a Uyghur woman, remains in incommunicado detention after she was sentenced on 5 June 2017, without any legal representation, to seven years imprisonment. She is currently being held at Urumqi Women's Prison.*

She was taken away from her parents' house in Urumqi, on 29 March 2017 and transferred to the city of Akesu, 1,000km away. No official documentation about her case, including what charges she was convicted of, has ever been provided. While Buzainafu Abudourexiti was pregnant at the time of her arrest, her husband later learned from officials in Xinjiang that the child was already dead in her womb when she was detained. Nothing is known about her current health status.

Buzainafu Abudourexiti went to Egypt to study Islam for two years and returned to Urumqi in early 2015 to work at her father's company while learning English. Planning to join her new husband Almas Nizamidin in Australia, she then went back to Egypt in September 2015 to collect the documentation for her visa application. After returning to Urumqi in December 2015, she then received the necessary clearance from the Urumqi police department and Almas proceeded to lodge an application for her Australian spousal visa. Buzainafu Abudourexiti was detained shortly after that and their application is still pending.

I fear that the detention of Buzainafu Abudourexiti is part of the wider crackdown on Uyghurs in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and that she may be subject to torture and other ill-treatment.

Therefore, I call on you to:

- **Release Buzainafu Abudourexiti unconditionally and immediately unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that she committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;**
- **Ensure that she has regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of her choice, and is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.**
- **Allow her prompt, regular and unrestricted access to medical care on request or as necessary.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Uyghurs are a mainly Muslim ethnic minority who are concentrated primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) in China. Since the 1980s, the Uyghurs have been the target of systematic and extensive human rights violations. This includes arbitrary detention and imprisonment, incommunicado detention, and restrictions on religious freedom as well as cultural and social rights. Local authorities maintain tight control over religious practice, including prohibiting all government employees and children under the age of 18 from worshipping at mosques. Chinese government policies limit the use of the Uyghur language, impose severe restrictions on freedom of religion and encourage sustained influx of Han migrants into the region.

In May 2014, a one-year “strike hard” campaign was launched in Xinjiang, and officials prioritized speedy arrests, quick trials and mass sentencing of Uyghurs. The government called for greater “co-operation” between prosecuting authorities and courts, raising additional concerns that accused individuals would not receive fair trials. The “strike hard” campaign has been extended in the subsequent years, and the authorities have massively increased their expenditure on police. Under such circumstances, many Uyghurs make the decision to flee the country. The Chinese authorities have responded by harassing the relatives of those who have left in order to pressure them to return and increasing attempts to curtail the political and human rights activities of Uyghur activists in other countries. This has led to growing fears among many Uyghurs abroad, including asylum seekers and refugees, of being forcibly returned to China. In recent years, dozens of Uyghur asylum seekers have been forcibly returned from South East Asian or Central Asian countries, to China.

Media reports illustrated the extent of the new draconian security measures implemented since Chen Quanguo came into power as Xinjiang’s Party Secretary in 2016, including over 90,000 new security-related positions being advertised within a one-year period. In October 2016, there were numerous reports that authorities in the region had confiscated Uyghur passports in an attempt to further curtail their freedom of movement.

In March 2017, the Xinjiang government enacted the “De-extremification Regulation” that identifies and prohibits a wide range of behaviours labelled “extremist”, such as “spreading extremist thought”, denigrating or refusing to watch public radio and TV programmes, wearing burkas, having an “abnormal” beard, resisting national policies, and publishing, downloading, storing, or reading articles, publications, or audio-visual materials containing “extremist content”. The regulation also set up a “responsibility system” for government cadres for “anti-extremism” work and established annual reviews of their performance. According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), Chinese authorities compelled Uyghur students enrolled in universities abroad to return to China since May 2017. In early July 2017, about 200 Uyghurs were detained in Egypt by order of the Chinese authorities, with 22 who have been forcibly returned have not been heard from since.

The Chinese authorities had denied the existence of “transformation through-education” facilities until October 2018, when acknowledging the camps they described them as voluntary, free “vocational training” centres. They claim that the objective of this vocational training is to provide the people with technical and vocational education to enable them to find jobs and become “useful” citizens. China’s explanation, however, contradicts the reports of beatings, food deprivation and solitary confinement we have collected from former detainees.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Chinese, English.
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 September 2019
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Buzainafu Abudourexiti (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7168/2017/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.