

URGENT ACTION

UYGHUR ACTIVIST'S 30 RELATIVES STILL DETAINED

Up to 30 relatives of Uyghur human rights activist Rebiya Kadeer, who currently lives in the United States, have been detained for nearly two years in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) without trial. The exact date that they were taken away remains unclear, however it is presumed they are being arbitrarily detained at a political re-education camp and are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Among those detained are Kadeer's sisters, brothers, sons, grandchildren and extended relatives who have for many years been targeted by the Chinese authorities to try silence Rebiya Kadeer.

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 remains a grave concern that, since 2017, up to 30 relatives of Uyghur human rights defender and former prisoner of conscience, Rebiya Kadeer, are still believed to be arbitrarily detained in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang).

*Rebiya Kadeer's son, **Ablikim Abdiriyim**, is one of those thought to be detained. A former prisoner of conscience, he previously served 12 years in prison where he was repeatedly tortured. It is believed he was sentenced in retaliation to his mother's human rights advocacy. Among the other family members who are believed to be detained are **Kahar Abdiriyim**, Kadeer's eldest son; **Ayugul**, Kahar's wife; **Aydidar**, Kahar's daughter; **Zulpikar**, Kahar's son; **Dildar**, Kahar's daughter; **Alim Abdiriyim**, Kadeer's youngest son; **Xelchem**, Kadeer's sister; **Atikem** and her son-in-law; **Imam**, Xelchem's son; **Ahmetjan**, Kadeer's brother; **Gheni**, Kadeer's brother.*

Formerly a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Rebiya Kadeer was detained in 1999, and sentenced to eight years in prison for "stealing state secrets". Rebiya Kadeer is one of the best-known Uyghur human rights advocates and is a leader at the World Uyghur Congress.

All the family members are presumed to be currently held at one of the many detention facilities that were established across the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). Referred to as "counter extremism centres", "political study centres", or "transformation-through-education centres", these facilities are known to arbitrarily detain Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities for indefinite periods. Forced to study Chinese laws and policies, many of those detained are targeted because they may have been found praying, owning religious books, have travelled abroad, or have family members living abroad.

Therefore, we call on you to:

- *Release Rebiya Kadeer's family members unconditionally and immediately unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognized offence and are granted a fair trial in line with international standards;*
- *Ensure that members of Rebiya Kadeer's family have regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of their choice, and are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Rebiya Kadeer's family have been targeted by the authorities ever since she was first detained as a prisoner of conscience in 1999. Intensifying after she was released on medical parole on 17 March 2005, she left China for the USA. Rebiya Kadeer claims to have been warned that if she engaged with members of the Uyghur ethnic community or spoke publicly about "sensitive issues", her "businesses and children would be finished". On 1 June 2006, Alim and Ablikim Abdiryim were beaten by police in front of their children and in front of their sister, Rushangul, who was then handed a mobile phone and told to call Rebiya Kadeer in the USA and tell her what was happening. On 27 November 2006, the day after Rebiya Kadeer was elected president of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), a court sentenced two of her sons, Alim Abdiryim and Kahar Abdiryim, to fines amounting to millions of US dollars, and Alim to seven years' imprisonment on charges of tax evasion. In addition, at the beginning of April, the Chinese authorities reportedly began a process to assess and liquidate the Kadeer family businesses.

Ablikim Abdiryim, son of Rebiya Kadeer, was detained in June of 2006, and sentenced in April 2007 in an unfair trial in which he did not have legal representation of his choice. He was repeatedly tortured while in prison and was released in May 2015.

Rebiya Kadeer has been campaigning for the release of her relatives but there is still no further information about them. She is calling on the US Congress and the US government to raise her relatives' cases with the Chinese government.

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 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.

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: 26 August 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Kahar Abdiryim (he/him); Ayugul (she/her), Aydidar (she/her), Zulpikar (he/him), Dildar (she/her), Ablikim Abdiryim (he/him), Alim Abdiryim (he/him), Xelchem (she/her), Atikem (she/her), Imam (he/him), Ahmetjan (he/him), Gheni (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7421/2017/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

HIS EXCELLENCY MR LIU XIAOMING Embassy of the People's Republic of China 49-51 Portland Place
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Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.