

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR UYGHUR ACADEMIC DEMAND ANSWERS

The whereabouts of prominent Uyghur academic Tashpolat Tiyp remain unknown and the risk of execution cannot be ruled out. Victim of an enforced disappearance in 2017, his family received reports in September 2019 that he had received a suspended death sentence. While Chinese authorities have since indicated that he is being tried on corruption charges, his current condition remain unknown. Without any official information about the charges and proceedings against him, there are grave fears for Tashpolat Tiyp's future.

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

Procurator-General Li Yongjun

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional People's Procuratorate

No 122, Jianguo lu, Urumqi

830002, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

People's Republic of China

Dear Procurator-General Li,

I am writing to ask for your urgent intervention in the case of **Tashpolat Tiyp**, the former president of Xinjiang University.

Tashpolat Tiyp was forcibly disappeared in 2017 while on the way to a conference in Germany with a group of students. He has been detained since then and his whereabouts remain unknown. He was reportedly convicted of "separatism" in secret and grossly unfair proceedings and sentenced to a "suspended death sentence" in 2017.

In December 2019, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that Tashpolat Tiyp was charged with corruption and had not been sentenced to death. However, there is no further information about any court proceedings or other details about the case against him. I find it very distressing that the whereabouts and condition of Tashpolat Tiyp remain unknown, especially when there is possibility of a death sentence being carried out.

A death sentence imposed under the conditions of enforced disappearance and secret trials would be arbitrary and a violation of international human rights law. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or the circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.

I call on you to:

- **Disclose Tashpolat Tiyp's whereabouts, allow him access to his family and ensure he is not subject to torture and other ill-treatment,**
- **Ensure all Tashpolat Tiyp's trial or court proceedings meet international fair trial standards, especially with respect to transparency and access to a lawyer of his choice, and**
- **Immediately halt any plans to carry out the execution of Tashpolat Tiyp**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tashpolat Tiyip is a geographer known for research on the impact of desertification on the ecology of Xinjiang. In 2010, he was appointed the president of Xinjiang University. In March 2017, he was detained at Beijing International Airport while traveling to Germany with a group of students and reportedly sentenced to death and suspended for two years, on charges of separatism. On 27 December 2019, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman denied this report, claiming that Tashpolat Tiyip was suspected of corruption and bribery and his case had not yet been decided.

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.

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. 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". It is estimated that up to a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim people have been held in secretive "transformation-through-education" centres, where numerous human rights violations can take place. The Chinese authorities describe them as voluntary, free "vocational training" centres, and rejected calls from the international community, including Amnesty, to allow independent experts unrestricted access to Xinjiang.

Amnesty International has also remained concerned about the secretive use of the death penalty in Xinjiang, in the context of the increased security measures in the "strike hard" campaigns. Such campaigns have typically been associated with the increased use of the death penalty, and scholars have criticized the proceedings used as part of these crackdowns for their lack of fair trial safeguards and the likelihood of "wrongful executions".

An in-depth investigation published by Amnesty International in April 2017, China's Deadly Secrets, shows that despite claims by China that it is making progress towards transparency in the criminal justice system, Chinese authorities enforce an elaborate secrecy system to obfuscate the extent of executions. This investigation found hundreds of executions in public media reports are missing from a national online court database, "China Judgements Online", even though such case should be uploaded according to Chinese regulations. This was also particularly relevant to death penalty cases relating to the Xinjiang region. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and under any circumstances, as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. The organization has been campaigning for global abolition of the death penalty for over 40 years.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Chinese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 May 2020

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Tashpolat Tiyip (He / Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA1710062019ENGLISH.pdf>

And copies to:

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