

URGENT ACTION

UYGHUR TEENAGE GIRL AND MOTHER DETAINED

Uyghur woman Buheliqiemu Abula and her 13-year-old daughter were detained near Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on 31 March and told by police they faced deportation to China along with two Uyghur men already held. Buheliqiemu Abula is the former wife of Nuermaimaiti Ruze, who with Aimidoula Waili has been detained without charge in Saudi Arabia since November 2020. All four of them are now at risk of deportation to China, where they will highly likely be subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and persecution. Pursuant to the international law, the Saudi authorities must immediately stop their deportation.

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

His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

Office of His Majesty the King Royal Court,

Riyadh Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Fax: +966 11 403 3125,

Twitter: @KingSalman

Copies to: Minister of Justice

Twitter: @MojKsa

Your Excellency,

*I am writing to express my grave concern for Uyghur woman **Buheliqiemu Abula** and her **13-year-old daughter** who were detained near the Holy City of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on 31 March. The police told them they were going to be deported to China, according to a message received by friends of Buheliqiemu Abula. Buheliqiemu Abula is the former wife of **Nuermaimaiti Ruze**, who with **Aimidoula Waili**, has been detained without charge in Saudi Arabia since November 2020. The Kingdom must abandon all plans to deport these four Uyghur people as this would amount to a clear violation of Saudi Arabia's non-refoulement obligations.*

The Chinese government has gone to great lengths to cover up the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang, and to prevent members of the Uyghur diaspora from speaking up about them. To that end, the Chinese government has been requesting extradition of many Uyghur people living abroad branding them "terrorist" or "extremist" simply for their peaceful activism. Chinese law defines "terrorism" and "extremism" in an overly broad and vague manner, and these laws have been used to crack down on Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities.

There is now ample evidence, including leaked government documents, hundreds of testimonies, as well as drone videos and satellite imagery that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture and persecution against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang based on their religion and ethnicity.

It is extremely alarming to have learned that if forcibly returned to China, Buheliqiemu Abula, her daughter, Nuermaimaiti Ruze, and Aimidoula Waili will be in real danger of arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment. Their deportation would violate the Kingdom's obligations under international law.

I therefore urge you to immediately halt the deportation of Buheliqiemu Abula, her daughter, Nuermaimaiti Ruze, and Aimidoula Waili to China, and immediately release them unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognizable offence.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

54-year-old Uyghur woman Buheliqiemu Abula, who has long-term residence permits in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, had been able to maintain regular contact with her ex-husband Nuermaimaiti Ruze until two weeks ago. The last time she received a phone call from Nuermaimaiti Ruze was on 20 March, when Nuermaimaiti Ruze recounted that he had told the Saudi authorities he and Aimidoula Waili “would rather die here than be sent back to China”. Nuermaimaiti Ruze, a 46-year-old father of five, travelled to Saudi Arabia from China for the first time in June 2013 to perform Umrah and eventually settled down in Mecca, working in a restaurant with a sponsored residence permit. Aimidoula Waili is a Chinese religious scholar of the Uyghur Muslim minority that has been brutally persecuted by the Chinese government since 2017 in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) in northwestern China. Aimidoula Waili, a 54-year-old father of four, was previously arrested in Xinjiang in August 2013 because one of the employees at his factory had allegedly incited an uprising. He told Amnesty International that he had been tortured in prison: being electrocuted and forced to stand on ice while wearing nothing but slippers and underwear for up to three hours every day. After completing his sentence, he was released in 2016 and went to Turkey where he was granted residency documents that allowed him to remain in the country indefinitely. In February 2020, he travelled to Saudi Arabia from Turkey on a tourist visa to perform Umrah, a religious pilgrimage, with his friend Nuermaimaiti Ruze.

Xinjiang is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in China. More than half of the region’s population of 22 million people belong to mostly Turkic and predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, including Uyghurs (around 11.3 million), Kazakhs (around 1.6 million) and other populations whose languages, cultures and ways of life vary distinctly from those of the Han who are the majority in “interior” China.

Since 2017, under the guise of a campaign against “terrorism” and “religious extremism”, the government of China has carried out massive and systematic abuses against Muslims living in Xinjiang. It is estimated that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained in internment camps throughout Xinjiang since 2017.

In June 2021, Amnesty International [published a report](#) revealing how hundreds of thousands of Muslim men and women in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are being subjected to arbitrary mass detention, torture, political indoctrination and forced cultural assimilation. Testimonies from former internment camp detainees detailed the extreme measures taken by Chinese authorities since 2017 to essentially root out Islamic religious beliefs and traditions, as well as the cultural practices and local languages of the region’s Muslim ethnic groups. Earlier the same year, [another piece of Amnesty research](#) described how the children of internment camp detainees are often sent to state-run “orphan camps” where they face indoctrination and are cut off from their parents.

Amnesty International has documented numerous cases where Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Turkic Muslim people in Xinjiang had been detained simply for living, travelling, or studying abroad or for communicating with people abroad. Many were detained simply for being “connected” with people who lived, travelled, studied, or communicated with people abroad.

Amnesty International has launched an international [campaign](#) calling for the closure of the internment camps, with more than 70 detailed casefiles on some of those thought to be currently detained. As of September 2021, more than 300,000 signatures had been collected from all over the world to demand the release all those currently detained in internment camps and prisons in Xinjiang.

The evidence Amnesty International has gathered provides a factual basis for the conclusion that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture and persecution against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, or English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 1 July 2022

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Buheliqiemu Abula (she/her), Nuermaimaiti Ruze (also known as Nur Muhammed Rozi) (he/him) and Aimidoula Waili (also known as Hamdullah Veli) (he/him).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/5399/2022/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGET

HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al-Saud
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
30 Charles Street, Mayfair W1J 5DZ.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Suggested tweets:

- *3 #Uyghurs - Buheliqiemu Abula, her 13 yo daughter, Nuermaimaiti Ruze & Aimidoula Waili are still at imminent risk of deportation to #China and would face persecution, arbitrary detention, and torture. #Saudi authorities must halt their extradition and immediately release them. [Link to UA]*
- *Buheliqiemu Abula and her 13-year-old daughter along with Aimidoula Waili and Nuermaimaiti Ruze must be released immediately. If sent to #China, these Uyghurs are at grave risk of being arbitrarily detained and possibly tortured. Their deportation would violate Saudi Arabia's obligations under international law. #StopDeportationofUyghurs @KingSalman [Link to UA]*
- *Saudi Ambassador (add the handle of the Saudi ambassador in your country) must stop the extradition of #Uyghurs in the Kingdom. If sent to #China, they will face a very high risk of torture. Their deportation would violate Saudi Arabia's obligations under international law. #StopDeportationofUyghurs @KingSalman [Link to UA]*