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## **China: Uighur man reportedly tortured to death**

*Amnesty International has just received information that Abdulhelil Abdumijit, a Campaign Against Torture appeal case in China, was reportedly tortured to death on 17 October 2000. The organization is calling on the Chinese government to reveal his fate.*

*"This case highlights the urgent need for international action on torture. Abdulhelil Abdumijit, a 31-year old street trader from Gulja city in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), was accused of leading a demonstration three years ago. From the outset it was reported that he was being brutally tortured in detention yet even now the authorities are silent," Amnesty International said.*

*The East Turkestan Information Centre, a Uighur exile organization based in Germany, reported yesterday that Abdulhelil Abdumijit was tortured to death by officials in Chapchal prison. The statement claims that his body was taken to a cemetery in Chapchal under heavy police guard and buried in a shallow grave, and that his relatives were denied access to his grave.*

*Previous unconfirmed reports from Uighur exile sources had claimed that Abdulhelil Abdumijit had been tried at the end of 1999 or early 2000, and sentenced to death together with two other defendants. One report also claimed that at a public sentencing rally held to announce the sentences, Abdulhelil had been severely beaten in front of the assembled crowd.*

*Abdulhelil Abdumijit's detention was marked by secrecy since his arrest in 1997. Although local officials in Gulja had confirmed his arrest*

shortly after the 5 February 1997 demonstrations, the authorities subsequently remained silent about what happened to him. His family was reportedly denied access to him or information about his situation.

Amnesty International calls on the Chinese government to disclose publicly the fate of Abdulhelil Abdumijit. The organization is also calling on the Chinese authorities to make a full and impartial investigation into the reports of torture of Abdulhelil Abdumijit and many others held in prisons throughout the XUAR.

"The case of Abdulhelil Abdumijit is typical. Like most other victims of torture, he was tortured in incommunicado detention and there is little chance that his torturers will ever be investigated or brought to justice. Amnesty International's campaign aims to change this dire situation so that cases like his become unacceptable and atypical," the organization said.

For background information on Abdulhelil Abdumijit please see Torture Campaign Appeal Leaflet AI Index: ACT 40/08/00 and "People's Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region". A jpeg photo is available from the press office.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>