

URGENT ACTION

RISK OF TORTURE FOR 17-YEAR OLD IN CHINA

Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz, a 17-year old boy, has been held incommunicado since 27 July in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in western China. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and his family fear for his life.

Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz was arrested by police at Urumqi's Nanmen market on 27 July. Police informed his family that he was detained because of his alleged participation in demonstrations in the XUAR on 5 July. They said that a boy of his build was suspected of having thrown stones at people on that day. Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz is being held in Shisen prison in Urumqi. No one has been allowed to meet with him since his detention. People recently released from Shisen prison have given accounts of dire conditions in the prison, including the deaths of prisoners from cold, hunger and disease. Inmates are reported to be kept in their cells 24 hours a day.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to immediately clarify Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz's whereabouts and the reasons for his detention;
- urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz, unless he is charged with an internationally recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated whilst in custody;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he is given access to a lawyer of his choice, his family and any medical treatment that he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 JANUARY 2009 TO:

Chairman of the Xinjiang Uighur
Autonomous Regional People's
Government

Nur BEKRI Zhuxi
Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Renmin
Zhengfu, 2 Zhongshanlu, Wulumuqishi,
830041
Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China
Email: master@xinjiang.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Chairman

Director of the Xinjiang Uighur
Autonomous
Regional Department of Public Security

LIU Yaohua Tingzhang
Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Gong'anting
58 Huanghelu
Wulumuqishi 830001
Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Chairman of the State Ethnic Affairs
Commission of the People's Republic of
China

YANG Jing Zhuren
Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui
252 Taipingqiaodajie, Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100800
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following the July unrest in the XUAR the authorities have detained thousands of people, reportedly brought dozens to trial, and threatened those involved with harsh sentences. Nine individuals have been executed, and eight others have received the death penalty for their involvement in the 5 July unrest. Eye-witness accounts received by Amnesty International contradict government accounts of the events of July, and suggest excessive use of force on the part of the authorities against initially peaceful protesters, resulting in injury and deaths of possibly hundreds of people.

In the XUAR, the authorities routinely associate Uighur cultural activities, religious practice and expressions of dissent with the "three evils" of "terrorism, separatism and religious extremism". Many Uighurs are arbitrarily detained and imprisoned as political prisoners or prisoners of conscience.

Ilham Tohti, editor of a popular Uighur website Uighurbiz.net, was taken from his home on 8 July, shortly after the authorities said that articles posted on his website had fuelled the violence. Ilham Tohti has denied the accusation saying that he would never agree with using violence. He was released on 23 July but remains under surveillance. There are unconfirmed reports that some other staff or regular contributors to Uighurbiz.net are also missing.

On 27 September the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional People's Congress Standing Committee issued new regulations that explicitly forbid the use of the internet to "endanger state security" and to "instigate ethnic separatism". China's Criminal Law already includes chapters on crimes of "endangering state security". "Endangering state security" includes, among others, "subversion of state power", "separatism" and "leaking state secrets". However, over recent years the Chinese authorities have increasingly used these vaguely-worded provisions in the Criminal Law to silence and imprison peaceful activists and to curtail freedom of expression.

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