

URGENT ACTION

UIGHUR WEBSITE EDITOR AT RISK OF TORTURE

Dilixiati Paerhati, editor of a Uighur website Diyarim.com, has not been seen since 7 August. His current whereabouts are unknown. There are fears that he is being held in incommunicado detention and is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

On 7 August, after receiving a phone call, Dilixiati Paerhati was taken away from his home in Urumqi, in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in northwest China, in a car, accompanied by unidentified men. Dilixiati Paerhati has not been heard from since.

The police had interrogated Dilixiati Paerhati, an ethnic Uighur, over around eight days from 24 July, in relation to the 5 July unrest. When he was released the investigating officers told him that “he didn’t have any problems”.

Violence and widespread unrest broke out in Urumqi and in other parts of the XUAR after a police crackdown on initially peaceful demonstrations in Urumqi by Uighurs. The demonstrators protested the authorities’ initial inaction following the death of two Uighur workers during a violent riot at a factory in southern China (Shaoguan, Guangdong province). In the aftermath of the violent crackdown, the authorities accused overseas Uighurs, in particular the World Uyghur Congress and its President Rebiya Kadeer, of having masterminded the unrest.

The website that Dilixiati Paerhati edits has been off-line since 6 July, when the authorities began closing down Internet, international telephone, and text messaging services in Urumqi and many other parts of the region on 5 July. The authorities have claimed that this in order to “prevent violence from spreading”.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Chinese, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately clarify Dilixiati Paerhati whereabouts and legal status
- urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Dilixiati Paerhati, unless he is charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee Dilixiati Paerhati 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 11 November 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 in the unrest with harsh sentences. The authorities have interpreted all dissent as stemming from "terrorist" or "separatist" activities, justifying their harsh crackdown while ignoring underlying sources of the discontent. 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 another 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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