



PETITION

URUMQI JUSTICE!

Independent investigation into 2009 unrest

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress
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Dear Chairman,

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about the death and injury of possibly hundreds of people after police and security forces violently cracked down on initially peaceful protesters in Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in July 2009.

Official figures state that 197 people were killed, the majority of which were “innocent Han Chinese killed by angry mobs” and over 1,600 people were injured.

However, eyewitness accounts obtained by Amnesty International following the unrest contradict the official version of events. Eyewitnesses describe the use of excessive force by security forces against protesters including beatings, the use of tear gas, and shooting directly into crowds of protesters, resulting in the deaths of possibly hundreds of people.

We urge you to initiate an open and impartial investigation into the events in July 2009. The National People's Congress has within its power the ability to lead the way in bringing justice to the victims of the crackdown and those detained.

In late 2009, at least 8 Uighurs and at least one Han Chinese individual were executed for their involvement in the unrest, and another 8 were sentenced to death. At least another 23 were sentenced and imprisoned, but dozens more are still expected to be brought to trial.

We believe that hasty trials and executions, a lack of legal representation for those detained or charged with crimes, and the indiscriminate rounding up and detention without charge or trial of Uighurs under the guise of destroying the ‘three forces’ of “separatism, terrorism and religious extremism” provides no justice for the victims.

The Chinese authorities must ensure that any subsequent trials are conducted in line with international human rights standards, with transparency and without recourse to the death penalty.

CONTINUATION SHEET

PETITION TITLE: _____

SHEET No. _____ OF _____ SHEETS

No.	NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
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11			
12			
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