

URGENT ACTION

STOP EXTRADITION OF UYGHUR MEN TO CHINA

Uyghur religious scholar Aimidoula Waili and his friend Nuermaimaiti Ruze are at high risk of forcible repatriation to China following their arrest in November 2020. Since this time, they have been held in Jeddah Dhahban Central Prison, Saudi Arabia, without any reason for their arrest or any charges presented to them. On 16 March, the two Uyghur men were transferred from Jeddah to Riyadh, a move believed to signal their imminent extradition to China, where it is highly likely that they will be subjected to arbitrary detention and torture. The Saudi authorities must immediately halt their extradition, which would amount to refoulement.

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

His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

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Riyadh Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my grave concern for religious scholar **Aimidoula Waili** (also known as Hamdullah Veli) and his friend **Nuermaimaiti Ruze**, (also known as Nur Muhammed Rozi) who have been detained since 20 November 2020 in Jeddah Dhahban Central Prison, Saudi Arabia. With no reasons given to their detention, it is alarming that they were transferred to Riyadh on 16 March, a move believed to signal their imminent extradition to China. The two Uyghur men must not be extradited as they would be at high risk of arbitrary detention and torture or other ill-treatment once they are back in China, as evidenced by the Chinese government's treatment of the minority group. Your government must refrain from extraditing the two Uyghur men as this would amount to a violation of Saudi Arabia's non-refoulement obligations.

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 on the basis of their religion and ethnicity.

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.

I am highly distressed to have learned that if extradited to China, Aimidoula Waili and Nuermaimaiti Ruze will be at real risk of arbitrary detention and torture and their extradition would violate the Kingdom's obligations under international law.

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

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.

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.

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.

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. 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.

Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment states that no state party shall extradite a person to another country where they would be in danger of being subjected to torture. Saudi Arabia became party to the convention on 23 September 1997.

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: 20 May 2022

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Aimidoula Waili (also known as Hamdullah Veli) (he/him) and Nuermaimaiti Ruze (also known as Nur Muhammed Rozi) (he/him)