

# URGENT ACTION

## UYGHUR ACADEMIC JAILED FOR “INCITING EXTREMISM”

Prominent Uyghur historian and publisher Iminjan Seydin was convicted of “inciting extremism” after a secret and grossly unfair trial in February 2019. His daughter only learned about his conviction in recent months through word of mouth. Missing since May 2017, he has been sentenced to 15 years in prison. No evidence against him has been made public.

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

*President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping*  
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Dear President,

*I write to express my concern for prominent Uyghur historian and publisher **Iminjan Seydin**, who was convicted of “inciting extremism” in a secret and grossly unfair trial in February 2019 and sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment, deprivation of political rights for five years and a fine of 500,000 RMB.*

*His daughter only learned about the trial in November 2019 through a friend in Beijing and phone conversations with the Tianshan District People's Court in Urumqi. While no evidence against Iminjan Seydin has been made public, it is believed that his conviction is related to an Arabic rhetoric book that he published in 2014.*

*He was part of a working group on poverty alleviation with the Xinjiang Bureau of Religious Affairs in Hotan when he went missing in May 2017.*

***I call on you to release Iminjan Seydin immediately and unconditionally, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he committed as internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Iminjan Seydin was a history professor at the Xinjiang Islamic Institute and the founder of Xinjiang Imin Book Publishing Company. Since 2012, he has published over 350 books on topics including science, psychology, linguistic education and child education. He has dedicated himself to strength cultural exchange. Due to his imprisonment, the Xinjiang Islamic Institute has terminated the contract with him. His daughter, Samira Imin, is currently working at Harvard Medical School.

Uyghurs are a mainly Muslim ethnic minority group who are concentrated primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) in China. Since the 1980s, the Uyghurs have been the target of systematic and extensive human rights violations. These include arbitrary detention and imprisonment, incommunicado detention and restrictions on religious freedom as well as cultural and social rights. Local authorities maintain tight control over religious practice, including prohibiting all government employees and children under the age of 18 from worshipping at mosques. Chinese government policies limit the use of the Uyghur language, impose severe restrictions on freedom of religion and encourage sustained influx of Han migrants into the region.

Media reports have illustrated the extent of new draconian security measures implemented since Chen Quanguo came into power as Xinjiang's Party Secretary in 2016. In October 2016, there were numerous reports that authorities in the region had confiscated Uyghur passports in an attempt to further curtail their freedom of movement. In March 2017, the Xinjiang government enacted the "De-extremification Regulation" that identifies and prohibits a wide range of behaviours labelled "extremist", such as "spreading extremist thought", denigrating or refusing to watch public radio and TV programmes, wearing burkas, having an "abnormal" beard, resisting national policies, and publishing, downloading, storing, or reading articles, publications, or audio-visual materials containing "extremist content". The regulation also set up a "responsibility system" for government cadres for "anti-extremism" work and established annual reviews of their performance.

It is estimated that up to a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim people have been held in the "transformation-through-education" centres. The Chinese authorities had denied the existence of such facilities until October 2018, when they began describing them as voluntary, free "vocational training" centres. They claim that the objective of this vocational training is to provide people with technical and vocational education to enable them to find jobs and become "useful" citizens. China's explanation, however, contradicts reports of beatings, food deprivation and solitary confinement that have been collected from former detainees.

China has rejected calls from the international community, including Amnesty, to allow independent experts unrestricted access to Xinjiang. Instead, China has made efforts to silence criticism by inviting delegations from different countries to visit Xinjiang for carefully orchestrated and closely monitored tours.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Chinese, English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 26 March 2020

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** [Iminjan Seydin] (he/him)