

PUBLIC

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UA 122/05 Fear for safety/fear of torture and ill-treatment

CHINA Ruzi Mamat (m), aged 25
Aysham Kerim (f), aged 34
Karima (f)
Shu Shao Chan

Ruzi Mamat and Aysham Kerim, both ethnic Uighurs, were detained on 11 May, according to reliable sources, in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in northwest China. It is not known why they were detained, but both are former employees of the recently freed prisoner of conscience Rebiya Kadeer. Karima and Shu Shao Chan, who work for the Bank of China and were involved in giving a loan to Kadeer's family, have since been reportedly detained. Amnesty International fears that all are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Aysham Kerim, who has a seven-month-old baby, was arrested at the office of the Akida Trade Company where she works as a director, and dragged by the hair all the way from the office into a police car. An hour later, the police returned to the office and detained Ruzi Mamat, the company secretary. They were reportedly taken to the 5th Branch of the Public Security Bureau in the XUAR capital, Urumqi. There are no details of the circumstances in which Karima and Shu Shao Chan were detained.

Rebiya Kadeer, once a prominent Uighur businesswoman, was detained in August 1999 in Urumqi on her way to meet with a United States Congressional Research delegation which was visiting China at the time. She was sentenced in a secret trial in March 2000 to eight years' imprisonment on charges of "providing secret information to foreigners". She was released on medical parole on 17 March 2005, and flown immediately to the USA, where her husband and five of her eleven children live. Since her release she has been vocal about her experiences in prison, and has vowed to continue campaigning for Uighurs' human rights.

Three days before she was released, Rebiya Kadeer says that eight or nine guards told her not to associate with Uighurs abroad or reveal sensitive information about the XUAR. "If you do so," she was told, "your business and children will be finished." Five of Rebiya Kadeer's children live in the XUAR; one of them is now reportedly in hiding.

At the time of Rebiya Kadeer's detention in August 1999 one of her sons and one of her secretaries were also detained and sentenced without charge or trial to two and three years' "Re-education through Labour" (RTL) terms respectively. Both were reportedly ill-treated in detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been reporting on serious and widespread human rights violations against the mainly Muslim Uighur community in the region since 1990s. The ongoing political crackdown on the so-called "three evil forces" of "separatist, terrorist and religious extremists" has intensified further following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the USA, as China uses the international "war on terror" as a pretext to justify its policies of repression in the region.

The official repression in the region has resulted in the closure of unofficial mosques, arrests of *imams* (Muslim clerics), restrictions on the use of the Uighur language and the banning of certain Uighur books and journals. Such repression is making it difficult for the Uighur people to engage in any independent expression of their ethnic, cultural or religious identity.

For many years the authorities have been detaining Uighurs who have expressed criticism, dissent or dissatisfaction with Chinese policies. Such expressions are often labelled as “separatist, terrorist or illegal religious” activities, leading to arbitrary detention of prisoners of conscience, torture and other serious human rights violations, including the death penalty. This is clear evidence that China’s policies of repression in the region stretch far beyond their stated concerns with combating acts of violence or “terrorism”. Many of these prisoners are believed to be held without charge or trial.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Chinese or your own language:

- expressing concern that Ruzi Mamat, Aysham Kerim, Karima and Shu Shao Chan appear to have been arbitrarily detained, solely for their association with Rebiya Kadeer;
- urging the authorities to release Ruzi Mamat, Aysham Kerim, Karima and Shu Shao Chan immediately and unconditionally, unless they are charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- expressing concern that Aysham Kerim was detained in a manner that amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee that Ruzi Mamat, Aysham Kerim, Karima and Shu Shao Chan will be treated humanely, and protected from torture or ill-treatment, while they remain in custody;
- expressing concern about the extensive human rights violations in the XUAR.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli

The State Council

9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie

Beijingshi 100032, People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 6596 1109

+86 10 6596 2660 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Email: webmaster@mfa.gov.cn (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairman of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional People's Government

Ismail TILIWALDI 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

COPIES TO:

Secretary of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Party Committee

WANG Lequan Shuji

Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Weiyuanhui

Wulumuqishi

Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Secretary

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 June 2005.