

AI INDEX: ASA 17/10/00
10 March 2000

China: Uighur businesswoman Rebiya Kadeer sentenced to eight years' after secret trial

Amnesty International has just received reports that Rebiya Kadeer was sentenced yesterday to eight years' imprisonment. The secret trial is reported to have been held in the morning of 9 March at the Urumqi City Intermediate People's Court, in the capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Rebiya Kadeer is believed to have been legally represented but no member of her family was permitted to attend the trial and none of the nine people present in the court was of Uighur nationality. No official announcement has been made by the Chinese government.

"The harsh sentence passed on Rebiya Kadeer, if confirmed, appears to be in line with the serious human rights crackdown which continues in XUAR and throughout China," Amnesty International said today.

"Rebiya Kadeer should not have been detained in the first place. She has not committed any crime. She is a prisoner of conscience who should be immediately released," the organization added.

Amnesty International is calling on the Chinese government to disclose information about the trial, the proceedings followed and the evidence against her.

Background

Rebiya Kadeer has been held since 11 August 1999. She was detained in Urumqi while trying to keep an appointment with a group from the United States Congressional Research Service. In September 1999 she was charged with "providing secret information to foreigners", but her case was reportedly referred to Beijing before she was indicted on 21 February 2000, under Article 111 of the Chinese Criminal Law. To date she has been held at the Liudaowan jail where prisoners are known to have been tortured and ill-treated. Rebiya Kadeer is reported to be in poor health as a result of her detention.

A well-known businesswoman and mother of ten, in 1997 Rebiya Kadeer formed the "Thousand Mother's Movement" in XUAR. She was formerly a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and in 1995 was part of China's official delegation to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

ENDS.../

**For more information or to arrange an interview please call Amnesty International on
+44 171 413 5566**