

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/016/2007

19 April 2007

Further Information on UA 156/06 (ASA 17/032/2006, 2 June 2006) and follow-up (ASA 17/038/2006, 10 July 2006; ASA 17/060/2006, 1 December 2006; ASA 17/011/2007, 8 March 2007) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment/Medical concern

CHINA

**Ablikim Abdiriyim (m) aged 33
Alim Abdiriyim (m) aged 31
Rushangul Abdiriyim (f) aged 37
Kaysar (m), aged approx 39
Rayila (f), aged 25
Razia (f), aged 16
Sardar Kaysar (m), aged 10
Epar Alim (f), aged 5
Turghun (m), aged 9
Kahar Abdiriyim (m) aged 42
Mamat Kadeer (m)**

Ablikim Abdiriyim, third son of Uighur activist Rebiya Kadeer, was sentenced on 17 April to nine years' imprisonment on charges of "instigation and engaging in secessionist activities". The court also deprived him of his political rights for three years, which will apparently take effect upon his eventual release. In practice, this can mean effective house arrest, with no means of communicating with the outside world. In addition, at the beginning of April, the Chinese authorities reportedly initiated a process to assess and liquidate the Kadeer family businesses.

According to the Chinese state media, Ablikim Abdiriyim confessed during the trial to the charges that he had "spread secessionist articles over the Internet, turned the public against the Chinese government and written articles which distorted China's human rights and ethnic policies."

The verdict, issued by Intermediate People's Court in Urumchi, capital of China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), reportedly said that Ablikim Abdiriyim had asked the Uighur-language webmaster of the Yahoo website to publish two articles entitled "Issues to be aware of and prohibited in Jihad" and "Struggle toward Independence". To Amnesty International's knowledge, there is no Uighur-language Yahoo site. The verdict also alleged that Ablikim Abdiriyim had planned to distribute written materials "in an attempt to stir up public protest against the local government", as well as an article he had written about China's policies on human rights and ethnic minority groups.

According to his family, Ablikim Abdiriyim was denied legal representation at the trial and did not have access to a lawyer. His family also did not receive advance notice about Ablikim's trial, which reportedly took place on 22 January. It is not clear whether Ablikim will appeal against the sentence, or whether he has been transferred from the Tianshan detention centre to a prison after the court issued the sentence.

On 2 April 2007, the "Kadeer Working Group", set up by the Chinese authorities to handle the state's action against the family and the business, posted notices announcing the start of an operation to liquidate the family's assets in order to pay the fines levied on the family business. The authorities reportedly forced Kahar Abdiriyim, Rebiya Kadeer's eldest son, to lead the operation. They warned that if he did not cooperate he would be arrested, and that any family members who spoke out against the confiscation process will face legal punishment.

There have been no further reports about Ablikim Abdiriyim's health. Amnesty International remains gravely concerned that the authorities continue to deny Ablikim the medical treatment he needs. In March, reliable sources said Ablikim's condition had deteriorated critically because of the injuries he sustained as a result of beatings and other ill-treatment suffered in detention. He was reportedly seen being carried out of Tianshan Detention Centre on a stretcher on 26 November 2006. No family members have been allowed to visit Ablikim since he was detained in June 2006.

Rebiya Kadeer's family has been targeted by the authorities since she was first detained as a prisoner of conscience in 1999. This intensified after her release from prison on medical parole on 17 March 2005, when she left China for the USA. Rebiya Kadeer claims that prior to her release she was warned that if she engaged with members of the Uighur ethnic community or spoke publicly about "sensitive issues" after her release, her "businesses and children will be finished". On 27 November 2006, the day after Rebiya Kadeer was elected president of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), the court sentenced Alim Abdiriyim and his brother Kahar Abdiriyim to fines amounting to millions of US dollars, and Alim to seven years' imprisonment on charges of tax evasion. Rebiya Kadeer has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. Amnesty International believes that the pattern of retribution against Rebiya Kadeer's family for her human rights activities cast serious doubt on the credibility of the police investigation.

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

- calling on the authorities to guarantee that Ablikim, Alim and Kahar Abdiriyim be given the opportunity to appeal against their sentences, be given access to lawyers of their choice and court documents, and that they be given a fair hearing if they choose to appeal;
- expressing continued concern at reports that Ablikim Abdiriyim is denied access to adequate medical treatment for injuries sustained due to torture or ill-treatment in custody, urging the authorities to ensure that he be given the medical treatment he needs;
- calling on the authorities to allow Ablikim Abdiriyim to receive visits from his family;
- calling on the authorities to launch a full, independent and impartial investigation into the reported beatings of Ablikim and Alim Abdiriyim and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to bring an end to the human rights violations directed at Rebiya Kadeer's family, including ill-treatment in detention, police harassment and other restrictions on their freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli

The State Council

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Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairman of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional People's Government

Ismail TILIWALDI Zhuxi

Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

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Salutation: Dear Chairman

COPIES TO:

Mayor of Wulumuqi Municipal People's Government

Shokrat Zakir Shizhang

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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 31 May 2007.