

China: Free Uyghur Scholar's Students

Newly Leaked List Includes 7 Prisoners Who Studied Under Ilham Tohti

By HRW, March 31, 2022

(New York) – The Chinese government should immediately release all remaining imprisoned students of the Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, Human Rights Watch said today. A government list of prisoners leaked in December 2021 indicates that six of the seven students on the list were sentenced in December 2014 to between three-and-a-half and eight years in prison. Although they would have completed their sentences, it is unclear whether they have been released.



Ilham Tohti's students, from upper left: Mutellip Imin, Perhat Halmurat, Atikem Rozi; lower left: Shohret Nijat, Akbar Imin, Luo Yuwei. © 2022 Private

Ilham Tohti, 52, who began writing about social problems facing Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang region in 1994, was arrested in January 2014 on charges of "se-

paratism" and sentenced to life in prison after a trial that was riddled with due process violations.

"China's severe repression in Xinjiang raises serious concerns that the seven students are still under some form of detention or movement restrictions," said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The Chinese government should immediately free them and restore their rights." The trials of Ilham Tohti and the students were the same year that the Chinese government opened its abusive "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" against the 11 million Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. The authorities ramped up the campaign in late 2016 and arbitrarily detained over a million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in "political education" camps, formal detention centers, and prisons. Human Rights Watch, Xinjiang Victims Database, and other organizations have previously documented cases in which individuals who were supposed to be released from prison during the Strike Hard Campaign were sent soon after release or immediately to political education camps or prisons instead.

The seven prisoners, who were Il-

ham Tohti's students at the Central Nationalities University of China or volunteers for his website Uyghurbiz.net, are Abduqeyum Ablimit, Perhat Halmurat, Akbar (or Ekbar) Imin, Mutellip Imin, Shohret Nijat, Atikem Rozi, and Luo Yuwei. According to the leaked list, five of the seven were convicted of "separatism" on December 7, 2014:

Abduqeyum Ablimit, born in 1990, was sentenced to three years and six months. He was held in Xinjiang No. 6 Prison (also known as Xinshoufan Prison) in Urumqi, Xinjiang's regional capital, and his sentence should have ended on July 17, 2017.

Perhat Halmurat, born in 1988, was sentenced to eight years and held in Turpan Prison. His sentence should have ended on January 14, 2022.

Akbar (or Ekber) Imin, born in 1981, was sentenced to five years and held in Xinjiang No. 3 Prison in Urumqi. His sentence should have ended on January 14, 2019.

Mutellip Imin, born in 1988, was sentenced to seven years in prison. He was held in Xinjiang No. 1 Prison. His sentence should have ended on January 14, 2021.

Shohret Nijat, born in 1987, was sentenced to seven years in prison. He was held in Turpan Prison. His sentence should have ended on January 14, 2021.

The only woman of the group, Atikem Rozi, born in 1991, was sentenced to four years in prison in a separate hearing on December 22, 2014, also for "separatism." She was held in Xinjiang Women's Prison, and her sentence should have ended on January 16, 2018. A short clip of her – speaking in Uyghur and dressed in prison uniform – appeared briefly in an April 2021 Chinese government propaganda film, allegedly showing that Uyghurs are susceptible to "radical separatist thoughts." That clip was the only recent information the authorities had released on the students since 2014.

The leaked list has no information on Luo Yuwei, the only non-Uyghur member of the group, who was also tried in December 2014. The list provides the most detailed information on the students since late 2014, when they were tried and sentenced in secret. At the time, Ilham Tohti's lawyers, Liu Xiaoyuan and Li Fangping, told the media that the students were convicted on a charge of separatism and were given between three and eight years in prison. But they had no details on the individual sentencing of each student. Liu and Li had obtained this information from the students' legal counsel.

The Chinese government has never released the students' sentencing information. A search for the students' names on the Supreme People's Court verdict database returned no results.

The leaked list – created in August 2015 – contains the names, genders, ethnicities, dates of birth, ID numbers, addresses, crimes, sentencing dates, and other details of over 18,000 Uyghurs in Xinjiang convicted of political and religious crimes. The anonymous source, who said they are a "Han Chinese who is opposed to the Chinese government's policies in Xinjiang," emailed this list of 18,000 prisoners and another of 10,000 Uyghur prisoners to the Xinjiang Victims Database in December 2021.

Xinjiang Victims Database, a website documenting cases of people in Xinjiang who were detained, forcibly disappeared, or



whose rights were otherwise violated since September 2018, has verified the leaked lists. The Database said details contained in the leaked list are consistent with other information it had collected. The situations of about 1,500 people on the list were already documented in the Database. Some of the personal and detention details of about 20 people matched information that had not been publicly disclosed previously.

Ilham Tohti's daughter, Jewher Ilham, said that his family has not been given access to visit him since early 2017. The prominent scholar established Uyghurbiz.net, a Chinese-language forum, in 2006 to raise awareness about problems facing Uyghurs, and to foster dialogue between Uyghurs and the majority Han Chinese. The Chinese authorities harassed him and had him under surveillance for years, barred him from teaching, and periodically placed him under house arrest. Officials detained him at Beijing Capital International Airport in 2013 as he was travelling to take up a post as a visiting scholar at Indiana University in the United States. He was put on trial the following year.

The Chinese government has long carried out repressive policies against Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Since the 1990s, it has accelerated

Xinjiang's integration into China by encouraging Han migration, developing the region's economy, and exploiting its natural resources. These policies, imposed on Uyghurs with no consultation, marginalized them and fueled their grievances against the Chinese government. Uyghurs also face official discrimination throughout China. Rozi, one of the imprisoned students, wrote an essay saying she had been denied a Chinese passport because of her ethnicity, the Chinese state tabloid, the Global Times, reported in 2012.

The Chinese government's mass violations against Uyghurs have escalated since the Strike Hard Campaign and amount to crimes against humanity, Human Rights Watch said. The authorities persecute through punishment in political education camps and lengthy imprisonment any Uyghur who is deemed a threat to state security, or whose thoughts contain what the authorities refer to as "ideological viruses."

"Dozens of governments and United Nations human rights experts have challenged Beijing over its atrocity crimes targeting Uyghurs," Wang said. "They should now press for information that these students have been released from prison, and if not, call for their and Ilham Tohti's immediate release."



Religion Banned from Off-Campus Teaching in Beijing Schools

*By Bitter Winter, SKANG HUILIANG
04/01/2022*

New regulations forbid criticism of the Communist Party and all references to religion.

The Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, whose regulations often become the model for other cities and provinces, enacted new rules on what materials can and cannot be used for off-campus teaching. The Commission believes that the strict rules on textbooks and other materials to be used in schools may be circumvented by introducing prohibited content in off-campus teaching and extracurricular activities.

The Commission identifies twelve “prohibited situations,” which would lead to the dismissal of the teachers and the punishment of all those involved:

1. Slandering the image of the Party and the state, or denigrating or slandering the Party and state leaders, heroic models, or distorting the history of the Party, the history of the People’s Republic of China, the history of the People’s Liberation Army.
2. Slandering and attacking the leadership of the CCP, the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, or introducing teachings contrary to the core values of socialism.
3. Damaging national unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

4. Damaging national honor and interests through materials hostile to China, insulting China, ugly to China, and other similar content.

5. Inciting ethnic hatred or ethnic discrimination, undermining national unity, violating national customs and traditions.

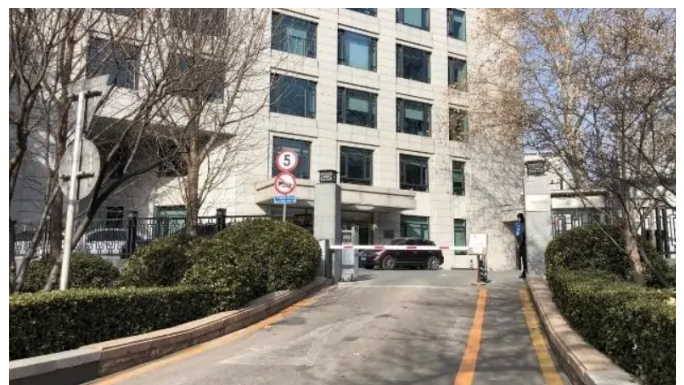
6. Promoting religious doctrines, religion, xie jiao, feudal superstitions, and similar.

7. Using material featuring violence, terrorism, gambling, drugs, sexual assault, obscenity, or exalting crime, and other similar content.

8. Not complying with the protection of intellectual property rights and other national laws and administrative regulations.

9. Including commercial or business advertising in disguise.

10. Low-level materials below the cor-



The office of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education in Beijing’s Xicheng District. Credits.

responding national curriculum standards.

11. Materials containing content that would mislead primary and secondary school students and produce undesirable behavior.

12. Any other illegal and inappropriate situations.”

In addition, materials produced abroad can only be used after an authorization is obtained.

It is clear that the crackdown on education is extending from the classroom to extracurricular activities and off-cam-

pus teaching. There too any criticism of the CCP, its leaders, and its mandatory interpretation of history is prohibited, as well as “separatism,” which means referring to Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang without strictly following the official propaganda.

Of particular interest is the total prohibition of any reference to religion, which is not limited to the usual xie jiao (movements banned as “heterodox teachings”) but is so broad to include even the five authorized religions.

period where ethical values are under attack.”

Uyghur Woman Who Escaped Forced Abortion Said to Have Died in Prison

By Shohret Hoshur, 2022.03.29

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A Uyghur woman who escaped from a hospital in northwestern China’s Xinjiang region to avoid a forced abortion in 2014 has died in prison, a Uyghur who lives in exile and a village police officer said.

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Authorities ordered Zeynebhan Memtimin to terminate her pregnancy, but she fled the hospital in Keriye (in Chinese Yutian) county in Hotan (Hetian) prefecture where the procedure was to take place.

In 2014, a Uyghur from the county who was then living in exile told RFA that authorities took Zeynebhan from

Arish village to a hospital for a forced abortion. RFA later determined through interviews with sources in Xinjiang that Zeynebhan had escaped from the hospital to save her unborn child.

When the child turned three in 2017, authorities detained Zeynebhan in an internment camp along with her husband, Metqurban Abdulla, who had

helped her escape from the hospital, on charges of “disturbing the social order” and “religious extremism” for avoiding the abortion, the Uyghur in exile told RFA last week.

Both were sentenced to 10 years in prison, the source said.

The Uyghur source said that contacts in the region and a former neighbor confirmed last week that Zeynebhan died in 2020.

The woman’s funeral was conducted under heavy supervision by Chinese officials, who did not disclose the reason for her death to her family and didn’t provide any information on her detained husband, the Uyghur source said. Chinese authorities in Keriye county contacted by RFA declined to comment on the matter.

A police officer in Arish village confirmed to RFA that Zeynebhan and Metqurban had been sentenced to 10 years, but he didn’t provide any information on what happened to their four children after they had been incarcerated.

“They were sentenced to 10 years in prison and were serving their terms in Keriye Prison,” he told RFA.

He also said that Zeynebhan was 40 years old when she died in prison from an illness caused by having multiple births, and that she had been jailed for violating family planning policies.

“Since she had multiple births, it’s natural that she died from illness,” he said.

RFA’s Uyghur Service reported in 2014 that Metqurban agreed to pay a fine for Zeynebhan to have a fourth child in violation of China’s family planning policy for ethnic minorities, which limited families to two children. But instead,



A Uyghur woman holds a baby at a market in Hotan in East Turkistan in a file photo.

authorities tried to force her to terminate the pregnancy.

At that time, the Uyghur Service aired a series of eight reports on authorities forcing women in Keriye county’s Lenger, Arish and Siyek villages to have abortions.

Of the 70% of Uyghurs in Arish village who were arrested and detained in 2017 for allegedly engaging in illegal religious activities about 10% were being held because they violated family planning policies, according to the Uyghur source in exile.

Uyghur activists say Chinese authorities in Xinjiang often arrest Uyghurs accused of violating family planning policies as a pretext for meeting their arrest quotas.

The Chinese government implemented population control measures for Uyghurs, including forced sterilizations and abortions as part of the crackdown that began in 2017.

Muslim Uyghur and other Turkic minority women who have been detained in Xinjiang’s vast network of internment camps but later released have reported being raped, tortured and forced to undergo sterilization surgery.

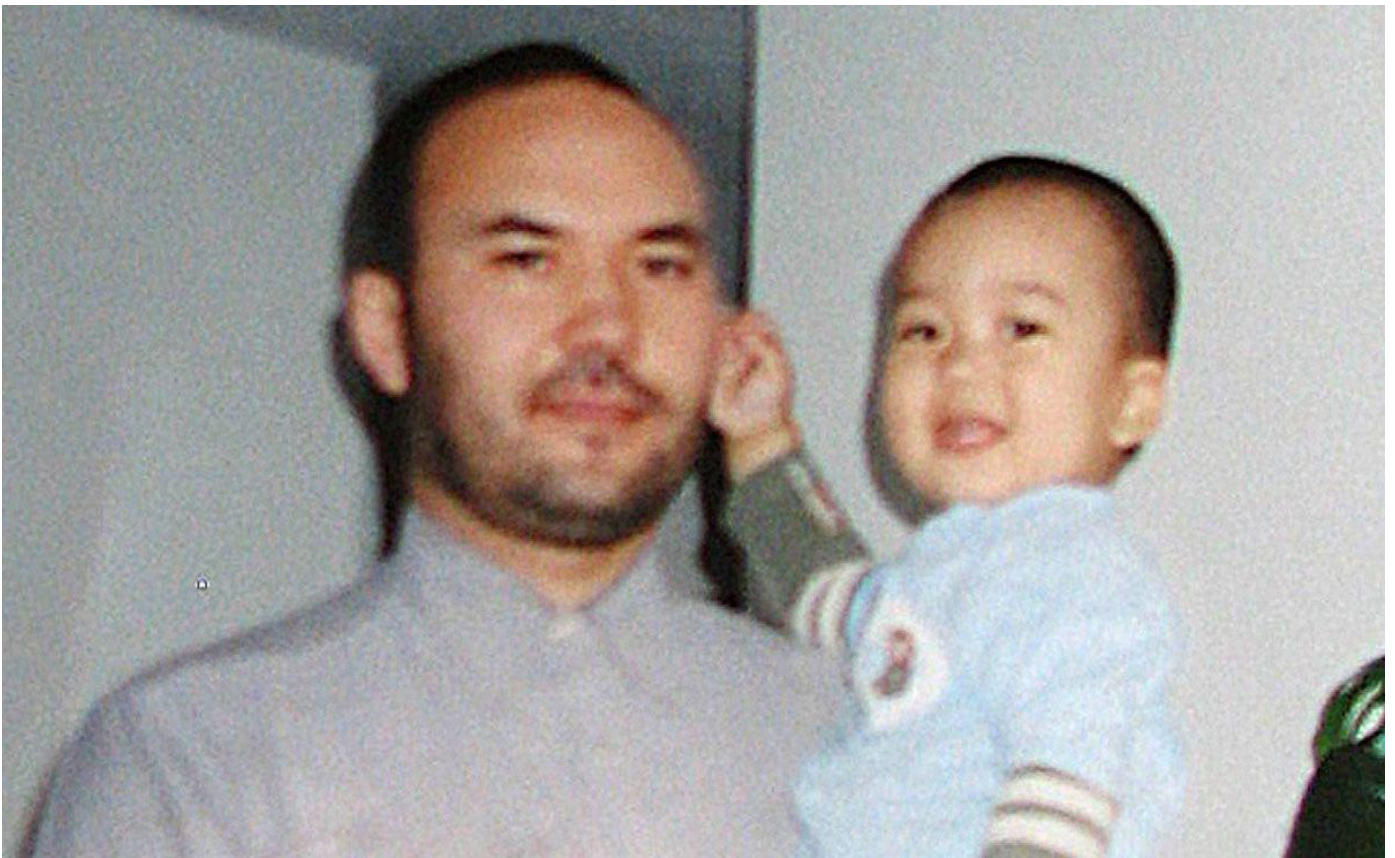
Such population control measures, among other repressive policies in Xinjiang, were cited by some Western parliaments and the United States as evidence that China is committing ge-

nocide against the Uyghurs.

Translated by RFA's Uyghur Service.
Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

China Urged to Release 'Wrongfully' Jailed Canadian on 16th Anniversary of His Arrest

*By The globe and mail, STEVEN CHASESENIOR
MARCH 27, 2022*



More than 20 current and former parliamentarians, as well as rights activists and ex-diplomats, have written Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urging the release Husseyin Celil, a Uyghur Canadian man on the 16-year anniversary of his controversial detention

Chinese Officials Restrict the Number of Uyghurs Who Can Observe Ramadan

By Shohret Hoshur, 2022.04.01

China's quota for those who can fast is 'pathetic and tragic,' says a Uyghur rights advocate.

Chinese authorities in Xinjiang are restricting the number of Muslims allowed to observe the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, drawing heavy criticism from rights groups that see the government directive as the latest effort to diminish Uyghur culture in the region.

For years, officials in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) have prohibited Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims from fully observing Ramadan including by banning civil servants, students and teachers from fasting.

Some neighborhood committees in Urumqi (in Chinese, Wulumuqi) and some village officials in Kashgar (Kashi) and Hotan (Hetian) prefectures have received notices that only 10-50 Muslims will be allowed to fast during Ramadan, which runs from April 1 to May 1, and that those who do so must register with authorities, according local administrators and police in Xinjiang.

"Ramadan measures are being taken," said a village policeman in Kashgar's Tokkuzak (Toukezhake) township. "The purpose is to allay the fears of [Uyghurs] who are afraid to fast, in addition to security, because there should not be any misconception about the [Chinese Communist] Party's religious poli-



A pair of shoes sits near an outdoor prayer area at the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar in East Turkistan, as seen during a government organized visit for foreign journalists, April 19, 2021.

cy. The party never said to abolish religion, but to Sinicize it."

A village administrator who oversees 10 families in Ghulja (Yining) county in Ili Kazakh (Yili Hasake) Autonomous Prefecture, said registration was already under way in his community and that the elderly and adults with no school-age children are allowed to fast.

"This system is designed to avoid religion to have negative effects on children's minds," he said. "There is a lot of propaganda about it right now. A cadre from the village is registering people who meet the criteria for fasting."

Another administrator who oversees 10 families in the city of Atush (Atushi) in Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture said he re-

ceived a notice about the fasting restriction from local authorities.

“Of the 10 families that I am in charge, two — Tahir and Ahmet — were identified as ones that can fast,” he said. “Both are elderly and have no children at home.”

A Uyghur employee at a hotel contacted by RFA on Wednesday said he could not say anything about Ramadan and hung up the phone.

Painting ‘a sham picture’

In past years, authorities have warned Uyghur residents that they could be punished for fasting, including by being sent to one of the XUAR’s vast network of internment camps, where authorities are believed to have held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities since April 2017. Authorities also have forced retirees to pledge ahead of Ramadan that they won’t fast or pray to set an example for the wider community and to assume responsibility for ensuring others also refrain.

“It is pathetic and tragic to see China’s notice that only certain people can fast,” said Tursunjan Alawudun, director of the Committee for Religious Affairs at the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) in Germany. “The Muslim world would laugh at China’s actions and be astonished by the setting of a quota for those who can fast.”

The Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project issued a statement on Thursday showing solidarity with Uyghurs in Xinjiang who cannot hold iftar, the meal eaten by Muslims at sundown to break the daily fast during Ramadan, or pray “without risking being labeled a religious extremist.”

“There will be no Ramadan for Uyghurs in the homeland this year — or any year — until China’s campaign of genocide is brought to an end,” the statement said.



Tursunjan Mamat sets down a copy of the Quran during a government organized visit for foreign journalists to his home in Aksu prefecture, East Turkistan, April 20, 2021. Credit: Associated Press

The Campaign for Uyghurs, also based in Washington, also noted that Uyghurs in Xinjiang are once again being forbidden to worship and celebrate religious holidays.

“To add insult to this injustice, the CCP selectively deploys Islam to paint a sham picture,” the group said in a statement issued Thursday.

WUC president Dolkun Isa said China has turned Ramadan into “a month of hellish suffering of genocide for the Uyghur people” and called on Muslim leaders worldwide to condemn the rights abuses occurring in Xinjiang.

“It’s your religious and moral duty to call on China to stop this ongoing genocide,” he said. “History will not treat you kindly if you continue to allow this genocide to continue under your watch.”

The U.S. and parliaments in some Western countries have declared China’s actions against the Uyghurs and other Turkic people a genocide and crimes against humanity, though China has denied accusations of abuse.

Translated by Mamatjan Juma and Alim Seytoff of RFA’s Uyghur Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

The least duty is to boycott Chinese goods, as Uyghurs from East Turkistan are now arguably suffering one of the worst ever humanitarian crises on earth. They are banned from practicing their religion, and millions are detained in concentration camps, They face all forms of torture.



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