

Saudi Arabia: Imminent Deportation of Uyghur Detainees

By hrw, January 10, 2022

Two Men Face Forced Return to Persecution in China

(Beirut) – Saudi authorities are apparently preparing to deport two Muslim Uyghurs back to China, where they are at serious risk of arbitrary detention and torture, Human Rights Watch said today. Saudi authorities have held the men arbitrarily since November 2020 without charge or trial.

An informed source told Human Rights Watch that on January 3, 2022, a Saudi official told one of the detainees, Nurmamet Rozi (Nuermaimai on his Chinese passport), 46, that he “should be mentally prepared to be deported to China in a few days.” The Turkey-based daughter of the other man, Hemdullah Abduweli (Aimidoula Waili on his Chinese passport), 54, a religious scholar, posted a video on social media in Arabic stating that her father and Rozi are at imminent risk of deportation, appealing for Saudi Arabia to allow them to return to Turkey where they were residents. The two men are currently held in al-Dhahban Mabath (intelligence) prison



Saudi Crown Prince and Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman arrives to attend the first meeting of the defense ministers and officials of the 41-member Saudi-led Muslim counter-terrorism alliance in the capital Riyadh on November 26, 2017. © 2017 Fayez Nureldine/AFP/Getty Images

north of Jeddah.

“If Saudi Arabia deports these two Uyghur men, it will be sending a clear message that it stands arm-in-arm with the Chinese government and its crimes against humanity targeting Turkic Muslims,” said Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “Deporting people to places where they would face arbitrary detention, torture, or worse, risks further tarnishing Saudi Arabia’s global human rights image.”

In late 2020, Human Rights Watch said that the Saudi authorities should immediately clarify the status of Abduweli and Rozi and disclose the basis of their de-

tentions. Abduweli arrived in Saudi Arabia in February 2020 to perform a religious pilgrimage, a Uyghur activist told Human Rights Watch. He had been in hiding since he gave a speech to the Uyghur community there in which he encouraged Uyghurs and Muslims to pray about conditions in China's Xinjiang region and to "fight back the Chinese invaders...using weapons," said another source who spoke to Abduweli.

In early November 2020, Abduweli spoke to Middle East Eye, a London-based online news outlet, saying he feared that Chinese authorities had sent a request to Saudi Arabia to detain and deport him. Middle East Eye posted photos of Abduweli's Chinese passport, Turkish residency card, and Saudi visa information.

Abduweli Ayup, a Uyghur activist in contact with Saudi Arabia's Uyghur community, said that he had previously documented five cases in which Saudi Arabia forcibly deported Uyghurs back to China in 2017 and 2018.

Uyghurs are Turkic-speakers, most of whom are Muslims, who live in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China's northwest. The Chinese government has long been hostile to many expressions of Uyghur identity and imposed wide-ranging controls – including religious restrictions – over daily life in Xinjiang.

Since late 2016, the Chinese government has dramatically escalated repression in Xinjiang as part of ostensible counterterrorism efforts, subjecting the region's 13 million Turkic Muslims to forced political indoctrination, mass surveillance, and severe movement restrictions. An estimated one million of them have been held in "political education" camps. These abuses, committed in a widespread and systematic manner, amount to the crimes against humanity of unlawful imprisonment; persecution; enforced disap-



pearance; torture; murder; and inhumane acts such as forced labor and sexual violence, Human Rights Watch said.

Much of this repression targets Uyghurs' religious practices. Uyghurs are detained and prosecuted for studying the Quran, going on pilgrimages without state approval, wearing religious clothing, and what the authorities have called "abnormal" thoughts or behavior that express "excessive religious fervor." An estimated 16,000 mosques in Xinjiang, or 65 percent of the total, have been destroyed or damaged as a result of government policies since 2017.

On a visit to China in February 2019, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country's de facto ruler, appeared to endorse Chinese government policies in Xinjiang. China's Xinhua official news agency quoted Mohammed bin Salman stating, "We respect and support China's rights to take coun-

ter-terrorism and de-extremism measures to safeguard national security.” Saudi Arabia endorsed joint letters in support of China’s policies in Xinjiang at the United Nations in 2019 and again in 2020.

The Chinese government’s record of arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearance of Uyghurs, as well as the absence of judicial independence and due process, raises serious concerns that if deported to China, Abduweli and Rozi will be at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Under the customary international law principle of nonrefoulement and as a party to the UN Convention against Torture, Saudi Arabia is obligated to ensure that no one in its custody is forcibly sent to a place where they would risk being subjected to persecution, torture, or other serious human rights violations.

In recent years, there have been several incidents of Uyghurs being forcibly returned to China in violation of international law. In July 2017, Egypt detained 62 Uyghurs and deported at least 12 to China. In August 2015, Thailand forcibly returned 220 Uyghurs to China. In December 2012, Malaysia deported six Uyghurs to China. In all cases, those returned appear to have been forcibly disappeared. Human Rights Watch has been unable to obtain any further information from Thai, Malaysian, or Chinese governments as to the deportees’ whereabouts or well-being.

“The Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman’s apparent endorsement of China’s persecution of Uyghurs is bad enough, but his government should not play a direct role in it by deporting back Uyghur men to possible arbitrary detention and torture,” Page said.

Refugees in Kazakhstan Deported Back to China: Report

By Alina Wang, January 12, 2022

According to a report released on Jan. 10 by Bitter Winter, over 100 asylum seekers have been sent back to Xinjiang by Kazakh and Chinese officers amid violent protests that have erupted across the Central Asian country in the past week.

Kazakhstan is currently experiencing the worst unrest it has seen in more than a decade over a spike in fuel prices and widespread disapproval for the country’s ruling party. Government buildings were seen being set on fire as widespread protests swept across the former Soviet republic of nearly 20 million people.



Police officers detain a demonstrator during a rally outside the Kyrgyz parliament building in Bishkek on January 7, 2022, during a protest against the decision by the Collective Security Treaty Organization to deploy a peacekeeping contingent to Kazakhstan. (Photo by VYACHESLAV OSELEDKO/AFP via Getty Images)

Kazakh media has reported that dozens of protestors have been killed in confrontations with police and videos circulating on social media showed droves of demonstrators facing off against hundreds of security forces in riot gear.

On Jan. 6, Russia and other members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), announced they would send troops to help restore order and stabilize the country after Kazakh's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev appealed to the military alliance for assistance. The first of about 2,500 Russian-led troops arrived in Kazakhstan last week.

China's foreign minister Wang Yi also said during a phone call with Kazakhstan's foreign minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi on Jan. 10 that Beijing would be willing to deploy troops in support of the country's police forces.

Amid the hundreds being arrested in Almaty as a result of the protests, many "among those arrested are people who were not particularly active in the current protests but have demonstrated in the last few months against the detention of thousands of ethnic Kazakhs in the dreaded transformation thorough education camps in [China's] Xinjiang region," the report said.

It added that Almaty asylum seekers who escaped persecution in Xinjiang are now being "detained and immediately deported back to

China by officers of the Chinese Consulate and Kazakh police."

Many of the refugees are "ethnic Kazakh citizens of China who managed to cross the border, sought asylum, and applied for Kazakh citizenship. Some already had their green card and were legally entitled to remain in Kazakhstan."

The report added that the refugees were taken from their homes, detained, and forcibly escorted to the Horgos Customs – the border between Kazakhstan and China that has remained closed since the unrest began earlier this month. The border was allegedly re-opened so that the refugees could be taken back to Xinjiang, with their fates unknown.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has long been accused of rampant human rights abuses targeting religious faiths and minorities for violent assimilation to its atheist ideology. Most recently, the Party was accused of forcefully sending more than 1 million Uyghurs — a Muslim ethnicity — to concentration camps in their native Xinjiang and across remote regions in Western China.

In addition to Muslim Uyghurs, the CCP has also targeted Chinese Christians, Tibetans and adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual practice – many of whom have suffered persecution for decades.



Turkish Foreign Minister Brings Up 'Sensitivities' Of Uyghur Treatment In Visit To China

By RFE/RL, January 12, 2022

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said he communicated Turkey's concerns about the treatment of the Uyghur ethnic group to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during talks in Beijing.

"We conveyed our views, expectations, and sensitivities regarding the issues on our agenda, especially the Uyghur Turks," Cavusoglu said after the talks on January 12, adding that the two sides also discussed economic cooperation.

The Chinese government has been accused of establishing a network of detention camps holding more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in the northwestern Xinjiang region.

The United States and many rights groups have alleged that Beijing is carrying out genocide against the Uyghurs. China denies

abuses in Xinjiang and says it is "reeducating" Uyghurs to prevent radical Islam and terrorism.

The issue is sensitive for Turkey because the Turkic Uyghurs share ethnic, religious, and linguistic connections that are a domestic political issue among Turkish nationalists and conservatives.

But Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has been accused of largely remaining silent on the plight of Uyghurs due to economic ties and other interests with the world's second largest economy.

In July, Erdogan held a phone call with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in which he said it was important that Uyghurs live in peace as "equal citizens of China" but that Turkey respects China's national sovereignty. An estimated 50,000 Uyghurs live in Turkey, the largest diaspora outside of Central Asia.

Denmark to Join Boycott of Beijing Olympics Over Human Rights

By Reuters, Copenhagen 15 January, 2022

Denmark will not send an official diplomatic delegation to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics due to human rights issues in the host country, Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said on Friday.

"It is no secret that we from the Danish side are very concerned about the human rights situation in China," Kofod said. "The government has decided that we will not attend the Winter Olympics in China."

The decision comes after EU countries failed to agree a common stance at a meeting in Brest this week.



A U.S. boycott to protest against China's human rights record has been joined by Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and now Denmark. - REUTERS

A U.S. boycott to protest against China's human rights record has been joined by Australia, Britain, Canada and Japan.

The Netherlands will also not send an official diplomatic delegation to the Olympics because of COVID-19 restrictions,

a foreign ministry spokesperson said earlier on Friday.

China denies rights abuses and has condemned the boycott as betraying Olympic principles.

Rights Groups Urge Countries to Pressure China on Human Rights Before Olympics

By Gulchehra Hoja, 2022.01.14

The world cannot let China use the games as a 'sportswashing opportunity,' says Amnesty International.

Rights groups and a former United Nations official issued a final plea for the international community to use the approaching Winter Olympics in Beijing to pressure China to improve its human rights record, amid widespread persecution of Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hongkongers and other groups. Thousands of athletes, officials and diplomats from around the world will attend the games, which run Feb. 4-20.

London-based Amnesty International said Friday that countries sending delegations to Beijing must use the Olympics, as well as the Paralympics on March 4-13, to demand that China treat minority groups better.

"The Beijing Winter Olympics must not be allowed to pass as a mere sportswashing opportunity for the Chinese authorities, and the international community must not become complicit in a propaganda exercise," Alkan Akad, Amnesty's China researcher, said in a statement.

"The games should not be used as a distraction from China's appalling human rights

record. On the contrary, they should be an opportunity to press China to address these issues," Akad said.

The Chinese government had pledged to respect media freedom, labor rights and peaceful demonstrations during the Olympics. But there is no evidence that it has followed through, Amnesty said.

"The right to freedom of expression is systematically violated in China. That's why it's vital that the [International Olympic Committee] and the various National Olympic Committees at the Games adequately res-



Ethnic Uyghur demonstrators take part in a protest calling for a boycott of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games, in front of the Olympic House, the headquarters of Turkey's National Olympic Committee, in Istanbul, Turkey, June 23, 2021.

pect athletes' and sports officials' wishes to speak out about human rights, including on issues deemed 'sensitive' by the authorities," Akad said.

His group called for the release of five detained Chinese activists: Uyghur professor Ilham Tohti, citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, labor rights activist Li Qiaochu, human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, and Tibetan blogger Rinchen Tsultrim.

"If the Chinese government wants to use the Olympics as a showcase for the country, it should start by releasing all those who have been prosecuted or detained solely for peacefully exercising their human rights," Akad said.

A coalition of more than 250 civil society groups representing Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hongkongers, Chinese, Southern Mongolians, Taiwanese and other communities sent a letter to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, asking him not to attend the Beijing Winter Olympics.

The U.N., the United States, and the legislatures of several Western countries have declared that China's systematic repression of the 12 million Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities who live in Xinjiang constitutes genocide and crimes against humanity.

"It's not only shocking that the secretary-general is willing to attend Beijing 2022 when there is a genocide being carried out against Uyghurs and other Muslims, but also incompatible with the U.N.'s core principles," Zum-

retay Arkin, program and advocacy manager at the World Uyghur Congress, said in a statement.

"His appearance at the Winter Olympics will not only be a kick in the teeth for all human rights defenders living under China's rule but will undermine the highly respected fora of the United Nations," she said.

Several countries, including the U.S., have announced diplomatic boycotts of the Beijing Olympics.

Kelley Currie, former U.S. ambassador-at-large for global women's issues and the U.S. representative at the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, told RFA that corporate sponsors of the Olympic Games and the IOC have made an exception for China in not pressing the country to address rights issues.

"They talk about women's rights and gender issues and other human rights issues," she said. "They have all of these principles that are on their website, but when it comes to China it's just they have an exception for China. And it's the same with these companies." "It's even more disturbing that they are being so deferential and so quiet when it comes to China and not saying anything, and so I think that they're pretending like they have no responsibility," Currie said. "They have a responsibility."

Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.



Chinese Spy Infiltrated UK Parliament, MI5 Alleges

By Aljazeera, 13 Jan 2022

Intelligence agency says female Chinese national 'engaged in political interference activities' on behalf of Beijing.

The United Kingdom's domestic intelligence service has alleged that a woman suspected of working on behalf of China's governing Communist Party has sought to improperly influence members of the UK's Parliament, according to officials.

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle's office said in a note issued to members of Parliament on Thursday that MI5 had found that the woman "has been engaged in political interference activities on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party".

Hoyle's letter added the Chinese national, whose whereabouts were unknown, had engaged with legislators and "facilitated financial donations to serving and aspiring Parliamentarians on behalf of foreign nationals based in Hong Kong and China".

There was no immediate comment by the Chinese government.

MI5's own interference alert, which was circulated to parliamentarians, said anyone contacted by the woman should be "mindful of her affiliation" and its "remit to advance the CCP's agenda".

Iain Duncan Smith, a former leader of the UK's governing Conservative Party, told Parliament on Thursday that the case was a "matter of grave concern".

He called for the woman to be deported and demanded Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government make a statement to the Com-



The UK's relations with China have deteriorated in recent years over issues including Beijing's tightening of its grip on Hong Kong and human rights abuses in East Turkistan [File: Stephen Hird/Reuters]

mons over the case.

Duncan Smith has been sanctioned by China for highlighting alleged human rights abuses in the country's northwestern Xinjiang region.

Deteriorating relations

Tobias Ellwood, a fellow Conservative lawmaker and former defence minister, also called for a government statement to the Commons.

"This is the sort grey-zone interference we now anticipate and expect from China," he said. "But the fact that it's happened to this Parliament, there must be a sense of urgency from this government."

The UK's relations with China have deteriorated in recent years over issues including the latter's tightening of its grip on Hong Kong and the situation in Xinjiang, where Beijing has been accused of detaining at least one million Uighurs, a largely Muslim ethnic

group, in internment camps.

Last year, MI5 urged British citizens to treat the threat of spying from Russia, China and Iran with as much vigilance as “terrorism”.

British spies say China and Russia have each sought to steal commercially sensitive data and intellectual property, as well as to inter-

fere in domestic politics and sow misinformation.

The UK in February 2021 expelled three alleged Chinese spies, who MI5 said were posing as journalists but actually worked for China’s Ministry of State Security.

Idris Hasan’s wife takes her three children daily to the Moroccan consulate in Istanbul to demand her husband’s freedom and save him from being extradited to China.

His child says: where is my father?





**Hosting and participating in Olympics in a country that
is committing genocide is against humanity.**



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