

WUC STRONGLY CONDEMNS LIFE SENTENCE OF WUC PRESIDENT'S BROTHER, HUSHTAR ISA

Press Release – For immediate release, 29 May 2021



The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) strongly condemns the sentencing of the WUC President Dolkun Isa's brother, Hushtar Isa. It was recently reported that he received a life imprisonment sentence, which was confirmed by Radio Free Asia (RFA) today.



Hushtar Isa graduated from Highway University in Xi'an in 1996. He worked in a restaurant for a while, and then worked as a teacher at a driving school in Aksu. In 2017, he was arrested and sent to one of the internment camps, where he spent two years for "inciting terrorism". Since then, WUC President, Dolkun Isa has not heard of any news about his whereabouts, nor received any information about his well-being. "I am truly heartbroken to hear this news. My brother is an innocent man.

He was punished because of my activism and work as a human rights activist," said WUC President Dolkun Isa. "This is the third consecutive year that I have received such heartbreaking news, first learning that my mother died in a camp in 2019, and in 2020, I learned about my father's death in a propaganda paper. And now in 2021, I learn about my brother's life-sentence. The Chinese government is using hostage diplomacy in an attempt to silence me and Uyghurs abroad."

The Chinese government continues to use retaliatory actions to silence Uyghurs abroad who are vocal about the human rights abuses taking place in East Turkistan, and who are advocating for their missing or detained relatives. The formal judicial system in East Turkistan has sentenced over 250,000

individuals since the escalation of the “Strike Hard Campaign” in 2016, with an imprisonment rate that has almost increased five-fold between 2016 and 2018, which is over five times higher than other regions in China. Uyghurs and Kazakhs are often imprisoned for vague offences of “inciting terrorism” or “inciting ethnic hatred”.

In December 2020, the family of Dr. Gulshan Abbas, sister of Campaign For Uyghurs (CFU) Executive Director, Rushan Abbas, received news that Dr. Abbas had been sentenced to 20 years in prison by the Chinese regime on false charges of terrorist activities. Similarly, Ahmetjan Juma, the brother of the Deputy Director of RFA’s Uyghur Service, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for “religious extremism”. Both Dr. Abbas and Mr. Juma are highly respected in the Uyghur community, to which they have contributed greatly.

UN special procedures mandate-holders have reiterated on numerous occasions their deep concern at the lack of basic due process

guarantees, including the absence of judicial oversight, the denial of basic procedural rights and the lack of concrete charges supported by sufficient and transparent evidence. The Chinese government refuses to inform the victims about the whereabouts of their relatives, even on the request of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

The WUC reiterates once again that the international community needs to condemn such practices, and hold China accountable for its severe violations of international law and principles. The WUC also urges the UN to publicly document, report and investigate the crimes perpetrated by the Chinese government.

The WUC expresses its sincere support to its President, Dolkun Isa, and his family, and stands in solidarity with him in the face of retaliatory actions by the Chinese government taken against his family members.

Australia and New Zealand unite over China human rights issues

Reuters, May 31, 2021



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison hold a joint press conference at Admiralty House in Sydney, Australia, February 28, 2020.

REUTERS/Loren Elliott

Australia and New Zealand on Monday expressed grave concerns over developments in Hong Kong and the human rights situation in East Turkistan, as the two nations sought to get in lockstep over their biggest trading partner.

In the first face-to-face meeting between heads of both countries in over 15 months, Australia and New Zealand presented a united front on China.

Quarantine-free travel between Australia and New Zealand began last month after both nations controlled the spread of COVID-19, allowing Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison to visit New Zealand.

Talks were focused among other things on China, with Australia currently at loggerheads with Beijing, while New Zealand has strengthened economic ties and upgraded a free trade agreement this year with China.

New Zealand's approach to China has led to suggestions by political commentators and the media that Wellington may not be taking a strong enough stance on China's human rights' issues.

Ardern rejected this, saying New Zealand and Australia had similar positions on issues such as trade and human rights.

"You'll see Australia and New Zealand have broadly been positioned in exactly the same place on these issues consistently so I really push back on any suggestion that we are not taking a strong stance on these incredibly important issues," she said in a joint press conference.

Morrison backed Ardern, saying Australia and New Zealand were trading nations, but nei-

her would ever trade away its sovereignty.

"I think as great partners, friends, allies and indeed family, there will be those far from here who would seek to divide us and they will not succeed," he said.

In a joint statement both prime ministers expressed grave concerns over developments in Hong Kong and the human rights situation in East Turkistan region, calling on Beijing to respect the human

rights of the Uyghur people and other Muslim minorities and to grant the United Nations and other independent observers unfettered access to the region.

China's foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, on Monday said Beijing rejects the statement from Ardern and Morrison.

"The leaders of Australia and New Zealand ... made irresponsible remarks, severely violated international law and basic norms of international relations, and grossly interfered in China's internal affairs," said Wang at a regular briefing.

Activists and U.N. rights experts say at least a million Muslims have been detained in camps in East Turkistan. The activists and some Western politicians accuse China of using torture, forced labour and sterilisations.

China initially denied detention camps exis-



Australian politicians have criticised China for breaches of human rights in East Turkistan. Credit: APott

ted, but has since said they are vocational centres designed to combat extremism. In late 2019, China said all people in the camps had “graduated”.

In Hong Kong, Beijing has clamped down on political protest, introducing a new security law in 2020 that criminalises what it considers subversion, secessionism, terrorism or collusion with foreign forces.

Australia’s ties with China have deteriorated

since Australia led support for an independent inquiry into the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

China has in recent months moved to restrict imports of Australian products such as barley, wine and beef, with the World Trade Organisation saying last week it would establish a dispute settlement panel to resolve the barley row.

‘Uyghur Tribunal’ Hears Grim Accounts of Rape And Torture in East Turkistan

By Roseanne Gerin, RFA, 2021-06-04



Members of the panel take their seats for the first day of hearings at the ‘Uyghur Tribunal,’ a panel of UK-based lawyers and rights experts investigating alleged abuses against Uyghurs in China, in London, June 4, 2021.

The June 4-7 hearings in London aim to determine if abuses of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims amount to genocide.

Witnesses and experts provided grim testimony about torture, rape, and other human rights violations in East Turkistan at the opening day of a tribunal in London investigating whether China's treatment of its ethnic Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims constitutes genocide.

Kicking off a series of hearings known as the "Uyghur Tribunal" to run on June 4-7 and again in September, Uyghur exiles described forced abortions, arbitrary arrests, and forced labor in East Turkistan, while international legal experts weighed in on the applicability of laws on genocide and other statutes. The tribunal has no state backing and any judgments will be nonbinding on any government. Beijing has denounced the tribunal and smeared its participants.

More than a dozen witnesses and experts are providing testimony during the sessions held at the conference center of Church House, the London headquarters of the Church of England in Westminster. Nine people spoke at the session on Friday.

"My characterization of what is happening to Uyghurs and other related Turkic Muslim peoples in East Turkistan as 'cultural genocide' emerges from my analysis of both the actions taken by the state against these peoples since 2017 and the context in which they are taking place," said Sean Roberts, an international affairs professor at The George Washington University.

"The actions themselves are more than the implementation of a random collection of repressive policies," he said at Friday's sessi-

on.

"Rather, they form a complex of policies, which are destroying Uyghurs' sense of nationhood. The context in which they are being carried out is that of China's settler colonization of the territory Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims peoples view as their homeland," said Roberts, who wrote a book on China's efforts to wipe out the cultural identity of the Uyghurs.

China has held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a network of detention camps since 2017.

Beijing has said that the camps are vocational training centers or re-education centers and has denied widespread and documented allegations that it has subjected Muslims living in East Turkistan to indiscriminate killings, torture, rape, enslavement, forced separation of children from their parents, forced sterilization, labor, enforced disappearances, destruction of cultural and religious heritage,



According to the United Nations, at least one million Uyghurs have been detained in the internment camps in East Turkistan Photo on centre" in East Turkistan

tion of cultural and religious heritage, persecution, forced marriages, and the imposition of Han Chinese men into Uyghur households. Muetter Illiquid of the Uyghur Transitional Justice Database, a Norway-based project that records disappeared and extrajudicially detained Uyghurs in East Turkistan, said in written testimony that the Chinese regime has been actively executing coercive ethnocentric Sinicization policies to erase Uyghurs' language, culture, and belief system.

"Sinicization implies the diffusion of Chinese culture and influence, in this case to the detriment of local minorities' cultures," she said. "These specifically targeted assimilation policies have had an enormous impact on the social interactions and the collective psyche of the Uyghur people both at home and abroad, which in recent years also started to impact the lives of other Turkic/Muslim peoples in East Turkistan."

'Young men disappeared frequently'

Quelbinur Sidik, a teacher born in Urumqi who was assigned to teach Chinese in both a men's and women's re-education camp for nearly two years provided witness testimony on unsanitary conditions in the camps and evidence of rape, forced sterilization, and the forced medication of Uyghurs.

"Male police officers really like working in female camps, as most of them volunteer to be in these camps," she said in her written testimony. "They brag about whom and how they raped during their inner circles after getting drunk, and that's how the news got out at the first place."

Quelbinur also said that she found out that all women in the camp where she taught had received periodic shots to stop their menstrual cycles, and that some experienced side effects such as severe bleeding from both the shots and pills they were given.

The inmates were given only water and a

small bun to eat, she noted. "No wonder they're losing weight day by day and look sicker and sicker," she said.

"It's one thing that they don't feed them enough, leave them in cold rooms without proper clothes, but they also beat them, rape and torture them, make them confess to the crimes they didn't commit," Quelbinur said.

Omir Bekali, a Uyghur of Kazakh decent who spent nine months in three camps on allegations of terrorist activities, recalled the maltreatment and torture he suffered at the hands of authorities.

He said that in one camp he was placed in a 22-foot cell with 45 to 50 others, though the cell was meant to hold only up to 16 people, and that cameras monitored the inmates.

"We gave blood from time to time," Omir said. "We were forced to take unknown medicines. People were removed if they experienced changes on their bodies, such as tumors. Similarly, young men between the ages of 16 and 40 disappeared frequently. Among them were businessmen, cadres and employees."

China has rejected and derided the Uyghur tribunal in the run-up to the hearings.

Responding to a question about the Uyghur Tribunal at a news conference in Beijing on Thursday, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said it was neither "legal



nor credible" and called the tribunal "just another anti-China farce concocted by a few individuals."

"In fact, this so-called 'tribunal' has nothing to do with the law," he said. "It attempts to run in the name of 'tribunal' to engage in anti-China political and public opinion manipulation. This is nothing but an insult on the law."

The Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim group estimated at more than 12 million people in the XUAR. Smaller numbers of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, fellow Turkic speaking people, have been incarcerated in the camp system.

The allegations, if proved, could implicate China in a campaign to deliberately destroy the Uyghurs, and constitute the commission of genocide as defined in Article 2 of the Genocide Convention of 1948 to which the country is a signatory and ratifying state.

The U.S. State Department — as well as parliaments in Canada, the Netherlands, the UK, and Lithuania — have described China's actions in the region as "genocide," while the New York-based group Human Rights Watch says they constitute crimes against humanity. The Italian parliament voted unanimously last week to condemn Chinese atrocities against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples.

The hearing gave witnesses "the belief there's a legitimate international mechanism to seek justice for all their suffering and hold Chinese officials accountable for their heinous

crimes," World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa told RFA's Uyghur Service after Friday's opening session. "They have more faith today in international law, global justice and democracy."

"The Uyghur Tribunal hearing has gone extremely well today in spite of China's disinformation campaign and diplomatic threats against tribunal, camp survivors and witnesses," the Germany-based advocate added.

'Severe ill-treatment, repression, abuse'

Schona Jolly, a London-based international human rights and equalities lawyer and writer, submitted written testimony for Friday, but did not appear at the proceedings.

"The severe ill-treatment, repression and abuse of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims by the Chinese State has been widely reported and these allegations have emanated from a number of diverse and credible sources," she wrote.

Jolly also said that because China has no "reliable avenues" for a fair, independent, and impartial resolution within the country, it is reasonable for outside parties to turn to international legal mechanisms to enforce China's obligations under international law.

"There exist, however, certain limitations upon holding China legally accountable for alleged violations/crimes," he added. "These include the fact that China has placed reservations on the dispute resolution clauses, complaints clauses, and inter-State resoluti-



on mechanisms that would allow the treaties to which it is a State party to be enforced.” The two international courts that can issue formal rulings on China’s policies in East Turkistan have not taken up the case. China is not a party to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and therefore is not bound to submit to a trial.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) can only pursue a case that has been approved by the United Nations Security Council, where

China’s permanent membership in the Council gives it veto power over any such decision. A second set of hearings will be held on September 10-13. The tribunal is expected to issue a final verdict on whether China is committing genocide or crimes against humanity in the XUAR in December.

Additional reporting by Alim Seytoff and Mamatjan Juma of RFA’s Uyghur Service.

WUC COMMEMORATES TIANANMEN SQUARE DEMOCRACY PROTESTORS ON 32ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIANANMEN MASSACRE

Press Release – For Immediate Release, 04 June 2021



On the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, during which thousands of Chinese protestors calling for democracy and respect for human rights were brutally suppressed, the World Uyghur Congress commemorates the victims and highlights the importance of democracy and freedom of speech and assembly. Students, teachers, activists and civilians were among those killed during the Tiananmen Square massacre, merely for exercising their right to freedom of assembly and calling for democracy.

“Democracy, freedom and human rights, which are at the core of a life free from oppression and violence, should never be taken for granted”, said WUC President, Dolkun Isa. “As the situation in China is getting increasingly critical, we cannot stop speaking out against these injustices in the hope of a better life for all those under the authoritarian CCP regime, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers, Southern Mongolians, and Chinese human rights defenders.”

Events like the Tiananmen Square massacre, and the failure of the international community to take immediate and adequate action to hold those responsible to account, have indeed set a dangerous precedent for the further dramatic erosion of freedom of speech and assembly throughout China. The years that followed the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 saw many other peaceful demonstrations brutally oppressed by the Chinese authorities. In East Turkistan, examples that stand out are the Ghulja Massacre of 1997 and the Baren Uprising of 1990. The gradual deterioration of Uyghurs’ rights and basic freedoms accelerated dramatically in the 2010s, and has evolved in the full-scale, ongoing genocide that is visible today.

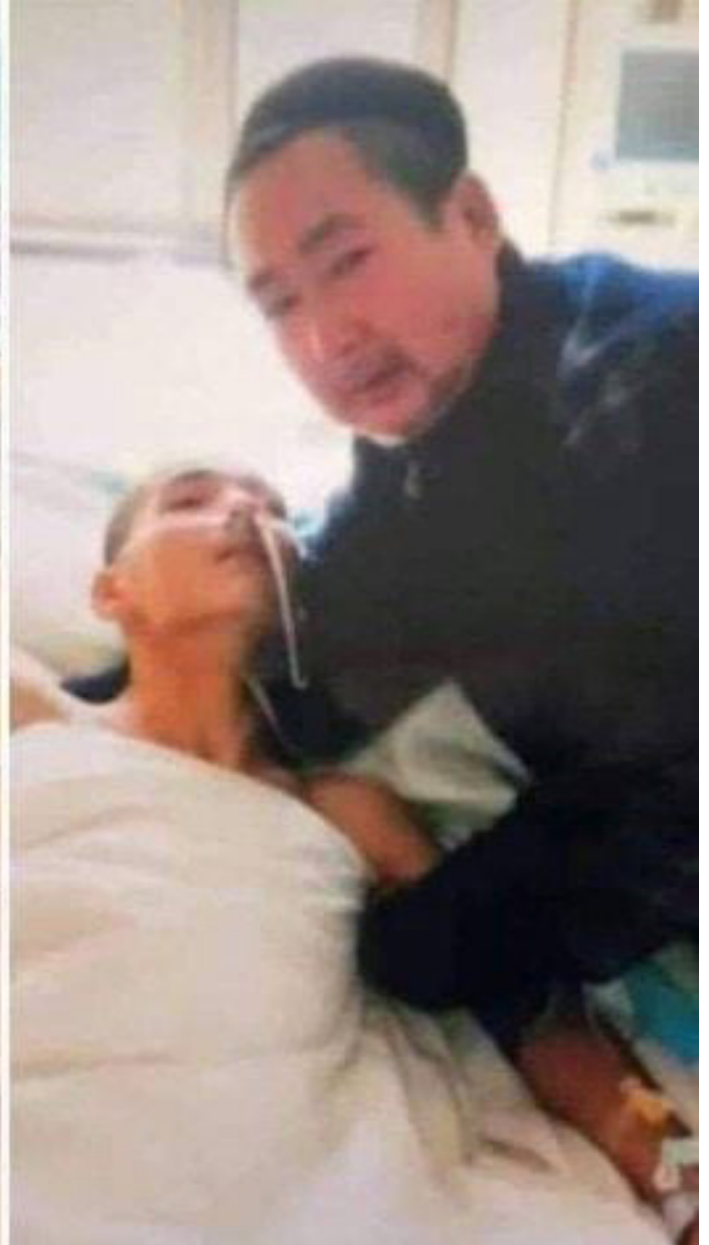
The events of the past year(s) in Tibet and Hong Kong have further shown that the Chinese government will not shy away from vi-

olently cracking down on peaceful demonstrations that call for democratic rights. The erosion of the democratic system in Hong Kong in particular, as well as the expansion of China’s repressive regime abroad, should serve once more as a warning to the international community of the threat that China’s authoritarianism poses to the international rules-based order and the international community as a whole.

In light of this, the WUC reiterates its calls on the international community to take appropriate steps to ensure that those responsible for violations of freedom of expression and assembly in China are held accountable. Most of all, it is imperative that the international community, including national governments and the European Union, firmly puts the promotion of human rights and democracy at the center of all their relationships with China.

On the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, the WUC honours the memory of those who lost their lives striving for freedom and human rights. Governments and citizens who consider these values to be universal and indivisible should come together in unity and determination to work towards a world where no one is deprived of them.

Girl before and after concentration camp...The daughter was taken to a torture camp, and at the time of release, she was in this condition. Those who leave the concentration camp can survive no more than 3 months. Stop concentration camps in China



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