

# Australian Uyghurs throw support behind Senator's bill to ban imports from East Turkistan



East Turkistan's cotton fields reportedly produce 20 per cent of the world's cotton.(Reuters, file)

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***Representatives of Australia's Uyghur community have spoken out in support of proposed legislation to ban imports from East Turkistan of China in response to claims of forced labour.***

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- **The Senate committee was addressed by three leaders of Australia's Uyghur community**
- **They said imposing sanctions on China was both the moral thing to do and in Australia's economic interests**
- **The Chinese government has denied the claims of forced labour and human rights abuses in East Turkistan**

Independent senator Rex Patrick tabled the bill which would amend Australia's Customs Act to prohibit the importation of all goods from the region plus any made through the use of forced labour from elsewhere in China. China has reportedly established scores of forced labour camps along with indoctrination centres in the Xinjiang region, which some Uyghurs in the region call East Turkistan. Senator Patrick has also been pushing the federal government to officially label the Chinese government's treatment of East Turkistan's Uyghurs as "genocide". Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Asso-

ciation president Ramila Chanisheff on Tuesday told the committee every Uyghur in Australia had family in labour camps in the region and Australia had been too slow to respond to reports of forced labour.

"Whether in Australia or internationally, legislation prohibiting and penalising the use of slave labour must be implemented and done so urgently," she said.

She said China was using its growing international power and influence to bully countries such as Australia into not speaking out.

**"I implore the committee to strengthen the legislative bill to hold companies, industries and their supply chains to account that rely in whole or in part on products made by Uyghur forced labour," she said.**

East Turkistan Australian Association president Nurmuhhammad Majid said Uyghurs at labour camps were being forced to work more than 18 hours a day.

Some Australian Uyghurs, including himself, had dozens of family members in the labour camps, he said.





"The Australian Uyghur community has credible testimonies to state that China has used force labour in the region, and this is also supported by the investigations by the Western reporters," he said.

"We strongly demand the Australian government should [pass] this bill to specifically target the supply chains of the Chinese cotton production lines, stop the human rights violations and other atrocities committed by the Chinese government."

### Woman allegedly paid 26 cents of 12-hour work day

Uyghur Association of Victoria president Alim Osman said sanctioning China was not only the morally right thing to do, it was in Australia's economic interests.

Mr Osman cited the example of a former camp resident, now in Kazakhstan, who said she worked at a factory in East Turkistan stitching gloves.

She was paid 26 cents Australian for a 12-hour day making 13 pairs of gloves, he said.

"If the cost of Uyghur labour to make a pair of gloves is two cents Australian, then it's im-

possible for similar Australian businesses to compete with that particular product in the Australian market," he said.

He added that importing forced labour goods was against Australia's core beliefs and values.

**"This is a test between morality and human conscience, and benefiting or profiting through slave labour," he said.**

In response to a request for comment, the Chinese embassy in Australia referred the ABC to a virtual press conference last month in which the Chinese Ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye spoke about sanctions imposed by Canada, the US, UK and US.

"Those countries, while making malicious accusations of China, they imposed sanctions against some Chinese individuals and entities based on groundless disinformation," he said. Chinese foreign affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian in March said: "There is not a grain of truth in the absurd allegation that there is 'forced labour' in East Turkistan."

"Such an allegation was made to hold back the development of the relevant Chinese side and Chinese companies," he said.



# East Turkistan Authorities Detain Uyghur Turkish Nationals Who ‘Witnessed Govern- ment Crimes’: Daughter

RFA, 2021-04-30

*Yahya and Amine Kurban were detained in late 2017 while running a shop in the regional capital.*



*Amine (L) and Yahya (R) Kurban in Urumqi in 2016.*

*Authorities in East Turkistan (XUAR) have detained an ethnic Uyghur couple of longstanding Turkish citizenship, according to their daughter, who said Beijing will not release them because they have witnessed human rights abuses in the region.*

Yahya Kurban, an ethnic Uyghur from Kargilik (in Chinese, Yecheng) county, in the XUAR's Kashgar (Kashi) prefecture, emigrated to Turkey with his family at age five and later became a Turkish citizen.

On September 10, 2017, he and his wife Amine Kurban, who is also from Kargilik, were detained in the XUAR

capital Urumqi, where they ran a shop, and taken to their hometown. Since then, the couple's four children in Turkey have lost regular contact with their parents. RFA spoke at length with one of their daughters, Han-kiz Kurban, as well as with a representative of the Turkish embassy in Beijing and relevant authorities in Kargilik but was ultimately unable to obtain more detailed information about the couple's whereabouts and current situation.

*“My mom and my dad have been Turkish citizens for 40 years. There are four of us kids. We were all born*



*and raised in Istanbul. My dad went back and forth [between Turkey and Xinjiang] for trade, and he and my mom lived in Urumqi," Hankiz said.*

*"[The authorities] took them away to Kargilik [more than] three years ago. As of now they still haven't let them go. After they were detained, they didn't call once for two years," she added.*

*"My mom sent me a voice message on WeChat crying and saying that she and my father had spent a night in a police station and then gone home to pack bags and were on their way to Kargilik. She said they were taking them away and told us to call the embassy. It was September 11, 2017 ... I tried calling them, but their phones had been shut off. I tried messaging back but there was no response."*

*Beginning in 2017, authorities launched a campaign of mass incarceration in East Turkistan that has since seen an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities locked up in a vast network of internment camps.*

*After denying the camps' existence initially, China in 2019 changed tack and began describing the facilities as residential training centers that provide vocational training for Uyghurs, discourage radicalization, and help protect the country from terrorism.*

*But reporting by RFA and other media outlets*

*indicate that those in the camps are detained against their will and subjected to political indoctrination, routinely face rough treatment at the hands of their overseers and endure poor diets and unhygienic conditions in the often-overcrowded facilities.*

*Former detainees have also described being subjected to torture, rape, sterilization, and other abuses while in custody.*

***Parliaments in Canada, The Netherlands, and the U.K., and the U.S. State Department, have described China's actions in the region as "genocide," while the New York-based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) says they constitute crimes against humanity.***

### ***Little help from embassy***

*Hankiz told RFA that she reported her parents' detention to Turkish authorities as soon as she received her mother's message, but representatives from the Turkish government told her that there are many Turkish people in the same situation and that they were "looking into the matter with Chinese authorities."*

*"They said if [the Chinese government] had locked them up or if there was a situation in which they were punishing them, they would have to notify [the embassy]," Hankiz said.*

*"They said they thought [our parents] were fine, and they didn't say anything else. But every time we called they told us to wait, to be patient. That's what they said every time." RFA called the Turkish embassy in Beijing to ask what they knew about Yahya Kurban and Amine Kurban's case. The representative who took the call said that the responsible employee was "out of the office" and recommended that RFA inquire about the case via email.*

*Hankiz said that, much to her surprise, she received a sudden phone call from her father*



missing. Rather than explaining why he had been missing for the past two years, he scolded her, warning her not to become involved in any “untoward” matters—a thinly veiled code by which he likely meant to express that she should go public about her missing parents.

“Two-and-a-half or three months later he called again, along with my mom. My mom’s voice wasn’t normal at all, as though something were squeezing her heart. I know my mom’s voice very well,” she said.

“Once again they didn’t give us any clear answers. They didn’t say they’d been detained. When I asked them things, like if they were having any troubles or where they were staying, they wouldn’t answer. They would just say they’d call again.”

Hankiz said that she felt “it was very clear that there was someone sitting next to them” because they spoke without any emotion and tried to assure her that they were not involved in any kind of trouble.

She said that for the past two years, the children and their parents have been calling each other once every two to three months. The parents refuse to use video chat, however, and each of their conversations lasts only a few minutes.

Hankiz also told RFA that some of their calls were disconnected if conversations did not go “as expected.” She said that she and her siblings have taken these signs to mean that their parents are still in detention.

“There was no emotion at all [in their voices]. It was like they’d just memorized the words. I think it was clear that there were people sitting next to them, or that they had them detained somewhere,” she said.

RFA called an official from the Kargilik County Office of Foreign Affairs, who said that they had no information about the couple. Similarly, a police officer in the county claimed to be unaware of the Turkish citizens’ current situation.

‘Cautious people’ who did not mix with poli-





Office of Foreign Affairs, who said that they had no information about the couple. Similarly, a police officer in the county claimed to be unaware of the Turkish citizens' current situation.

'Cautious people' who did not mix with politics

But Hankiz told RFA over the phone from Istanbul that her parents were "very cautious people" who made sure to stay far away from any matters that would have upset the Chinese government and educated their children to do the same. She said there was no possibility her parents had done anything illegal to warrant their disappearance.

"Even now I still remember that when my dad was always so careful when he was in Urumqi, when he was going to and from there," she said.

"Here [in Turkey], a lot of Uyghurs will go out to protests, but he never allowed us to be involved in that. There's absolutely no place where my father has committed a crime. Actually, if that had been the case, at the time when they took him away, when they found out about it, he would have come back [to Turkey]."

In several phone calls with relevant officials in Kargilik, RFA was unable to independently verify that the foreign-national couple are being held in the county.

One official source confirmed that Yahya Kurban and Amine Kurban were under his jurisdiction and were not permitted to return to Turkey but declined to comment on their case or provide detailed information, including on their specific whereabouts.

Meanwhile, Hankiz noted that while she still has no information about her parents' legal and health statuses, the family also has had

no news of what happened to their property in Urumqi after their disappearance. She said her parents owned a home, a commercial shop, and valuable items, including several kilograms of gold.

### **Detained for 'witnessing government crimes'**

Hankiz said she believes that her parents were detained not because they committed any crime, but rather because they had witnessed "Chinese government crimes" as the internment campaign got underway, and thus could not be sent back to Turkey.

"If at that time, between January and September [of 2017], my father had happened to see something that happened to one of his neighbors, or his friends, or his acquaintances, I think it might be the case that [the authorities] detained him because they knew that he saw what had happened and it was possible that he would speak out about it were he to leave the country," she said.

"My [parents have] committed no crime. [They have] merely seen the crimes the Chinese government is committing."

*Reported by Shohret Hoshur for RFA's Uyghur Service. Translated by the Uyghur Service. Written in English by Joshua Lipos.*



# Whereabouts, Well-Being of Renowned Uyghur Poet Unknown Three Years After Detention

RFA, 2021-04-28

*Abduqadir Jalalidin's children  
continue to advocate on his  
behalf and demand his release  
from overseas.*



*Uyghur scholar and poet Abduqadir  
Jalalidin, in an undated photo.*

*The situation and well-being of a renowned Uyghur intellectual who was detained by authorities in northwest China's East Turkistan Uyghur Autonomous Region remains unknown more than three years after he was taken into custody, according to the man's U.S.-based son.*

*In late April 2018, RFA's Uyghur Service learned that Abduqadir Jalalidin, a Uyghur professor at Xinjiang Normal University as well as a well-known writer and poet, had been detained three months earlier by State Security forces in the regional capital Urumqi. Jalalidin's writings have been popular among the Uyghur people, as have his literary translations into Uyghur, including George Orwell's iconic novel Animal Farm. He had advised a number of graduate students, training a new generation of community researchers.*

*His son Babur told RFA that he and his Japan-based older sister Bulbulnaz have continued to advocate for their father's release but have obtained little information about his situation since learning of his detention. "They took him from our home on the evening of Jan. 29, 2018, around 7:00 or 8:00 p.m.," he said.*

*"Up to now I have been unable to obtain any information about his health or what he is doing. We also don't know why they took him away or how long he's been sentenced to."*

*According to Babur, police raided their family home one day before arresting Jalalidin, confiscating Uyghur-language materi-*



als, as well as computers, tablets and phones. "And then the next day ... they took my father away and never brought him back."

"My father never broke the law. All of his works were published by government publishing houses, and prior to being published they were edited by government editors. Our father always raised us not to break the law, to be good people ... I demand my father's release."

While RFA has been unable to confirm the reason for Jalalidin's detention, earlier this month, Chinese state media channel CGTN published a documentary video titled "The War in the Shadows: Challenges of Fighting Terrorism in East Turkistan," which featured the cases of intellectuals such as Yalqun Rozi, who guided the compilation of a textbook of Uyghur literature back in 2003.

Though the film did not mention it, Jalalidin was involved in the compilation of this textbook, as well as other textbooks in language and literature for Uyghur intermediate school students.

Authorities in East Turkistan are believed to have held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a vast network of



Uyghurs protest to urge the European Union to call upon China to close "re-education centers" in East Turkistan, Brussels, April 27, 2018. AFP

internment camps since early 2017. While Beijing initially denied the existence of the camps, China in 2019 changed tack and began describing the facilities as "boarding schools" that provide vocational training for Uyghurs, discourage radicalization, and help protect the country from terrorism.

But reporting by RFA and other media outlets indicate that those in the camps are detained against their will and subjected to political indoctrination, routinely face rough treatment at the hands of their overseers and endure poor diets and unhygienic conditions in the often-overcrowded facilities. Former detainees have also described being subjected to torture, rape, sterilization, and other abuses while in custody.

### **Poetry cannot be detained**

Babur's demand for Jalalidin's release comes a month after his sister was interviewed by Japan's NHK news channel after giving testimony about her father at a joint event by the Japan Uyghur Association and Human Rights Now. In her remarks, she noted that images of her father as a scholar and intellectual are at the forefront of her mind.

"When I think of my father, I see an image of him sitting and reading books," she told NHK. "This innocent man, who wanted nothing other than to read books and do academic work, has been deprived of his freedom in a place for criminals."

Bulbulnaz told NHK that her father was careful not to discuss politically sensitive issues.

"He's never been a religious man or a political man. He [was] always encouraging people to try new things. I remember people respecting him, and they loved to spend time and [have] conversations with him," she said.

In November, The New York Times published an essay titled "China Disappeared My Professor. It Can't Silence His Poetry" by Joshua L. Freeman, a former master's student of Ja-

Jalalidin's and a current postdoctoral fellow at Princeton University, who discussed his relationship with his former teacher.

In the essay, Freeman noted that even in detention Jalalidin had continued writing poetry. He said other inmates had committed his new poems to memory and had managed to transmit one of them beyond the camp gates, suggesting that while a poet can be detained, poetry cannot, and that poetry serves as a tool of resistance for many Uyghurs.

### Intellectuals targeted

According to the 2020 Freedom to Write Index published by PEN America, China is among the countries with the highest number of imprisoned writers, intellectuals, and researchers, including at least 40 imprisoned Uyghur intellectuals. Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) has documented hundreds of disappeared Uyghur scholars. Last month, the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy published a report which said

that China has demonstrated "intent to destroy" the Uyghur ethnic minority, and therefore bears state responsibility for committing genocide, in the first independent report to investigate claims of abuses in East Turkistan. The report counted the mass internment campaign, as well as other state policies such as government-mandated homestays, a mass birth-prevention strategy, the forcible transfer of Uyghur children to state-run facilities, the eradication of Uyghur identity, and the selectively targeting of intellectuals and other leader as evidence of intent to destroy the ethnic group.

The U.S. government determined in January that rights violations in the region amount to genocide—a label that has since been similarly applied by the parliaments of Canada, The Netherlands, and the U.K.

*Reported by Nuriman Abdurashid for RFA's Uyghur Service. Translated by the Uyghur Service. Written in English by Joshua Lipes.*



**Every day, thousands of People of East Turkistan are being targeted towards China's Genocide crime.**



**EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION**  
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