

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 31, 2023

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to express my grave concern about the mass internment, torture, and persecution of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and to ensure that in all future high-level engagement between the U.S. and Chinese governments, the human rights abuses of the Uyghurs are addressed.

Since 2017, the Chinese government has committed massive and systematic abuses against Muslims living in the XUAR. An estimated one million members of predominantly Muslim ethnic groups have been arbitrarily detained and sent to internment camps or prison. Many are forced into labor under harsh and inhumane conditions.

We are particularly concerned about a Uyghur family with loved ones in our state: Memeteli Abdurashid, Ametjan Abdurashid (brother), Tajigul Qadir (mother), and Abdurashid Tohti (father). The family of Memeteli has been taken away and sentenced from seven to 17 years for “having potentially thought of promoting terrorist activities” – charges that stem from nothing more than having family members who reside in Turkey.

Memeteli’s family members were last heard from in 2016 and 2017; however, no information was provided regarding their trials. Unfortunately, their story is not uncommon. Tens of thousands of Uyghur people are still detained in these political re-education camps and prisons throughout Xinjiang.

The case of Abdulhakim Idris and Rushan Abbas’ family is also deeply troubling. Turanisahan, Bu’Aisha, and Bu’Hadiqa Idris (sisters) and Abdurahim Idris (brother) are missing or reportedly detained. Abdulkarim Zikrullah Idris (father) passed away in January 2023, and the news of his passing reached the family in the United States on August 15<sup>th</sup>, almost seven months later. The exact date and circumstances on his death remain unknown.

In a secret trial in March 2019, Gulshan Abbas (sister) was sentenced to imprisonment on charges of “taking part in organized terrorism, aiding terrorist activities, and seriously disrupting social order.” She is believed to be detained due to her sister’s advocacy for the Uyghur people.

The State Department should demand information about the well-being and whereabouts of the people, including the families of Memeteli and Idris and Abbas, who have been detained or gone missing without a trace and call for the release of anybody arbitrarily detained. We urge the

administration to continue to highlight detained or missing individuals when in dialogue with Chinese counterpart whenever an opportunity arises.

The administration should make clear that the Chinese government's policies in the XUAR amounted to crimes against humanity and the Chinese government must end its ongoing gross human rights violations and repressive policies in Xinjiang and respect its human rights obligations.

By continuing the discussion on Uyghur issues, the State Department will send a strong message that the United States stands with China's Uyghur population.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress