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- 2012: China-Culture-Year in Germany

HIGHLIGHTED MEDIA ARTICLES AND REPORTS ON UYGHUR RELATED ISSUES
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- Freedom House’s China Media Bulletin
- New Cases of Uyghur Political Prisoners

MORE MEDIA ARTICLES
WUC Troubled by Witness Accounts on Hotan Incident

Based on several witness accounts, the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has serious doubts about the official version of the incident in Hotan, East Turkestan. While the WUC unequivocally condemns all acts of violence, it urges the international community to view Chinese state media reports on the incident with extreme skepticism and caution since similar events in the past have proven that the Chinese government is systematically spreading false information and suppressing any information that contradicts its official narrative.

According to the official Xinhua news agency, "thugs" forced their way into a police station, they took hostages and engaged in a gunfight that resulted in several people dead. However, according to sources in Hotan, the shooting took place not at a police station, but at the close main bazaar of Hotan, in the Nurbagh area, when more than 100 local Uyghurs peacefully gathered to protest a police crackdown imposed on the city for the last two weeks. Demonstrators gathered and demanded to know the whereabouts of relatives who had gone missing into police custody. Police opened then fire on the demonstrators, killing at least 20 people. Based on information received from one hospital in Hotan, another 12 people were injured seriously, among them four women and an 11-year-old girl named Hanzohre. In addition, more than 70 people were arrested. The WUC fears the number of causalities to be much higher. Since the roads to Hotan city have been blocked by Chinese security forces and incoming and out-coming people are controlled and searched and martial law was imposed by the authorities in Hotan, it is difficult to obtain information on the incident.

In addition, Chinese authorities immediately blocked internet searches on the incident within China to avoid that news on the events are spread in the country. The Chinese government is, in typical fashion, attributing the Hotan incident to the "three forces" (terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism). The authorities regularly use the fact that the Uyghurs happen to be Muslim to appeal to racist stereotypes that unfortunately exist about Muslims and portray the Uyghurs as religious extremists and terrorists. Uyghurs have long practiced a moderate, traditional form of Sunni Islam, strongly infused with the folklore and traditions of a rural, oasis-dwelling population and religious extremism has no roots in Uyghurs’ practice of Islam and remains scarce among the Uyghurs. As during the July 2009 events of Urumqi, the Chinese authorities’ distorted portrayal of the Hotan incident is an attempt to avoid dealing with the actual root causes of such events, namely, the crackdown on Uyghur culture, identity, freedom of expression and religion, as well as the ongoing economic discrimination of Uyghurs in East Turkestan. After the July 2009 events, Chinese officials stated that 197 people were killed during the incidents. However, numerous eyewitness accounts provided to Amnesty International, Uyghur human rights organizations, and media outlets have indicated that security forces committed extrajudicial killings of protesters and that in fact around 1000 people were killed.

The WUC urges the Chinese government to allow international media and observers to freely and independently investigate the incident in Hotan to reveal the real circumstances of the events, and to stop its ongoing crackdown on Uyghurs in all areas of their life to avoid a further destabilization of the situation.

See also:

- 'Clashes Sparked by Death-Beatings'
  RFA, 19 July 2011

- Clash in China's Xinjiang killed 20: exile group
  AFP, 19 July 2011

- IFJ Urges Greater Transparency from Xinjiang Authorities
  IFJ, 19 July 2011

- Beijing admits: at least 18 dead in Xinjiang
  Asia News, 20 July 2011
and subsequently led to ethnic unrest in the city that left hundreds of people dead. Despite international calls, no independent investigation into the incident has been allowed by the Chinese authorities and the number of people killed, detained, imprisoned, executed and disappeared remains unclear.

On July 5, 2011 and in the days surrounding July 5th, the **WUC and its member organizations staged demonstrations in 21 cities around the world** and other actions to commemorate the 2nd anniversary of one of the saddest and most tragic days in the history of the Uyghur people and of East Turkestan and to ensure that the world does not forget about the devastating plight of the Uyghur people.

In its **5 July press release**, the WUC published new photo material that reveals a violent crackdown on a Uyghur demonstration which took place on 7 July 2009 in Kashgar.

In the days preceding the 5 July anniversary, the WUC was facing severe cyber attacks, electronic spamming and telephone blockades originating in China and other countries. WUC’s website [www.uyghurcongress.org](https://www.uyghurcongress.org) was inaccessible during two weeks (starting 28 Jun) through massive "Distributed Denial-of-Service" (DDoS) attacks. This is a type of cyber attack aimed at putting a site out-of-service, by submerging it with unnecessary and extremely increased traffic, leading to the collapse of the site. Also another two temporary blog-websites ([https://uyghurcongress.wordpress.com](https://uyghurcongress.wordpress.com) and [www.worlduyghurcongress.blog.com](http://www.worlduyghurcongress.blog.com)) were hacked. Hackers are also spamming WUC’s general e-mail account with 15,000 e-mails in five days. A part from the cyber attacks, several WUC-related phone lines were blocked during days through constant incoming calls. With these kind of actions, the Chinese government tried to suppress any information that contradicts its official narrative about 5 July 2009 and to hamper WUC’s activities planned around the world to commemorate the victims of 5 July and to protest against the Chinese government’s prohibition on conducting an independent investigation into the events. For more WUC’s press releases on the attacks please click [here](https://www.uyghurcongress.org) and [here](https://www.uyghurcongress.org).

**See also:**

- China: Authorities grow bolder in Uighur crackdown
  Amnesty International, 4 July 2011
- Repression and Surveillance of Uighurs Still a Concern on Second Anniversary of Urumqi Crackdown Freedom Hause, 5 July 2011
- Huge police presence on 2nd Xinjiang anniversary
  Zee News, 5 July 2011
- IFJ calls on China to Release Journalists and Writers on Uyghur Unrest Anniversary
  International Federation of Journalists, 5 July 2011
- Xinjiang Riots Anniversary: Continued Suppression of Uighurs
  NDTV, 9 July 2011

**Urgent Appeal by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) on Ershidin Isarel and other disappeared Uyghurs**

On 18 July 2011, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) issued an urgent appeal on the enforced disappearances of Mr. Ershidin Isarel and his brother Mr. Shemshiden Isarel, Mr. Abdusalam Nasir and Mr. Abdukerin Dihan, four Uyghur men from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

OMCT is gravely concerned about their safety and fears that they may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment. Mr. Ershidin Isarel, a 38 years old Uyghur asylum seeker, was forcibly deported to China from Kazakhstan, on 30 May 2011. The Chinese authorities have reportedly only disclosed that he is being held in custody facing "major terror" charges, without providing information about his fate and whereabouts. OMCT has also been informed about the arrest by Chinese security forces, shortly after his extradition to China, of one of Mr. Ershidin Isarel’s brother, Mr. Shemshiden Isarel, on 13 June 2011, in Urumqi, on alleged irregularities in a car business, as well as of Mr. Abdusalam Nasir and Mr. Abdukerin Dihan, on 9 June 2011, in Suydung (Gulja district). The Chinese authorities have reportedly since then refused to disclose information about their whereabouts, legal statuses or well-being. According to the same information received, Mr. Abdusalam Nasir, Mr. Abdukerin Dihan and Mr. Enver Isarel, another of Mr. Ershidin Isarel’s brother, were reportedly among a group of 20 Uyghur men detained in 2009 after Mr. Ershidin Isarel provided information about Mr. Shohret Tursun to RFA. They were later released in 2010.

The International Secretariat of OMCT is gravely concerned about the safety of the abovementioned Uyghur individuals and their relatives, and accordingly urges the competent Chinese authorities to immediately disclose their whereabouts as well as guarantee their physical and psychological integrity, at all times, in accordance with international human rights law, in particular the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to which China is a State party.
The full appeal, including the actions requested, is available here. For WUC’s latest press release on the extradition and disappearance of Ershidin Israel please click here.

MEDIA WORK

Blog Post by Manager of Uyghur Human Rights Project

On 24 June, Henryk Szadziewski, Manager of the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) published a blog post on Xinjiang Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian’s recent tour of four countries (United States, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran) and the scheduled visit of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to China, considering them two of the most current examples of overlooking abuses of human rights to establish cordial relations. The full post is available here.

WUC Press Release on Travel Ban for Uyghur Leaders

On 27 June, the WUC issued a press release on the travel ban imposed by Pakistani authorities on two prominent members of the exiled Uyghur community in Pakistan. The brothers Akbar and Omer Osman, who co-founded a charity to teach Pakistani Uyghurs their own language in the northern city of Rawalpindi, planned to fly to Istanbul on 17 June 2011 to attend the one week conference "East Turkestan Brothers’ Union Summit" organized by Uyghur groups in Turkey. However, despite holding a valid passport and visa, Pakistani authorities at Islamabad’s airport told them that they were not allowed to travel abroad since Chinese embassy in Islamabad had demanded to block their travel plans. In the press release, the WUC calls on the Pakistani government to respect its own constitution and international treaties it is part of, and guarantee freedom of movement to all citizens, including Uyghurs.

Op-ed by UAA President in the Huffington Post

On 5 July, the Huffington Post published a op-ed article entitled "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" by Alim Seytoff, President of the Uyghur American Association (UAA) in which he draws parallels between the bloody crackdown in Northern Ireland by the British security forces on 30 January 1972 and the bloody crackdown on peaceful Uyghur demonstrators in the city of Urumqi, East Turkestan, on 5 July 2009. These two infamous days became what is known to the Irish and the Uyghurs as - "Bloody Sunday". The full article is available here.

Radio Free Asia’s 15th Anniversary

Radio Free Asia (RFA) is celebrating its 15th anniversary (see special website here). This month, RFA is highlighting RFA’s Uyghur Service, broadcasting to East Turkestan. Click here to explore the unique features of RFA Uyghur, including special programming, major news events and exclusive stories of the past 12 years.

PAST EVENTS

Exhibition: East Turkistan Uighur Culture – A history of the Uighur

An exhibition in the Migration Museum’s Community Access Gallery in Australia, opened on 18 June, celebrates Uighur people and culture in South Australia. The exhibition entitled East Turkistan Uighur Culture – A history of the Uighur people of South Australia, is presented by the East Turkistan Australian Association and funded by the Amnesty International Australia Human Rights Innovation Fund. The exhibition gives a rare look at the fascinating history, rich culture and unique traditions of the Uighur people of East Turkistan. On display will be a variety of objects from the beautiful traditional costumes of the Uyghurs to their distinctive handmade musical instruments. Visitors will also be able to read about the history of Uighur homeland; discover the story behind the migration of the Uyghurs to Australia; and learn about how the East Turkistan community has contributed to Australia’s multicultural society. Pictures of the launch of 'Uighur Culture' exhibition are available here.

WUC Protests State Visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in Berlin

On 28 June, WUC Secretary General Dolkun Isa and other WUC members staged a joint protest with Tibet Initiative Germany (TID) against the state visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who attended the first Sino-German Intergovernmental Consultations in Berlin.
Four days before, on **24 June**, the WUC had published a **joint open letter** with Amnesty International (AI), International Camping for Tibet (ICT) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) addressed to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, calling on the government to raise human rights violations in China during her talks with the Chinese delegation. Both the protest and the joint letter generated a lot of media attention.

**Debriefing EU-China Human Rights Dialogue**

On **7 July**, the UNPO Brussels office attended a debriefing of the **EU-China Human Rights Dialogue** that took place in Beijing, June 14-16. The meeting informed civil society organization in a discussion with officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the outcomes of the meeting. On **16 June** 2011 the European Union and the People’s Republic of China held the 30th round of the «EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights» in Beijing. Given that the EU had chosen to focus on minority rights, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and the WUC were asked to contribute with background information on the situation in East Turkestan and in Southern Mongolia.

**Uyghurs Support Global Day of Action for Tibet, Washington DC**

Alim Seytoff, president of Uyghur American Association, joined a demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in Washington DC on the occasion of **13 July**, the **Global Action Day for Tibet**, showing Uyghurs’ support of the Tibetans. In his speech during the event, he said that “if the Tibetans, Mongolians and Uyghurs join forces and rise up together, the Chinese government will fail.”

**WUC Vice President Speaks at Washington Times Foundation Seminar**

On **13 July**, Omer Kanat, WUC Vice President, gave a speech on religious freedom for Uyghurs at the seminar on World Wide Religious Persecution: “Stop Religious Persecution Now.” The seminar underscored the persecution of various religions around the world. Delegates from many faith groups were present, as well as congressional and administration representatives, human rights activists, media and advocates from religious freedom organizations. The seminar is co-sponsored by The Washington Times Foundation and the Universal Peace Federation USA.

**UAA President at Falun Gong March**

On **15 July**, more than 2500 Falun Gong practitioners from around the world held a **grand march in Washington D.C.**, calling for the end to the persecution in China. UAA President Alim Seytoff, who attended the march, denounced during a public speech the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong members in China.

**WUC at 102nd Session of UN Human Rights Committee and Meetings with UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders and UNHCR**

From 11-29 July 2011, the **102nd session of the UN Human Rights Committee** took place in Geneva, Switzerland. Since the Committee considered from **14-15 July** the country situation of Kazakhstan, the WUC together with Human Rights in China (HRIC, www.hrichina.org) attend the review to raise different human rights issues of concern, among them the recent extradition of Uyghur refugee Ershidin Israel as well as the human rights abuses under the umbrella of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). From the WUC, Secretary General Dolkun Isa and Project Coordinator Jana Brandt were present.

During their stay in Geneva, the met with the secretariats of several UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders, among them the Special Rapporteur (SR) on Freedom of Expression, SR on Human Rights and Terrorism, SR on Torture, SR on Women´s rights, Working Group (WG) on Arbitrary Detention and WG on Enforced Disappearances, and draw the attention to different human rights abuses against the Uyghur people in East Turkestan.

In addition, the WUC and HRIC met with UNHCR staff to discuss UNHCR´s role in the extradition case of Ershidin Israel.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Uyghur Demonstrations on Hotan Incident**

The WUC and its members are organizing different demonstrations to protest against the Hotan incident. As WUC President Rebiya Kadeer had stated in a recent interview with RFA “discriminatory policies against Uyghurs, including unfair exploitation of natural resources, encouragement of Han Chinese immigration, and restrictive state security measures, had contributed to ethnic tensions in...”
the region ahead of the Monday attack.” On 21 July, demonstrations will take place in Stockholm and Istanbul, on 22 July a demonstration will be held in Ankara and on 25 July in Munich.

2012: China-Culture-Year in Germany

2012 has been declared China-Culture-Year in Germany on the occasion of next year’s 40th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-German diplomatic relations. Although so far, no further details on next year’s events have been published, on 26 July the WUC together with the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) will stage a first action “No China-Culture-Year without Human Rights” in Munich to demand that human rights abuses, especially against Uyghurs, Tibetans and Inner Mongolians, are addressed during the activities planned for the China-Culture-Year. In addition, the WUC and STP will hand over a petition to the Mayor of Munich to ask for an inclusion of all aspects of the Chinese reality.

New UHRP report: “A city ruled by fear and silence: Urumchi, two years on”

A new report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) published on 5 July 2011 examines the nature of post-July 5, 2009 detentions and criminal procedures in East Turkestan (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or XUAR, in the People’s Republic of China). The report looks at the Chinese government’s portrayal of July 5, and contrasts this with information, including newly emerged videos and eyewitness testimonies, that contradicts the official depiction of events. It also examines the ways in which Chinese officials have responded to Uyghur calls for protection from the state, and the state’s active inflammation of ethnic tensions. The full report can be downloaded here.

Freedom House´s China Media Bulletin

In November 2010, Freedom House launched the China Media Bulletin, a news digest and succinct analysis focusing on traditional media and internet freedom issues related to the People’s Republic of China. Drawing on both English and Chinese-language sources, each week the China Media Bulletin includes sections that examine key broadcast and print media, as well as new media and technology developments in the PRC.

An integral part of the Bulletin is a section dedicated to press freedom developments in ethnic minority areas, including Xinjiang. In this context, recent issues have highlighted the increased surveillance and propaganda ahead of the second anniversary of the July 2009 unrest, the life sentence given to a Uighur web editor, and the deportation of a Uighur refugee from Kazakhstan.

The aim of this initiative is to help focus attention on increasingly important press freedom and censorship issues arising in China and its immediate neighborhood. Freedom House anticipates that the China Media Bulletin will be a useful tool for policy makers, press freedom advocates, scholars, journalists and others with an interest in the free flow of information in Asia. To subscribe to the China Media Bulletin, email cmb@freedomhouse.org.

New Cases of Uyghur Political Prisoners

A recent article entitled "Virtual Jails for Prisoner Families" published by Radio Free Asia (RFA) on 15 July 2011, describes how families of Uyghur political prisoners in East Turkestan are constantly harassed by authorities, treated as outcasts by their communities, and reeling from financial problems. In addition, the cases raised as examples in the articles, are so far unknown cases of Uyghur political prisoners and prove that only very few cases of imprisonment of Uyghurs get to the public. Among the cited are:

- Qurbanjan Abdusemet, 26, was given a 10-year sentence after his sale of books and videos about Islam was linked by Chinese authorities to charges of separatism.
- Qurbanjan’s younger brother, 24-year-old Abdugheni Abdusemet, was sentenced along with Qurbanjan, but was released after serving three years in prison because he suffered from mental problems that his mother said are a result of abuse while incarcerated.
- Merdan Siyitahun, 37, was arrested on April 14, 2008 and sentenced to life in prison at the same time as Qurbanjan. Authorities said Merdan had committed “acts of separatism” by providing “illegal” religious education to Uyghur children.
- Ehmetjan Emet, a resident of Aruz village in Gulja county, was arrested on April 14, 2008 and sentenced to 15 years in jail for “separatism” on March 24, 2009. In November 2010, he died in detention as a consequence of torture. Ehmetjan’s brother, 38-year-old Erkin Emet, was arrested along with him in 2008 and also sentenced on March 24, 2009 to 10 years in prison for...
Uyghurs / East Turkestan

Uyghur Leaflets Prompt Crackdown
RFA, 11 July 2011

China: Uyghur students expelled from school for praying “illegally”
Spero News, 14 July 2011

Cambodia’s Uighur ‘Madness’
The Diplomat, 19 July 2011

Tibet

Xi Jinping: China will ‘smash’ Tibet separatism
BBC, 19 July 2011

China

China admits “long way to go” for citizens to enjoy human rights
Reuters, 13 July 2011

‘Interpol misused to punish opponents’
Deccan Chronicle, 18 July 2011

Interpol’s Red Notices used by some to pursue political dissenters, opponents
Iwatch, 18 July 2011

ABOUT THE UYGHURS

The Uyghur People

The Uyghur people are indigenous to East Turkestan [also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in northwest China]. For many years, the Chinese government has waged an intense and often brutal campaign to repress all forms of Uyghur dissent, crack down on Uyghurs’ peaceful religious activities and independent expressions of ethnicity, dilute Uyghurs’ culture and identity as a distinct people, and threaten the survival of the Uyghur language.

The authorities have routinely equated Uyghurs’ peaceful political, religious, and cultural activities with the “three evils” – terrorism, separatism and religious extremism – and have couched their persecution of the Uyghurs as efforts to quash these “three evils.” The authorities have also economically marginalized the Uyghurs in East Turkestan through intense and blatant racial discrimination in employment.

The Uyghurs are a Turkic people and have long practiced a moderate, traditional form of Sunni Islam, strongly imbued with the folklore and traditions of a rural, oasis-dwelling population.

East Turkestan

East Turkestan lies in the very heart of Asia. Situated along the fabled ancient Silk Road, it has been a prominent centre of commerce for more than 2000 years. The current territorial size of East Turkestan is 1.82 million square kilometers. The neighboring Chinese province annexed part of the territory as a result of the Chinese communist invasion of 1949.

East Turkestan borders with China and Mongolia to the east, Russia to the north, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to the west, and Tibet to the south.

According to latest Chinese census in 2010, the current population of East Turkestan is 21.81 million including 8.75 million ethnic Han Chinese (40.1%) illegal settled in East Turkestan after 1949 (the ethnic Han Chinese numbered 200,000 in 1949). The Uyghurs make up around 10.2 million Uyghurs and...
(according to the 2000 census; the numbers for 2010 have not been published yet) and constitute still the majority of East Turkestan. However, the population shifts more and more in favor of the Han Chinese and make the Uyghurs strangers in their own land. However, Uyghur sources put the real population of Uyghurs around 20 million.

**Events of 5 July 2009**

The human rights situation of the Uyghur population in East Turkestan has been dire for decades and has even worsened since the July 2009 protest and ethnic unrest in Urumqi, the capital of East Turkestan.

The July 2009 protest began with a peaceful demonstration by Uyghurs in Urumqi that was brutally and lethally suppressed by Chinese security forces. The Uyghurs were protesting against a lack of government action in regard to a deadly attack on Uyghur factory workers in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province in the south of China. The violent and illegal reaction of the Chinese security forces to the peaceful protest led then to ethnic violence and riots between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, during which hundreds of Uyghur and Han Chinese civilians were killed.

According to data published by the Chinese Xinhua news agency, 197 people were killed, but the World Uyghur Congress estimates – based on eyewitness reports - that more than 1000 people died in the riots. However, until today, the exact death toll on both sides is not clear since so far no independent investigation of these events has been undertaken.

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**ABOUT THE WORLD UYGHUR CONGRESS**

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) is an international umbrella organization that represents the collective interest of the Uyghur people both in East Turkestan and abroad and promotes Uyghur human rights and a peaceful and non-violent solution based on rule of law for the conflict in East Turkestan. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

WUC’s monthly newsletter provides the latest information on Uyghur related issues and informs about the work and activities of the WUC and its affiliate members. Older editions of the newsletter can be viewed from the [web](#).

To subscribe for WUC’s e-mail service, please fill in this [form](#). If you wish to stop receiving e-mails from the World Uyghur Congress, please send an e-mail with “unsubscribe” in the subject to [contact@uyghurcongress.org](mailto:contact@uyghurcongress.org).

**Support the World Uyghur Congress!**

The WUC is organised as a non-profit organisation and relies on membership fees, grants and donations, which help the organisation to sustain its work and activities. Your donation will support our efforts to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future.

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Account No.: 244 089 901

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Thank you for your continued support.

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