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**Uyghur situation in Central Asia countries
(In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan)**

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Uyghur Human Rights situation in Central Asia countries (in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan)

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Central Asia countries as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan are home to Uyghur minorities. According to the official information from those countries, there are about 250 thousand Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, 50 thousand Uyghurs in Kyrgyzstan and 40 thousand Uyghurs in Uzbekistan. However, many Uyghur activists say the real number is much higher. We believe the population is at least about 1 million Uyghurs in those countries.

Uyghur minorities in Central Asia suffer living under unequal political, cultural and economic policies in their own land.

The situation has been strengthened in recent years under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which groups China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Because of this, the political activities of the Uyghur people in Central Asia have been greatly suppressed in all these countries.

The leader of Uyghuristan liberation movement based in Kazakhstan, Mr. Hashir Vahidi was in 1997 murdered with brutal methods by unknown people at his home, Kazakhstan.

The chairman of the Uyghur Association of the Kyrgyzstan Republic based in Bishkek, Mr. Nighmet Bosakup was shot to death in Kyrgyzstan by unknown people on March 28, 2000,

The chairman of Uzbekistan Uyghur writers association, the well-known writer Eminjan Osmanov was murdered in Uzbekistan by unknown people in March, 2001.

The Chairwoman of "Nuzugum Foundation" in Kazakhstan, Ms. Dilbirim Samsakova was murdered by unknown people in July, 2001, in Kazakhstan.

This has negative impact on the lives of Uyghur people. They feel that their life is under threat. Therefore, individual Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, especially those who are involved in political activities, were forced to escape to democratic countries for their personal safety.

The authorities have also become increasingly more alarmed because of the strength of the declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In addition, even today the Uyghur refugees are still under investigation by the members of the securities services, like former KGB from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Uyghur asylum seekers in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan face an ever-present risk of being detained by the police as "illegal immigrants", which puts them in greater danger of being forcibly returned to China. An Amnesty International report said that Kazakhstan may have returned around 20 Uyghurs, and Kyrgyzstan around 50 Uyghurs in recent years, but the exact number is impossible to determine.

In 1999, after the Kazakhstan authorities sent the political individuals: Hemit Memet, Kasim Mehpir, Ilyas Zordon, Zulikar Memet, Seydehmet Memet and others back to the Chinese; these people were executed on the 3rd of October 2000.

On 23 May 2002, two Uyghur activists, **Memet Sadik (or Mamet Sadyk)** and **Memet Yasin (or Mamet Yasyin)** were reportedly handed over to China by the Kyrgyz authorities (ETIC report 2003, 5 Sept 2003, p.13, quoting Kyrgyz news agency.)

On 31 March 2004, it was reported in the official Chinese media that two men, **Rahmutulla Islayil** and **Arken Yakuf** had been executed after being transferred to China from Kyrgyzstan in July 2002. (Xinhua, 30 March 2004.)

In March 12, 2001, three Uyghurs, namely Ahmet Günen, Berhamjan Elimov, and Esker Tohti, were sentenced to death penalty and another Uyghur, Ali Mesum, was sentenced to 25 years long term imprisonment by the supreme court of Kyrgyzstan.

On 31 December 2002 in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, three Uyghurs, **Ablimit, Tohti Niyaz** and **Kayser Jalal**, were reportedly sentenced to 16, 17 and 25 years in prison respectively for forming an “unlawful East Turkistan organization”.

In April or May 2003, **Abdukakhar Idris**, a Uighur asylum seeker reportedly “disappeared” in Almaty, Kazakhstan. We believe he was detained and forcibly returned to China.

In late 2001, two Uighurs, **Ahat Memet** (aged 21) and **Turgan Abbas** (aged 27), religious students, went missing in Kazakhstan and we believe they have been forcibly returned to China. They had fled from East Turkistan in August 1999.

In May 2006, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights said Yusuf Kadir Tohti and Abdulkadir Sidik went missing in Kazakhstan. Amnesty International reported on June 27, 2006 that Yusuf Kadir Tohti and Abdulkadir Sidik were returned from Kazakhstan on May 10, 2006. The two men are at risk of serious human rights violations and possibly the death penalty.

On May 11, 2007, Uzbekistan authority arrested Uyghur millionaire Rehmetjan Ehmet suspected of “supporting Uyghur’s human rights”. 30 years old Rehmetjan Ehmet was successful businessman, temporary living in Uzbekistan for his business affairs. According to the news he was immediately after his arrest sent to China where he is unquestionably to face torture even execution.

In March 2006, Uzbek authorities arrested Canadian citizen and ethnic Uyghur Huseyin Celil, during a visit to Uzbekistan, at the request of the Chinese government, and later handed over him to China to face charges of “terrorism.” The Chinese government reportedly in April 2007 sentenced Husen Celil to life imprisonment. According to Celil’s mother, he was tortured to force him to make and sign a confession that had already been prepared by the Chinese authorities. The Canadian government has expressed great concern about his case. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper raised Celil’s case directly with Chinese President Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting last November in Vietnam. However, in spite of the direct intervention by Prime Minister Harper, the Chinese government continues to deny Canadian consular access as required by international law, and to hold Celil as a “terrorist.”

Under the pressure and request of Chinese government, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are not only violating the human rights of the Uyghur who are living in those countries but also discriminate Uyghur people in the fields of education and economics.

Although the Uyghur population is one of the largest minorities among those countries, nevertheless, numbers of the Uyghurs who hold positions among government officials and legitimate organs are extremely few.

In recent years, the cultural and educational rights of the Uyghur people have also worsened gradually. During the time of the Soviet Union, there were around 60 Uyghur school but in recently years some of those schools were dissolved and some of them were changed to Uyghur classrooms within Russian or Kazakh schools. Currently, there are only 13 Uyghur schools in Central Asia.

Some of the Uyghur newspapers, Radio, TV and theatres were demolished completely.

The Uyghur Voice newspaper was published 5 times a week for a long time, however, now it is published only once a week. The New Life newspaper was forcefully shut down in January 2005. The Uyghur radio which broadcasted one hour daily, now broadcast for 30 minutes per week. Uyghur TV used to televise one hour five times a week, right now it is only one 20 minutes program a week.

The Uyghur research institute, a branch from Kazakhstan scientific academy was an important research center with full research staff of 80 to 90 peoples until 1991. Today this centre has been reformed and minimized to a Uyghur service from East Study institute. Many research staff from the original Uyghur research institute were laid off from their jobs. Today, only 15 staff work in this Uyghur service.

In 2002, the main trade center of the Uyghur in Bishkek was burned down by unknown arsonists. This “bazaar” had a trade volume of 150 million dollars annually. Chinese were accusing the Uyghur traders in the bazaar for financing anti-Chinese activities.

As of November 2003, Kyrgyzstan has allowed Chinese secret police to keep a close eye on Uyghur dissidents in that country. Since then several Uyghur have disappeared without leaving any trace. Uyghur believe that they have been abducted by the Chinese secret police.

These are just some example of Uyghurs being prosecuted. For more information please contact us.