

**Written Statement of Ilshat Hassan Kokbore**

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**Congressional-Executive Commission on China Hearing**

**The Long Arm of China: Global Efforts to Silence Critics From Tiananmen to Today**

May 24, 2016

Good afternoon.

I would like to first thank the CECC for holding this important hearing today, and for inviting me to participate. I am a victim of the Chinese government's constant political persecution, and a human rights activist living in the U.S.

Personally, I hope the U.S. government and U.S. Congress can understand the Chinese government's long arm, which stretches beyond China's borders to overseas, to threaten and harass overseas human rights activists. I hope the U.S. government and Congress will act to hold the Chinese government accountable for its vicious actions.

This is my personal story.

My name is Ilshat Hassan Kokbore, also known as Ilshat Hassan. I was born in Ghulja, East Turkistan.

I have been politically active against communist Chinese rule in East Turkistan since studying at university in the 1980s. Constantly under harassment, threats, and persecution from the regional government's secret service agency, I was forced to leave East Turkistan in November 2003, leaving behind my parents, sisters and brothers, wife, and child. After three years of waiting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for resettlement as a refugee, in July 2006, I came to the U.S.

After coming to the U.S., I joined the Uyghur American Association (UAA) and became a very active member of UAA. I actively participated, organizing demonstrations against the Chinese government's occupation of East Turkistan, attending and holding conferences to expose the Chinese government's cruel policy against the Uyghur people, and writing articles in Chinese to rebuke their claim over East Turkistan.

My political activities greatly agitated the Chinese government. In the beginning, the Chinese government held my family members hostage, denying my wife and son passports; inhumanely causing the forced separation of my family. I was only able to meet with my son after 10 years of long-suffering separation.

After losing the hope of getting a passport for my wife, and also of protecting her from constant harassment from the Chinese government and secret agents, I had to make the painful decision to get a divorce. But that didn't stop the Chinese government from continuing to harass and threaten my ex-wife, and she was continually under surveillance and threats.

In order to pressure me to stop my political activities, on August 17, 2014, at midnight, Chinese authorities burst into my elder sister's house around 1:30 a.m.; after searching her house and taking her son's computer, she was detained in an undisclosed place for around 8-10 months, without any charge.

Even though she was released, she still has to report to the local police regularly, and has to get approval even to visit our parents.

On the same day, August 17, 2014, RFA journalist Shohret Hoshur's two brothers were detained, and were later sentenced. This was obvious retaliation against Mr. Hoshur, who revealed a great deal about Chinese police brutality against Uyghurs.

As we all know, prominent Uyghur leader, human rights champion, and World Uyghur Congress (WUC) president Mrs. Rebiya Kadeer has constantly been accused by the Chinese government of being an evil separatist; and her two sons were sentenced to jail as retaliation from the Chinese government.

The Chinese government pressured one of Mrs. Kadeer's imprisoned sons to condemn his mother, and to accuse Mrs. Kadeer of being an evil criminal. As normal, civilized human beings, we cannot imagine under what circumstances, and under what kind of pressure, a son was forced to condemn his dearest mother, accusing his own mother publicly of being a criminal!

Dolkun Isa, another prominent Uyghur human rights activist, and chair of the WUC executive committee, was recently preparing to attend a meeting held in Dharamsala, India. The Indian government, after issuing a visa to Mr. Isa, and under the Chinese government's pressure, cancelled the visa, denying Mr. Isa entry into India.

In late 2009, Mr. Isa, as a German citizen, was in immediate danger of being repatriated back to China when he tried to enter South Korea to attend a human rights conference. He was put in solitary confinement for more than three days, before the U.S. and European Union intervened.

The Chinese government has constantly tried to block all of Mr. Isa's political activities by claiming he is a wanted terrorist according to an Interpol red notice, baselessly accusing him of supporting and funding terrorists.

Recently, another friend of mine, a Uyghur who is a Norwegian citizen, called me and told me that his family members living in East Turkistan were being harassed by the Chinese government; some of his family members were brought to the police station and interrogated for several hours, and they were told to tell him to stop any activities supporting Uyghurs.

Of course, we all know about the Uyghur refugees who managed to get out of China; but unfortunately, they were sent back to China by some irresponsible countries when they were in the process of applying for UNHCR refugee status. Some of them were directly interrogated by Chinese police in other countries, and their family members were threatened. After they were repatriated, most of them disappeared, and some of them were given harsh sentences.

The story of Uyghurs facing the Chinese government's constant persecution, harassment, and threats goes on and on. Even Uyghurs who live overseas can't be spared from the inhuman political persecution of the Chinese government. The Chinese government's long arm keeps stretching longer and longer. It's obvious that if China isn't pressured to stop this kind of harassment, no one will be safe, regardless of where we live.