

**Statement by Oyunbilig, Executive Director of
Inner Mongolian People's Party (IMPP) to
the Congressional Executive Commission on China,
December 9, 2002**

Members of the Commission, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I thank the commission for giving me this opportunity to speak on the human rights situation in Inner Mongolia. My name is Oyunbilig. I came to the United States from Inner Mongolia in 1995 and now I'm staying in the United States as a political asylee.

Due to the limited time, I'll be straight to the point. However, I do need to point out that the southern part of the Mongol land and its people had always been a part of the Mongol nation that came to exist in 13th century and that's where the name Inner Mongolia came to be. In 1947, the Chinese government setup the "Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region" against the will of the Mongol people. Since then, individual human rights have been deprived from the Mongols in Inner Mongolia, along with their political and civil rights as a people. For more than half a century, the Mongols in Inner Mongolia have witnessed some most horrifying events in our people's history: mass killings of innocent civilians; total destruction of the religious establishments; calculated and forced cultural assimilation that brought the Mongol culture and tradition to the brink of extinction; and catastrophic destruction of the grassland, just to name a few.

Now, I'll provide two cases as testimonies to what we are very concerned about.

The first one is the case of Mr. Hada and Mr. Tegexi. In 1992, Mr. Hada, Mr. Tegexi, and other Mongol students and intellectuals established the Southern Mongolian Democracy Alliance (SMDA). The goal of the SMDA was to promote and preserve Mongolian language, history and culture in Inner Mongolia and to strive for the civil and political rights for the Mongols.

In December 1995, Mr. Hada, Mr. Tegexi, and over 70 members and supporters of the SMDA were arrested after they organized peaceful demonstrations and student strikes at universities against the Chinese government's oppressive policies toward the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. On Dec. 6, 1996, Mr. Hada was charged with crimes of inciting separatism and was sentenced to 15 years in jail. Mr. Tegexi was accused of similar crimes and was sentenced to 10 years in jail. Today, Mr. Tegexi's whereabouts are not known.

According to Hada's wife, Ms. Xinna, Hada has been tortured by the prison guards constantly and suffers from a number of physical illnesses. Ms. Xinna was also arrested several times for giving interviews to foreign media, including Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. The bookstore they owned was shutdown and that left Ms. Xinna and their son Uiles with no reliable sources of living. In 2001, Hada's 16-year old son Uiles was expelled from school without sufficient explanations from the school. Later in Dec. 2001, he was arrested for alleged robbery and sentenced to two years in jail, again, without proper trial. According to Ms. Xinna, prison guards also beat Uiles several times.

The second case concerns the Chinese government's on-going effort to evict and re-locate Mongol herders by force.

In recent years, sand storms originated from the north have become a big problem for China as they grow in calamity and frequency. Beijing is one of the major cities hit by the sand storm, because of its close proximity to Inner Mongolia. Government officials in Beijing had long ignored the problem until they

were exposed to the threat of sand storms. However, they put the blame on the Mongol herders and their animals, instead of on their own policies toward Inner Mongolia. Since the early 1950's, the Chinese government moved millions of Han Chinese into Inner Mongolia as an attempt to make the occupation of Inner Mongolia a fait accompli. Most of these Han Chinese are peasants and their only means of life is to cultivate the land. Unsuitable for agricultural cultivation that strips the land of its topsoil, the Inner Mongolia steppe would turn into patches of desert after only a few years of farming, the consequence of which is threatening China's capital now.

The Chinese government started a program to forcefully relocate Mongol herders two years ago under the pretext that the main reason for the sand storms is overgrazing. According to the Xinhua News Agency, the program will resettle about 650,000 people in six years and most of them are Mongol herders. One of the nine prefectures of Inner Mongolia already declared a total ban on livestock herding. We have many reports from Inner Mongolia indicating that Mongol herders were asked to sell off their livestock and were forced out from their pastures into unfamiliar territory and unknown lifestyle, without any support from the government.

Members of commission, Mr. Hada and Mr. Tegexi are two of the few political prisoners who are serving ten or more years of prison terms in China. I would like to ask the commission and the U.S. congress to bring up their cases during the future contact with Chinese officials; I also ask you to urge the Chinese government to stop the relocation program that is aimed at the Mongol herders, and provide adequate support and subsidy for those already have been displaced.

Thank you very much.

Oyunbilig
Inner Mongolian People's Party
17125 King James Way, # 301
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Phone: (301) 990-7928

E-mail: oyunbilig@innermongolia.org