

Written Testimony of Rushan Abbas  
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Congress Executive Committee  
for  
**The Congressional-Executive Commission on China Hearing on “The Faces of Repression:  
Prisoners, Families, and Communities Targeted by the CCP”**

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Thank you to the Chairman and Commissioners for the opportunity to be present today and speak my truth before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). My name is Rushan Abbas, and I am the founder and Executive Director of Campaign for Uyghurs and a member of the International Advisory Board of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

I stand before you today not only to discuss the impacts of the Chinese communist government’s relentless oppression on Uyghur people, but also as living proof of the CCP’s transnational repression’s direct effects. And my family is living proof that Beijing’s reach follows us across every border we cross. Also, I come before you first and foremost as a sister to an innocent woman who has been jailed in China for the past 8 years in retaliation for my advocacy in the US as an Uyghur American.

Transnational repression refers to tactics designed to “monitor, influence, coerce, and silence political exiles, dissidents, and diaspora populations.”<sup>1</sup> Transnational repression can take many forms – harassment, surveillance, stalking, intimidation, and so much more. According to data from Freedom House, China is responsible for 22 to 30 percent of global instances of transnational repression. However, this number does not account for instances of digital surveillance, cyberharassment, and pressure on family members still living inside China, making the actual number both unknowable and likely much higher.

My own experiences with transnational repression have altered the course of my life in a permanent way. On September 5th 2018, I participated in a public panel at the Hudson Institute exposing the CCP’s mass detention of the Uyghurs by the millions, and genocidal policies against my people back home while outlining the fate of my in-laws. Just 5 days after that, Chinese authorities abducted my sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, as a hostage to intimidate me. My sister is a retired physician, a mother, and a grandmother – not a political person. She retired early due to health complications.

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Zenz and Muetter Tohti, "If You Fly to the Sky, I Can Catch You by Your Feet': Beijing's Transnational Authoritarian Control of Uyghur Diaspora Research and Documentation Efforts," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2026), <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2026.2726260>.

Her imprisonment is a blatant act of transnational repression—an attempt to punish me for speaking the truth and to send a chilling message to Uyghurs everywhere: speak out, and your family will pay the price. But Beijing’s cruelty did not silence me. It transformed the course of my life. I walked away from my professional career and became a full-time advocate for my people, determined to turn the pain they inflicted on my family into a relentless fight for freedom, justice, and accountability.

For years following my sister Gulshan’s abduction, my family was given no information about her health, safety, or whereabouts. Her case is a devastating example of a system that extends its punishment beyond individuals, targeting entire families simply for telling the truth.

Gulshan was later secretly sentenced to 20 years in prison. Gulshan turned 64 years old 3 months ago. For eight years, we have been denied meaningful access to her. We have received no independent proof of her health or well-being. Think about what this means.

I exercised my constitutional rights in the United States, yet an authoritarian regime thousands of miles away, the Chinese Communist Party, tried to punish me by making my beloved sister disappear.

Gulshan’s case is not an exception. It is part of a deliberate system of repression—one that targets advocates, dissidents, and members of ethnic and religious communities, both inside China and beyond its borders. At the same time, the Chinese Communist Party is carrying out what the United States and other governments have recognized as genocide against the Uyghur people. This campaign includes coercive birth-control measures, forced sterilization, forced abortions, and the forced marriage of Uyghur women and girls to Han Chinese men. Nearly 1 million Uyghur children have reportedly been separated from their families and placed in state-run boarding schools and orphanages, where they are subjected to political indoctrination and cut off from their language, culture, and identity.

Uyghurs are also subjected to forced labor in factories and across global supply chains, while the regime systematically erases Uyghur culture, language, religion, and heritage. New law, the “Ethnic Unity and Progress Law,” has taken effect on July 1, 2026, codifies this campaign of assimilation and cultural destruction. These policies form a coordinated effort to break the Uyghur people as a community and erase us as a distinct nation.

That is why I will not be intimidated or silenced. The Chinese government may have taken my sister, but it would not be able to take my voice. I will continue to expose these crimes, defend the rights of the Uyghur people, and demand freedom, justice, and accountability until this system of repression ends.

## **I. The Present Reality of Transnational Repression**

Recent whistleblower testimony from a former Chinese police officer provides extensive evidence that the Chinese government's system of repression in East Turkistan is not winding down, but continuing and intensifying. The testimony described by Zhang Yabo via the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation reinforces what Uyghurs have been saying for years: forced labor, mass detention, surveillance, and coercive assimilation remain integral tools of Beijing's campaign against the Uyghur people.<sup>2</sup> Their campaign of surveillance and transnational repression, in particular, continues to grow.

Transnational repression exists in many forms, as outlined above. Oftentimes, the CCP will punish activists and dissidents living abroad via their family still living within China's borders. The detention of my sister is one key example of this, but hardly the only example. By the summer of 2017, more than twenty members of my husband Abdulhakim Idris's family had disappeared into the Chinese government's system of mass detention. Among them were three of his sisters and their husbands. The "excessive religious activities" cited as justification for my sisters-in-law's disappearance amounted to nothing more than wearing headscarves and praying in their own homes. Their husbands, ordinary men who had committed no crime, were likewise detained for practicing their faith, including attending mosques. My brother-in-law was ultimately sentenced to 21 years in prison currently. This is how the CCP destroys families: not because people have committed crimes, but because their faith, identity, relationships, or the voices of relatives abroad are considered threats to the Party.

And Beijing increasingly reaches through third countries to exercise its arm of transnational repression against Uyghurs.

My husband Abdulhakim Idris traveled to Malaysia late March this year, to launch the Malay-language edition of his book "Menace: China's Colonization of the Islamic World & Uyghur Genocide," along with several new reports published by his organization, Center for Uyghur Studies. Upon arrival at the Kuala Lumpur airport, his U.S. passport was confiscated; he was detained by the Royal Malaysia Police, held for almost 22 hours without justification or adequate food or water, and forcibly escorted onto a deportation flight by four police officers. His Malaysian partner in Kuala Lumpur confirmed his denial of entry was the result of direct pressure from Beijing.

That should alarm every member of this Commission. A prominent Uyghur scholar—an American citizen carrying an American passport, was detained in Malaysia, denied entry, treated like a criminal, and forcibly deported.

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<sup>2</sup> "Unprecedented Whistleblower Testimony from Inside China's Police Apparatus Confirms Xinjiang Forced Labor Is Intensifying," Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, April 16, 2026, <https://victimsofcommunism.org/unprecedented-whistleblower-testimony-from-inside-chinas-police-apparatus-confirms-xinjiang-forced-labor-is-intensifying/>.

Think about what that means: China's transnational repression is no longer confined to silencing Uyghurs inside or outside of China. It is reaching across borders, targeting American citizens, and testing whether a U.S. passport still provides protection against Beijing's long arm of repression.

This is not only an attack on one Uyghur American. It is a challenge to American sovereignty, the safety of American citizens abroad, and the fundamental principle that Beijing does not get to decide where—or whether—Americans can exercise their freedoms.

Additionally, China operates more than 100 secret overseas police stations in 53 countries to monitor, silence, and harass activists and dissidents. Stories out of a number of countries, including the UK, United States, Canada, and others, document pressures on Uyghur diaspora communities, interrupt Uyghur people's pro-democracy activism, and more. The existence of these pressures intimidates diaspora communities into silence, making it especially difficult to collect testimony from witnesses or survivors of the CCP's oppression out of fear of retaliation.

Beijing is increasingly pairing traditional transnational repression with a more insidious tactic: transnational co-optation. Instead of relying solely on threats and intimidation, Chinese authorities exploit what Uyghurs in the diaspora want most, the ability to see, speak with, and protect their families. Family visits, permission to travel, employment, financial benefits, and other privileges can become tools of leverage, offered selectively in exchange for cooperation, compliance, or silence.

Uyghurs in the diaspora have largely been unable to communicate with or visit family members still living in our homeland, since the China government's genocide began with the "Strike Hard Campaign," launched in 2016. Uyghurs unable to communicate freely with them or return home without fear of detention or retaliation.

In recent years, Beijing has selectively allowed some diaspora Uyghurs to return for family visits. But these visits are not evidence of restored freedom. They can be tightly controlled and conditional. Some travelers have been required to undergo background checks and obtain advance approval from local authorities. Once inside the Uyghur homeland, their movements and daily activities may be closely monitored, with some required to report to authorities on Uyghurs living in diaspora.<sup>3</sup>

This is coercion disguised as permission. Beijing is weaponizing family ties and the basic human desire to see one's loved ones, turning access to family into a tool for surveillance, control, and influence against Uyghurs living in the free world.

The CCP also reaches us digitally.

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<sup>3</sup> "Visitors to Xinjiang Pressed to Monitor Activists, Australia's Uyghur Language Schools," Human Rights Watch, August 16, 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/08/16/australia-chinese-government-menaces-uyghur-diaspora>.

A video appeared on YouTube calling for the execution of my husband and me along with two other Uyghur advocates.

While I was traveling for an Uyghur conference in Sarajevo, I received emails welcoming me to the country and asking me what color rifle I would prefer to be shot with.

Last year, I published my memoir, *Unbroken: One Uyghur's Fight for Freedom*, and two fake memoirs showed up on Amazon claiming to tell my life stories with false narratives.

More recently, trolls discovered information about our son's upcoming wedding in Washington and circulated fake invitations containing false information to our friends and family.

Imagine that. And it gets deeper.

Some longtime Uyghur friends or even distant relatives living in democratic countries are afraid to attend the wedding because they fear that simply being at our son's wedding could bring retaliation against their parents, siblings, or relatives still living under Chinese rule.

The CCP does not always need to arrest someone in a democratic free country. Sometimes it only needs to convince that person that someone they love will suffer if they speak, assemble, protest, travel, or even attend a wedding.

Fear becomes a prison.

And the prison has no borders.

Beijing's transnational repression is designed to discredit survivors, spread disinformation, intimidate activists into silence, and isolate advocates like us. These acts are deliberately structured to be difficult to detect, document, and confront. They rely not only on overt threats, but also on pressure against family members, surveillance, intimidation, coercion, and manipulation—methods that can devastate their targets while remaining hidden from public view.

That is precisely what makes criminal act of transnational repression so dangerous: Beijing seeks to make the cost of speaking out unbearable, while making the repression itself difficult for democratic governments to see, prove, and stop.

## **II. Ethnic Unity Law and its Impacts on TNR**

The Chinese government's new Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, adopted in March 2026 and implemented on July 1, represents a dangerous escalation of Beijing's transnational repression. Article 63 codifies Beijing's claimed authority to pursue individuals and organizations beyond China's borders for activities it deems to undermine "ethnic unity."

In June 2026, a senior Chinese official went even further, asserting that China has the right to target people outside its borders who violate the law and describing such actions as legal and necessary.

Beijing has long used threats against family members, intimidation, surveillance, and coercion to silence Uyghurs abroad. Now it is attempting to give these practices a veneer of legality, and to assert that its power to punish dissent follows Uyghurs wherever we live.

For Uyghurs in the diaspora, the implications are chilling. Peaceful advocacy, documenting human rights abuses, preserving Uyghur identity, or calling for the release of political prisoners can all be portrayed by Beijing as threats to this new law or acts of “separatism.”

Consider what that means for Uyghur Americans. Documenting genocide could be characterized as undermining ethnic unity. Defending our identity could be characterized as separatism. Calling for political prisoners to be freed could become an offense. Even speaking before the United States Congress as I am doing today, could potentially be characterized by Beijing as conduct subject to punishment.

I reject that claim.

Beijing does not determine what an American citizen may say in Washington. The Chinese Communist Party does not determine which meetings we may attend, which organizations we may join, whom we may criticize, or whether we may speak about the genocide of our people. And no foreign authoritarian government should be permitted to weaponize the families of American citizens to suppress constitutionally protected speech in the United States.

Article 63 therefore cannot be dismissed as merely another provision of Chinese domestic law. It must be understood for what it explicitly asserts: Beijing’s claimed authority to reach beyond China’s borders.

That claim must be rejected—clearly, publicly, and unequivocally.

### **III. Recommendations for Congressional Action**

Awareness of this crisis is not enough on its own. This Commission and the U.S. Congress both have concrete tools within reach to address the CCP’s genocidal crimes and transnational repression, horrific forced organ harvesting and I respectfully urge the following:

A. Pass pending legislation that directly targets transnational repression.

1. Pass the bipartisan, bicameral Transnational Repression Policy Act (S. 2525/H.R. 4829).<sup>4</sup> It would codify a U.S. policy of combating transnational repression, require a State Department-led interagency strategy comprising diplomatic, foreign assistance, and law enforcement elements, authorize relevant training for federal, state, and local officials, and require certain outreach and

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<sup>4</sup> Congress.gov. "H.R.4829 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): Transnational Repression Policy Act." August 1, 2025. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4829>.

other activities by DOJ, including a dedicated tip line for transnational repression reporting with the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice.

2. Pass the Uyghur Policy Act of 2026 (S. 1542),<sup>5</sup> advanced by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this June. The bill would direct the State Department to prioritize policies supporting Uyghurs, maintain contact with Uyghur religious and political leaders, and establish a reporting mechanism for individuals to flag incidents of transnational repression. I urge the full Senate and House to pass it and send it to the President's desk before this Congress ends.

3. Pass the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act of 2025 (H.R. 1503). The House passed this legislation by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 406–1, and the Senate should act. The bill would make combating forced organ harvesting and trafficking for organ removal U.S. policy; require sanctions against individuals and entities involved in these abuses; strengthen visa restrictions and accountability mechanisms; and require reporting on forced organ harvesting in foreign countries. It would also explicitly establish U.S. policy to hold accountable those implicated in forced organ harvesting, including members of the Chinese Communist Party.

4. Pass the bipartisan Uyghur Genocide Accountability and Sanctions Act (S. 2560/H.R. 4830). The legislation would strengthen accountability for the ongoing atrocities against Uyghurs by expanding sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for or complicit in serious human rights abuses; strengthen restrictions against perpetrators of forced abortions and forced sterilizations; support documentation and preservation of evidence of genocide and crimes against humanity; counter PRC propaganda denying or obscuring these atrocities; support the preservation of Uyghur cultural and linguistic heritage; and require a U.S. strategy to deter and disrupt forced organ harvesting in China, including a determination of whether forced organ harvesting has occurred in the Uyghur Region since 2017. It would provide the United States with stronger tools not only to condemn the Uyghur genocide, but to identify its perpetrators, impose consequences, preserve evidence, and pursue meaningful accountability.

5. Support legislation to sanction and expel unauthorized PRC policing operations on U.S. soil, building on bills such as the Expel Illegal Chinese Police Act,<sup>6</sup> so that anyone who helps stand up an overseas police station here faces real consequences rather than diplomatic silence.

B. Put existing accountability tools to fuller use.

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<sup>5</sup>Congress.gov. "H.R.2635 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): Uyghur Policy Act of 2025." September 3, 2025. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2635>.

<sup>6</sup>Congress.gov. "S.49 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): Expel Illegal Chinese Police Act of 2025." January 9, 2025. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/49>.

6. Direct Treasury to designate, under the Global Magnitsky authority Congress already extended through 2030, the specific officials responsible for enforcing kin-punishment campaigns and the new Ethnic Unity Law's extraterritorial provisions.

7. Continue and expand the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List,<sup>7</sup> which DHS just grew to 187 entities in its largest-ever expansion, and ensure enforcement funding keeps pace with the caseload.

8. Direct the State Department to issue a clear, public condemnation of Article 63 of the Ethnic Unity Law and Beijing's claimed authority to pursue individuals and organizations beyond its borders for "undermining ethnic unity" or "promoting separatism." This statement should explicitly affirm that the United States does not recognize any foreign law's jurisdiction over constitutionally protected speech, advocacy, or religious practice by U.S. citizens and residents. It should also put Beijing on notice that any attempt to enforce Article 63 against a person in the United States, whether through harassment, surveillance, or pressure on family members still in China, will carry diplomatic consequences. This condemnation should be raised as a standing agenda item in bilateral talks with Chinese officials, not left as an unaddressed footnote to the broader relationship.

#### C. Protect and support diaspora communities directly.

9. Fund and publicize the community tip line and training programs called for in the Transnational Repression Policy Act, so Uyghur-Americans facing harassment know where to report it and can expect a response.

10. Establish or expand expedited protective pathways, such as asylum processing and humanitarian parole, for family members of U.S.-based activists who are at heightened risk of retaliatory detention, as my sister was.

11. Continue to name Dr. Gulshan Abbas specifically in Congressional statements and any high-level engagement with Chinese officials, and press for her case to be raised as a precondition in future bilateral talks, not treated as background noise.

### **IV. A Call for Continued US Leadership and Engagement**

I urge U.S. policymakers not to allow the Uyghur genocide to become yesterday's crisis. The Chinese government is counting on the world becoming distracted, fatigued, or silent. That is particularly dangerous for those of us living in the Uyghur diaspora, because Beijing's repression does not stop at China's borders. When international attention fades, transnational repression becomes easier to carry out in the shadows. Uyghurs abroad are surveilled, intimidated, harassed,

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<sup>7</sup>U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "UFLPA Entity List," <https://www.dhs.gov/uflpa-entity-list>.

and threatened, while our family members inside China can be punished in retaliation for our advocacy.

The possibility that the United States could weaken or abandon its genocide determination would be especially damaging. It would not only undermine the international recognition of what has happened to the Uyghur people, but could also embolden Beijing to intensify its efforts to silence Uyghurs abroad. The Chinese government needs to know that imprisoning the family members of activists, threatening Uyghurs in the United States, and attempting to suppress our advocacy will carry consequences.

The case of my sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, and all of the instances documented above demonstrate exactly why sustained American leadership on this issue matters. Every time a Uyghur activist is threatened, every time a family member is punished, and every time someone is pressured into silence, Beijing is testing whether the United States will stand behind those who speak against its abuses and protect Uyghur Americans' freedom of speech in this home of the brave and land of the free.

We cannot allow the answer to become uncertain.