

## **Uyghur Tribunal - Fact Witness Statement**

**UTFW2-039 – Rahima Mohammed Nuri**

### **SUMMARY**

The witness is a qualified nurse who, from mid-1999 until the end of 2000, worked at a hospital in Hotan city. She worked in the maternity department focusing on abortion operations. About 100 women came to the hospital for abortions every day. The majority of women who came for abortions were Uyghur, and a small minority were Han Chinese women.

There are two departments in the hospital. One department deals with abortions of women who are pregnant of up to three months. In most cases, these women went for an abortion voluntarily to avoid hefty fines. However, another department, where the witness worked, dealt with women who are pregnant for four months and above. In this case, it was clear that the women were forced to undertake the abortions.

Women were also given different kinds of medicines. One medicine (Misoprostol (米索前列醇)) was given to women in their seven to nine months of their pregnancy. This medicine was white, round and looked like aspirin. It was used to relax and open the cervix. Another medicine was an injection given to women, together with (Misoprostol (米索前列醇)). This injection served to induce contractions.

After leaving the hospital, the witness opened a pharmacy where, amongst others, she helped women remove their IUDs. In China, private clinics and pharmacies do not have the right to remove IUDs, so these IUD removals were conducted in secret. Between 2002 and 2007, she helped approximately 70 women a month to remove IUDs. All of them were Uyghurs. This was because, when Han Chinese women wished to remove IUDs, they could go to a government hospital. But when Uyghur women wanted to remove IUDs, it was not possible to go to a government hospital. So, Uyghur women had to remove their IUDs in secret.

**Witness Statement**  
**Rahima Mohammed Nuri**

**Female, 42**

I was born on 7 December 1978 in Hotan city. I first studied at Xinjiang University, but was expelled from the university for wearing a hijab. I later studied at a vocational school in Xinjiang and received a nursing certificate. Later, my family established a kindergarten and I began to work in education. I moved to Turkey on 16 August 2016. I am married and have eight children. In Turkey, I work as a primary school teacher.

1. I worked at a hospital in Hotan city from mid-1999 until the end of 2000. I worked in the maternity department focusing on abortion operations. About 100 women came to the hospital for abortions every day. Some of these women came on their own accord but the majority were referred there by the Family Planning Office.
2. The foetuses were disposed of in a garbage basket, which was then handled by the hospital.
3. The majority of women who came for abortions were Uyghur, and a small minority were Han Chinese women. The policies for whom was forced to undertake an abortion were decided by the Family Planning Office. Many of the women who came to do the abortion operation were forced to undertake such abortions by this Office. Each woman was accompanied by a Family Planning Officer, and they could not refuse to do it. Some women however undertook these abortion operations voluntarily, to avoid having to pay hefty fines for any children above the allowed limits.
4. In my studies, undertaking abortion operations was not covered in the syllabus. I learnt how to undertake these operations in private clinics, where I did work experience. My mentor taught me how to undertake these operations. After this work experience, I received a certificate, and I was employed at a government hospital.

5. There are two departments in the hospital. One department deals with abortions of women who are pregnant of up to three months. In most cases, these women went for an abortion voluntarily to avoid hefty fines. However, another department, where I worked, dealt with women who are pregnant for four months and above. In this case, it was clear that the women were forced to undertake the abortions. I thought abortions at this late stage were unethical and they also posed risks to the mothers. This was part of the reason why I decided to resign.
6. However, I never raised any of my ethical concerns with the hospital administration because I was aware that my opinions would not be heard. However, between nurses and some doctors, we talked about how many abortion operations we undertook per day. But nobody dared to raise their concerns with the hospital administration.
7. Women were also given three different kinds of medicines. One medicine (Misoprostol (米索前列醇)) was given to women in their seven to nine months of their pregnancy. This medicine was white, round and looked like aspirin. This medicine was divided into four, consecutive doses. It was used to relax and open the cervix. This was the first step in the performance of the abortion operation. Another medicine was an injection given to women, together with (Misoprostol (米索前列醇)). This injection served to induce contractions.
8. There was also a third kind of medicine that women had to take for over two months. But I do not remember the purpose of this medicine in detail.
9. I decided to resign after one and a half years working in this hospital because, after some time, I understood that what I was doing was unethical, particularly towards the unborn babies. However, I never shared my concerns with the hospital administration, and I kept them to myself.

10. After leaving the hospital, I got married and, together with my husband, we opened a pharmacy where, amongst others, we helped women remove their IUDs. In China, private clinics and pharmacies do not have the right to remove IUDs, so these IUD removals were conducted in secret. Between 2002 and 2007, we helped approximately 70 women a month to remove IUDs. All of them were Uyghurs. This was because, when Han Chinese women wished to remove IUDs, they could go to a government hospital. But when Uyghur women wanted to remove IUDs, it was not possible to go to a government hospital. So, Uyghur women had to remove their IUDs in secret. I know that our pharmacy was not the only one undertaking such secret IUD removal. I have heard of several other clinics.
11. However, where Uyghur women whose IUDs were removed “illegally” subsequently have children, they cannot register their children. Nor can they go to school. Usually, families would have to build an underground room where they kept those children hidden from the Family Planning officials. These children therefore had to remain hidden and could not be educated in a normal school.
12. After 2007, I got pregnant and we moved into the centre of Hotan city. There my family established kindergarten for Uyghur children. However, after running it for two years, the Chinese authorities forced us to close the school down. We were forced to close the kindergarten down because the authorities said that we were teaching the Qu’ran. But this was not true.
13. After 2009, I got pregnant again. And we had to move from apartment to apartment to avoid being seen by governmental officials. However, from 2010, the family planning in China got stricter. So, in 2016, my family decided to move to Turkey.
14. My sister worked at the Family Planning Office for around 10 to 15 years. However, after this period, she resigned this position. But soon after she resigned, she was imprisoned for refusing to continue to work at the Family Planning Office. I have lost contact with her and have no news about her whereabouts.

15. My sister-in-law worked as a nurse in a hospital in Hotan. However, she also decided to resign from her position because of the conditions in the hospital. And shortly afterwards she was imprisoned. I have no news from her.

**I have read and understood this witness statement and I confirm that I agree with its contents. I understand that this statement will be published on the Uyghur Tribunal website and will be available to the general public online.**

**Signature:** Rahima Mohammed Nuri

**Date:** 09/09/2021