



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Witness Name: Habibulla Achad		
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Transcript included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>

*Please note that all recordings of the Uyghur Tribunal hearings can be found on You Tube: [Uyghur Tribunal - YouTube](#)

Witness Statement

Habibulla Achad

Male Age 50

1. My name is Habibulla Achad. I was born in Actur Hamlet, Chimen village, Kuchar County on 15 August 1970. I fled China in 1995 as I feared being detained for attending an Islamic religious school. As a result of my fleeing, my family has been targeted for monitoring and punishment from Chinese authorities. In 2000 my parents were detained for 15 days, relating to my fleeing aboard. I learned in late 2016 / early 2017 from a contact in China that two of my family members had been sent to a concentration camp. I have had no contact direct, or indirect, with my family since then. I currently live in Germany.
2. Between the 1980s until 1995, I lived in a well-known family in Kucha. My uncle was the secretary of the village and a CCP-member and my father was a government employee, he worked as the village secretary for 40 years, who refused to join the CCP. In 1983 I started to attend a religious school. Between the 1980s to 1990s, the Chinese government permitted legal Islamic education. Since 1990, I stopped attending this school as it was heavily controlled by the police – it wasn't an open educational system anymore. Around that time, people around me (including my father's friends) told me they wouldn't be able to protect me in the future as they had access to the new policies that those with a religious background would be targeted for arrest by the authorities.
3. Starting in 1991, there was several rebellions in Kuchar county. Since then, the government started to arrest people who attended Islamic religious school secretly. In Kucha, I attended the final judgement for 5 boys (names: Himit Talip, Helil Altun, Idris Omer, Memet Yunus, Himit Mehsum) – they were sentenced to death as it was claimed they committed theft. They all studied Islam; they were the best students at the Islamic religious school. Except for this they had committed no crimes or had criminal records. Besides them, between 1992 – 1994, a lot of people from in Kuchar county were secretly arrested. The two heads of the Islamic religious school were arrested. Hundreds of other students who attended that Islamic school were secretly arrested too. I believe those boys were arrested because of their appearance in a video, where a leader of the school, Karim Kari, gave a speech in 1990s. His speeches were non-political speeches, which promoted a moderate form of Islam. Once his speech was recorded and the video was leaked out to Chinese authorities – anyone identified in this video was arrested. I was there when the video was taken, but luckily, I was behind a tree and so I could not be identified.

This happened between 1993- 1994. I have never been arrested by the authorities in China.

4. As a result of his growing concern, my father sent me out of China in 1995. I came to Almaty in Kazakhstan in January 1996 and there is a Uyghur community there where I established my new life, marrying my current wife
5. I was in contact with my father between 1998-1999. At that time, my family was considered as a mistrusted family and was to be subject to enhanced monitoring from the authorities. The government pressured my parents to bring me back to China. In February or March 2000, my parents were detained for 15 days in a prison because I travelled out of China. I learned this information from my parents by direct phone call from my mother after she was released. My parents have been pressured by the government to call me. They have avoided contacting me by denying they know my whereabouts or phone number. After I left China, my family has been receiving a roughly twice-monthly police visit. The main question the police asked was about my whereabouts. Because my family had become a mistrusted family, my brothers endured barriers to their businesses. Since I left in 1995, a lot of troubles have happened to my family.
6. I travelled to Kazakhstan with a travel document (not a passport). That caused me a lot of troubles. I was in prison in Almaty because of illegal residency. In 2000, Kazakhstan had an extradition treaty with China. This was around the same time as my parent's detention – so I believe there was some connection with my detention and theirs. I was facing a lot of problems and was being prepared to be sent back to China from August 2000 to May 2001. On 23 July 2001, I fled to Germany due to fear of what would happen to me in China. I have no criminal record, have committed no crimes – I was just a regular student studying Islam. I believe this all happened to me and my family due to my attendance at this Islamic school.
7. I kept in contact with my father until he died in 2015. The last time I had contact with my family was in end of 2015, when my father died. At that time, I was in regular contact with family members for 2 months. Other relatives were too scared to contact me, but the death of my father led my relatives to contact me for 2 months to discuss the funeral. All of my contacts with China were via direct phone calls.
8. I had been in contact indirectly with my family through an intermediary in Urumqi by direct phone calls. This continued until late 2016 / early 2017. At that time, my friend found out that this communication was not safe, and she has stopped being an intermediary. Since then, absolutely no contact has taken place.
9. This intermediary in Urumqi brought me messages about my family. The first; my sisters- husband was “taken to the hospital” – I didn't understand what this meant at the time, but later on I found out that meant “taken to the concentration

camp". The second; my nieces' husband "became disabled" – I didn't understand what this meant at the time, but later on I found out that meant he was "given a life sentence". Since I didn't understand what "hospital" and "handicap" meant, I asked the intermediary on a second call and then she told me on that call that they used those terms to avoid censorship and clarified what she meant by them both. She said on that last phone call she said he shouldn't call anymore and that was the last he heard from here. This was the last contact with China.

10. Since 2003, after I came to Germany, in 2005 I opened a shop in Germany – I pay my taxes. The reason I am telling my story is because I have sacrificed a lot in order to live in a free country with human rights.
11. Except for me, all relatives are in China. I have 6 siblings, 2 older brothers, 2 older sisters, 1 younger brother, 1 younger sister. I know nothing as to their status. My families are religious brothers with beard, sisters with hijab. Also, my siblings have a lot of children, all with four- minimum China. All these are considered significant factors that contribute to getting people into camps or imprisoned. Therefore, I shall testify for my 36 relatives in total.

4630 **6 June 2021 (03: 14:10 – 03:50:40)**

4631 **Habibulla Achad UTFW-060**

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4633 *Counsel – In your statement you refer to the early 1990s that people told you they wouldn't*
4634 *be able to protect you in the future that those with a religious background would be*
4635 *targeted for arrest.*

4636 HA – We enjoyed a relatively better freedom between 1980s/early 1990s and since the
4637 early 1990s after the uprising there was a crackdown on religious behaviour. During this
4638 religious crackdown the first target were the young students who studied religion. My

4639 father's friends told him that the friendship will not save your son, it is better to let him go
4640 somewhere safe.

4641 *Counsel – You say they had this information on the basis of some policies?*

4642 HA – It is not possible for me to know the exact policy, but I was warned through my father
4643 and his close acquaintances, one man specifically who warned this was the new policies
4644 are implemented and it will be extremely difficult to protect religious people, especially
4645 young terrorists. Also because of a teacher, a fellow religious teacher, anyone who had
4646 lessons from him were being targeted.

4647 *Counsel – The coded language you refer to in your statement, why is there a need for the
4648 coded language and what was it used for? What were individuals afraid of?*

4649 HA – I believe it was around 2016 as I cut off my last contact with my father in 2015. The
4650 language was used regarding my sister's husbands arrest when taken into hospital, and
4651 my nieces referred to as 'paralysed'. At first, I just thought that they were ill in the hospital
4652 and I thought my niece was paralysed literally. Even up until 2015 my communication with
4653 my family members were very short over the phone. We never used other apps or the
4654 internet. After my father died in mid-August 2015 during that period I still managed to
4655 communicate with my brothers, since then I have been cut off.

4656 *Counsel – In your statement you state five boys were sentenced to death for theft, was
4657 the sentence carried out?*

4658 HA – I believe they were executed between 1992-1994. I attended the court hearing of
4659 one of them who was my friend and classmate. The hearing was an open hearing which
4660 was in an open cinema. He was accused of theft and robbery. The sentence was one
4661 year suspended death penalty. Because it was an open trial, many thousands of people
4662 attended. As a classmate I know there is no way he would commit any theft or robbery
4663 and, in our teachings, we taught not to do so. When he was tried his head was bolted
4664 down.

4665 *Counsel – How old was he and the others accused?*

4666 HA – Most of them were the same age. In 1992-1993 he was 22/3 and I believe he was
4667 26 years old and maximum 28.

4668 *Panel – In the trial you attended did they have the benefit of a defence lawyer and did the*
4669 *defence lawyer defend them?*

4670 HA – Yes It was a sham trial; the so-called lawyer works for the communist party.

4671 *Panel – Is the reason they were arrested and sentenced to death because of the theft or*
4672 *some other reason?*

4673 HA – What we did at that time was to teach young people religion, how to reach the
4674 Quaran. I had 40 students. The rest who was sentenced to death that was the reason. At
4675 that time, they could not say to give a death penalty for this reason so had to accused
4676 them of theft and robbery. But I know from their character that these people wouldn't
4677 touch anything, let alone stealing. In fact, the crime that they were accused of apart from
4678 theft the biggest crime was attempt to separate the country, to split the country. At the
4679 time I didn't know how it was possible to split the country. I was not even aware of the
4680 concept of separatism.

4681 *Panel – Could you tell the tribunal why the authorities considered your family a mistrusted*
4682 *family?*

4683 HA – After I fled my country, up until 1998 I did not have any communication with anyone
4684 back home. After then during one conversation with my elder brother, I asked him why he
4685 did not go to pilgrimage. He said it is impossible as our family is branded mistrusted. He
4686 said they could not leave their region without permission. Prior to leaving the country my
4687 family were quite financially well off. After I left, they made it financially difficult for them.
4688 Whenever they needed to do anything, they were pressurised to bring me back

4689 *Panel – Why do you think persecution of your family is happening? Do you think it is to*
4690 *persuade you to go back to China?*

4691 HA – Exactly, I remember during their trial they said 'you bunch of small separatists
4692 wherever you go even if you fly up to the sky or go down to the earth we will find out and

4693 make sure you will be tried.'. even during my time in Kazakhstan, I was arrested, I had no
4694 peace. The police in Kazakhstan colluded with Chinese police to take me back.

4695 *Panel – When the people were given the life sentence, were they ever released, did their*
4696 *relatives know where they were, what were they doing in prison?*

4697 HA – They were executed after a period.

4698 *Panel – Were any of them under 18? Were there any children?*

4699 HA – During that time the children were not arrested, they targeted the teachers. About
4700 40-50 were arrested and they were adults and teachers. I used to have that video but I
4701 do not have it any more. I believe those 40-50 arrested are gone. Since 2017 I was cut
4702 off from contacting anyone. There were many young boys who grown up and I did not
4703 know. Until now I do not know what happened to them. Based on survivor stories I do not
4704 think they left them alone. They must be in hardship. I can say 100% the testimonies from
4705 camp survivors I believe my family endured the same treatment.

4706 *Panel – Is there anything else you would like to add?*

4707 HA – I do not have much to add but I would like to let you know I am extremely worried
4708 about my family members, especially the women, my sisters. I wish there was an
4709 earthquake and if they died I would be in peace.