



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Witness Name: Rahima Muhammad Nuri		
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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

1 **11th September 2021 (3:02:55 – 3:52:00)**

2 **Rahima Muhammad Nuri**

3

4 *COUNSEL – In the hospital in which you worked, undertaking these abortions on*
5 *women pregnant 4 months and above, you said it was clear these women were being*
6 *forced to undertake these abortions. Were these women Uyghur women or were they*
7 *Han Chinese women?*

8 RAHIMA NURI – I believe they were forced because to remove or abort a child at 4-5
9 months is not beneficial to the women's health. Some because they have known of
10 the family planning laws as they cannot go above a certain amount do this to not be
11 punished or receive any fines.

12 *COUNSEL – Can you specify if these women were Uyghur or Han women?*

13 RN – There were a lot of Uyghur women, there were some Chinese but very few.

14 *COUNSEL – Even in the category of women pregnant 4 months and above, did this*
15 *include Han Chinese women?*

16 RN – Yes there were.

17 *COUNSEL – You state you decided to leave the job as you found it unethical and*
18 *dangerous to have abortions at such a late stage. Could you speak to us about why*
19 *you felt it was unethical and how it felt to carry out abortions which you knew were*
20 *unethical but could not raise any concerns with the hospital?*

21 RN – I saw this with my conscience I felt this was a crime and the same as killing a
22 human being. I could not raise this with the administration as it was a Chinese policy
23 and it would be like criticising the policy.

24 *COUNSEL – Moving to your pharmacy, helping Uyghur women removing IUDs in*
25 *secret. You state that whereas Han Chinese women could go to an official hospital to*
26 *remove such devices, Uyghur women had to do it in secret. Why was there a*
27 *difference, why could Uyghur women not go to a hospital?*

28 RN – In the cities, people cannot have more than 2 children, so to not go against family
29 planning policy they need to get special permission to get IUDs removed. Because
30 they cannot get such permission and they know they have gone against the policy, to
31 avoid punishment they come to us to get their IUDs removed.

32 *COUNSEL – When you say ‘they’ do you mean Uyghur women not Han Chinese*
33 *women?*

34 RN – Yes, I mean Uyghur women.

35 *COUNSEL – What would happen, has it ever happened that the Chinese authorities*
36 *discovered that a woman removed an IUD secretly – has this happened and what*
37 *would happen?*

38 RN – We had a registered legal pharmacy, the IUD removal was done in my home
39 itself, we were never caught. If there is a raid or we are checked, they come straight
40 to the pharmacy. We were very careful about this. If they found out that I carried out
41 the practices, they would close down the practice, close the pharmacy and punish me
42 for going against the family planning policy.

43 *COUNSEL – From your own knowledge, you were carrying out removals of IUDs in*
44 *secret between 2002-2007, at that time the surveillance system we have heard a lot*
45 *about had not been fully developed and it was still possible for women to come to your*
46 *home to carry out the operation in secret. Would you still be able to carry this out today*
47 *with the surveillance systems currently in place?*

48 RN – No way, it is impossible.

49 *PANEL – You say that over 100 women had abortions at the hospital every day, how*
50 *are you confident about that figure?*

51 RN - I'd like to clarify this does not just refer to abortions but all family planning
52 operations to stop pregnancies, such as inserting IUDs, of course with abortions as
53 well.

54 *PANEL – Can you tell us how late abortions took place? Were there abortions taking*
55 *place at 6-7 months of pregnancy or later than that?*

56 RN – Yes there were aborted.

57 *PANEL – What was the latest you know about?*

58 RN – At 8 months.

59 *PANEL – Were any of those born alive?*

60 RN – Yes, some were born alive, but not long after, they died.

61 *PANEL – You say from 2010 family planning in China got stricter, in what ways did it*
62 *get stricter?*

63 RN – They started to be everyday checks from the authorities. I would tell my kids to
64 leave the home every two days as I knew there were checks coming. Heavy fines were
65 imposed. Some people were sent to prison.

66 *PANEL – You say most women were referred for abortions by the family planning*
67 *office where your sister worked. Can you tell us more about this office and where it*
68 *received its directions from?*

69 RN – They get their orders from the Chinese government.

70 *PANEL – Do you know which part?*

71 RN – No.

72 *PANEL – You say your sister was imprisoned as she left the family planning office.*
73 *What was her job there?*

74 RN – She was involved in advertising and promoting. She would go from house to
75 house and explain the family planning policy. She would also hand out pills for
76 sterilisation to stop women becoming pregnant.

77 *PANEL – When was she imprisoned and how did you know she was imprisoned for*
78 *resigning?*

79 RN – In 2016 I was able to get a passport and leave for Turkey. I heard from my friends
80 she was imprisoned. The actual reason for her being imprisoned had to do with ethical
81 religious reasons. She was also covered and so I assume she was detained as she
82 was promoting religious ideas.

83 *PANEL – Do you know if there was any judicial process in her imprisonment?*

84 RN – No I am not aware of any as I was not able to keep in touch.

85 *PANEL – Do you know if she is still imprisoned?*

86 RN – From messaging on a secret chat using phrases like this person is impossible to
87 trace I knew that she was still in prison. She has four children and I do not know their
88 whereabouts.

89 *PANEL – Your sister-in-law was also imprisoned after resigning from her job in a
90 hospital. You say she resigned because of the conditions; can you tell us about these?*

91 RN - She felt she was not able to pray or not able to live out her religion. Also, the
92 unethical practices brought on by family planning.

93 *PANEL – What were the unethical practices?*

94 RN – She worked in various departments in the hospital whether the female ward or
95 others. The treatment she got from others and work practice things, the everyday
96 interactions she felt uncomfortable with. Not long after she also fell pregnant and this
97 went against family planning policy. My brother's child when he was three years old
98 people reported him to the authorities and my brother was fined 100,000 Chinese yen.

99 *PANEL – How do you know your sister-in-law was imprisoned and was a reason given
100 for her imprisonment?*

101 RN – Before I had heard from others, she was sentenced for 3 years. Using WeChat
102 I asked secretly has she come out of the hospital and the response was that she
103 hasn't. This indicated she was not free.

104 *PANEL - You talk about families who had more children than permitted, and hiding
105 children so not being able to go to school. How widespread was this situation in your
106 area?*

107 RN – According to my knowledge I feel this is about 40-50% are in this situation about
108 my immediate surroundings.

109 *PANEL – With regard to termination at a late stage of pregnancy I would anticipate a*
110 *large number of live births. You said they died soon after. How did they die? Was*
111 *anything used to bring on or accelerate their deaths?*

112 RN – Yes, the injections given initially has the AB amount and within 72 hours that
113 child dies naturally on its own.

114 *PANEL – So three days later. Were any of these babies' given injections after they*
115 *were born?*

116 RN – So yes, while they are in the stomach the injection was given. It was done before
117 not after they are born.

118 *PANEL – If the children were born now to mothers who had their IUDs illegally, would*
119 *the parents be fined, or would the children be taken to boarding school?*

120 RN – Speaking from experience, my brother was fined. Recently I found out my friend
121 in Turkey, but when she had given birth in China, she was fined 1,700,000 Chinese
122 yuan.

123 *PANEL – What are the health risks to the mother when she has a late abortion?*

124 RN – Some women do have health risks, some don't. Those that do suffer great blood
125 loss, and side effects of the injection. The uterus is ripped, and also it can affect the
126 other organs.

127 *PANEL – Have you seen any mothers pass away due to a late abortion?*

128 RN – I cannot remember. May I add something?

129 *PANEL – Let us hear what she has to say.*

130 RN – From 2002-2007 with my pharmacy there was an incident involving two women
131 running away in order to give birth. At 7 months a woman came to me asking me to
132 assist in the birth and using various medication we tried to give birth. Later we had to
133 take her to another facility, but the child died during the birth. Two or three days later
134 another woman comes from the same town at 9 months. I helped her with her birth.
135 Because this woman gave birth outside of the family planning policy, they had to show
136 the body of a dead baby to the authorities, so she is not punished. So, we exhumed
137 the baby which was born at 7 months as proof the other child was not born. After the
138 woman gave birth, she requested that they find an injection to stop the mother lactating
139 as if the authorities check later the woman is lactating, they will know the child is alive.
140 Because on my conscience over time it was not just IUDs removal from 2002-07. I
141 also assisted in the births of 150-200 women. You would want to ask the question why
142 women would put themselves in dangerous situation coming to a clinic like mine. It is
143 because the women are trying to escape the family planning policy. It shows how dire
144 the situation is for our people.