

Witness Statement

Patigul Talip

1. My name is Patigul Talip and I was born in 1967 in Kucha, East Turkestan. I got married with Muhemmetimin in 1989. I have five children. The two eldest: my son Salahaddin born in 1990; and my daughter Rukiye, born in 1992 were born in East Turkestan. They had to stay behind when we left China. My husband left in 1994 and I left in 1996. After we left, it was Muhemmetimin's mother, Maryemhan Abdwali, who took care of the kids. Then, my daughter Raziya was born in 1999 in Turkey; and my son Uygur was born in 2001 in Turkey as well. Finally, my youngest child Ahmed was born in 2007 in Sweden. My husband and I went to live in Turkey in 1996. We did not have a valid status there however, so we ultimately applied for asylum in Sweden and moved there in 2004.
2. The reason for us leaving China was that my husband, Muhemmetimin, and his elder brother Kerem taught the Arabic alphabet and the Quran. They were also known to the authorities as they were trying to raise awareness on the fate of Uyghurs, for instance with regards to forced abortions. In 1991, considered an agitator by the authorities, he was sentenced to prison. He was later temporarily released for medical reasons following his torture in detention. He had to go back when his health improved. In 1992 he was brought back to prison. That was around the time of the birth of our first child. I was told he could be found in Urumqi, so I went, and I managed to visit him there. He was barely recognisable because of how badly he was treated (we could not recognise him, but he recognised us and came to us). He remained in jail for two years after that. Then we decided to leave the country, he escaped China in 1994.
3. Today he cannot really speak on this because of the trauma he endured, it affected his memory too. During his imprisonment, Muhemmetimin was taken to forced labour and had to spend sixteen hours a day doing hard physical work. He has frequently faced hunger and was beaten by the police for no reason. He had to carry heavy stones and break these stones into pieces, and when he could not lift stones anymore, he would be clubbed by the guards. In the evening, he had to face interrogations for reasons like "not working hard" or "not admitting guilt." During interrogation, they would take off his nails with pliers and use the pliers to pinch his leg tendons. They would also hit him on the head, so much that he was bleeding from his head several times, and these injuries ultimately caused memory loss.
4. Because of my husband's status of "political criminal" we had to use other people's passports to travel out of China. However, at this point, it was not possible to do the same for my two children. I tried a lot of things to bring them out of the country, like applying to the "family gathering scheme" in Sweden in 2005, so that they may be allowed to join us. The two of them were issued

passports following this application, they even came to Beijing airport and got to the plane, but then they were called out of the plane before it took off. The authorities must have figured that they were going to reunite with us, and they cut their passports. They basically have to ask permission to authorities to travel.

5. Whenever my daughter Rukiye, who remained in China, would contact us, the authorities would pressure her to tell us that we needed to come back. Since they were not able to bring us back from Sweden through our daughter, they arrested her. She was sentenced to three to five years in prison. She has two kids, my grandchildren, and one of them was one year old when she was sentenced. Then, all our family members were forbidden to get in touch with us, under penalty of imprisonment. The last time we were able to talk to anyone in our family was in 2015. We have had no news since then. In particular, I have had no contact with my eldest son Salahaddin since 2014. I do not know if they have killed or imprisoned him.
6. Many of my relatives were imprisoned. The reason for all these imprisonments is that they had contacts with us, who were also close to Kerem Abdulwali, my husband's brother who was a target for the authorities.
 - a. We learnt that Kerem himself had died in prison sometime in 2014 or 2015. He was detained since 1991 and every three years or so he would go to court and the authorities would offer to release him if he stopped talking about Uyghur freedom, which he would always refuse. He had become very weak because of years of deprivation. We were told this by people who used to be his cellmates in prison.
 - b. In 2014, authorities imprisoned two of my husband's younger brothers, Abdurahman and Ibrahim Abduwali. Abdurahman was sentenced to 15 years in prison, Ibrahim was sentenced to 17 years. Ibrahim's wife was also sentenced to 10 years.
 - c. The same year, they also imprisoned two of my younger brothers, Satta and Imam Micit.
 - d. I also know my sister Aigul Abduhilal(born in 1982) and her husband Abduhilal Hassanare detained.
 - e. Many more people were put in detention: my cousin's son Memet Nurla; one of my brothers-in-law Mehmud Mulavut; one of my nephews Ali Rozi; and another of my brothers-in-law, Abdulkhelil Husen, who is also my husband's nephew, etc.
7. I got a lot of this information through my mother, directly on the phone, in 2015. She explained everything to me. She asked me not to blame my relatives for cutting contact: anyone who reaches out to foreigners or people living abroad will see their family suffer. She is seventy-seven years old, and she said she is going to die anyway so she wanted the information to get out. I also got some of this information from someone I met in 2016, in Turkey, as I travelled there for leisure. This person was from Kucha as well, and he told us that all the family had been forced to move to a camp in Kurla.
8. Since all this happened, I have had psychological issues. I have been taking medication for depression, and it has become difficult for me to concentrate and

remember things chronologically. It is very hard for me, all my relatives' troubles happened because they contacted us. My children in China were pressured by authorities to make us come back, and they failed to do so, so now they are considered disloyal and are being punished.