

# 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.