

# **Witness Statement**

## **Nursiman Abdureshid**

### **Female aged 33**

1. My name is Nursiman Abdureshid. I am a Uyghur, and my religion is Islam. I have lived in Turkey since I came to study in 2015. Until 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017 I had normal contact with my family. After this date I have had no contact with any of my family or friends.
2. My mother is the victim of China's birth control policy. From time to time, the village officials ask all the women to participate in pregnancy checks and check if the women have IUDs or not. Normally in our village in Kashgar we barely saw the Chinese at that time, all the villagers were Uyghur. As far as I know the same policy was launched in all cities in China. But in our village, it is mainly Uyghur, so it is mainly targeted against Uyghur women. I remember the nurse who worked in our village, she distributed some medicine to the younger women. She gave this medicine to my cousin's wife.
3. IUD checks happened untimely, and several times my mother felt sick because of the side effects of the IUD. She did not initially remove it because she was afraid of the punishment. This kind of check also stressed my mother mentally, because it happened untimely, so the women do not have time to prepare themselves. Because she felt sick, she eventually removed the IUD. One time my father sent her to the city centre so she couldn't attend the test. Normally there is a nurse in every village. She is responsible for the tests and would come to the house to ask women to go to the village centre. It is very personal to the women. My mum was shy, and the facilities are not very appropriate, it is not a hospital, there is not any facility.
4. My sister-in-law she has two children, and she can't have any more according to the government. She was pregnant with twins. Then they had to decide whether they save the twins or go to the hospital to abort them. She went to the hospital, by herself, and had an abortion because she was scared of the punishment. She was so sad.
5. In 2008, I visited a textile factory where nearly 100 Uyghur youth were forced to work in Jiangxi province. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the name of the factory. It was only Uyghurs in the factory. I just visited once.
6. At that time all the youth who did not continue to study after middle school had the obligation to apply for such a program. Normally the village officials made contact with the factory in inner-land China, then they forced the young people to go there and work. For the Uyghurs normally everyone tries to find work in the city or in the neighbourhood, but they do not try in in land China because it is hard. They were recruiting young people in every village. Normally after middle school, if the person didn't progress to high school the village officers

tried to convince them to go. Often the young girls get married early, so they don't have to go.

7. I had a chance to visit the factory just because my friend's father was within the working group who were accompanying the Uyghur workers to the factory to control and manage them. My friend and me went to the factory to visit her father.
8. I saw nearly 100 girls living in very old dormitories in the factory. And they said they do not want to work here. Most of the time they work in night shifts and sometimes they get so sleepy, and this causes their fingers to get injured by the machine so badly. The girls told me about this and showed me their fingers. And their fingers were damaged.
9. It is a one floor building; it is kind of U-shaped. There is a small yard and a place they can take some water. The weather is so bad you can see the wall becomes yellow. There is some smell because it is so old. Inside the dorm there are three beds. In other dorms, there are six or eight people in bunk beds. There is no washing room, nothing inside the dorm, when they wash their face or go to the toilet they have to go to a different place.
10. I once saw a piece of paper pasted on the door of dormitory room. It was a daily salary of the worker, it was 25-35 RMB for the day. The salary was calculated according to how many kilograms of textile they processed daily, and they cut the cost of the workers food and dormitory fee from their wage. Interesting point is some workers already owed the factory nearly 800 RMB. If the workers could not go to work for any reason or if they did not work hard the daily earning will be less compared to their daily cost of food and dormitory. That is why they have to pay to the factory.
11. In short, I witnessed the forced Uyghurs workers unwillingness, and forced labour barely with no salary. Everyone felt like they were forced, and they were unwilling to work. They told me I don't want to work, and some girls said they had to ask parents to send money so they could pay the factory. Some girls escaped and when they got to the train station the police brought them back. Some of the girls were afraid that they would be trafficked by other people who saw them at the train station because they would know they were Uyghur. So, the girls cooperated with the police in returning themselves.
12. I visited the production line and saw there was three or five Chinese ladies. They were teaching the Uyghur workers. The factory was so big, but they were using the small part. It was an abandoned factory, but after they found cheap Uyghur labour, they started to use this part of the factory.
13. The girls were between 17 and 27. Most were very young, 17 or 18.
14. When I was young, there was forced labour in our village. From time to time the village asked people to gather and asked them to clean the street or sometimes go to the riverside in the summer. The river was flooded by the rain, so they had to build something. It was sometimes light work and sometimes heavy

work. People had to go there. My family had to pay 2000 RMB every year otherwise they had to go to work. This is very normal in Kashgar or in other places in Xinjiang. When I was in primary school, we sometimes had to pick cotton in the summer. That was the authorities making us do that.

15. My elder brother was detained in 2016. He didn't commit a crime, but police said my brother got some credit from someone and didn't return it back. But when my family tried to collect the money and return it to the person, there was no one who he had given money to; my father couldn't find the person. My brother was a businessman and had an auto spares business in Kashgar. They targeted him because of this. In January 2017 I learned he is working at an electronics factory in the prison. The prison is located in Atux city. The inmate who stayed in the same prison and worked in the same line told this to my father when he was released. I learnt from my father when I spoke on the phone; we could speak on the phone then.
16. My family members have been forcibly disappeared and unlawfully imprisoned. I have lost contact with my family in Kashgar, China, since 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2017.
17. On 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2017, I learned from my aunt's husband via a short telephone call that my father and my younger brother were taken by officials to study. My aunt's husband asked me not to call them again. My aunts husband knew because my aunt visited my mum. My mother called my aunt, and my aunt visited my mother to check on her after my brother and my father arrested. In 2018, via my WeChat contact, I learned that there is no one in my home anymore. This contact is in China. They said that my mother was also arrested, but I am not sure when she was arrested.
18. On 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, after too many attempts by me to obtain information, the Chinese embassy in Ankara, Turkey informed me that my parents and my brother are in prison.
19. According to the embassy, my father Abdureshid Tohti was sentenced to 16 years and 11 months for the so-called crime of disturbing the social order and preparing to commit terrorist activities.
20. My mother Tajigul Kadir was sentenced to 13 years for the so-called crime of preparing to commit terrorist activities.
21. My younger brother Muhammadali was sentenced to 15 years and 11 months in prison for the so-called crime of preparing to commit terrorist activities.
22. When I was on the phone to the embassy, I kept asking them if there was any proof of their accusations. I kept asking them if my family did anything or if they think they might have some kind of intention. The embassy said according to the paper we received from the Xinjiang government it is written that they might have had the intention to commit the crime. That means there is no crime, and my family didn't do anything. Because the Chinese government think they might have had the intention that's why they arrested them. The Chinese government assign people as high or low risk based on whether they have family abroad, a

passport etc. Because I live in Turkey, I think the government put them in a high-risk group. That is why they were arrested and why they think they might commit a terrorist act.

23. I have the record of the phone conversation, if needed I would like to share with the Uyghur tribunal. In the recording they discussed all the information on the time and reasons for my families' detention. The charge on my phone at that time was not very good so I only have a very short recording of the whole phone call [see Appendix 1].
24. The Chinese embassy refused to give any evidence or court paper about their accusation against my family members and did not tell me in which prison they are detained in right now.
25. Via my WeChat contact I got an information paper that informed me that my father was taken to prison on 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2019 [see Appendix 2). I am suspicious that my father was unlawfully detained for nearly two years in a concentration camp and transferred to prison with wrong accusations. The same process was maybe used in my mother and brother's case.
26. The Chinese embassy said my family members were arrested in 2017 and taken to the court and sent to the prison. They said they followed the process according to their law. But they don't know I have a paper that clearly states my father was sent to the prison in 2019. So that's why I am suspicious. Because I put so much pressure on the Chinese embassy in Turkey, they told me the lie that my family were sentenced in 2017. I think they told me this made-up crime because I put too much pressure on them. The paper said he was sent to prison in 2019 but the Chinese embassy told me they were sent in 2017. So, I am suspicious that what the Chinese embassy told me about my parents is a lie and they tried to prove my family had committed a crime and that my family had a normal court hearing. They are just trying to convince me that the legal process was properly followed. I am suspicious, that what the Chinese embassy told me is not correct. My family were arrested and lived in the concentration camps for two years and then were sent to the prison. A lot of similar cases have happened with Uyghurs. After too much pressure the state randomly chooses people and transfers them from the camps to the prisons. My brother and mother also never had any proper legal process when they were sent to camps. The embassy told me they were sent to prison in 2017, but actually my father was sent to prison in 2019. He was just trying to convince me my family had committed some crime.