



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

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

Witness Statement

1. My name is Melikzat Habibul and I was born on 20th November 1984 in Turpan city. In October 2010, I travelled to Egypt with my husband, Kuduse Abdukader. We had the project of creating a business with my sister, Bahargul Habibul, initially between China and Turkey. So, we moved to Turkey on 6th November 2014. I had originally applied for a Turkish visa which had been refused, but the visa was granted when I made the request from Egypt.
2. After this, we had a sort of family reunion in Turkey, as my family came to visit us, including my parents, my brother Memet Habibul. They stayed for a while and, as they returned to China, their passports were seized at the airport.
3. It was in February 2015 that my sister Bahargul and I started doing business between Turkey and Turpan city, in Xinjiang, selling and exporting clothes to East Turkestan through online shopping. My sister had opened a Chinese bank account for business purposes. In 2016, the authorities apparently decided that we were earning too much money and about \$20,000 were confiscated from this business account. Of course, we discussed the subject of this confiscated money, I thought of going back to China to ask for that money to be given back to us. In the end we decided not to do this. In May 2017, I started receiving calls from my father, asking me to come back to China, otherwise there would be retribution and my family would be taken to camps. I was scared of going home, because I feared what might happen when I do, and also, I did not really believe, then, that they would put all my relatives in jail if I did not come back. I thought “we have teachers and police agents in the family, why would they be put in a re-education camp?” So, I just said that I couldn’t because I did not have my passport. He said we could go the Embassy and request a kind of travel visa, but we did not. My father also tried to reach out to my husband, whose brother was already detained in a camp, to convince him that he needed to come back to take care of his brother. Again, we refused.
4. On 9th June 2017 it was the last time that I was able to contact my family. I believe that on the next day, my mother and sister were taken to a concentration camp. I tried to find information about their whereabouts, but no one was able to help me. I do know that something happened: my sister was always very responsive on the phone, she would always answer text messages right away, and she had never failed to answer, especially since we were in business together.
 - a. My older brother Memet was detained from 30th April 2017. He is 48 years old; he has two children and he used to work in insurance. I know this because my sister was still responding to me at the time, and she told me. He was called to a meeting with police and did not come back. I found out that he was sentenced to three years in prison for going to Turkey. Three years have passed, but he is not free. I got this information in September 2020 from a client of mine, who enquired about my family. That same client who gave me this information also told me that her own sister had been sentenced to twenty years and that she has had to look

after her child because no one else can. Also, in September 2018 I was able to communicate with my uncle's daughter who told me that everyone in my family had been taken to a camp, except for one person, the daughter of my uncle.

- b. I mentioned my sister Bahargul earlier, the one I was doing business with. She was born 30th April 1983 and graduated as an accountant. She was taken to the camp with my brother on 10th June 2017. Her husband lost his job after she was detained, and he was sent to a village to work forcibly as construction worker. However, her husband got his original job back after I started to testify for my family on social media. I heard there was a judicial process against her in May 2019, but I had no news following that, until November 2019 when I learnt she had been sentenced to five years in jail. I do not know what the specific reason for her imprisonment is. This information came from one of my clients in China.
 - c. My mother, Mariam Tursun, was born on 10th January 1947 in Turpan city. She used to work in a post office. She is now 74 years old. From what I know, on 10th June 2017, she was detained in a re-education camp and released in January 2019. She has had heart problems in the past, but now I have no idea how she is faring, how her health is.
 - d. My father, Habibul Abdul, was born on 15th January 1941 and he was a policeman in Turpan for thirty years. He was detained in the same period as my mom, also most probably because of the trips to Egypt and Turkey. He was detained sometime in 2017 but also released in January 2019. In April 2020 he was arrested again and sent to a camp. He was supposed to be released in October 2020, but as far as I am aware, he was not released then.
 - e. My sister Aigul Habibul, a mother of two, was taken to a camp in October 2017, and also released in January 2019. She used to have a regular work, she worked as a teacher for 25 years, but right now it is really difficult for the people who have faced detention to be hired anymore so I believe that she is unemployed.
 - f. My second brother, Alim Habibul (born on 9th April 1975) had been working as a prison guard in Turpan since 1997. He has a wife and two children. He was also taken to a camp in October 2017 and was then sentenced to three years in jail in November 2019, according to my friend from Shanghai. He should have been released in October 2020 but I still have no information on whether he came out or not. I have two other brothers who also did time in jail, but I know nothing about what happened to them, if they were released or if they are alive and well.
 - g. Another of my sisters, Mihray Habibul (born 3rd June 1976 in Turpan) is 46 years old, and she was working as a policewoman for twenty years until she was detained in a camp in October 2018. In November 2019 she was sentenced to jail without due process.
5. I also obtained some of this information from one of my Han Chinese friends, from Shanghai, whom I had asked to call my family to enquire about them. This friend of mine finally travelled to East Turkestan in May 2020. He had problems for that: he was taken to the police and they questioned him for two days because he had contacts with Uyghurs, and it was very difficult for him to travel

back to Shanghai. If he had resided in Xinjiang, he would probably have had a lot more problems.

6. As I learnt all this, I started becoming active particularly on social media, to share the situation and testify. In April 2020, my brother contacted me through a friend to ask me to send receipts for all the transactions that my sister Bahargul and I made for our business, to help my sister's case. He said he needed it within a week. I sent the receipts through internet to a friend in Urumqi. This friend gave it to the court. I called the court in China to enquire about these receipts and follow-up on my sister's case. But every time I mention my sister's name they cut the call. I wanted to tell them that I sent the receipt and that they should release her, but it never happened. I do not even know how she is doing, if she is healthy and well. From what I know, the court has refused to release her. I have reported all of this to Radio Free Asia.
7. My husband's older brother, Abdurehim Abdukader (born in 1969) was sent to a camp in May 2015 because he sent money to his brother, my husband, in Turkey. In August 2016 he was apparently released, but he was detained again in April 2017. In May 2020, his detention was eased as he is allowed to go home to his family on weekends, but he must go back to the camp from Monday to Friday. I know this from another Han Chinese friend, from Beijing, who travelled to Aksu, in Xinjiang, to enquire about our family. Abdurehim is a farmer, and he used to own 350 acres which were confiscated by the government. They left him a small piece of land, like a small garden, but for a big fee. My husband is one of nine siblings, and three of them were taken to camps as well. According to the Aksu list, one of his brothers was detained for about three years in a camp. His family used to own a cotton business before, but now they are being sent to Aksu to work in a factory. When they used to be owners, now they are forced to do manual work. Shemsinur Abdurehim, the daughter of Abdurehim who was born on 1st January 1996, was sentenced in April 2015 to three years in prison for sending money to us in Turkey. She is detained in Kurla. Even though her sentence was three years, she was not released, after spending one year in the camp, she was sent to a forced labour camp in Ghulja. In mid-2020 she was released after I started testifying on social media and is now in her home in Aksu. I received this information from friends in Mainland China.

6130 **7 June 2021 (03:11:36 – 03:58:40)**

6131 **Melikzat Habibul – UTFW-034**

6132

6133 *Counsel – In your statement you say in 2016 Chinese authorities confiscated \$20,000*
6134 *from your business account. Did they provide a reason for this confiscation?*

6135 MH – The confiscated amount was the Chinese currency but can be approximately to
6136 20,000. No reason was given.

6137 *Counsel – Was that money or your business connected with extremist, separatist or*
6138 *terrorist activities?*

6139 MH – No.

6140 *Counsel – In your statement you say one of your husband's brothers' name was on the*
6141 *Aksu list, could you confirm and what led you to confirm it was your husband's brother*
6142 *and not someone with a different name?*

6143 MH – I did some research and already I knew my husband’s brother was spent three
6144 years in the camp, so I can confirm the name on the list was him.

6145 *Counsel – How did she gain access to the Aksu list?*

6146 MH – My husband is from Aksu Abat and there is a WhatsApp group anyone from that
6147 region would be part of it to access this information and did some kind of investigation
6148 work themselves.

6149 *Panel – You moved to Turkey in 2014 with your husband, could you tell us more about*
6150 *that business, and why would it be good to do between Turkey and the region?*

6151 MH – The clothes made in Turkey are very popular in my country, 90% were buying these
6152 clothes from Turkey. My sister was quite senior in business so we thought it would be
6153 profitable.

6154 *Panel – When you applied for a Turkish visa, it was refused, you obtained it in Egypt, was*
6155 *that when you visited in 2010 or did you visit on other occasions?*

6156 MH – In the beginning my goal was to go to Japan, but spending two years awaiting a
6157 passport a visa to Japan was refused. Then I applied for one to Turkey, but then I learned
6158 a visa from Egypt so I then I applied to go there in 2010 which was 2010.

6159 *Panel – So that was a long-term visa?*

6160 MH – The initial visa was not but when I registered at a university there, I obtained a visa
6161 for a year and extended it each year.

6162 *Panel – When you were in Turkey, family members visited you, how many did and did*
6163 *any of your husband’s family visit you?*

6164 MH – No as they were not able to obtain a passport.

6165 *Panel – In 2015 your husband’s niece sent money to Turkey, and your husband’s brother*
6166 *also did. Could you tell us when and how much they sent?*

6167 MH – There were other reasons accused of - I only learned from the conversation they
6168 were taken away because of transferring the money.

6169 *Panel – You mention your clients in China, are those from your clothes business, is it still*
6170 *operating?*

6171 MH – No it is not.

6172 *Panel – Members of your family were sent to camps from 2017, and some on from there*
6173 *to prisons, three sisters, four brothers, and parents, is that correct? Are there others?*

6174 MH – No I do not know any other family members but I know there are some former
6175 business clients who were taken.

6176 *Panel – As far as you know, what were the reasons for their detention?*

6177 MH – The main reason is that I did not return to my home country because for 3-4 months
6178 they pressurised me to go back. After I failed to obey that order that was the result.

6179 *Panel – You have obtained information from some friends about what has happened to*
6180 *your family, have those friends been concerned about their own safety in finding that*
6181 *information for you?*

6182 MH – I do not think they were concerned up until April 2020 with a self-deleting message
6183 – we used a secure way of communication.

6184 *Panel – Your husband's niece served part of a sentence in a forced labour camp*
6185 *alongside your brother-in-law. Do you know the name of the forced labour camp, or the*
6186 *company that either of those people were made to work for?*

6187 MH – In a factory in the Ghulja region.

6188 *Panel – You not return as you thought two members of family were in the police so you*
6189 *thought they would be protected. Why do you think holding those positions did not protect*
6190 *them?*

6191 MH – I believe it is the policy carried out since 2016 and that was a reason as one of the
6192 criteria to detain people to camps were relatives abroad.

6193 *Panel – You decided to speak out about your family's circumstances on social media.*
6194 *Can you tell us what effect this has had?*

6195 *MH* – In the beginning I was no so concerned but then in January in 2019 my father was
6196 released and I thought the rest would be released also, but later in December I learned
6197 that my brothers and sisters were given prison sentences. They were imprisoned in
6198 November 2019.

6199 *Panel* – *What has been the effect of using social media to publicise their cases?*

6200 *MH* – For example, one of my brothers was arrested and detained for two months.

6201 *Panel* – *Is there any reason why the authorities might regard you as a terrorist, separatist*
6202 *or extremist?*

6203 *MH* – No.

6204 *Panel* – *When the land was taken by the state, did they pay for it?*

6205 *MH* – I do not know. A lot of people's land was confiscated to grow cotton.

6206 *Panel* – *Do you know whether the land was given to other people or is it in the possession*
6207 *of the state?*

6208 *MH* – All I know is that it was confiscated by the state.

6209 *Panel* – *You say your husband's older brother who owned it, he went to a camp. Does*
6210 *the PRC call that camp a re-education centre?*

6211 *MH* – Yes, in the beginning they said they would need to be educated.

6212 *Panel* – *Which camps were they (ones can return home)?*

6213 *MH* – The one who was detained was a re-education camp.

6214 *Panel* – *He was treated as a criminal after coming out of the re-education centre and his*
6215 *land was confiscated?*

6216 *MH* – They only live a very small portion left for them.

6217 *Panel* – *The cotton business belonging to another brother-in-law, was that also taken by*
6218 *the government?*

6219 MH – They ordered that their business was all confiscated, I do not know if it happened
6220 before or after they went into the camp. There is no way to continue making business, so
6221 they had to go to factories to survive.

6222 *Panel – In total, \$20,000, 250 acres of land, and a cotton business all taken from your*
6223 *extended family, is there anything else that was taken?*

6224 MH – The \$20,000 was frozen.

6225 *Panel – Is this a pattern you have come across in other family, business contacts? Is this*
6226 *a familiar pattern? Does this happen to other rich Uyghur families?*

6227 MH – Yes, that is correct. Even my former clients were taken and placed into camps,
6228 many were wealthy business camp.

6229 *Panel – Can you give a number of roughly how many she knows have had land, business,*
6230 *property confiscated she knows of?*

6231 MH – I know people taken to camps, but I do not know the exact number who had land,
6232 etc taken.

6233 *Panel – Would you like this tribunal to ask questions to the PRC about your relations or*
6234 *would that do more harm than good?*

6235 MH – I would like you to do so.