



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Witness Name: Asiyeh Abdulahad		
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Transcript included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>

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

Witness Statement

Asiye Abdulahad

1. My name is Asiye Abdulahad, I was born on 3rd December 1973 in Urumqi. I now live in the Netherlands and I have lived there for 11 years. On 23rd June 2019, I received a digital file containing sensitive information about hundreds of people detained for various reasons like having relatives abroad, their religious habits or their relationships. I was not the first person to receive this file. A source inside gave this material to someone else, who I will not name, outside of China. This person tried to give the file to others who did not respond, so they then sent it to me. I think one of the reasons they sent it to me was because I can speak Chinese.
2. When I had a look at the file, I could tell they were genuine because they were signed by officials, and it was on official paper. I thought that the most stupefying thing in this file was the number of people who were sent away. In a matter of weeks, thousands were taken for reasons as trivial as greeting each other with the common Muslim greeting. I then immediately thought that I needed to find a way to expose this, to bring these files to light. On the very same day, I published one page from the file online, on Twitter, which showed a signature from a known official, Zhu Hailun (Deputy Party Secretary of the XUAR). My purpose was to get a reaction, to see what would happen. There were two notable reactions, from researchers Adrian Zenz and Rian Thum. They were interested and they asked me to take it down. I sent some of the material files to both. Adrian Zenz thought these documents were too important and sensitive to disclose and that further enquiry was necessary. Rian Thum introduced me to a New York Times journalist, named Dake Kang, a Chinese man from Hong-Kong, and I sent the rest of the files to the New York Times. The journalist from the New York Times saw the material and thought that it was too sensitive and that it was beyond their capability to publish this alone. Following this, Adrian Zenz had a conversation with the New York Times and they decided to contact more mainstream media, including the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, for them to publish the story of the China Cables.
3. Throughout the month of July 2019, I started receiving contact requests, comments and questions on my Facebook. Some were allegedly coming from famous activists, like Shorhet Hoshur. They were telling me to share the information I had. I was suspicious because they made so many spelling and grammar mistakes. I know these people and I did not believe they would make

such simple mistakes, hence my doubts about their true identity. I did not share it with them.

4. In September 2019, my ex-husband Jasur Abibula, who also resides in the Netherlands, came to visit me and the kids. He told me that one of his friends back home in China who worked in the State Security Bureau, and who had asked him to go to Dubai for a meeting. He asked my advice on whether he should go to this meeting or not. I then started thinking of the actual activists from the United States and contacted them to ask if they had ever tried to approach me on Facebook. They answered that they had never contacted me. I understood that all of this was a play of the Chinese authorities to try to threaten me because of the documents I possess. I told the whole story to my ex-husband, who at the time did not know. He was shocked. He initially agreed not to go but by the time he went home, his friend had again urgently requested that he come to Dubai and even proposed to cover the expense, so Jasur went to Dubai on 9th September 2019. He stayed there for one week. A group of Chinese state security agents, including his friend, would come see him. He said they were staying in a luxurious hotel. One day, they took him to the desert and there they threatened him. They suggested that if he were to die here, his body would not be found for decades. They also reminded him that he has small children, and that if he agreed to help them, he could see his children more often. They could make his life easier and he could become rich. They gave him a USB key and said it contained a message to me from my mother-in-law. He came back in the evening on 14th September and he seemed terrified. He immediately closed all the windows and curtains. After careful consideration, we decided to report this to the police, and we gave them the USB key. By this time, the media in Holland wanted to speak with us. A famous journalist posted our story in a headline and we became public figures. We also became a hot topic on social media. We did not mean to, but now we have had to get involved. Jasur's trip to Dubai ended up making the news. Since we have kids, and we want to ensure their security we had no choice but to appear on social media.
5. When the media started publicising the affair, the person who had given me the China Cables files announced that there was more: China Cables is one half of a bigger file and the Karakax list is the other half of this file. After this, the intimidation messages started coming from everywhere. One in particular came from the Chinese Global Times. An editor from this media texted me and she said that if I ever received threats they would come from my friends, my community, not from the Chinese state, and that I should be careful. We also received many threats and comments. Recently, we even received a threat from a Uyghur from Holland, which we found very strange. We called the police again and reported it. We try to remain vigilant. Since all of this started, I do watch over my shoulder when I am outside in the street with my children. My

ex-husband is afraid too. The police installed a security system in our house, and they will be alarmed if something happens.

6. Recently, I have started investigating myself. I have made a report that compiles all the documents issued by the Chinese government in the last 70 years relating to policies on Uyghur and the campaign against Uyghurs. All of this is official, they are “Red documents”. They contain crucial information. They go back to 1949. Most importantly, they include documents about the camps. My report provides a lot of information on the logistics and the general functioning of the camps (number of detainees, details on the detainees themselves, the names of officials, etc.). It is a 206 pages report which is currently in the process of being translated into English.

The interviewer (Martin Davenas) asked the witness whether she understood the contents of the statement and whether she agreed with its contents. The witness confirmed that she agreed with the contents of this statement on 24th February 2021 at 21:55 GMT.

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3 **Asiye Abdulahad – UTFW-015**

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5 *Counsel – Can you provide the tribunal with a brief background as to how you came into*
6 *possession of the documents?*

7 AA - I am very pleased to be given this opportunity to talk today. I have received the
8 documents at the end of June 2019. Soon after I looked at them, I sent it to a few media
9 groups and some people I knew in the media. After this, I did not receive any positive
10 response. I got nervous and decided to distribute it on social media. In particular, I
11 published a page on Twitter. Not long after this, two experts contacted me, Rian Thum
12 and Adrian Zenz. They told me how important the document was. They told me to take
13 the post down and we discussed the documents. They asked me if I had more, I sent the
14 24 pages that I had to them. After this, Rian Thum introduced me to a reporter from the
15 New York Times. The reporter contacted me and so did Adrian Zenz. Zenz asked if I had
16 shared the documents with anyone else. They told me that I cannot publish it like this,
17 and that they needed to authenticate the documents first. They started assessing the
18 document and confirmed it was genuine, so the research began. Since the documents
19 were released I have faced many threats by Chinese authorities. I was contacted by
20 people impersonating persons from RFA or famous journalists and asking me to share
21 the list. At the beginning I would reply to the emails. But later I realised there were spelling
22 mistakes in the emails and that these emails were not genuine. Afterwards my computer,
23 my phone and my email account were all attacked by hackers. I could recover my
24 Facebook account but it took me two months to recover my email account. The first threat
25 I received was on Facebook. I received a text message in Uyghur, the Arabic script,
26 saying “if you don’t stop what you are doing, we will kill you, and your dead body will be
27 found in the black trash bin at your door.” Another one was in September, when my ex-
28 husband’s friend, who had not communicated with him for three years, contacted him to
29 come to Dubai.

30 *Counsel – Yes, this story is fully reflected in your written statement. China claims that*
31 *Adrian Zenz’s claims about the leaked document is false, made-up information, what do*
32 *you respond to that?*

33 AA – This is impossible. The document contains 137 pages, it lists 3000 people’s detailed
34 information, including their addresses, ID numbers, relatives and even neighbours’
35 information. It is unthinkable that Adrian Zenz could have created such a document.

36 *Counsel – You stated that you worked on a report, when do you think this will be*
37 *available? Would you be willing to share this with the UT?*

38 AA – I foresee that the report could be published within two or three months. I am no
39 academic. I simply compiled a lot of policies concerning my people in China. The report
40 needs to be reviewed by academics. But when it is ready, the report can absolutely be
41 shared with the Tribunal.

42 *Panel – What was your occupation at the time? What is your occupation now?*

43 AA – I worked as a journalist before, back home. Later I worked in the tourist industry for
44 about a year, as a director at a tourism company.

45 *Panel – Do you live alone now with your two children?*

46 AA – I have three children and yes, I live with them.

47 *Panel – Why did they choose you to send the file?*

48 AA – While I was back home I studied translation from Chinese. Since I came out of my
49 own country, communications with my home was cut off. After these incidents I started to
50 observe the situation as a journalist and a writer. I have good writing and translating skills,
51 so I would share my observations and translations on social media. People on social
52 media could see I was very involved in these issues. So, in addition to my translation
53 skills, I believe that is why I was chosen.

54 *Panel – Do you believe these documents came from the central government?*

55 AA – I believe the document originated from the central government. However, some of
56 it also emanates from XUAR government as well, as the stamps on some documents are
57 those of Xinjiang officials.

58 *Panel – What year does the information cover?*

59 AA – From my memory it covers 2017, it covers people from Karakax county.

60 *Panel – Does the document include data about forced abortion and sterilisation?*

61 AA – From memory, it should be in the Karakax list.

62 *Panel – So is it the same data as in the Karakax list?*

63 AA – It was one big document split in two, published separately with China cables on one
64 side, the Karakax list on the other.

65 *Panel – Before you published a page on Twitter, what other ways were you trying to*
66 *publicise them?*

67 AA – My plan was to publish it through prestigious media outlets. That's why I sent it to
68 some known reporters, but when I sent them the documents, some of them were out of
69 office so they did not respond immediately.

70 *Panel – Did anyone else, genuine, contact you besides Rian Thum and Adrian Zenz?*

71 AA – The two of them contacted me about the 24 page document. However,
72 when it came to the Karakax list there were more media contacting me.

73 *Panel – You then sent them to the New York Times, and you said they did not want to*
74 *publish them because it was too "hot." Who was it that eventually released the articles?*

75 AA – The group called ICIJ published the first part, but the Karakax list was published by
76 several outlets at the same time.

77 *Panel – Why did your husband accept to go to Dubai?*

78 AA – The person that contacted my husband was a childhood friend of his, they even
79 studied together. He contacted my husband after three years of not talking to him. Also,
80 my husband thought he could get some information from him. That's why he went.

81 *Panel – The Chinese security people who met him, where were they from?*

82 AA – Those security people came from our Homeland.

83 *Panel – You did not open the USB key that your husband was given, what were you*
84 *worried about?*

85 AA – When they gave the stick to my husband, they told him if you put it into Asiye's
86 computer we will be able to monitor it, so we were scared of using it.

87 *Panel – You say you were a “hot topic” on social media, can you elaborate on how that*
88 *happened?*

89 AA – Even if I did not tell anyone, I had shared the document with Adrian Zenz. Even if
90 my husband did not know anything he would have gone to Dubai and would have received
91 the USB stick. We reported to the Dutch police after he came back and gave them the
92 USB stick. So, anyway, I did not really tell my husband what I had done, it was already
93 known by the Chinese authorities that I had the documents. So, we thought there was no
94 point in not talking about it, so we decided to disclose the subject to the media. That's
95 how they started talking about it.

96 *Panel – You stated that publishing the documents on social media would ensure the*
97 *safety of your children, can you elaborate?*

98 AA – I think that it is a mistake in translation. The purpose of talking on social media about
99 the incident in Dubai was to show another proof that the documents were true. I just
100 wanted to show that the red documents were true.

101 *Panel – What do you mean by “red documents?”*

102 AA – “Red document” means it is an official government document. There is a colour code
103 on the document and the stamp is also red and it means it is “authorised by the
104 government,” that is why we call it “red document.”

105 *Panel – You said you received threatening messages, are you frightened to investigate*
106 *yourself after those threats?*

107 AA – It would be wrong if I said I am not afraid. I am concerned by all this and it is
108 frightening. But when I think of the millions of people in my homeland, I believe it is worth
109 it to not be afraid and stand up.