

Uyghur Tribunal – Fact Witness statement

UTFW2-005 – Shemsiye Tursun

1. My name is Shemsiye Tursun and I was born in the city of Ghulja (*Yi ning*). I moved to Istanbul in 2012 and I have not returned to my homeland since. Today, I would like to give a testimony for my mother, father and aunt.
2. In this photo is my father, my mother and my aunt.
3. My parents visited me in Turkey on their way back from Hajj (Pilgrimage) in 2012. After that, they visited me again - twice. The last time was in 2016. After they left, we contacted each other via the internet and had regular video chats. However, since October 2017, we lost all contact and I had no way to contact them. In April or May 2018, I learned that my mother had been sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment. She had not committed any crime nor had she done anything wrong. The only reason for her imprisonment was because she visited me in Turkey. My father is a retired employee of the People's Congress of the Ili Province. My mother is a retired employee of Ili Provincial Friendship Hospital. Both had completed higher education and had not done anything that was against the law. Both my mother and father are in very poor health. My father had heart surgery twice and has diabetes. My mother also has severe diabetes and heart disease. Her blood pressure is very high. I have heard nothing about their current condition.
4. This is my aunt. My aunt had two children, a daughter and a son, studying in Turkey. My aunt travelled to Turkey three or four times. During her last visit, she left on December 20th 2017. After leaving, she was taken from Urumqi Airport to a concentration camp. Her dead body was handed over to her family on the 13th of April 2021. We learnt about this two months later.
5. My parents were also harassed overnight at Urumqi Airport when they returned from Turkey and their passports were confiscated. Since then, my parents have not been able to travel.

6. We are living in the technologically advanced 21st century, in which a phone call can reach any part of the world except China or East Turkistan. I have two sisters and a brother. I also have other relatives. I have not heard from any of them. I heard that my brother was in a concentration camp for a year before being released. I heard he is in poor health but I could not get any news about him. It has been over four years since I last heard their voices.

I have read and understood this witness statement and I confirm that I agree with its contents.

I understand that this statement will be published on the Uyghur Tribunal website and will be available to the general public online.

Signature:

Date: