

Uyghur Tribunal – Fact Witness statement

UTFW2-017 – Gülnar Mirza

1. My name is Gülnar and my father's name is Mirza. I am from Sekkizsomul Village, Chapchal County, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture. I was born on the 11th of August 1978. On the 9th of December 2015, when I was six months pregnant, people from the Birth Control (Family Planning) Office came with policemen to our house and threatened me and my husband with imprisonment if I refused to have an abortion. They were planning to kill my six-month-old foetus via brain injection. I rejected and told them: "I don't have a job, my husband works and we can support our family without government aid." They insisted that if I gave birth, they would send my husband to prison.
2. Afterwards, on the 9th of December 2015, they sent two people with documents regarding forced abortion. They forced me to go to Chapchal County Hospital. I went to the hospital and the doctors gave me pills for an abortion. I took them for three days but they did not work. I had extreme abdominal pain and suffered a lot so I was then transferred from the County Hospital to Ghulja (*Yining* in Chinese). Doctors at Ghulja City Hospital injected me with anaesthesia and tied my hands and legs to the bed. When I would regain slight consciousness, I would scream which resulted in me being dosed with more of the injection. I woke up in the morning and realised that they had performed an operation which caused an abortion.
3. Around noon the following day, I regained full consciousness. My sister in-law feared that I might die. It was a baby boy. They wrapped him to the side of my bed. We were made to pay all the hospital fees including the abortion fees. They took the baby out and buried him.
4. A Han Chinese civil servant visited us and mandated that I have an intrauterine device (IUD) put in my body. Doctors checked my body and decided not to proceed with the procedure as my uterus was damaged during the abortion operation. The civil servants still insisted that I should have an IUD inserted. I was so intimidated. There was no way

anyone could have prevented that, I would have been forced regardless. For the sake of my children, I complied.

5. After that, we moved to Ghulja City and lived on retail trade between Kazakhstan and Ghulja. My husband exported vegetables to Kazakhstan. I sold goods (e.g. pots) in Ghulja which my husband had brought from Kazakhstan.
6. On the 1st of November 2017, my husband was arrested on suspicion of travelling to the 'terrorist state' of Kazakhstan. I stayed in Ghulja. As the government closed retail markets for goods from Kazakhstan, such as Tashlepke and the Kazakh Bazaar in Ghulja, I sold my goods in the black market to make ends meet. At the time, my eldest daughter had graduated from a university in Guangzhou, my younger daughter was studying in the 8th grade in Chapchal County and my son was just three years old. Thus, I was left alone with my three kids.
7. In January 2018, several police and birth control officers from Chapchal County came looking for me. They gave me a letter. The letter was issued by the Chapchal County Birth Control Office and contained the amount and the deadline of my payment. They warned me: "If you don't pay this within a week, you'll be sent to an (internment) camp and your husband won't be able to leave the camp. Forget about your kids and your family business, find whatever way possible to get the money for your payment".
8. One day I cried and all of my Uyghur neighbours comforted me. One would bring meat, the other would bring milk, one after another, to help us get going. Each family had someone detained. Within a week, by borrowing from neighbours and friends, I collected the money and went to Chapchal to give the money to the Birth Control Office. After they had taken the money and my signature, they told me that I would study at a school. I did not understand the reason why I should go to the camp as I paid the money within the deadline. They insisted that I must go there for the sake of my husband. I was also told that I must score 100 points every day or else they would reduce my husband's (social) credit and would charge him with prison sentence.

9. As such, I went and studied between Ghulja and Chapchal. It lasted a month and there was no one left to look after my children. A month later, six policemen from the so-called '20 Office' in Ghulja stormed my house. They forced me out to the yard. When I asked why, they said that my husband was a terrorist and I was a suspect. They made my ID card in such a way that when I went through the check points, the system emitted a red warning light and set off an alarm sound.
10. The police told me that I must move out from Ghulja within three days and go back to my community in Chapchal to continue studying. They pressed on: "You must go, regardless of the circumstances, we won't let you live here. You are a suspect, we won't let you travel outside of Ili (Prefecture)."
11. From that day on, every day, a policeman would watch me from inside his car which was parked outside of my door. The neighbours were just as scared. I did not even know what I had done. My neighbours started distancing themselves from me, scared of me, and greeted me from afar.
12. Afterwards, when I was wondering where to find a house in the chilling cold weather, village officials from my town found an old house for me. On a bitterly cold winters day, I moved into that house with my kids. The house was so old that it could not shelter us from the rain, snow or cold. There were other Uyghur and Kazakh women living there as well, women who were accused of having more children than the given quota and whose husbands were in the internment camps. Some of their husbands or kids had been sentenced to 20-25 years in prison simply for praying. A Uyghur woman (Reyhan) sat next to me in class. We used to chat. She often cried because her husband was sentenced. I could write a few books on what I witnessed. My health has become really bad since then.
13. In the morning, we would go to the Village Council building and study there. We had cameras around us and they collected our mobile phones. For all these women, whose husbands were taken and whose children went to school: who would make money, what would they eat, who cared for the children? They didn't care at all. One day I

said: "We are summoned to this place every day, my husband is in an internment camp, neither can earn money or look after our children, how are we supposed to live?" They said: "It is none of our business. You have to obey what we say."

14. One time, my son became ill and was taken to a nearby hospital by the neighbours. He had a fever of over 40°C. They didn't care if our children died.
15. All those whose husbands were given prison sentences because they were said to have prayed were Kazakhs, Uyghurs and few Hui Muslims.
16. Every Tuesday, one of the chiefs from Chapchal County came and gathered all the Uyghur and Kazakh women. Then, after closing the doors and windows, he would curse and bully the Uyghur and Kazakh women by saying: "you are bad people, we told you not to pray but you prayed. If there is a God, then that God should be feeding you. You should believe in the government, not in God." We kept our silence, saying to ourselves: "you guys will also die one day". We would have been executed had we said anything out loud.
17. They asked us to take off our headscarves, wear jeans, not to wear long dresses, curl our hair, dress like Chinese, speak Chinese and eat Chinese food. A Han man and a woman were stationed in our house for a month. They would sit and observe what we did in our daily lives.
18. In class, when I would sometimes think about my children, my eyes would naturally look down but they regarded it as suspicious. They would say from the speaker: "why is that person looking down? She has an ideological problem, let her sit facing the camera".
19. I now have, in my hands, all the evidence about how I was forced to have an abortion, the facts about my husband's detention in the internment camp and everything else.

20. My husband was also hospitalized several times before leaving the camp. He also had some debts that I paid off myself. The debts included his hospital bills and fees when he was at the internment camp. My husband was released from the internment camp on the 16th of October 2018.
21. The day I received my passport, a few people from Ghulja, Chapchal County and our village came to our house . I was preparing to leave for Kazakhstan. They sat me down, took pictures, took a photo of my eyes, recorded my voice and took my fingerprints. One of them then sat down and said: "You know everything that has happened here. Once you cross the border, if someone asks you about it, just say you don't know." I promised, otherwise they would not let me go. "If you mention anything, we will bring you back from Kazakhstan with a black hood on your head."
22. I went to Kazakhstan and said the truth. They detained my brothers, sister, and brother-in-law and kept them as prisoners at the Village Council. My husband's sister threatened me with committing suicide if I kept speaking up. I spoke the truth for my dead child. I do not lie. They must be held accountable.
23. My brother found out where I was staying. He told me that the Chinese government would bring me and my husband back with black hoods on our heads. I told him: "let them take me if they can, I am not afraid." In fact, they were afraid to talk to me. They knew that we would expose their true nature, that is why "they were frying us with our own fat" and using our siblings to get what they wanted.
24. I said to my brother, "Were you not be able to come to our house while we were in Chapchal? You just saw us from afar." I didn't even have a single relative who were able to pay a visit. Because I had a policeman and a camera in my house, no one dared to do so. From morning to night, there was a policeman watching, who would have dared?
25. There was a woman named Uljat who accompanied me until Bakhitali was released. She knew everything. She was a working woman. She would comfort me by saying

that I endured and endured well. She had been criticized several times at her workplace for comforting a suspected woman. She knows my whole story – about all of my hardship and suffering.

26. After my husband was released from the camp, I requested permission from the officials to allow my husband and eldest daughter to return to our leftover business in Kazakhstan. I also told them that I would stay there, as a guarantor, and was willing to get punished if anything happened and I signed with my two children. Thus, I managed to send my eldest daughter and husband to Kazakhstan with a month stay permit. In July 2019, I received a doctor's certificate that my husband was ill in Almaty and was vomiting blood. I took the evidence to the police and asked for a month of travel permit.

27. With the assurance of my relatives, I travelled to Almaty with my two children on the 6th of November 2019. The police didn't allow me to take anything. When we arrived at the Qorghas Border Control, they let all the other passengers pass but held us and confiscated our two handbags. They checked and checked until 10am. After 12am, they called my village officials and got their confirmation about my month long travel permit. I arrived in Kazakhstan at 10pm. Upon arrival, we went to court.

28. I have gone through so much. Among those who studied with me were women who had university degrees, women whose husbands had been persecuted and an 80-year-old man who was there because he used to pray in mosques. They used to look at me at times but were afraid to talk.

29. I speak with evidence that is not false. I am open to all media and there is no need to hide. I want to spread the word to the whole world about the oppression of Kazakhs and Uyghurs. In China, women like us, younger than us, are afraid of giving birth, afraid of being punished for giving birth. They stop with a single child. Why do we come to this world? We have come to leave offspring. If we die, those generations will continue to live.

30. God is watching, I didn't say a single lie. I am responsible for every word I said. I'm not afraid to go to court, I'm ready to speak out about the truth in the Tribunal, with all my evidence.

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: