

## **Uyghur Tribunal – Fact Witness statement**

### **UTFW2-075 – Habibulla Haliq**

1. My name is Habibulla Haliq. My pen name and social media account name is Habibulla Izchi. I was born in Kucha city, East Turkestan. When I was in high school my classmates and I published a newspaper called 'Dawn'. As a result, I was forced to leave my hometown. After that, in 1992, I went to Urumqi and settled down there. Later, I entered Xinjiang University and studied for a while in the field of information and journalism. Unfortunately, for the same political reasons, I couldn't finish my study there. After that I had to leave Urumqi and moved to other provinces. Up until 1994, I spent most of my time in Beijing and Tianjin, at my relatives' places.
2. Afterwards, due to my passion for the profession I had pursued further studies in, I was able to get acquainted with and get guidance from some great intellectuals whilst I was working around Xinjiang University. My main activities during that time were collecting evidence, conducting interviews and keeping records of cases which involved the forced evictions of Uyghurs from suburbs in Urumqi e.g. Karasu, Yamaliq, Heijiasan etc. Because of that, at the end of 1996, I was arrested again in Yining (Ghulja) and imprisoned in Urumqi Liudawan Prison. I stayed there for around 7-8 months. I returned to Kucha three months later and was detained again - probably because I was not imprisoned for long enough during my previous arrest. For almost two and a half years, I spent most of my time in prisons e.g. Liudawan Prison, Saywagh Prison, a third prison, hospital prison etc. The last time I was released, I was told I was going to die. At that time, I was barely able to walk or sit. Gradually, I got well again and founded Ajrim Bio-Science Co. Ltd, a company in Urumqi. Then, I opened a factory and bought a brand called Yadikar Tea and there were about 50-60 people working in the factory.
3. The current Uyghur genocide is directly related to the July 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 massacre. The July 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 massacre was the foundation upon which China rests when rationalising the current genocide because a lot of policies have been implemented since then. Until 2012, for example, many people were arrested after the incident. After 2012, many

children from Yeken, Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan have disappeared. Most have been abducted and taken to other provinces. My close friends and I formed a Foundation called the 'Brotherhood Charitable Foundation' which was not initially registered. The Foundation had been involved in the rescue of children who had been abducted to other provinces. The main contributors were me and my business friends . As a result of the Foundation being widely publicized by social media groups and websites, nearly 300 children were rescued in 2014. Consequently, the government began to intervene and, in 2014, Chen Yeguang (the Secretary General of the High Court of the Autonomous Region), another person from the Public Security Administration and a person from another unknown Administration Office came to our office and said: "Everything is going well, you are contributing to society. The Autonomous Region's Government does not want to be silent. You will work with us and give us all the information you have. For example, who donated? How much has been donated? Where was it used? Where, from which police and by what means, did you get the information about each child from?" They began to pressure us into give them all the details we had. In the meantime, as the government began to intervene, they held a meeting in September 2014 at Xinjiang University. The meeting was organized by the Autonomous Region Government. The meeting was chaired by Mijit Nasir (Deputy Chief of Staff of the Autonomous Region Government) and Chen Yeguang (Secretary-General of the Supreme Court of the Autonomous Region, whom I mentioned above). At the meeting, the head of the Autonomous Region Women's Union (then Azat Sultan - one of the most well-known scholars of the Uyghurs), the head of the Kashgar Provincial Women's Union and several cadres from the Supreme Court and the Lower Court of the Autonomous Region (none of which said their names) were present. Those sat in the front row were Chen Yeguang, Mijit Nasir, the president of the Autonomous Region Women's Union, the then Secretary of the Standing Committee and Chairman of the Tianshan District Regional Government, Anwar. At the meeting, Chen Yeguang summarized the situation: "the 2009 incident did not happen overnight. More than 200,000 people were arrested in the 2009 incident and 50,000 were directly related to the incident. As many as 400,000 people have been arrested between 2012 and 2014. Those people have stored and exchanged anti-government messages on their mobile phones, are religious extremists or their family members

are members of the Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic ideology". Those were his first remarks. He also said: "over the past six months, we have accelerated the process in Kashgar and Hotan because we have too many prisoners". We asked: "What does acceleration mean?" A Uyghur cadre from the Autonomous Region Court said: "For example, in Kucha, Aksu and some counties in Kashgar, a prison prosecutor's office, a lawyer's office and a judge's office have been set up inside the prison. As such, it takes 12 days to finish the process after a person is arrested. That is the acceleration." That's exactly what happened when I checked in later. In Kucha and in Aksu, there were people who had been sentenced within a week.

4. He continued: "You don't know or understand yet. Our country is developing greatly. When we came to Xinjiang at that time (in 1949), there were a small number of educated intellectuals among the Uyghurs. Whether they were educated by the Soviets or influenced by Pan-Turkism or Pan-Islamism (such as Masud Sabiri, Isa Yusuf Aliptekin or Muhammadin Bugra) we used them all. That was the biggest mistake we made. They are now everywhere. From our education system to the publishing houses, to the entire government, to our system." After that he cited Abdurehim Ötkürs books as an example. "Under normal circumstances, these books should not be published. But the government knowingly allowed such things. We want this to come to surface when the time comes." These are some of the remarks he made at the meeting. Is the current fate of all Uyghur intellectuals and educated people who have now been arrested and imprisoned in the camp directly related to what this man said at the time? I think, yes.

5. I witnessed another meeting before I was exiled. After 2009, the central government sent investigation teams to Xinjiang three times. On each occasion, each group received 10 or more groups. They met with entrepreneurs, businessmen, religious scholars, intellectuals and educators in East Turkestan. Moreover, these delegates were selected by the local government themselves, from regional business associations, city administrations, organizations, etc. They appointed the delegates to different meetings. During the meetings, they were told that whatever they said did not violate the law, did not conflict with politics and that they should speak whatever

they had in their minds just as the Chinese had done in the Cultural Revolution. During the meetings, the Uyghurs were questioned about whether there was a truly radical religious trend among the Uyghurs, etc. and they discussed it. The meetings were chaired by Chen Yiguang, the same person mentioned above. There was not much new from him at the time - he repeated the aforementioned speeches. However, before I went abroad in 2016, there was an opening ceremony of the Brotherhood Charitable Foundation in the international market in January and many entrepreneurs contributed. Chen was present there and said: "It is a great event and community contribution. You helped your people, for example, the orphans and the children who were abducted. It was a good thing to rescue them." A dinner was held after the event at that international market. At the time, the government officially took over the Foundation. In other words, the government imprisoned some of the Foundation's founders and put the others under surveillance. Other than Chen Yiguang, there was someone called Qurban Rozi who introduced himself as a member of the Public Security Bureau of the Autonomous Region. There was also a retiree from the National Security Bureau from the Autonomous Region. They took over the Foundation and, as such, we lost ties with the Foundation. Since we were donating companies, we were present at the event but it was only a show. After the event, Chen said: "Although some of the current trends among Uyghurs seem to be about helping the people and caring about the people's lives, there are other hidden things going on. We know who is involved and what they are doing. After the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, we will integrate the Residential Committee database and the Exit and Entry Administration (Customs) database."

6. At the time, I didn't pay attention to the meaning behind what he was saying. After 2009, each Residential Committee employed 200-300 people, all of whom were graduates waiting for employment. Each family would be then supervised by 3 people from the committee, they would draw a map of your house - for example: "who will sleep in which room? Which room will the children be sleeping in? Where is the guest room? Where is the kitchen? What is there in each room? How many books are there?" The names of the books, the cars, the motorcycles, the bicycles, the clothes they wear ... everything would be registered. They would sit in front of each yard and make

a note about all the people who came in that day, what kind of clothes they wore, where they went.... all of the household's activities. That is why I said that the policies introduced in 2009 were the basis for today's policies.

7. Another thing that the Chinese government did in East Turkestan (after 2009) was to create archives about all the Uyghurs. They also set up fences around the areas where Uyghurs were living in large populations e.g. Urumqi, Kashgar, Hotan, Kucha and Aksu. According to Chen, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2016, the database of the Residential Committee would be connected to the database of the Exit and Entry Administration i.e. Customs. In 2015-2016, it was very easy to get a passport and many people went abroad. According to Chen: "some of the Uyghurs would be better off abroad – destroying the Uyghur peoples' reputation instead of living in China and remaining as a burden to the government." But since the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, many people have been banned from going abroad. During his speech, when he was talking about the number of arrests, he didn't mention how many people had been arrested. 400,000 people were arrested from 2012 to 2014 and the total number of arrested people from 2014 to 2017 exceeded 700,000. According to him, the acceleration of the provision of a verdict had been planned for a long time but now they were able to actually realize it. It would only take between a week to 12 days for a person to be imprisoned. The offices of all the relevant bureaus (including the courts, prosecutors, etc.) were inside the prison which made the process much easier. He also said: "you don't know right now but here will be a big, nationwide clean-up of unhealthy ideologies and we will execute them in *Jiabanggu*". I didn't know what *Jiabanggu* was and I hadn't read anything about it at that time. A man from the court said: "*Jiabanggu* is the desert between Lanzhou and our region. What he was talking about was this desert where people killed all the intellectuals during the Chinese Cultural Revolution and people ate each other's meat. I know we moved some prisoners to Lanzhou and the north-eastern provinces but we don't know whether we moved people to *Jiabanggu*. This is the first time I have heard about it." Someone else from the court also said something similar.

8. I would like to testify about my family and loved ones too. After having moved abroad in 2016, I lost all contact with my relatives. All I know is that, in 2017, my sister, my cousin and her husband were arrested. Her husband, Ekrem Tursun, was my partner in the company at the time. My cousin, Arzugül Tashpolat, was working as a physical chemistry teacher at the Science and Technology Institute in Sanji for almost 30 years, majoring in the field of mentoring.
9. In 2017, my cousin and her husband visited Turkey to attend their children's wedding. They were arrested at the airport in Urumqi after returning from Turkey. My cousin spent nearly a year and a half in prison and she has now been released from prison. However, she lost her 30-year teaching job and became a cleaner at the Institute.
10. My third testimony is for my wife's sister, Hornisa Omar, who is from Kucha city, Yengi Mahalla Residential Committee. Two or three months ago, we learned that Hornisa and her husband, Husanjan Emin, have been in prison for three years. According to the news my wife received from someone else, the family can see them once every three months and their children were taken to the state orphanage and visited once a week by my mother-in-law. This is my testimony about my family members.
11. The Chinese government is responsible for my father's death because, when the police came to search our house, my father was beaten by the police and left half paralyzed. He died six months later. My mother died of a stroke within a week. The Chinese government has ruined my whole family, my history, my education, my dreams - everything.

**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:**