



Amnesty International

Group 524

April 2020



April Meeting Cancelled

Cancellation of April Meeting

It should come as no surprise that our meeting at Providence Heights has again been cancelled. For this month, however, there is an AIUSA online program scheduled for **Wednesday the 22nd** that fits in very well with our group's new case.

China: New Prisoner Case – Guligeina Tashimaimaiti



As outlined in last month's newsletter, our group has just received a new prisoner case. **Guligeina Tashimaimaiti** is a member of the Uighur ethnic group from the Xinjiang region of northwestern China. She was living in Malaysia in December 2017, preparing to begin a PhD program, when she decided to make a quick trip home, in order to check on the safety of her parents. Guligeina's friends back in Malaysia have not heard from her since that time, and they fear that she has been imprisoned in one of China's "re-education" concentration camps.

China: AIUSA Online Program Focuses on China's Abuses of Ethnic Minorities

At 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22nd, Amnesty USA will offer an online presentation on a topic directly related to our new prisoner case. The title of the program is *Chinese State Surveillance and "National Security" in Xinjiang*.

See [Page 2](#) for details on how to watch this free program.

Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Providence Heights
9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101



Contact John Warren (jf.warren@verizon.net or 412-766-2506) for more information on material in this mailing, or visit the Amnesty USA web site (www.amnestyusa.org) and Group 39's Amnesty Pittsburgh web site (www.amnestypgh.org).



AIUSA Offers Online Programs on Human Rights Topics

Here are the details on the online program scheduled for **8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22nd**.

Chinese State Surveillance and “National Security” in Xinjiang	
<p>Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are being harassed, detained and arrested in huge numbers. Speakers will address how and why these groups are being targeted; how China’s use of facial recognition and other intrusive methods of monitoring, in the name of “national security,” facilitate human rights abuses; and what Amnesty International, and AIUSA in particular, are doing to fight back in terms of actions and support for U.S. legislation.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Jewher Ilham</u></p> <p>Contact: Instagram: Jewherrr, Twitter: Jewher.ilham</p> <p>Jewher Ilham is the daughter of Uyghur academic Ilham Tohti, who is serving a life term for "separatism." She recently graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Political Science, Arabic, and Central Eurasian Studies, is assisting on a documentary film about Uyghurs, and continuing her advocacy on behalf of her father.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Steven Pieragastini</u></p> <p>Steven Pieragastini is a China Country Specialist for Amnesty International USA. He has a Ph.D. in modern Chinese history from Brandeis University and his research focuses on the relationship between the State and religious organizations, especially since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.</p>

This is a snapshot of the program description contained in the agenda document described on [Page 3](#). Most, if not all, of the programs described in the agenda document had been prepared for presentation in workshops at the 2020 Annual General Meeting. This year, the AGM was scheduled to take place in San Diego during the first week of March.

AIUSA wisely decided to cancel plans for the AGM. Instead, a “Virtual AGM” has been created, with online presentations taking place during the six-week period from mid-April to late May. There will be one program per night, for three nights per week. The schedule can be found in the agenda document; see [Page 3](#).

Every program is free, but to be able to watch a program, you must register for it. Click the link below to go to the Registration page.

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/take-action/events/amnesty-internationals-2020-annual-general-meeting/>

At the Registration page, scroll down until you find the listing for your program, and simply click the **Register** button. Clicking it will take you to a very simple registration form. As soon as you register, you will receive an email message, confirming your registration.

Save that confirmation message! It will contain a link for you to click at the date and time when the program begins. The presentation will be structured as a meeting led by the speakers and participated in by everyone who has registered. The Zoom software will automatically enable you to see and hear all the participants – and they will be able to see and hear you. If you prefer, however, a couple of clicks will enable you to switch off your computer’s camera and microphone.

AIUSA Offers Online Programs on Human Rights Topics (continued)

For details on all the online presentations being offered in April and May, you can scroll through (or download) an impressive 20-page PDF document. It begins with a schedule of the programs – one program per night, three nights a week, for six weeks.

After the schedule is the Table of Contents, which you see below. The rest of the document consists of one page per program, with information on the topic and the speakers. See [Page 2](#) for an example. Here is the link to the document.

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Virtual-AGM-Agenda-5.pdf>



Amnesty International USA's Virtual Annual General Meeting

Join us for content and connection.

Last Updated 04/06/2020


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Descriptions of each session, along with related speaker info, can be found accordingly in alphabetical order.
Please note that contact information has been listed only for speakers who have indicated that this could be shared publicly.

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China: Model Letter for Prisoner Case Similar to Guligeina Tashimaimaiti

*Next month, our letter-writing opportunity will probably involve **Guligeina Tashimaimaiti**. For April, we have a case that is similar in some respects, because it concerns the detention of a student who had been studying abroad, but returned to China for family-related reasons.*

Note that this model letter is directed to the Chinese embassy in Washington. International mail can be uncertain these days, and we have been advised to direct our letters and petitions to the embassies.

*As the AIUSA model letter explains, **Buzainafu Abudourexiti** has been held in incommunicado detention for nearly three years, and she faces another four years behind bars. Don't hesitate to use words of your own to modify the model letter. You also have the option of sending your letter via email (chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn).*

Ambassador Cui Tiankai
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
3505 International Place NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador:

It is of grave concern that **Buzainafu Abudourexiti**, a Uighur woman, remains in incommunicado detention after she was sentenced on 5 June 2017, without any legal representation, to seven years in prison. She is currently being held at Urumqi Women's Prison.

She was taken away from her parents' house in Urumqi, on 29 March 2017 and transferred to the city of Akesu, 1,000km away. No official documentation about her case, including what charges she was convicted of, has ever been provided. While Buzainafu Abudourexiti was pregnant at the time of her arrest, her husband later learned from officials in Xinjiang that the child was already dead in her womb when she was detained. Nothing is known about her current health.

Buzainafu Abudourexiti went to Egypt to study Islam for two years, and returned to Urumqi in early 2015 to work at her father's company while learning English. Planning to join her new husband Almas Nizamidin in Australia, she then went back to Egypt in September 2015 to collect documentation for her visa application. After returning to Urumqi in December 2015, she then received the necessary clearance from the Urumqi police department and Almas proceeded to lodge an application for her Australian spousal visa. Buzainafu Abudourexiti was detained shortly after that, and their application is still pending.

I call on you to release Buzainafu Abudourexiti unconditionally and immediately, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that she committed an internationally recognized offense. If so, she must be granted a fair trial in line with international standards.

In any case, your government must ensure that she has regular, unrestricted access to her family, and to lawyers of her choice. She must not be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, and she must have prompt, regular and unrestricted access to medical care on request or as necessary.

Amnesty Reports on Chinese Persecution of Uighur Students Abroad

This February 21st article from the Pacific Media Centre (based in Auckland, New Zealand) describes a new human rights report – “Nowhere Feels Safe” – issued by Amnesty International. Based on interviews with Uighur students in countries around the world, the report documents an intense campaign of harassment and intimidation, with the purpose of preventing students from speaking out about the abuses against the Uighur people in China.

Note that Amnesty generally uses the alternative spelling ‘Uyghur’. A link to the Amnesty report can be found at the end of the article.

Uyghurs Living Abroad in New Zealand tell of China’s Campaign of Intimidation

Chinese authorities are systematically harassing Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups, even after they have left the country, according to new testimonies gathered by Amnesty International. Uyghur New Zealanders were among those interviewed, despite the threat of further Chinese intimidation.

The case studies, published online today, reveal how Chinese authorities target members of the Uyghur and other Chinese diaspora communities across the globe through pressure from its embassies abroad, as well as through messaging apps and threatening phone calls.

Amnesty International New Zealand executive director Meg de Ronde says the intimidation is part of an ever-growing body of evidence of the Chinese government’s attempts to control and repress people speaking out about continued human rights abuses both inside and outside China. “Governments have a responsibility to ensure people are free to practise their beliefs, whatever they may be,” she says.

“In China, the government is using tactics like enforced disappearances, intimidation and detainment to prevent these freedoms. The Chinese government is not only preventing them from practising their religious beliefs, they’re extending this to other countries as well.”

De Ronde says Uyghurs living in New Zealand, a majority of whom have fled persecution in the autonomous territory of Xinjiang in northwest China, must maintain a low profile for their own safety. “The situation for Uyghurs living in New Zealand is very delicate. We urge anyone working with this community to be mindful of their safety and what information is shared on what platforms, to ensure they are not inadvertently putting anyone at risk. Uyghurs must be given autonomy over any processes undertaken with government departments or external organisations; their freedom over their own lives here must be protected.”

She adds that the New Zealand government must monitor and protect against attempts to repress people living within New Zealand. “It’s incredibly important that the government takes measures to protect the Xinjiang diaspora living here, because the threats of further intimidation and oppression are very real for those living in fear. Everyone has the right to live in peace with the religion they choose. Amnesty International is also calling on Chinese authorities to allow UN human rights experts access to the region to conduct an independent investigation into the situation in Xinjiang.”

Amnesty Reports on Chinese Persecution of Uighur Students Abroad (continued)

The “Nowhere Feels Safe” Report

For the “Nowhere Feels Safe” report, Amnesty International collated information from approximately 400 Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and members of other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups living in 22 countries across five continents, over the course of a year between September 2018 and September 2019.

Their accounts reveal the harassment and fear being experienced by these communities on a daily basis.

Several Uyghur interviewees told Amnesty International that local authorities in Xinjiang had targeted their relatives back home as a way to suppress the activities of Uyghur communities living abroad.

Others said the Chinese authorities had used social messaging apps to track, contact and intimidate them.

The testimonies illustrate the global scope of China’s campaign against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and others originally from Xinjiang, with Chinese embassies and consulates tasked with collecting information about members of these ethnic groups residing in other countries.

Since 2017, China has pursued an unprecedented campaign of mass detention of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang. An estimated one million or more people have been held in so-called “transformation-through-education” or “vocational training” centres, where they have endured a litany of human rights violations.

Earlier this week, a 137-page Chinese government document leaked to several international media outlets listed the personal details of people from Xinjiang, including their religious habits and personal relationships, as a means of determining whether they should be interned in “re-education” camps. The leaked details supported evidence of violations previously documented by Amnesty International.

An estimated up to 1.6 million Uyghurs live outside China, according to the World Uyghur Congress. Significant diasporic communities of Uyghurs can be found in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Smaller communities live in other countries, including Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United States.

Amnesty International’s “Nowhere Feels Safe” Report

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2020/02/china-uyghurs-abroad-living-in-fear/>