

URGENT ACTION

GRAVE HEALTH CONCERNS FOR MISSING UYGHUR

Retired doctor Gulshan Abbas has not been seen or heard from since 10 September 2018. Suffering from multiple chronic diseases that require consistent monitoring and regular treatment, there are serious concerns for her wellbeing. While her family believes that she may have been sent to a “transformation-through-education” facility, they have never received any official information about Gulshan Abbas from the Chinese authorities.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Director Tao Hongjun
Urumqi Municipal Public Security Bureau
No. 30, Nanhudong Lu, Shuimogou Qu
Urumqi
830017 Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
People's Republic of China

Dear Director Tao:

I am writing to express my concern about **Gulshan Abbas** (古丽先·阿巴斯), a retired Uyghur doctor who went missing in Urumqi and has not been seen or heard from since 10 September 2018.

As some relatives of Gulshan Abbas told her family at the end of 2018 that she was “studying”, it was thought that Gulshan Abbas might have been sent to a “transformation-through-education” facility. However, after more than 20 months, no official information about the whereabouts of Gulshan Abbas has been shared with her family.

I find it very troubling to also learn that Gulshan Abbas has undergone surgery on both her eyes and suffers from multiple chronic diseases including high blood pressure, back pain and severe recurring migraines. It is therefore of critical importance that she receives regular and adequate medical care.

Without any information about her condition or whereabouts, I am gravely concerned for Gulshan Abbas' wellbeing and therefore urge you to:

- **Release Gulshan Abbas unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that she committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;**
- **Pending her release, disclose Gulshan Abbas' whereabouts, allow her access to her family, a lawyer of her choice as well as prompt and adequate medical care, as necessary or requested, and ensure she is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gulshan Abbas is a retired doctor from the Xinjiang Oil Field Company Ming Yuan Workers Hospital in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). She had an early retirement because of her health problems.

Gulshan Abbas' sister Rushan Abbas is a Uyghur activist in the US. Rushan Abbas believes that Gulshan Abbas was taken away just days after Rushan made a speech about the mass detention of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Rushan has since come under attack by Chinese official media, such as the *Global Times*, which has accused her of being a "separatist" and spreading rumours about the detention of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. This would not be the first time that relatives of activists have been targeted, as Amnesty International has documented several cases of harassment and intimidation of Uyghurs overseas by the Chinese authorities.

Xinjiang is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in China. More than half of the region's population of 22 million people belong to mostly Turkic and predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, including Uyghurs (around 11.3 million), Kazakhs (around 1.6 million) and other populations whose languages, cultures and ways of life vary distinctly from those of the Han who are the majority in "interior" China.

In March 2017, the Xinjiang government enacted the "De-extremification Regulation" that identifies and prohibits a wide range of behaviours labelled "extremist", such as "spreading extremist thought", denigrating or refusing to watch public radio and TV programmes, wearing burkas, having an "abnormal" beard, resisting national policies, and publishing, downloading, storing, or reading articles, publications, or audio-visual materials containing "extremist content". The regulation also set up a "responsibility system" for government cadres for "anti-extremism" work and established annual reviews of their performance.

It is estimated that up to a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim people have been held in the "transformation-through-education" centres. The Chinese authorities had denied the existence of such facilities until October 2018, when they began describing them as voluntary, free "vocational training" centres. They claim that the objective of this vocational training is to provide people with technical and vocational education to enable them to find jobs and become "useful" citizens. China's explanation, however, contradicts reports of beatings, food deprivation and solitary confinement that have been collected from former detainees.

China has rejected calls from the international community, including Amnesty, to allow independent experts unrestricted access to Xinjiang. Instead, China has made efforts to silence criticism by inviting delegations from different countries to visit Xinjiang for carefully orchestrated and closely monitored tours.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Chinese, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 8 July 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Gulshan Abbas] (she/her)