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## STATE SPONSORED PERSECUTIONS ON UYGHUR INTELLECTUALS

**Uyghur (Uighur) intellectuals including writers, web masters and journalists are being systematically persecuted in the aftermath of the “5<sup>th</sup> July” 2009 Urumchi ethnic conflict in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China**

After the violent crackdown on the initially peaceful “5<sup>th</sup> July” Urumchi Uyghur protest by China’s police and other military armed forces, plus cutting off the region’s international telephone lines for 6 months and internet connections for a year, there was insufficient international condemnation of China’s gross human rights violations in the region. Since that incident, Uyghur intellectuals, including writers, web masters and journalists are being systematically persecuted by the Chinese authorities with the aim of assimilating and depriving the Uyghurs of their civil, cultural, and political rights that should be protected by any state according to the UN human rights declaration.

The crackdown on Uyghur intellectuals intensified after the 2009 protest, the number of sentences handed down to Uyghur intellectuals, and the execution of numerous Uyghur youths convicted of so-called “separatism”, are alarming.

We – the International PEN Uyghur Centre - urge all international organisations including European Union Human Rights Commission, all governments of the European Union, and International NGOs, including International PEN Centre and Amnesty International to take urgent measures to protect Uyghur intellectuals from being further persecuted in China.

Here are the details of the few convicted Uyghur intellectuals that have been revealed by Chinese media, but there are hundreds of other Uyghur writers, webmasters and journalists whose whereabouts is still unknown, along with thousands of other Uyghur people arrested after the “5<sup>th</sup> July” protest.

- **Gheyret Niyaz**, a freelance journalist and former editor of the web site *Uighur Online*, was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the Urumchi Intermediate People’s Court on charges of “endangering state security.” The charge is reportedly based on an interview he gave to the Hong Kong-based magazine *Yazhou Zhoukan* (*Asia Weekly*) on August 2, 2009, regarding the 5<sup>th</sup> July protest.



- **Dilshat Perhat** - internet writer, founder and editor of the Uyghur-language web site *Diyarim.com*, detained in Urumchi on August 7, 2009. He was found guilty of “endangering state security” for publishing politically sensitive material on the protest. On July 21, 2010, Perhat was sentenced to five years in prison. His current whereabouts is unknown.



- **Gülmire Imin** held a local government post and worked for the Uyghur-language *Salkin* website, which called for a demonstration on July 5, 2009. She was sentenced to life in jail for alleged separatist offenses.



▪ **Memetjan Abdulla**, a Uyghur journalist working for an official Chinese radio service has been sentenced to life following a secret trial in Urumchi conducted April 2010. Abdulla worked as a manager for the Uyghur-language Salkin website.



▪ **Tursunjan Hezim** was jailed for seven years by the Aksu district court after a secret trial. He is the founder and web editor of the Uyghur-language website Orkhun. Tursunjan Hezim's secret sentence was revealed by his relatives in March 2011, about eight months after he was secretly tried along with other journalists and dissidents.



In other July 2010 trials, **Nijat Azat**, manager of the *Shabnam* website, was sentenced to 10 years, and **Nureli Obul**, manager of *Salkin* website, was sentenced to three years. Based on interviews with relatives of the arrested, we calculate that more than 100 forum moderators who worked with Salkin Uyghur language website were arrested after July 5 2009.

We estimate that including the moderators of the other two major Uyghur language websites, Diyarim and Shebnem, at least 300 Uyghur Web moderators may be detained and jailed in the Uyghur region now. We are unable to confirm this estimate because of the Chinese government's lack of transparency over the "5<sup>th</sup> July" 2009 protest. We – the International PEN Uyghur centre - call again on the international community to conduct an independent investigation of all the allegations against the Chinese authorities' extra judiciary punishment of Uyghur writers as well as Uyghur people connected to the "5<sup>th</sup> July" protest.

Yours sincerely

**International PEN Uyghur Centre**

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