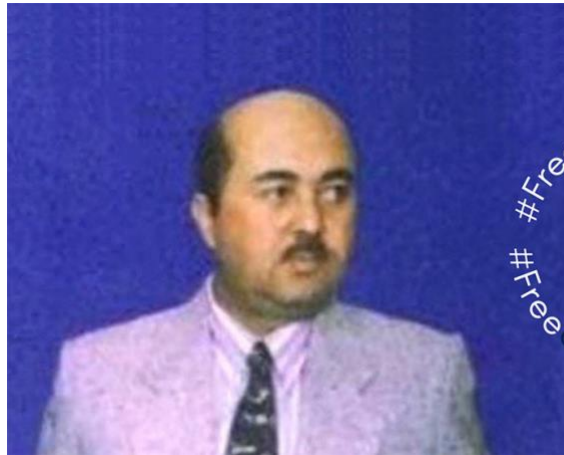


Ahtam Omar, a prominent Uyghur writer, sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in China

Published by **Uyghur PEN** on 1st May 2021

A prominent Uyghur writer Ahtam Omar, well known to the Uyghur people with his numerous stories, novels and screen writings, sentenced to 20 years imprisonment by the authorities of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China.

According to the Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service report, Ahtam Omer, who had been missing since early 2017, had been detained and that his book was ripped from shelves across the region last year and set alight as part of a campaign to censor him."



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Ahtam Omer was detained from his home on March 12, 2017, in Kashgar (in Chinese, Kashi) prefecture's Makit (Maigaiti) county, a month after his brother Anwar Omer and nephew Iskander Omer. The source said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal. "The basic reason for this, the reason was given at the time, was that he had sent his older brother's son to study in Egypt and sent money to him."

The source said, "Ahtam Omer's literary work was stopped during the police investigation into his activities, after which he was charged with "separatism" and sentenced to prison in a secret trial in the XUAR capital. Urumqi in late 2018."¹

Ahtam Omar was born in 1962 in Makit County. He graduated from Kashgar Pedagogical School in 1981, worked as a rural Union cadre, presenter for the Kashgar Municipal Radio Station and professional writer of the Prefectural Literary and Artistic Association;

screenwriter for the Tangritagh Film Production Studio, and for the Xinjiang Song and Dance Troupe. He joined the Chinese Writers' Association in 2008.

Ahtam Omer is an outstanding Uyghur writer with his unique style. "The greetings to the homeland from distance horizon", which published at the beginning of the 1990s, became one of the most-read novels. That novel depicted the author's visit to foreign countries, comparing the Uyghur lives at home, and it becomes a very popular book at that time read by every Uyghurs.

He wrote many stories that reflect the rural Uyghur lives and the problems of social injustice that many people were suffered in the midst of Chinese economic and social opening-up and reforms that took place under the horrific remaining shadows of the Chinese "Cultura Revolution" in the 1980s that people have never forgotten.

He's an author of the book "Ahtam Omer's Story Collections". His other published novels are: "The polluted Lake", "Oh, the merciless River", "The Bloody Valley", "The Value of the Morning", "The Lonely Island", "Believe in yourself", "Child of the Eagle" and a classic love story "Gharib and Sanam".

The Uyghur PEN Centre urges all PEN International members, Civil Societies, Human Rights Organisations, and Governments to follow Ahtam Omer's case, demand from the Chinese government about his release. We appeal you take action to save hundreds of known and unknown Uyghur writers' and poets' lives. They are now suffering from injustice, unfair legal procedures, and extrajudicial punishments that systematically target the Uyghur intellectuals, sentencing them for long length of imprisonment or detaining them unlawfully into the Chinese internment camps in Uyghuristan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China). In August 2018, U.N. said it has credible reports that China holds over a million Uyghurs in what resembles "massive internment camps".² The world must hold accountable for the Chinese Governments atrocities towards the Uyghur people and the increasingly deteriorating situation of the Uyghurs; the US, Canada, the Netherland and the U.K recognised China's genocide on Uyghurs.³ The world, and the U.N, and the people who stand against the Crimes of Humanity must take action to stop China's Uyghur Genocide!

*Read from Uyghur PEN website:

<https://www.uyghurpen.org/free-ahtam-omar>

¹ Xinjiang Authorities Sentence Prominent Uyghur Author to 20 Years in Prison
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/author-04232021205321.html>

² U.N. says it has credible reports that China holds million Uighurs in secret camps
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-un-idUSKBN1KV1SU>

³ Uyghurs: MPs state genocide is taking place in China
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-56843368>