

June 09, 2020

Senate Human Rights Caucus
United States House of Representatives
United States Senate
China Congressional-Executive Commission
White House National Security Council
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
U.S. Department of State

Re: Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Imprisonment Of a Prominent Uyghur Entrepreneur Following Participation In US State Department Program

We are Harvard Law School alumni drawn from over 50 countries and we are writing to you regarding Mr. Ekpar Asat, a prominent young Uyghur leader and entrepreneur, who has reportedly disappeared into the shadows of the detention system in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region ("XJUAR.")

We are writing this letter to express our gratitude for your valuable support for Ekpar Asat, the brother of our friend and classmate, Rayhan Asat, who is unjustly detained by the Chinese government.

We are delighted and grateful to note that seven senators of the Senate Human Rights Caucus issued a joint statement to the US Embassy in China, urging the Chinese government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Asat.¹ The White House National Security Council has also called out "the Chinese Communist Party for its treatment of millions of Uighurs like Ekpar Asat whom it arbitrarily detains, indoctrinates, and forces into labor to erase their ethnic identity and religious beliefs."²

We are also writing this letter take concrete actions to secure Ekpar's unconditional release.

We, as lawyers and human rights advocates from across the world, are disturbed by the opacity surrounding Mr. Asat's enforced disappearance and the injustice around his subsequent imprisonment. **We are particularly concerned that Mr. Asat's participation in the US State Department's International Leadership Visitors Program (IVLP) may have made him a target for the Chinese government.** Like Mr. Asat, most of us left our home countries to take part in a prestigious program of study in the United States. Afterwards, we returned home to our families and led successful careers. Mr. Asat did not.

None of us can remotely imagine the pain that Ekpar, Rayhan, and their family have gone through over the years since Mr. Asat's disappearance. More importantly, we cannot even fathom how Mr. Asat has spent his days during these four years and counting in Chinese internment camps and prisons. We are moved by Rayhan's courage and have particularly witnessed Rayhan's uphill battle against an authoritarian government.

¹ In light of the New York Times reporting, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Chris Coons, Senator Todd Young, Senator Tom Tillis, Senator Mazio Hirono, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton publicly demanded Mr. Asat's immediate release. Both the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission also joined the call.

² See Edward Wong, New York Times: Sister Fights to Free Uighur Businessman Held in China After U.S. Trip, May 9, 2020

Rayhan is now asking various US government agencies to escalate their efforts to free her brother. We join her call, and we ask that the US government work in concerted effort to secure Mr. Asat's release, including working with the President of the United States.

We are encouraged by the State Department's statement that "diplomats would continue to raise Mr. Asat's case with the Chinese government."³ **We ask you to urge the State Department to significantly intensify its effort to secure Mr. Asat's release, especially given that his disappearance and detention appears connected to his participation in the aforementioned US State Department program.** As a democratic country promoting the rule of law, the US simply cannot stand still while knowing that Mr. Asat disappeared for participating in a program sponsored by the State Department.

We sincerely appreciate all of your efforts to put this egregious violation of Mr. Asat's basic human rights to an end and to combat the ongoing oppression against the Uyghur community in XJUAR of China.

Respectfully,

Signatories

1. Diogo Santana Lopes (Portugal)
2. Kristen Zornada (Australia)
3. Sigrún Ingibjörg Gísladóttir (Iceland)
4. Avani Bansal (India)
5. Joan Selorm Michaels (Ghana)
6. Carlos Andres Pagan (Puerto Rico, United States)
7. Alice Lee (Taiwan)
8. Rachel Tompkins (New Zealand)
9. Thomas Ewing (United States)
10. Mobola Lawal (Nigeria)
11. Amy Woolfson (United Kingdom)
12. Adhitya Srinivasan (India)
13. Noura Al-Saket (Jordan)
14. Irene Atim Lakony (Uganda)
15. Sarah Mishkin (United States)
16. Aluma Zernik (Israel)
17. Michela Mancini (Italy)
18. Oliver M. Barker-Vormawo (Ghana)
19. Rachel Jonas (United Kingdom)
20. Lindiwe Sibande (Malawi)
21. Jitka Vrtelova (Czech Republic)
22. Claudia Torres (Mexico)
23. Kulani Jalata (United States)

³ Edward Wong, New York Times: Sister Fights to Free Uighur Businessman Held in China After U.S. Trip, May 9, 2020

24. Carmen Feito (Spain)
25. Juliane Steffens (Germany)
26. Justinas Jarusevicius (Lithuania)
27. Anna Crawford (New Zealand)
28. Tobyn Danger (Japan)
29. Shammias Malik (United States)
30. Cem Tecimer (Turkey)
31. Du Xuan (Singapore)
32. Lindiwe Sibande (Malawi)
33. Sam Parsons (United Kingdom)
34. Tess Nolizwe Peacock (South Africa)
35. Lauren Godles Milgroom (United States)
36. Mayu Yamaguchi (Japan)
37. Odile Amman (Switzerland)
38. Lena Borislavova (Bulgaria)
39. Camila Tomimatsu (Brazil)
40. Kyle Strickland (United States)
41. Tonia M'Bawa (Sierra Leone)
42. Asli Orhon (Turkey)
43. Ricki-Lee Gerbrandt (Canada)
44. Seohyung Kim (South Korea)
45. Giovanna Parini (Paraguay)
46. Mayuko Tsuijimoto (Japan)
47. Breno Casiuch (Brazil)
48. Johan Lievens (Belgium)
49. Ujwala Uppauluri (India)
50. Samantha Lint (United States)
51. Sulyok Katalin (Hungary)
52. Marium Khawaja (United States & Pakistan)
53. Mathieu Bernier Trudeau (Canada)
54. Mavis Abada (Nigeria)
55. Tamar Kiki Gonzada (Georgia)
56. Bell Athayu (Thailand)
57. Angel Gabriel (Mexico)
58. Barbara Lyszcza (Poland)
59. Francis Igiriogu (Nigeria)
60. Michel Haber (Brazil)
61. Lydia Adude (Kenya)
62. Rabiat Akande (Nigeria)
63. Isaac Saidel-Goley (United States)
64. Ruta Hadgunu (Eritrea)
65. Constanza Borear (Peru)
66. Andrey Morozov (Russia)
67. Işıl Pişkin (Turkey)
68. Salma Mohsen (United States)
69. Zeeshaan Hashmi (Pakistan)
70. Omar Vasquez Duque (Chile)
71. Margaux Marmy (Switzerland)
72. Alexandra Arizmendi (Peru)
73. Erick Ribeiro (Brazil)
74. Catalina Garcia (Colombia)

75. Irmina Pacho (Poland)
76. Kiran Iyer (Australia)
77. Ariana Pagliacci (Italy)
78. Ayça Yılmaz (Turkey)
79. Andres Fuchs (Chile)
80. Reem Alaa Abass (Egypt)
81. Rafael Andrade (Brazil)
82. Shubhangi Bhadada (India)
83. Tomohiro Yokota (Japan)
84. Michael Leung (Hong Kong)
85. Reon Cloete-Delparo (South Africa)