

URGENT ACTION

FIVE UYGHURS STILL AT RISK OF FORCED RETURN

After Thai authorities forcibly returned 40 Uyghur refugees to China on February 27, five other Uyghur refugees are at risk of being forcibly returned to China where they would be at real risk of serious human rights violations. The men had travelled to Thailand in 2014 fleeing persecution, and the Thai government must uphold its obligations and ensure their rights, including to international protection.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **Second UA 154.15**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra

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CC: Thai Embassy in the United States Ambassador Dr. Suriya Chindawongse

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Dear Prime Minister,

It is unconscionable that your government forcibly returned **40 ethnic Uyghur refugees** to China on February 27, in violation of Thailand's international human rights obligations and of the principle of nonrefoulement. I am concerned for the situation of an additional **five Uyghur men** imprisoned in Klong Prem Central Prison, Bangkok, who are themselves at risk of forcible return to China.

I am disturbed to learn that prior to deporting them, your government denied the 40 refugees their requests to have access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and have their protection needs assessed.

I am saddened that the Thai government failed to protect these men, despite the recent enactment of domestic law prohibiting refoulement and the adoption of a newly created mechanism to screen individuals in need of international protection.

I therefore urge you to show your commitment to upholding your international human rights obligations and take the following actions:

- Ensure the five Uyghur men have access to a full, effective and fair procedure to assess their asylum claims; to adequate and appropriate medical care and lawyer of their choice; and commit to not forcibly returning them to China or to a third country from where they could be returned to China;
- Investigate the refoulement of 40 Uyghur men forcibly returned to China;
- End arbitrary detention of refugees and migrants and amend legislation and regulations in line with international standards accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The five men travelled to Thailand in March 2014, after fleeing China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Two of the men were children, aged 16 at the time. They were among more than 300 men, women, children, and elderly people who officials detained in two operations targeting presumed human smuggling camps in mid-March 2014. Officials transferred individuals to immigration detention centers under Thailand's Immigration Act.

In June 2015, authorities had allowed 172 women and children from the group to travel to Turkey. In July 2015, Thailand breached its domestic and international human rights obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement, by facilitating the forcible return of 109 other Uyghur men, women, and children to China. At the time, Amnesty [decried the deportations](#) as "a despicable act, and illegal under international law". In 2020 the five men escaped from Mukdahan Immigration Office in North-eastern Thailand. They described oppressive conditions of detention as a reason for their escape. Authorities have sentenced them to terms of imprisonment until 2029 for escaping from detention. In light of the deportation of 40 Uyghurs in late February, there are concerns that authorities may grant them a pardon for the purposes of accelerating their deportation back to China.

Prior to their imprisonment, they, along with dozens of other detained Uyghurs, were unlawfully held for years without charge or trial under the Immigration Act, which does not define a maximum period for detention. Amnesty has confirmed poor conditions of detention in the centers.

In January 2025, Thai government officials had visited Uyghur refugees in Suan Phlu Immigration Center and had reportedly pressured them to complete paperwork agreeing to deportation to China. Authorities subsequently denied the men access to officials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency). UN human rights experts, governments, and members of civil society called on the Thai government to uphold its obligations not to engage in refoulement. Refoulement is also prohibited under Section 13 of Thailand's 2022 Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance Act. On February 27, 2025, Thai authorities transported a group of 40 Uyghur men from Suan Phlu Immigration Detention Center to Don Mueang Airport, where they boarded a flight direct to Urumqi, China.

Amnesty International has documented massive and systematic abuses by the government of China against Uyghurs and other Muslims living in Xinjiang Autonomous Region, including in internment camps, where over a million people have been arbitrarily detained. Uyghurs have been subjected to severe restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and religion, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trials, executions, extrajudicial killings, and violations of economic, cultural, and social rights. Amnesty International has concluded that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture and persecution against Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Thai, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: September 13, 2025

NAME AND PRONOUN: Five Uyghur refugees at risk of forced return [all he/him]

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/2065/2015/en/>