

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH CONCERNS FOR UYGHUR DETAINED FOR DECADE

Ekpar Asat is a Uyghur businessman who has been detained since April 2016, partly incommunicado, while his family has faced significant challenges as they advocate for his release. Finally able to visit him in mid-2025, his family expressed concerns for his physical and mental health. Chinese authorities should urgently end his arbitrary detention and take concrete steps to implement UN recommendations, including the release of all other individuals detained solely because of their ethnicity, language, religious belief or expression.

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 **Fourth UA 79.20**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Chen Xiaojiang 陈小江
Secretary-General, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Committee
2 Jiankang Lu, Urumqi 830002
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
People's Republic of China

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Embassy of China in the United States
Ambassador Xie Fang
3505 International Place, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn

Dear Secretary-General Chen,

I am writing to express my grave concern for Uyghur tech entrepreneur **Ekpar Asat** (艾克拜尔·艾赛提), who was taken into custody nearly a decade ago, tried, and convicted of “inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination”. He is reportedly serving a 15-year sentence, but his family has never received court documents attesting to his trial or whether he was provided with a lawyer.

It is distressing to learn that his detention and imprisonment in Aksu Prison have been marked by concerns about the conditions and treatment he faces, which fall short of international human rights standards. His family has reported that from January 2019 to at least 2021, he was held in solitary confinement. The first video conversation his family had with him, in January 2021, raised serious concerns about his health.

I call on you to release Ekpar Asat immediately and provide compensation for his decade-long ordeal. Pending his release, he must be treated in full accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), without torture or other ill-treatment, and transferred from Aksu Prison to a prison in Urumqi, and must have regular, unrestricted access to a lawyer of his choice and to his family.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ekpar Asat is a Uyghur tech entrepreneur, media founder, and philanthropist dedicated to helping older people and children with disabilities. He founded a popular social media app featuring information on current affairs and cultural topics. He went missing in April 2016 and was later reportedly convicted without any known trial on charges of “inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination” and sentenced to 15 years in prison. His family only learned of the trial through communications between Chinese authorities and several US senators in late 2019 and early 2020. He is currently detained in a prison in Xinjiang’s Aksu Prefecture.

Ekpar Asat was finally able to communicate with his family in January 2021 for the first time since 2016. His family reported that his health appeared to have deteriorated. During the three-minute video call, he appeared to have lost significant weight, looked pale, and had black spots on his face. He told his family that his physical and mental health were declining. The 2025 visit to Aksu Prison was important for the family, but the distance and cost may prevent regular visits, even though such visits are in principle guaranteed by Chinese authorities.

About Xinjiang / the Uyghur Region

Xinjiang is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in China. More than half of its 22 million residents belong to mostly Turkic and predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, including Uyghurs (around 11.3 million), Kazakhs (around 1.6 million), and others whose languages, cultures, and ways of life differ significantly from those of the Han ethnic majority in the rest of China.

Since 2017, under the guise of countering “terrorism” and “religious extremism”, Chinese authorities have carried out massive and systematic abuses against Muslims in Xinjiang. Over a million people have been arbitrarily detained in internment camps under vague definitions of extremism that target individuals peacefully expressing their cultural identity. In 2021, Amnesty International found China to have committed at least the crimes against humanity of torture, imprisonment, and persecution against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.

In August 2022, the OHCHR released a report stating that China’s arbitrary and discriminatory detention and treatment of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other predominantly Muslim groups may constitute crimes under international law, particularly crimes against humanity. In August 2024, the OHCHR reiterated that “many problematic laws and policies remain in place” despite clear recommendations. In February 2026, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged Chinese authorities to stop using vague criminal and national security provisions to suppress fundamental rights and to release all those arbitrarily detained. He also expressed regret over the lack of follow-up on previous recommendations.

PREFERRED LANGUAGES TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Uyghur, Chinese, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: November 1, 2026

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ekpar Asat (he/him).