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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251  
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED "HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL"**

**Written statement\* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of  
the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic & Other Minorities, a non-governmental  
organization on the Roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is  
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 June 2006]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the  
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Statement on the Situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China**

*East Turkestan, known as “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” in present-day China, continues to be a region where Uyghurs face grave violations of their fundamental freedoms and human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Additionally, the influx of Chinese settlers, together with coercive birth control among Uyghur women and the systematic sinozation of the Uyghur language, pose a substantial threat to the survival of the Uyghurs.*

### ***Uyghurs and the “War on Terror”***

The people of East Turkestan continue to be arrested, tortured and executed on political grounds. According to Amnesty International, since 11 September 2001, the Chinese authorities have arrested more than 3,000 Uyghurs. In November 2005, Reporters Without Borders condemned the three-year prison sentence passed by a court in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, accusing Koresh Huseyin of publishing a fable supposedly alluding to the region’s harsh laws. Reuters, quoting Xinjiang Daily, reported on 21 January 2006 that in the year 2005 alone, thousands of Uyghurs were arrested, accused of being separatists, religious extremists or terrorists. Amongst the arrested were scholars (such as Tohti Tunyaz), writers (such as Nurmammed Yasin) and journalists and editors (such as Abdulgani Memetemin and Koresh Huseyin).

According to the United Nations (UN), arrested Uyghurs are frequently subjected to torture, some left physically and mentally scarred as a result. UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Mr. Manfred Nowak, reports that “torture in China is still wide-spread” and groups including the Uyghurs and Tibetans “have been particularly targets of torture.”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Nowak made these conclusions after visiting detention centers in Xinjiang, Tibet and Beijing during his trip to China in late 2005.

According to the 2004 Annual Human Rights Report, released by the US State Department, the Chinese government “...used the international war on terror as a pretext for cracking down harshly on suspected Uyghur separatists expressing peaceful political dissent and on independent Muslim religious leaders.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, *Amnesty International* stated in its 2004 report that, “China has repackaged its repression of Uyghurs as a fight against ‘terrorism’” and *Human Rights Watch* in its most recent report noted that, “China has opportunistically used the post-September 11 environment to [...] claim that individuals disseminating peaceful religious and cultural messages in Xinjinag are terrorists who have changed tactics.”

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<sup>1</sup> SR report available from: [www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/index.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2004 Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Available at US Department of State. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41640.htm>

### ***Population transfer***

Before 1949 there were only 300,000 Chinese settlers in East Turkestan. According to a recent official Chinese census the number of settlers has risen to more than 7 million in 2005 although according to observers, this figure could be even higher.

It is estimated that annually 250,000 Chinese settlers are moving into East Turkestan. Population transfer, including the implantation of settlers and settlements, was recognised by the *Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities*, in its resolution 1991/92/93, to constitute a violation of the basic human rights and freedoms of not only the peoples being moved or removed by the governments, but also of the original inhabitants of the territory into which settlers are being implanted.

As stated above, population transfer can violate the rights of the settlers as well as the indigenous population, thus with the steady flow of Chinese settlers into East Turkestan its original inhabitants are faced with the danger of becoming a minority in their own homeland and losing their cultural identity. This demographic policy not only undermines the right to self-determination, but also affects the economic, social and cultural human rights of the Uyghurs.

Despite the region's natural wealth, the Uyghurs live at bare subsistence level with almost 80 percent of them living below the poverty threshold. According to a report released by the Xinjiang Provincial Government in October 2004, the average income of Chinese settlers in East Turkestan is four times higher than that of a Uyghur. About 85 per cent of the Uyghur people are farmers. According to the said official Chinese report, the average annual income of a Uyghur farmer is 820 yuan or 100 US dollars, whereas a Chinese farmer in East Turkestan earns an annual income of 3,000 Yuan.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Social and cultural rights violations***

Furthermore, in effect restraining the growth of the Uyghur population, coercive birth control is being carried out among Uyghur women, though contradicting China's stated policy of implementing special, preferential population policies for designated minority groups. Recently, in the town of Chapchal, with a population of 180,000, only 100 women were allowed to give birth. In the same town, 40 Uyghurs working in the Chinese administration were fired from their jobs because their wives were pregnant.

Today, Chinese authorities are pursuing a policy of systematic sinocization of the Uyghur language and literature. Until 1949, the literary language of the Uyghurs contained almost no Chinese words, whereas now, a large quantity of Chinese words has been introduced into the Uyghur vocabulary. In this regard, several thousands of already existing Uyghur words have been removed for reason such as "not favourable to the socialist construction",

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<sup>3</sup> World Uyghur Congress (WUC), Address by Mr. Erkin Alptekin, Available at: <http://www.uyghurcongress.org/En/pressrelease.asp?ItemID=1139587161>

“national unity” or for other seemingly political reasons. According to Uyghur scholars, the situation has reached an alarming proportion. Unless preventive steps are taken, it is feared that the Uyghur language, the most representative language of the Altay Language Family, which played a major role in the enrichment of Central Asian civilization for almost two thousand years, may disappear from the linguistic scene.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Lack of freedom of religion***

Furthermore, a campaign of religious repression has been directed against Muslim Uyghurs. According to a 114-page report released by *Human Rights Watch* on 11 April 2005, “the world-wide campaign against terrorism has given Beijing the perfect excuse to crack down harder than ever in Xinjiang. Other Chinese enjoy a growing freedom of worship, but Uyghurs, like Tibetans, find that their religion is being used as a tool of control.”<sup>5</sup> Recently Chinese authorities have also tightened curbs on Uyghurs, banning any government officials, state employees, Party members, and children and in some cases women from entering mosques. A photo sent to Radio Free Asia’s (RFA) Uyghur service shows a sign above the gate of a Mosque in the southern part of Eastern Turkestan forbidding Muslims to attend worship.<sup>6</sup>

Concern is expressed at the fear of civil unrest as the people of East Turkestan remain in a desperate, frustrated situation, and there is a pressing need to defuse rising tensions by urging the Chinese government to end systematic violations of human rights against the Uyghurs.

### ***Recent Arrests***

On 29 May 2006, as widely reported, the three adult children of Uyghur human rights activist and former prisoner of conscience, Mrs. Rebiya Kadeer, were detained by Chinese Police and refused permission to legal counsel.<sup>7</sup> The detention coincided with the arrival of a United States Congressional team in East Turkestan. Ablikim and Alim Abdiriym, and Rushangul were taken into custody one day before the US Congressional visit to the region. Mrs. Kadeer has reportedly been repeatedly threatened, citing consequences for her children and her business, not to speak out on behalf of the Uyghur people.<sup>8</sup> The current whereabouts of Alim and Rushangul remain unknown, although they are reported officially by the Chinese government to be under house arrest.

In conclusion, IFPRERLOM appeals to the UN Human Rights Council

*to urge the immediate release of Ablikim, Alim Abdiriym and Rushangul from Chinese custody;*

and to adopt a resolution that calls upon the Chinese authorities;

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/china0405/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.rfa.org/english/news/2004/11/17/religion\\_uyghur/](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/2004/11/17/religion_uyghur/)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.rafto.no/DesktopModules/ViewAnnouncement.aspx?ItemID=223&Mid=42,>

[http://www.unpo.org/news\\_detail.php?arg=21&par=4681,](http://www.unpo.org/news_detail.php?arg=21&par=4681)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=9414&t=1&c=1>

*to extend an open invitation to all thematic mandates of the Council and receive them on official missions in Xinjiang;*

*to end so-called “Strike Hard” campaigns aimed at the Uyghur population;*

*to put an end to the practice of death penalty for political and religious dissidents;*

*to release all ‘political’ and ‘religious’ prisoners; and*

*to guarantee the preservation of the cultural, religious and national identity of Uyghurs.*

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