

## **Mr. Alimujiang Yimiti**

Mr. Alimujiang Yimiti (Alimjan Yimiti in Uyghur), a Christian Uyghur from Xinjiang, was accused of engaging in illegal religious activities when authorities targeted the British company, Jirehouse, which he was working for in a series of closures of foreign companies belonging to Christians in September 2007. Mr. Yimiti was subsequently taken into detention on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and accused of endangering national security by instigating separatism and stealing, penetrating, purchasing and illegally providing state secrets or intelligence for overseas organizations and individuals, under Articles 103 and 111 of the Chinese Criminal Code. The charges are seen as a cover for religious persecution and sources state that the reason for Mr. Yimiti's imprisonment is his Christian faith and witness among the Uyghur people. Mr. Yimiti was formally arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008. His trial opened on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at the Kashi District Intermediate People's Court, but after a six and a half hour hearing the Court referred the case back to state prosecutors due to "insufficient evidence". Although initially denied access to his lawyer, Mr. Yimiti was allowed legal representation by two lawyers in court. However, his wife and members of the media were prohibited from entering the court on the grounds of the sensitivity of the case.

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found Mr. Yimiti's detention to be arbitrary and in contravention of articles 7,9,10,11(1), 12 and 18 of the UDHR (Opinion No. 29/2008).

In March 2009 an inside source reported that Mr. Yimiti's case had been sent to a Communist Party committee at the highest government level in Xinjiang. The committee, which is the final arbitrator on all cases among the law enforcement agencies in the region, was to make the final decision on Mr. Yimiti's case.

On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2009, at around 10am, Mr. Yimiti was seen at Nongsanshi (Military Farm) Hospital in Kashgar. His hands were bound and he was being roughly escorted by police and a prison doctor. He repeatedly shouted to onlookers 'I am sick. Tell my lawyer to come quickly to see me'. A week earlier Mr. Yimiti's lawyer had visited him – the second time anyone had been allowed to visit since his detention - and reported that he was in very good health. Sources state that the sudden change in Mr. Yimiti's health is considered suspicious, and that abuse and torture by prison authorities cannot be discounted as local officials are desperate to justify his detention in light of the increasing national embarrassment over his case. Attorney Li Donyong visited Mr. Yimiti on 21<sup>st</sup> April. However when Attorney Li asked about his health Mr. Yimiti gestured to say that he was not allowed to speak about it. Attorney Li reported that Mr. Yimiti was thankful for the concern shown for him from all over the world.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May government sources told Mr. Yimiti's mother, Wushuerhan (65), that the Kashi Public Security Bureau is secretly planning to sentence him to three years of re-education through labour, an administrative sentence that they can independently apply without approval of the court or other departments. Sources say that the PSB, which originally filed the case against Mr. Yimiti, is intent on sentencing him to cover up their error in arresting him.

Mr. Yimiti's wife, Guli Nuer, and their two sons and family members are deeply concerned about his situation and urge for immediately intervention to be made on his behalf. Guli Nuer has highlighted that her husband is being persecuted for his faith and that he would not have had access to state secrets as an agricultural worker. In March 2009 Guli Nuer wrote: "It has been almost one year and two months since Alimujiang was taken away. As for how we, his family members, feel, it is hard to describe in words."