

Elfidar Iltebir's Testimony on Transnational Repression in the US.

Thank you to the Members of the Tom Lantos Commission for providing me with the opportunity to address the atrocities faced by Uyghurs, especially the ones in the United States. I am Elfidar Iltebir, privileged to serve as the President of the Uyghur American Association, a community-based organization established in 1998. As an Uyghur American, I aim to shed light on how the ongoing genocide in our homeland, East Turkistan, affects our daily lives here in the United States. It is already challenging to cope with the anguish of knowing that our families and friends endure physical torture, rape, and enslavement in modern day concentration camps, forced labor factories and prisons.

It's crucial to recognize China's new propaganda endeavors and understand the current stage we are in. China replaces visible checkpoints with high-tech surveillance and relocates Uyghurs from makeshift camps to actual prisons while falsely portraying normalcy in our homeland to the world. Concurrently, China's extraterritorial harassment, including on American soil, has increased in recent years. China persistently violates United States laws to target Uyghurs within the United States, subjecting them to psychological torture by threatening the safety of their relatives to silence criticism of its genocide. Uyghurs in the United States are under surveillance.

China's state terror transcends borders. We are also victims of the CCP's harassment campaign within this free country. It's brutal for the CCP to physically torture our families back home to inflict psychological torture on us by preventing us from speaking out about its atrocities. China employs tactics akin to kidnappers, targeting us by holding loved ones hostage to compel our compliance with its demands through fear of repercussions on them for our actions. By resorting to such threats and psychological torture, China flagrantly violates American laws with impunity.

The decreasing number of whistleblowers and witnesses indicates that the CCP is succeeding with its new tactics of transnational repression (TNR) worldwide. Here, I would like to show a screenshot of WeChat video call with our community members living in Virginia. Because their family members back home fear texting or speaking about their harassment, they silently conveyed their request on paper to their children here in the United States. "Do not attend any events; there are people around you watching and reporting here. If you go to those places, we will be arrested. We signed a document stating you will not participate in anything." Later, four of that family's relatives were taken to concentration camps. This is the life of Uyghurs here in this free country.

I have also faced harassment and threats numerous times. Shortly after being elected as the current president of UAA, I received a call from a young Uyghur man from another state. He informed me that Chinese police had contacted him, urging him to move to my neighborhood and monitor the people visiting my house. The man declined, citing difficulty in transferring to other schools, but he wanted to caution me to be vigilant. On another occasion, during a webinar on China's boarding school policy,

Chinese trolls registered with fake email addresses and sent harassing messages to me and Dr. Adrian Zenz. My home address was posted online, suggesting they knew where I lived. Now, I have cameras installed on three sides of my house, and I've reported these incidents to the FBI. Based on my investigation, most online accounts that harass me were created right after I was elected. Most harassments I receive are during Beijing's work hours on weekdays, and they use Google Translate, referring to me as "he" in their comments to discredit my work and tarnish my reputation. Most recently, when I attended a protest in San Francisco during APEC to demonstrate against genocidal president Xi, we faced harassment there too. Chinese trolls occupied our protest spot, forcing us to retreat and blocking us with huge flags probably distributed by the Chinese Embassy so no one could see us. They verbally abused Tursunay Ziyawudun, an Uyghur camp survivor. "Why is American police just watching and not protecting us?" Tursunay questioned.

Sheffield Hallam University's report on China's Transnational Repression of the Uyghur Diaspora titled "We know you better than you know yourself" outlines how the Chinese authorities employ various tactics such as surveillance, harassment, coercion, and intimidation to monitor and control Uyghurs. Chinese government forces students to spy on others.

The Chinese government's transnational repression violates the fundamental rights of Uyghurs living abroad and undermines the internationally recognized principles of human rights. By targeting dissenters beyond its borders, China seeks to create a climate of intimidation, effectively silencing opposition and perpetuating its authoritarian rule unchecked.

Millions of Uyghurs live in detention camps and in an open-air prison - the mass surveillance police state in our homeland - and we feel like the CCP is trying to imprison our minds and souls here in the United States. The world must halt the CCP's long arm from reaching so far beyond China and hold the CCP accountable for its crimes.

Here are three key recommendations:

- 1- Increase protection for Uyghur Americans: Implement measures to ensure the safety and security of Uyghur Americans who are facing harassment and threats on US soil.
- 2- Provide support for Uyghur refugees: Expand support and assistance for Uyghur refugees who have fled persecution in China and are seeking asylum in the United States. Expedite and streamline the asylum process.
- 3- Sanction and revoke visas for Chinese government officials who are responsible for the transnational repression, forced labor and Uyghur genocide