



April 18, 2014

President Xi Jinping  
The State Council General Office  
2 Fuyoujie  
Xichengqu  
Beijingshi 100017  
People's Republic of China

**RE: Abduweli Ayup**

Your Excellency:

On behalf of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), I write with regard to Abduweli Ayup, an imprisoned linguist and teacher. The LSA is the oldest and largest scholarly society working to advance the scientific study of language. The LSA is also a member of the Science and Human Rights Coalition of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Together, we have partnered with scores of organizations representing thousands of scientists and engineers in the defense of human rights around the world.

Abduweli Ayup is a Uyghur linguist and educator in Xinjiang, China, who has been detained since August 20, 2013. Mr. Ayup, the recipient of a Ford Foundation Scholarship, earned a Master's Degree in Linguistics from the University of Kansas in 2011. Upon graduation, he returned to Xinjiang with the hope of establishing a Uyghur Language school so that Uyghur students would have an opportunity to develop academic proficiency in their native language. Mr. Ayup's school proved to be popular, and he was preparing to open a Uyghur Language kindergarten before his arrest. Today, he is being held on unknown charges.

I respectfully urge you to investigate the situation surrounding Abduweli Ayup arrest, to explain publicly the circumstances of Abduweli Ayup's arrest and, pending his immediate release, to ensure that his case proceeds in a manner consistent with China's obligations under international law, in particular internationally recognized standards of due process, fair trial, free expression and freedom of association, and to ensure Abduweli Ayup's well-being in custody, including disclosure of his current location and access to counsel and family. I request that you ensure adherence and compliance with the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of the People's Republic of China. Article 10 states that "Autonomous agencies in ethnic autonomous areas guarantee the freedom of the nationalities in these areas to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and their freedom to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs." Article 36 states that "In accordance with state guidelines on education and in accordance with the law, autonomous agencies in ethnic autonomous areas decide on educational plans in these areas, on the establishment of various kinds of schools at different levels, and on their educational system, forms, curricula, the language used in instruction and enrollment procedures."

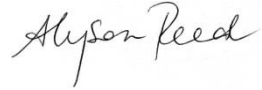
While the Chinese government indicated during its Universal Periodic Review [in October 2013] that it "attached great importance to developing the cause of human rights for ethnic minorities," in practice

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your government continues to punish those who protect the rights of ethnic minorities. In your government's National Human Rights Action Plan for 2012–2015, Chinese citizens are assured that they will enjoy rights to freedom of speech, freedom of information, freedom of religion, and a fair trial, and that the rights of ethnic minorities will be protected.

I thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alyson Reed  
Executive Director  
Linguistic Society of America

Cc:

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