

President  
Xi Jinping  
Zhongnanhai Xichangan'jie Xichengqu,  
Beijing Shi 100017  
People's Republic of China

Dear President,

On the fourth anniversary of the detention of prominent Uighur economics professor and writer Ilham

Tohti, I am urging your government to immediately and unconditionally release him. Known for his moderate views on ethnic issues in China, Ilham Tohti was given a life sentence for “separatism” in

September 2014, solely for the peaceful expression of his opinions. Prosecuting Ilham Tohti for his writings and university lectures under this charge is clearly a misuse of the law and he should never

have been detained in the first place.

Amnesty International considers, Ilham Tohti, a well-respected university professor in Beijing, to be a

prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression,

a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China signed in 1998 and has repeatedly stated the intention to ratify, as

well as in the Chinese Constitution.

Ilham Tohti comes from the Uighur community, a largely Muslim ethnic group that faces widespread

discrimination within the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Ilham Tohti adamantly and consistently

opposed violence, worked tirelessly to build bridges and encourage co-operation between ethnic communities in accordance with Chinese law. For two decades, he promoted understanding

between

Uighurs and Han Chinese. He was the founder and director of the bilingual website “Uighur Online”,

which reported on human rights violations suffered not only by Uighurs but also by ethnic Han Chinese.

In addition I wish to raise my concern about Ilham Tohti’s continued detention at Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region No. 1 Prison. While Ilham Tohti remains imprisoned, I urge you to respond favourably to the request that he be moved to a prison closer to his home in Beijing so that his family

will be able to visit him more frequently, a legal right enshrined in Principle 20 of the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and Rule 59

of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules).

Releasing Ilham Tohti immediately and unconditionally would demonstrate China’s commitment to uphold human rights and further protect the right to freedom of expression.