

July 12, 1947

**Letter from Ahmetjan Qasimi and Rahim Jan Sabri to
Mr. Savel'yev, Consul General of the USSR in Urumqi**

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Summary:

Ahmetjan Qasimi and a colleague asks for Stalin's and the Soviet Union's support in protecting the interests of Muslims in Xinjiang.

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TO THE USSR GENERAL CONSUL IN URUMQI
Mr. SAVEL'YEV

Having found out that you are leaving for Moscow in the next few days we are making use of this occasion and request [you] pass to the leader of the Soviet Union, Mr. Stalin, fervent greetings from the Muslims of the province of Xinjiang. At the same time, we allow ourselves to direct your attention to some issues as the mediator in the conclusion of a peace agreement between the peoples of Xinjiang and the Central Chinese government.

In signing the peace agreement we, the representatives of three districts, nurtured great hopes that the peoples of Xinjiang would be granted equal rights. More than a year has passed since that time but all the points of the agreement remain only on paper. and the agreement itself has been turned into a trap. The peoples are inhabiting a province convenient for stronger oppression than before.

After the signing of the agreement a great enthusiasm was observed in the people. In spite of the fact that the Chinese authorities put every possible obstacle in the way during the elections, the people nevertheless managed in many places to remove compromised officials from [their] posts and elect those whom they wanted, although in individual cases machineguns and rifles were used against the population. For example, in Kuqa [Kuche] and Keriya [Yutian] people's rallies were fired upon by machineguns. Then there followed the appointment of officials driven out by the people to more responsible work through military channels. As regards the personnel elected by the people they were subjected to persecution and as a result forced to leave work and flee. Some stout-hearted ones of them even continued to work in spite of threats but were nevertheless finally thrown into prison and others who had been elected by the people were not allowed to work at all. This was in Yarkant [Shache], Hotan [Hetian], Guma [Pishan], Kargilik [Yecheng], Bögür [Luntai], and Maralbexi [Bachu]. In Akou [sic], Kuqa, Bay [Baicheng], and Karakax [Moyu] the Chinese military authorities also appointed their own people to the posts of chief of district and member of the advisory committee without holding elections. Thus the 1st point of the agreement was not carried out at all in Yarkant, Hotan, and Aksu [Akesu] districts.

Abuses were committed in these districts to a greater degree than in any other and the political oppression of the population exceeded even the tyranny in fascist countries.

The 3rd point of the agreement was not implemented anywhere, with the exception of issues of education.

The 5th point of the agreement. In our opinion, this point was written as a mockery, that is, whoever demands the development of national culture and art and putting into practice freedom of speech, press, assembly, etc. suffers the most severe consequences. They are abandoning their own homes, fleeing to Ili District, and some are hiding in villages.

The 6th point of the agreement speaks of the release from custody of the participants in the uprising. In actual fact, very many continue to be held in imprisonment. There are cases of mass arrests, beatings, and numerous cases of suicide because of the severe situation. In spite of all this the population of Urumqi and Kashgar [Kashi] tried to defend the freedom of press that had been won. In view of the fact that these newspapers cited a large number of cases we will omit these cases here.

None of the members of the provincial government who came from the three districts enjoy any rights. The number of various provocative acts against these members of the government has recently increased. These acts not only hinder [them] from working but present a threat to their lives. This can be confirmed by facts. For example, the demonstrations of 25 February, the events of 5 March, the arrest of the driver of [Ahmetjan] Qasimi at the end of June, the badgering [travlya] of Ghulja [Yining] residents in a Chinese newspaper, etc. Some members of the government have recently begun to openly speak against Nanhuaken' (the residence in Urumqi of people from Ghulja), as occurred at the 27th meeting of the government.

If one turns to those points of the agreement which touch on military issues one can point out that on the basis of the agreement an 11-12,000-man army was created and administrative institutions were reorganized in the three districts. This work was entrusted to the command of the army of the three districts which was also done in a timely fashion and in addition reported to the appropriate authorities. The army was reoutfitted with Chinese uniforms at the same time. Meanwhile, it developed that the appearance in the Altay of Ospan [Batyr's] [Osman Batur's] band, which receives support from the Chinese military command in Urumqi, caused resentment among our soldiers and therefore they refused to wear the Chinese military uniform.

The agreement provided for the formation of national self-defense detachments in Aksu and Kashgar but this point has still not been implemented in spite of our repeated demands.

In the last point of the agreement it speaks of the participants of the uprising not being subjected to repression. Visiting the south this spring we saw with our own eyes that more than 300 people who had sympathized with the liberation movement were subjected to devastation, and the leaders of the uprising were killed or disappeared without a trace, including Tabit Kary, Hasan Habul, Tursun Akhun, and others. The situation in the south is exceptionally tense right now. The population of the south is devastated and lives for the most part in exceptionally difficult material conditions. Many of them were driven off their lands.

This is how the peoples of the south of Xinjiang enjoy the rights written down in the agreement.

We can confirm that two or three cases of lawlessness were committed in the three districts. During the repatriation from the Soviet Union of refugees the population of Chuguchak [Tacheng or Qoqek] was subjected to persecution by 10-15 servicemen and policemen. A government delegate named Turkestan was killed in Dörbiljin [Emin]. Special attention ought to be directed to the substance of this issue since the resentful population of Chuguchak has attacked their former executioners.

The military and the police are committing outrages in the south and creating exceptionally difficult conditions for the people.

We think that a mediator will see to the precise and complete fulfillment of the agreement.

Availing ourselves of your departure for Moscow we are delivering this letter to you and think that the mediator who was the initiator in the matter of ensuring peace in Xinjiang will draw his government's attention to the above.

Please pardon us for bothering [you] with this long letter.

With respect, the people's representatives who signed the agreement:

AHMETJAN QASIMI
RAHIM JAN SABRI

NOTE: The three districts are being subjected to severe economic pressure after the signing of the agreement. Beginning 1 January 1947 these three districts are not being budgeted money for administrative and military expenses.

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