

Minister of
Foreign Affairs



Ministre des
Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

Mr. Kayum Masimov
President
Uyghur Canadian Society
401 - 4909 Clanranald Street
Montréal QC H3X 2S1

NOV 14 2012

Dear Mr. Masimov:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 2, 2012, concerning the situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China.

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy and a priority in our long-standing relationship with China. Canada takes principled positions on important issues to promote freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The Government of Canada remains seriously concerned about the human rights situation in China, including ongoing restrictions on ethnic minorities' unique cultures, languages and religions. The Government of Canada is deeply troubled by reports of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and harsh treatment of political dissidents, human rights defenders, religious worshippers, and ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs.

Through high-level engagement and ongoing cooperation, Canada continues to urge China to implement and adhere to international standards on human rights and the rule of law. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and I have both voiced concerns about human rights in meetings with our Chinese counterparts. In addition, I have spoken publicly on violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief in China, including in a keynote address to the Royal Commonwealth Society in London in January 2012 and during a consultation on the Office of Religious Freedom at Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) in October 2011.

Canada also addresses human rights at the multilateral level and has specifically raised concerns about the treatment of Uyghurs at the United Nations General Assembly (e.g. Third Committee in September 2011), the United Nations Human Rights Council (e.g. March 2012 session), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (e.g. Standing Committee meetings in March and June 2012).

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Canada

I have forwarded the report enclosed with your letter to DFAIT officials for their information. I can assure you that the Government of Canada will continue to bring its human rights concerns to the attention of the Chinese government.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Baird".

John Baird, P.C., M.P.