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Party Secretary of Xinjiang
Ma Xingrui
479 Zhongshan Lu
Tianshan Qu, Urumqi
830041, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
People’s Republic of China

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Dear Secretary Ma,

**I am writing to express alarm over the conviction on 20 June 2024 of Yashar (Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti 亚夏尔·肖合拉提), a Uyghur songwriter and musician**. The court determined that, for creating music and reading literature in his native Uyghur language, he was guilty of «promoting extremism» and «illegally possessing extremist materials». He is currently serving a three-year sentence in Wusu Prison, Xinjiang.

My distress is heightened by concerns that this ongoing imprisonment places Yashar’s health at real risk of deterioration. Already suffering from bronchitis, and requiring regular medication, it is unknown whether he is receiving the medical attention he requires.

I fear that Yashar’s case reflects the ongoing targeting of Uyghur cultural expression with vague «extremism» charges. Yashar’s music and his possession of Uyghur-language books are reported as the sole basis for his conviction. Many Uyghurs view these books as essential to understanding their history and identity, making their classification as problematic or even «extremist» highly concerning.

This is not Yashar’s first time being unjustly detained; he was held in custody for three weeks following his peaceful participation in White Paper Movement (白纸运动) demonstrations in Chengdu in November 2022. But it is clear that now, Yashar is being punished solely for exercising his right to enjoy his own culture and to freely express his views.

**I urge you to:**

* **Immediately and unconditionally release Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti, also known as Yashar;**
* **Provide him with regular and adequate medical care, and ensure he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;**
* **Ensure that Uyghur artists can express their identity without fear of persecution or arbitrary detention.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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