

# CHINA: Chinese police detain Kazakhs with overseas ties, send them for 're-education'

By Qiao Long, translated by Luisetta Mudie

RFA (30.10.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2z0MqWQ> – Chinese authorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang are continuing to detain ethnic minority Kazakhs, sending them to police-run detention centers or re-education camps” across the region, sources told RFA.

Those being targeted often have overseas links, including a history of overseas study or family and friends across the border in Kazakhstan, they said.

Among those detained was Dalyat Jaynar, 27, a student from Qutubi county, in Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture who was detained this summer at the Jeminay border checkpoint on returning to China after studying in Kazakhstan.

“Dalyat was traveling back to China on July 17 via the Jeminay border crossing, and was detained by police on the grounds that she had spent longer than 6 months in Kazakhstan,” a source in Kazakhstan told RFA on Monday.

Dalyat’s fiance confirmed the report, saying she had been taken to a “vocational training center.”

But he declined to give further details. “She is studying in China,” he said.

A second Kazakh source said the village party secretary of his birthplace in China was recently imprisoned for writings—including poems—on the topic of Kazakhstan’s history and national identity.

“The head of Mabai village in Dolat township, who is a poet, was found to have a number of poems about Kazakhstan’s history stored in his cell phone,” the source said. “There were also some lyrical songs on Kazakhstan’s history.”

### ***‘Anger engulfing the heavens’***

Meanwhile, Altanbek Sagandahar, 30, of Karzhao village in Jeminay county has been held under criminal detention since April at an unknown location.

He was detained after penning a poem about “anger engulfing the heavens,” about the ruling Chinese Communist Party’s treatment of ethnic Kazakhs in China.

“My ethnicity [as a Kazakh] is more important than anything,” he had written. “Don’t be fooled if we seem fairly prosperous ... future generations could lose their faith; stop propelling us towards extinction.”

And a Kazakh source in Zhaosu county in the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture said a young man, Muheit Akbar, who is in his early twenties, was detained for helping a returning ethnic Kazakh to obtain a sim card.

“He helped a friend who returned from Kazakhstan to get a sim card for his cell phone,” the source said. “He was detained, released, and then detained again. He is in prison now.”

The source said a 21-year-old ethnic Kazakh from the area, Aray, was held for time in a “re-education center.”

“After he got out not long ago ... he left Xinjiang and now he’s in Kazakhstan,” the source said.

Meanwhile, authorities in Fuyun, in Xinjiang’s Altay prefecture, have detained a student and his entire family after he was forcibly repatriated while studying in Egypt, an unnamed Kazakh source told RFA.

Bagdad Aken was detained alongside three other members of his family by state security police at Urumqi's international airport, the source said.

"It was because he went to Egypt. They detained all four of them," the source said. "The police had promised that he would be released if he came back from Egypt."

"But shortly after that, the state prosecutor's office was saying that he would likely get seven years' imprisonment," he said.

### ***Region-wide wave of minority detentions***

The move follows a region-wide wave of detentions of ethnic minorities – including Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kirgыз – who have any kind of overseas ties.

A Kazakh source in Qinghe county said the policy is being dubbed a "localization" policy by Chinese officials.

"There aren't even any letters being sent out on headed notepaper," the source said. "They come over [to Kazakhstan] when they're retired, but then they get a directive saying that their pensions will be cut if they don't return to China immediately."

Students told RFA they are now too worried to return home, for fear that they won't be allowed to leave again.

Chinese authorities are also believed to be holding a number of ethnic minority Kazakhs for wearing "Islamic" clothing and praying, a practice forbidden by the ruling Chinese Communist Party on university campuses across the country.

Dozens of Kazakhs have also faced detention, intimidation, and the confiscation of their passports and other documents because they have family members living or studying overseas.

Ethnic minority Kazakh Muslims were among some 200 ethnic

minority holders of Chinese passports targeted in August by Egypt's secret police in an operation activists said was requested by Beijing.

The 200 students, many of them religious students at Cairo's Al-Azhar Islamic University, were detained in a crackdown that began on July 4, and were rounded up in restaurants or at their homes, with others seized at airports as they tried to flee to safer countries, sources told RFA's Uyghur Service at the time.

Official figures show that there are around 1.5 million Kazakhs in China, mostly concentrated in and around the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture.

China has previously welcomed Kazakhs who wished to relocate from Kazakhstan, but many Kazakhs with Chinese nationality are now heading back in the other direction, with their numbers peaking at nearly 38,000 in 2006.

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