

More detained in Xinjiang, Kadeer's family accuses her

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 04 August 2009 07:56 -

Police in western China have detained another 319 people suspected of being involved in deadly ethnic unrest between Muslim minority Uighurs and the dominant Han Chinese community last month, a state news agency said.

Police in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, said the detentions were made in the city and elsewhere in the far western region, based on information given by the public or obtained in investigations, Xinhua news agency reported late on Sunday. It did not say how many of those detained were Uighur or Han Chinese.

The detentions came in addition to earlier announcements by the government that more than 1,600 people have been detained over the July 5 riots in Urumqi that started when police stopped a protest by Uighurs. The Uighurs smashed windows, burned cars and attacked Han Chinese. Two days later, Han Chinese took to the streets and staged retaliatory attacks.

Xinhua said Urumqi police would not say how many — if any — of the 1,600 detained earlier have been released, and that suspects will face charges related to the July 5 riot.

The government says 197 people were killed and more than 1,700 were injured in the violence and that most of the victims were Han Chinese.

Meanwhile, Chinese state media reported yesterday that relatives of exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer had blamed her for the deaths of innocent people in the unrest early last month.

Kadeer's son Khahar, daughter Roxingul and younger brother Memet wrote an open letter to her, expressing "their moral indignation at the riot" in Urumqi, Xinhua said.

"Because of you, many innocent people of all ethnic groups lost their lives in Urumqi on July 5, with huge damage to property, shops and vehicles," Xinhua quoted them as writing.

"The harmony and unity among ethnic groups were damaged," the letter allegedly said.

The Chinese government says Kadeer was behind the July 5 violence.

Kadeer, a former businesswoman who spent several years in Chinese jail before leaving for US exile in 2005, has denied the charges.

Among those of Kadeer's children who remain in China, her son Ablikim Abdiriyim was sentenced in April 2007 to nine years in prison for what Beijing called "secessionist" activities.

It was not possible to immediately ascertain the authenticity of the letter, which was widely reported in the Chinese-language media.

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Chinese state TV showed footage from the alleged letter, written in the Arabic script of the Uighur language.

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/08/04](#)