

Kadeer accuses Beijing of 'psychological torture'

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 06 August 2009 07:37 -

Exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer yesterday accused China of carrying out "psychological torture" on her children by forcing them to appear on state television to blame her for deadly unrest.

Kadeer said her daughter Roxingul and jailed son Alim had taken part "against their will" in the CCTV news report, in which they said she incited last month's violence in the Xinjiang region which left at least 197 dead.

"What the Chinese government did was probably one of the worst kinds of violence, I would say, against my children to force them to speak up against me," Kadeer, speaking through a translator, told journalists in Melbourne.

"I believe it's against their conscience, against their will, to force them to say the things against me, and I believe it's a form of dictatorship imposed upon them by the government," she said.

Roxingul, Alim and Kadeer's brother Memet denounced the 62-year-old US-based Uighur leader in a report aired on Tuesday, saying she had whipped up China's worst ethnic violence in decades — a claim also made by Beijing.

"What my mother has done has no result. Separatists cannot separate such a great nation, neither can she," Alim said from prison, where he is serving a sentence for tax evasion.

Roxingul, Memet and Khahar, another of Kadeer's sons, had earlier written letters widely circulated in the Chinese press denouncing her over the unrest in Urumqi.

"It's hard for me to imagine what kind of psychological torture they are going through at the moment," Kadeer said.

"When I was in prison I was also forced to say things against my will by the Chinese government on a videotape and [it was] posted on a Web site, so it's no surprise to me," she said.

The mother of 11 was once a successful businesswoman in Xinjiang, but spent six years in a Chinese jail and has become a standard-bearer for the Uighur movement since her release in 2005. Her visit to Australia sparked strong protests from Beijing, which calls her a "criminal" and summoned Canberra's ambassador to complain.

Kadeer is due to attend a premiere on Saturday of a documentary about her life, 10 Conditions of Love, which China tried to have withdrawn from the Melbourne International Film Festival.

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“It’s just like the Olympics and China —it was just an international sporting event, but the Chinese government turned that into a political event,” said Kadeer, adding she was “shocked” by Beijing’s reaction.

“It’s the same thing I see with the film festival: initially it’s just a film festival, but with the Chinese pressure it became politicized,” she said.

“I am only peacefully advocating rights and justice and freedom for my people, but it’s been witnessed that the Chinese government put enormous pressure on Japan during my recent visit, and also put enormous pressure on Turkey, now Australia,” she said.

“I believe the Chinese government is basically trying to impose its authoritarianism on the whole world because of me,” she said.

China is inflaming ethnic tensions by deceiving its own people about the Xinjiang riots, she said.

“The Chinese people should be very careful with the Chinese government’s versions of the events and the ways and means the Chinese government employ ... to deceive, to some extent, the Chinese people, to create this kind of terrible relationship between two groups,” Kadeer said.

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Source: [Taipei Times 2009/08/06](#)