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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

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Endangered Scholars Worldwide


The information in this quarterly print report is current as of March 15, 2018. The situation of scholars and students around the world changes on a daily basis. For the most up-to-date information and ways in which you can be involved in calling for the freedom of endangered scholars and students, please visit us online at www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net or follow us at www.facebook.com/endangeredscholars. In these pages we introduce new cases that have come to our attention over the past three months and provide basic information about continuing cases—a description of charges and potential or actual reported sentences. If you are aware of a scholar or student whose case you believe we should investigate, please contact us at esw@newschool.edu.



URGENT CALL FOR ACTION

On February 5, 2018, Iran’s Supreme Court rejected a request to review the death sentence given to university professor AHMADREZA DJALALI, who was accused of passing information to Israel.

The 45-year-old professor, who taught at the European Master in Disaster Medicine (EMDM) in Italy—a joint master’s program of the Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel—was arrested in April 2016 in Tehran on charges of “collaboration with a hostile government” while he was visiting his family. Djalali was later accused of providing information to Israel to help it assassinate several senior nuclear scientists. Amnesty International reports that Djalali’s lawyers were told on December 9, 2017, that the Supreme Court had considered his case and upheld his October 24 sentence in a secret process without allowing them to file defense submissions.



We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide consider this arbitrary sentence a flagrant and unjust violation of the freedom, security, and safety of an academic who is clearly a victim of a political witch hunt—arrested without cause, held for months in solitary confinement and without access to a lawyer, and subjected to physical mistreatment and psychological abuse. We deplore this unjustified verdict in the strongest terms and ask all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to strongly protest and condemn this arbitrary sentence, to call for Professor Djalali’s immediate and unconditional release, and to urge the officials of the Iranian government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties.

Please join us in calling for Professor Djalali’s release by signing our open letter at www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net/single-post/2017/12/13/Letter-of-Appeal-on-Behalf-of-Professor-Ahmadreza-Djalali.

NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

BAHRAIN

Scholars and Researchers: ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE, 56, the former head of the department of engineering at the University of Bahrain, has been in Jau prison since 2011 on a life sentence for allegedly “plotting to overthrow the government” during the Arab Spring protests. Al-Singace, who has long campaigned for political reform and an end to torture, was himself tortured at the time of his detention. Recent reports suggest that he has repeatedly been denied medical treatment as he refused to wear the prison uniform and handcuffs. He has also had all of his pens, papers, books, and writing materials confiscated, including the only manuscript of the book he had been working on. On January 15,

he spent his 56th birthday behind bars in Bahrain. ESW joins fellow organizations including English PEN, ADHRB, and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, in asking our supporters to send cards on social media and with the hashtag #FreeAlSingace.

ESW calls for Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace to be granted access to all necessary medical care as a matter of urgency, and continues to call for his immediate and unconditional release, as well as all those detained in Bahrain in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bahrain is a state party.

Students: ALI MOHAMED HAKEEM AL-ARAB, 23, was arrested on February 9, 2017. On March 7, he was moved to Dry Dock Prison. Ali al-Arab has allegedly been tortured during interrogation and remains at risk of further torture and other ill-treatment. Other students who remain in prison include AHMED AL ARAB, a nursing student arrested in January 2014 and sentenced to life imprisonment, who has reported that he was subjected to severe torture and ill treatment while held in detention. ESW is strongly concerned about continued attacks on Ahmed Al-Arab. On January 25, he was denied a family visit, and he has reported an increase in harassment. AHMED AOUN was arrested in May 2015 on charges of “involvement in pro-democracy demonstrations.” Five other students were sentenced to 15 years in prison at a trial on March 5, 2012, following involvement in prodemocracy demonstrations, including JAWAD AL-MAHARY, SHAWQI RADHI, JASSIM AL HULAINI, JASSIM AL-MUKHODHER, and YOUSIF AHMED.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide is extremely concerned about the continued ill treatment of scholars and students in Bahrain, and calls on the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, the European Union, and international institutions to put pressure on Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Al-Arab, along with all other detainees held on politically motivated charges due to the ongoing popular movement for freedom and democracy.

Please send appeals to:

His Majesty Sheikh Hamad bin Isa
Al-Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
The Amiri Court
PO Box 555
Rifa'a Palace
Al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 176 64 587
Website: <http://www.mofa.gov.bh/>

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa
Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Diplomatic Area
PO Box 450
Al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 13 333, +973 175 31 284

BANGLADESH

New Cases

On March 3, 2018, Bangladeshi Professor MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL, 65, was stabbed at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet, Bangladesh. The well-known secular activist and science fiction author, who has previously received death threats from radical Islamists, was stabbed from behind as he was about to take the stage to address a science festival that had been organized by the university, said university proctor Zahir Uddin. He was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital immediately after the incident. The attacker is in police custody; his identity and the motive of the attack have not yet been released.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide condemns this attack in the strongest possible terms. In recent years, there has been a rise in extremist violence in Bangladesh, including a series of assassinations of bloggers or intellectuals who have criticized militant Islam. Students, professors, and academics have been increasingly targeted in violent attacks—an unacceptable trend that hurts the future of societies at large. Universities, as all-in-one symbols of freedom, empowerment, and peace are increasingly targeted for the values they promote, which stand in strong contrast with the extremist ideology and ruthless methods of terrorist groups.

Please send appeals to:

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin
Embassy of Bangladesh
3510 International Drive NW
Washington, DC 20008

USA
Tel: +1 202 244 2745

CHINA

Scholars and Researchers: On August 9, 2017, authorities in northwest China's Xinjiang region sentenced HEBIBULLA TOHTI, a prominent Uyghur theological scholar sponsored by the country's state-sanctioned Islamic Association, to 10 years in prison on charges of "illegal religious activity," following his return from Egypt, according to local sources. Tohti is among the more than 1000 Uyghur students that the Chinese government ordered to return to Eastern Turkistan from Egypt. According to Radio Free Europe, the authorities have also targeted family members of Uyghur students studying abroad. News coverage has documented the Egyptian government's compliance with China's order, rounding up Uyghur students to deport them. The stories of students who were previously returned and detained by Chinese authorities indicate that these students will most likely face lengthy prison sentences in China.

It has been over four years since Uyghur scholar ILHAM TOHTI, a professor of economics, was arrested on charges of promoting separatism. He is now serving a life term behind bars in China. As an outspoken economist, Tohti, who regularly highlighted the religious and cultural persecution of the Muslim Uyghur ethnic minority in China's Xinjiang region, was sentenced to life in prison in September 2014 by the Xinjiang People's High Court for "separatism" following a two-day show trial. In a January 17, 2018, statement, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) described Tohti's situation as "typical of the massive human rights violations taking place under [Chinese] President Xi Jinping."

Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores the Chinese government's pervasive and ongoing crackdown on the Uyghur people. ESW is particularly concerned about the reports that Tohti's wife and children would not be allowed to visit him in 2018.

Also remaining in prison is GUO QUAN, a literature professor at Nanjing Normal University, sentenced to 10 years in prison in October 2009 on charges of “inciting subversion of state power.”

Students who remain in prison on charges of “separatism” and their connection to Professor Ilham Tohti are PERHAT HALMURAT, SHOHRET NIJAT, LUO YUWEI, MUTELLIP IMIN, ABDUQEYUM ABLIMIT, ATIKEN ROZI and AKBAR IMIN.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Xi Jinping
President of the People’s Republic of
China
Zhong Naihui
Beijing 100032
People’s Republic of China

Zhou Qiang
Chief Justice, Supreme People’s Court
No. 27 Dong Jiao Min Xiang
Beijing 100745
People’s Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6529 2345 (c/o Ministry of
Communication)
Website: www.court.gov.cn

EGYPT

Students who remain in prison include KARIM ASHRAF MOHAMED AL-BANNA, sentenced to three years in prison in January 2015 on charges of on blasphemy and insulting the divine, and SHERIF GABER, a student from Suez Canal University who was sentenced to one year in prison in February 2015 for contempt of religion relating to activities on campus and atheist statements online. Gaber initially went into hiding upon his release on bail and prior to his sentencing. He is now known to be residing in Germany.

Please send appeals to:

Ambassador Mohamed M. Tawfik
Egyptian Embassy to the United States
3521 International Ct. NW
Washington DC 20008
USA
Email: contact@egyptembassy.net
Website: <http://www.egyptembassy.net>

Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta
Egyptian Permanent Representative to the
United Nations
United Nations
800 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
USA

IRAN

Scholars and Researchers: On February 8, 2018, an Iranian Canadian professor died in prison in Tehran after being arrested with other environmental activists and scientists on suspicion of spying. KAVOUS SEYED EMAMI, a 63-year-old environmental activist and sociology professor at Iran's Imam Sadegh University, an elite institution set up after the Islamic revolution in part to train officials, was detained by Iranian authorities on January 24, 2018, in Tehran. Iranian authorities have said that Professor Emami committed suicide. However, his family has asked for an independent autopsy. Emami was also managing director of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a well-funded and officially recognized NGO. Endangered Scholars Worldwide calls for letters, faxes, and emails urging the Iranian authorities to investigate the situation, explain publicly the circumstances that led to Professor Emami's death, and hold accountable the institutions involved in this painful loss.

On July 17, 2017, an Iranian court sentenced American graduate student XIYUE WANG, a 38-year-old historian from Princeton University, to 10 years in prison for "spying under the cover of research." Wang, a Chinese-born US citizen, was arrested last summer while conducting research in Iran for his doctoral dissertation. *Fars News*, a semiofficial Iranian news agency, reported that Wang was "gathering secret and top secret [intelligence]" for the US State Department, Harvard Kennedy School, and the British Institute of Persian Studies. He was accused of "infiltrating Iran's national archive and building a 4,500-page digital archive" for "the world's biggest anti-Iran spying organization."

Wang is the latest American to be arrested in Iran on espionage charges. His wife, Hua Qu, told ABC News in December that she fears for his life, as he is held in Evin Prison's Ward 7, where he was previously beaten by another prisoner.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide strongly deplores and condemns the ongoing detention, persecution, and conviction of XiYue Wang, and calls upon all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promo-

tion and defense of human rights to strongly protest and condemn this arbitrary incarceration, to call for Wang's immediate and unconditional release, and to urge the officials of the Iranian government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties in accordance with Iran's obligations under international law.

Students who remain in prison in Iran include ARASH SADEGHI, a student rights activist sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in September 2014 on charges of "collusion against the regime" and "insulting the Supreme Leader of Iran." Other students still in prison include HAMID BABAEI, 35, a PhD student at the University of Liege in Belgium, detained in August 2013 shortly after his return to Tehran and sentenced to six years in prison on charges of "communicating with hostile foreign governments and spying." Babaei has consistently said that he was imprisoned for refusing to operate as an informant in Belgium for Iran's Intelligence Ministry. Recent reports suggest that he is being refused hospital treatment by the authorities.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Jomhouri Street
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 644 11

Website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/www.Khamenei.ir>

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office
of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e
Jomhouri
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

President Hassan Rouhani
The Office of the President
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Javad Zarif
Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Minister's Office
Imam Khomeini Square
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 66743149
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.ir>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jzarif>

LAOS

Student protestors THONGPASEUTH KEUAKOUN, SENG-ALOUN PHENGPHANH, and BOUAVANH CHANHMANIVONG, along with three others, were imprisoned in 1999 following their arrest on charges of treason for displaying posters calling for economic, political, and social change during demonstrations. According to a report from the Amnesty UK, even after eighteen years, it is not known in which prison the three students named are being held or if they are still alive.

Please send appeals to:

President Bounnhang Vorachith	His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith
Presidential Palace	Prime Minister's Office
Thanon Setthathirat	Lane Xang Avenue
Ban Xiengyeun Tha, Muang Chanthaburi	Vientiane
Vientiane	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Laos	Fax: + 856 21 213560

SAUDI ARABIA

Scholars and Researchers: In March 2016, ALI ABDULLAH AL-HAJI, a professor at King Saud University in Riyadh, was arrested along with 31 others on charges of spying for Iran. According to Saudi news outlets, Al-Haji was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The accused also include a student at Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, as well as an academician who held the job of "development researcher" at the Ministry of Education for more than 25 years. Endangered Scholars Worldwide has not been able to obtain the names of the latter two defendants.

Scholars and researchers who remain in prison include ABDUL KAREEM YOUSEF AL-KHODER, a professor of comparative jurisprudence at Qassim University, sentenced in June 2013 to eight years' imprisonment and a ten-year travel ban, and SA'UD MUKHTAR AL-HASHIMI, a faculty member at the King Abdulaziz University, sentenced in November 2011 to 30 years in prison.

Please send appeals to:

Adel bin Ahmed Al- Jubeir
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 0645

Dr. Walid bin Mohammed bin Saleh
Al-Samaani
Minister of Justice
PO Box 58889, Bldg. 373
King Fahad Road
Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 4612061

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

Scholar: SIDIG NOREEN ALI ABDALLA, who has taught at West Kordofan, has been in prison since January 14, 2014, on charges of “advocacy on the situation in Darfur.” According to the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) report dated March 25, 2015, the most recent report Endangered Scholars Worldwide has been able to obtain, there are growing safety concerns for the detained scholar, who has been held in custody in El Obeid town, North Kordofan state, by Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS).

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Lt. Omar Hassan Ahmad
Al-Bashir
President of the Republic of Sudan
President’s Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan
Fax: +249 183 783 223

His Excellency Ambassador Omer Dahab
Fadl Mohamed
Permanent Mission of the Republic of
Sudan to the United Nations
305 East 47th Street, 4th Floor,
New York N.Y. 10017
United States
Phone: +1 212 57360 33
Fax: +1 212 573 61 60
Email: sudan@sudanmission.org

His Excellency Mohamed Boshara Dosa
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum
Sudan
Fax: +249 183 78 07 96/ +249 183 770883

THAILAND

Scholars and Researchers: CHAYAN VADDHANAPHUTI, director of the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development at Chiang Mai University, who organized the thirteenth International Conference on Thai Studies along with four other Thai academics, was charged with violating the country's military junta's ban on political gatherings of more than four people. Also charged were four delegates at the conference, PAKAWADEE VEERAPATPONG, CHAIPONG SAMNIENG, NONTAWAT MACHAI, and THIRAMON BUA-NGAM, all of whom committed the same offense: holding posters reading "An academic forum is not a military barrack" to protest the military's surveillance of participants during the conference. If convicted, they face up to one year of imprisonment. A report on University World News said the charges were announced on August 14, 2017, a month after the conference was held at Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand.

Students: On Thursday, August 3, 2017, a court in Thailand began a closed-door trial of an activist law student arrested for sharing on Facebook an article posted by the BBC Thai-language service about the country's new king. The student, JATUPAT 'PAI DAO DIN' BOONPATTARARAKSA, was arrested in December 2016. Jatupat is a prominent member of Dao Din, a small student organization that has protested against Thailand's military government. While in detention, he was given the Gwangju Prize, a human rights award from the May 18 Memorial Foundation in South Korea.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide believes that the *lese majeste* law is being used in Thailand to silence academics, students, and political dissidents. The military regime that took power in 2014 has primarily cracked down on commentary on the Internet. According to iLaw, a group that tracks royal defamation cases, 82 people have been charged under the *lese majeste* law since the coup three years ago. ESW urges the officials of the Thai government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in interna-

tional conventions and treaties and urges the Thai authorities to drop any charges against the accused arising out of the nonviolent exercise of the rights to expression, association, and assembly.

Please send appeals to:

Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi	CH 1202 Geneva
Permanent Mission of Thailand to the	Switzerland
United Nations and Other International	Fax: + 41 22 715 1000
Organizations	Website: http://www.thaimission.ch/
United Nations	Email: mission.thailand@ties.itu.int
5 Rue Gustave-Moynier	

TURKEY

Scholars, researchers, and students: Endangered Scholars Worldwide continues to be extremely concerned about the harsh measures the Turkish government has taken against universities and other institutions of higher education, and its systematic targeting of the country's scholars and professors, since the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. These actions have inflicted major harm on the entire educational system.

In July 2016, a series of actions by Turkey's Council of Higher Education (YOK) have effectively dismissed 1,577 university deans and four university presidents and resulted in the shutting down of 15 universities. With the latest decrees both dismissing more academics and reinstating others, some 6000 academics have lost their jobs across the country.

ESW expresses our solidarity with the thousands of Turkish academics who lost their jobs as a result of their peaceful activities and the exercise of their freedom of speech. We are deeply distressed by the Turkish government's actions, which irreversibly harm the entire educational community by undermining universities' abilities to meet scientific and ethical standards as well as fulfill intellectual, educational, social, and institutional responsibilities.

For full coverage of the crisis in higher education in Turkey and to sign our letter of protest, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/turkey-esw>.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
President of Turkey
The Office of the President
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi
06560 Bestepe, Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 525 58 31

His Excellency Abdulhamit Gül
Minister of Justice
06669 Kizilay, Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 419 3370
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

On September 5, 2017, United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) was being rescinded. As numerous accounts indicate, the majority of DACA recipients are students who are enrolled in higher education institutions. As an organization committed to protecting the human rights of scholars and students across the globe, Endangered Scholars Worldwide believes that ending DACA is a mistake. It puts the lives of thousands of committed students in the United States in jeopardy, prevents them from the ability to pursue their education, and returns them to a life of anxiety and doubt.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide urges the US Congress to move decisively to sustain the DACA program. We believe that upholding DACA will ensure the mission of institutions of higher learning to provide safe environments in which everyone is respected and teaching and learning is fostered.


Please send appeals to:

Jefferson Sessions
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001
Tell: +1 202 514 2000
Website: <http://www.justice.gov/ag>

VIETNAM

Scholars and researchers: On June 10, 2017, Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang signed a special order into effect stripping French-Vietnamese mathematician and former political prisoner PHAM MINH HOANG of his Vietnamese citizenship. In the official letter, the



Vietnamese government informed Hoang, 62, of its decision to revoke his nationality, citing Articles 88 and 91 of the country’s Criminal Code, which prohibit “conducting propaganda against the state” and “fleeing abroad or defecting to stay overseas with a view to opposing the people’s administration,” respectively.

After receiving the letter, Hoang called the decision “invalid,” saying it violates the law on Vietnamese nationality, and pledged to fight for his right to live in his homeland. He has formally begun the process of renouncing his French citizenship in a bid to block the revocation.

Hoang is a professor in applied mathematics at the Ho Chi Minh City Institute of Technology. He was previously arrested in Vietnam for his political writing and activism. In August 2010, he was sentenced to three years in jail and three years of probation under Article 79, “subversion of administration”—one of many penal codes defined vaguely and used to detain and arrest political activists in Vietnam.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide is gravely concerned about the loss of citizenship of the French Vietnamese professor Pham Minh Hoang. We call for letters, emails, and faxes respectfully urging authorities in Vietnam to reconsider this decision, respect their responsibility to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression, and refrain from imposing arbitrary restrictions on movement intended to limit or retaliate for the exercise of these freedoms.

Students who remain in prison are DINH NGUYEN KHA, sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment on charges of “conducting propaganda against the state” in May 2013. He was arrested in October 2012 for handing out leaflets critical of the government. According to a report by Amnesty International, Dinh Nguyen Kha is being denied medical treatment following an operation in December 2016 to remove a tumor from his stomach. ESW calls upon the Vietnamese government to end the practice of deliberately depriving political prisoners of medical care, and to ensure that detainees receive proper medical care and are granted medical parole in time to properly treat their illnesses.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Trần Đại Quang
President of the Socialist Republic of
Vietnam

c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hanoi
Vietnam

RELEASES

IRAN

We are happy to report that on February 14, 2018, ZIA NABAVI, a former member of the Babol Industrial University Islamic Association, a spokesperson for the Right to Education Council, and a chemical engineering graduate of Babol Industrial University, was released from prison. Zia Nabavi was arrested on June 15, 2009, along with several of his friends. The interrogations and the physical and psychological pressure inflicted on the student activist during the initial 120 days of his arrest were repeatedly protested by human rights activists.

SOURCES

Al Jazeera English. <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

Amnesty International. <http://www.amnesty.org/>

Bahrain Center for Human Rights. <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en>

Committee of Concerned Scientists. <http://concernedscientists.org/>

Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. <http://www.academicrefugees.org/>

Endangered Scholars Worldwide. <http://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net/>

English PEN. <http://www.englishpen.org/writersinprison/>

Human Rights in China. <http://www.hrichina.org/>

Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/>

Hurriyet. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/>

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/>

Islamic Human Rights Commission. <http://www.ihrc.org/>



The New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com>

Radio Free Europe. <http://www.rfa.org/>

Scholars at Risk. <http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center. <http://www.smhric.org/>

UN Watch. <http://blog.unwatch.org/>

—Written by Ebby Abramson and Dolunay Bulut