

Progress and spending report for shahit.biz

Time period: February 5, 2022 to November 5, 2022 (9 months)

I. Donations and spending breakdown

Donations received: 43147.13 USD

Total spent: 42550.11 USD

Breakdown

- Curator: 10640 USD

- Victim importing: 19439.84 USD (including translation fees)

- Research: 7436 USD

- Fees: 5034.27 USD (international transfer commissions, site domain/server, Google One online storage, regular site backups and cybersecurity services, internet data plans, support software such as VPN and antivirus, Google API costs for map/translation services, Skype subscription for calls to China, technology repair/replacement, work space rent, purchase of relevant books/literature, miscellaneous freelancer tasks)

Approximately 500 USD of the importing salary was donated back by the importers in the form of direct social assistance to former detainees in Kazakhstan (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/general-aid-for-xinjiang-incarceration-victims>).

II. Staff and project size

Curator (general management, research, and quality control of everything): 1 full-time

Importers (adding/processing victim information into database): 5 part-time

Translators (translation of primary evidence and site interface): 3 part-time

Site programming and development: 2 volunteer

Research (victims and accountable parties): 3 part-time

Editing (of eyewitness accounts): 1 temporary volunteer internship

Profiling of victims (for blog/media): 1 volunteer

Two of the part-time staff are themselves victims of the mass incarceration campaign, with the part-time work making it possible for them to cover their costs of living.

III. Progress over the past nine months

- 19601 new victims documented (3159 high-quality, 15369 medium-quality, 1073 low-quality). 3365 of them have also been independently corroborated.

- 18 new facilities documented (4 pre-trial detention centers, 2 camps, 12 prisons), with almost all of the 50+ prison facilities in Xinjiang now covered, with the exception of 5-10 recently constructed ones (https://shahit.biz/xjvictims_facilities.pdf).

- Addition of two new camp releases lists (releases in September 2018 or earlier, and releases in April 2019 or later), to better track the release policies over time

(<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1490967869022416898>).

- Addition of Urumqi police notes as a new section to the primary-evidence report, with 60 notes currently added (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1505412637357928448>).
- Addition of a tabulated summary of eyewitness claims (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1508285472862519299>).
- A new list for victims who served multiple prison sentences, as many of those who had been detained previously were sentenced again – to longer terms – in the recent campaign (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1508995939448815616>).
- Translation of 2 new court verdicts: one for a Christian group in Mongolkure County (<https://shahit.biz/verview.php?no=47>) and one for Ababekri Dayim, an Uyghur inmate who appeared to have mental problems but was put in solitary confinement and then sentenced to an additional 3 years for “undermining supervision order” (<https://shahit.biz/verview.php?no=48>).
- Translation of the 4 short prison letters from Zhang Haitao to his wife (<https://shahit.biz/letview.php?no=7>).
- A small revamping of our Watchdog interface (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1518967537471750146>), with more efforts made to actively get information about cases that are the most dire.
- Translation of the letter of complaint written by Ilham Tohti’s lawyers (<https://shahit.biz/appview.php?no=3>) regarding his mistreatment at the Autonomous Region Pre-Trial Detention Center in Urumqi.
- Completion of the summary of the 582 victims from the Karakash List (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1534563572784963584>).
- The introduction of an applet to estimate camp closures in Xinjiang, based on statistical inference and documented facilities (<https://shahit.biz/closures.php>).
- Translation of an official diplomatic notice regarding the case of Gulsimqan Bazarbek, a 78-year-old Kazakh woman who was detained after returning to China (<https://shahit.biz/notview.php?no=33>).
- Achieving nearly complete ID coverage for Konasheher County (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1550177003831058432>), meaning that almost everyone from the county is listed in records available to us, and searchable by ID for the general public (with information provided upon request).
- The addition of an accountability sub-database (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#account>) that links victims to individuals helping implement the mass incarceration, surveillance, exploitation, and propaganda in Xinjiang. Around 1800 individuals have been added to the database so far. China’s state media has also reacted: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k5hhFrWwdU>
- Addition of a statistical analysis of the Konasheher prisoners list to our primary-evidence section (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1559779747399626752>).
- Launching of a blog (<https://blog.shahit.biz>) for profiling specific victims and giving an outlet to volunteer journalists.
- Addition of a “charges vs. action” section to our primary-evidence report (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1564666431685308416>), allowing to match the abstract criminal charges used to sentence specific victims with the concrete things they actually did. Over 500 cases have been added.
- Addition of a “detention rates” section to our primary-evidence report

(<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1579872577346240512>), which allows to see the magnitude of the detentions on the local village/neighborhood level for 70 villages/neighborhoods in southern Xinjiang, with the original sources also made available.

- Transcription/translation of the Radio Free Asia call that documented the detention of imam Abduheber Emet (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1583833789973028864>).
- The processing and setting of over 2000 victim photos (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1586358089682673665>), taken from the Xinjiang Police Files.
- The addition of integrated joint operations center reports to our primary-evidence section (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1587834189394546688>), with 2 translated reports added so far: <https://shahit.biz/ijopview.php?no=1>, <https://shahit.biz/ijopview.php?no=2>.

IV. Future plans

shahit.biz is currently documenting victims from 7 main source channels:

- Victim data gathered by Uyghur advocates in the diaspora (around 3000 victims).
- Urumqi police notes and reports (around 1000-2000 victims).
- A leaked prisoners list of approximately 18000 individuals sentenced on questionable charges in 2015 and earlier (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nn-i6pWiBZvryNw2dn1SuSkaDTcB3eun/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109776214625080468628&rtpof=true&sd=true>), approximately 2000 of whom are already in the database and 16000 of whom are new and need to be added.
- Hundreds of government documents obtained by scholar Adrian Zenz in 2019 (possibly around 10000 new victims, if not more).
- General name-ID lists, many of which are public, that may be crossed with the sensitive ID lists (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1466141001119059985>) to “discover” new victims because their tags make it statistically very likely that they were detained (possibly 10000 or more new victims).
- Media reports, social-media posts, and general testimonies (100s of victims).
- Xinjiang Police Files, which contain hundreds of lists of detainees (likely around 10000 new victims).

Consequently, the coming year is expected to be very busy with regard to adding new victims to the database, with it likely that we will cross the 100000 threshold in a year or two. Future leaks or hacks may augment these plans further.

The documentation of new victims is the core of our work. However, shahit.biz also continues to work in the following supplementary directions:

- Translation of various forms of primary evidence and expansion of the primary-evidence report (https://shahit.biz/xjvictims_primary.pdf), where the work is essentially infinite (high priority)
- Identification and documentation of detention facilities with known victims (https://shahit.biz/xjvictims_facilities.pdf), with the 150 threshold likely possible (high priority)
- Continued expansion of the ID database that allows anyone to see which individuals we have

information about and to request the information from us, which consists of feeding ID numbers from thousands of different public and nonpublic documents (high priority)

- Continued documentation of accountable parties for the accountability section, with around 10000-20000 already in the pipeline (medium priority)
- Internet research on existing victims, by searching their names and IDs in various Chinese search engines and databases, as a means of improving their entries and corroborating their identities/situations (low priority)
- Calling local police and offices to ask about the fates of certain victims whose cases are particularly dire (low priority)
- Developing and maintaining the villages interface (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#village>), with continued research on their demographic data and geolocation, as this allows the improvement of the overall detention number estimate at the top of the page (low priority)
- Incorporating new information on already documented victims by checking other documents/sources where they appear (low priority)
- Continued quality rating and editing for existing entries, as over 4000 are still unrated and around 7000 are unedited (low priority)

The following new features are also on the horizon:

- An improved and more professional statistics interface, with better and exportable graphs, convenience filters, and refined categories (for example, splitting the “phone/computer content” detention reason into the type of content, such as VPN, WhatsApp, religious audio, etc.).
- A new section dedicated to the authentication of various government spreadsheets and documents, by correlating the data in each document with that found in other independent sources, so as to have a rigorous score that represents the likelihood of a given document’s authenticity.
- Detention timelines for individual victims, showing how their status changed over time, which will allow to better track both the individual and general situations over the years.
- The determination and computation of reparations that the Chinese authorities owe individual victims, based on their time in detention and precedents where such reparations have been requested or paid. This will be an extension of the detention timeline feature above.
- A database extension for unnamed victims, although this is not very high priority for the time being.