

Progress and spending report for shahit.biz

Time period: January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023 (3 months)

I. Donations and spending breakdown

Donations received: 15162.64 USD

Total spent: 16005.63 USD

Breakdown

- Curator: 3360 USD

- Victim importing and translation: 5802.22 USD

- Research: 5035 USD

- Fees: 1808.41 USD

(international transfer commissions, 584.76;

site domain/server, 239.70;

Google One online storage, 6.33;

regular site backups and cybersecurity services, 110.70;

internet data plans, 138.04;

Google API costs for map/translation services, 94.99;

Skype subscription for calls to China, 20.34;

SMS generator for Chinese accounts, 20;

technology repair/replacement, 37;

work space rent, 522.55;

purchase of relevant books/literature, 34)

Approximately 525 USD of the importing salary was donated back by the importers in the form of direct welfare 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): 3 part-time

Translators (translation of primary evidence and site interface): 2 part-time

Site programming and development: 1 volunteer

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

Victim documentation (core)

- 7299 new victims documented (114 high-quality, 7021 medium-quality, 164 low-quality). 564 of them have also been independently corroborated.

Primary-evidence translation and organization >> <https://shahit.biz/eng/#evidence>

- Eyewitness accounts added for Gulbahar Haitiwaji (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#1577>), Zhou Yuan (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#56100>), and Zhazira Asen (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#49043>).
- Translation and addition of around 200 police notes from the Urumqi police records, bringing the current total to 344.
- Translation and addition of 2 full-length Urumqi police reports (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1634967974389116928>).
- Translation of Zhanargul Zhumatai's appeal letters to the local authorities in Urumqi, regarding the mistreatment she has faced since being released from camp in 2019 (<https://shahit.biz/appview.php?no=4>).
- Translation of the e-mail correspondence from the Dutch government to Muniridin Yadikar (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1620817162553397248>), which confirmed the sentencing of his mother and sister-in-law.
- Translation of a local work/monitor group's report (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1621511179083599875>) on former camp detainee Erbolat Qusman, written within days of his release from detention.
- Addition of our translation of a leaked recording from a lecture at the Xinjiang University of Finance and Economics (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1621925251268620288>), which confirmed the detentions of multiple university heads.
- Translation of the court verdict for Helchem Pazil's family (<https://shahit.biz/verview.php?no=49>), where 5 women from one family in Korla, including a 78-year-old woman, were given long prison terms for religious gatherings they had held in 2013.
- Translation of Chinese media coverage of Huseyinjan Jelil's case (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1632757845602209793>), which outlines how he left China and became a refugee in Canada, and how the Chinese state still considers him a Chinese citizen.

Facility documentation >> <https://shahit.biz/eng/#facilities>

- 3 new facilities documented: the Changji Drug-Rehabilitation Center (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#facilities123>), the Shayar County Pre-Trial Detention Center (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#facilities124>), and the former Shayar County Pre-Trial Detention Center (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#facilities125>).

Accountability >> <https://shahit.biz/eng/#account>

- 14165 new individuals added to the accountability database. Around 10000 of them were Urumqi police officers (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1611134809526386688>). Another 1000 were police staff from Konasheher County. The rest are mostly local-level secretaries and government staff, as well as some prison staff.
- Our accountability inclusion criteria were formalized and added to our FAQ section (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1621175004338737154>).

Notable cases and/or significant finds

- Addition of Zhanargul Zhumatai's (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#48985>) case, together with numerous supplementary and corroborating materials.
- Addition of Nizhat Usen's (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#49657>) case, together with the local police report in which he praises his own detention. Nizhat is a former Olympic boxer and also a People's Liberation Army officer.
- Addition of Meryem Ismayil's (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#49704>) case, together with the local police reports talking about her suicide. Meryem was a student at Xinjiang University, who was allegedly driven to kill herself following her father's detention and the persistent harassment of her mother by local authorities.
- Addition of Gulnisahan Mijit's (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#56014>) case. Gulnisahan was the wife of alleged Urumqi bomber Sedirdin Sawut, and was among the relatives hunted and detained following the incident. She was sentenced to 10 years for "harboring criminals".
- Addition of Zhou Yuan's (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#56100>) case, together with numerous supplementary and corroborating materials. Zhou's case was famous in Xinjiang as he spent 15 years in detention on rape and murder charges for crimes he never committed, before finally being exonerated some 20 years after his initial arrest. The state also issued him compensation (around 350RMB/day of detention).
- Translation of police report further corroborating the detention of poet and editor Wahitjan Osman (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1637331924275580930>), as well as the school textbooks he was responsible for being recalled.
- One of the documented sentenced victims, Ablet Abdureshit, was found to have died, as reported in a local article written by a visit-benefit-unite worker assigned to "assist" his father in 2019 (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1641103102559535104>).

Tools, features, and platform improvements

- We've made it possible to export large data sets by having the platform automatically break them down into smaller batches (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1629355874274902016>).
- Our ID search has been expanded with the addition of around half a million new individuals (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1640407230628634625>), and now also makes it possible for anyone searching to see the coded sources in which the individual appears (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1630878394647998467>), thereby allowing them to keep track

in case new information in new sources becomes available in the future.

- We've added a detention chronology feature that shows graphically what type of detention a given victim was held in and during what time period

(<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1638199347711193088>). Furthermore, we built on this to add a reparations calculator, which computes the reparations owed to each victim by the state (based on the 350RMB/day rate applied in Zhou Yuan's case).

Blog articles

- A translation of a 2010 profile of late Kazakh writer Qazhygumar Shabdan

(<https://blog.shahit.biz/2023/01/29/those-were-times-when-speaking-the-truth-had-serious-consequences/>), who spent half of his life in prisons and was under house arrest at the time of his death in 2011.

- A translation of an eyewitness account of camp survivor Zhazira Asen

(<https://blog.shahit.biz/2023/02/06/the-camp-broke-me-spiritually-materially-and-physically/>), originally published in Kazakh and Russian in July 2022.

- A translation of the story of Zhou Yuan (<https://blog.shahit.biz/2023/03/13/zhou-yuan-the-nie-shubin-of-xinjiang-finally-exonerated-but-is-justice-20-years-late-still-justice/>), originally published by the *Tianjin Daily* in December 2017.

Known external use, media mentions, and public reactions

- Media mentions/coverage:

Global Voices (<https://globalvoices.org/2023/01/27/repression-of-uyghurs-remains-unchanged-interview-with-xinjiang-victims-database-founder-gene-bunin/>),

The China Project (<https://thechinaproject.com/2023/03/02/a-search-engine-for-disappeared-uyghurs/>),

Bloomberg (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-15/china-detains-ethnic-kazakh-activist-in-xinjiang-scholar-says>),

Radio Free Europe (<https://www.rferl.org/a/ethnic-kazakh-xinjiang-sos-bid-to-escape-arrest-china/32212570.html>),

Middle East Monitor (<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230305-the-chinese-authorities-must-release-my-19-year-old-sister-demands-uyghur-engineer/>)

- Some of our data regarding the internment of ethnic Hui was used by the Chinese Human Rights Defenders in a recent report (<https://www.nchrd.org/2023/03/will-the-hui-be-silently-erased-a-groundbreaking-report-on-muslim-hui-minoritys-crisis-of-survival-amid-chinese-government-policies-aiming-to-eliminate-hui-identity/>).

- Amnesty International has referenced us in their Urgent Action for Zhanargul Zhumatai (<https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ASA1765612023ENGLISH.pdf>).

- The recently released Xinjiang Person Search Tool

(https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/about_person_search/) calls on our database simultaneously with searching their own, providing the user with a link if there is additional info that our database can provide, as well as to the victim's entry if they are a documented victim in our database.

- The addition of Urumqi police to our accountability database (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1611134809526386688>) created a very large reaction in the “pro-China” and propagandist circles, as 3-4 of the police officers had used photos of celebrities (notably: Andy Lau and Chow Yun-fat) as their photos in the police system, which we failed to notice while filtering out the photos that didn’t correspond to the actual officers. Consequently, much fun was had by Chinese state media (<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2023-01-14/Actors-listed-as-Xinjiang-police-officers-by-anti-China-organization-1gAjTdblocg/index.html>), including the SCMP (<https://www.scmp.com/news/people-culture/article/3206955/infernal-blunder-hong-kong-movie-stars-andy-lau-and-chow-yun-fat-wrongly-listed-xinjiang-cops-who>). This story also alerted a number of Western propagandists (Andy Boreham, Daniel Dumbrill, Jerry Grey) to their inclusion in our accountability list, which prompted additional reactions in smaller media, as well as Russia Today (<https://www.thecanadafiles.com/articles/prominent-canadian-youtuber-slandered-by-xinjiang-victims-database>, <https://www.rt.com/news/571522-xinjiang-victims-china-human-rights/>).

Other initiatives/work

- 9 postcards sent to prisoners by a volunteer that have also been added to their entries (<https://twitter.com/shahitbiz/status/1615806258639998980>).

IV. Future plans

The following are our major plans for the coming few months. There is a chance that we won’t get to all of them, but most should get realized if all goes well.

- The documentation of 15000-20000 new victims, the majority sourced from an old prisoners list (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nn-j6pWiBZvryNw2dn1SuSkaDTcB3eun/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109776214625080468628&rtpof=true&sd=true>). We have been working on this one for almost a year now, as a lot of the translation and geolocation is quite time-consuming, but are hoping to prioritize and finish it in the near future.
- New platform features, such as
 - (a) a “mission map” of places/people in Xinjiang to visit for anyone who has the opportunity to go there in person,
 - (b) a revamped statistics interface,
 - (c) a Kazakh-language version of the site,
 - (d) a customized machine-learning based Google translator to facilitate translation of Xinjiang-related texts and documents, which would call on our existing in-house dictionaries and translations (if funds permit, as training such a translator can cost up to 300USD),
 - (e) a new section dedicated to authenticating government documents (harder, may not be realized so soon) and summarizing the leaked/hacked documents available so far (easier, should be doable soon).
- New important documentation for Halmurat Ghopur’s (<https://shahit.biz/eng/#253>) case.
- The addition of around 3000 judges and other court staff to our accountability section.
- Working with the Boston Uyghur Association to send 100s or 1000s of postcards to prisoners.

V. Ways to donate

We are currently encouraging people to set up small monthly donations via our Donorbox: <https://donorbox.org/xinjiang-victims-database-work>. This is preferred as it helps us stabilize our funding and have a better idea of what is possible in the future. At the moment, about a quarter of our monthly costs are covered by a total of 40+ monthly donors, so we're still looking for others to help cover the rest.

For those who would like to make a one-time gift only, we recommend using our GoFundMe fundraiser: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/xinjiang-victims-database-work>. The fees here are slightly lower than with Donorbox, and so there's not much reason to choose the latter if you're only going to donate once.