



IV International Uyghur Women's Seminar

24-26 September 2011

Tallinn, Estonia

Speech delivered by Marino Busdachin, General Secretary, UNPO

On behalf of UNPO, I convey to you the greetings of our 50 Members all of whom share in the unfair and unjust challenges experienced by all of those who lack adequate representation and the ensuing struggle to acquire human, civil and political rights and ensure democracy and rule of law.

Today's conference, kindly sponsored by Julu-Kalle Raid MP and NED, is a very important event and is essential to the advancement of the Uyghur cause worldwide.

The Uyghur's struggle for justice, freedom, and an effective form of autonomy in East Turkestan has been continually frustrated by the Chinese framework of dialogue, an approach proven to be inflexible and intolerant. I believe a new framework is necessary in order to encourage consensus and support amongst the international community and to ultimately end the harsh oppression practiced by the Chinese government.

The Uyghur campaign for autonomy should be political and should challenge Chinese authorities on detailed issues. For this campaign to succeed it must be supported at the grassroots level by a substantial human and civil rights movement.

But..., at present, there is no dialogue!

Despite calls for dialogue on the part of the Uyghurs, Beijing maintains that the Uyghur people are both terrorists and separatists, and have instead responded with cruel repression and a total lack of respect for human rights.

How to act? How can we create a successful international campaign that forces China to implement its own Constitution and ensure autonomy and basic rights for the Uyghur population?

The events of the summer 2009 clearly show that China has not change...and will not change unless forced.

For almost six decades, China has violated the most elementary human rights of its people. In conjunction with arbitrary detention and arrest, torture and extrajudicial executions, the state's widespread endorsement of the death penalty and its inhumane birth control policy permit Beijing to deny the freedoms of expression, information and communication. The Chinese Government's continued restriction on religious practice and

access to multilingual education have forced citizens to protest in the face of violent crackdowns and involuntary migration.

A campaign that will lead China to adequately respond to the Uyghur call for dialogue is necessary; and this will only be made possible by the support of the International community and international public opinion. Such a campaign must be supported at the grassroots level. There is no struggle without a dialogue, for without a dialogue it means that there is no strategy.

Uyghurs also face a serious and grave problem beyond the borders of East Turkestan: the international response to refugees and asylum seekers.

Increasingly, countries have facilitated the return of refugees to Chinese borders, demonstrating cruel disregard for their obligations as outlined by the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The governments of Cambodia, Thailand, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, and Myanmar are responsible for the forcible return of Uyghur asylum seekers to China where they are likely to face torture, unfair trials and the death penalty. There is pressing concern that Indonesia and Malaysia are ready to join the ranks of these countries and bow to Chinese pressure.

We are disappointed by the weak response of the UN and the international community regarding these disgraceful actions.

We must raise our voice and call on the UN and its members states to publicly voice their strong commitment to the principle of “non-refoulment,” and to fully respect the 1951 Refugee Convention and associated protocols.

Finally, I would like to say something about the importance of Women in promoting human rights and democracy.

It is not a coincidence that human rights and women rights during the last 30 years have had an enormous impact in transforming political and civil societies around the world and particularly at the UN.

But what is extremely interesting is the mutual reinforcement and cooperation between human rights and women rights movements.

In fact we can say that women have emerged as the protagonists in changing the world in the last half of century.

The same is happening on the question of democracy.

Women have been and continue to be on the frontline, in the streets and in parliaments worldwide.

From the 1989 fall of communism to the Arab spring this year.

Let me now to tell you that I sincerely believe that the time is ripe to consider democracy as a fundamental human right.

Women deserve to live in democratic societies. It is a basic female right.

Times are changing, and women are changing politics.

Therefore I believe this is a fight for freedom, and this is a fight for justice.

This Conference will be an important step to revive discussion on the survival of the Uyghur people, the survival of the Uyghur culture, its language, and its beliefs.