

# Two Brothers Of Uyghur In Exile Detained For Calling ‘Separatist’ Sibling Abroad

*By Shohret Hoshur, 2021.11.03*

“Local government officials sanctioned the calls, but later arrested the pair for conversing with their brother.”



The brothers of a Uyghur based in the Netherlands have been arrested by authorities in northwestern China’s Xinjiang region for contacting a sibling abroad deemed a “terrorist” during officially sanctioned phone calls, officials confirmed to RFA.

Ghopur Ebey, 46, left his family in Baytoqay village of Ghulja (in Chinese, Yining) city in 2009 and moved to the town of Alkmaar in the Netherlands. Ghopur told RFA in September that two of his brothers, Ehtem and Shakir Ebey, were taken away after they talked to him using a phone provided by local authorities who gave them permission to call Ghopur abroad.

A third brother, Shukur Ebey, was arrested in 2017 and detained for two years in an internment camp after he took a group trip to Turkey, though he

had received permission from officials to travel to the country, which is considered a safe haven for persecuted Muslim Uyghurs and a defender of their rights.

When RFA contacted village officials to confirm the identities of Ghopur’s brothers and ask why they were apprehended, a judicial office employee responded, “They are Ehtem Ebey and Shakir Ebey.” Authorities arrested them for talking to Ghopur in the Netherlands, he said.

When asked why authorities allowed Ghopur’s family members to call him abroad but then punished them for doing so, the official said he could not answer further questions and suggested that RFA obtain additional information from the Communist Party command headquarters.

But when RFA contacted that office, officials there declined to comment.

Other local officials in Baytoqay village told RFA

that they did not know Ehtem and Shakir Ebey and were unaware of their cases.

Ghopur told RFA that his three brothers were ordinary citizens who were arbitrarily arrested and repressed simply because of their ethnic identity as Uyghurs.

Chinese authorities allowed Shukur, the eldest of the brothers who is a businessman in Ghulja, to travel to Turkey in 2013 as part of an officially approved tour group.

But in 2017, authorities arrested Shukur in the middle of the night, placing a black hood over his head and taking him to an internment camp because he had traveled to Turkey, Ghopur said.

In early 2018, Ghopur provided video testimony about Shukur's arrest, after which Shukur and a number of other relatives who had been detained in the "re-education" camps were released.

China has held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and others in internment camps since 2017, while dismissing evidence that it has mistreated the Muslim minority, including testimony from former detainees and guards describing widespread abuses in interviews with RFA and other media outlets.

China has said that the camps are vocational training facilities where Uyghurs and other Turkic people learn skills to find jobs under policies aimed at preventing religious extremism and terrorism in the region.

News of the release of Shukur and others was conveyed to Ghopur through a special arrangement by local authorities who appointed Ehtem to communicate on behalf of his family using a government-provided phone. In January 2019, Baytoqay village officials allowed arranged for Ehtem to call Ghopur on a dedicated phone line whose number ended in 113, Ghopur said.

"They called me while they were surrounded by Chinese police, and after that the police

told my relatives that they could call me and contact me," he told RFA.

"Then, my first younger brother was allowed by the authorities to contact me on behalf of all my family members," he said.

During their conversations, they were very careful not to speak about anything political or sensitive because they knew that authorities were listening to the calls, Ghopur said. After Ghopur suddenly lost contact with Ehtem, one of his contacts living abroad told him that Ehtem had been detained in December 2020 on charges that he had "spoken with his separatist brother in the Netherlands."

Sometime later, Ghopur learned that his youngest brother Shakir had also been arrested for the same reason.

When RFA called the number ending in 113, an official who answered did not comment when questioned about the Ehtem and Shakir's detentions, but did not deny that they had used the same government-issued phone to call Ghopur.

"We cannot tell you the details without seeing you in person," said the official when asked who was present when Ehtem and Shakir called Ghopur on the phone.

***Translated by the Uyghur Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.***



# Canada's Grocery Chains Stocked With Tomato Products Connected To Chinese Forced Labour

CBC News, Oct 29, 2021

## Supermarket pulls product, Italian supplier to stop using Xinjiang tomatoes

Canadian consumers who purchase popular tomato pastes, sauces and ketchups may actually be buying products harvested and manufactured by Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities under oppressive working conditions in China, according to a CBC Marketplace investigation. Marketplace, in collaboration with the Investigative Reporting Project Italy — a non-profit media association — and The Guardian, found some of the world's biggest grocers, including ones here in Canada, are stocked with tomato products that could be tied to forced labour in Xinjiang, a remote area of western China where Uyghurs are subjected to mass detention, surveillance and torture by the Chinese government, in what many countries have labeled a genocide.

"This is such a moral failure on the side of these companies," said Adrian Zenz, senior fellow in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.



CBC found several products sold in Canadian grocery stores with links to forced labour in East Turkistan. (Caitlin Taylor/CBC)

Zenz said the "risk of forced labour is endemic and systemic" in China's tomato industry and that "it's high time [these companies] increased their awareness."

Marketplace identified several major brands — Nestle, Del Monte and Unilever — that purchased tomatoes from Chinese companies in Xinjiang, processed them in intermediary countries like Pakistan, the Philippines and India, and shipped them internationally to be eventually sold at Canadian grocery stores like Walmart and T&T.

But a Canadian consumer may never know the true origins of that tomato product by looking at the label because regulations don't require a company to disclose the entire geographical makeup of the raw material — only which country it was last processed in. "So shocking," said Glenford Jameson, a Toronto lawyer specializing in food regulation, after he was shown CBC's findings.

Jameson said noting on the label where all the tomatoes come from would help “enable brands to build trust with their customers.” Even the Italian suppliers of store-brand products for Canada’s most recognized grocers — Loblaws, Sobeys and Whole Foods — were found to be purchasing tomatoes from the Xinjiang region, although the grocers say no Chinese tomatoes are in their products. One grocery chain, Whole Foods, has removed its store brand 365 Double Concentrated Tomato Paste from store shelves “out of an abundance of caution” after Marketplace provided information about their supplier. “It’s troubling,” said Amélie Nguyen, head of the International Centre for Workers’ Solidarity, a Quebec non-governmental organization. “People should know where the products come from, they should be able to make choices about the food products they buy.” She says supermarkets need to investigate their global supply chains and “put pressure on the producers from Xinjiang to treat the workers better.”

### China one of biggest suppliers of tomato paste concentrate

China is one of the world’s biggest producers of tomato paste concentrate — exporting 855,490 tonnes globally last year. That paste is the foundation for finished tomato products seen on many store shelves.

The U.S. government banned tomato products from Xinjiang due to forced labour allegations earlier this year.

It’s a much different story for Canada, however, where tomato products from Xinjiang are still flowing into the country.

To see how readily available these products were, CBC spent months mapping out the dizzying web of global suppliers — going undercover with Chinese companies and analyzing international shipping records — to connect Xinjiang tomatoes to multinational

brands, some of which were on store shelves at Walmart and T&T, a grocery chain owned by Loblaws.

Export records, provided by Washington-based non-profit C4ADS, showed Del Monte, Unilever, Nestle and UFC NutriAsia purchased thousands of tonnes of tomato paste in the last two years from Cofco Tunhe, a company implicated in China’s alleged forced labour scheme.

The tomato paste was shipped from Xinjiang to their factories in Southeast Asia, processed as spaghetti sauces and ketchups and then exported under the Product of Philippines, Product of India or Product of Pakistan country origin labels.

Nowhere on the labels did it mention the use of Xinjiang or Chinese tomatoes.

### Canadian in-store brands have supplier links to Xinjiang

Marketplace found Canadian grocery stores such as Loblaws, Sobeys and Whole Foods work with Italian processors who conducted business with Xinjiang companies.

The Italian suppliers admitted to using Xinjiang tomatoes, but said these products don’t



Whole Foods 365 Double Concentrated Paste was taken off the shelf in this Toronto store after Marketplace provided information about the Italian supplier and its business connections to East Turkistan. (Caitlin Taylor/CBC)

come into Canada, they are sent instead to markets like the U.K, Australia and Africa.

One of those companies, Antonio Petti Fu Pasquale S.p.A., makes Whole Foods 365 Double Concentrated Tomato Paste. That processor, according to Italian import records obtained via a freedom of information request, ordered tomato paste from Cofco Tunhe in the first six months of 2021.

Antonio Petti Fu Pasquale S.p.A. — currently under investigation by Italian authorities for allegedly passing off foreign tomatoes as 100 per cent Italian — is a major processor that makes private label pastes and sauces for Canada, the U.S. and the U.K.

Whole Foods said that the tomatoes in its “365 Concentrated Tomato Paste are grown and processed in Italy” and that it has third-party audits and raw material traceability records that support their claim.

Mehmet Tohti, executive director of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, “strongly condemns” Whole Foods’ business relationship with Petti.

“I urge them to stop immediately,” said Tohti. “This is insane and unacceptable.... Regardless of whether there are Xinjiang tomatoes in their products, [they] are part of this for-



Food supply expert Amélie Nguyen says grocers need to do more to investigate their supply chains to make sure they're not using tomatoes from East Turkistan.

ced labour supply chain and they are benefiting from it.”

Following CBC’s inquiries, Whole Foods said it pulled its 365 Double Concentrated Tomato Paste off store shelves and has cut ties with Petti as a supplier.

Another Canadian brand that also sources tomato products from Antonio Petti Fu Pasquale S.p.A. is B.C.-based Bosa Foods. It sells tomato paste under the Italissima brand.

Bosa Foods said it had been with Petti for many years and that the processor has assured the grocer that its code of ethics complied with internationally recognized human and labour rights standards.



Whole Foods 365 Tomato Paste. Its Italian supplier sources imported tomatoes from East Turkistan, according to records obtained by FOI. Whole Foods says its paste is made with Italian tomatoes. (CBC)



Bosa Foods Italissima tomato paste (produced in Italy). Its Italian supplier, Antonio Petti Fu Pasquale, sources tomatoes from East Turkistan, according to import records. Bosa Foods said its tomatoes are sourced from Italy or Europe. (CBC)

Petti admitted it used Chinese tomatoes, but only for products destined for the African market.

Petti told CBC in an email that it “has a code of ethics to which it constantly strives to adapt commercial relations with foreign partners to respect human rights.”

Zenz said these companies have “found a way to still make a profit off this oppression.” “It means that they are using a product that carries a high risk of forced labour and then they say, ‘We don’t sell this to the West because Western countries might have a problem with that, but it’s fine to sell it to Africans,’” said Zenz.

### ‘Lack of moral compass’

CBC also investigated some of Sobeys’ and Loblaws’ private brand tomato products — Compliments and President’s Choice, respectively — and found that both are made by Italian processor La Doria, which, according to Italian import records, had purchased tomato paste from Xinjiang as recently as May 2021.

La Doria, a leading supplier of private brands globally, confirmed that it used Xinjiang tomatoes for grocers in the U.K., Europe, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia but not for Sobeys or Loblaws.

Loblaws told CBC in an email that it shares “concern about labour conditions throughout the global supply chain and takes these matters very seriously.”

Loblaws and Sobeys did not indicate whether they would sever their relationship with La Doria, despite the apparent contravention of their companies’ stances on human rights violations by their suppliers.

“It really shows a lack of moral compass on the part of those companies,” said Joanne Smith Finley, an expert on Uyghur affairs at Newcastle University. “It makes a mockery of their [corporate social responsibility] policies



*Adrian Zenz, a senior fellow in China Studies at Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, said any company with ties to East Turkistan is ‘morally problematic.’ (Submitted by Adrian Zenz)*

... they deserve to be challenged.”

La Doria told CBC it will continue to use Xinjiang tomato paste through November 2021, but clarified that it has not ordered from this year’s harvest. Any tomato paste from Xinjiang was harvested in 2020. The company’s decision to stop purchasing Xinjiang tomatoes was made prior to CBC’s inquiries, although CBC News was the first to report this.

### ‘They live under constant fear’

Adil, a Uyghur Muslim, said every year up to 12 members of his family were forced to farm tomatoes in Xinjiang.

That meant planting seeds, harvesting crops and even working in factories, or risk appearing unpatriotic toward the Chinese government.

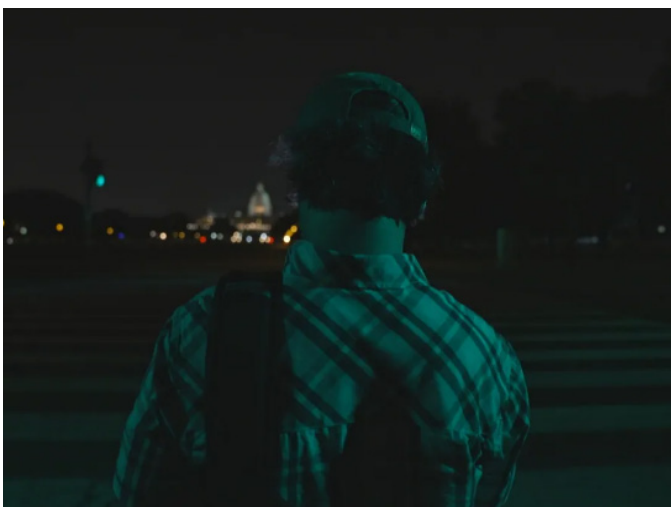
“The authorities may confiscate their lands, they confiscate their houses and they also confiscate their livestock.... It’s very common that they will go to jail if they refuse to pay a fine,” Adil said through a Chinese translator. The Chinese Communist Party considers Uyghurs “extremists,” and experts say it has taken harsh discriminatory measures toward them and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. This involves the alleged coerced transfer of

Uyghurs throughout the region to do seasonal work like picking tomatoes and cotton. A more recent component, which has yielded international condemnation, involved putting over a million people into internment camps, where human rights abuses have taken place.

Adil, whose name we've changed due to fear of retribution by the Chinese government



*Loblaws' Italian supplier admits to using East Turkistan tomatoes, but not for Canada. (CBC)*



*Adil escaped East Turkistan with his wife and kids and is now in the U.S. He said every year his family in China is forced to pick tomatoes. (Caleb Hargett)*

toward his remaining family, recently escaped with his wife and kids and now resides in Washington, D.C.

"I felt very lucky. I thought it was a miracle that I could leave China," he said.

He says his remaining family is "still living under fear" and believes "if they are not in [internment] camps ... my family is picking tomatoes. The Chinese Communist party has so many ways to torture you. No one can escape from their evil hands."

### **Undercover in Xinjiang and a pattern of forced labour**

By analyzing government documents, state media reports and interviewing former Xinjiang residents, CBC pieced together a pattern of forced labour in the Chinese tomato trade going back years.

This involved the transfer of thousands of Uyghurs throughout the region to plant seeds, pick tomatoes or work in factories for many companies — including some of the biggest in China such as Cofco Tunhe Tomato and Xinjiang Guannong Tomato Products Co., under the pretense of "poverty alleviation."

Cofco, according to export records, sold tomato paste to international companies like Heinz and Del Monte; Guannong to Russian companies like Grandstar. Both Chinese companies also send to Italian processors.

They also have ties to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a paramilitary organization linked to Xinjiang's agricultural sector. The XPCC, according to a report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, has been connected to the large-scale surveillance, detention and indoctrination program targeting Uyghurs and other groups.

But one would never suspect anything nefarious was going on based on the undercover

conversations Marketplace producers, posing as tomato traders of a fabricated company, had with Cofco and Guannong representatives during virtual tours.

When the undercover journalists asked Cofco and Guannong about whether they used Uyghur labour, the companies were either evasive or downplayed how much they relied on it.

But documents CBC analyzed not only showed Cofco Tunhe involved in labour transfers, it stated in a 2020 press release that it collaborated with local governments to employ Uyghurs as a way to promote “national unity.” A Cofco representative denied using any forced Uyghur labour and did not respond to further requests for comment after CBC revealed they were journalists.

Chinese state media reports also showed that Guannong had been involved in the transfer of hundreds of Uyghur workers to its factories as recently as 2020. But a representative from Guannong said that the company also did not use Uyghur forced labour, and did not respond to further questions after CBC revealed themselves as journalists.

Dru Gladney, a professor and expert on Uyghur studies at Pomona College in California, believes forced labour in China’s tomato trade is “very, very pervasive.”

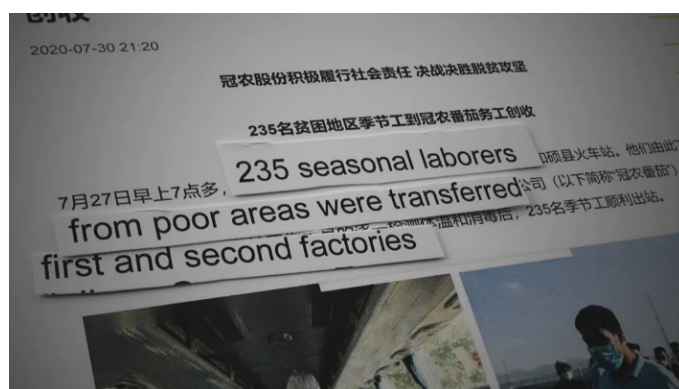
“It’s not surprising that Uyghur labour is often forcibly utilized, because often these are low paying or menial jobs,” said Gladney.

### Canadian government yet to ban tomatoes

The Canadian government has sanctioned four Chinese officials and another division over what is described as “gross and systemic human rights violations” in Xinjiang, but

it has yet to issue an import ban on tomato products from the region.

Employment and Social Development Canada said in a statement that it was “progressing on a number of cases” and was working “to identify trade patterns and specific shipments potentially affected by forced labour for consideration and possible enforcement.” Even though the Canadian government has the ability to seize imports if they are found to be produced wholly or in part by forced labour, it has yet to enforce those rules.



*CBC, with the help of Adrian Zenz, analyzed many Chinese state media (and translated) reports that showed the transfer of Uyghurs to tomato fields and factories in East Turkistan, under the pretense of “poverty alleviation.” (CBC)*



*CBC created a tomato trading company seen in this screenshot. Undercover journalists were able to get virtual factory tours with companies accused of using Uyghur forced labour in China. (CBC)*



# Liz Truss Unleashes Furious Tirade Against China Accuses Beijing of ‘Genocide’

By JAMES LEE, Nov 1, 2021

**FOREIGN SECRETARY Liz Truss has privately slammed China, accusing them of committing genocide in a change of stance on the country from her predecessor Dominic Raab.**

Mr Raab stopped short of describing China’s persecution of the Uyghur Muslims as genocide when he was Foreign Secretary, insisting the international community had to be “careful” before making such claims. But Ms Truss has a far more robust approach than both Mr Raab and Boris Johnson when he held the role.

The top British diplomat let her views be known in a meeting with Caroline Wilson, the UK ambassador to China.

When Ms Wilson was appointed in October last year she discussed Britain’s relationship with Beijing in a meeting with Truss in her role as international trade secretary.

According to an ally of Ms Truss, Ms Wilson ended their discussion by asking why the UK couldn’t treat China “like we treat the French”.

The meeting then ended abruptly, the source told The Times. The exchange has been corroborated by a second source close to the Foreign Secretary.

Ms Truss is said to be “personally appalled” by Beijing’s persecution of the Uyghurs, which included reports of forced sterilisation



*Liz Truss has privately condemned China’s human rights record (Image: Getty)*

and slave labour in Xinjiang, the northwest province.

Further reports suggest that thousands of Uyghur Muslims are being slaughtered as part of the Chinese organ transplant market, feeding body parts to Chinese and Saudi patients for cash.

China denies the allegation.

Ministers and diplomats around the world are cautious about accusing regimes of genocide in public.

The legal threshold for the International Criminal Court by a regime is very high and proving beyond a reasonable doubt is extremely difficult.

The international court defines genocide as a deliberate attempt to destroy a race based on ethnicity or religion.

The Foreign Office declined to comment on “private meetings”.

A statement did however mention: “The Government has led international efforts to hold China to account for its human rights violations in Xinjiang at the UN.

“It is the long-standing policy of the Government that the determination of whether genocide has taken place should be made by a competent court with the jurisdiction to try such cases, rather than by the government or a non-judicial body.”

Before being appointed Foreign Secretary, Ms Truss said Britain must not become “strategically dependent” on China.

Britain has remained cautious of Beijing following Chinese firm Huawei seeking to install the UK’s 5G network, which some say could be used by China to spy on Britain.

A Government source said of Ms Truss: “She’s a China hawk. She will want to reduce our dependence on China and build up alliances in the Indo-Pacific region. The prime minister is a lot more liberal on China than she is.”



*Predecessor Dominic Raab was far more relaxed on China (Image: Getty)*



*China and Britain may be trade partners in the future (Image: Getty)*

With the UK now out of the European Union, China may still become a key economic partner with the UK.

Both London and Beijing are seeking to expand their membership of various regional and international trade deals and could become closer if accepted.

Earlier this year, China addressed the issue of the Uyghur population, and allegations of genocide.

Speaking to the UN Human Rights Council, foreign minister Wang Yi said: “These basic facts show that there has never been so-called genocide, forced labour, or religious oppression in Xinjiang.

“Such inflammatory accusations are fabricated out of ignorance and prejudice, they are simply malicious and politically driven hype and couldn’t be further from the truth.”



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