

Dear Rahile Dawut,

I write to you to express my solidarity and support for you in this time of difficulty and darkness. I have come to know of you through the impassioned words of your family, friends, and colleagues, individuals who have been doing everything they can to draw attention to your plight and call for your immediate and unconditional release.

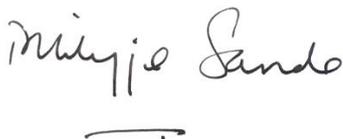
Your scholarship reflects a deep love of a people and its culture, and history. From your peerless research in support of the cultural heritage of the Uyghur community, you have inspired a new generation of scholars to follow in your footsteps. The integrity, dedication and respect you have shown in your work is remarkable.

It is clear that your work has left an indelible impression on all those who have had the fortune to meet you. The generosity, determination, and unyielding humanity you have demonstrated has been felt by many people, and I write to express my deep and personal solidarity with you in these difficult times, as your right to freedom of expression – along with so many other rights protected under international law – has been curtailed.

The government of the PRC once recognised the value of your scholarship – and did so publicly – by funding your research and work. Today, that government has detained you under conditions of secrecy for almost four years, and I understand has also denied to your family information as to your wellbeing. Such actions undermine the idea of the rule of law and the requirement to respect the dignity and humanity that attaches to every human being.

You represent the best of humanity. Please know that you are not alone, and that many of us are watching with concern and attentiveness what happens to you next in the coming times.

With respect and good wishes



Philippe Sands

President, English PEN