

UK Uyghur-led campaign to highlight China's abuse of Muslims launched, boosted by large donation from Pears Foundation



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The cause of Uyghur Muslims facing repression in China has received a significant boost, with a £90,000 donation by Pears Foundation, a major funder spearheading the British Jewish community's support.

The donation has been made to 'Stop Uyghur Genocide', a campaign group set up by Rahima Mahmut, a Uyghur exile living in north London. Although she receives a small stipend as the UK representative of the World Uyghur Congress, until now Rahima and a group of dedicated supporters have run the campaign on an entirely voluntary basis. The recent flood of reports of atrocities against the Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups – mass detention, forced labour, forced sterilisation, destruction of religious sites, near-total digital surveillance – and the growing awareness of the issue in the UK has meant that Rahima has had to juggle her campaigning with her day job as a translator. The donation was facilitated by the Jewish human rights charity, René Cassin, which has been supporting Rahima and campaigning on the Uyghur issue for the past two years.

Pears Foundation's generous grant has enabled the campaign to launch as a national grassroots organisation and to carry out work building Uyghur campaigns in countries around the world.

The Stop Uyghur Genocide campaign has already won two significant victories. In April, the UK Parliament voted to

recognise the genocide; and on 19th July, it decided to stage a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

“It is hard to put into words my gratitude for this gift, and the support for my fellow Uyghurs that it represents. In practical terms, it will mean that we will have the resources to make a real impact with our campaigns to label the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics ‘the Genocide Games’ and expose the extent to which western companies benefit from forced Uyghur labour. And in moral terms, to know we have the support and empathy of a community that has a real understanding of what we are suffering has a value beyond measure”.

“This gift is both a testament to Rahima’s hard work and tenacity and a practical expression of the revulsion the Jewish community feels about ethnic and religious repression so brutal and so widespread that the UK and US have labelled it ‘genocide’.

When I first met Rahima two years ago I pledged that René Cassin would work to bear witness to what is happening to the Uyghurs and raise awareness among the Jewish community. This generous gift is enormously encouraging. But it is just the first step on the road that will only end when China ceases persecuting its minorities. We were with Rahima at the beginning of that journey, and we intend to be with her at its end.”

For further information and comment, contact:

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