Rizwangul NurMuhammad

Rizwangul NurMuhammad is a Uyghur human rights defender, Fulbright Scholar, OHCHR Minority Fellow. Rizwangul's public advocacy began in response to a personal crisis. In 2017, her brother, Mewlan NurMuhammad, an internet technician, was detained by Chinese authorities and later sentenced to nine years in prison. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an Opinion in this case, determining his arrest and detention were arbitrary and suggesting immediate release. What began as personal advocacy evolved into a structured, Uyghur-led initiative: the "Uyghurs at UN Action Initiative" (UUNAI). This Initiative addresses the rights of Uyghurs as minorities, refugees, and migrants in China and host countries. Through UUNAI, she focuses on protecting Uyghurs from refoulement and deportation while supporting their resettlement and integration through education, empowerment, and protection. She has taken the Uyghur cause to international platforms, including the United Nations, and has engaged with foreign policymakers to raise awareness about detention camps and forced labor. Rizwangul's work bridges international human rights advocacy with grassroots community social and financial development and capacity building. In 2021, she co-founded Empower Communities Charitable Trust. As its leader, she designs and executes projects to uplift the Uyghur diaspora, focusing on economic empowerment, education, and well-being. She is currently pursuing PhD research at the University of Sheffield, UK, with a WRDTP fellowship, focusing on Uyghur diaspora identity construction. Rizwangul remains committed to deepening her understanding of the Uyghur crisis and human rights mechanisms while enhancing her community's capacity to learn and advocate effectively for their rights, locally and globally.