

Statement on U.S. Visa Restrictions on Thai Officials Over Uyghur Deportations

March 15, 2025

The Wild Pigeon Collective welcomes the U.S. decision to impose visa restrictions on Thai officials responsible for the unlawful deportation of 40 Uyghur refugees to China. This step acknowledges Thailand's complicity in Beijing's ongoing genocide against Uyghurs but unfortunately is far from enough.

Public condemnations have come too late to prevent these 40 men from being forcibly disappeared, and their fate remains unknown. Men who had [applied to the UN Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\)](#) for international protection, were ignored. Men [sent out SOS letters and went on hunger-strike](#) pleading for help to stop their imminent deportation, again to no avail. Their legitimate fears of refoulement were disbelieved as [Thai officials repeatedly denied](#) that any deportation was planned.

We urgently call on the U.S. and the international community to press for immediate access to the deported Uyghurs, including independent monitoring by international organizations, and to demand proof of their well-being. China must be held accountable for guaranteeing their safety and must allow them to travel outside China and to communicate freely and privately with their families, whether they are inside or outside China.

The United States government should also seek to work in tandem with allies to impose targeted sanctions on both Thai and Chinese officials, as well as entities, that were implicated in these violations of human rights. The Wild Pigeon Collective, alongside other advocacy groups, has submitted suggestions for those which should be priority targets to the United States Department of State, as well as others.

In response to the [announcement of US visa restrictions](#), the [Thai Foreign Ministry has stated](#) that it "received assurances from the Chinese government regarding the safety of the Uyghurs" and that Thailand "will continue to follow up on the well-being of this group." Yet, no details have been provided regarding what this follow-up entails, who is responsible, or which persons specifically will be allowed access to all of the deported men. The families of these Uyghurs outside of China have had no contact with their loved ones since their deportation.

The world has seen these so-called "assurances" from China before—given before Uyghur deportees vanished into the mass internment camp system, prison labor programs, and forced indoctrination centers. Likewise, when at least 109 Uyghurs were deported from Thailand back to China in 2015, there were also assurances at that time that they would be monitored. Just as there is a planned visit by Thai ministers to visit China in relation to the 40 Uyghur men next Tuesday 18 March, a decade ago [a visit in July 2015](#) from the then National Security Council Chief of Thailand took place to reportedly check on the 109 or more Uyghur men, women and children deported a few weeks earlier. However those Uyghurs disappeared, [seemingly into the internment system](#), and have not been heard from since. We cannot accept empty diplomatic statements as proof of life. We call on the U.S. and other governments to demand verifiable

information on these 40 men, including independent monitoring of their whereabouts and well-being. Thailand, too, must provide full transparency about its role in this deportation and commit to halting any further forced returns.

The Wild Pigeon Collective remains committed to seeking justice for these men and all Uyghurs at risk of forced repatriation.