



Future Generations
CalsMUN 2022

Research Report

Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: Human Rights Violations in China
Regarding the Uighur Muslims

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Personal Introduction

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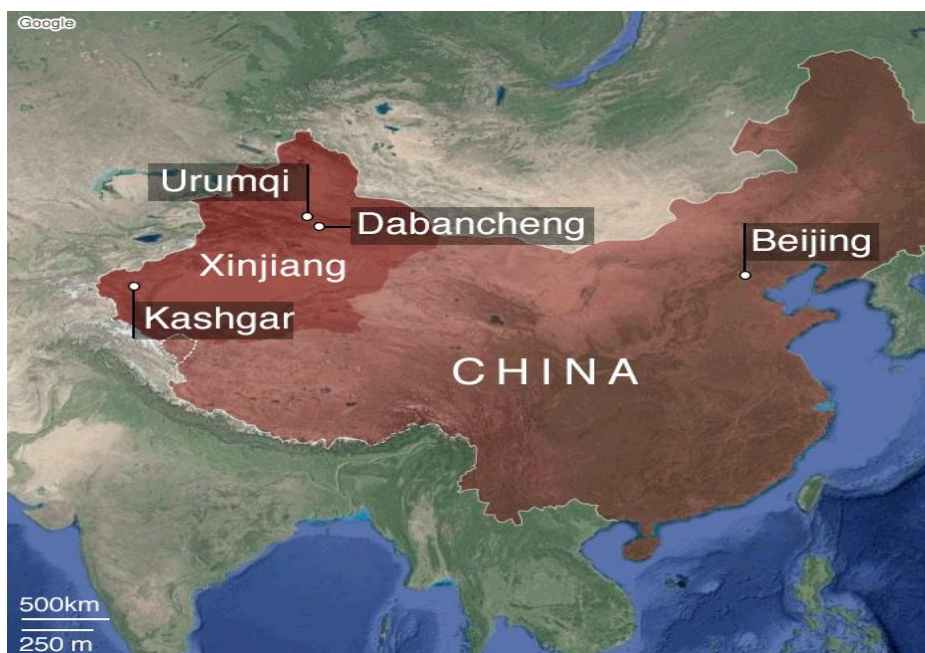
Hi! My name is Sara and I'm 16. I am currently a year 12 student at the British School in the Netherlands, where I study Chemistry, Biology, History, Maths, French and English in the IBDP program. I'm Italian and have lived in Holland for most of my life. I've been involved in MUN for three years and my conference experience began at MUNISH XXX in HRC, so I'm excited to now Chair it. This year, I'll be doing about six or seven conferences, so I hope to see some of you again after CalsMUN!





Introduction

Since 2014, the Chinese government, under the direction of the CCP and its General Secretary Xi Jinping, has incarcerated an estimated 1 million Muslims (the majority of these being Uyghurs) in internment camps without legal process; this is the largest-scale detention of a religious/ethnic minority since World War II. Their lack of trial as a precursor to incarceration is already a fundamental breach to their human rights, but the occurrences inside the camps they are consequently sent to cause this to be an increasingly pressing issue. The treatment inmates receive includes the suppression of religious expression, forced labour, political indoctrination, separation of families, and a plethora of physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuses. Despite the Chinese government's frequent and categoric denial of the issues, the actions have been recognised as ethnocide and cultural genocide by independent NGOs and human rights experts. It is essential that the basic human rights of the Uyghur people are restored: it is therefore your role as delegates in the Human Rights Council to ensure that this specific genocide is acknowledged and terminated, as well as to prevent genocide from occurring at any scale or in any part of the world in the foreseeable future. This report aims to give you a basis of knowledge on the history, causes and origin of this issue and how to begin to resolve it.





Definition of Key Terms

Uyghurs

Alternatively spelled Uighurs: a Turkic ethnic group native to the general region of Central and East Asia and recognised as titular to Xinjiang in Northwest China. They are generally Islamic in faith, thus referred to as Uyghur Muslims. They are one of China's officially recognised ethnic minorities as of 1945.

Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

The single ruling party in the state of mainland China, founded in 1921.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

Mainland China as governed by the CCP, established in 1949.

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR)

A landlocked region of the PRC close to Central Asia containing the majority of the Uyghur ethnic group as titular peoples.

East Turkestan Independence / Islamic Movement (ETIM)

A political movement that seeks the independence of East Turkestan from the PRC. It is described as “the most militant of the ethnic Uyghur separatist groups”.

East Turkestan Liberation Organisation (ETLO)

An organisation with a similar aim to ETIM, of establishing the independent state of East Turkestan. It was founded in Turkey in 1990-96.



General Overview

Violent outbreaks in Xinjiang have occurred sporadically throughout Chinese history. Multiple so-called “strike hard” campaigns have been conducted by central Chinese governments targeting Xinjiang with a goal of reducing violence, fighting crime and retaining law and order: therefore, a heavy police presence is and has been constant in Xinjiang for decades. The main reason for historic tensions between the Han Chinese government and the Uyghurs stems essentially from the Chinese government’s fear of fostering Islamic extremist terrorism within its own territory and causing a threat to national sovereignty in this way. This has been exacerbated by numerous factors. With China’s economic development plans came the connection of Xinjiang to Central Asia through road and rails, such as to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. These openings, while necessary for trade, increased fears that these lines would expose the XUAR to Islamic militant training, arms transfer from this, and the drug trade from the neighbouring countries. The occurrences on September 11th, 2001 gave China more leeway and freedom in their treatment of the Uyghurs as mistreatment felt more permissible or acceptable given the global sentiment at the time. The Chinese government’s general aversion to separatism, seen also in its interactions with Taiwan, meant increased tension over the East Turkestan Independence Movement and thereby higher hostility to Uyghurs overall. China has often blamed ETIM or people inspired by it for violent incidents both inside and outside Xinjiang, and has used its existence as a tool to justify extensive law enforcement presence in the area.

The Xinjiang area has therefore been unstable for some time, and this was first evidently seen during mass protests in 1990 in Baren, followed by violent riots and further demonstrations in cities such as Yining, Khotan and Aksu throughout the 90s. The first protest had been started by the then-leader of the East Turkestan Islamic Party, Ismail Yusup, demanding an end to the mass immigration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang. This immigration had occurred in large numbers throughout the 90s due to the richness of Xinjiang in terms of natural resources - including oil and natural gas - and its general economic prosperity. The protests and their aftermath were followed by a “strike hard” response from the government throughout 1996, including the forceful suppression of an Uyghur demonstration in Yining. More large-scale ethnic rioting in the regional capital of Urumqi occurred in 2009 with circa 200 people killed in the unrest, the majority of these being Han Chinese. As a result, many



more “strike hard” campaigns were issued in periods of unrest after this, none with a discernible end but more so the government’s reminder for police to continue monitoring the area. These “strike hard” campaigns not only served as precursors but also as inspiration for the situation we see in Uyghur treatment today.

Brutal attacks on pedestrians that were blamed on Uyghur separatists also occurred in Beijing and Kunming in 2013 and 2014 respectively. The first of these, in October 2013, occurred when a group of Uyghurs allegedly drove an SUV into pedestrians on Tiananmen Square, with 5 deaths and 40 injuries. In early 2014, a knife terror attack in a train station in the Yunnan Province resulted in 31 casualties and over 100 injured. The attack was blamed on Uyghur separatists by the Chinese government. This marked a shift in China’s approach to the region and its administration. The Chairman of the XUAR at the time, Nur Bekri, proceeded to state that “the government is determined to curb the spread of religious extremism as well as prevent severe violent terrorist attacks and mass incidents from happening”. In leaked internal speeches published by the New York Times, President Xi was said to have called for an all-out “struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism”. This was the first open mention or suggestion of what was named “vocational training for those more easily manipulated by religious extremism”, an allusion to camps meant to maintain CCP doctrine or, at the very least, destroy inmates’ Islamic faith. In 2014-15 this system was still emergent and had not reached its current scale, but following the Kunming attack, the situation with the treatment of Uyghurs saw escalation. Already in 2013, Amnesty International published a report stating that authorities “criminalised what they labelled ‘illegal religious’ or ‘separatist’ activities and clamped down on peaceful expressions of cultural identity”, and as early as July 2014, some Xinjiang government departments banned Muslim civil servants from fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, although this had not been the first time fasting was restricted in Xinjiang. By 2015, the government had enforced an enormous surveillance network in the area. This included millions of cameras, police checkpoints, tracking software and bugs placed across the region as well as further limitations on freedom of religious expression. Residents of the XUAR had to submit iris scans, blood and DNA samples, and other biometric data to authorities for identity verification purposes. All of these show rising tensions between Uyghurs and the Chinese government and population that will ultimately have led to this issue being so prominent.



Since 2017, at least an estimated 1 million Uyghurs have been arbitrarily detained in internment camps. Government officials stated that these camps, created under the Secretary's administration, serve the goals of ensuring conformity to CCP ideology, preventing inmates' involvement in ETIM or separatism, combating terrorism, and giving Uyghurs career and technical education. Certainly, they succeeded in enforcing the CCP's ideology in these, through techniques involving suppressing any form of Muslim religious practice or expression, indoctrinating inmates with CCP ideology by forcing them to sing Chinese hymns, listen to lectures about CCP ideology, read books about CCP ideology, or take tests on Chinese ideology to determine whether they will be allowed to leave the camp. Many other human rights abuses besides the limitation of freedom of religious or political expression were alleged to be happening in the camps, including forced labour, physical beatings or torture, forced sterilisation and contraception, forced abortion, verbal harassment, and rape and sexual assault.

Due to the Chinese government's actions, the Xinjiang area has seen, at its peak, a circa 50% overall decrease in birth rates in the XUAR and reported that between 2015-2018 the largely Uighur-inhabited areas of Hotan and Kashgar saw a decrease in their birth rates of over 60%. The Chinese authorities recognised these figures but denied accusations of non-consensual sterilisation or neonaticide and infanticide.

China has persistently denied Uyghur genocide accusations, which have so far come from several countries including the US, Canada and the Netherlands. China has vehemently refused to acknowledge any of these and instead states that the crackdown in Xinjiang is for the purpose of rooting out terrorism and Islamic extremism. The Chinese Foreign Ministry released a defensive statement leading up to the 2022 Beijing Olympics which saw a potential for a boycott due to the findings of the internment camps, calling allegations of genocide the "lie of the century".



Documents branded as the "Xinjiang Papers" were leaked and published in full by November 2021, as well as having been passed to the Uyghur Tribunal in the UK in September. The documents were authenticated by experts. The Papers revealed how both Secretary General Xi and Premier Li Keqiang previously made direct statements that led to policies affecting the Uyghurs, including all of the above treatments of Uyghurs in detainment camps as well as



coercion to work in factories. Reports also emerged detailing the forcible mass sterilisation of Uyghur women in order to suppress the population. China overall came under massive international pressure over allegations of human rights violations in Xinjiang. Series of reports were published by outlets from all countries in 2017, including the Wall Street Journal, that testified to the intense surveillance and camp life Uyghurs were subjected to. Chinese government statements, when reviewed, showed officials largely avoiding addressing the issue from 2015 until late 2018, when the growing scrutiny made ignoring the issue increasingly impossible. In response to a hearing of the OHCHR's CERD, the Chinese representative stated that allegations of concentration camps were "completely untrue" and sustained that the camps were simply for vocational training purposes. Foreign Minister Wang Yi among many other officials continued claims that China's system was simply in keeping with the UN's "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism" of 2016. Satellite images were shown of a camp in Shufu County that grew from as early as 2013, from when it has doubled in size, begun having watchtowers and has had dormitories built in the facility. Further proof against the Chinese government's denial of the camps, or more specifically proof that they were actively hiding their involvement, occurred when inmates reported being coached on what to say to journalists and visitors when asked questions about life and conditions in internment camps to avoid scandal.



Major Parties Involved

Organisations

Human Rights Watch

As an NGO dedicated to conducting research on and advocating for human rights, the group has the ability to pressure governments, policy makers, and companies to denounce abuse and begin to respect human rights for all Uyghurs, as well as generally any Muslim communities in countries where they are a minority. It has published specific reports and sent investigative journalists to the area to discover more about the extent and causes of the problem.

Amnesty International

Its goal of ending human rights abuses against all makes it directly responsible for ending the violence and terror caused by the discrimination of the Uyghurs. It has released numerous country-specific reports and investigated the causes or mechanisms for law enforcement's ability to discriminate certain groups of individuals. In its manifesto on police violence, it states: "police brutality and racism international human rights law strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination. No one should be treated differently by law enforcement because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnicity, national or social origin, disability, or other status". It has provided comprehensive and detailed reports on the detention camps describing the prevalence of torture as well as the lengths to which the Chinese government has gone to hide the human rights abuses it has perpetrated. All 108 former camp detainees Amnesty interviewed in the report recounted cruel or degrading treatment.

Countries

China

Being the location where all these abuses occur, it is evident that China is one of the sole main parties involved in this issue. Despite repeated denial, evidence, supported by figures such as birth rates published by the CCP itself and reports by various outlets has shown that these abuses do effectively take place.



United States of America

US policy on this issue is constrained as they are not the site of the abuses, but as another large power it has the potential to be a more influential voice when encouraging China to respect human rights, especially considering that many immediately neighbouring countries are indifferent to the issue. The US has previously recognised individual ETIM terrorists but has not added the ETLO to its list of terrorist organisations. US outlets, including the Wall Street Journal, the Associated Press and BuzzFeed, have also testified to or reported on the Uyghur camps and the abuses that occur herein, so the US media has had massive influence in raising awareness over the issue. As the state that notoriously declared its “War on Terrorism”, it would also be symbolic to the Chinese government that the US refuses to class Uyghurs as this. Under the Trump administration, the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act was signed as well as other laws being invoked to sanction Chinese companies and individuals.

Pakistan

Both a neighbour and friend of China, it has taken a stricter line with the Uyghurs. After the Pakistani-Chinese extradition treaty of 2003, the third highest leader of ETIM, Ismail Kadir, was returned to China following his capture by Pakistani authorities. Pakistan’s President Musharraf stated in November 2003 that “this country will never allow anybody, including the terrorist force of ‘East Turkestan’, to use the territory of Pakistan to carry out any form of anti-Chinese activities. Thousands of Uyghurs travel yearly in Pakistan for both business and religious purposes, and the Chinese believe that over 1000 Uyghurs were trained by Osama Bin Laden’s forces in Afghanistan as well as some reports suggesting that Uyghurs were trained in militant training camps in Pakistan.



Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
<i>9th December 1948</i>	CPPCG proposed & passed unanimously in UNGA
<i>1955</i>	XUAR granted autonomy by China
<i>1966</i>	Cultural Revolution, mosques destroyed, religious scripts burned
<i>1976</i>	“Reform and Opening” riots & demonstrations result in massacre
<i>April 1990</i>	Armed uprising in Baren
<i>1996</i>	“strike hard” campaign propagates through China
<i>August 2001</i>	Chinese military undertakes large-scale exercises in Xinjiang
<i>11th September 2001</i>	Terrorist Attack on the World Trade Centre
<i>January 2002</i>	Official statement on “East Turkestan terrorists” released
<i>January 2007</i>	Chinese raid on & destruction of training camp in XUAR, 19 killed
<i>June 2009</i>	Uyghur riots in Urumqi
<i>28th October 2013</i>	Tiananmen Square Attack in Beijing
<i>1st March 2014</i>	Kunming Station knife attack
<i>2014</i>	“People’s War on Terror” policy launched
<i>2015</i>	Government enforces massive surveillance network in the XUAR
<i>2017</i>	Authorities begin arresting Uyghurs for “extremist behaviours”
<i>2018</i>	Initial denial of the existence of concentration camps in China
<i>September 2021</i>	“Xinjiang Papers” passed to Uyghur Tribunal



Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Foremost would be the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) also known as the Genocide Convention, an international treaty seen as the first legally official document to criminalise genocide and the first human rights related treaty passed unanimously by 152 states in the UNGA. It further called for states to enforce its prevention. However, since its ratification in 1948, it has proven not to be completely effective as we have still seen genocide, such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994. It was a treaty recalled in the context of the Uyghur Muslim's treatment and used to argue that the Chinese government should receive sanctions. The National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China was further released by the Office of the State Council in September 1999, outlining a general policy towards minorities. However, the policy was made vague and was easy to find loopholes in. The UN also held a Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination where the Uyghur camps were often brought up, but China's frequent denial of their existence made discussing these effectively impossible. The US's implementation of the Uyghur Rights Policy Act as well as its sanctioning of Chinese companies and individuals in response to the issue – including Chen Quanguo, a top member of the Chinese politburo – has helped set a basis for future action. So far, many attempts to resolve the issue were made impossible, initially by Chinese denial that the issue existed in the first place, and later due to unwillingness to collaborate when tackling the issue.

Possible Solutions

An overall comprehensive effort should be made towards reducing the stereotyping of all Muslims as terrorists, which has contributed massively towards causing this issue. However, due to continued human rights abuses, a higher priority is placed on ending the existence of the concentration camps in China before attempting to eradicate causes for genocide. This can include:

- Building an international coalition aimed at helping Uyghurs in Chinese detainment camps, including removing them from these and providing them with safe refuge



- Economic policies to motivate the Chinese to change course in its treatment of Uyghurs and activities in Xinjiang
- Supporting Uyghurs and affiliated peaceful groups directly wherever possible, and withdrawing support for Chinese companies that involve Uyghur forced labour



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