



UYGUR ARAŞTIRMA ENSTİTÜSÜ
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Current
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES
in
East Turkestan
(Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China)

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The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group who have now become minorities in their own homeland. East Turkestan (called the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region by China), spans over 1.6 million square kilometers and makes up the largest administrative division in China. More than 11 million Uyghurs – the majority of them Muslim and ethnically and culturally close to other Central Asian nations – live in East Turkestan (or the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, XUAR).

Despite the Chinese government's claim that rapid economic and social development has created a harmonious, stable and satisfactory social environment, Uyghurs have always had a troubled relationship with the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) central government authorities and have been facing a Beijing-supported influx of Chinese migrants into their homeland, harsh repression of political dissent, and limitations on the expression of their distinct identity. The Uyghur people are struggling for cultural survival.

To help you better understand the urgency and scale of the human rights issues they are facing, we are providing this report to brief you on the intensifying human rights situation in the Uyghur region, including China's most recent unlawful mass detention of the Uyghurs.

1. Freedom of Expression

Chinese officials introduced policies to regulate the Uyghur Muslims' personal religious expression, including circumcisions, weddings, and funerals, according to the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China's (CECC) 2015 report. Authorities have also adopted new regulations limiting the role of religion in education, as well as Uyghur parents' ability to engage their children in religious activities in the XUAR (CECC 2017, p.8). CECC's 2017 report notes that Chinese authorities continued to harass, detain and imprison democracy advocates who exercised their freedom of speech, assembly and demonstration (CECC 2017, pp. 55).

Chinese government's repression of free speech and religious activities is getting more severe in East Turkestan (XUAR) than in the other parts of China. The government has implemented new repressive security measures, arbitrary arrested and detained individuals for their peaceful expression of political and religious beliefs without any legal process under the name of combating terrorism and extremism (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.1)

Many Uyghur intellectuals, including independent writers and blog administrators, have been detained over the past few years in the XUAR. Uyghur activists speculate that Nurmuhemmet Yasin, recognized by Pen America for his allegorical short story "Wild Pigeon" – the same writing that led to his arrest – probably died in prison. In 2014, Chinese authorities handed down a life sentence to Ilham Tohti, an economist, professor and researcher on Uyghur-Han relations, convicting him of "separatism" despite his call for ethnic harmony and understanding. Tohti was awarded the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2016 (Amnesty International, 2017).

There are several incidents of detaining foreign journalists who are trying to visit the Uyghur region. Security officials held journalists for several hours, seized their laptops and cameras that they were using for examining collected information. Moreover, the officials interrogated and harassed them (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.25). Chinese authorities have not only detained Uyghur writers and journalists in East Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), they have also detained relatives of journalists in other countries.

Four ethnic Uyghur journalists have reported that their parents and relatives in East Turkestan have been detained or have disappeared. ShohretHoshur, GulchehraHoja, Mamatjan Juma, and Kurban Niyaz, all of them working for the new U.S. government-funded agency RFA, believe that their parents and family members have been detained or have disappeared. Two of them are U.S. citizens. [Gulchehra](#) believed that around 20 of her relatives have been detained because of her work in the U.S. (Laignee Barron, 2018). “Uighur webmaster Nijat Azat continued to serve a sentence for “endangering state security.” Fellow Uighur webmaster Dilshat Perhat was scheduled to be released, but there was no information on his case at year’s end. During the year additional journalists working on traditional and news media were also imprisoned.” (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.23).

The government has been using "double -linked household" system in East Turkestan and Tibet region for many years. Households are divided into groups of 10 in order to monitor each other and report on " security issues" to the officials. This forced people to be informers (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.20).

Central and regional officials in the XUAR also placed strict restrictions on communication tools over the past few years. They tightened controls on cell phone use and ordered residents to install a spyware application –JingwangWeishi (Web Cleansing Guard) –to allow the government to monitor their activity for “illegal religious content” (Oiwan Lam, 2017). The government also expanded its

censors on the internet, blocked access to virtual private networks (VPNs), and at times fought the filming of treaty body reviews and online access to them.

The Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology posted a notice on its website in 2017, announcing the launch of a nationwide clean-up campaign aimed at internet service providers, internet data centers, and content delivery network companies (Sijia Jiang, 2017). The notice also prohibited the creation or rental of communication channels, including VPNs, to run cross-border operations without government approval. VPNs are often used to access social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which are restricted in China. In the XUAR, VPNs have been treated as tools for terrorists. According to Radio Free Asia, in 2016, police in the XUAR's Changji City detained a man for allegedly "downloading violent and terrorism circumvention software," warning others of the serious consequences of using VPNs in the Uyghur region (Qiao Long, 2016).

A report by the US State Department cited the number of death sentences in China, indicating that the number of executed people dropped in 2016. While the number of Uyghur executions increased, Han Chinese executions decreased (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.19). Media reports pointed out that the Ministry of Public Security was using tens of millions of surveillance cameras throughout China. The Ministry increasingly relied on videos and other forms of surveillance system to monitor and intimidate political dissidents, Tibetans and Uyghurs. Especially in East Turkestan (XUAR), officials monitoring and disrupting telephone and internet communications, allowed security agencies to cut communication networks during major incidents (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.19).

The government used its membership of the world organization Economic and Social Council's Committee on NGOs to prevent teams critical of China from getting world organization accreditation and blacklisted authorized activists from taking part in the UN event. Dolkun Isa who was accredited to take part in UN

Permanent Forum on indigenous Issues was not allowed to take part in the event (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.52)

2.Restrictions on Religious Activities

In 2017, the Chinese Communist Party expanded restrictions on the already limited space for expression, religious activity, and peaceful assembly. Today, restrictions on religious freedom have intensified dramatically in the XUAR and Tibet. Authorities have adopted new regulations limiting the role of religion in education as well as parents' ability to involve their children in religious activities. Regulations also ban Islamic dress –including veils and irregular beards –and prohibit parents from naming their children any of a list of dozens of Islamic names deemed extremist by Chinese authorities. Families who fail to comply with the name regulation risk denial of household registration (hukou) for their newborns, thereby restricting their access to social services such as education and healthcare. More recent reports indicate that the name prohibition has been extended to include children up to the age of 16 (CECC 2017, p.8).

In the East Turkestan (XUAR), Chinese authorities have also ordered ethnic minority Muslim families to hand in religious items, including prayer mats and copies of the Quran to the authorities, according to RFA (Qiao Long₂, 2017). News also specified that almost 70% of mosques were demolished in the Kashgar city, under the "Mosque Rectification" campaign that was launched by the Chinese government in 2016 (Shohret Hoshur, 2016).

Many intellectuals and businessmen disappeared or were arrested for their religious thought or practice. Muhammad Salih Hajim, a well known religious leader and academic, might have disappeared or been detained, according to unofficial sources, World Uyghur Congress called Chinese government to clarify his status and whereabouts (WUC, 2017). Clergy was not allowed to participate in the funeral of Akmet, who was an ethnic Kazakh imam and had died in the police

custody mysteriously. Following his funeral, more than 100 people were detained for posting about his case online (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.3)

The government restricts religious practice to five officially recognized religions and only in officially approved religious premises. It retains control over religious personnel appointments, publications, finances, and seminary applications. In a major speech on religion, President Xi Jinping warned against overseas infiltrations through religious means and called on religions to adopt Chinese characteristics (HRW₁, 2017).

In 2016, Beijing issued a white paper –“Freedom of Religious Belief in XUAR” – alleging that the government protects normal religious activities and respects citizens’ religious needs and customs. Just days after publishing the paper, the government once again imposed its annual ban on the observance of Ramadan; and authorities prevented government employees, students, and children from fasting and in most cases from praying during Ramadan. As of November 2016, Uyghur Muslim parents are forbidden from including their children in any religious activity, and citizens are encouraged to inform authorities about neighbors who may be involved in activities prohibited by the government.

Authorities continue to restrict men from sporting beards and women from wearing headscarves and face-covering veils. Various reports also indicate that the Chinese government destroyed thousands of mosques in the XUAR in 2016, purportedly because the buildings were considered a threat to public safety (USCIRF, 2017, p.34).

3. “Bilingual Education” Policy

In July 2017, the Education Department in the XUAR’s Hotan prefecture issued a directive requiring full Mandarin instruction beginning in preschool and banning the use of Uyghur in all educational activities and management, threatening punishment if the directives were not followed (UHRP₁, 2017).

Under China’s “bilingual education” policy, class instruction takes place primarily in Mandarin Chinese, replacing instruction in languages spoken by ethnic minority groups. Authorities in Hotan banned the Uyghur language in education “in order to strengthen elementary and middle/high school bilingual education.” The ban includes a prohibition on Uyghur language signs on school grounds as well as the use of Uyghur in school activities and educational management. Earlier that year, in March, state media had announced that authorities would strengthen preschool bilingual education in the XUAR by building or expanding a total of 4,387 bilingual kindergartens and hiring 10,000 bilingual teachers in 2017 (CECC 2017, p.55).

Those measures are the most restrictive language policies in the regional education system to date and suggest a policy effort to move all Uyghur children into the “bilingual” education system is accelerating. But despite its label, “bilingual education” is effectively monolingual – Mandarin Chinese. The policy undermines the Uyghur people’s right to preserve their cultural identity and facilitates the assimilation of Uyghurs into Han culture.

In June 2017, the state media reported that the Department of Education in Hotan, a Uighur-majority prefecture, issued a directive requiring full instructions in Mandarin beginning in preschool and banning the use of Uighur in all educational activities and management. Similar measures were implemented throughout the XUAR (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp. 63).

The Uyghur Research Institute has been sounding alarms about the marginalization of the Uyghur language, concerned it will lead to the end of formal education for Uyghurs students in their own language. China has laws protecting the use of minority languages, including in the education system – Article 4 of the Chinese Constitution protects the freedom of minorities to use their own language, and Article 37 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law states that schools in autonomous regions should use the ethnic language as the primary

medium of instruction. International human rights also outline standards protecting the right of ethnic minorities to receive education in their own language. These include Article 29 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 4 of the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Chinese government should realize its efforts to undermine important elements of Uyghur identity will not solve the underlying issues of marginalization and inequality. It should respect its own laws and the principles of international law protecting the rights of minorities to educate their children in their own language.

4. Effects of Counter-terrorism Law and Anti-Extremism Regulations

Over the past few years, the Chinese government has been exploiting "terrorist threats" in order to further strengthen its security forces in East Turkestan, invoking and proclaiming the danger of extremism from Uyghurs, justifying and expanding its harsh policies, and trying to further crackdown on civil rights.

China's ostensible campaign against the "three evil forces" (terrorism, religious extremism and separatism) in East Turkestan has explicitly served to draw a direct line from fundamental aspects of Uyghur culture to terrorism (WUC, 2017).

The Counter-Terror Law, its burden heavily falling on Uyghurs, passed in December 2015, used to further restrict communication and religious practice of the people.

Undoubtedly, Chinese authorities have been exaggerating the threat from extremism and terrorism. They have been overly suppressing religious activities and ethnic independence in East Turkestan. They claimed that China faced the threat of terrorism, but failed to release details about terrorism convictions in the

region. This raised concerns about using counter-terror law on nonviolent activities. China's Counter-Terrorism Law is regarded as politically motivated because of its lack of transparency and violations of a fair trial (HRW₁, 2017).

Current party secretary of Uyghur district, Chen Quanguo who transferred his job from Tibet implemented similar policies in Tibet. He increased security budget for more than 300 percent and recruited more than 9088 security related jobs, strengthened the surveillance effort, enhanced restrictions on movement and religious practices (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.63).

The risk of racist attacks by law enforcement authorities toward Uyghurs has always been high in East Turkestan. It is clear that Chinese Counter-Terrorism Law did not only not comply with international human rights law, but also with China's domestic law.

Chinese state media reported a number of violent incidents in the region without providing any further details. It claims to have killed alleged terrorists, also tightening restrictions on the news media and any other sources of information about the incidents (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.3).

In March 2017, the XUAR People's Congress adopted the region's first "anti-extremism" regulations (CLT, 2017). The regulations categorize 15 actions as extremism, and according to a Chinese legal scholar they "draw a clear line between legal religion and illegal religion." While the XUAR People's Congress adopted regional measures in July 2016 to implement the PRC's Counter-Terrorism Law –which describes how authorities should work to counter religious extremism (CTL 2016; Bai Tian, 2016) – the 2017 regional regulation provides more detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of the XUAR government authorities to eliminate extremism (Xinhua, 2017). Measures aimed at countering extremism in the XUAR in recent years have often threatened to criminalize the Uyghurs' peaceful practice of religious faith (UHRP, 2016).

The regulations categorize 15 actions as the sign of extremism, "draw a clear line between legal religion and illegal religion," and threatened to criminalize Uyghurs' religious practice (CECC, 2017, p.283). According to these categories, using "Halal" signs on food products is also regarded as extremism (Eziz, 2017).

The above regulations overly applied in East Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) which had a total surveillance system, which included checkpoints at train stations and roads in and out of towns, hand-held devices for searching people's smartphones, a GPS system for tracking cars, facial recognition systems everywhere, and a huge database for collecting biometric and other relevant information of citizens (Josh Chin, Clément Bürge, 2017).

Some area of China's Counter-Terrorism Law raising our concerns;

China's Counter-terrorism Law should include articles that relate to protecting minorities, especially when its main objective is to protect certain minority groups. According to article 104 of the law, the Chinese government defined thoughts and speeches which attempted to "influence national policy making" belonging to terrorism. So, any thoughts urging the Chinese government to change the policy toward East Turkestan (Xinjiang) might be regarded as terrorism. This may cause local law enforcement officials in East Turkestan to abuse their power, and to categorize more innocent people as terrorists.

Articles 15, 16, and 94 indicated that any telecommunication and internet services have to provide a "backdoor" for the government. That means any telecommunication and internet service providers that do not comply with the regulation will be restricted from operating in China. These regulations further restricted freedom of expression and communication by using an overseas service provider. Individuals who have access to restricted communication tools may be regarded as criminals.

Articles 23 and 46 allowed officials to track down people with a digital surveillance system, establish checkpoints and collect individuals' information to be compiled into a database.

Article 52 also allows law enforcement to restrict communication, living location, social and business activities.

These implementation guidelines for the national Counter-Terrorism Law will do little to resolve the issue in the region. Instead of addressing the problems of the economic marginalization of the Uyghur population, the repression of free religious practice, and access to education in the Uyghur language as well as the increasing atmosphere of suspicion towards Uyghurs, the guidelines clearly indicate that authorities intend to continue to increase the militarization of the region.

5. Recall of Uyghur Students Abroad

In 2017, the Chinese government ordered Uyghur students studying abroad, including those in Egypt, to return home (Shohret Hoshur₂, 2017). Several sources report Chinese authorities detained family members of overseas students to force them to return. After they failed to obey China's demands to return, more than 100 Uyghurs were detained in Egypt in August 2017. At least more than two dozen were forcibly returned to China, where some of them were reportedly arrested and imprisoned (Emily Feng, 2017). BuzaynepAbdureshit (Buzainafu Abdourexiti), a young Uyghur woman who had returned to China in 2015 after studying for two years in Egypt was suddenly detained in March 2017 and sentenced to seven years in prison during a secret trial (Amnesty International, 2017). Habibullah Tohti, an Uyghur man who graduated with a Ph.D. from Al-Azhar University in Egypt, was sentenced to ten years in prison after he tried to find a job in the Chinese education system (Shohret Hoshur₃, 2017). At least six other Uyghur students who traveled to Turkey for educational purposes were jailed upon returning home, according to a relative of the region's former

Communist Party Chairman, despite a probe that found the students had not committed any crimes (Shohret Hoshur¹, 2017).

China continues to seek out and recall members of the ethnic Uyghur population scattered across the globe. In the case of Egypt, Chinese authorities have relied on Egyptian security forces to round up ethnic Uyghur Chinese citizens. Many details remain unclear about the arrest, detention, and deportation of Uyghur students studying in Egypt, including the legal residential or student status of some of the Uyghurs in Cairo. But the People's Republic of China's ability to demand the return of an entire group of minority citizens –without a clear and compelling case for their repatriation and without any hint of due process –should raise concern within the international community.

Uyghur students in western countries are also facing a lot of pressure, both from Chinese officials and by Han Chinese people. RFA reported that one of the Uyghur students was threatened by Han Chinese classmates who told him they would report him to the Chinese embassy for his "separatist view" (MihrayAbdulim, 2018).

6. Re-Education Centers in the East Turkestan (XUAR)

Perhaps the most urgent issue today is the detention of tens of thousands of Uyghurs in “re-education” centers or camps in East Turkestan (XUAR). In 2017, China began rounding up Uyghurs by the thousands of detention in “re-education” camps or so-called political education centers. The camps are now formally referred to as Professional Education Schools after various other labels, including Socialism Training Schools and Counter Extremism Training Schools, since their inception in early 2017 (Eset Sulaiman¹, 2017).

Although Chinese government denied the existence of "re-education camps", there are many evidences that the Chinese government was continually establishing camps related to re-education system. From 2015, some official

news agencies had been revealing that re-education camps existed in East Turkestan (XUAR). Chinese government recruiting security officials have been releasing information about construction of re-education camps, and camps related expenses during the past few years (Adrian Zenz,2018).

Radio Free Asia has already published and broadcast dozens of news reports on China's re-education camps in the XUAR. Approximately 2000 of the 13,000 Uyghurs in Kora City and 4000 of the 30,500 in Karakash county have been detained. At least 2000 Uyghurs in Aktu county were also detained in the re-education camps (Eset Sulaiman, 2017). There may be many other re-education centers in other regions of the XUAR. Uyghurs have been detained in the re-education camps for various reason, including traveling overseas, and are forced to express their remorse over previous thoughts (Shohret Hoshur₄, 2017).

Some estimates demonstrate that as numerous as 800,000 people, generally Uyghurs, have been imprisoned in the re-education camps. Based on the current populace of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, which stands at a few 11 million, this sums up to the extrajudicial detainment of about ten percent of the ethnonational group (Phillips, 2018).). Some Uyghur exile group estimates that up to 1 million Uyghurs have been detained in re-education camps, authorities in Xinjiang are using age as criteria to determine if the Uyghurs should be detained in re-education camps, indicated that young Uyghurs born after 1980 are considered "violent" and " untrustworthy (Shohret Hoshur₂, 2018).

One of the re-education centers in Karakash county was filled with detainees last November, so about 500 excessive detainees were transported to another "re-education center" near the county train station (Shohret Hushur₂, 2018). Some re-education camps already have full of detainees, according to RFA news. Horigul Ismail who is 80 years old woman and 5 other students in Bayanday town of Ghulja released from 're-education camps' recently. It has been knowing that there are other detainees released as well, for the reason that re-education camps need

space for new inmates (Shohret Hoshur⁵ ,2018). New detention in Bayanday town increased from last year. Up to 50% to 60% of local Uyghur people in the different three villages in Bayanday town have been detained in re-education camps (Shohret Hoshur⁶, 2018).

Chinese government has been urging other countries not to issue visas to Uyghurs who had left China, and is imprisoning them upon return, some of them sent to re-education camps by officials (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp. 65)

The Chinese government is also targeting foreign citizens that have had Chinese citizenship before. RFA interviews a Kazakhstan citizen Omurbeg, who was detained by Chinese officials in East Turkestan (XURA), and was abused and tortured for 20 days (Gulchehre¹, 2018).

Uyghur have been detained for various reasons. An Uyghur woman was taken to a re-education camp just because she answered a phone call from a relative whose number was on the government blacklist (Shohret Hoshur³, 2018). Students who are tried to return home from various countries have been detained without any explanation and formal charge, incarcerated in the re-education camps or jailed for suspected as "untrustworthy" (Foreign Policy, 2018). An article published on Guardian also reveals that 50 Uyghur women who are married to Pakistani Men detained in re-education camps, without taking their health and family condition into account (Memphis Barker, 2018). Executive Committee chairman of World Uyghur Congress told that three or four people from every household are taken to re-education camps, they have been detained in a cramped condition (Steven Jiang, 2018).

Another report by Radio Free Asia stated that the Uyghurs detained in these facilities were held in overcrowded and squalid conditions, due to the large numbers of Uyghurs being held there. Despite this, more Uyghurs are being arrested and sent to these facilities daily (Shohret Hoshur¹, 2018).Some people

have been taken to re-education camps because of their beards, keeping religious books and having religious content on their phones (Gulchehra₃, 2018).

An ethnic Kazakh man, who 87 years old released from "re-education cam" just three months before he died had exposed how he was tortured in the camp. According to information he provided to China Aid journalist, many people in re-education camps suffering mental and physical tortures, including beaten, forced to eat pig's head and internal organs. Some people have mounted special helmet on their head, make noise 21 hours each day in order to keep them away from sleep, many people are driven to be insane (Qiao Nong, 2018)

Many Uyghur activists fear that these repressive institutions may develop into something paralleling the concentration camps the Jewish people suffered in more than 80 years ago. Human Rights Watch has called on the Chinese government to immediately free the people held in the unlawful political education centers in the XUAR and shut the centers down. HRW noted that the political education centers are contrary to China's constitution and international human rights law. Article 37 of China's Constitution states that all arrests must be approved by the procuratorate, the state prosecution, or the courts, yet none of those agencies appear to be involved with the detentions (HRW₂, 2017).

7.Travel Restrictions

In 2017, the XUAR officials continued to restrict Uyghurs' ability to travel freely in violation of Chinese law and international law. Since October 2016, authorities throughout the XUAR reportedly ordered residents to turn in their passports to police with varying deadlines of up to four months. Authorities subsequently required residents to seek approval from police for international travel in order to retrieve their passports (CECC 2017, p.55).

“There were multiple reports that authorities arrested or detained lawyers, petitioners, and other rights activists for lengthy periods, only to have the charges

later dismissed for lack of evidence. Many activists were subjected to extralegal house arrest, denied travel rights, or administratively detained in different types of facilities, including “black jails.” In some cases, public security officials put pressure on schools not to allow the children of prominent political detainees to enroll. Conditions faced by those under house arrest varied but sometimes included isolation in their homes under guard by security agents. Security officials were frequently stationed inside the homes. Authorities placed many citizens under house arrest during sensitive times, such as during the visits of senior foreign government officials or preceding the 19th Party Congress, annual plenary sessions of the National People’s Congress (NPC), the anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre, and sensitive anniversaries in Tibetan areas and the XUAR.” (U.S. Department of State, 2018,pp. 11)

Officials have also restricted domestic and local travel by setting up checkpoints on the roads, implementing severe restrictions and security standards that apply only to Uyghurs and not Han Chinese citizens (Jilil Kashgary, 2017). While many factors are certainly at play, further restrictions on the Uyghurs’ ability to travel seems likely to exacerbate the feelings of frustrations held by many Uyghurs.

Uighurs in the East Turkestan (XUAR) were restricted to travel within the East Turkestan (XUAR) itself. “Domestic passports” that called for local official approval before traveling to another area were discontinued in 2016. Identification checks still exist at places when entering cities and on public roads. Same restrictions were not applied to Han Chinese in the region (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.42).

8. The "Big Data" and Mass collection of DNA

Chinese government created unprecedented surveillance system not only with the mass number of cameras, but also forced people to monitor each other. Uyghurs' every movement including human interaction, living habits and social relations have been recorded. The system was also used to predict future disloyalty of

Uyghurs, punished them for predicted future disloyalty based on their past behaviors and words that were spoken during social life (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.99). Chinese government labeled such potential disloyal people as "two faced", and heavily punished them. HalmuratGhopur, president of the Xinjiang Food and Drug Administration's Department of Inspection and Supervision in the regional capital Urumqi , was taken into custody for his disloyalty and regarded as a "two-faced official" who had failed to follow Communist Party [guidelines](#) . Local officials accounted that anyone who provided information with evidence of criminal offenses of "two-faced people" would be [rewarded](#).

Government established so called "convenience police stations" throughout the urban areas, and established more than 30,000 security offices for these police stations all throughout China. He arranged for them the latest and high-tech surveillance and anti-riot equipment (Leibold, James, and Adrian Zenz, 2016). Chinese government was [using](#) thousands of armored police and peacekeeping forces for parading on the streets of the major cities in East Turkestan (XUAR) in order to demonstrate their strong determination on long- term stability in the region. In 2015, Chinese officials said that they had installed [40,000](#) high-definition cameras throughout the region, according to Xinjiang new agency, and this figure might have been increased.

Chinese state security department, in collaboration with the information technology firms, created " mass automated voice recognition and monitoring system" which can understand Mandarin Chinese and some minority languages including Tibetan and Uyghur languages. China's big data system not only recorded voice patterns, but also fingerprints and DNA information of Uyghurs (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.20).

Chinese authorities are also building and implementing a predictive policing program, which depends on on big data analysis in the Uyghur region. According to a Human Rights Watch [report](#), Chinese authorities have developed a predictive

policing program in order to monitor, investigate and detain individuals in the Uyghur region. Monitoring is performed on family, financial and social situation, and anything linked to personal information. Authorities also organized a special team for visiting every family and gathering data about them. The inspection results will be used to determine who should be taken into custody. The platform is an effective tool against "two-faced people," and is going to be used in the Strike Hard Campaign, which may eventually result in extrajudicial detention (HRW,2018).

According to research conducted by HRW and a report by *Nature* (international weekly journal of science), security personnel has been collecting DNA samples from Uyghurs in the XUAR and from others throughout China, in many cases without consent. International observers raised concerns about the risk of officials misusing and abusing the collected biometric data to heighten security controls on the Uyghur population as officials build a database of citizens' biometric information –not limited to those with a criminal background as in other countries and lacking the kinds of legal safeguards other countries implement to manage their DNA databases (CECC 2017, p.56).

The Chinese government is also collecting voice patterns from Uyghurs in the XUAR and storing them in a biometric database. HRW reported that China has already collected DNA samples from almost 40 million people and more than one billion faces for a nationally searchable database without oversight, transparency, or privacy protections (HRW₃, 2017). The Uyghurs in the XUAR have been forced to take part in so-called “free medical exams” while the purpose and results of those examinations are concealed from patients.

DNA collection should meet the international privacy standards enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China has signed but not ratified. A DNA collection and retention mechanism must be comprehensively regulated, be narrow in scope, and be proportionate to a legitimate security goal.

9. Forced Labor and Transfer of Young Uyghur Women to Mainland China

The Chinese government's forced labor program still exists today in many of regions of the XUAR. Especially in rural areas, Uyghurs face various kinds of labor abuses in addition to the employment discrimination that prevents them from seeking non-agricultural jobs. In the rural southern areas of the XUAR, forced labor is a common practice implemented by a government program called *hashar* in the Uyghur language. The program requires four to 11 hours of unpaid daily labor on public works projects with strict penalties for those who fail to participate and is a major violation of the Uyghurs' labor rights. Not only does the *hashar* program eliminate jobs that Uyghurs should be paid for, it also prevents them from performing their own agricultural work. Forced labor programs not only violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but China's domestic laws as well (UHRP₂, 2017).

The Chinese government continues to transfer young Uyghur women to Eastern China to work in factories for low wages. This policy –promoted as an overwhelmingly positive experience for young women –has effectively removed thousands of Uyghur women from their families and placed them in substandard working conditions thousands of miles from home (UHRP, 2008). At the same time, China aids the movement of large numbers of poor Han Chinese migrants to the XUAR by providing them with economic opportunities.

The transfer policy can be seen as yet another aspect of Beijing's effort to forcibly assimilate the Uyghurs and undermine the distinct Uyghur identity and culture of the XUAR. The continuation of the policy will only further marginalize the Uyghurs and deepen the Uyghurs' mistrust in government officials, leading to even greater tension in the XUAR (Peng, 2017). Inequality and discrimination are the major sources of ethnic tension in the region.

10. Ethnic and Linguistic Assimilation Policies

Over the past 50 years, the Chinese government has supported the movement of a steady stream of Han Chinese migrants to the XUAR under a strategic campaign called "Open Up the West." The campaign began to alienate the region's ethnic population in 2010 (PreetiBhattacharji, 2012). The demographic change has exacerbated the ethnic tension because of the increased marginalization of and discrimination against Uyghurs.

Government's redevelopment policy resulted in the destruction of historical and cultural constructions throughout East Turkestan (U.S. Department of State, 2018, pp.20).

Uyghurs in the XUAR have been subject to various forced assimilation policies, including the repression of their language and restrictions on movement and religious activities. Authorities in many of the prefectures in the XUAR have issued directives completely banning the use of the Uyghur language at all education levels and threatening severe punishment for those found in violation, according to official sources (Eset Sulayman₂, 2017).

Chines authorities also launched the "relative's week" program in 2017. The program requires local Han Chinese civil servants to spend a week with Uyghur families in rural areas. Most of the civil servants are complete strangers with different cultural and religious customs. Activists and scholars suspect the primary goal of the "relative's week" program is surveillance of Uyghur families or dilution of ethnic identity (Joyce Huang, 2017).

Local government is implementing new regulations that encourage Han Chinese to marry Uyghurs, promising them ten thousand Yuan for a mixed marriage (Gulchehre₂, 2018). Uyghur residents are forced to learn Han Chinese and Chinese culture. Related news indicated that Uyghur are forced to recite the anthem in the Chinese language, and at least one Uyghur man tried to commit suicide because

he feared being punished for failing to recite the Chinese anthem (ShohretHoshur, 2018).

The Chinese government intensified its crackdown on religious activities in 2017. China invested more than \$38 million USD to monitor mosques and install surveillance-data platforms in the XUAR (Josh Chin, Clément Bürge, 2017). The communist regime has also increased efforts to convert Uyghur mosques into propaganda centers for the communist party (Kurban Niyazı, 2017). The government has also banned Islamic names and religious attire in the XUAR (Benjamin Hass, 2017).

11. Imprisonment of Writers and Students

Over the past several years, Chinese authorities detained and imprisoned many Uyghur intellectuals –among them, writers, webmasters, and students –who expressed support for the preservation of the Uyghur cultural identity, called for understanding between Han Chinese and Uyghurs, and criticized the government’s harsh policies in the East Turkestan (XUAR).

Most prominent among those intellectuals, Ilham Tohti, a well-regarded ethnic Uyghur economist and peaceful critic of the Chinese government’s policies, was sentenced to life in prison by the Xinjiang People’s High Court for allegedly engaging in separatism after a grossly unfair trial. Tohti spoke passionately of an independent legal system that could ease abuses in the region. Perhaps more importantly, he helped those watching the XUAR from inside and outside China understand developments there and urged peaceful debate, not violence, among students, scholars, and others (Sophie Richardson, 2016).

Authorities also arrested some of Tohti’s students –Perhat Halmurat, Sohret Tursun, and Abdukeyum Ablimit (MihrayAbdilim, 2014). Other Uyghur students and intellectuals, including MutellipImin, AtikemRozi, and Ekber Imin were arrested on charges of separatism and inciting ethnic hatred for alleged work on

the Uyghur language website "Uyghur online ("Edward Wong, 2014). RFA's Uyghur Service confirmed that at least five Uyghur web writers and administrators –Tursunjan Memet, Omerjan Hesen, Ababekri Muhtar, AkbarjanEset, and an online writer whose name could not be confirmed –were also detained (Eset Sulayman). Prominent Uyghur musician Abdurehim Heyt was arrested in 2017 amid the “ideological purge” without an official explanation by local authorities (Kurban Niyaz₂, 2017).

Another famous case that took place recently was that of a prominent Uyghur Muslim scholar Muhammed Salih Hajim, who died at age 82 in jail at the hands of the Chinese government, taken into prison for 40 odd days for no crime other than his ethnicity and his belief. The Chinese government is unlikely to give his body back to his family for a proper Islamic burial because the Chinese government worries that it would incite further protest if the family saw that the sheik had died under torture. This is just one of the Uyghur people who has died in the Chinese Nazi-style re-education camp in East Turkestan.

12. Health Care and Nuclear Testing

Uyghurs barely have access to basic health care in the XUAR. There are no operating rooms, gynecology equipment or disinfectants in the majority of the hospitals in the region. At best, some antibiotics or TB medication may be available. Almost all doctors working in hospitals in the XUAR are Chinese, do not speak Uyghur, and therefore cannot communicate with Uyghur patients who may have difficulty explaining their health issues in Chinese. In recent years, cases of cholera, leprosy, hepatitis, and HIV have substantially increased in the region.

Overall ecological and human health trends in the East Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) are terrible. The growing negative impacts of air and water pollution, desertification, and overall ecological damage have turned East Turkestan (XUAR) into one of the unhealthiest regions in China.

Deforestation and coal-fired power plants which were caused by Han migrants contribute to the further deterioration of air quality. According to a recent report by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, the Eighth Inspection Group indicated that environmental degradation in the region is getting serious, and pointed out that pollution control and protecting measurements are never been enough (MEP, 2018).

East Turkestan is high tuberculosis and HIV prevalence area in China. Studies showed that prevalence of tuberculosis co-infection among the HIV positive patients is higher than other parts of China, with the economic hardship and lack of preventing measures and economic hardship being the major reasons for the low cure rate of tuberculosis and reduced survival in HIV patients (Maimaiti, Rena, et al, 2017)

China's nuclear testing in the XUAR over the past three decades continues to impact the environment – polluting drinking water and food supplies and undermining the health of livestock and residents. According to various sources in the XUAR, residents in and near nuclear testing sites continue to give birth to children with horrible deformities. However, the districts bordering the nuclear testing sites have yet to receive adequate medical attention. No medical investigations have been carried out on China's nuclear testing in the XUAR until recently (Dennis Barbion, 2012).

China detonated its first nuclear bomb, codenamed “596,” in October 1964 in the XUAR. Between 1964-1996, China detonated 46 nuclear bombs in the Lop Nor area of the XUAR and completed another 22 underground tests –including thermonuclear blasts, neutron bombs, and an atomic bomb. The cities of Urumchi, Turpan, Qumul, and Korla lie within 320 kilometers of the nuclear testing site. Nearly 190,000 people may have died and at least another 1.5 million may have been affected by the radioactive material during the 32 years of nuclear testing at Lop Nor. Researchers estimate that China's nuclear testing in the XUAR released

six million times more plutonium in the Uyghur region than the plutonium released during the Chernobyl incident, which affected approximately one million people worldwide (The Tibet Post, 2012; Das, S, 2009).

The Uyghur Research Institute urges human rights organizations, governments, and international organizations to urge the Chinese government to:

- Take all necessary steps to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights if the Chinese government wishes to be taken seriously by the international community.
- Engage with and respond substantively to UN Special Procedures, namely the Special Rapporteurs for Arbitrary Detention, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Freedom of Religion or Belief, and Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism. China must allow for transparent and constructive visits and monitoring by these representatives who have the ability to respond to the developing situation there.
- Provide public access to reports on high-risk detainee cases. The international community must be able to gain adequate information regarding detainees, particularly those who have been illegally returned from neighboring states. China must also unconditionally release Ilham Tohti, who has been accused on baseless charges of separatism.
- Recognize the importance of human rights protections within the context of counterterrorism campaigns and abide by international standards.
- Immediately and substantially amend China's National Anti-Terror Law and regional implementation measures for East Turkestan in accordance with international standards.
- Immediately take steps to ensure Uyghurs are able to freely practice their faith. China must ensure that current policies that explicitly and implicitly link Islam to extremism and violence are reviewed and modified in accordance with international law.

- Lift passport restrictions for those recently affected in East Turkestan. Passports and other travel documents must be returned to those wishing to legally travel within the region or out of the country.
- Stop transferring Uyghur women to Eastern China and stop supporting Han Chinese migration to East Turkestan if they wish to realize equality and stability in the region.
- Take necessary measures to prevent epidemic diseases caused by nuclear testing and provide free treatment for people affected by radiation.

Uyghur Research Institute also calls on states within the international community to:

- Recognize the importance of human rights protections across China and integrate human rights into economic and political dialogue in bilateral relationships with the Chinese government.
- Demand China participates wholeheartedly in human rights dialogue and engage with high-level representatives to increase the legitimacy of such talks. Stipulate concrete progress on human rights.

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