

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** Addressing the Genocide in Xinjiang

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## Introduction

China has been leading a genocide against Uyghurs in Xinjiang by intensifying state surveillance, creating a massive intelligence network, and creating “political reeducation centers”. Uyghurs have been sent to detention camps by taking part in “religious extremism” or “politically incorrect” views, where they are faced with forced matching, overcrowding, low quality food, torture, medical neglect, waterboarding, sleep deprivation and lack of adequate clothing. Regional government authorities have ordered officials in XUAR to detain a certain percentage or number of the local population, leading to overcrowding of orphanages for children and detention camps.

China’s forms of detention violate multiple human rights issues: Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of the definition of “Crimes Against Humanity”. Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) and Equal Rights Initiative (ERI) estimate that as of June 2018, authorities may have forced around 2.2 million XUAR residents to attend the “education sessions” in detention camps. Other sources by international rights groups, scholars, and media organizations estimate that around 800,000 to 1.1 million people are detained. The lack of information and secrecy has gathered little international attention to China’s actions.

China has been building new security facilities at increasing speed. GMV, a multinational aerospace company, gathered media reports and academic research to find a list of 101 facilities located across Xinjiang. After measuring the creation of new sites and expansion of existing sites, GMV identified and compared common features including watchtowers and security fencing - both of which monitor people’s movement. Seeing China’s growing measures and movement against the minority Uyghur population, the cultural genocide member states must act upon the conflict.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Uyghurs

Turkish - speaking ethnic group identified as Sunni Muslims. As of 2018, 10 million Uyghurs live in China, with most living in the Northwest region.

## **Xinjiang**

Autonomous region and largest political unit of China, located in the Northwest. Bordering Xinjiang are Chinese provinces Qinghai and Gansu, the Tibet Autonomous Region, Afghanistan, disputed territory of Kashmir, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia.

## **Crimes Against Humanity**

Widespread or systematic offenses of arbitrary imprisonment and persecution directed against any civilian population. Article 7 of the Rome Statute provides a list of 11 acts that may constitute “crimes against humanity”.

## **Cultural Genocide**

The elimination of a group’s identity through measures such as forcibly separating children from their families, restricting the use of a national language, banning cultural activities, destroying school, religious institutions, or memory sites.

## **Background Information**

### **History of Conflict**

#### ***Recent History***

The Uyghurs have had previous conflict from high-profile terror attacks. The key event which sparked violence was the “7.5 incident” in 2009, which led to inter-ethnic violence in Urumqi. The incident was stabilized only after 14,000 forces from the People’s Armed Police (PAP) and Special Police Units (SPU) from 31 provinces arrived in Xinjiang. Mass murder of Uyghurs in China followed, and terrorism associated with Muslims led to the government’s repressive tendencies. The XUAR government responded by increasing investment in personnel across the public security agencies, and initiating recruitment of SPU officers. Up to 2,655 positions were advertised in December of 2009, and SPU officers were heavily equipped with sub-machine guns, bulletproof vests, intense mental and physical training.

In 2013, an Uyghur suicide - driver crashed into pedestrians in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. A 2014 incident where a knife-wielding Uyghur gang massacred 31 travellers at Kunming train station was compared to the September 11 attacks on the US. Further unrest and tension

led to 100 deaths in Yarkand, and Uyghurs have been blamed for a bombing at a popular Chinese shrine which killed 20 citizens.

### ***China's Responses to Potential Conflict***

Total security-related recruitment doubled from 6,876 positions in 2006-2008 to 15,841 positions in 2009-20011, and reached 31,687 in 2016, under newly appointed Chen Quanguo. The increasing trend has continued, with Germany-based scholar Adrian Zenz noting that spending on security measures went up 93% in 2017 compared to 2016. XUAR has announced a nation-wide counter-terrorism campaign, with Zhang Chunxian calling for a “people’s war on terror”. The Chinese government has responded by arguing that harsh measures are necessary to prevent violence associated with Uyghur separatism. By utilizing an arbitrary definition, China has excused the conflict as incidental torture and counterterrorism efforts instead of mass murder. Furthermore, China’s system of a cultural genocide over a physical genocide may be due to the limited international attention span and fewer reputational costs. This allows China to easily conceal the atrocities being committed, and have President Xi promote his “Belt and Road Initiative” trade policy, which depends on the Xinjiang’s route.

## **Detention Camps**

### ***Victims of Detention Camps***

Detention camps have been named “political reeducation” centers and victims have been Uyghurs, or members related to them. The Chinese government in one weekend of July 2015 detained nearly every single human rights lawyer, and has previously detained China’s Nobel peace prize laureate until he died in custody on July of 2017. Key figures including renowned Uyghur Islamic scholars Muhammad Salih Hajim and Abdulnehed Mehsum died in detention camps. However, the government has also targeted teenagers (Yqub Jan Narman), people who have expressed sympathy to those detained (Pezilet Bekri), and officials who have failed to send Uyghurs to the centers. The XUAR authorities have also detained foreign citizens including U.S. based rights advocate Rebiya Kadeer and Kazakh citizen Kairat Samarkan.

### ***Conditions of Detention Camps***

Victims are sentenced to prison terms, subjected to medical maltreatment and neglect, placed psychological pressure, forced to study political subjects, sing Communist songs, and participate in military training. RFA reported that as of June 2018, over two dozen Uyghurs passed away in Hotan, Qaraqosh county, due to high blood pressure. For example, Omir Bekali was shackled to a bed and not provided medication for high blood pressure. Family members of the victims have been refused basic information on the location and health concerns of detained

members. An October 2017 report by the RFA stated that women and children from the Qaraqash (Moyu) county of the Hotan prefecture have been sent by authorities to the Aksu prefecture. As men are detained, women and children are forced labor in agriculture and other forms - which is a violation of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labor. If the people do not comply, authorities punish them by placing them in handcuffs and ankle cuffs, waterboarding, and utilizing the "tiger chair". Additionally, Uyghurs have been forced to eat pork and drink alcohol despite their Muslim faith.

## China's Intensified Security Measures

China's central and regional government has placed intense security measures throughout XUAR, with security personnel, surveillance technology and mass detentions. Recent administrators have led greater repressive security measures, including XUAR party Secretary Chen Quanguo, who was selected as Communist Party Central Committee Political Bureau (Politburo) member on October 2017. Shohrat Zakir, the XUAR government chairperson stated in January 2018 that the XUAR believed an extended security crackdown was necessary to fight against "continued terrorist activity" and "an intense struggle against separatists". There is much indication that the focus is on repressing Uyghurs: involuntary DNA collection and other biometric information, widespread and frequent checks on technological devices, checkpoints and facial recognition cameras, and monitoring cameras in and around mosques and homes. Moreover, the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) gathers and analyzes data from closed-circuit cameras, computers, smartphones, license plates, and identification cards to find banking and travel records, then identify people to investigate or place in detentions. The Fang Hui Ju program allows officials to conduct mandated visits to rural ethnic minority families. Analysis by the Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), an international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), in July 2018 found that 21% of all criminal arrests took place in XUAR, and the overall amount increased by 731% in 2017 compared to 2016, in proportion to policies implemented by Chen Quanguo.

The XUAR also require a registration form for individuals working in Urumqi who do not have a household registration permit (hukou). The form provides information on personal details, asking whether they have visited 26 countries linked to terrorism. Certain sections include officials to rank the individuals on a 6 point scale, and classify them "safe", "average", or "unsafe". A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report has written that 1 Urumqi resident even had to include how many times he prayed a day, and which mosque he usually went to.

## Restrictions on Freedom

### *Religious Freedom*

The Chinese government has stated that there must be measures to combat people who "pretend to support national unity but secretly spread separatism and extremism". The XUAR has

repeatedly targeted Uyghurs when restricting religious freedom, especially by confiscating and prohibiting studies on the Quran, the central text of Islam. In early 2018 local officials asked residents to sign pledges stating they and their family would not study the Quran or learn Arabic. China has continued restricting Uyghur's freedom when officials in XUAR took away all Qurans, prayer mats, or any item with Islamic significance. China has obstructed Uyghur's burial and religious practices, and has set up "burial management centers" instead. Fasting during the Ramadan period or abstaining from alcohol has been deemed "extremist" behavior, completely disrupting Uyghurs' religious practices and beliefs. Authorities in the Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture forced restaurants to stay open and students to eat at school, as students were required to sign agreements stating they would not fast.

### ***Internet Freedom of Expression***

Uyghurs have been restricted basic rights of freedom through mobile phone and internet use. XUAR officials continue to order residents to install an app called "Web-Cleansing Guard" (jingwang weishi) on their cell phones. Jingwang enables the Chinese government to surveil citizens' online activities, monitoring "terrorist" and "illegal religious" content, as mentioned by the previous section. Jingwang reportedly served as a surveillance and security network "police" to monitor residents, as it has the capacity to send all file names to a government server. Through the collected information, members of predominantly Muslim ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang have been detained for sharing or storing "extremist" content on mobile devices. Security personnel manning checkpoints throughout XUAR reportedly detained Kazakhs, Uyghurs, and other ethnic minority individuals and held them custody for several weeks if they had an iPhone. Systems directed against counter "extremism" and terrorism has often threatened to criminalize the Uyghurs' religious faith. XUAR authorities have stated that the minorities' actions are violations of the XUAR People's Congress issued in December 2016, and residents who spread "false" or "harmful" information on the internet must be punished.

### ***Freedom of Press***

Foreign Journalists have also been prohibited from increased official restrictions from XUAR in 2017. A January 2018 report by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC) stated that 73% of journalists who traveled to XUAR in 2017 said officials and security personnel warned them their work would be prohibited and restricted. In August 2017 a Globe and Mail correspondent was detained for 3 hours after trying to interview residents of Yarkand, and previously, an anonymous American journalist was detained for 11 hours.

### ***Freedom of Movement***

In previous years, the XUAR restricted Uyghurs and Kazakhs' ability to travel freely, which violated Chinese laws and international legal standards. In addition, since October 2016, residents were ordered to turn in their passports to the police, with deadlines up to four months. By October 2017, Uyghurs in areas of China outside XUAR were required to go through a passport check.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### Radio Free Asia (RFA)

The RFA is a broadcasting news source which was specifically created to report news and information from Asian countries whose governments prohibit free press. The RFA is financed by the United States Agency for Global Media, an independent agency; however, a legislative firewall stops U.S. interference in order to allow uncensored and reliable journalism.

### UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

An August committee review of China's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination described Xinjiang as a "massive internment camp shrouded in secrecy", as emphasized by member Gay McDougall, who noted China's actions are "something resembling a massive internment camp ... a sort of no-rights zone".

### UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

A council created by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 2001 by resolution S/RES/1366, formed to refer information and analyses on cases involving violation of international laws or conflicts and disputes from ethnic, religious, and territorial concerns.

### Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Widely known as the Genocide Convention, the Convention established the policy that states have a duty in preventing genocide and enacting legislation to criminalize and punish individuals responsible for the act. The prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm of international law (*ius cogens*), therefore no derogation is allowed.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 11th, 1946	96th UN resolution declares genocide an international law crime
December 9th, 1948	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA)

## Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- The Crime of Genocide, 11 December 1946 (**A/RES/96-I**)

## Possible Solutions

**Sanctions may be able to impact China's economy when other countries respond to their disagreement in China's actions.** Sanctions would make China more susceptible to work with countries' demands. Furthermore, the amount of sanctions placed could vary based on the improving or destabilizing relationship with Uyghurs. However, the risk of China lashing out and allowing greater repression still remains, and sanctions must be approved by all the Permanent Five (P5) members, which include China.

**A better standpoint may be to have countries come together and evoke the R2P.** Countries in the UNSC should work together to fulfill their duty in stopping the cultural genocide from worsening. After developing the R2P as pretext, actions must check the Uyghurs' safety. For example, forming temporary refuges around Xinjiang under peacekeepers' protection may be one idea. Yet, this solution seems unlikely due to China's unwillingness in opening up its borders and allowing foreign orders.

**To check China's transparency in the Xinjiang conflict, the UN could conduct investigations** of the detention camps and information obtained from apps including the JingWang. After conducting investigations, representatives should write a report on any human rights violations and hold meetings or conferences to discuss what should be done. The major flaws of this solution is the probability and the lack of direct solutions to help the Uyghurs. When planning resolutions and solution ideas, delegates must understand China's openness and aspects of indirect and direct solutions for the Uyghurs.

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