

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EAST TURKISTAN CRISIS AND THE UYGHURS

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EAST TURKISTAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

Established in 2004, the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE) is the democratically elected body representing East Turkistan and its people. The ETGE promotes the interests and rights of the people of East Turkistan including Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and others through advocacy and diplomacy.

This report was written jointly by the East Turkistan Government in Exile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Communications and Information.

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East Turkistan and the Uyghur people prior to invasion by the Manchu Empire in 1876

The Uyghur people through history played a crucial role in the cultural exchanges between East and West. The Uyghurs grew sufficiently strong over time so as to establish an empire, the Uyghur Khanate, which lasted from 744-840AD. The Uyghurs were an important presence in the other historical empires occupying the region, including in the Koglyuk Khanate (552-744), the Kara-Khanid Khanate (840-1212), Gansu Uyghur Kingdom (848-1036), Idikut State (856-1335) and the Mongol Empire (1206-1368). In particular, Uyghurs were central to the administration of the Mongol Empire, with Genghis Khan adopting their script.¹ In AD 954 Islam started to replace the former Uyghur religions of Buddhism, Manicheism, and Tengrism.² Kashgar, the capital of the Kara-Khanid Khanate, became a major centre of learning in Islam, with prominent Uyghur scholars such as Yusuf Has Hajip and Mahmud Kashgari authoring influential works.³

Both during this period and afterwards Uyghurs built an established presence in and around East Turkistan. As they did so, Uyghurs developed a unique culture and civilization, which retained a prestige in parts of the Islamic world, as part of which the Uyghur script was revived in Samarkand, the Timurid centre, in the fifteenth century.⁴ The name ‘Turkistan’ was first mentioned in the 5th century. The term ‘the country of the Uyghurs of Turkistan’ was used by scholars in the middle of the 17th century and at the start of the 19th century respectively.⁵ The expression ‘Uyghur leaders’ was used by a Qing gazetteer in the late 18th century.⁶ These demonstrate that such geographic conceptions of Uyghur lands continued throughout this period.

Chinese invasion and subsequent struggles for autonomy: 1884-1949

In 1884 the Manchu Empire formally invaded and annexed East Turkistan after eight years of war. The region was renamed “Xinjiang” (meaning “New Territory” or “New Frontier”) on November 18, 1884.⁷ Following the 1911 Han Chinese revolution East Turkistan was abandoned by the Manchu government as a Chinese colony.⁸ On November 12, 1933 the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other Turkic peoples rose up against Chinese colonisation and established the East Turkistan Republic.⁹ This republic was short-lived, with its destruction by Chinese troops on April 16, 1934.¹⁰ Between 1934-1943, East Turkistan was ruled by a Chinese warlord, Sheng Shicai, who implemented repressive policies similar to those in force today, and presided over purges which killed over 100,000 Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples.¹¹

On November 12, 1944, Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Tatars again declared independence, forming the East Turkistan Republic (1944-1949).¹² Initially supported by the Soviet Union, the East Turkistan Republic was later abandoned as part of its concessions in exchange for Outer Mongolia’s independence in 1946.¹³ After a mysterious plane crash on 27 August 1949 which claimed the lives of the leaders of the East Turkistan Republic, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army invaded East Turkistan.¹⁴ This invasion, starting on 1 October 1949 against a nation which had lost its strategic leadership, succeeded by 22 December 1949.¹⁵

Uyghurs and the modern Chinese state: 1949-2009

These years initially saw the occupation of East Turkistan cemented by crackdowns on resistance, policies of forced Han Chinese immigration to the region, as well as repeated nuclear tests at the Lop Nur site. These years were characterised by lethal force and arbitrary arrests used both during and

following Uyghur protests against their living situation. Such arrests frequently led to executions subsequent to mass trials. This intensified from 1990 to 2009, thus setting the stage for the present crimes committed by China against the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other Turkic peoples.

Introduction

Two important factors must be understood as fundamental motivation for the Chinese Communist Party's actions during these years.

Firstly, East Turkistan's resources of natural gas and oil make up an estimated one-third of the total in China.¹⁶ East Turkistan additionally holds large resources of gold, uranium and other metals, while the climate is attractive for cotton cultivation. Therefore the region is deemed vital to China's economic security.¹⁷ The Chinese Communist Party were well aware of this in 1949: in a memorandum of a conversation between Stalin and a CCP delegation which has since been declassified, Stalin noted the deposits of oil and cotton in Xinjiang and China's need for them.¹⁸ East Turkistan is now a crucial link in China's Belt and Road (formerly One Belt, One Road) foreign policy initiative. This initiative is intended to tie the Middle East and Europe to China through infrastructure, investment and trade.¹⁹ Accordingly, the present Chinese government have declared "preventing the creation of East Turkistan" as one of their key national defence priorities.²⁰

Secondly, in 1949 the number of Han Chinese in East Turkistan was significantly lower than those of other cultural identities. In 1944, the Uyghurs constituted three-quarters of the population of East Turkistan, onto which percentage the population of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Turkic peoples must then be added which makes the Turkic population at over 90%.²¹ In 1949 Stalin put the proportion of Han Chinese at 5%, which he encouraged the Chinese Communist Party to raise to 30% through immigration in order to more effectively annex the land.²²

Initial crackdowns on resistance

Resistance to Chinese occupation appears to have been brutally suppressed. According to an Urumqi Radio report on January 1, 1952, a total of 120,000 'enemies of China' had been eliminated in East Turkistan.²³ Another report from the same radio station in March 1954 said that 30,000 local counter revolutionary insurgents were eliminated in East Turkistan, making a total of 150,000 killed.²⁴ In 1962, more than 60,000 Uyghurs and Kazakhs fled from China into the Soviet Union because of Chinese Communist Party policies and Soviet advertisements of better living conditions on their side of the border.²⁵ The border remained open for five days, after which it was forcibly closed by the Beijing government.²⁶ This laid the scene for demonstrations in Ghulja City in 1962, during which Chinese soldiers fired on the protestors with live rounds.²⁷ According to eyewitness survivors, several hundred Uyghurs and Kazakhs were killed.²⁸

State-directed Han immigration

The Chinese Communist Party from 1950 directed Han immigration into East Turkistan.²⁹ In each of 1959 and 1960 the number of Han migrants arriving into Xinjiang was over 800,000 on account of both party-mandated population flows and, in particular, the famine caused by the 'Great Leap Forward'.³⁰ By 1975, the Han population had reached nearly 5 million.³¹ This continues today: between

2015 and 2018 up to 2 million residents were added to the Han majority areas in East Turkistan, while population growth rates in these regions were almost 8 times higher than the other areas.³²

Nuclear testing and its harmful effects

From 1964 to 1996 China conducted 46 deliberate nuclear tests in East Turkistan at the Lop Nur site.³³ On March 18, 2009, it was revealed by Professor Takada at a nuclear forum that these tests likely caused the deaths of between 190,000 and 750,000 people, mostly Uyghurs.³⁴ He provided a “conservative minimum” estimate that around 1.2 million received doses high enough to induce leukaemia, solid cancers and foetal damage.³⁵ Medical records from Xinjiang showed that cancer rates were 30-35% higher there than the national average.³⁶

Suppression of Uyghur and Turkic cultural identity, followed by lethal force, arbitrary arrests and executions as a strategy to put down protests and silence dissension

It is important to set out the events of the 1990s in detail, because they provide crucial context to the genocide that has since taken place. In 1990 in Barin, an Uyghur-majority town, around 200 men marched to the local government office in protest against mandatory abortions imposed on Uyghur women and forced labour. Clashes with Chinese armed police followed. These continued over the next few days until the Chinese army deployed significant numbers to put down the rebellion. This became known as the Barin uprising. There were several dozen Uyghur fatalities.³⁷ According to a Chinese official’s journal which was subsequently published online, more than 3000 Uyghur civilians were arrested and over 200 were executed following the Barin uprising.³⁸

These events became the catalyst for hard-liners within the Chinese government to crack down much more harshly on Uyghur and Turkic religious freedom and culture.³⁹ An official policy was created to find and destroy all private religious schools.⁴⁰ Several thousand imams were questioned, resulting in the dismissal of many and “training” of the remainder.⁴¹ Mosques under construction were closed, and repair work was halted on existing mosques.⁴² In addition, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (‘XUAR’) People’s Congress adopted extensive rules purportedly regulating protest. These needed prior authorisation for all marches or demonstrations, the application for which required their purpose, the number of participants and any slogans, among other matters.⁴³ No protest would be allowed which would “threaten the unification of the state, harm *minzu* solidarity, or compromise the interests of state, society or collective”.⁴⁴ These cannot reasonably be described as policies aimed in good faith at regulating protest within an open society. Rather, these rules must be seen as intended to shut lawful protest down, and render any future protest unlawful.

In 1993, the XUAR People’s Congress passed Implementing Measures for the Law on the Protection of Minors, which forbids parents and guardians to allow minors to engage in religious activity.⁴⁵ No comparable rule applies to the remainder of China.⁴⁶ In 1994 a group of Uyghurs in Ghulja decided to revive a traditional social organisation, called the meshrep.⁴⁷ Their function was to share music and dance, to learn more about Islam and to hold each other to account.⁴⁸ These multiplied quickly, with 400 meshreps in the region, with memberships of several dozen.⁴⁹ These were initially aimed at reducing alcohol, cigarette and drug use, and succeeded in doing so, but they additionally gave Uyghurs a sense of collective capacity to help themselves.⁵⁰ However, after the government detained one of the founders, and elected leader, of the movement for questioning, and following a protest demonstration by young Uyghurs the next day, it banned all meshreps.⁵¹

After the elected leader of the meshreps organised a youth football league (military officials occupied the football field and removed goalposts from all the local schools to prevent it from happening), he was again taken in for questioning.⁵² The next morning, hundreds marched peacefully through the streets. After they dispersed, by midday snipers were seen standing conspicuously on rooftops and the armed police put barbed wire barriers up on the main intersections.⁵³ Following these events and a series of raids on mosques during Ramadan during which dozens were arrested, the Ghulja demonstration began on the morning of 5 February 1997.⁵⁴ At least 500 men marched to the centre of town. They were met this time by police in riot gear with dogs, who, after some time, fired live bullets into the crowd.⁵⁵ Up to 500 arrests were made of both demonstrators and bystanders.⁵⁶ A group of 300-400 were hosed down with icy water and were kept for two hours in the freezing cold.⁵⁷ As a result, many required amputations of their feet and hands owing to frostbite.

Over the course of the next two weeks, the authorities conducted sweeping searches of the nearby towns and villages for the organisers of these demonstrations and conducted arbitrary arrests.⁵⁸ The estimate of the number arrested is from 3,000 to over 6,000, with credible evidence that many have been held for weeks or months without charge and tortured.⁵⁹ There are several credible allegations of extrajudicial executions during these searches.⁶⁰ Amnesty International report that torture methods used included attack dogs;⁶¹ unidentified injections, insertion of pepper or chili powder in the mouth, nose or genital organs; and the insertion of horse hair or wires into the penis.⁶² The authorities went on to conduct mass trials and executions on vague charges such as ‘separatism’ and ‘subversive activities’.⁶³ Amnesty International have published a list of over 250 people imprisoned, sentenced to death and/or executed in the region between 1997 and 1999.⁶⁴

A turning point in the treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples by the Chinese government occurred in July 2009, during events remembered as the Urumqi Massacre. The trigger was an incident in Shaoguan, Southern China on 25 June 2009. Han Chinese factory workers, responding to a fabricated rumour that a number of Uyghur men had raped two Han women, grabbed iron bars and long knives and attacked a dormitory where Uyghur workers lived.⁶⁵ There is credible evidence that several Uyghurs were killed and hundreds injured.⁶⁶ The lack of any communicated state response led to justified anger, amidst a general sense of injustice arising from Chinese state repression, persecution and discrimination.⁶⁷

Protests in Urumqi began peacefully on the afternoon of 5 July 2009 as demonstrators called for a full investigation into the incident.⁶⁸ They were met with a roadblock of armed police and riot police, who used batons and tear gas initially, but subsequently fired live rounds at protestors.⁶⁹ Sources inside East Turkistan suggest that over 400 Uyghurs died on July 5 in Urumqi.⁷⁰ Thousands were arbitrarily arrested on the day, and in the subsequent days these increased as wide-scale police sweeps heightened. The Financial Times estimated that some 4,000 arrests had already taken place by mid-July 2009 and that Urumqi prisons were so full that newly arrested people were being held in People’s Liberation Army warehouses.⁷¹ Since then, government violence against the Uyghur people has continuously worsened.

“People’s War” against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples: 2009-present day

Since 2009, the Chinese state has launched an offensive on several fronts aimed at destroying the Uyghurs. In themselves many of the strategies satisfy the definition of genocide. The totality represents repression and persecution of the most widespread, pervasive and intrusive kind. This document

highlights several categories of state control which the Chinese have inflicted on the Uyghur and Turkic peoples. These are as follows: (1) mass internment camps; (2) forced birth control and sterilisation; (3) forcible transfer of children from their families to Chinese state orphanages and boarding schools; (4) measures aimed at eliminating the use of the Uyghur and other Turkic languages in schools (5) enhanced surveillance of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples significantly beyond that experienced by Han Chinese; (6) massacres; (7) repressive measures against Islam; and (8) organ harvesting.

These are all interrelated: the monitoring of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples through their mobile phones has enabled the Chinese state to track and select people for internment camps.⁷² Likewise, the measures against Islam are backed by internment. Reasons for suspicion or detention, found in the ‘Karakax list’, a Chinese government document leaked in February 2020 showing data on numerous Uyghurs, including their reasons for detention,⁷³ include “had a beard” and “prayed regularly”.⁷⁴

Mass internment camps

The mass internment camps were created partly as a result of a series of private speeches given by Xi Jinping to officials after a visit to East Turkistan in April 2014.⁷⁵ Xi Jinping urged that the “organs of dictatorship” be used in an all-out “struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism”, showing “absolutely no mercy”.⁷⁶ The internment camps quickly expanded when the hardliner Chen Quanguo became the provincial leader in 2016, who encouraged officials to “round up everyone who should be rounded up”.⁷⁷ Estimates of numbers who have been interned at these camps ranges from 1 million to 3 million.⁷⁸ These have been aptly described by foreign state officials and in the press as ‘concentration camps’.⁷⁹ These numbers demonstrate the mass nature of the detentions affecting a large proportion of Uyghur and Turkic society. In August 2018 local officials estimated that one in six Uyghurs were (not ‘had been’) interred at that time.⁸⁰ In Hotan, officials were given the target of sending 40% of the population to the internment camps.⁸¹

There is credible evidence that a large number of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Turkic people have died or been killed at these camps. Annex 1 of this document contains a list of reports detailing many victims who have died in these camps and in police custody.⁸² The true number of deaths must be vastly greater given that a minuscule proportion of the deaths will have been individually published by international news outlets. These camps have not been set up and operated for the ‘re-education’ or ‘vocational training’ of those in East Turkistan.⁸³ The majority of survivors of the camps do not have the freedom of speech to provide information about their experiences; nonetheless, a significant number of survivors of the camps have reported killing, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.⁸⁴

Survivors of the camps, and their guards, have provided detail about the forms of torture alleged to have been used, including: the use of unidentified injections which cause the victims to become mentally unbalanced or lose the ability to speak coherently; the use of electric batons and wires; inserting sticks or needles under the fingernails or pulling out the fingernails; intentionally using a tool to peel off detainees’ skin;⁸⁵ using handcuffs, shackles, or ropes to tie prisoners in ways which cause intense pain; starvation; unsanitary conditions, including in one instance 68 women in a single cell;⁸⁶ exposing prisoners to extreme heat or cold, including locking one detainee in a small metal cage and pouring freezing water on him;⁸⁷ intense sleep deprivation;⁸⁸ stabbing until the detainee was bleeding out of her mouth and nose, and had lost one of her teeth – at which point salt-water was poured on her;⁸⁹ and severely beating detainees with fists, belts or a variety of instruments (including in one case three times a

week until a detainee's skin peeled off), many victims of which have developed permanent leg and back pain or lost hearing.⁹⁰

Such alleged treatment is both physical and psychological, striking directly at an individual's sociocultural identity. This includes forcing Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim peoples to eat pork and drink alcohol.⁹¹ They are additionally made to repeatedly deny and repudiate their own culture, declare themselves Chinese and declare allegiance to Xi Jinping.⁹² The fact that an internee does not know how long they will be in the camp constitutes a further element of psychological torture.⁹³ Many have reported mild and severe mental illnesses resulting from such physical and psychological torture, including personality disorder, anxiety, post traumatic depression, and seizures. Several people have described their constant crying, appetite loss, and depression, sleep disturbance and frequent nightmares owing to this threat and mental pain.

Furthermore, there is credible evidence that 500,000 Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims have been transferred from the internment camps to secret prisons in inland Chinese provinces.⁹⁴ The torture in these prisons is alleged to include electric gloves and 'hedgehog vests' which give powerful electric shocks, the shocks from the 'hedgehog vests' being powerful enough to kill.⁹⁵ One anonymous guard stated that they routinely require detainees to remain motionless, even when they develop sores on their buttocks.⁹⁶ Because of the extreme secrecy of this, no-one knows how many have been killed in such prisons.⁹⁷

Forced birth control and sterilization

On 29 June 2020, Dr Adrian Zenz and the Jamestown Foundation published a report entitled 'Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP's Campaign to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang'.⁹⁸ This has been widely publicised and relied upon by governments⁹⁹ and the media,¹⁰⁰ which consider the report a source of the highest credibility. In 2017, following a reform to family planning policy, family planning documents started requiring officials to 'severely attack behaviours that violate family planning'.¹⁰¹ Since then, China has used what amounts to mandatory birth control of Uyghur women en masse in order to suppress Uyghur birth rates.¹⁰² This has had the effect desired by the Chinese state: population growth rates in the largest Uyghur prefectures fell by 84% between 2015 and 2018, and further declined in 2019.¹⁰³ By 2019 the Chinese government had planned to subject at least 80% of women of childbearing age to intrusive birth control methods (IUDs or sterilisations) in the southern four minority prefectures.¹⁰⁴ Zenz suggests that the actual proportion who underwent such birth control was 'much higher' than this.¹⁰⁵

Women are given money if they "voluntarily" accept sterilisation after their second child,¹⁰⁶ but they are threatened with detention in the internment camps if they refuse to be subject to birth control.¹⁰⁷ This is not an empty threat: on the 'Karakax list',¹⁰⁸ the most frequent reason for detention is 'birth control violations'.¹⁰⁹ In detention, women are directly forced to undergo birth control measures, including being required to drink white liquid and receive injections, resulting in the cessation of periods.¹¹⁰ When the Chinese government finds out that a Uyghur mother has 'illegal' children, the children are often taken away, as happened to Qelbinur Tulsun, five of whose six children were taken after she fled to Turkey to safely deliver her sixth child.¹¹¹

Forced family separation of children

According to a planning document on the Chinese government website, almost 500,000 Uyghur children have been taken from their families and placed into state-run boarding schools.¹¹² The planning document directly states that the boarding schools are designed to assimilate the children at an early age, away from their families' influence.¹¹³ Quoting from the planning document, it aims to "break the impact of the religious atmosphere on children at home": in other words, to prevent the children from learning Uyghur tradition, culture and beliefs, thereby erasing Uyghurs in the next generation. The planning document describes religion as a pernicious influence (without specifying Islam by name, but it is clear what is meant).¹¹⁴ It states that removing children from their homes would "reduce the shock of going back and forth between learning science in the classroom and listening to scripture at home."¹¹⁵ The children are expected to eat pork, wear Han clothes and conform to Han culture.¹¹⁶ There are credible reports that Uyghur children in orphanage camps attempt suicide by drinking detergent and often ask their Chinese teachers questions such as "is this jail?"¹¹⁷

Numerous Uyghurs who provided testimony and interviews to the Uyghur Research Institute and elsewhere had their children forcibly removed from their families in this manner.¹¹⁸

Measures aimed at eliminating the use of the Uyghur language in schools

The Chinese government has steadily ramped up its measures aimed at eliminating the use of the Uyghur, Kazakh, and other Turkic languages in schools. For example, minority students tested in Chinese receive higher points than those tested in their own language and have greater choice in the university they attend.¹¹⁹ From 38% in 2016, now most elementary and middle school students in East Turkistan are taught in Chinese.¹²⁰ Several thousand pre-schools have been in rural areas in order that minority children will be taught in Chinese from an earlier age.¹²¹ In certain areas a heavier-handed approach has been taken. The Uyghur language has been banned in all schools in Hotan province at least since September 2017.¹²²

This adds to the picture laid out above of a carefully planned separation of the younger Uyghur / Turkic generation from Uyghur / Turkic language and culture. Uyghur / Turkic music and songs, Uyghur / Turkic literature and poems, Uyghur / Turkic legendary stories, Uyghur / Turkic traditional medicine and Uyghur / Turkic histories can only be fully and easily expressed in the Uyghur / Turkic language. China's policy of banning the Uyghur / Turkic language causes the inter-generational ethnic cultural continuity of the Uyghurs to vanish: and this is fully intended by the Chinese state.

Enhanced surveillance of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples significantly beyond that experienced by Han Chinese

The mass surveillance of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples is both human and technological in nature. Both are repressive and designed to prevent Uyghurs and Turkic peoples from engaging with their traditions and culture. As for human surveillance, by the end of 2018 1.12 million Han Chinese cadres had been sent to Uyghur and other Turkic homes, in order to live in their homes and spy on them.¹²³ Furthermore, over 10,000 teams each with half a dozen people go from house to house in order to compile dossiers of information, particularly regarding 'extremist behaviour' which includes not drinking alcohol, having long beards, fasting during Ramadan and owning 'undesirable' items such as Korans.¹²⁴ They additionally report anything other than wholehearted support of the Chinese Communist Party as an 'undesirable attitude'.¹²⁵

Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Turkic are monitored by face recognition and voice recognition cameras every 100-200 metres along every street;¹²⁶ mandatory spyware is installed in their electronic devices;¹²⁷ mass collection of DNA samples of 36 million people has been undertaken;¹²⁸ fingerprints, iris scans, voice samples, and blood types of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples have been collected;¹²⁹ every kilometre there are up to five checkpoints where ID cards are scanned, photographs and fingerprints taken and iris-recognition technology is used, such that Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples' movements are tracked at all times;¹³⁰ and at these checkpoints people are required to hand over their phones to be placed in a cradle, which downloads all the phone's content for analysis.¹³¹

The mass data gathered in these and other ways allows the Chinese government to rank the 'trustworthiness' of the citizens of East Turkistan. Those who are deemed untrustworthy are more likely to be sent to an internment camp, as the 'Karakax list' demonstrates.¹³² The categories considered include the following, according to the Economist in 2018:

*"15 to 55 years old (ie, of military age); Uighur (the catalogue is explicitly racist: people are suspected merely on account of their ethnicity); unemployed; have religious knowledge; pray five times a day (undermining the guarantee of freedom of worship under the Chinese constitution); have a passport; have visited one of 26 countries; have ever overstayed a visa; have family members in a foreign country (there are at least 10,000 Uighurs in Turkey); and home school their children."*¹³³

However, it is intentionally made unclear what categories of behaviour might risk an individual going to an internment camp. The 48 activities which interviewees for Human Rights Watch in East Turkistan stated they were afraid to do included praying, having WhatsApp, having too many children, performing a traditional funeral or acting sad when their parents die.¹³⁴ Most of the 48 activities relate to Uyghur cultural and religious identity. It appears vague by design which activities are banned by official policy and which are the result of rumour based on individual decisions by officials.¹³⁵ Ill-defined boundaries create the fear of treading near them.

The Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other East Turkistanis in the diaspora frequently report that Chinese officials have threatened to kill and torture their parents, relatives, or children, and forced them to work as Chinese spies.¹³⁶ In addition, they are watched, followed and harassed, which adds to their fear.¹³⁷ The enhanced surveillance makes these threats more than credible.

Massacres

It appears from the testimony of two Chinese PLA soldiers to the Bitter Winter website that: (1) in the summer of 2013, 100 Uyghurs living in a mountainous area were arbitrarily slaughtered; and (2) the entire Uyghur population in a mixed Han-Uyghur village was massacred 'a few years ago'.¹³⁸ The first event was a 'top secret mission'. The soldier's higher-ups informed him that it was for the purposes of 'stability maintenance'. The soldier stated:

"We executed more than 100 people in a mountainous area. They looked like Uyghurs; some were young children... With the help of a drone, we were able to see wherever the Uyghurs ran, they were unarmed, but we shot them with QBZ-95s [China-made assault rifles]. They were doomed to die."

As for the second event, the captain of the informant soldier, who lived in Fujian in South-East China, was sent on a mission 'a few years ago' to a mixed Han-Uyghur village in East Turkistan. According to

the captain, plainclothes soldiers that day told the Han Chinese to cover their windows with newspapers and lock their doors before going to bed. The interviewee stated that the captain heard lots of shooting at night, that all the Uyghur residents in the village appeared to be gone, and that he presumed they had been killed. It is unclear how many other Uyghur villages suffered the same fate, or the reasons why the Chinese government would order such a massacre.

Repressive measures against Islam

In 2015, the Chinese government drafted broadly-defined anti-terror laws. These were criticised by the international community because there were no safeguards preventing those practising their religion or criticising the Chinese government from being charged under them.¹³⁹ The appointment of Chen Quanguo has widely been seen as part of a decision to repress Uyghur cultural identity to a greater extent.¹⁴⁰ In April 2017 the regional government passed a law restricting religious freedom even further, with a ban on veils and ‘abnormal’ beards (‘abnormal’ remaining undefined), and making it illegal to prevent children from receiving national education.¹⁴¹ Additionally, certain religious baby names are banned under this law.¹⁴²

As is regularly the case with vague laws, executive discretion has gone significantly further in repressing Islam and Uyghur modes of worship than the terms of the law. It has been noted above that it is no longer safe, and no longer felt safe, to display outward signs of being Muslim or even to pray regularly as required by Islam, given that these are factors which determine whether an individual is placed in an internment camp.¹⁴³

The Chinese government, however, goes further than this, forcing Uyghur Muslims to betray their religious beliefs through intimidation. Local officials bring ‘gifts’ of pork to residents on Ramadan, monitoring the individuals to check whether they have eaten them.¹⁴⁴ The Chinese government provides lunch at schools and local authority offices during Ramadan, forcing residents to eat for fear of the consequences if they do not.¹⁴⁵ Restaurants are required to stay open during Ramadan.¹⁴⁶ In 2019 Kazakh Muslims in the Ili Kazakh prefecture were required to eat pork and drink alcohol to celebrate Chinese New Year, with the threat that they would be taken to internment camps if they did not.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, the Chinese government has destroyed mosques, graveyards and other historical religious sites, including shrines which previously were the subject of mass Uyghur pilgrimage.¹⁴⁸ This has been undertaken with the explicit aim of disconnecting Uyghurs with their cultural history.¹⁴⁹

Organ harvesting

The China Tribunal, an independent human rights organisation, testified to the UN Human Rights Council that China was harvesting the organs of Uyghurs en masse.¹⁵⁰ Of importance is the testimony of Dr Enver Tohti, an Uyghur doctor who had conducted live organ harvesting and now campaigns to make more people aware of its happening.¹⁵¹ Geoffrey Nice QC, Chair of the China Tribunal and former prosecutor at the ICTY who led the case against Slobodan Milosevic, stated that the international community “can no longer avoid what it is inconvenient for them to admit.”¹⁵²

Recommendations to the Canadian Parliament

- The Canadian Parliament should pass a resolution recognizing China's atrocities against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan as a genocide;
- The Canadian Parliament should pass a resolution recognizing East Turkistan as an Occupied Country;
- The Canadian Parliament should establish an East Turkistan Friendship Committee / Group;
- The Canadian Parliament should pass a Uyghur Policy Act similar to that passed by the United States;
- The Canadian Parliament should call on the Canadian Government to sanction Chinese officials and entities including Chen Quanguo, Zhu Hailun, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) paramilitary and other security forces;
- The Canadian Parliament should call on the Canadian Government to grant immediate refugee status to all Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples fleeing Chinese persecution in East Turkistan;
- The Canadian Parliament should call on the Canadian Government to work to free Canadian citizen Huseyin Celil;
- The Canadian Parliament should call on the Canadian Government to coordinate a resettlement plan of exiled Uyghurs from Turkey to Canada with the East Turkistan Government in Exile;
- The Canadian Parliament should call on the Canadian Government to offer grants and scholarships for exiled Uyghurs and other East Turkistanis education;
- The Canadian Parliament should support the East Turkistan Government in Exile's complaint by urging the International Criminal Court to start investigations against Chinese officials for Genocide and other Crimes Against Humanity.

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