



Human right violation: Persecution of the Uyghur Muslim minority in Xinjiang

Rekha Chandel

Independent Scholar, M.A. IGNOU, New Delhi, India

Abstract

Religion and ethnic conflict both contribute to the violence among Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, China. The Uyghurs, a majority-Muslim ethnic group that occupies the entire territory, are the largest Turkic ethnic group in Xinjiang. This ethno-religious fusion involves not only the movement of people and weaponry, but also the movement of political and theological ideas. There is no one Uyghur agenda. Violent gangs want to create their own Uyghur state. Some people are assimilating into the Chinese system, but others desire to maintain their cultural identity while maintaining a separate relationship with China. Some Uyghurs are in favor of the creation of a separate state. The Re-Education by Work program, Xinjiang's historical context, and current geopolitical objectives are all examined in this essay. It then goes on to outline the "education" methods utilized inside the camps and refutes China's justification for their creation.

Keywords: Xinjiang, Uyghurs, CCP, human right, religion, persecution

Introduction

More than 25.85 million people live in Xinjiang, and much of the tension there is a result of the demands of some Uyghur separatist groups for greater political and religious autonomy as well as anger at the growing dominance of Han Chinese, the largest ethnic group in China, which they feel restricts their access to economic opportunities. For more than a thousand years, Xinjiang's sizable Muslim and Turkic populations have held the belief that they are religiously and ethnically separate from Han Chinese civilization. Uyghurs make up just under half of the population in Xinjiang, but when Kazaks and Kyrgyz are taken into account, the percentage of Turkic Muslims rises to over half. The Uyghurs have not felt a strong sense of shared destiny until the last few generations. These Uyghurs, however, are very afraid because they feel that Chinese policy has largely ignored them or, worse yet, actively worked against them. Typically, the Chinese government is criticized for restricting citizens' legal and human rights. It's been a while since I've had a chance to do this, but I'm going to try. Despite having legal commitments and making agreements with other countries to protect its citizens' human rights, the People's Republic of China is committing genocide against the Uyghurs, a community of minority Muslims in the Chinese province of Xinjiang. The nation's minority group is subject to violations of human rights. In order to eradicate terrorism in the nation, safeguard its inhabitants, and preserve its sovereignty and integrity, the Chinese government contends that Uyghurs are a group of Islamic fanatics who need to be reeducated. The rise in the number of incidents of genocide in China is a result of this thinking. Despite legal safeguards and being a party to numerous international accords, the Chinese government is associated with the repression of human rights for lawyers and activists. Speaking out against the government's policies frequently results in intimidation, arbitrary arrests, sex and mental abuse, disappearances, and illegal incarceration. Despite the fact that human rights are internationally acknowledged and protected by international treaties, China is currently violating the human rights of Uyghurs. It is

important to defend the rights of China's fearful Muslim minority.

The UN human rights office claimed that the atrocities may be regarded as crimes against humanity, despite the fact that the United States and a number of other foreign nations have referred to China's activities in Xinjiang as genocide. Representatives of the Chinese government have asserted that they have not violated the rights of Uyghurs and that the re-education camps were shut down in 2019. Yet, using satellite imagery, personal testimonies, and unreleased Chinese official data, international journalists and scholars have uncovered a pervasive system of mass imprisonment throughout the province.

Background of the Uyghur nation

East Turkestan, a former Central Asian republic, is home to the native Uyghur people. India, Tibet, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are among the nine nations it borders. East Turkestan is a region in western China that is now frequently referred to as Xinjiang. Since the fifth century, the Turkic ethnic group known as the Uyghurs have been nomads, building the vast nomadic empire known as the Uyghur Khaganate. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the Uyghurs started to practice Islam; they are now Sunni Muslims. The Western Turkestan regions of Central Asia were subjugated by Russian powers in the 18th century, according to the perspective of modern Asian history. Western Turkestan was divided into five distinct republics, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan after the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established in the 20th century. East Turkestan, the remaining portion of Turkestan, was colonized by the Chinese Qing dynasty until the middle of the century. On October 12, 1949, during the Mao Zedong era, the People's Liberation Army totally occupied the East Turkestan territories after the People's Republic of China was established on October 1, 1949. As a result, during the communist era, East Turkestan formally acceded to the PRC. The territory's name was also changed to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955. Yet once Communist

China invaded, Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups began to suffer from human rights abuses; these abuses continue today in an effort to assimilate the country and solidify China's hegemonic dominance over the minority Muslim community.

Genocide has been compared to numerous continuing atrocities carried out by the Chinese government in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and other racial and religious minorities. Since 2014, actions implemented by the Chinese government, which is led by the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, have resulted in the imprisonment of over a million Turkic Muslims in internment camps (CCP). Activities were overseen by the Xinjiang CPC secretary from 2016 to 2021, significantly expanding the size and scope of the camps. After World War II, incarceration rates for racial and religious minorities have been far higher than they are today. Forced abortion, political indoctrination, severe abuse, forced sterilization, and forced labor are examples of government interventions. At internment centers run by the government, Uyghurs have been unfairly imprisoned. In Xinjiang, the Chinese government denies violating human rights. Research by the UN Human Rights offices found that China's policies and actions in the Xinjiang area may constitute crimes against humanity or "serve human rights abuses," in accordance with councils that have condemned how the Chinese government handles Uyghurs.

Human right violation: The communist government's repression of the religion freedom of the Muslim minority in Xinjian

Several diverse religions exist around the world. In accordance with Article 18 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, every person has the freedom to practice any religion they so choose (UDHR, 1948). Still, the right to practice one's faith remains restricted for citizens in Xinjiang. Or, to put it another way, it is unacceptable for the Chinese government to work hard to eliminate such Uyghur minorities. They established re-education centers to carry out harsh rules and practices, which have even prompted criticism from several international groups and organizations. For instance, it is currently forbidden for people to practice Islam throughout the entirety of Xinjiang; parents are even forbidden from naming their infants Muslims; and if people disobey these laws, the government will send them to prisons or re-education camps against their will, even though they have not broken any laws.

The majority of individuals who wind up in re-education camps do so for understandable reasons, such as practicing Islam, which includes acts like praying and reading the Qur'an, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, going on pilgrimages, dressing modestly for men by growing beards or headscarves, or even leaving the country and maintaining contact with family members there. As a result, the communist government of China has long adopted these severe methods. Due to persecution against political and religious groups, there was an uprising against the Chinese government in 2014.

Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang are being imprisoned politically in camps

Re-education institutes have reportedly been built by the Chinese government since 2017. Only in Xinjiang are these camps, which are formally termed as "Training Centers" or

"Vocational Education," held. The 2014 Uyghur riot in the city of Urumqi in the Xinjiang region served as the impetus for the creation of the concentration camps. Initially, racial tensions between Han Chinese and Uyghurs were the cause of the riots. The Chinese government spent several years sending millions of Han Chinese into Xinjiang in an effort to assimilate the local ethnic population, establish authority over the state, and take over their private and public lands. It's been a while since I've been here. Uyghurs have started a retaliatory movement to safeguard the existence of their country in the end. In addition, it is said that racial tension was the cause of an incident between Han Chinese and Uyghurs that left 100 people injured and 31 people dead in one of the busy marketplaces in Urumqi city. After Chinese President Xi Jinping said that he had "Absolutely No Compassion" for Uyghurs and instituted incredibly stringent security measures in the area, the Chinese government accused the Uyghurs of radicalism and ethnic succession.

The Uyghur people are under communist government control

The 2014 uprising led to the authorities severely isolating Xinjiang and turning it into China's most militarized region. In order to properly control the Uyghurs, the Chinese government is exerting pressure on them at an increasing rate and using cutting-edge surveillance methods and technologies. In addition to DNA samples, they also incorporate iris recognition, voice and facial verification. Using these methods, the Chinese government can easily observe their populace. The Chinese government claims that all of these surveillance measures are meant to prevent religious fanaticism and ethnic secession.

The Chinese government continues to continuously monitor everyone's movements despite this enormous monitoring apparatus, even when they are at home. Many special police personnel occasionally cohabitate with Uyghurs in their homes to ensure they don't practice religion. If they do, they will deport them to concentration camps, and their children will attend concentration kindergartens or schools where they will be forced to study and speak Mandarin while also despising their religion and who they are. Also, their parents won't always know where their children are. Many Uyghur families have lost their relatives in this way, unable to contact them or find out where their parents, siblings or other family members are.

In 2018, Communist Party spokeswoman Hu Liahhe asserted in front of a UN commission that "re-education camps do not exist and are absolutely false." Hu continued by referring to the camps as "Vocational Camps" or "Training Schools," which he portrayed as joyful training establishments where radical behavior is subdued. Yet, the Chinese government originally denied the existence of concentration camps. Chinese officials assert that certain acts or policies are justified by national security considerations, which are meant to protect the stability of the entire country by thwarting extremism, terrorism, and separatism.

Uyghur activists and UN human rights experts disagree with China's assertions and believe that several of these activities significantly violate the rights of the Uighur Muslim minority. The "vocational centers," as they are known to the Uyghurs, are more than just fun venues for them to practice their activities, the report claims. According to the research, even ordinary Uyghurs who live outside of these

concentration camps are forced to live in open prisons where they are forbidden from carrying out numerous daily duties. For instance, they are not allowed to enter mosques, travel abroad, don women's scarves, or even speak their own language. Thousands of Muslim minority are detained in camps in China despite these restrictions. The UN committee claims daily violations of the human rights of the approximately 2 million Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities held in Xinjiang's political re-education facilities. The communist Chinese government is attempting to convert the next generation of Uyghurs into communist robots that must live in a society where they are not free to practice their faith as they wish by forcibly cutting all ties to their family, culture, tradition, and religion. The facts make this clear.

Response to the Uyghurs Muslim Issue

Chinese response and action

China frequently accuses the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) or those who support it of being responsible for violent incidents that happen both inside and outside of Xinjiang. According to reports, ETIM wants to create an autonomous East Turkestan in China. ETIM is "the most active of the ethnic Uyghur separatist groups," according to the US State Department in 2006. Others have questioned whether ETIM may plan major extremist acts due to the organization's ambiguous operational mandate. The ETIM, however, is confident that no terrorist attacks occurred. Chinese officials claim that the camps' dual objectives are to "nip terrorist operations in the bud" and safeguard people from radical ideologies. Mandarin, Chinese legislation, and practical skills are taught to these objectives. The camps are allegedly no longer aggressive, and since December 2016, there haven't been any terrorist acts in Xinjiang, according to the authorities. China's recently published white paper, "Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang," also tries to defend how the country still manages to handle its Uyghur Muslim minority. It said that the international community has a duty to combat terrorism and extremism as two common enemies of mankind.

World's response

The imprisonment of Uighurs in Xinjiang has drawn criticism from a considerable segment of the global community. The UN human rights chief and other UN officials have asked for access to the camps. European Union officials have asked China to respect religious freedom and change its Xinjiang-related policies. China has also been urged by human rights organizations to immediately dismantle the camps and reply to questions about the missing Uighurs. Yet, Chinese officials maintain that the so-called "vocational training centers" do not infringe on Uighurs' human rights. Yet, they are blocking foreign and domestic journalists from visiting the detention facilities and have steadfastly refused to provide information about them.

In March 2019, the US administration scheduled a meeting with the UN Human Rights Council to demand China stop imprisoning Muslims. Activists and politicians have condemned the US government's inactivity in the meanwhile. Many Muslim countries, most notably Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Indonesia, have chosen to disregard the human rights violations. Building up corporate connections

and strategic alliances with China is a top priority for them. Turkey was the only country with a majority of Muslims to call on China to secure "the full safeguarding of the cultural identities of the Uyghurs and other Muslims" during a UN Human Rights Council meeting in the early months of 2019.

India's stand

India can respond in kind by diplomatically bringing up the persecution of Uyghurs. China has already wounded India over the Jammu and Kashmir problem. India took extreme care to avoid inciting China on this issue, even during the 2017 Doklam war. Notwithstanding this, China has brought up the UN's resolution on Jammu and Kashmir's partition as well as India's revocation of Article 370. China has conveyed its deep concern about the circumstances in Jammu and Kashmir and the alleged breaches of human rights. Similar demonstrations in favor of the Rohingya, the Palestinians, and the relocation of the American Embassy from Jerusalem were organized by advocates for human rights and civil liberties in India. India can express its concerns to international bodies over China's alleged breaches of human rights in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Conclusion

The situation of Uyghur Muslims in China is not only very concerning but also disturbing in nature. The Chinese government has a reputation for violating minority rights under the guise of combating terrorism and religious extremism, but in order to further this goal, the government has consistently used violence against Muslims, particularly Muslim women and children. China responded by establishing a strategy to prevent the targeting of extremists and separatists by Uyghur movement groups. Out of all the measures, systematic mass incarceration, reeducation programs, and anti-Islamic programming are regularly used. China's treatment of the Uyghur people is manifestly discriminatory in general. China has the ability to impose its will on its citizens through the adoption of a number of policies, but it is unable to reject the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) or the values that it was founded on. The fact that China is a member of the UN Security Council further suggests that any proof of discrimination stemming from China's actions might be considered a serious violation of human rights under Rome's 1998 statute of limitations.

China will obviously not accept the handover of any land, as evidenced by policy analysis, which reveals that China's primary priority is maintaining its sovereignty. This is because the Chinese government, which is inextricably linked, attaches great importance to Xinjiang. As long as there is a society that upholds a state's constitution and government, policy and sovereignty, according to Xinjiang, are still possible, even if the people lose faith in the administration running the country. While the outcome in the context of international law shows that in accordance with the tenets of Islamic law so as to maintain the guarantee of civil and political rights, liberal and democratic ideals or independence, and individual freedom in relation to the state. The issues raised, especially those pertaining to the degree of equality in rights between Uighurs and other ethnic groups in China, the outlawing of cruel punishment and degrading treatment of political prisoners, and the protection of religious freedom in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Both the international laws that currently govern states and effective counterterrorism tactics are not recognized by the Chinese government. The rights of Uyghur Muslims living in China must be protected, but this can only be done if the Chinese government modifies its attitude towards local minorities and grants them access to their basic freedoms.

Languages of China. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, 185-6.

References

1. Gladney DC. 'Islam in China: Accommodation or Separatism?', *The China Quarterly*, 2003:174:451-467.
2. Freeman M. Human Rights, Democracy and "Asian Values", *Pacific Review*, 1996:9(3):352-366.
3. Jones D. 'Democratization, Civil Society and Illiberal Middle-Class Culture in Pacific Asia', *Comparative Politics*, 1998:30(2):147-169.
4. Dwyer M. 'The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy and Political Discourse', *Policy Studies* 15, East-West Center, Washington, DC, 2005.
5. Document, translation from Donald MacInnes, *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice*, 1989, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, 2006:19:8-26.
6. Milward J. 'Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment', *Policy Studies* 6, East-West Center, Washington, DC, 2004.
7. Baranovitch N. 'From the Margins to the Centre: The Uyghur Challenge in Beijing', *China Quarterly*, 2003:175:726-750.
8. Balzacq, Thierry. *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. Routledge, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, 2011.
9. Zhou, Jiaquan. "From Drones to Social Credits, 10 Ways China Watches Its Citizens." *South China Morning Post*, 2019.
10. Bulag Uradyn E. "Nationality" Afterlives of Chinese Communism: Political Concepts from Mao to Xi, edited by Christian Sorace *et al.*, ANU Press, Australia, 2019, 149-154.
11. Zhou Jiaquan. "From Drones to Social Credits, 10 Ways China Watches Its Citizens." *South China Morning Post*, 2019.
12. Starr SF. editor. *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. M.E. Sharpe Inc, Armonk, N.Y, 2004.
13. Shicor, Yitzhag. "The Great Wall of Steel: Military and Strategy in Xinjiang." *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, edited by Frederick Starr, Sharpe, 2004, 120-160.
14. Clarke, Michael. "China and the Uyghurs: The "Palestinization" of Xinjiang?" *Middle East Policy*, 2015:22(3):127-146.
15. Dru C Gladney. "Xinjiang: China's Future West Bank?" *Current History* (2002): 267. 216) Nicolas Becquelin, "Staged Development in Xinjiang," *China Quarterly* 178, 2004, 358-78.
16. Charles Horner, "The Other Orientalism: China's Islamist Problem," *National Interest* (Spring 2002), 45.
17. Kamalov, "Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics," 123-130.
18. Zambelis, "Xinjiang Crackdown and Changing Perceptions of China in the Islamic World?", 6-7.
19. James M. Millward, "Does the Urumqi Violence Mark a Turning Point?" *Central Asian Survey*.
20. Tania Branigan, "China: 21 Killed in Kashgar Clashes," *Guardian*, April 24, 2013, 22) Ramsey, S. Robert. *The*