

# CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN EAST TURKISTAN

## STEP BY STEP GENOCIDE

Murat Yilmaz

2020



**iHH**  
HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOUNDATION



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**Concentration Camps in East Turkistan:**  
Step By Step Genocide

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# ABSTRACT

The intensive establishment of concentration camps began in April 2017 throughout East Turkistan, the number of which is reported to exceed 1,200, and there are at least 3 million people who are estimated to have been kept at such camps, and yet sad stories. If we were able to collect all of them in one book, this would undoubtedly be one of the most touching books in world history.

Three million East Turkistanis who were ripped from their homes, children and spouses, parents, relatives and friends, in short, all of their loved ones as well as their jobs and schools, who were confined within four walls; and were subjected to the most severe tortures and deprivations in the world...

They were beaten, raped and sexually abused...

They were left hungry, thirsty and deprived of sleep...

They were kept naked in the heat of the summer and sometimes in the cold of the winter

*“The last thing I heard before I fainted was that it was a crime for me to be an Uighur.”*

*Mihrigul Tursun<sup>1</sup>*

at camps in the middle of the desert...

They were forced to deny their beliefs and values, having been fed pork and forced to drink alcohol, and their psychological and moral values were destroyed...

Their hopes and dreams were stolen from them...

Their ties with their families and relatives whom they left behind were broken...

They had to constantly worry about their children, since they were locked in nurseries and boarding schools...

They were forced to memorize the discourse, anthems and poems of the ideology of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which they do not believe, and to honor the leaders of the party as if it were a religious act...

In short, there were hundreds of thousands of people who were deprived of their hu-

<sup>1</sup> An ex-prisoner who was held in a concentration camp. For detailed information, see Maria Danilova, “Woman Describes Torture, Beatings in Chinese Detention Camp”, *AP News*, November 27, 2018, <https://apnews.com/61cdf7f5dfc34575aa643523b3c6b3fe> (Since the access dates of all internet resources that are included in this study which was prepared in March-May 2020, are within this period, they were not specified throughout the study.)

man rights and were subjected to all these treatments without having committed any crimes and mostly without standing trial in any court; and furthermore, they did not even know when they'd be able to get out of these torture houses...

Being under the same sky with these people and witnessing their pain and suffering, the cries of their hearts and heartbreaks, even from afar, is an embarrassment to humanity in the unfair order of the age we live in.

The most important reason for our anger is the blindness, deafness, muteness and heartlessness of countries, all governmental/non-governmental institutions and organizations during such cruelty and violation of human rights and the law for all the world to see! The following words of Adil Awut from Hotan summarize what happened in the Chinese camps: "If you enter a concentration camp in Luopu, you can never get out."<sup>2</sup> How much happiness can a world where Adil and hundreds of thousands of those like Adil experience such things, offer a person?

Our Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him (pbuh)) says: "*Whoever sees evil, they should personally intervene on it. If they are not strong enough to personally intervene on it, they should verbally intervene on it. And if they are not strong enough to verbally intervene on it, they should seek to intervene on it by heart, which is the weakest level of faith*".<sup>3</sup> In this context, this study is not prepared with academic concerns, but rather

to show the manifestation of the concentration camps that were arbitrarily opened all over East Turkistan for innocent people, and should therefore be regarded as the driving force to create an environment of empathy and take action.

Our goal is to be able to persuade China, which seemingly aims to eliminate the ideologies and beliefs of the people of Islamic faith, including Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs and Huis, but which actually aims to eliminate them altogether with a racist approach, given the actions that are taken and the methods that are applied, to give up its practices involving human rights violations and genocide.

Having witnessed many genocides in his country, Bosnia, Alija Izetbegović said: "*A forgotten genocide will be repeated*." I would like to thank our precious IHH (The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief) President Bülent Yıldırım, who provided guidance and encouragement for this study which was prepared with the hope that no genocide is ever forgotten and the human race never experiences any genocides, to the members of the IHH Board of Trustees and the President of INSAMER (IHH Humanitarian and Social Research Center), Ahmet Emin Dağ, who read the text and shared their ideas, to Hacer Ahmedoğlu for her contributions in the preparation of some sections, to Amine Tuna Ertürk who provided support with her suggestions, and to my precious family who helped me in preparing the study.

<sup>2</sup> Lily Kuo, "If you enter a camp, you never come out": Inside China's war on Islam", *The Guardian*, 11.01.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/11/if-you-enter-a-camp-you-never-come-out-inside-chinas-war-on-islam>

<sup>3</sup> Müslim, İmân 78; Tirmizî, Fiten 11; Nesâî, İmân 17.



# INTRODUCTION

## What is going on in the Uighur region?

Having attracted attention with its political, economic and military advances since the 2000s, China<sup>4</sup> emerges with two different faces to the east and west of its borders. It hides East Turkistan<sup>5</sup>, where it has been carrying out assimilation and intimidation policies for many years, from the entire agenda of the world, exposing Muslim Uighurs who have lived in this land for centuries, to all kinds of

human rights violations. So much so that it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no other community in the world which is in a more difficult position than the Muslim people of East Turkistan in terms of rights and freedoms.

Chen Quanguo<sup>6</sup>, who has been the Communist Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region since August 2016, has

<sup>4</sup> China is surrounded by Tajikistan and the republics of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the northwest, Mongolia in the north, the Russian Federation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the northeast, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar in the south, India, Bhutan and Nepal in the southwest, and Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west. The east of the country is bounded by the Yellow Sea, which is one of the marginal seas of the Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea and the South China Sea. It is the third largest country in the world with an area of 9,571,300 square kilometers and the most populous one with a population of 1,439,323,776 (April 2020). The country is divided into 21 provinces, three municipal administrations (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin), five autonomous regions (East Turkistan, Inner Mongolia, Ninghsia, Kuanghsi, Tibet), 29 autonomous cities and 69 autonomous administrations. 10 of the 56 ethnic groups living today in China are Muslims including Uighurs, Kazakhs, Tatars, Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs, Salars and those who live in the East Turkistan and Chinghai regions who are of Turkish origin. The Tongsiangs and Paoans, and the Tajiks in the Kansu region are Mongolian and Farisi, respectively. Huis, who are Muslims of Chinese-origin, are found in large communities or in small scattered groups in many provinces and cities of the country, particularly in the Kansu, Ninghsia, East Turkistan, Yunnan and Shantung regions. For detailed information, see *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, "Çin", <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/cin-ülke>

<sup>5</sup> The term East Turkistan is a geographical term, the use of which began with the occupation of the western part and eastern part of Great Turkistan in the Asian continent as of the beginning of the 19th century by Russia and China, respectively; i.e. Turkistan was divided into two with the occupations of Russia and China, and has since then been referred to as East Turkistan and West Turkistan. East Turkistan was first invaded by the Chinese Manchu in 1758, and China, fearful of the increasing Russian influence, annexed East Turkistan in 1884 under the name Sinjang (New Land) and declared it as the 19th province of the Manchu Empire. East Turkistan became a part of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and its province status was abolished on October 1, 1955 and it was declared as an autonomous region. For detailed information, see Amine Tuna, *Doğu Türkistan'da Asimilasyon ve Ayrımcılık*, İstanbul: İHH Kitap, November 2012, p. 43, <https://www.ihh.org.tr/public/publish/0/30/dogu-turkistanda-asimilasyon-ve-ayrimcilik.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Chen Quanguo is a Chinese politician who was born in November 1955. He is the Communist Party secretary of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Quanguo, who became the governor of Hebei in 2009, became the CPC secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2011 and brought police surveillance in the region to the highest level for security reasons during his term there. Assigned as the CPC secretary of Xinjiang on August 29, 2016, Chen Quanguo has taken measures to improve the "security", eliminate the "separatist movements", and expand the "re-education camps" in the region with the orders he received from Xi Jinping, just as he did in Tibet, almost turning the region into both a closed and open prison.

The CPC secretaries who have served in East Turkistan following the occupation of the region in 1949 are as follows: 1949-1952 Wang Zhen, 1952-1967 Wang Enmao, 1970-1972 Long Shujin, 1972-1978 Saifuddin Azizi, 1978-1981 Wang Feng, 1981-1985 Wang Enmao, 1985-1994 Song Hanliang, 1994-2010 Wang Lequan, 2010-2016 Zhang Chunxian, and currently as of 2016 Chen Quanguo, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang#Politics>

## China set up concentration camps so extensively in the region that the documents confirm that an ethnic/religious minority is imprisoned in such large groups for the first time since World War II.

begun to send the Uighurs in East Turkistan to concentration camps or the compulsory “Vocational Education and Training Centers” according to China’s official communications as of April 2017<sup>7</sup> by order of the President of China, Xi Jinping<sup>8</sup>, which represents a new shameful act for China.<sup>9</sup>

The world became aware of the existence of the concentration camps with the inclusion of Kazakh Turks in the camps in addition to the Uighurs. The Kazakhstan-based relatives of the Kazakhs who live in East Turkistan, constantly submitted petitions for investigation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan for their relatives in East Turkistan, who they could not hear from, which led Kazakhstan to take action. With this process, which turned into a diplomatic crisis between Kazakhstan and China, the world has become undeniably aware of the existence of the camps. Interviews

with witnesses who managed to get out of the camps and came to Kazakhstan, also clearly revealed the reality of the concentration camps.<sup>10</sup> Upon these developments, China accepted the existence of the camps, which it had previously denied persistently, in October 2018, and had to explain through the interview of the President of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region Government, Shohrat Zakir by the *Xinhua News Agency* that a “vocational education and training program” had been implemented in the region for a long time. Saying that the camps were established for the purpose of “stopping terrorism, discrimination, extremism and religious activities”, Zakir claimed that these supposed “education centers” allowed the people of the region to get rid of the tendency to radicalize, to learn the common language of the country, and to improve their professional skills.<sup>11</sup> China set up concentration camps so extensively in the region that the documents confirm that an ethnic/religious minority is imprisoned in such large masses for the first time since World War II.<sup>12</sup>

Although different figures are pronounced regarding the number of the detainees in the concentration camps in East Turkistan, current data reinforce the estimates that around 3 million people are kept in the camps.<sup>13</sup> These prisons, which are built for innocent people, who

<sup>7</sup> There has been evidence of the existence of these camps since 2014; however, their intense opening and the inclusion of large numbers of Uighurs in the camps has been observed since April 2017. For detailed information, see HRW, “China: Free Xinjiang ‘Political Education’ Detainees,” 10.09.2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/10/china-free-xinjiang-political-education-detainees>

<sup>8</sup> Xi Jinping is a politician who has been serving as the General Secretary of the CPC, President of the People’s Republic of China, and chairman of the Central Military Commission. He has been the “top leader” of China since 2012 and officially received the title of “paramount leader” from the CPC in 2016. As the general secretary, Jinging served as the chairman of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, which is China’s top decision-making body, [https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Ei\\_Cinping](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Ei_Cinping)

<sup>9</sup> Gery Shih, “Permanent cure: Inside the re-education camps China is using to brainwash Muslims”, *Business Insider*, 17.05.2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-life-like-in-xinjiang-reeducation-camps-china-2018-5>

<sup>10</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “Kamplar...İşkence korkunç”, *Hürriyet*, 04.11.2018, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ilber-ortayli/kamp-lar-iskence-korkunc-41007791>

<sup>11</sup> Maha Akeel, “China must allow access to its ‘training centers’ for Uighur Muslims”, *Arab News*, 06.11.2018, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1400216#W-INokDfAdI.twitter>

<sup>12</sup> Emma Graham-Harrison, Juliette Garside, “Allow no escapes: Leak exposes reality of China’s vast prison camp network”, *The Guardian*, 24.11.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/24/china-cables-leak-no-escapes-reality-china-uighur-prison-camp>

<sup>13</sup> There is various information about the number of the people who are held in the camps. In this study, a separate section on this subject is included. For detailed information, also see: Phil Stewart, “China putting minority Muslims in ‘concentration camps’, U.S. says”, *Reuters*, 04.05.2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-concentrationcamps/china-putting-minority-muslims-in-concentration-camps-us-says-idUSKCN1S925K>

are often not tried in any court<sup>14</sup>, and most of whom have not been charged with any crime<sup>15</sup>, and which are being expanded day by day, are reminiscent of the Nazi concentration camps or the Soviet Gulag practices<sup>16</sup>. While the number of people who are forcibly removed from their homes, lands, spouses and children increase day by day, thousands of people are estimated to have lost their lives as a result of the torture and persecution they are subjected to. The bodies of the relatives of many families were delivered but no explanation was given to them about the causes of death. In addition to the immense harshness of the living conditions at the camps, it is reported that the number of detainees who also include children, is much higher than the capacity set for the camps at the time of their establishment. So much so that there is mention of camps where more than 10,000 people are held.<sup>17</sup> According to the statements of some witnesses, people can only sleep on their sides in incredibly narrow wards since they don't even have the possibility to lie on their backs, while in other camps where even this is not possible, people can only sleep in turns.

According to the statements of those who managed to leave the camps, the methods applied in the concentration camps indicate that the Chinese administration considers all Uighurs to be "guilty" regardless of their age and gender, treating particularly those who are devoted to their religion and traditions as "terrorists".

According to Western sources, there are around 1,200 concentration camps in East Turkistan.<sup>18</sup> This means that at least one per-

**According to the statements of those who managed to leave the camps, the methods applied in the concentration camps indicate that the Chinese administration considers all Uighurs to be "guilty" regardless of their age and gender, treating particularly those who are devoted to their religion and traditions as "terrorists".**

son in almost every Uighur family is kept in such camps. It is reported that the detainees are generally Uighur men who are aged 20-40. The Uighurs at the camps are forced to change their beliefs and submit to the Communist Party ideology. Under the current conditions where the situation in the region has become so severe, questions are being asked, such as, why did China open these camps which are completely against human rights, the number and places of the camps, how many people are held there, the reasons for the arrest of the people, the living conditions of the camps, what treatments people are being subjected to, the medical conditions of the detainees at the camps in the aftermath of the covid-19 outbreak, the dispatch of those who were taken in the camps as mandatory workers to labor camps and factories, the fates of the children, spouses and relatives of those who are kept in the camps, and what international reactions are there against the reality of the camps? Answers to these questions and other similar ones will be sought throughout the study.

<sup>14</sup> "EU team gets rare access to China's restive Xinjiang region under tight supervision", The Straits Times, 28.01.2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/eu-team-gets-rare-access-to-chinas-restive-xinjiang-region-under-tight-supervision>

<sup>15</sup> "Arrests skyrocketed in China's Muslim far west in 2017", France 24, 25.07.2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20180725-arrests-skyrocketed-chinas-muslim-far-west-2017>

<sup>16</sup> Camps in the Soviet Union, to which millions of people were sent, to be punished for the charge of "public enemy" during the Stalin era. It is claimed that the total number of people who were executed, exiled, employed in the gulags and punished by other methods for political reasons in the Soviet Union is 15 million. Official records state this figure to be over 4 million.

<sup>17</sup> John Sudworth, "China's hidden camps", BBC, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China\\_hidden\\_camps](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps)

<sup>18</sup> "Expert Estimates China has More Than 1,000 Internment Camps for Xinjiang Uyghurs", Radio Free Asia, 11.12.2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/zenz-11122019161147.html>

## NEW-GENERATION GULAGS

*Aziz said: "If I could, I would prefer not to be born as an Uighur, and not to be born in Xinjiang. We are the world's most unfortunate ethnic group."<sup>19</sup>*

The concentration camps of the Nazi Germany, the Soviet Gulags, Pol Pot's killing fields and the Bosnian genocide... These are crimes of humanity that went down in history as events, each of which were no less violent than the other, and where the most extreme examples of the concentration camps in the world were unveiled in the 20th century.<sup>20</sup> The people who were kept and slaughtered here were civilians who were considered by the states as enemies, and most of these innocent people were consciously subjected to assimilation and genocide as well as forced labor. Undoubtedly, mass concentration camps did not start or end with the Nazis. Today, it is possible to see such camps anywhere from China to Europe and the USA. So how can we stop the establishment or spread of such camps?

The definition of a concentration camp is sometimes ambiguous, but such camps mainly represent a combination of physical and legal

power. Concentration camps are institutions that are based on the collective isolation of people who have not been convicted of any crime and who are not guilty according to the criminal law, based on their race, religion and social class, "for purposes of preventive measures". It is a way for modern states to segregate groups of civilians by placing them in a closed or separate place under special rules that are different than those of the country's constitution and penal system. A concentration camp is a symbol of anything that needs to be stood up against: arbitrary use of power, systematic removal of freedom, the defamation of culture and beliefs, ideological repression, dehumanization, harassment, torture, murder and genocide... In short, these camps are places where all human rights are violated.

China has a long history of camps. Initiated by Mao in the 1950s, the political "re-education" program is one of the most comprehensive

<sup>19</sup> Yanan Wang, Dake Kang, "China treats Uighur kids as 'orphans' after parents seized", AP News, 21.09.2018, <https://apnews.com/903a97b-7c62a47b98553b6f422827dd7/China-treats-Uighur-kids-as-orphans-after-parents-seized>.

<sup>20</sup> A concentration camp was first established by Spain in Cuba in 1895, and then continued in other colonies of the Western countries: by the British in South Africa, by Americans in the Philippines. Today, people who are taken to the concentration camps in East Turkistan are people who are not guilty of crimes even under the Chinese law. For detailed information, see Ekin Kadir Selçuk, "Doğu Türkistan Otoriter Rejimler İçin Bir Laboratuvar": Mehmet Volkan Kaşıkçı'yla Söyleşi", *Birikim Dergisi*, 26.12.2019, <https://www.birikimdergisi.com/guncel/9859/dogu-turkistan-otoriter-rejimler-icin-bir-laboratuvar-mehmet-volkan-kasikci-yla-soylesi>

gulag networks in the world, which resulted in the death of millions of people due to hunger and poverty.<sup>21</sup> However, the newly opened Chinese camps are slightly different. First of all, East Turkistan camps are supported by state-of-the-art digital surveillance methods provided by leading companies in the global industry. Developed by a government-operated defense industry manufacturer company and designed to implement military cyber systems, the CCTV camera network is integrated in the civilian public security in China. This system analyzes behavior to track people and predict “potential criminals”.

The main reason for the human right violations of China against Uighur Muslims in not only the concentration camps, but almost all areas of life is based on its historical relationship with East Turkistan and the strategic importance of the region. Looking back to history, it is observed that Uighurs have been neighbors with China (Han) for at least 2,000 years. Founded in a small plain of the Yellow River, China has grown by assimilating neighboring ethnic groups throughout history. Contrary to the understanding of the Confucian philosophy that they have advocated, the Chinese have formed a class society and as clearly seen in East Turkistan, have considered the ethnic, cultural and beliefs of groups other than the Han nation to be of a lower class for more than 260 years. The main element in the growth of the Han domination, which has a colonial perception of civilization, has always been assimilation.<sup>22</sup> As a manifestation of this understanding, Mao Zedung was able to say that East Turkistan has been “The land of China for 2,000 years”!

**A concentration camp is a symbol of anything that needs to be stood up against: arbitrary use of power, systematic removal of freedom, the defamation of culture and beliefs, ideological repression, dehumanization, harassment, torture, murder and genocide... In short, these camps are places where all human rights are violated.**

China invaded East Turkistan for the first time during the Manchu Dynasty -in 1758-, which initiated the immigration of the Han Chinese to the region, and such migrations gained momentum after 1831. Today, it is reported that around 250,000 Han Chinese migrate to the region every year.<sup>23</sup> Uighur Muslims from East Turkistan are sent to China for mandatory education and work through reverse migrations, by which the Uighur land is sought to demographically consist of the Han Chinese. In this respect, concentration camps stand out as one of the most effective methods of demographic dissolution. Therefore, what China has been trying to do for 260 years is to reduce the Uighur population in the region through oppressive practices such as forced immigration, massacres, birth control policies, forced marriages with Han Chinese, etc. The practice we witness today with the concentration camps is actually nothing more than a current reflection of this core understanding.

Another one of the most important reasons behind the conversion of almost the entire East Turkistan to a concentration camp is

<sup>21</sup> Envisaged as a large-scale economic and social reform project, Mao's “Great Leap Forward” project resulted in the deaths of around 45 million people, most of which was due to starvation, between 1958 and 1962. For detailed information, see Arifa Akbar, “Mao's Great Leap Forward ‘killed 45 million in four years’”, *Independent*, 17.09.2010, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/maos-great-leap-forward-killed-45-million-in-four-years-2081630.html>

<sup>22</sup> “Doğu Türkistan’da Toplama Kampı Sistemi’nin uygulanmasının amacı”, *Sinoturk News*, 27.10.2018, <http://www.sinoturknews.org/cinin-dogu-turkistanda-toplama-kampi-sistemi-uygulamasinin-amaci/>

<sup>23</sup> Tuna, p. 136.

**East Turkistan is a region that is very rich in terms of natural resources. Its oil and gas reserves in particular, are close to those of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and around three times higher than those of the US in volume. According to the 2012 data, 30% of the oil and natural gas requirement of China which has a population of 1.4 billion is met by this region.**

that Uighur Muslims are a resilient nation, who are devoted to their religion, culture and traditions. Having established states in 842 (Karahanlı State), 845 (Koçu Uighur Khaganate), 1514 (Seidiye Khanate), 1865 (Yakuphan State), 1933 (Islamic Republic of East Turkistan) and 1944 (Republic of East Turkistan) throughout history, Uighurs have made numerous attempts for independence such as the Revolt of the Altishahr Khojas (1757-1759), Ush Rebellion (1765), Holy War of the Seven Khojas (1847), Wāli Khān Rebellion (1857), and the Dungan Revolt (1862). With such a historical tradition, Uighurs are considered to be a nation with the potential to rebel against the CPC. For this reason, all Uighurs from any profession who can be influential and lead society have been placed in concentration camps, thus the life blood of the Uighur community has been stemmed.

As an extension of this understanding, Uighur Muslims are subjected to a pointless scoring system which is implemented by Chinese administrators throughout East Turkistan. According to this practice; any movement, which is a necessity of religion, culture and tradition, is scored with the created "Data Collection Forms" and

attempts are made to try to understand the cultural and religious structure of the person. In this system, not consuming alcohol, having a passport, having a relative abroad or even having a tent is enough for a person to be labeled as a terrorist or someone with an extremist potential, and these are documented and considered as evidence for such person to be placed in a concentration camp.<sup>24</sup>

One of the reasons behind such treatment of Uighurs is the enormous economic potential of East Turkistan. East Turkistan is a region that is very rich in terms of natural resources. Its oil and gas reserves in particular, are close to those of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and around three times higher than those of the US in volume. According to the 2012 data, 30% of the oil and natural gas requirement of China which has a population of 1.4 billion is met by this region. 35% of the mineable oil reserves in China are in East Turkistan<sup>25</sup>, and the region is also rich in uranium, gold and coal deposits. Furthermore, the natural gas purchased by China from countries such as Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is delivered to the developed regions in the east of China through pipelines in East Turkistan. Having such rich resources and such a geographical significance, East Turkistan is becoming an increasingly vital place for China, which has become a global economy.<sup>26</sup> However, Uighur Muslims, who are the real owners of these lands, cannot benefit from this wealth due to China's racist and exclusionary policies. In fact, Uighurs generally have a living standard that is below the level of poverty compared to an average Chinese. In 1954, China established the *Bingtuan* (Xinjiang Production and Construction Forces) enterprises, the employees of which almost entirely consist of Han Chinese and semi-military personnel, to reinforce its presence on the region's resources.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Clarke, "Xinjiang's 'transformation through education' camps", Lowy Institute, 25.05.2018, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/xinjiangs-transformation-through-education-camps>

<sup>25</sup> Tuna, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandra Ma, "This map shows a trillion-dollar reason why China is oppressing more than a million Muslims", *Business Insider*, 23.02.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/map-explains-china-crackdown-on-uighur-muslims-in-xinjiang-2019-2>

This organization, which currently produces agricultural crops in the fertile lands of East Turkistan, also has a special privilege in the extraction of oil and other natural resources. Reaching 1,480,000 in 1966, the population of this enterprise exceeded 2,600,000 in 2010.<sup>27</sup> Indigenous people have always been viewed as dangerous.<sup>28</sup>

One of the significant economic movements for China is the “One Belt One Road” project announced by President Xi Jinping in 2013. The project for which China plans to invest between \$1-8 trillion<sup>29</sup>, consists mostly of the project for energy and goods transportation networks that will be opened up to the world from East Turkistan. In this way, China aims to both shorten the transport time in trade and create alternative trade routes against a possible conflict and blockage in the South China Sea.<sup>30</sup> On this point, East Turkistan is even more vital for China. This project is one of the most important reasons for the persecution in the concentration camps that China zealously continues in East Turkistan, the destruction of the historical and cultural fabric of the cities, and the assimilation and destruction policy it implements on all the Uighur families in the region. This is because China considers Uighurs to be a threat to its activities aimed at dominating the world in an economic and political sense, with the hope of making the present day the Age of China and as such it applies iron fist politics by using un-

founded excuses such as combating terrorism and extremism to overcome this obstacle(!).

It is argued that China aims to suppress Islamic countries and silence them about East Turkistan with the huge investments it will make under this global economic project. As a matter of fact, the Islamic world has not seriously voiced any concerns on this issue although it has been more than three years since the concentration camps has been opened, which seems to confirm this argument. An even more ironic aspect of the issue is that 22 countries, all of which are Western<sup>31</sup>, wrote a statement criticizing China’s policies in East Turkistan on July 8, 2019, while 37 countries, most of which are from the Islamic world<sup>32</sup>, sent another letter supporting China’s policies in East Turkistan only four days later. The number of supportive countries<sup>33</sup>, which rose to 54 by November, clearly revealed that many Islamic countries have already been influenced by China.

Aggressively continuing its efforts to revive the One Belt One Road project and the historical Silk Road, in which the East Turkistan region will play an important role, China also seems determined to drive out the original inhabitants of the geographical area, to demolish many settlements of this historical Uighur region, and build multi-storey buildings there. Seeking to legitimize this process, which it tries to implement by destroying the will of the people of the region, in the name of “development”, China

<sup>27</sup> China Statistical Yearbooks Database, <http://tongji.oversea.cnki.net/oversea/engnavi/navidefault.aspx>

<sup>28</sup> Sudworth, “China’s Hidden...”; Onur Erkan, “Nazi Kamplarından Çin Toplama Kamplarına”, *Uygur Haber*, 24.03.2019, <https://www.uygurhaber.com/dogu-turkistanda-neler-oluyor>

<sup>29</sup> Ma, “This map shows a trillion-dollar...”

<sup>30</sup> Gül Berna Özcan, “E-Otokrasi ve Çin’in Toplama Kampları”, *Birikim Dergisi*, 18.05.2019, <https://www.birikimdergisi.com/guncel-yazilar/9514/e-otokrasi-ve-cin-in-toplama-kamplari#.Xhe3PCRRXDs>

<sup>31</sup> Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, England, France, Germany, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Norway, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Iceland, Luxembourg, Spain, Austria, Ireland, Belgium and Switzerland. For the original letter and signatory countries see [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/190708\\_joint\\_statement\\_xinjiang.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/190708_joint_statement_xinjiang.pdf); see also Ben Westcott, Richard Roth, “UN members issue dueling statements over China’s treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang”, *CNN*, 30.10.2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/29/asia/china-xinjiang-united-nations-intl-hnk/index.html>

<sup>32</sup> Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Kuwait, Laos, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. For detailed information, see “37 countries rally around China at top UN human rights body” *AP News*, 12.07.2019, <https://apnews.com/a2584de07c014e4786a21bc9f446a40>. See also Catherine Putz, “Which Countries are for or against China’s Xinjiang Policies?”, *The Diplomat*, 15.07.2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/which-countries-are-for-or-against-chinas-xinjiang-policies/>; Tom Miles, “Saudi Arabia and Russia among 37 states backing China’s Xinjiang policy”, *Reuters*, 12.07.2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-rights/saudi-arabia-and-russia-among-37-states-backing-chinas-xinjiang-policy-idUSKCN1U721X>

<sup>33</sup> Putz, “Which Countries are...”

**In the official documents that provide the basis for the creation of these camps, which are persistently stated to have a “voluntary” participation, the programs and treatments that are applied to people are defined as a punishment.**

represents its policies, by which it, for example destroys the historical and cultural heritage in the ancient city of Kashgar, as a move to save the residents of the region from poverty.<sup>34</sup>

In short, the project, which is defined as the New Silk Road, seems to have the potential to turn into a colonial project in the modern sense. Currently, the lands, ports, and straits of dozens of countries have already been left to the Chinese initiative. The project involving 65 countries<sup>35</sup>, which constitute 60% of the world’s population, is a project that connects the easternmost Asia and Western Europe and will create a serious transfer of the Chinese population and economic dependence.<sup>36</sup> For the Communist Chinese regime, ensuring a steady growth of the economy is a struggle of existence, because China, which is at a very low level in terms of democracy and human rights, tries to compensate the dissatisfaction of its people -particularly the urban

people who are more elite- with economic development and prosperity. The 0.4% elite segment of the CPC, which condemns almost half of the population to live at the level of poverty, holds 70% of the national income.<sup>37</sup>

For all these reasons, China has begun to place the Uighur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz minorities in East Turkistan in concentration camps which it introduced as “vocational training camps”, “camps for the integration of those affected by extremism into society” or “re-education camps” since April 2017, on the grounds that they have “radical religious views” and “politically incorrect ideas”.<sup>38</sup> But oddly enough, in the official documents that provide the basis for the creation of these camps, which are persistently stated to have a “voluntary” participation, the programs and treatments that are applied to people are defined as a punishment.<sup>39</sup>

At the Second Xinjiang Business Forum held in 2014, the Chinese President Xi Jinping said that religious extremism is the foundation of the Xinjiang ethnic discrimination, which therefore poses a great threat to China’s security, and that efforts to eradicate extremism should be initiated. This date (May 2014) also signaled the start of the *Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism*,<sup>40</sup> which was the beginning of the process of concentration camps for 3 million innocent people in East Turkistan.<sup>41</sup> Just

<sup>34</sup> Akeel, “China must allow access...”

<sup>35</sup> There are also sources which show the number of countries as 70 and 100.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Nantulya, “Implications for Africa from China’s One Belt One Road Strategy”, Africa Center, 22.03.2018, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/implications-for-africa-china-one-belt-one-road-strategy/>

<sup>37</sup> Tuna, p. 228.

<sup>38</sup> “Expert Estimates China...”

<sup>39</sup> Amy Goodman, “Uyghurs & Other Muslim Minorities Forced into Labor Programs to Work in Chinese Factories”, *Democracy Now*, 09.01.2020, [https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/9/china\\_uyghurs\\_muslim\\_minorities\\_workers](https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/9/china_uyghurs_muslim_minorities_workers)

<sup>40</sup> China has been one of the strongest defenders of the USA’s “Global War on Terror” campaign after September 11, 2001 to intervene in East Turkistan, and approved the US’s entry into Afghanistan and Iraq, seizing a great opportunity to increase its policies of oppression against the Uighur people in East Turkistan several times and to include the structures that it doesn’t want within the scope of terrorism. In 2002, the USA and then the European Union included the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in the terrorist list, thereby legitimizing Chinese interventions. This led to the process of the delivery of 763 Uyghurs, who were caught as suspects of terrorism in Afghanistan, to China, and the interrogation of 22 Uyghurs who were taken to Guantanamo, under torture by Chinese agents. Meanwhile, China has become the only country which was able to enter Guantanamo.

With the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which China established in 1996 with the participation of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and India and Pakistan in 2018, China aimed to control the Uighur Muslims in the member countries and to guarantee their extradition, where desired, and usually achieved this goal.

A few attacks that were carried out by Uyghurs who fought in Syria and Uyghurs in response to the growing tensions between the Han Chinese and the Xinjiang Uighur population, led to the rationale for the Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism in May 2014. The mobile phones, computers and religious materials of Uyghurs were tightly controlled, and long beards and headscarves were prohibited, see “China Steps Up ‘Strike Hard’ Campaign in Xinjiang”, *Radio Free Asia*, 01.09.2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/strike-hard-01092014172927.html>; Graham-Harrison, Garside, “Allow no escapes...”

<sup>41</sup> Marie Trédaniel, Pak K. Lee, “Explaining the Chinese Framing of the ‘Terrorist’ Violence in Xinjiang: Insights from Securitization Theory”, University of Kent, 13.12.2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1351427>



as Myanmar did against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Rakhine, China resorts to harsh measures that have oppressed the entire region of Xinjiang under the pretext of protecting peace and preventing terrorism.<sup>42</sup> Today, East Turkistan is known as the place where the world's most strict public order measures are taken.<sup>43</sup> The spokesperson of the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress, Dilxat Raxit says the Chinese government uses "extremism" as an excuse to place people in concentration camps.<sup>44</sup>

The concept of "terrorism" has been used for a long time to show Uighurs and other Muslims as an existential threat to the Chinese nation. Thus, the Uyghur people are seen as an exception for which basic human rights are not applied, and the word terrorist in China is often associated with Muslims. This gives rise to Chinese people perceiving terrorism as a threat associated with different people in the border region. Labeling the Uighur community in this way provides the Chinese state with a cover for crimes against humanity against the reactions of international institutions such as the United Nations (UN).<sup>45</sup>

Enacted on January 1, 2016, the National Counter-Terrorism Law, gave directives to the relevant government departments to increase not only their armed operations but also their activities in education and propaganda. Therefore, it became possible for any incident in East Turkistan to be associated with terrorism and punished; for the police to freely open fire during interventions in the incidents, and make arrests with night raids, and for people to be imprisoned without a court order. With this

act, the East Turkistanis were turned into open targets, while the Uighur people were started to be treated as terrorists altogether.

In 2017, the "Regulations on De-extremification in Xinjiang" entered into force, enabling the concentration camps to be put into operation under the name of "re-education camps" in line with the new style of practices for "eradicating extremism".<sup>46</sup> China actually rejected the existence of such camps for a long time with the censorship it implemented, but the facts of this matter were revealed through satellite images, statements of ex-prisoners and their relatives, the high number of construction tenders and security guard procurements, and the Chinese administration became obliged to accept the existence of the camps.<sup>47</sup> A report published in 2018 states that 2,805,000 people across East Turkistan were forced to migrate after these developments.<sup>48</sup>

In short, the historical struggle underlying the identity of East Turkistan, the region's high level of richness in natural resources and its location at the junction of the New Silk Road constitute the main motivation for China's policies for the region. In addition to such political and economic concerns, hundreds of years of rights and freedom demands of the peoples of the region such as Uighurs and Kazakhs are an important barrier for China. The possibility of the failure of its occupation and assimilation policy in East Turkistan, which it has been pursuing for years, has led China to set up concentration camps and carry out all kinds of human rights violations.

<sup>42</sup> Akeel, "China must allow..."

<sup>43</sup> Tara Francis Chan, "How a Chinese Region That Accounts for Just 1,5% of the Population Became One of the Most Intrusive Police States in The World", *Business Insider*, 02.08.2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/xianjiang-province-china-police-state-surveillance-2018-7>; "Apartheid with Chinese characteristics China has turned Xinjiang into a police state like no other", *The Economist*, 31.05.2018, <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/31/china-has-turned-xinjiang-into-a-police-state-like-no-other>

<sup>44</sup> Ben Blanchard, "China defends Xinjiang camps as it takes reporters on tour", *The Irish Times*, 07.01.2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/china-defends-xinjiang-camps-as-it-takes-reporters-on-tour-1.3750070>

<sup>45</sup> "Doğu Türkistan: Stanford Hapishane Deneyinden Çok Daha Aşırı Bir Proje", *Uygur Haber*, 09.06.2020, <https://www.uygurhaber.com/dogu-turkistan-stanford-hapishane-deneyi>

<sup>46</sup> Erkan, "Nazi Kamplarından Çin..."

<sup>47</sup> Adrian Zenz, "New Evidence for China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang", The Jamestown Foundation, 15.05.2018, <https://jamestown.org/program/evidence-for-chinas-political-re-education-campaign-in-xinjiang/>

<sup>48</sup> "Xinjiang Uyghur Özerk Bölgesi 2018 Hükümet Hizmet Raporu", 30.01.2019, <http://uyghur.people.com.cn/156325/15752980.html>

## RATIONALE FOR THE FOUNDATION OF THE CAMPS

It seems that having the photo of a relative wearing a headscarf or a banned app such as *WhatsApp* on your mobile phone is enough for being sent to a concentration camp in China, just as the 25-year-old East Turkistani Ali and hundreds of thousands of other people like him experienced.<sup>49</sup>

As such, most of China's arrests against Uighur Muslims are based on arbitrary reasons. China says that the arrests were carried out under the principle of preventing crime (!), and the investigations that are carried out confirm this, and it is understood that almost all of the Uighurs who were placed in the concentration camps did not commit any crime.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the External Affairs Director of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, Zhang Zhisheng indirectly admits this situation by saying: "Some people have the potential to be murderers even without committing a murder. Do you think we should wait for them to commit a crime? Or stop them before it happens?" Likewise, the official of the Xinjiang Propaganda Bureau, Shu Guishiang,

uses the following argument: "Our goal here is to take someone who has reached the limit of committing crimes, and reintegrate them into society as someone who complies with the law!"<sup>51</sup> However, this completely ignores the principle of "presumption of innocence", which is one of the most basic rules of international law, i.e., the principle of considering a person innocent until it is proven that she/he committed a crime.

During his visit to East Turkistan in 2014, the Chinese President Xi Jinping made a warning against the "poison of religious fundamentalism", and prepared the ground for arbitrary arrests, arguing that this policy of oppression should be applied to eliminate radical Islamism(!). In the published reports, the arrests in the region were stated to be for the benefit of the Uighur people, and 75 different signs of extremism<sup>52</sup> were listed, asking people to report those who exhibit even one of such signs. At the working meeting held in 2015, the CPC Secretary of the period, Zhang Chunxian said that "the hitting hand and the educating hand should be strict",

<sup>49</sup> Sudworth, "China Hidden..."

<sup>50</sup> Chan, "How a Chinese Region..."

<sup>51</sup> "Çin'in toplama kampları: 'Eğitim kampı' olarak tanıtılan 'cezaevleri'", *Timetürk*, 19.06.2019, <https://m.timeturk.com/cin-in-toplama-kamplari-egitim-kampi-olarak-tanitilan-cezaevleri/haber-1102011>; Sun Feiyang, "Breaking down the BBC's visit to Hotan, Xinjiang", 08.07.2019, <https://medium.com/@sunfeiyang/breaking-down-the-bbcs-visit-to-hotan-xinjiang-e284934a7aab>

<sup>52</sup> The full list is provided in the ANNEX. For detailed information, see "新疆部分地区学习识别75种宗教极端活动 遇到可报警" 24.12.2014, [http://www.cssn.cn/zjx/zjx\\_zjsj/201412/t20141224\\_1454905.shtml?COLLCC=3800964462&](http://www.cssn.cn/zjx/zjx_zjsj/201412/t20141224_1454905.shtml?COLLCC=3800964462&)

which basically revealed the key logic of the concentration camps to be established.

The number of arbitrary arrests increased with the appointment of the Xinjiang CPC Secretary, Chen Quanguo to the region in 2016. Increasing the security measures in East Turkistan, Quanguo instructed regional authorities to “take in anyone who needs to be taken in.”<sup>53</sup> The main idea of the 403-page directive issued by President Xi Jinping on concentration camps is “never have mercy”.<sup>54</sup> A number of preparations were made for this purpose. The predecessors of Chen, who were the managers of the period before his appointment, greatly increased the number of recruitments for police and other security officers in response to the events of July 5, 2009. While approximately 5,800 police officers were recruited between 2003 and 2008, this figure rose to approximately 40,000 with a significant increase between 2009 and July 2016. With the appointment of Chen Quanguo to the region in August 2016, 90,866 police were recruited by July 2017, in less than a year.<sup>55</sup> These heavy security personnel recruitments were due to the recruitment of police assistants who were required for around 7,500 newly-established police stations.<sup>56</sup>

The study of the investigative writer, Tanner Greer, which is entitled “*Forty-Eight Suspicious Signs of Extremist Tendencies*”, and published in the *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2018 clearly reveals the extent, and particularly the reasons for the arrests that are made for people to be sent to concentration camps in East Turkistan.<sup>57</sup>

**China says that the arrests were carried out under the principle of preventing crime (!), and the investigations that are carried out confirm this, and it is understood that almost all of the Uighurs who were placed in the concentration camps did not commit any crime.**

Greer’s study is based on the interviews of *Human Rights Watch (HRW)* researchers with Uighur and Kazakh Turks who managed to escape from China. Gerry Groot, who is a lecturer at the Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Adelaide in Australia, and one of the co-authors of the *Australian National University’s 2018 Yearbook of China*, confirms that these 48 signs are guidelines for identifying and distinguishing religious fundamentalism in China.<sup>58</sup>

Even if these signs do not make any sense on their own, Chinese authorities have tried to analyze a potential of piety and militancy, considering each one of those signs along with the Uighur culture and religious beliefs. The 48 signs which are considered to be sufficient for Uighurs to be sent to concentration camps are listed below:

1. Owning a tent
2. Telling others “not to take an oath”
3. To have travelled abroad
4. Speaking to someone who travelled abroad
5. Owning a welding machine

<sup>53</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “China’s Repression of Uighurs”, 25.11.2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-repression-uighurs-xinjiang>

<sup>54</sup> Austin Ramzy, Chris Buckley, “Absolutely No Mercy: Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims”, *New York Times*, 16.11.2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>

<sup>55</sup> “A Summer Vacation in China’s Muslim Gulag”, *Foreign Policy*, 28.02.2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/28/a-summer-vacation-in-chinas-muslim-gulag/>

<sup>56</sup> Adrian Zenz, James Leibold, “Chen Quanguo: The Strongman Behind Beijing’s Securitization Strategy in Tibet and Xinjiang”, The Jamestown Foundation, 21.09.2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/>

<sup>57</sup> Versions of 17 or 75 prohibited actions or signs are also available.

<sup>58</sup> Tanner Greer, “48 Ways to Get Sent to a Chinese Concentration Camp”, *Foreign Policy*, 13.09.2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/13/48-ways-to-get-sent-to-a-chinese-concentration-camp/>; Marcell Lui, “Xinjiang: A summary of China’s concentration camps”, *Le Journal International*, 16.12.2018, <http://www.lejournalinternational.info/en/english-xinjiang-a-summary-of-chinas-concentration-camps/>

**With the appointment of Chen Quanguo to the region in August 2016, 90,866 police were recruited by July 2017, in less than a year. These intense security personnel recruitments were due to the recruitment of police assistants who were required for around 7,500 newly-established police stations.**

6. Telling others not to sin
7. Having extra food
8. Having breakfast before sunrise
9. Knowing someone who travelled abroad
10. Owning a compass
11. Having an argument with a government official
12. Saying that China is weaker than some countries in public
13. Owning more than one knife
14. Filing a complaint about the officials in the region
15. Having multiple children
16. Avoiding the consumption of alcohol
17. Not allowing officials to sleep in their bed, eat their food and live in their home
18. Having a VPN (virtual private network)
19. Avoiding smoking
20. Not carrying one's identity card
21. Having the *WhatsApp* application
22. Lament when a parent dies, feeling or acting sad in public
23. Not allowing officials to take DNA samples
24. Watching any video that is filmed abroad
25. Wearing a headscarf at a location where there is a Chinese flag
26. Women under the age of 45 wearing headscarves
27. Going to a mosque
28. Performing the Salaat
29. Fasting
30. Listening to religious lessons
31. Not allowing officials to perform retina scans
32. Not allowing officials to download everything on their phone
33. Not giving voice recordings to officials
34. Speaking their native language at school
35. Speaking their native language at government agencies
36. Talking to someone from abroad with applications like *Skype*, *WeChat*
37. Wearing clothes with Arabic letters on them
38. Having a full beard
39. Wearing clothes with religious symbols
40. Not participating in compulsory propaganda classes
41. Not participating in the compulsory flag hoisting ceremony
42. Not participating in the public campaign sessions (humiliation of political opponents by the public)
43. Refusing to condemn family members and themselves in public campaign sessions
44. Trying to commit suicide when arrested by the police
45. Trying to commit suicide while at camp
46. Having a traditional funeral ceremony
47. Inviting several family members to their home without having them registered at the police station
48. Having a family member who did any of the above

The above-mentioned 48 articles indicate that the Chinese administration describes any practice of the Islamic religion and Uighur culture, or any action that reminds them, as “extremism”, and clearly demonstrate the extent of the policies of oppression and assimilation towards the Uighurs.

Researcher Mehmet Volkan Kaşıkçı lists the characteristics of the people who are placed in concentration camps as follows:

“China’s propaganda focuses on *extremism*. For example, a young Kazakh man becomes a Chinese policeman. He becomes so happy that he wears his uniform, gets his photograph taken, and sends it to his relatives in Kazakhstan and is placed in a concentration camp for leaking information outside of China. This is the most common category. The second group consists of those who are taken in for religious reasons. Almost everyone who goes to the mosque and performs the Salaat has been arrested. There are those who are taken in just because they helped a mosque for some business, have a picture of a mosque on their phone or sent a good Friday message to others. As far as we know, those who are taken in the camps and prisons for religion-related reasons are the ones who are held under the harshest conditions. Another very important group includes the pillars of the community: journalists, writers, academics. The rector of the Xinjiang State University is sentenced to death. Most of the wealthy businessmen are taken in. If you are someone who stands out in a small city, they will take you in too. The most educated section of society is targeted very harshly, which reveals the absurdity of all the claims that China is trying to legitimize itself.”<sup>59</sup>

The measures to be taken for the “protection of stability” include things that would never spring to mind. For example, your identity number must be indelibly engraved on the bread knife at your home and the same knife must be fixed with an iron chain in the kitchen. The

**The measures to be taken for the “protection of stability” include things that would never spring to mind. For example, your identity number must be indelibly engraved on the bread knife at your home and the same knife must be fixed with an iron chain in the kitchen.**

rules for knives are not limited to this. Having multiple knives can put you in the “potential terrorist” category, which may mean that you will stay at a concentration camp for a lifetime, never knowing when you’ll get out of there, or lose your mind or die under the harsh conditions of the concentration camp during the most productive years of your life.

Another reason for being sent to a concentration camp is “to have travelled abroad” which is included in the third article of the list. It is understood that the Chinese authorities are working hard on this article, because another study on 200 countries in the world was carried out and going to 26 of them was raised to a more critical level for the Uighurs. These countries are: Afghanistan, Libya, Thailand, Algeria, Malaysia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Nigeria, Turkmenistan, Egypt, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, Kazakhstan, South Sudan, Kenya, Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan.<sup>60</sup>

As can be seen, countries other than Turkey, such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Russia, with which China has a partnership under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are also included in this list. Even though China is able

<sup>59</sup> Selçuk, “Doğu Türkistan Otoriter...”

<sup>60</sup> “Chinese Uighurs in Saudi face impossible choice”, *Bangkok Post*, 26.01.2020, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/1843999/chinese-ughurs-in-saudi-face-impossible-choice>

**The number of students who are located in Turkey, Egypt or another country for education, and haven't been able to see their parents, siblings and relatives for more than three years, is high.**

to ensure the extradition of any person it likes from such countries through the agreements it concluded with them thanks to this organization that it created for movements that may be initiated against it, it still continues to take new measures in its own way.

Going abroad for educational purposes has also become an issue of “witch hunt” for China. Students who go to different countries including Turkey in particular, for their university education by fulfilling all the legal requirements and moreover, with China's official permission, are considered as a security risk by China. China tries to get most of these students to return to China by pressurizing them. At the beginning of spring in 2017, Uighur students studying abroad were called on to contact the Chinese authorities at the countries in which they were located, and return to China for “political assessment” until May 20, 2017. Initiated by the Chinese administration, this process resulted in the detainment of thousands of Uyghurs at the so-called re-education camps as of autumn of the same year.<sup>61</sup> In Egypt alone, a joint operation was carried out with the Sisi junta against Uighur students who acted slowly to return, and many students were extradited to China like criminals. While about 5,000 East

Turkistanis resided in Egypt for education before the operation, only 50 families remained after the operation.<sup>62</sup>

All official procedures of students who did not return to their countries due to sensing the danger, including passport renewal, were suspended by the Chinese consulates in the countries in which they were located.<sup>63</sup> In addition, these students reported that they frequently received threatening and harassing phone call messages from the consulate or people they did not know, and similarly received threatening and harassing messages via the social media application *WeChat*. During interviews with Amnesty International, the Uighurs living in Egypt, the USA, Canada, France, Germany and Iran reported that they were contacted by the Chinese police via *WeChat* and were asked to provide their identity numbers, addresses, passport photographs and even their spouse's identity information.<sup>64</sup>

According to the three articles related to foreign connections in the list above (articles 4, 6 and 9), the families of these students, who lived in East Turkistan were also placed in concentration camps on the grounds of “extremism”. The number of students who are located in Turkey, Egypt or another country for education, and haven't been able to see their parents, siblings and relatives for more than three years, is high.<sup>65</sup>

A ban that is issued across East Turkistan in 2019 is quite exemplary for showing the extent of the practices. Accordingly, if you want to cook a dessert at home or want to sweeten your tea a little, and go to the grocery store, it is not so easy to buy sugar, because granulated sugar is also

<sup>61</sup> Emre Yıldırım, “Çin'deki Toplama Kampları ve İslam Dünyası ile İlişkiler”, İNSAMER, 19.11.2018, [https://insamer.com/tr/cin-deki-toplama-kamplari-ve-islam-dunyasi-ile-iliskiler\\_1800.html](https://insamer.com/tr/cin-deki-toplama-kamplari-ve-islam-dunyasi-ile-iliskiler_1800.html)

<sup>62</sup> [https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/qisqa\\_xewer/misirda-uyghur-mesilisi-08302019235620.html](https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/qisqa_xewer/misirda-uyghur-mesilisi-08302019235620.html)

<sup>63</sup> Gizem Sade, “Çin'in Uygur diasporasını eritme taktiği; elçilik pasaportları yenilemiyor”, *Euronews*, 21.01.2020, <https://tr.euronews.com/2020/01/26/cin-in-uygur-diasporasini-eritme-taktigi-elcilik-pasaportlar-yenilemiyor>

<sup>64</sup> Uluslararası Af Örgütü, “Hiçbir yer güvenli değil: Uygurlar Çin'in yürüttüğü korkutma politikalarını anlatıyor”, <https://www.amnesty.org.tr/icerik/hi%C3%A7bir-yer-guvenli-degil>

<sup>65</sup> “Yürekler yanıyor! Çin Uygur çocukları annelerinden ayırıyor”, *Milli Gazete*, 16.05.2020, <https://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/4370887/yurekler-yaniyor-cin-uygur-cocuklari-annelerinden-ayiriyor>; “Doğu Türkistanlı öğrenci Türk kardeşlerinden dua istedi bizi bırakmayın”, *Yeni Şafak*, 21.12.2019, <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/dogu-turkistanli-ogrenci-turk-kardeslerinden-dua-istedi-bizi-birakmayin-3518981>

among the substances that are considered as “terrorist elements” that should be controlled in East Turkistan and a series of procedures must be followed for its sale. For example, in early November in 2019, a person living in Shihezi reported that he/she is required to register his/her identity when buying granulated sugar, and if the salesperson does not record his/her identity number and the Public Security Bureau somehow becomes aware of this, he/she would be arrested and placed in a concentration camp. He/she also said that such shopkeeper would have a fine imposed of 4,000 yuan (over \$510), and sent to a “labor camp” for selling granulated sugar to a customer who did not have his/her ID card with him/her. According to the new regulations, only 1 kg of granulated sugar can be purchased with an ID card.<sup>66</sup> This practice of China is based on the law regulating the sale of materials that are used in making explosives.

Another practice is related to mobile phones. For example, while walking on the streets of Urumqi, you can suddenly be stopped by a police barricade and asked for your mobile phone. Once you think you can get your phone back after all your confidential information is surely scrutinized, and apps as well as any videos and photos are examined, you may be told that you should hand over your phone so that it can be checked to see if there are any bomb set-ups! In short, you never know the extent of the potential difficulties you might face as a result of the slightest suspicion of the officer in front of you.

You can not only be inspected at any time while walking on the street, but you’re also required to have your ID card read by the device when entering residential areas or a market. Even Han Chinese, who come to visit their relatives in East Turkistan, say that they do not want to stay in the region because they think the imple-

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mented measures are very strict. People started to leave the region as the policies of oppression exhausted everyone. For example, a trader said that the number of stores in a shopping mall in the region reduced to 11 from 46 after these practices.<sup>67</sup>

It is reported that it is quite normal to see a checkpoint every 300 meters, a concrete cabin in which soldiers and police wait, barbed wires and long queues formed by Uighurs. At each checkpoint, 3D photographs are taken by artificial intelligence computers, IDs and belongings are scanned, and all the combined data of each person is checked, and people are either permitted or not permitted to pass through. In these areas, the police act according to the instructions specified by artificial intelligence: interrogation, detention for further investigation or immediate arrest! There is no presumption of innocence. As of 2017, almost all Muslims between the ages of 12 and 65 have undergone extensive biometric imaging and

<sup>66</sup> Bitter Winter, “In Xinjiang, Even Buying Sugar Can Send You to an Internment Camp”, *The Epoch Times*, 08.08.2019, [https://www.theepochtimes.com/in-xinjiang-even-buying-sugar-can-send-you-to-an-internment-camp\\_2993684.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/in-xinjiang-even-buying-sugar-can-send-you-to-an-internment-camp_2993684.html)

<sup>67</sup> Winter, “In Xinjiang, Even...”

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DNA testing, including photos of their faces and bodies, which were taken from different angles as well as blood tests, fingerprints, retinal scans, hair samples and voice recordings.<sup>68</sup>

When implementing its policy of oppression in East Turkistan, China uses high-tech tracking and surveillance systems utilizing QR codes, biometric data, artificial intelligence, spy phone software, and large databases. After extensive protests, uprisings and state violence in East Turkistan in 2009, the number of private security companies operating in the region exceeded 1,400, and most of these companies are a manifestation of President Xi Jinping's race with the United States on artificial intelligence.<sup>69</sup> According to a data leak detected by a Dutch cyber expert, it is estimated that the Chinese administration keeps the Uighurs and other Muslims of Turkish origin under intense surveillance, monitoring more than 2.5 million people in the region. Sense Nets Technology, *which is a Shenzhen-based technology company* developing facial recognition software, is

able to collect approximately 6.7 million GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinates within 24 hours via the camera surveillance system, and perform any type of surveillance in real time.<sup>70</sup>

Being outside in East Turkistan means that a person is always monitored by a camera surveillance system wherever he/she goes. Most of these cameras have high-resolution face recognition features. Using technology supported by artificial intelligence, these systems enable people to be automatically monitored at different times and places. The daily activities of a person can be assessed by the system through searches in the videos.<sup>71</sup> In this respect, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the authorities in the region are carrying out a mass experiment in the field of social engineering.

Human rights defenders point out that these systems have turned into an instrument of social oppression for the Uighur Turks, particularly in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Uighurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs have to pass through a detector operated by an artificial intelligence system called IJOP and two checkpoints to enter public spaces such as hospitals, banks, parks or shopping malls, or to buy fuel for their cars.

Not content with keeping people under constant monitoring and surveillance, the local authorities also undermine social trust by encouraging neighbors to act as informers for each other. Furthermore, encouraging civilians to control each other when almost more than 1 million officers and police are mobilized in the region to follow people, draws attention to a practice that pushes the limits of reason. As an extension

<sup>68</sup> Konstantin Salomatin, Shura Burtin, "Beyond Orwell's Worst Nightmares: How China Uses Artificial Intelligence to Commit Genocide", *Byline Times*, 18.11.2019; <https://bylinetimes.com/2019/11/18/beyond-orwells-worst-nightmares-how-china-uses-artificial-intelligence-to-commit-genocide/>

<sup>69</sup> "Doğu Türkistan: Stanford..."

<sup>70</sup> Cathy He, "Chinese Regime Tracks Roughly 2.5 Million in Xinjiang Through Facial Recognition", *The Epoch Times*, 18.02.2019 [https://www.theepochtimes.com/chinese-regime-tracking-roughly-2-5m-through-facial-recognition-in-xinjiang\\_2805488.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/chinese-regime-tracking-roughly-2-5m-through-facial-recognition-in-xinjiang_2805488.html)

<sup>71</sup> "Doğu Türkistan: Stanford..."



of this control paranoia, the crudest form of intervention in private life is also implemented by practices such as assigning inspection officers to Uighur families, who constantly live with them through a project called “Becoming Family”.<sup>72</sup>

In its report published in 2017, HRW states that the local Chinese officials collect the personal information of individuals and the records of their daily activities without their consent through the monitoring program called “Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP)”, and profile the people they consider as potential threats under the pretext of “preventive police measures”. In addition, the Washington-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists published a document in June 2017 in relation to the surveillance operations in the region, reporting that the IJOP identified 24,000 “suspects” in one week and sent 15,500 of them to concentration camps.<sup>73</sup>

According to experts, the existing system of collective detention in China has no basis, even under Chinese law. As the Chinese criminal law expert Jeremy Daum puts it, the anti-terrorism law allows up to 15 days of detention for activities that do not reach a criminal level and does not include detention in relation to remedial mentoring for minor offenses in relation

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to the provisions of the law on “education”. The “Distancing from Extremism Act” dated March 30, 2017<sup>74</sup> does not include the expression of detention in the provisions on education. According to Daum, while the anti-terrorism law includes a provision on “education-placement”, which is observed to allow indefinite detention, it appears that this applies only to those convicted of a terrorist offense. As people who aren’t convicted of a crime are detained under the practice of the “detention camp”, the current evidence demonstrates that such camps are completely illegal.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> HRW, “Çin: Müslüman Bölgesinde Ağır Baskı”, 09.09.2018, <https://www.hrw.org/tr/news/2018/09/09/322264>

<sup>73</sup> Emre Aytakin, “Çin ABD teknolojisi ile gözetliyor”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 28.11.2018, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/cin-abd-teknolojisi-ile-gozetliyor/1658092>

<sup>74</sup> The International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation (IUHRDF), “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification”, 31.03.2017, <http://www.iuhrdf.org/content/xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-regulation-de-extremification>

<sup>75</sup> UHRP, “The Mass Internment...”

# CONCENTRATION CAMPS ARE EVERYWHERE: THE NATURE AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF THE CAMPS

According to the estimates of the Chinese human rights defenders and Non Government Organizations (NGOs), the number of people who have been formally arrested in East Turkistan since 2014, tripled compared to the previous five-year period. While the government holds people in detention centers, prisons and “re-education camps”, the objections of those who are not even charged with any crimes, are rejected and the people who are arrested are subjected to torture and maltreatment.<sup>76</sup> Since China does not base the arrests and detainments on specific crimes, it also does not try the people it detains through a legal court process. The places where people are held are places that are created under arbitrary conditions as a continuation of a similar process. According to the testimonies of the concentration camp witnesses, some people were subjected to harsh interrogation and torture after being placed in the camp; were forced to sign a confession including the crimes they were charged with; and then directly imprisoned based on such forced confessions, without any court decision. Some were even given a long list of crimes and asked to “choose” a crime.<sup>77</sup>

A number of reports reveal that large-scale arrests began in the region in late March 2017. This coincides with the process of the “Regulations on De-extremification” which were announced on March 29, 2017. In the directive numbered 14 in the third section of this regulation, it is stated that “individual and central education should be applied together for purification from extremism and transformation”. Accordingly, there are three types of re-education facilities:

- Central transformation through education centers
- Transformation through the schools in the legal system
- Centers of correction through rehabilitation

Tender offers confirm this practice and it is understood that such facilities are part of a larger facility which sometimes includes detention centers, police stations, and even hospitals and supermarkets.<sup>78</sup> According to the information obtained by the correspondent of the *Radio Free Asia* (RFA) through a phone call to the camp officials in December 2018, a camp consists of

<sup>76</sup> HRW, “Eradicating Ideological Viruses: China’s Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang’s Muslims”, 09.09.2018, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs>

<sup>77</sup> “Uygurlar suç listesinden kendilerine suç seçmek zorunda bırakılıyor”, DW, 10.06.2020, <https://www.dw.com/tr/uygur-lar-su%C3%A7-listesinden-kendilerine-su%C3%A7-se%C3%A7mek-zorunda-b%C4%B1rak%C4%B1yor/av-53756400>

<sup>78</sup> Zenz, “New Evidence for China’s...”

more than 60 buildings with a total of 1,000-1,200 wards, and 10 to 20 people are kept in each ward.<sup>79</sup>

Although the Chinese administration tried to hide the existence of the concentration camps<sup>80</sup> and obscure the evidence<sup>81</sup>, the researchers' quick broadcast of the satellite images showing the camps' locations, and the interviews that were held with people who managed to escape from the concentration camps, and the relatives of the detainees in the camps revealed the existence of concentration camps. In addition to such key evidence, documents such as public construction and service tenders which record the area size and security features of the camps, public recruitment notices, government budget reports, government work reports, and corporate contracts that are published on local and social media, which were collected as secondary evidence, also revealed the existence of the camps. In fact, in the following weeks, the Chinese administration ended its communication of denial and started saying that the camps were education camps which were created to save Uighurs from unreasonable radical religious thoughts and to provide them with work, and that Uighurs "voluntarily" attended such camps.<sup>82</sup>

Although China refers to these camps which are spread all over East Turkistan (Kashgar, Hotan, Kizilsu, Aksu, Bayangol, Ili, Bortala, Urumqi,

**According to the testimonies of the concentration camp witnesses, some people were subjected to harsh interrogation and torture after being placed in the camp; were forced to sign a confession including the crimes they were charged with; and then directly imprisoned based on such forced confessions, without any court decision. Some were even given a long list of crimes and asked to "choose" a crime.**

Turfan, Tacheng, Karamay, Altay, Sanci Hui, Kumul)<sup>83</sup> as voluntary education camps, the data<sup>84</sup> indicate exactly the opposite. It is quite clear that these camps which are surrounded by barbed wires, and walls that are reinforced with multiple layers of security systems, and where watch towers and tens of thousands of police officers and soldiers are located, are detention-oriented facilities.<sup>85</sup> In fact, no-one, not even the Chinese, believe that the camps where people are placed involuntarily and never know when they will get out, are education centers. People are held in concentration camps that are set up in educational centers such as primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and

<sup>79</sup> "نوپۇزلۇق ئاخبارات ئورگانلىرىدىن رويتېرس ئاگېنتلىقى - 29 نوپاىر كۈنى ئۇيغۇر ئېلىدىكى لاگېرلار ھەققىدە بىر مەخسۇس تەكشۈرۈش دوكلاتى ئېلان قىلدى." 03.12.2018, <https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/kishilik-hoquq/uyghurda-lager-12032018164520.html>

<sup>80</sup> The first step to finding the concentration camps on social media is to search for a "re-education center", using the Chinese search engine *Baidu*. This search reveals news articles describing how the local authorities "re-educated" the Muslim ethnic minorities, particularly the Uighurs and Kazakhs, in the northwestern Xinjiang region under the policy known as the "Activities for Purification from Extremism". In the second step, one sees what is said about the activities and locations of the centers on the state websites that appear in the search results. This simple process can reveal a lot of evidence ranging from the press release of the local government at a recently built facility in Xinjiang, to the photos of the opening ceremony; i.e., there is a lot of evidence of the existence of camps, see. Sigal Samuel, "Internet Sleuths are Hunting for China's Secret Internment Camps or Muslims", *The Atlantic*, 15.09.2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/china-internment-camps-muslim-uyghurs-satellite/569878/>

<sup>81</sup> The Chinese government's efforts to block the data on the internet, which could provide evidence for the concentration camps, are continuing. For detailed information, see Kuo, "If you enter a camp..."

<sup>82</sup> Sudworth, "China Hidden..."; Zoe Tidman, "Muslims detained in China camps for thinking 'unhealthy thoughts', leaked documents reveal", *Independent*, 17.11.2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/muslim-uyghurs-china-detention-leaked-documents-new-york-times-unhealthy-thoughts-a9206216.html>

<sup>83</sup> "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'daki toplama kampları ve bölgedeki dağılımları", *Mepa News*, 20.12.2019, <https://www.mepanews.com/service/amp/cinin-dogu-turkistandaki-toplama-kamplari-ve-bolgedeki-dagilimlari-29713h.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Autonomous Region Party Political and Legal Affairs Commission, "Autonomous Region State Organ Telegram", <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/6558510/China-Cables-Telegram-English.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> Fergus Ryan, Danielle Cave, Nathan Ruser, "Mapping Xinjiang's 're-education' camps", Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/mapping-xinjiangs-re-education-camps>

## HRW and the German academic, Adrian Zenz, who investigated the concentration camps in East Turkistan, states that there are 1,200 camps in the region.

universities; hospitals; warehouses; hangars and factories; underground dungeons, and those that are sometimes set up in deserts and neighborhoods. Torture and assimilation programs are applied to those who are held in such secret facilities, the monitoring of their rights even by their relatives are not allowed, they are not informed of the locations in which they are held, and in fact, they are usually not even informed whether they are dead or alive.

The secret documents including guidelines on how the camps are operated, are shown to the press by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists which is composed of more than 75 journalists and 17 press institutions from 14 countries, also proves that these camps are definitely concentration camps in all aspects.<sup>86</sup>

The testimonies of local eyewitnesses also confirm this information. For example, in April 2018, an Uighur businessman said that there were five redesigned facilities, including a school near Gulca and a factory that used to be a police training center, and a large number of people were held there. In January 2018, a law enforcement official in Kashgar stated that ap-

proximately 120,000 Uighurs were held in four detention camps in the region.<sup>87</sup>

Satellite images provide evidence that the construction of concentration camps in East Turkistan is increasing. Volunteer researchers and journalists working with the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement confirm that there are approximately 500 concentration camps and prisons where Uighur Muslims are held, as evidenced by documents.<sup>88</sup> The same research group also revealed the existence of 182 concentration camps, 209 prisons and 74 Bingtuan labor camps in East Turkistan, with their geographical coordinates in 2019.<sup>89</sup>

HRW and the German academic, Adrian Zenz who investigated the concentration camps in East Turkistan, states that there are 1,200 camps in the region.<sup>90</sup> Zenz supports this claim of his as follows: "My increasing reviews on the evidence show that there is at least one concentration camp in every administrative unit between a town and district level in East Turkistan, and these add up to 1,200."<sup>91</sup>

The astronomical activity in cement and steel production also clearly reveals the construction intensity in East Turkistan. It is also believed that the cement production figures support the formation of prisons and re-education camps that are built in Xinjiang. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the cement production in China decreased by 0.2% in 2017 compared to the previous year, but the cement production in Xinjiang increased by 13% in the

<sup>86</sup> Scilla Alecci, "Watch: China Cables Exposes Chilling Details of Mass Detention in Xinjiang", ICIJ, 24.11.2019, <https://www.icij.org/investigations/china-cables/watch-china-cables-exposes-chilling-details-of-mass-detention-in-xinjiang>

<sup>87</sup> UHRP, "The Mass Internment..."

<sup>88</sup> "Çin'de Uygur Türklerinin tutulduğu kamp ve hapisane sayısı yaklaşık 500", *Euronews*, 13.13.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/11/13/cin-de-uygur-turklerinin-tutuldugu-kamp-ve-hapisane-sayisi-yaklasik-500>; Alexandra Ma, "Maps show 500 suspected 're-education' camps and prisons where China is locking up and torturing its Muslim minority", *Business Insider*, 25.11.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-uygur-prison-camp-suspected-locations-maps-2019-11>; East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, "Coordinates", <https://nationalawakening.org/coordinates/>; "China detaining Uyghurs nearly 500 camps and prisons researches", *South China Morning Post*, 13.11.2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3037492/china-detaining-uyghurs-nearly-500-camps-and-prisons-researchers>; "Uighur activists say China running hundreds more camps", *Aljazeera*, 28.11.2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/uyghur-activists-china-running-hundreds-camps-191112204426528.html>

<sup>89</sup> Ma, "Maps show suspected..."; East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, "Coordinates", <https://nationalawakening.org/coordinates/>

<sup>90</sup> Ryan, Cave, Ruser, "Mapping Xinjiang's 're..."; "Expert Estimates China..."

<sup>91</sup> "Expert Estimates China..."

same year. In December 2017, the annual cement production in the entire country decreased by 2.2% while the production in Xinjiang increased by approximately 65%. Steel production also followed a similar pattern. After President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, the steel production in Xinjiang generally declined, but in 2017 increased by about 28%, and this rate reached 43% in December of the same year.<sup>92</sup>

Hence, the documents seized in Hotan clearly show that the authorities expanded the detention camps. For example, Education Center No. 1 for Vocational Skills in the Luopu county is a huge building that looks like a campus and is built on agricultural land, surrounded by barbed wires and surveillance cameras. Located on a highway, the center is larger than most of the nearby villages, with an area of about 170,000 square meters. According to satellite images in 2018, it seems that at least 10 more buildings were added to Education Center No. 1 for Vocational Skills. The construction work at the camp, which was identified by Shawn Zhang, a student at the Canadian British Columbia University's School of Law, was reportedly still continuing during the visit of the reporters of *The Guardian* newspaper to the area in mid-December 2018. It is estimated that Luopu, which is a rural area with nearly 280,000 inhabitants, almost all of whom are Uighurs, is home to eight concentration camps that officially appear as vocational education centers.<sup>93</sup>

Another important research on the expanded concentration camps was conducted by the Chinese dissident Li Fang, who lives in Finland. Fang not only found 15 concentration camps and 19 prisons in Kashgar as a result of his/her research, but also revealed the expansion process for some concentration camps and prisons with the data history feature of *Google Earth*.<sup>94</sup>

For example, a prison that is 5.28 miles west of the Yarkant county (N: 38° 24' 47". E: 77° 08' 54"), which was built before 2007, covering an area of about four decares, was increased by 4.14 decares more in 2014. The new buildings in the added areas cover an area of 3.48 decares.

In a *Google Earth* image dated October 21, 2017, an annex of 9.28 decares and buildings covering an area of 5.89 decares spread over this area are visible. Based on an image dated May 8, 2018, it is understood that a building along with a new 3.63-decare area was added to the region. The closed section in this area has a capacity of 2.67 decares. As of May 2018, the total area of this prison has reached 21.07 decares, the closed part of which is approximately 14.32 decares. *Google Earth* images show that the facility is currently being expanded.

Using the data history feature of *Google Earth*, Li Fang first identified that several prisons in Shule and Kargilik (Yecheng) have been significantly expanded since 2017, he then decided to scan all the counties in Kashgar, and found 19 more prisons in the region. If the sub-prisons of the two large facilities are also counted, the figure reaches 27. Fang states that this research, which was carried out only in one area, gives an idea of the situation in the whole region.

With a photograph that was taken by *Google Earth* on September 8, 2018, 2.45 miles east of the Shule county of the Kashgar province (Geographical coordinates: N: 39° 24' 27". E: 76° 05' 38"), a potential re-education camp was identified in the area. Based on a satellite image that was captured in February 2016, it is understood that the region looks like a school covering an area of about 8.66 decares and has an estimated construction capacity of 3.01 decares. An expansion has been observed in this area starting from

<sup>92</sup> Jennifer Zeng, "Mapping Human Rights Horror: Calculating the Detentions in Xinjiang", *The Epoch Times*, 28.12.2018, [https://www.theepochtimes.com/mapping-a-human-rights-horror-calculating-the-detentions-in-xinjiang\\_2750362.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/mapping-a-human-rights-horror-calculating-the-detentions-in-xinjiang_2750362.html)

<sup>93</sup> Kuo, "If you enter a camp..."

<sup>94</sup> Zeng, "Mapping Human Rights..."

## Journalists report that access to the province is strictly controlled, which makes it almost impossible to verify the exact number and nature of the camps.

August 2016, and some buildings with blue roofs have been identified since July 2017. It can be seen that many houses were destroyed in November 2017 with the expansion in the surrounding area. The expansion was completed in September 2018, at which point a total of 12.91 decares of construction area was created.<sup>95</sup>

As a result of his research, Li Fang reached the following conclusions:

- The total estimated capacity of the buildings in the 19 prisons is 351 decares and an estimated 262 decares were built after 2017. This corresponds to 74.45% of the entire closed areas.
- The estimated total construction capacity in the 15 possible re-education camps is 269 decares, and all of them, apart from one, have emerged as of October 2016, two months after Chen took office at Xinjiang.
- This is because prisons which are hidden inside farms and have no high, closed walls or watchtowers, could not be identified so they do not meet the above criteria. Therefore, it's possible that the actual number of prisons is much higher.
- Potential "re-education camps" that are hidden inside large closed buildings such as large markets, ground floors of buildings, underground facilities and shelters were also not

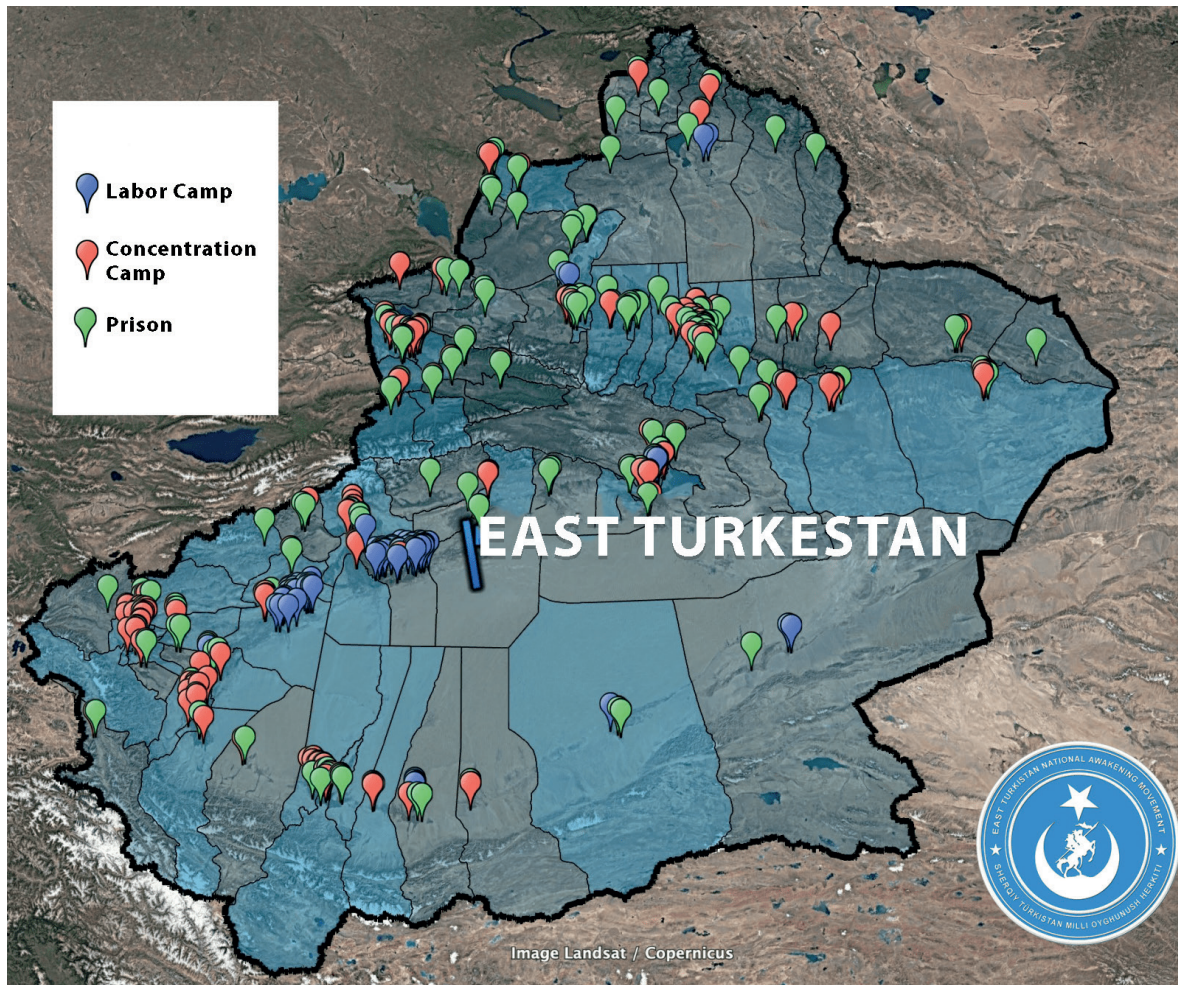
considered under the above criteria. Identification of such places would further increase the number of camps.

- The total construction capacity of 19 potential prisons and 15 potential re-education camps is 620 decares. According to the standards in Hong Kong, the average living space per prisoner is 4.66 square meters, while the Chinese standard is unknown. However, it is estimated that half a million people can be held in a 620-decare building, using an average of 5 square meters or about 54 square meters with an approximate calculation.
- If half a million people are imprisoned in Kashgar, this means that 12% of the entire population in the region is in prisons and concentration camps. If 12% of the Xinjiang population is in prisons or re-education camps, this corresponds to 1,360,000 detainees, and this figure would be higher than the UN's estimate on the detainment of 1 million Uighurs in October 2018.<sup>96</sup>

There are other studies like Li Fang's study. One of them was carried out by *Reuters*. In this study, 39 camps which have previously been opened at various points in the region were detected with satellite images. While the number of camps almost tripled in the 17 months between April 2017 and August 2018, the most recent images show that most of the construction work there is still going on. Covering an area of approximately 140 football pitches, the expansion represents only a part of the total number of detention facilities which are estimated to exist in the province. Journalists state that access to the province is

<sup>95</sup> Zeng, "Mapping Human Rights..."

<sup>96</sup> Zeng, "Mapping Human Rights..."



strictly controlled, which makes it almost impossible to verify the exact number and nature of the camps.<sup>97</sup>

A document bearing the signatures of a top security officer in East Turkistan and the Vice-President of the CPC, Zhu Hailun, shows how the centers are designed in order to subject the detainees to a difficult assimilation process:

- Camps are required to comply with a strict physical and mental control system that is applied in the locked dormitories, floors and corridors, as well as all buildings. Each build-
- ing must be protected by walls and wires. There should be a special police station where monitoring is undertaken by security guards at the front door and watchtowers.
- Prisoners can be held at camps indefinitely, but they must stay for at least a year.
- The camps will be operated through a scoring system. Prisoners will collect points for “ideological transformation”, “compliance with discipline” and “labor and education”.

<sup>97</sup> Adam Withnall, “China sends state spies to live in Uighur Muslim homes and attend private family weddings and funerals”, *Independent*, 30.11.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-uighurs-muslim-xinjiang-weddings-minority-communist-party-a8661006.html>

- Prisoners are not released after “transformation in education” has been achieved. They are sent to another camp where they participate in an internship for “labor skills education”, which lasts three to six months.
- Weekly phone calls and monthly video calls with relatives are their only contact with the outside world, and these may be suspended for punishment purposes if necessary.
- “Prevention of escape” is the key priority.

In the order document, it is stated that video surveillance should be carried out day and night, “without any blind spots”, to monitor the prisoners at any moment. The control of every aspect of the prisoners’ lives is so extensive that they are monitored not only in the wards and classrooms, but even in meal queues.<sup>98</sup>

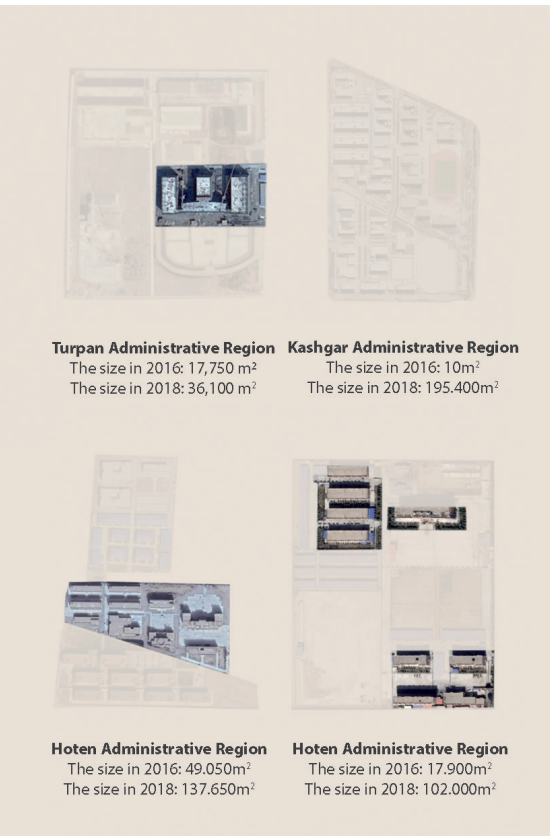
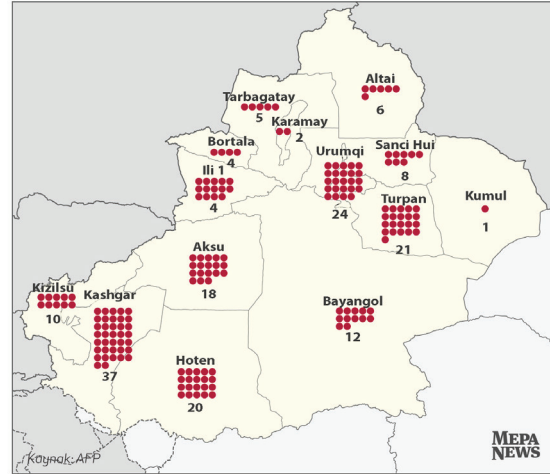
The map showing the regions where the concentration and labor camps and prisons are located in East Turkistan, is shared by the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement in the *Google Earth KMZ* format.<sup>99</sup>

The cities and regions where the concentration camps in East Turkistan are identified to have been established as a result of the investigations, are as follows: Kashgar, Hotan, Kizilsu, Aksu, Bayangol, Ili, Bortala, Urumqi, Turpan, Tacheng, Karamay, Altay, Sanci Hui, Kumul. The map below shows the number of camps per city and region.<sup>100</sup>

The *Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)* conducted a study based on the research of the German academic, Adrian Zenz on the concentration camps, and the research of the law school student, Shawn Zhang on satellite

## CHINESE CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN EAST TURKISTAN

Chinese government keeps over 1 million Uighur in concentration camps

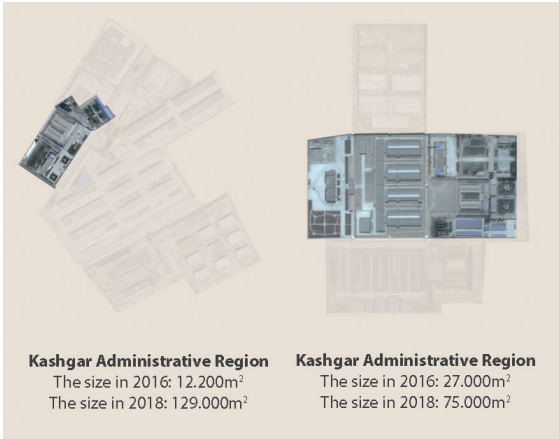
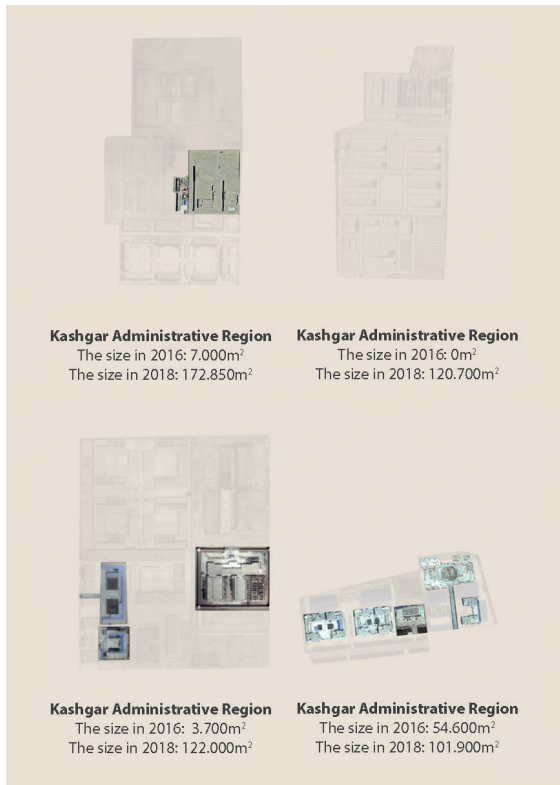
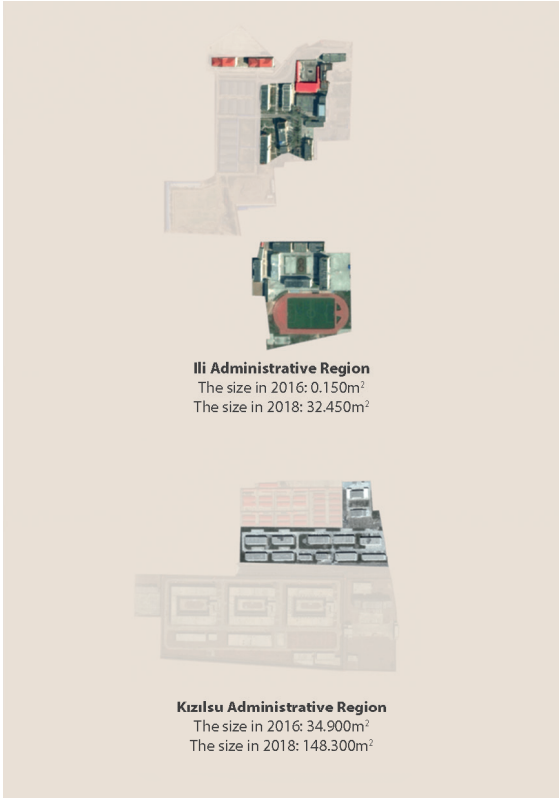


<sup>98</sup> Graham-Harrison, Garside, “Allow no escapes...”

<sup>99</sup> East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, “Coordinates”, <https://nationalawakening.org/coordinates/>

<sup>100</sup> “Çin’in Doğu Türkistan’daki...”





Source: Mark Doman, Stephen Hutcheon, Dylon Welch, Kyle Taylor, "China's frontier of fear", 13.10.2018.

images depicting the concentration camps in China. In this study, 28 regions where the camps were established under the contracts and tenders initiated by the Chinese government for the camp sites, were examined by area size over different years, in addition to documents. ASPI's reviews covering the period between 2016 and 2019 revealed a 465% growth in these 28 camp sites. It is understood that the total area of the 28 camps in September 2018 was 2.7 million square meters. According to the aforementioned study, the growth at a facility which appeared on the same date in the city of Hotan, is the largest of those that were identified. The area of the facility increased to 172,000 square meters in September 2018, from 7,000 square meters at the beginning of 2016, which corresponds to an expansion of 2,469% over a period of approximately 18 months.<sup>101</sup>

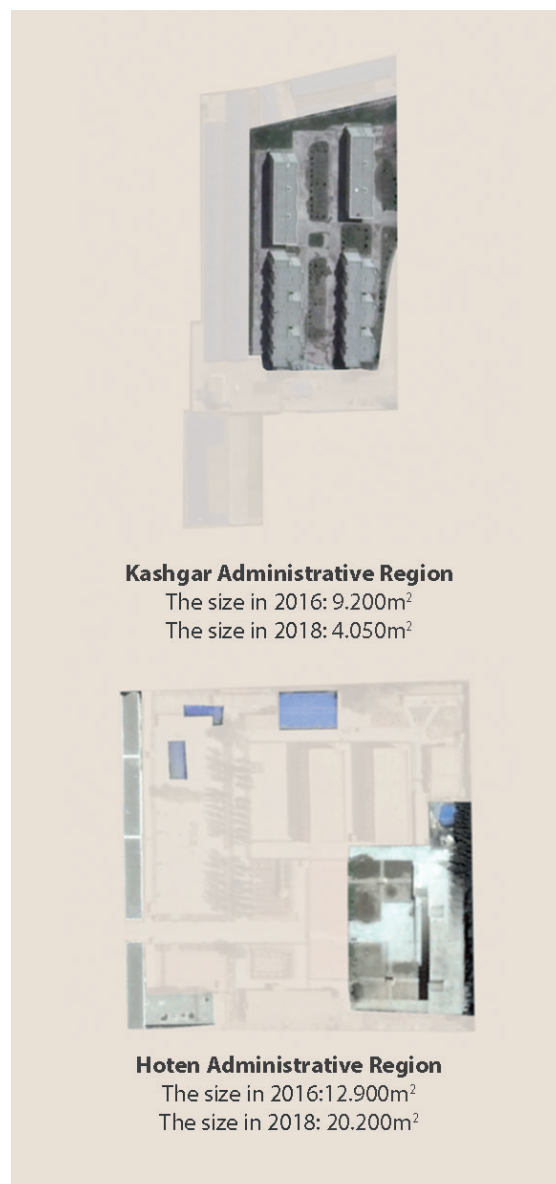
The satellite images below show the expansion of the camp sites in different regions between 2016 and 2018:

The research of the law student, Shawn Zhang, who was aware of the existence of the concentration camps in his country and conducted a study on satellites to investigate such camps, is one of the significant research studies that show the existence of the concentration camps and is used as a resource by media organizations. In May 2018, Zhang scanned the Google Earth satellite images to find evidence on the subject and located the images of the camps before and after they were built by comparing the concentration camp addresses in the files he found with the satellite images.<sup>102</sup>

The satellite images in the photos are images that are captured before and after 2017, which

are published by Shawn Zhang, and which depict the extent to which the construction of concentration camps has increased after 2017.

These images show that the number and area of the concentration camps have increased rapidly as of 2017.<sup>103</sup>



<sup>101</sup> Ryan, Cave, Ruser, "Mapping Xinjiang's 're...'", Chris Buckley, "China is detaining Muslims in vast numbers. The Goal: 'Transformation'", *New York Times*, 08.09.2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/world/asia/china-ughur-muslim-detention-camp.html>

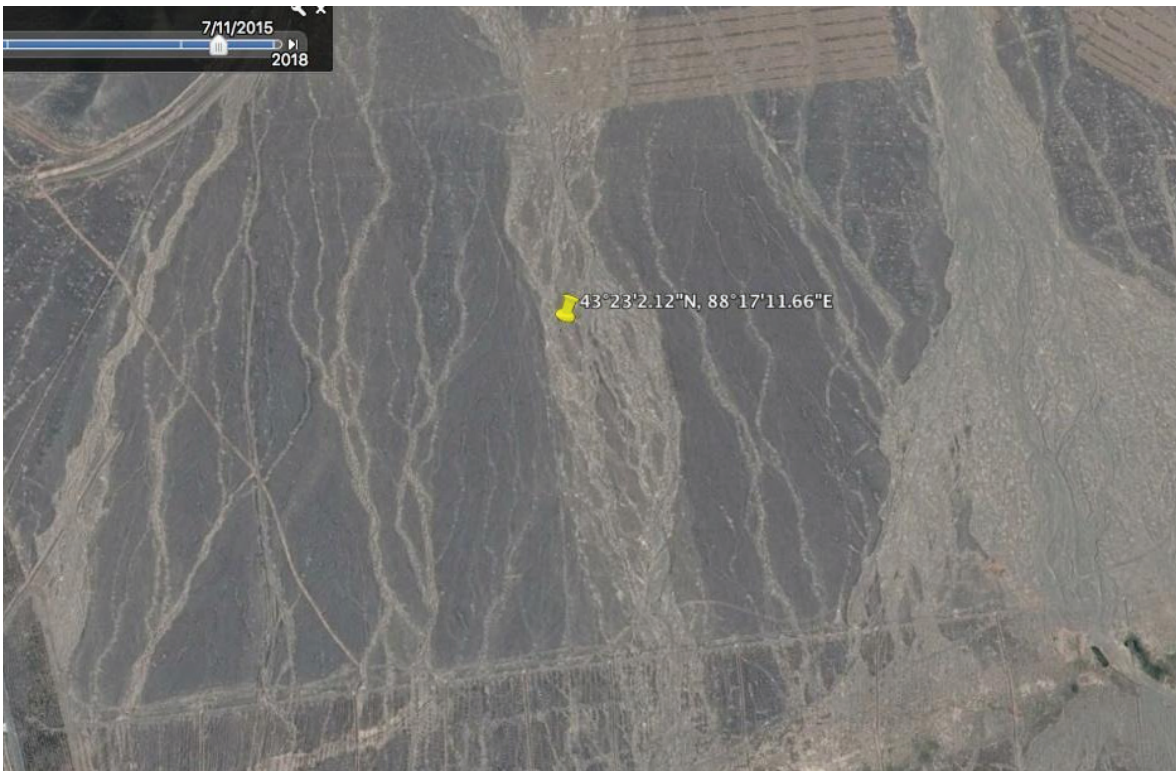
<sup>102</sup> AQ&A, Shawn Zhang, "What Satellite Images can Show Us About 'Re-education' Camps in Xinjiang", *China File*, 23.08.2018, <http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/features/what-satellite-images-can-show-us-about-re-education-camps-xinjiang>

<sup>103</sup> Shawn Zhang, "Detention Camp Construction is Booming Xinjiang", 19.06.2018, <https://medium.com/@shawnwzhang/detention-camp-construction-is-booming-in-xinjiang-a2525044c6b1>

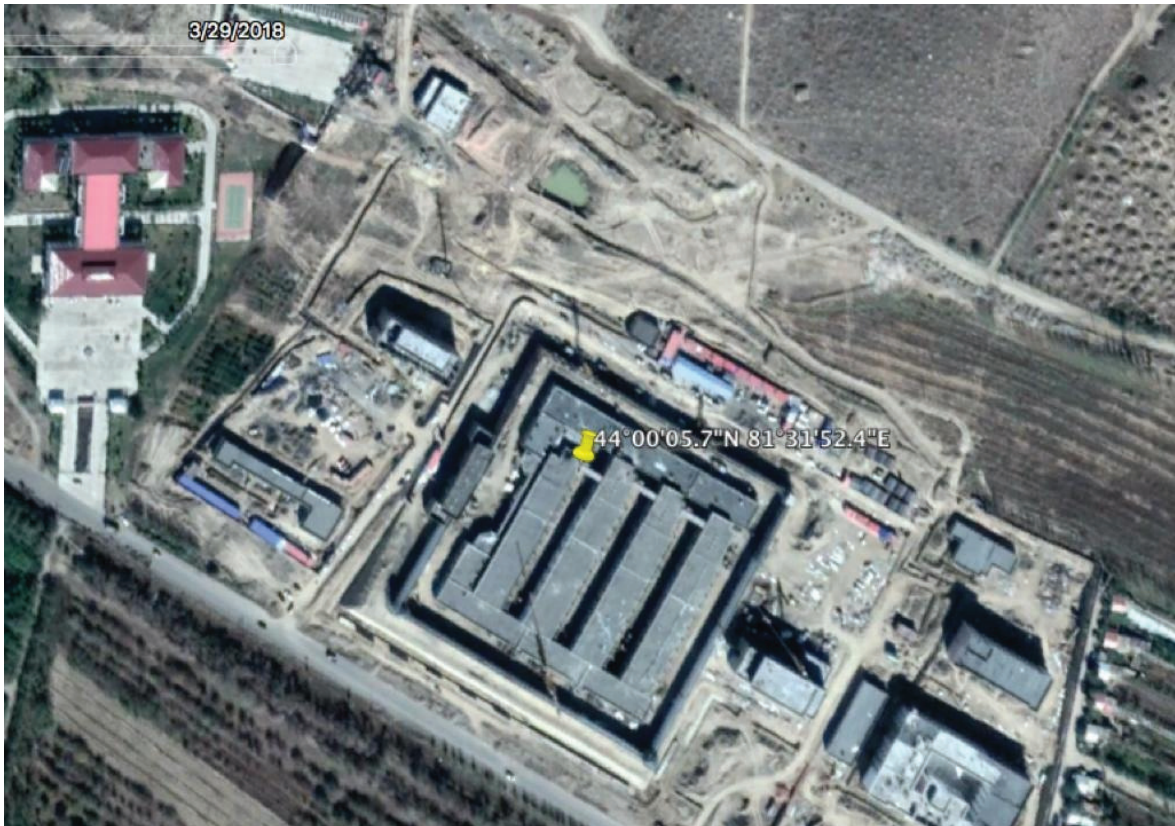
## Satellite Images of the Concentration Camps



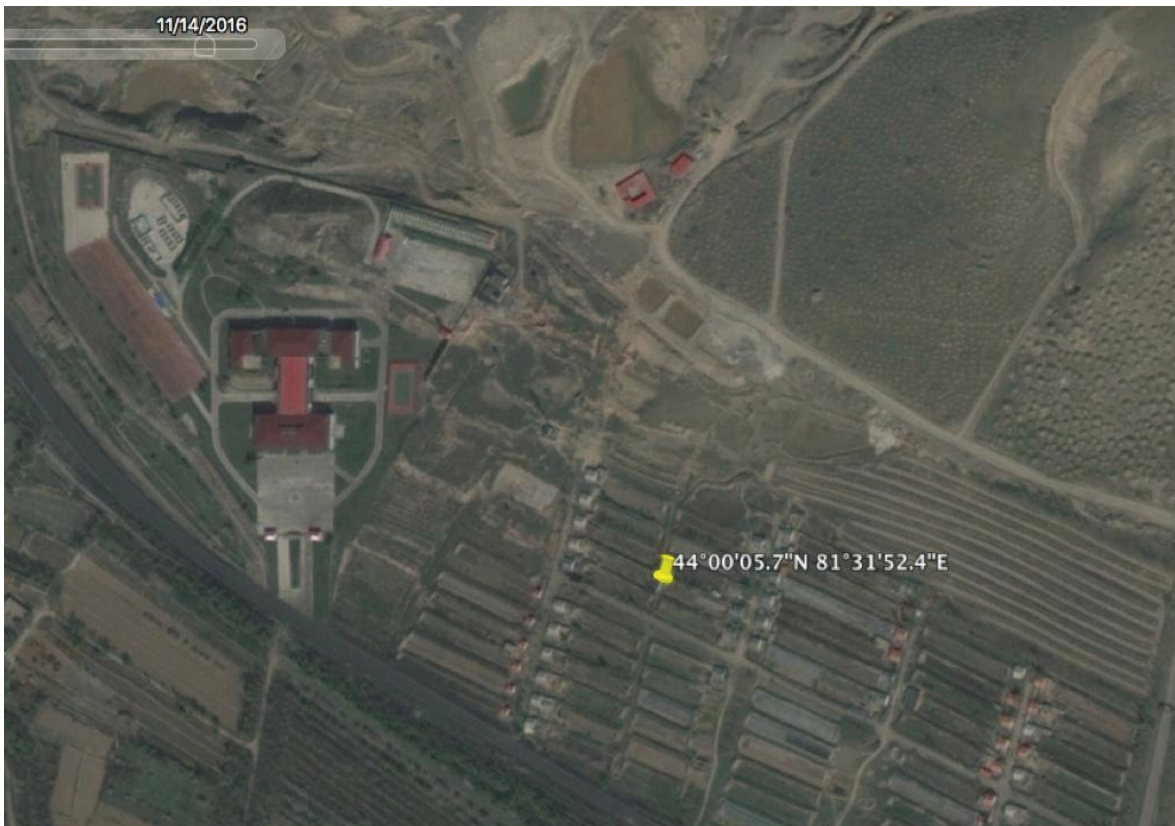
Tapancheng - Urumqi / 2018



Tapancheng - Urumqi / 2015



Yining/Gulca-Ili / 2018



Yining/Gulca-Ili / 2016



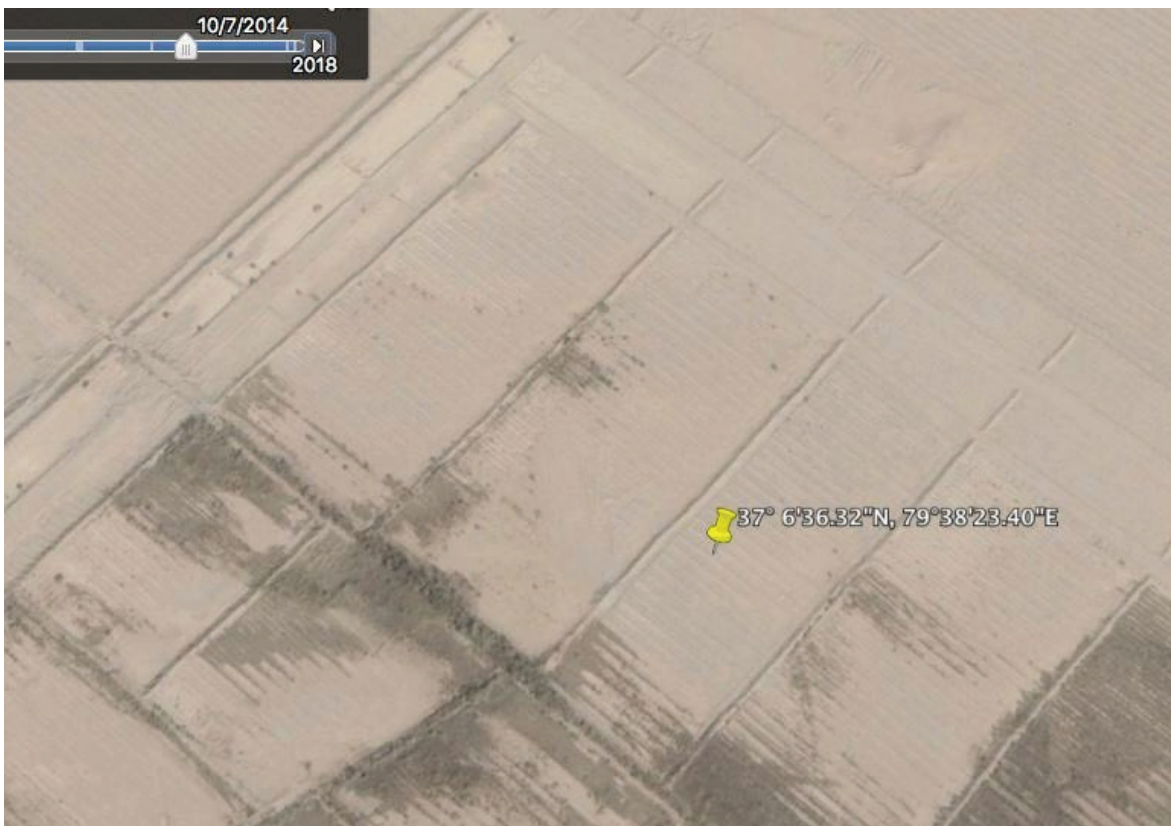
Kargilik - Kashgar / 2018



Kargilik- Kashgar / 2015



Karakas - Hoten / **2018**



Karakas - Hoten / **2014**



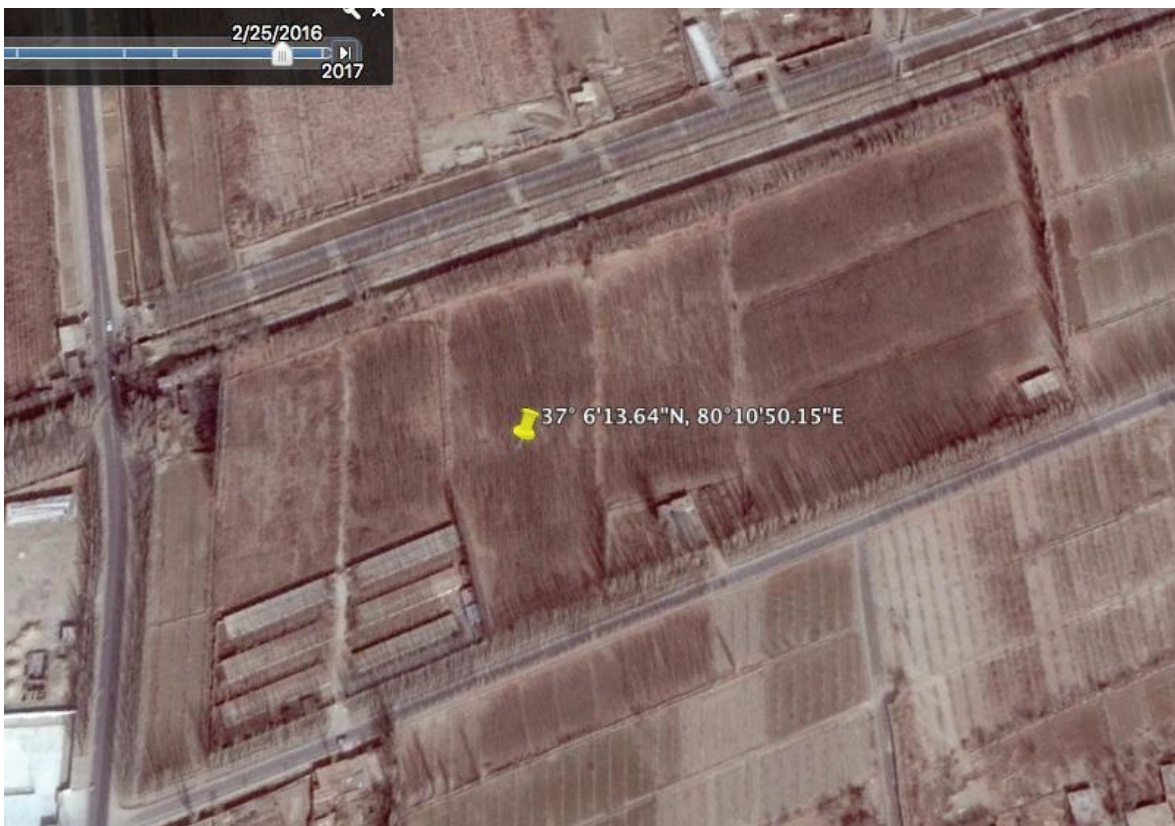
Yarkant - Kashgar&Hoten / 2017



Yarkant - Kashgar&Hoten / 2015



Lop-Hoten / 2017

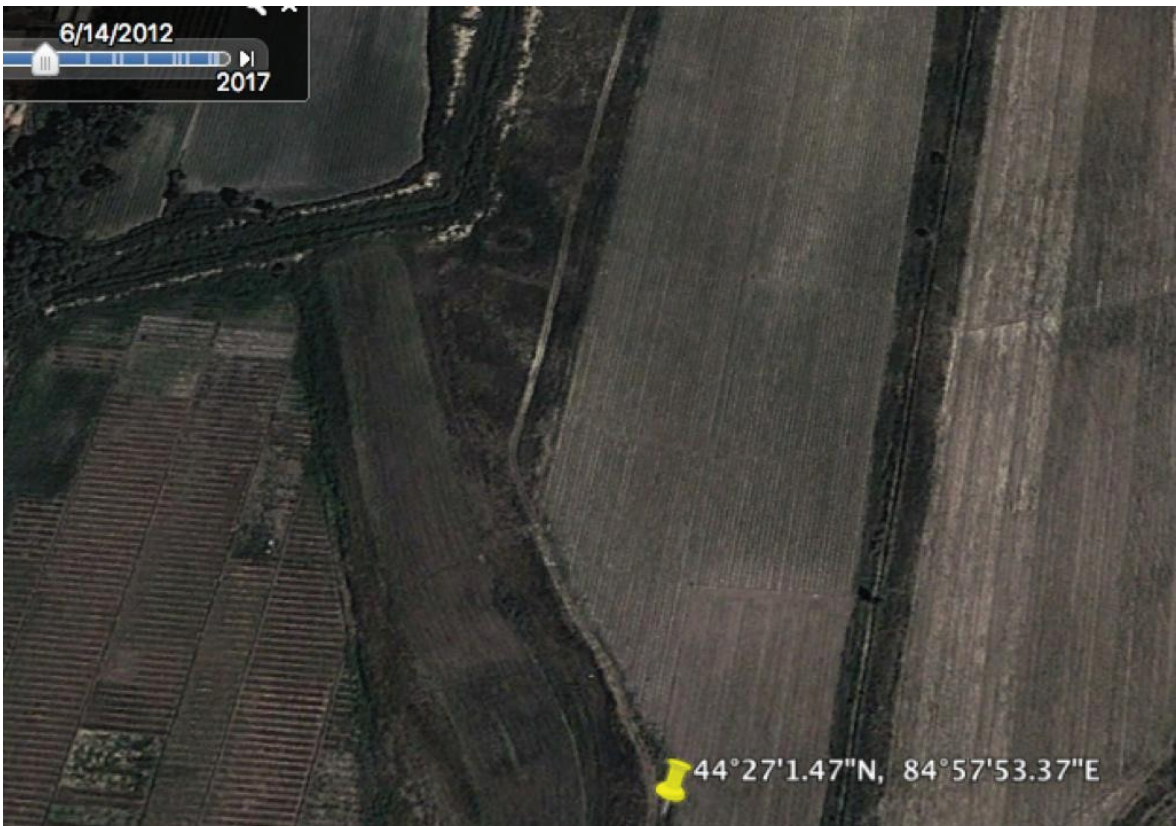


Lop-Hoten / 2016





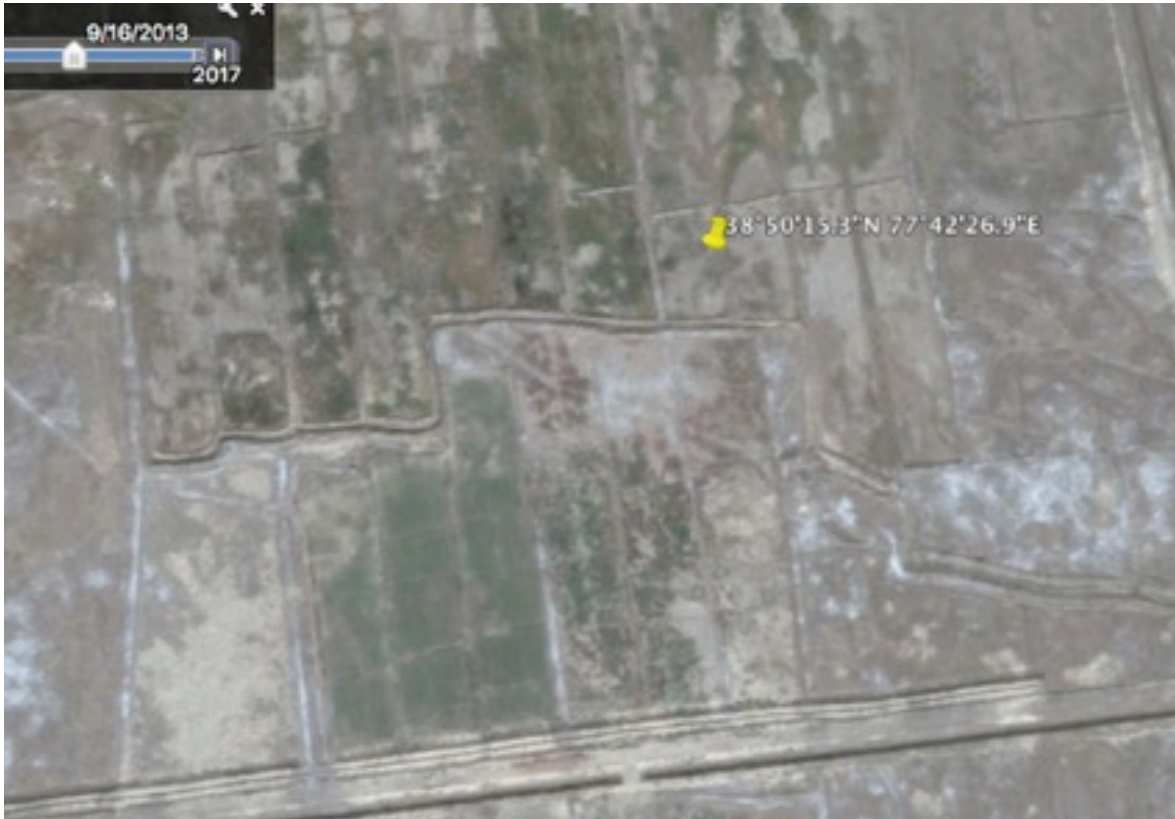
Kuytun - Ili / 2017



Kuytun - Ili / 2012



Makit-Kashgar / 2017



Makit-Kashgar / 2013



Hotan-Hoten / 2018



Hotan-Hoten / 2016



Hotan-Hoten / 2018



Hotan-Hoten / 2015



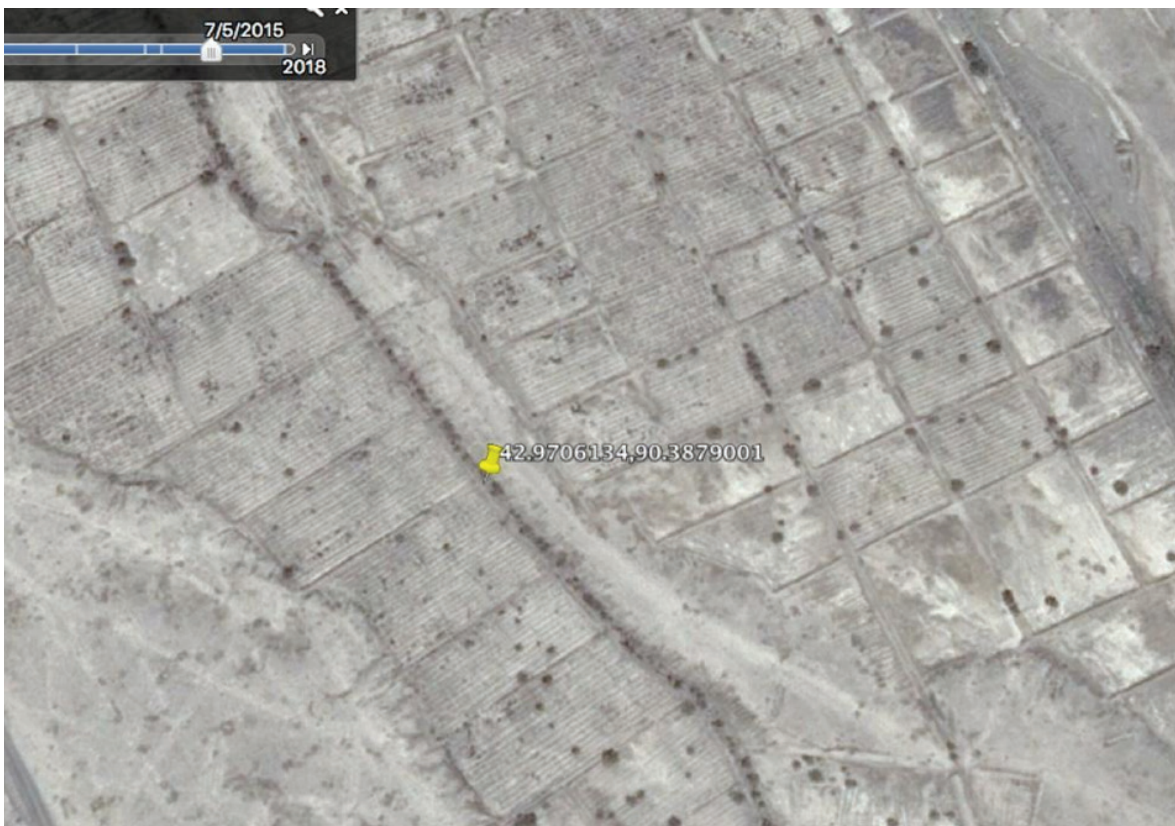
Bay (Baisheng)-Aksu / 2017



Bay (Baisheng)-Aksu / 2011



Shanshan-Turpan / 2018



Shanshan-Turpan / 2015



Chapchal, Ili / 2017



Chapchal, Ili / 2015



Kuka-Aksu / 2018



Kuka-Aksu / 2016





Shayar - Aksu / 2018



Shayar - Aksu / 2014



Korla-Bayingolin / 2018



Korla-Bayingolin / 2014



Aksu / 2018



Aksu / 2015

## 3 MILLION SOULS LONGING FOR SUNSHINE

There are differing pieces of information about the number of people who are held in concentration camps, and almost all of this information is given as an estimate as a result of the statements of those who managed to get out of the camps, and their relatives, the testimonies of the local residents in villages and towns, and the research studies of academics and journalists.

Article 103 of the Criminal Code of the People's Republic of China stipulates that any activity which is considered to "explicitly provoke separatism and seek to divide the country" should be punished.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, independent journalists, activists, NGO officials and independent delegations cannot enter the camps to do research. These people usually try to enter the regions with tourist visas and share the results of their research studies as secretly as possible.<sup>105</sup>

China is known to have taken state officials and some groups to centers that are prepared

in advance with make-believe programs to stall the world public.<sup>106</sup> China mostly chooses the diplomats and journalists it takes to these places,<sup>107</sup> and since the objectivity of these visits is controversial as they are not independent programs, the data obtained during such visits certainly do not reflect the truth.<sup>108</sup> During these programs, there were many incidents showing that the people who were asked questions, were predicted to have provided information which they were forced to memorize in advance, with tearful eyes.<sup>109</sup> In one such excursion program, the statement of "Please continue enduring my heart!" which was written in a corner of the concentration camp and was understood not to have been erased as it wasn't noticed, is enough to explain many things.<sup>110</sup>

It is known through the interviews with ex-prisoners, that there are people from almost every job and profession group in the camps: students, farmers, tradesmen, businessmen, scholars,

<sup>104</sup> Tuna, p. 127.

<sup>105</sup> "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'daki..."; Alexandra Ma, "Chilling undercover footage taken inside China's most oppressive region shows it's virtually impossible to escape the paranoid police state", *Business Insider*, 30.06.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-xinjiang-undercover-report-police-paranoia-muslim-crackdown-2019-6?r=US&IR=T>

<sup>106</sup> The Uyghur American Association, "OIC head to visit Muslim Uighur regions in China", 06.14.2010, <https://uyghuramerican.org/article/oic-head-visit-muslim-uyghur-regions-china.html>

<sup>107</sup> Uluslararası Af Örgütü, "Hiçbir yer güvenli..."

<sup>108</sup> "Kanadalı gazetecinin dilinden Çin'in toplama kampları", *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 07.09.2019, <https://qha.com.tr/haberler/kanadali-gazetecinin-dilinden-cin-in-toplama-kamplari/79123/>

<sup>109</sup> "BBC, Uyghur Türkü Müslümanların tutulduğu toplama kamplarına girdi", 18.06.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kX-BH21-dxM>; John Sudworth, "Searching for truth in China's Uighur 're-education' camps", *BBC*, 21.06.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-china-blog-48700786>

<sup>110</sup> "Çin toplama kampları: 'Eğitim kampı' olarak tanıtılan 'cezaevleri'", *Timetürk*, 29.06.2019, <https://www.timeturk.com/cin-in-toplama-kamplari-egitim-kampi-olarak-tanitilan-cezaevleri/haber-1102011>

clergymen,<sup>111</sup> academics,<sup>112</sup> local government employees, civil servants, workers, artists and athletes; women, men, children, young and old people.<sup>113</sup> It is understood that Uighur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Muslims are taken to the camps in the broadest sense possible. Researchers who were able to go to the region say that the shops in some villages, towns and cities are always closed, and it is even difficult to see any people on the streets, and they mention the abundance of the imprisoned people with the analogy of ghost towns and cities.<sup>114</sup> In fact, it is stated that even the collection of crops in the fields is a problem since the majority of the young men in the villages are in concentration camps, and the poverty of the people increases even more as a result. On the other hand, it is stated that the Han Chinese population is intensely located in all regions where the population became sparse, with significant financial benefits.

A report released by the *Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP)* in January 2019 states that at least 338 Uighur intellectuals have been imprisoned by the CPC or have somehow disappeared since April 2017.<sup>115</sup> This figure is also confirmed in another source.<sup>116</sup> One of these people is Prof. Dr. Mutallip Sidiq Shahiri, who is a prominent intellectual of the Uighur society, and was a lecturer at the Department of Turkish and Uighur Literature at Kashgar University between 1983 and 1991. Known for the 900-page study published in 2010 on the onomasticon of the modern Uighur language, which is consid-

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ered to be the core of Uighur research studies, Shahiri, suddenly disappeared in Kashgar in September 2018. Yalkun Rozi, aged 54, who was also highly respected by society and who has prepared textbooks that teach classic poetry and folk tales to Uighurs for 15 years, was sentenced to imprisonment for more than 10 years on charges of "incitement to the destruction of the state".<sup>117</sup> İlham Tohti, who was an economics professor at the Beijing Minzu University was arrested with his mother in January 2014 and sentenced to life imprisonment.<sup>118</sup> In January 2018, the famous clergyman, Muhammed Salih, aged 82, who translated the Quran into Uighur Turkish, was placed in a concentration camp despite his advanced age and was martyred there. All of these are just a few examples of how serious the human rights violations and massacres implemented by China have become.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>111</sup> "Ninety-Year-Old Uyghur Imam Confirmed Detained in Xinjiang But Condition Unknown", *Radio Free Asia*, 01.22.2020, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/imam-01222020130927.html>

<sup>112</sup> "China denies detained Uighur academic was sentenced to death", *France24*, 27.12.2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20191227-china-denies-detained-uyghur-academic-was-sentenced-to-death>

<sup>113</sup> "Xinjiang Authorities Arrest Prominent Uyghurs in Public to Instill Fear", *Radio Free Asia*, 14.11.2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/public-11142019152712.html>

<sup>114</sup> "Burası Doğu Türkistan: Koca bir köyde tek kişi bile yok", *Haber Nida*, 07.03.2019, <http://habernida.com/burasi-dogu-turkistan-koca-bir-koyde-tek-kisi-bile-yok/>; "Doğu Türkistan'da şehirler bomboş", *Türkistan Press*, 13.04.2019, <http://turkistanpress.com/page/dogu-turkistan-39-da-sehirler-bom-bos/479>

<sup>115</sup> UHRP, "The Persecution of the Intellectuals in the Uyghur Region Continues", Haziran 2019, [https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/UHRP\\_UP-DATE-ThePersecution\\_ofTheIntellectuals-in-the-Uyghur-Region.pdf](https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/UHRP_UP-DATE-ThePersecution_ofTheIntellectuals-in-the-Uyghur-Region.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> "Son 2 Yılda Tutuklanan Doğu Türkistanlı Aydınlar ve Sanatçılar", *Uyghur Haber*, 09.02.2019, <https://www.uyghurhaber.com/son-2-yildir-tutuklanan-dogu-turkistanli-aydinlar>

<sup>117</sup> Gizem Sade, "Çin Uyghur aydınları cezaevinde tutuyor: Rozi'nin hikayesi", *Euronews*, 27.08.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/08/27/vid-eo-cin-uyghur-aydinlari-cezaevinde-tutuyor-rozi-nin-hikayesi-dogu-turkistan>

<sup>118</sup> "Uyghur fikir adamı İlham Tohti, Nobel Barış Ödülü'ne aday gösterildi", 11.01.2018 <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/tr/uyghur-fikir-adami-ilham-tohti-nobel-baris-odulune-aday-gosterildi/>

<sup>119</sup> "Alim Muhammed Salih Çin hapishanesinde şehit edildi", *Yeni Şafak*, 30.01.2018, <https://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/alim-muhammed-salih-cin-hapishanesinde-sehit-edildi-3047738>

**A report released by the UHRP in January 2019 states that at least 338 Uighur intellectuals have been imprisoned by the CPC or have somehow disappeared since April 2017.**

UHRP researcher, Henryk Szadziewski reveals the main purpose of these policies as follows: “Intellectuals and leaders constitute a focus point. Therefore, targeting them is considered to be the most effective way to speed up the assimilation processes and at the same time destroy the Uyghur identity.”<sup>120</sup> China resorted to this practice several times within the past century. When East Turkistan was occupied in 1949, the first order of business was to close the madrasahs, which are the key institutions of Islamic education. The clergymen and intellectuals who could lead the people were declared as “public enemies”, and were removed, and during the period of Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 and continued until Mao’s death in 1976, hundreds of intellectuals and scholars were massacred, declaring everything in relation to the Turkish Islamic culture as hostile under the pretense of reactionism and bigotry to sever the society from its traditional values and ties, to make them give up their religious beliefs and to force Uighurs to become Chinese.

According to the August 2018 issue of the *Newsweek* magazine published in Japan, the number of those held in camps is 892,329.<sup>121</sup> The German anthropologist Adrian Zenz states

in his report published in May 2018 that the number of people held in camps could be over 1 million with the addition of cities at the regional and administrative level.<sup>122</sup> According to the UN, approximately 1-3 million Uighurs are forcibly held in camps in East Turkistan.<sup>123</sup> UHRP Chairman Nuri Türkel states that the number of people held in camps can reach 3 million, considering the breadth and number of the camp sites.<sup>124</sup> According to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization of UN (UNPA), the number of people held in concentration camps is more than 2 million.<sup>125</sup>

Looking at the 48 items that are deemed sufficient for people to be arrested and detained in camps, clearly reveals that there cannot be any Uighurs who cannot be considered to meet such conditions! It is therefore quite likely that there is a much higher number of detainees, which exceed the estimates. In fact, the President of the East Turkistan Education and Solidarity Association, Hidayet Oğuzhan says that the number of those detained in concentration camps is nearly 5 million.<sup>126</sup>

China refuses to provide information on how many people are held in concentration camps. Almost the only official statement on behalf of China was made by the President of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region Government, Shohrat Zakir, who indicated that he could not say exactly how many people were in the facilities and simply said: “1 million people! This number is quite intimidating. 1 million people in the education system! This is not realistic at all. It’s all just hearsay.”<sup>127</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Isabel Van Brugen, “Uyghur Diaspora Receive ‘Proof of Life’ Calls From the ‘Disappeared’ in Xinjiang”, *The Epoch Times*, 07.03.2019, [https://www.theepochtimes.com/uyghur-diaspora-receive-proof-of-life-calls-from-the-disappeared-in-xinjiang\\_2828189.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/uyghur-diaspora-receive-proof-of-life-calls-from-the-disappeared-in-xinjiang_2828189.html)

<sup>121</sup> “ウイグル絶望収容所の収監者数は89万人以上”, 13.03.2018, <https://www.newsweekjapan.jp/stories/world/2018/03/89-3.1.php>

<sup>122</sup> UHRP, “The Mass Internment...”

<sup>123</sup> East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, “Coordinates”, <https://nationalawakening.org/coordinates/>; “Çin’in Doğu Türkistan Zulmü”, 01.05.2020, <https://www.bylge.com/post/ck3zo5sohturt0790ce4vx8ob>

<sup>124</sup> “‘Modern-Day Slavery’: China is Forcing Muslims into Forced Labor, Prison & Indoctrination Camps”, *Democracy Now*, 09.01.2020, [https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/9/inside\\_chinas\\_push\\_to\\_turn\\_muslim](https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/9/inside_chinas_push_to_turn_muslim)

<sup>125</sup> UNPO, “East Turkistan: US Senate approves Uyghur HR Bill”, 15.05.2020, <https://unpo.org/article/21893>

<sup>126</sup> Doğu Türkistan Haber ve Araştırma Merkezi, “Oğuzhan: Çin coronavirusü Doğu Türkistan’da fırsata dönüştürebilir”, 24.02.2020, <https://www.doguturkistan.org/2020/02/24/oguzhan-cin-coronavirusu-dogu-turkistanda-firsata-donusturebilir/>

<sup>127</sup> Blanchard, “China defends Xinjiang...”

A local resident who wants to remain anonymous, says that her husband, four brothers and 12 nephews (all the men in the family) have been held in concentration camps since 2017.<sup>128</sup> According to the news article of the East Turkistan Education and Solidarity Association, dated August 16, 2018, the number of people held in camps that were opened in Hotan exceeds 300,000.<sup>129</sup> The details of the numbers that are provided are approximately as follows:

- Secondary School Camp No. 2 in the Hotan-Karakax county: 5,000 people
- Special Education Center Camp next to the Directorate of Public Affairs of the Hotan-Karakax county: 9,000 people (female detainees)
- Central Teaching School (Sifen) Camp in the Hotan-Karakax county: 10,000 people
- The camp next to the Hotan-Karakax county train station: 100,000 people
- Urchi city camp in Hotan-Karakax: 15,000 people (female detainees)
- Bostankoy Industrial Zone Agricultural University Camp in Hotan-Karakax: 60,000 people
- Vocational High School Camp in Hotan-Yorunkash city: 60,000 people
- Teaching School (Sifen) Camp in the Hotan-Gazun county: 15,000 people
- Information on the number of detainees in the Hotan-Kaipachui Camp could not be obtained.
- Hotan-Laskuy city market camp: Although the number of detainees in this camp could not be obtained, it is known as the most crowded camp in terms of the number of detainees.<sup>130</sup>

**When East Turkistan was occupied in 1949, the first order of business was to close the madrasahs, which are the key institutions of Islamic education. The clergymen and intellectuals who could lead the people were declared as “public enemies”, and were removed, and during the period of Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 and continued until Mao’s death in 1976, hundreds of intellectuals and scholars were massacred, declaring everything in relation to the Turkish Islamic culture as hostile under the pretense of reactionism and bigotry to sever the society from its traditional values and ties, to make them give up their religious beliefs and to force Uighurs to become Chinese.**

According to a list created for a small section of the arrests in Hotan, it is understood that 311 people were sent to concentration camps just because they “grew beards, fasted or applied for a passport”. All of these people were sent to concentration camps in 2017 and 2018. The list also includes information on hundreds of relatives of those people, including children. For example, even a video which someone downloaded six years ago while talking to a friend of his/her, who is located abroad, through a communication program called *WeChat* was documented. The 137-page list also contains detailed information on 1,800 people who had contact with the 311 detainees.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>128</sup> HRW, “Eradicating Ideological Viruses...”

<sup>129</sup> This figure corresponds to almost half of the population of the region, which is reported to be around 650,000, and considering that it has nearly been two years since the publication of the news article, it is possible that it has increased even more. For detailed information, see Doğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, “İşte işgalci Çin zulmü: Sadece bir şehirde 300 bin Uygur Türkü esir edildi”, 16.08.2018, <https://www.doguturkistander.org/2018/08/16/iste-isgalci-cin-zulmu-sadece-bir-sehirde-300-bin-uygur-turku-esir/>

<sup>130</sup> This camp is known as a horrible death camp where oppression, persecution and any type of torture are applied against Uighur detainees. Residents of the region say that those who are imprisoned in this camp never come out alive.

<sup>131</sup> “Çin’den Sızan Yeni Belgeler Doğu Türkistan’daki Toplama Kampları ve Keyfi Tutuklamaları Kanıtıyor”, *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 18.02.2020, <https://qha.com.tr/haberler/cin-den-sizan-yeni-belgeler-dogu-turkistan-daki-toplama-kamplarini-ve-keyfi-tutuklamalari-kanitli-yor/160799/>

According to a study conducted by the Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) and the Equal Rights Initiative (ERI) in August 2018, in the Kashgar province, 660,000 people in the region were placed in camps on the grounds that they had “strong religious views” or “politically incorrect opinions”. In addition to this, approximately 1.3 million were subjected to compulsory education under the pretense of “re-education” at places where they were located, by being grouped into day and night classes. In the study, it is stated that 30% of the Uighur population living in rural areas in the south of East Turkistan were understood to have encountered the forced re-education practice without any judicial decision based on the current findings. A large number of Uighurs who live outside of China reported that their relatives who were held in these camps, which particularly target the Uighurs, died either while they were at camp or after their release.<sup>132</sup> The report also states that more than 2 million people in East Turkistan were arrested and detained in concentration camps until the end of July 2018.<sup>133</sup>

An interesting research article on how many people can be found in the camps was published on the news site *The Epoch Times* on December 28, 2018. According to the research, Li Fang, a Chinese dissident living in Finland, identified 19 potential prisons and 15 potential re-education camps in the Kashgar province, where he estimated that half a million Muslims are held based on the knowledge that more than 80% of the Uighurs in East Turkistan live in the south of the region. Having reached this conclusion as a result of a challenging and meticulous study through the *Google Earth* satellite images, Fang set some criteria for a

building to be a concentration camp, a similar surveillance center or a prison. Accordingly, the main features of the concentration camps are as follows:

- The site is surrounded by walls and barbed wires.
- Inside the camps, there are partition walls, barbed wires or iron fences which divide the group of buildings into several independent areas.
- The sites include facilities that are similar to security booths.
- There’s usually very little movement at the site. There are either no vehicles or very few vehicles inside the facility.
- The above features usually appeared after 2017 and simultaneously.

Having identified about 20 facilities in Kashgar, Fang estimates that 15 of them are potentially concentration camps. The criteria set by Li Fang for prisons are as follows:

- There are thick, flat and surrounding walls outside the designated area.
- Watchtowers that are higher than the walls are located at the two or four corners of the closed area.
- Generally, there are very visible patrol routes inside and outside the walls.
- The buildings are built very neatly and are quite far away from the walls around them.
- There are usually no vehicles at the prisons.

With these criteria, Fang not only found 19 prisons in Kashgar as a result of his research, but also revealed the expansion process for some prisons with the data history feature of *Google Earth*.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Mustafa Bağ, “Çin’den toplama kampı savunması: Uygur Türklerine bedava mesleki eğitim veriyoruz”, *Euronews*, 17.10.2018, <https://tr.euronews.com/2018/10/17/cin-dogu-turkistan-daki-kamplar-kabul-etti-kamplar-uygur-kokenli-yonetici-savundu>

<sup>133</sup> Chinese Human Rights Defenders, “China: Massive Numbers of Uyghurs & Other Ethnic Minorities Forced into Re-education Programs”, 03.08.2018, <https://www.nchr.org/2018/08/china-massive-numbers-of-uyghurs-other-ethnic-minorities-forced-into-re-education-programs/>

<sup>134</sup> Zeng, “Mapping Human Rights...”



# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AT CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Characterizing the religious and cultural lifestyle as “extremism”, the Chinese government and media uses a language that belittles the religion of Islam, arguing that Uighurs are “infected with unhealthy thoughts” and concentration camps are quarantine centers that have been opened “to rid them of this virus”. The concentration camp system implemented by China is literally a definition of human rights violation and crime against humanity.<sup>135</sup> Although Chinese officials claim that these places are voluntary education camps, interviews with former detainees who were able to escape from the camps, observations of journalists who went to the region, and the picture revealed by some Chinese officials who leaked secret documents to the press clearly shows that the facts about the camps are the complete opposite of this official communication. The facts revealed by the witnesses and documents regarding the camps reveal that these are actually centers where any type of human rights violations and oppression are applied, and where cultural and religious assimilation is carried out by providing ideological and behavioral education.<sup>136</sup>

Documents called “Chinese Correspondences” contain instructions for brainwashing methods that are expected to be applied in camps where hundreds of thousands of people are held. These secret documents show that the Chinese police decide on who will be placed in such camps among the people living in East Turkistan, based on artificial intelligence software. These documents were signed in 2017 by Zhu Hailun, who is the top security officer of East Turkistan, and was the CPC vice president of the region at the time.

HRW’s China Director Sophie Richardson<sup>137</sup> stated that these documents were clear evidence for serious human rights violations that are committed in East Turkistan, and emphasized that they should be used by prosecutors.<sup>138</sup> Reviewed by the collaboration of 17 press institutions, including the *BBC* and *The Guardian*, these documents are the most concrete evidence of the Chinese government’s systematic brainwashing activity against Muslim Uighurs and the human rights violations that occur in the region. The most striking one of these documents is a

<sup>135</sup> Aldan Forth, “The ominous metaphors of China’s Uighur concentration camps”, *The Conversation*, 19.01.2020, <https://www.theconversation.com/amp/the-ominous-metaphors-of-chinas-uighur-concentration-camps-129665>

<sup>136</sup> “Secret documents reveal how China mass detention camps work”, *AP News*, 25.11.2019, <https://apnews.com/4ab0b341a4ec4e648423f2ec47ea5c47>

<sup>137</sup> HRW, “Sophie Richardson, China Director”, <https://www.hrw.org/about/people/sophie-richardson>

<sup>138</sup> “Çin’in kamplarda tuttuğu Uygur Türkleri için verdiği ‘beyin yıkama’ talimatları sızdırıldı”, *BBC*, 25.11.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/amp/haberler-dunya-50541665>

directive that was prepared for the managers of the concentration camps, which the Chinese administration called the “Telegram”. The instructions in this booklet, which was prepared in 2017, consist of the following:

- The indoctrination (brainwashing) methods to be used
- How to hide the existence of the camps from the public
- How to prevent escapes from the camps
- How to control epidemic diseases
- The conditions, under which those who are held in camps can see their relatives, and even when they can go to the bathroom<sup>139</sup>

In the concentration camps that are set up for assimilation purposes, the arrest and detention of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities because of their lifestyles is a violation of human rights simply on its own, and the activities at the camps show how intense such violations are. The human rights violations that are applied in accordance with the instructions in these documents are listed below under headings.



### **Uighurs are arrested without being charged with any crimes and without standing trial.**

People are held at political education camps with their right to a fair trial breached, and are neither charged with a crime nor stand trial. One of the detainees describes the situation as follows: “I asked the officials if I could hire a lawyer. They told me, ‘No, because there is no verdict of conviction for you. You don’t have

to defend yourself for anything. You are at a political education camp here. All you have to do is study.”<sup>140</sup>



### **Families are not informed about the fate of those who are held in the camps.**

The Chinese government considers religious and cultural activities as crimes of terrorism and notifies the families of many people who are detained long after the situation. In fact, information is not available about many people even though a long time has passed since their arrests, and their fate is unknown. For example, 137 people were detained in Hotan in Ramadan in 2019, but the families were notified of the situation a long time afterwards, and many of them actually still haven’t heard from their relatives.<sup>141</sup> Families are afraid to speak up to find out about the fate of their relatives, worrying that they too will experience a similar fate because it is known that there are hundreds of thousands of people from the same family or with kinship ties at the concentration camps.<sup>142</sup>



### **They are exposed to political brainwashing.**

The first item in the curriculum that is attempted to be taught in the camps relates to the ideological education that is aimed at changing the mentality of the detainees. According to the HRW report, those who are held in concentration camps are exposed to Communist propaganda for days, months, and even years of their stay and are forced to accept this doctrine. Almost all male members of some families are reported to

<sup>139</sup> Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, “Exposed: China’s Operating Manuals for Mass Internment and Arrest by Algorithm”, International Consortium of Investigative Journalist (ICIJ), 24.11.2019, <https://www.icij.org/investigations/china-cables/exposed-chinas-operating-manuals-for-mass-internment-and-arrest-by-algorithm/>; “Data leak reveals how China ‘brainwashes’ Uighurs in prison camps”, BBC, 24.11.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-asia-china-50511063>

<sup>140</sup> HRW, “Çin: Müslüman...”

<sup>141</sup> İnsan Hakları Hukuku Perspektifinden Doğu Türkistan: “Toplama Kampları” <https://medium.com/@efkarihur/insan-haklari-hukuku-perspektifinden-dogu-turkistan-toplama-kamplari-69dec957ddb7>

<sup>142</sup> Uluslararası Af Örgütü, “Çin siyasi kamplarında tutulan 1 milyon kişinin aileleri cevap talep ediyor”, 24.09.2018, <https://www.amnesty.org.tr/icerik/cin-siyasi-egitim-kamplarinda-tutulan-1-milyon-kisinin-aileleri-cevap-talep-ediyor>

be held in these political education camps.<sup>143</sup> The detainees are ordered to deny their religion and culture, and accept that there is no God (far from it), only the CPC.<sup>144</sup> Mandarin Chinese is taught by force in the camps, prisoners are forced to sing anthems praising the CPC, and memorize China's ideological rules. They are compelled to participate in flag-raising ceremonies, political meetings, and mass denunciation and denial meetings. Those who resist or are deemed to have "failed to learn" are punished. With its unprecedented prohibitions and oppressive practices on religious duties, China has practically declared the religion of Islam as illegal.<sup>145</sup> However, the Chinese Constitution states that "The citizens of the People's Republic of China have the freedom of religion and belief.", and "No government agency, public institution or individual can force citizens to believe or not believe in any religion, or discriminate against citizens based on the religion that they believe in or don't believe in."<sup>146</sup>



### **The detainees in the camps are exposed to physical and psychological torture.**

The testimonies that are provided below are based on information obtained from interviews with Uighurs and members of other Muslim minorities who managed to escape from the camps. The statements in different testimonies conform on the subject, which proves the accuracy of the information. Accordingly, some of the torture methods that are mentioned are as follows:

- Making people stand on hot stones with only their underwear on them in the summer, and barefooted on ice in the winter

**With its unprecedented prohibitions and oppressive practices on religious duties, China has practically declared the religion of Islam as illegal. However, the Chinese Constitution states that "The citizens of the People's Republic of China have the freedom of religion and belief.", and "No government agency, public institution or individual can force citizens to believe or not believe in any religion, or discriminate against citizens based on the religion that they believe in or don't believe in."**

- Beating
- Electrocuting
- Not intervening in disease situations
- Sleep deprivation
- Long-term solitary confinement
- Leaving people handcuffed for a long time
- Making people wait for a long time with black sacks on their heads
- Restricting people from going to the bathroom
- Holding people in overcrowded rooms
- Depriving people of food and water or not giving them enough food
- Immersion in water tanks or pouring cold water on people out in the cold
- Putting out cigarettes on the faces and bodies of female detainees
- Beating prisoners with a baton, electrocuting them, beating them with

<sup>143</sup> "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'da kurduğu kampları anlattı: 15 ay güneşi görmedim, her anı işkenceydi" 06.07.2019, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/48661/d%C3%BCnya/%C3%A7in%E2%80%99-do%C4%9Fu-t%C3%BCrkistan%E2%80%99da-kurdu%C4%9Fu-kamplar%C4%B1-anlat-t%C4%B1-15-ay-g%C3%BCne%C5%9Fi-g%C3%B6rmedim-her-an%C4%B1>

<sup>144</sup> Keir Simmons, "Inside Chinese camps thought to be detaining a million Muslim Uighurs", *NBC News*, 04.10.2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/ncna1062321>

<sup>145</sup> HRW, "Çin: Müslüman..."

<sup>146</sup> Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Ankara Büyükelçiliği, "Xinjang'da Dini İnanç Özgürlüğü", 12.06.2016, <http://tr.china-embassy.org/tur/xwdt/t1371486.htm>

**China annually generates \$1 billion from organ trade. It is stated that there is strong evidence indicating that the organs of a significant number of prisoners held in concentration camps, such as heart, lung, cornea, and liver were removed, and that such evidence was submitted to the UN Human Rights Commission.**

various pain-inflicting objects and torturing them while they are hung from their wrists

- Making people stand in the cold
- Blinding with intense and bright light
- Keeping in a tense position for a long time
- Making people sit without moving on seats called tiger seats for days
- Making people walk around with their hands handcuffed and their feet shackled
- Debilitating people with regularly administered drugs, the contents of which are not informed, and forcing obedience
- Forced abortions and birth control practices, sterilization of men
- Forcing a person to watch someone getting raped
- Gang rape



**Whether the detainees will be allowed to meet with their families or not is decided through a punishment and reward system.**

The persons detained in the camps can only meet with their families on condition that they fully complete the provided education, pass the language and political doctrine exams, and unconditionally comply with all the rules.<sup>147</sup>



**The period of confinement in the camps is not known.**

People do not know how long they will be held in the camps, which is also implemented as a psychological form of torture. Some leaked documents state that detainees will be released only if they change in terms of religion, language and culture. This release procedure can only take place after four CPC committees accept and confirm the evidence that the person has completely changed.<sup>148</sup>



**Imprisoned Uyghurs are asked to report or profile their family or friends.<sup>149</sup>**

Tens of thousands of new innocent people are placed in concentration camps in this way. A businessman who was arrested for alleged links with radical groups says: “They released me under the condition that I should spy on the East Turkistanis in Turkey for them.” With this practice, the Uighurs are asked to profile each other.<sup>150</sup>



**The children of the detainees in the camps are taken and it is ensured that people lose track of them.**

Arrests cause families to be torn apart. Those who want to take care of the children of their imprisoned relatives are not allowed to do so,

<sup>147</sup> “Data leak reveals how...”; Ellen Ioanes, “Rape, medical experiments, and forced abortions: One woman describes horrors of Xinjiang concentration camps”, *Business Insider*, 22.10.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/muslim-woman-describes-horrors-of-chinese-concentration-camp-2019-10>

<sup>148</sup> “Data leak reveals how...”

<sup>149</sup> “Secret documents reveal...”

<sup>150</sup> Mustafa Bağ, “Uygurlara ‘Çin işkencesi’: Doğu Türkistan’da neler oluyor?”, *Euronews*, 14.02.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/01/05/uygurlara-cin-iskencesi-dogu-turkistan-da-neler-oluyor>

and attempts to assimilate the children of the prisoners are made by being sent to orphanages and other social institutions. Children are forcibly removed from their families, and it is ensured that the families lose track of them.<sup>151</sup>



### **The organs of the Uighur Muslims located at the concentration camps are being stolen.**

The report prepared by the non-governmental organization called “The China Tribunal”, which is supported by the HRW Australian branch and was established to end the abuse of the international organ transplant system, and also supported by the international coalition, contains striking data on this issue. The report states that there is strong evidence indicating that the organs of a significant number of prisoners held in concentration camps, such as heart, lung, cornea, and liver were removed, and that such evidence was submitted to the UN Human Rights Commission.<sup>152</sup> According to the report of the China Tribunal, China annually generates \$1 billion from organ trade.<sup>153</sup> In another report published in the *BMC Medical Ethics* journal, it is stated that Chinese officials register the organs they forcibly harvest from Muslim Uyghur detainees as “organ donations”. It is claimed that more than 90,000 Uighurs and some political prisoners are executed every year in this way for their organs.

While the total number of “legal” organ transplants is estimated to be around 10,000 per year,

### **The European Parliament Committee on Public Health and the Subcommittee on Human Rights report that each illegally collected kidney and liver can have a market price of up to 150,000 Euros.**

the real figure in China is stated to be much higher, considering the above claims. Using the data from the country’s three largest hospitals, the researchers state that there are not only 100 hospitals in the country, where organ transplant operations can be performed, as the Chinese government claims, but 712 hospitals where liver and kidney transplants are performed. The European Parliament Committee on Public Health and the Subcommittee on Human Rights report that each illegally collected kidney and liver can have a market price of up to 150,000 Euros.<sup>154</sup>

Due to the fact that the bodies of the victims are not given to their families and the witnesses are often doctors, police officers and prison guards who are unable to speak, it is reported that it is very difficult to prove these practices in China.<sup>155</sup> In a news article published in a UK newspaper in 2013, a surgeon named Enver Tohti, who shares what he experienced in Urumqi in 1995, says that a prisoner who was executed, was deliberately shot in his right chest so that he did not die immediately and his heart was still beating while some of his organs were removed (liver and two kidneys). Saying that he was ordered to carry out this operation, Tohti said, “It was impossible to

<sup>151</sup> “İnsan Hakları İzleme Örgütü: Ailelerinden koparılan Uygur çocuklar derhal teslim edilsin”, 17.09.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/09/17/insan-haklar-izleme-orgutu-ailelerinden-koparilan-uygur-cocuklar-derhal-teslim-edilsin>

<sup>152</sup> China Tribunal, “Short Form of The China Tribunal’s Judgment”, Temmuz 2019, [https://chinatribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/China-Tribunal-SHORT-FORM-CONCLUSION\\_Final.pdf](https://chinatribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/China-Tribunal-SHORT-FORM-CONCLUSION_Final.pdf); Will Martin, “China is harvesting thousands of human organs from its Uighur Muslim minority, UN human-rights body hears”, *Business Insider*, 25.09.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-harvesting-organs-of-uyghur-muslims-china-tribunal-tells-un-2019-9>; Adam Withnall, “China is killing religious and ethnic minorities and harvesting their organs, UN Human Rights Council told”, *Independent*, 24.09.2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-religious-ethnic-minorities-uyghur-muslim-harvest-organs-un-human-rights-a9117911.html%3famp>; “China dituduh ambil, jual organ etnik Uighur”, *MyMetro*, 30.09.2019, <https://www.hmetro.com.my/global/2019/09/502096/china-dituduh-ambil-jual-organ-etnik-uyghur>

<sup>153</sup> Zak Doffman, “China Killing Prisoners to Harvest Organs for Transplant: BMC Report Accuses China of ‘Falsifying’ Data”, *Forbes*, 16.11.2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zakdoffman/2019/11/16/china-covers-up-killing-of-prisoners-to-harvest-organs-for-transplant-new-report/#5cd644a62ec7>

<sup>154</sup> CJ Werleman, “More Uyghur Horror: Harvesting Hundreds of Thousands of Organs from Mass Murder”, *Byline Times*, 26.11.2019, <https://bylinetimes.com/2019/11/26/more-uyghur-horror-harvesting-hundreds-of-thousands-of-organs-from-mass-murder/>

<sup>155</sup> Benedict Rogers, “The Nightmare of Human Organ Harvesting in China”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 05.02.2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-nightmare-of-human-organ-harvesting-in-china-11549411056>

oppose this order.”<sup>156</sup> The following statements of the President of the China Tribunal, Sir Geoffrey Nice, clearly reveal the gravity of the situation: “The results show that too many people died terribly for no reason. Many people’s kidneys, livers, hearts, and corneas were removed while they were still alive.”<sup>157</sup>

In a statement to the RFA, Enver Tohti also claimed that these organs were sold as “Halal organs” in Saudi Arabia between 2012 and 2014.<sup>158</sup> While some news articles published in the state media in 2014 report that China will phase out the practice of organ harvesting from prisoners who are sentenced to death, and replace it by a national organ donation system, the data and evidence show that Uighur prisoners are currently the subjects of such organ trade. A few survivors of the concentration camps told the China Tribunal how they were subjected to physical exams and tests such as blood tests, x-rays and ultrasound. These testimonies confirm this

claim. This is because the experts predict that these examinations and tests are carried out to understand whether the organs of the victims are healthy and suitable for transplantation.<sup>159</sup>



**Uighurs and members of other Muslim minorities who are detained in the camps are forced to work as workers.**

According to official documents, interviews with experts and the reports prepared by researchers as a result of their visits to the region, “Chinese administrators are forcing the Muslim minority to become workers.”<sup>160</sup> There is evidence that the Uighurs in the camps are forced to work for free against their will in spinning and textile factories as well as cotton fields.<sup>161</sup> Ranked first in the global cotton production, China forcibly employs Uighurs whom it “holds responsible for the production of one of every five bales of cotton that are produced globally” in the fields.<sup>162</sup>

## Living Conditions at the Camps

Camps are controlled by an integrated physical and mental control system. The wards, corridors and buildings in general are all locked with multiple locks, and they are surrounded by barbed wires to prevent escapes. Surveillance of the camps is carried out through watchtowers and guards.

Since preventing the escape of the prisoners is a primary priority, every area in the camps is monitored 24/7 with cameras.<sup>163</sup>

The schedule of a day in the camps is generally as follows:

- 06.00-07.00: Breakfast
- 07.00-11.00: Political brainwashing classes including CPC slogans are held and detainees are forced to sing political marches including statements such as “I am Chinese, I am proud of being a Chinese, long live the Communist Party”.

<sup>156</sup> Gabriella Swerling, “British government ‘ignored’ Chinese organ harvesting, Tribunal rules”, *The Telegraph*, 17.06.2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/17/british-government-ignored-chinese-organ-harvesting-tribunal/>

<sup>157</sup> Werleman, “More Uyghur Horror...”

<sup>158</sup> “Çin, Uygur Türkleri’nin organlarını, ‘helal’ diyerek zengin Suudiler’e satıyor”, *Timetürk*, <https://www.timeturk.com/cin-uygur-turkleri-nin-organlarini-helal-diyerek-zengin-suudiler-e-satiyor/haber-1069619>

<sup>159</sup> Saphora Smith, “China forcefully harvest organs from detainees, tribunal concludes”, *NBC News*, 18.06.2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-forcefully-harvests-organs-detainees-tribunal-concludes-n1018646>

<sup>160</sup> “Modern-Day Slavery...”

<sup>161</sup> “US Reviews Report of Imports From Slave Labor Camps In China”, *Money and Markets*, 19.12.2018, <https://moneyandmarkets.com/us-report-forced-labor-camp-china/>

<sup>162</sup> There is a separate chapter on this subject in the study. Also see Business and Human Rights Resource Center, “China: Ethnic minorities detained in internment camps reportedly subject to forced labour in factories supplying to major apparel brands; Incl. co responses”, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/china-ethnic-minorities-detained-in-internment-camps-reportedly-subject-to-forced-labour-in-factories-supplying-to-major-apparel-brands-incl-co-responses>

<sup>163</sup> “Çin’in kamplarda tuttuğu...”

- 11.00-12.00: Prisoners are asked to repeatedly chant and memorize slogans such as “I would sacrifice my life for the CPC”.
- 12.00-14.00: Lunch, which is the same as the breakfast served in the morning, is served.
- 14.00-16.00: Prisoners are forced to sing marches including patriotic expressions such as “If there was no CPC, there would be no new China”.
- 16.00-18.00: A session is held for the prisoner to confess his/her crimes.
- 18.00-20.00: Dinner, which is the same as the breakfast and lunch, is served.
- 20.00-22.00: The prisoners are instructed to think about their misdemeanors, facing the wall with their arms up.
- 22.00-00.00: The prisoner is asked to make another self-assessment.
- 01.00: The prisoner is held standing straight.
- 06.00 Sleeping on the right side.<sup>164</sup>

In another report, it is stated that the rooms are searched every morning, and then the prisoners are forced to listen to the records of the 19th CPC Meeting where the three-hour political dogma of the Chinese President Xi Jinping is explained. Then the prisoners are forced to sing marches that praise Jinping, and then, military training is provided at noon. After breakfast, a 10-minute appreciation program is organized for the CPC and Xi Jinping for providing their food, drink and livelihood. Prisoners have to learn and sing many march-

**In the camps, intensive ideological education is provided in order to change the mentality of the detainees. According to the statements of those who were able to get out of the camps, the detainees are pressured to accept that their old lifestyles are wrong and to “regret and confess their wrongdoing”.**

es. If they cannot sing these marches, they are not allowed to eat, sleep or sit.<sup>165</sup>

In the camps, intensive ideological education is provided in order to change the mentality of the detainees. According to the statements of those who were able to get out of the camps, the detainees are pressured to accept that their old lifestyles are wrong and to “regret and confess their wrongdoing”. It is strictly forbidden to speak any language other than Chinese at the camp. People are lined up twice a day, being asked random questions in Chinese, and those who cannot provide a response are beaten or punished by being starved. Detainees are subjected to examinations each week on Mandarin, ideology and discipline, with increasing difficulty by month and season. Those who are able to pass these exams are rewarded by being allowed to visit their families or leave the camps. Those who fail the exams are sent to other camps where they will be subjected to a longer and harsher treatment.<sup>166</sup>

Since the meals given to prisoners are both inadequate and poorly prepared, there are frequent cases of poisoning. In addition, prisoners who

<sup>164</sup> Ian Birrel, “China’s concentration camps holding up to three million Muslim prisoners subjected to a regime of modern surveillance and old-fashioned torture - as one survivor recounts how you can be executed for laughing”, *Daily Mail*, 24.11.2019, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7718987/Inside-Chinas-concentration-camps-holding-three-million-Muslim-prisoners.html>

<sup>165</sup> Simon Denyer, “Former inmates of China’s Muslim ‘reeducation’ camps tell of brainwashing, torture”, *The Washington Post*, 17.05.2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/former-inmates-of-chinas-muslim-re-education-camps-tell-of-brainwashing-torture/2018/05/16/32b330e8-5850-11e8-8b92-45fdd7aaef3c\\_story.html?noredirect=on](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/former-inmates-of-chinas-muslim-re-education-camps-tell-of-brainwashing-torture/2018/05/16/32b330e8-5850-11e8-8b92-45fdd7aaef3c_story.html?noredirect=on)

<sup>166</sup> “Çin’in Doğu Türkistan’da...”

**Since the meals given to prisoners are generally inadequate and poorly prepared, there are frequent cases of poisoning. In addition, prisoners who are forced to consume alcohol and eat pork every Friday are prohibited from talking, laughing, crying, and - tragicomically - screaming due to torture.**

are forced to consume alcohol and eat pork every Friday<sup>167</sup> are prohibited from talking, laughing, crying, and - tragicomically - screaming due to torture.<sup>168</sup>

In different phases of the camps, prisoners are forced to sit still for 17 hours a day, simply looking at the wall without speaking.<sup>169</sup> No prisoner is ever allowed to have a cell phone, and armed police keep watch over every corner of the camps and high-level security measures are taken to prevent this.<sup>170</sup>

In the camps, every area, including the toilets, is monitored by advanced camera surveillance systems. The rooms are very cold and do not let in any light. 20 people stay in a room which is 16 square meters on average.<sup>171</sup>

Shower and toilet times are strictly controlled. Toilets can be used not according to need, but

according to the time determined by the camp management. Taking a shower is allowed once a week, and sometimes these permits are arbitrarily removed. Each room has a plastic bucket that is used as a toilet and each detainee has only two minutes to use the toilet. This bucket is allowed to be emptied only once a day.<sup>172</sup>

According to the testimonies of many people who managed to get out of the camps, the detainees are given drugs, the contents of which they do not know, once a month, which debilitate the cognitive skills, make the person feel weak, stop the menstruation of women and sterilize the men.<sup>173</sup> In addition, deaths due to untreated health problems are also reported.<sup>174</sup>

Detainees are punished for almost everything. Failing to sing a march that praises the CPC, which the prisoner is asked to memorize, or using a language other than Chinese is sufficient for punishment. Punishments include different types of torture ranging from being starved and the removal of nails to sleep deprivation and being held in difficult positions. Many cases of sexual torture and rape against women have also been reported.<sup>175</sup>

According to the report of HRW, some of the detainees attempt suicide due to physical and psychological violence, poor conditions, overcrowding, uncertainties and various other concerns.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Denyer, "Former inmates of China's..."

<sup>168</sup> Zamira Rahim, "Prisoners in China's Xinjiang concentration camps subjected to gang rape and medical experiments, former detainee says", *Independence*, 22.10.2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-xinjiang-uighur-muslim-detention-camps-xi-jinping-persecution-a9165896.html%3famp>

<sup>169</sup> "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'da..."

<sup>170</sup> Simmons, "Inside Chinese camps thought..."

<sup>171</sup> Rahim, "Prisoners in China's Xinjiang..."

<sup>172</sup> Simmons, "Inside Chinese camps thought..."; "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'da..."

<sup>173</sup> Rahim, "Prisoners in China's Xinjiang..."

<sup>174</sup> "Secret documents reveal..."

<sup>175</sup> "Çin'deki Müslümanlar Tutuklu Kaldıkları Korkunç Toplama Kamplarında 'Tecavüz, Kürtaj, Kısırlaştırma ve Cinsel Organlarına Zorla Acı Pul Biber Sürme' Gibi İşkencelere Maruz Bırakıldı", *Sino Turk News*, 12.10.2019, <http://www.sinoturknews.org/cindeki-muslimanlar-tutuklu-kaldiklari-korkunc-toplama-kamplarinda-tecavuz-kurtaj-kisirlastirma-ve-cinsel-organlarina-zorla-aci-pul-biber-surme-gibi-iskencelere-maruz-birakildi/>

<sup>176</sup> HRW, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses..."



## **INHUMANE TREATMENT, TORTURE AND DEATH AT CAMPS**

There have been two types of practices related to corpses in the camps where thousands of deaths have occurred to date. The first practice involves either delivering the bodies of the prisoners to their families or delivering the prisoners to their families in the last days of their lives, whereupon they died when they were with their families. The second practice involves not delivering the bodies to the families in any way.

In cases where the bodies were given to the families, the families were threatened not to file any complaints, and the majority of them had to suffer in silence and bury their children, fathers, spouses or close relatives quietly with tears in their eyes without even being able to perform a funeral prayer. It is reported that there are tens of thousands of prisoners, whose relatives could not hear from even after three years or more. Although they are reported as missing by their families to the official authorities, the families could neither get an answer nor had a chance to trace or access information on the whereabouts of their missing relatives.

As a result of the investigations that were carried out, it is reported that the DNA information of about 15 million people in East Turkistan was collected, and concentration camps naturally provide the most convenient data collection opportunity. China is the place where organ traf-

ficking is most common in the world. Hundreds of thousands of people in the camps are considered as natural donors of patients waiting for organs. It is stated that it is quite likely that the organs of tens of thousands of prisoners were used illegally for other people's needs.

It is estimated that a high number of people died in the camps due to maltreatment and torture, and their bodies were not delivered to their families and were buried in unknown places or burned in crematoriums. When considered in this way, it is very blurred and the questions about what the people in the camps actually experienced, how many of them died, and what happened to their bodies turn into simple details in the face of the magnitude of the suffering that has been experienced. This is because in such a process, people can consider death as a salvation.

Prisoners who become quite weak mentally and physically due to difficult conditions and malnutrition, also have a low resistance to diseases, both physically and mentally. In addition, it is stated by the prisoners who managed to get out of the concentration camps that a prisoner who falls ill has extremely limited access to a health center or hospital. Some of the people who have chronic or ongoing diseases and are placed in concentration camps die because they are not given their medication. People with

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chronic conditions such as a heart disease or hypertension are the most vulnerable in the difficult camp conditions.

It is stated that tens of thousands of people may have died in the camps due to the coronavirus epidemic that started in China in November 2019 and spread to the world. While the Chinese government has not made any statements on this matter, it seems unlikely that the virus has not spread in such a crowded and constricted area. China does not even provide information to the World Health Organization (WHO) about the camps which it completely conceals.

Even if the people who have relatives in these camps cannot express their most important expectation clearly, it is to receive immediate information about the health of their relatives who are illegally held in the camps. As in the case of the folk poet Abdurrehim Heyit, the video images of whom was broadcast by China when news of his death was reported in 2019, the families' right to information is not respected.

The number of people in each camp, their names, crimes, court information if they are tried, the sentence they received and above all, whether they are alive or not remain as questions that are expected to be answered by the Chinese administration.

These concentration camps, which are closed to the world, to international independent observers, in short, to everyone and to every institution, are shameful places that violate human dignity, and they cannot even be compared with any collective punishment method. Information that is obtained about some of the thousands of people who are currently held in the camps or who passed away near their relatives, gives important clues about the conditions that the remaining vast majority of people are in:

- A report of the RFA dated June 27, 2018 stated that 26 detainees were killed in the detention centers in Yengisehir and Konasehir. According to information confirmed by a security officer, those who died include a 37-year-old tradesman named Ablet and probably many Uighurs. The statement of the security officer was as follows: "Weather conditions are not good and most of the elderly have high blood pressure and heart disease. They, therefore, are unable to adapt to the conditions under which they are held. But this is my opinion, because I wasn't with them when they died, so I won't be able to give you detailed information on this."<sup>177</sup>
- On January 29, 2018, the 82-year-old Muhammed Salih Hajim, who is one of the leading scholars and opinion leaders of East Turkistan, and who translated the Qur'an to Uighur, died in the camp where he was held. Hajim, whose cause of death is unknown, was detained at the end of 2017 along with his daughter and other relatives.
- The 86-year-old Abdulahad Mahdum, one of the leaders of the Uighur community, was reported to have died in a detention camp in Hotan in November

<sup>177</sup> UHRP, "21. Yüzyılda Çin'in..."

2017. It is stated that Mahdum, who is the nephew of Mehmet Emin Buğra, one of the leaders of East Turkistan, was imprisoned in 2016 with his family and relatives, and his death was reported in March 2018.<sup>178</sup>

- According to local sources, the 17-year-old Yakupcan Naman who visited Turkey in 2016, and was taken in custody upon his return due to this trip, died in the camp after a while in the concentration camp in Kashgar. Since his body was buried under police supervision, Yakupcan's cause of death could not be determined.<sup>179</sup>
- Abdusselam Memet and Yasincan Naman, who were studying at the al-Ezher University in Egypt, but had to return to East Turkistan as they were threatened that their families would otherwise be imprisoned, lost their lives in a concentration camp in 2017, most likely due to the severe torture they suffered. It is stated that Abdusselam Memet is the son of the imam of the biggest mosque in the

**The number of people in each camp, their names, crimes, court information if they are tried, the sentence they received and above all, whether they are alive or not remain as questions that are expected to be answered by the Chinese administration.**

city of Korla, while Yasincan Naman is the brother of a police officer stationed at the Korla Cag Prison.<sup>180</sup>

- According to the reporting of the RFA, an elderly Uighur woman died in May 2018 in the Yamachang Camp in the city of Gulca.<sup>181</sup>

It is possible to give more examples of this news of deaths. In addition, the existence of hundreds of thousands of innocent people including men, women, old and young people, students or employees who are currently held in such camps without having being tried in any court, even just as a formality, reveals the magnitude of the tragedy that is or will be experienced.

<sup>178</sup> "Doğu Türkistanlı alim Çin'in toplama kampında hayatını kaybetti", *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 29.05.2018, <http://old.qha.com.ua/tr/turk-dunyasi/dogu-turkistanli-alim-cin-in-toplama-kampinda-hayatini-kaybetti/171074/>

<sup>179</sup> Victims of 21st Century Concentration Camps, "Yaqupjan Naman", 03.14.2018, [http://uyghurvictims.org/index.php?title=Yaqupjan\\_Naman](http://uyghurvictims.org/index.php?title=Yaqupjan_Naman)

<sup>180</sup> Doğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, "İki Uygur öğrenci Çin hapsinde şehit oldu", 21.12.2017, <https://www.doguturkistander.org/2017/12/21/6498/>

<sup>181</sup> UHRP, "21. Yüzyılda Çin'in Uygur..."

# THE CORONAVIRUS THREAT AT THE CAMPS

Neither the number and location of the camps, nor the conditions of the people who are held there are known exactly. Similarly, the issue of how the coronavirus (covid-19) epidemic affected the people in these camps remains a great mystery.

The coronavirus, which was first said to have come out of an animal market in the city of Wuhan in China, and later claimed to have been produced in a laboratory and released, has infected 8 million people worldwide and claimed the lives of 435,000 people as of June 14, 2020. Although it has been announced by the public authorities in China that 83,132 people have been infected and 4,634 of them have died, there are strong views that the Beijing administration conceals the number of dead people, since almost any information on any issue provided by the administration creates suspicions.

Although the Chinese authorities refuse to provide any information on the extent of the epidemic in East Turkistan, mentioning that it's a "state secret", 24 people are understood to have been

infected and 1,254 people are held under medical observation in East Turkistan as of the beginning of February 2020, according to the small snippets of information in the news reports published in the Chinese media.<sup>182</sup> On February 10, the number of patients in the region was reported as 78 (Urumqi: 23, Gulca: 18, Tacheng: 7, Sancı: 4, Korla: 4, Shihezi: 2, Aksu: 1, Turfan: 3, 4th Military Base: 10, 6th Military Base: 2, 7th Military Base: 1, 12th Military Base: 3).<sup>183</sup> Later, three of the 78 identified cases of coronavirus were reported to have died.<sup>184</sup> However, according to the claims of the Chinese dissident journalists, the number of deaths in the region is over 1,000.<sup>185</sup>

In a statement to the RFA, the President of the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress, Dolkun Isa pointed out that the spread of coronavirus to concentration camps would have serious implications for the Uighur detainees and that the lives of millions of people would be compromised in such a situation:

"We are aware of the fact that the conditions in the concentration camps are terrible. Many people contracted

<sup>182</sup> Hüseyin Koyuncu, "Doğu Türkistan'da koronavirüsün ne kadar yayıldığı sorusuna 'devlet sırrı' cevabı", *Euronews*, 05.02.2020, <https://tr.euronews.com/2020/02/05/dogu-turkistan-koronavirus-sorusuna-devlet-sirri-cevabi-uygur-turkleri-sincan-cin>

<sup>183</sup> "Doğu Türkistan Gerçeği, Çin Virüsü", *Doğu Türkistan Basın ve Medya Derneği Bülteni*, Mart 2020, s. 4.

<sup>184</sup> Doğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, "Doğu Türkistan'da Çin koronavirüsten daha zararlı", 14.04.2020, <https://www.doguturkistander.org/2020/04/14/dogu-turkistanda-cin-koronavirusten-daha-zararli/>

<sup>185</sup> Aslan Balcı, "Utanc kamplarında salgın endişesi", *Açık Görüş*, 09.05.2020, <https://www.star.com.tr/acik-gorus/utanc-kamplarinda-salgin-endisesi-haber-1538358/>

serious diseases due to overcrowding and unhygienic conditions, and the immune systems of detainees were weakened. The poor quality of the meals provided, the lack of medical care and torture cause weakening of the detainees' immune systems. China must do everything it can to prevent the virus from spreading to camps. Otherwise, the consequences would be disastrous. This arbitrary attitude can lead to the death of tens of thousands of Uighurs.”<sup>186</sup>

In this process, the WHO is accused of being late in declaring the pandemic and emergency. Germany argues that the main party responsible for WHO's postponement of a global warning is the Chinese administration. According to the German media, the Chinese President Xi Jinping asked the WHO President Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a phone conversation on January 21, to hide the information that the coronavirus was transmitted from person to person and to postpone the pandemic warning. It is claimed that the world lost four to six weeks in fighting the virus due to this.<sup>187</sup>

It seems that China also made use of its ever-increasing effectiveness in the UN<sup>188</sup> in the case of WHO, which is an institution that should be neutral.<sup>189</sup> China and the UN have also not yet made a statement regarding the situation of the people who are placed in concentration camps. What's even more disturbing is that if the virus spreads to the camps, nobody from the outside world would know how the Chinese paramedics

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would react to this situation and even what the mortality rates would be due to the concealment policy followed by the Chinese administration.<sup>190</sup>

While people are prohibited from getting together and gathering somewhere, and even family members are recommended to use different rooms in the same house to stop the spread of the virus throughout the world, China refuses to evacuate the concentration camps where nearly 3 million people are detained. If the virus is transmitted (or has been transmitted) even to a single prisoner through camp police or officers, the disease would spread dozens of times faster than usual in camps due to crowded and unhygienic living spaces. In concentration camps, where more than 10,000 people are reported to have been sporadically living in a closed area, the risk of any epidemic is already quite high, which is why it is estimated that the mortality rate at these places would be very high if the virus was spread to the camps.

<sup>186</sup> Koyuncu, "Doğu Türkistan'da koronavirüsün...".

<sup>187</sup> "WHO dementiert Telefongespräch mit Chinas Präsident", Der Spiegel, 10.05.2020, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/corona-ausbruch-who-dementiert-telefongesprach-mit-chinas-praesident-a-37678f1c-6960-453c-a317-8ef9feed8b7c>; Tung Cheng-Chia, Alan H. Yang, "How China Is Remaking the UN In Its Own Image", *The Diplomat*, 09.04.2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/how-china-is-remaking-the-un-in-its-own-image/>

<sup>188</sup> China chairs four of the UN's 15 private agencies. 1,115 Chinese individuals have leading roles in the UN. "Koronavirüs ve Çin rüyası", Doğu Türkistan İnsan Hakları İzleme Derneği, Uluslararası Doğu Türkistan Teşkilatlar Birliği Basın Bülteni, 08.05.2020, s. 32.

<sup>189</sup> Seema Sirohi, "China's presence at the UN is growing stronger and Covid is another opportunity for Beijing", *The Print*, 08.04.2020, <https://theprint.in/opinion/chinas-presence-at-the-un-is-growing-stronger-and-covid-is-another-opportunity-for-beijing/397456/>

<sup>190</sup> Abdul Malik Mucahid, "Detained Uighur Muslims are Sitting Ducks for the Coronavirus. China must Close the Camps", *USA Today*, 14.02.2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/02/14/coronavirus-uighurs-china-muslim-concentration-camps-column/4739265002/>

Given that most of the people who died due to the virus are sick and old people with weak immune systems, the situation of the people who are held in concentration camps where not even routine health care is provided is very worrying. In fact, prisoners whose immune systems are impaired due to poor living conditions and unhealthy meals, are at serious risk. Those who are held in camps are also psychologically exhausted due to both maltreatment and harsh camp conditions, as well as the separation from their families, which is why they have neither the physical strength nor the moral motivation to fight such a disease. In short, this situation poses great danger for the detainees at the camps.<sup>191</sup> And once the disease starts spreading, the 167 hospitals in East Turkistan will obviously not be sufficient for the treatment of patients.

According to human rights observers and camp victims, access to hospitals, quarantine areas, adequate nutrition, hygienic products and other requirements for healthy living are severely restricted for Uighurs and other persecuted groups who are held in China's mass detention camps. The detainees are held in overcrowded cells, where it is impossible to even stand without touching the person next to one. It is understood from the statements of the witnesses that people can only sleep by taking turns because of the overcrowding of some camps. Considering all the other adversities listed above, the risk of infection and death due to coronavirus at the camps is quite high.<sup>192</sup>

One of the interesting circumstances is that the flights to Urumqi, the capital of East Turkistan, continued even after the danger of coronavirus emerged and Wuhan and the surrounding cities were quarantined. This led to comments that the Chinese government did not care about the

spread of the virus to the Uighur regions despite the increased risk. Considering that thousands of people are being held in each camp and the number of detainees increase day by day, it is understood that the Chinese authorities care little about the health of not only those who are in the camps but also the others living in the region.

After the Beijing administration declared a quarantine in Urumqi, which is one of the largest cities in the region, the concern that the coronavirus epidemic would be used as an excuse for ethnic cleansing, particularly at the camps, has increased among Uighur Turks.

It is not exactly known to what extent the concentration camps are affected by the epidemic, since the camps have no contact with the outside world. However, according to leaked information, it is stated that a student named Miradil Nurahmet was quarantined at the Concentration Camp No. 6 in Artux, while 10 Uighur Turks at another camp, who are suspected of having contracted the virus, are kept under observation. Some sources evaluating the situation in East Turkistan report that similar news which needs to be verified, is received from many camps. For example, like thousands of others whose relatives are at camps, the 14-year-old Mehliya Çetinkaya says she is concerned that her mother, whom she has not been able to communicate since 2017, may be in danger because of coronavirus.<sup>193</sup>

The state-controlled *Newspaper of the Public (Ren Min Wang)* reported that all construction sites, oil refineries and textile factories in East Turkistan have started production at almost full capacity since March 12, 2020 and all the schools in the region have re-initiated their education activities.<sup>194</sup> As of March 28, it is stated

<sup>191</sup> Doğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, "Doğu Türkistan ve Korona Virüsü", 03.02.2020, <https://www.doguturkistander.org/2020/02/03/rapor-dogu-turkistan-ve-korona-virusu/>

<sup>192</sup> "Uyghurs and the China Coronavirus", *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/uyghurs-and-the-china-coronavirus/>

<sup>193</sup> Stephanie Thomas, "Uyghur Muslims Fear Impact of Coronavirus on Populations in Camps in China", *CTV News*, 02.02.2020, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/uyghur-muslims-fear-impact-of-coronavirus-on-populations-in-camps-in-china-1.4794528>

<sup>194</sup> There is also information that factories have never been closed.

that all the facilities in the region are operating at a capacity of 98%.<sup>195</sup> However, residents in the region say that no serious measures are taken in concentration camps, factories and daily life, and if the disease reappears, a major disaster can occur in the region, where health and communication capabilities are limited. Another important problem is that young people from East Turkistan are sent to the inner parts of the country in an extremely careless manner to compensate for the workforce that is reduced throughout China due to the virus. It is known that hundreds of thousands of people from both concentration camps and civilians were transferred from one company to another, and made to work almost like slaves.<sup>196</sup>

In Hong Kong and some Chinese media, news reports were published indicating that prisoners were sent from camps in East Turkistan to be employed in factories in many cities of the country such as Ciciang, Chongqing, Sichuan, Heilongciang, Guangzhou, Jiang Xi, Shanghai, Jie Jang, Shenzhen and Hunen, and that these people were made to work without any protective clothing. However, it was subsequently also reported that an investigation was opened against journalists who reported such news as they “disclosed a state secret”.<sup>197</sup>

In addition to all this, there were news reports that Uighurs didn't have enough food and drink during the ongoing quarantine process in the

region, and that many families had to make do with the resources they already had because of the curfew, and conversations between Chinese soldiers and Uighurs caused controversy in social media.<sup>198</sup>

Uighurs in the diaspora, who can't get any information on whether their family members in the camps are alive or not, are worried that China can intentionally ignore the epidemic in the camps or will use coronavirus to explain the deaths that have nothing to do with it. Another one of the allegations is that there is no vigilance in camps where Muslim Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek Turks living in East Turkistan are staying, to prevent the spread of coronavirus, and that people are simply left to die. Since openly executing the prisoners in their camps would attract reactions from all over the world, carrying out drug trials or consciously not controlling the spread of the virus can lead to mass deaths silently occurring at the concentration camps.<sup>199</sup>

It is very important to send emergency medical delegations to East Turkistan to stop the spread of coronavirus in the region and to take the necessary measures to prevent deaths. It is particularly essential for those staying at the camps to immediately undergo detailed health screening, and for medical teams to be appointed for diagnosis and treatment.<sup>200</sup> At this point, closing the concentration camps, where millions of people are at risk, is the absolute solution.

<sup>195</sup> “Facing Slave Labor Reports, China Claims 98% of Large Industrial Businesses are Back at Work”, *Politicopathy*, 02.04.2020, <https://www.politicopathy.com/2020/04/02/facing-slave-labor-reports-china-claims-98-of-large-industrial-businesses-are-back-at-work/>

<sup>196</sup> “Apple, Nike and other major companies implicated in Muslim forced labor in China”, 02.03.2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-02/aspi-uyghur-china-forced-labour-report/12017650>

<sup>197</sup> Balci, “Utanc kamplarında...”

<sup>198</sup> Doğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, “Doğu Türkistan’da Çin...”

<sup>199</sup> Balci, “Utanc kamplarında...”

<sup>200</sup> Munawwar Abdulla, “Uyghurs and the China Coronavirus”, *The Diplomat*, 05.02.2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/uyghurs-and-the-china-coronavirus/>

## THOSE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND

In a statement in November 2016, the East Turkistan CPC Secretary, Chen Quanguo instructed all orphan children in East Turkistan to be placed in institutions by 2020 as part of the various development moves for the region.<sup>201</sup> According to this instruction, no vacant quotas will be left in the existing orphanages and child-care centers, and the capacity of the existing ones will be increased with the new centers to be established. Each center is planned to have at least 100 children.

Article 4 of the Adoption Law of China defines orphans as “children under the age of 14 who have lost their parents, whose parents cannot be found and who cannot be cared for because of the special disability of their parents”. In addition, Article 43 of the Law on the Protection of Children, which indicates that the orphanages established by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China are obliged to take care of the orphans, does not authorize the forced removal of children from their relatives for state care. There are no other legal procedures regarding this issue.<sup>202</sup> In this respect, the extent to which the reports that are published which indicate that the legal consents of the families of children who were placed in orphanages even though

they had families, were given, reflect that the truth is open to scrutiny. In fact, the majority of Uighurs say that they didn’t want their children to be sent to these centers.

In a statement to the Uighur Service of the RFA, an Uighur official at a police station in the Feyziwat-Jiashi county of Kashgar, who would like to remain anonymous, said that the local government officials stated that the fate of the children whose parents were sent to concentration camps was determined by the state. An officer on the Chasa Street neighborhood committee in Kashgar stated that children with no guardians were sent to orphanages and that only the government had jurisdiction over these children.

It was reported that the Central Orphanage officials refused to provide a response to those who asked for information on how the children of Uighurs, who were detained at Urumqi, were taken care of at state institutions. A similar situation exists in all provinces of the region. An Uighur, who worked at an orphanage in the south of East Turkistan, said that the facility was overcrowded and the conditions were terrible, and that children were locked up like farm animals. The same employee said that a lot of cash donations were collected from the public, but little

<sup>201</sup> Isabel Van Brugen, “Uyghur Children Kidnapped by the State, Put in Xinjiang’s State-Run ‘Orphanages’”, *The Epoch Times*, 01.11.2028, <https://www.theepochtimes.com/uyghur-children-kidnapped-by-the-state-put-in-xinjiangs-state-run-orphanages-2705600.html>

<sup>202</sup> HRW, “China: Children Caught in Xinjiang Crackdown”, 16.10.2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/16/china-children-caught-xinjiang-crackdown>



spending was made for children, some of the received money was used to decorate a few rooms, and for promotional activities by dressing some children just for show and getting them on TV.

The Uighur officer stated that there were few children in the orphanage in the past, but the number of children has recently increased, and the reason for this is the placement of the children whose parents are sent to re-education camps, in the orphanage. She/he said that the age of the children varied between 0 and 12, money was being saved by giving children meat only once a week at the orphanage, and rice soup was served for the remaining meals.

Pointing out that the Chinese authorities in northern provinces such as the Kazakh autonomous province Ili and Tacheng are more comfortable in placing Uighurs in re-education camps, the same officer stated that the orphanages there were nevertheless also overcrowded, which was why the children were moved to mainland China, but it was not exactly known where they were taken. Since the security measures in East Turkistan are very strict, it is almost impossible for parents to find their children in orphanages even if they are released from education camps.<sup>203</sup>

The Chinese authorities place the children of Uighurs and other ethnic minority groups (Kazakh, Kyrgyz) in orphanages run by the state in the west of East Turkistan, even if their families are alive. There are serious findings indicating that the Beijing government is using these orphanages not for the purpose of protecting children, but rather as part of its efforts to systematically distance the Muslims in East Turkistan from their families and cultures.<sup>204</sup>

**Article 43 of the Law on the Protection of Children, which indicates that the orphanages established by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China are obliged to take care of the orphans, does not authorize the forced removal of children from their relatives for state care. There are no other legal procedures regarding this issue.**

According to the data on the official website of the Ministry of National Education, there is a total of 7,778 childcare centers in East Turkistan. The entire staff of these centers, including educators, is 92,200. In addition, 59,400 people were employed with the status of “Special Officer”. In accordance with the decree called “Two Placements” which is issued by China in 2018, the elderly and unattended children are placed in state-owned nurseries and nursing homes, thereby causing thousands of unattended children whose parents are placed in concentration camps, to be placed in such institutions in accordance with this decree of the central government. When proportioned based on the number of officers announced by the Ministry, it is estimated that the number of children who are held in these centers is approximately 2 million.<sup>205</sup>

HRW’s China Director Sophie Richardson describes the Chinese government’s forced separation of children from their relatives as the most brutal dimension of the oppression in East Turkistan.<sup>206</sup> HRW stated that they were deeply

<sup>203</sup> “Children of Detained Uyghurs Face ‘Terrible’ Conditions in Overcrowded Xinjiang Orphanages”, *Radio Free Asia*, 10.18.2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/children-10182017144425.html>; Van Brugen, “Uyghur Children Kidnapped...”

<sup>204</sup> “China is putting Uighur children in ‘orphanages’ even if their parents are alive”, *Independent*, 21.09.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-uyghurs-human-rights-muslims-orphanages-xinjiang-province-reeducation-a8548341.html>

<sup>205</sup> “2 Milyon Uyghur Türkü Çocuk, Çinlileştirme Merkezinde Tutuluyor”, *Türkistan Press*, 03.04.2019, <http://turkistanpress.com/page/2-milyon-uyghur-turku-cocuk-cinlilestirme-merkezinde-tutuluyor/460>

<sup>206</sup> HRW, “China: Xinjiang Children Separated from Families”, 15.09.2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/15/china-xinjiang-children-separated-families>

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concerned about the placement of children in state institutions without their consent or any legal justification, as well as their exposure to practices which deny them of their fundamental rights and cultural heritage. As reported in the Chinese media and the government-sourced websites, children in boarding schools in East Turkistan are taught Chinese, told to sing and dance to marches that include CPC propaganda, are not allowed to speak their own language, and are exposed to other rights violations, which further raise concerns.

Although the Uighur education opportunity has been provided in China before, it was announced that a new phase was initiated with the party policies that have been getting harsher since December 2016. Accordingly, the schools will be an extension of the practices in East Turkistan, and these institutions will focus on the Chinese language, patriotism and loyalty to the party. The most striking aspect of the program for Uighurs is that the issue of religion is described as a "poisonous phenomenon" on children. According to a document from 2017, 497,800 students, who

make up 40% of all the secondary school students in East Turkistan, are placed in boarding schools. In East Turkeitan, Chinese replaced Uighur Turkish and education in Chinese has become compulsory in primary and secondary schools.<sup>207</sup>

A government notice published in Kashgar in February 2018 states that children with one parent in custody should be sent to a boarding school even if they have relatives who can take care of them at home. The notice states that teachers should indoctrinate students with socialist values, and ensure that the students feel grateful for the provided education, and avoid the "75 types of behavior", which are indicators of religious extremism.<sup>208</sup>

When the foreign journalists who visited East Turkistan in 2018 and 2019, wanted to visit the schools to prepare reports on the education provided in the region, they were not allowed to do so. But as a result of external observations, it was stated that these schools, which are surrounded by barbed wires, fences and cameras, resembled detention centers, rather than places where the safety of the children is ensured. It was also observed that the construction of childcare centers and boarding schools was accelerated so that children in the region, whose parents are in concentration camps can be gathered at certain points. According to *Turkistan TV* which broadcasts about East Turkistan, the locations of more than 20 children's camps are identified and the dates on which these camps were established coincide with the dates on which the concentration camps for adults began to be opened in East Turkistan. Another source indicates that the government allocated more than 30 million dollars to build 45 orphanages with a capacity of 5,000 children or to expand the existing ones between the beginning of 2017 and mid-2018

<sup>207</sup> Oğuz Erdiç, "500 bin çocuk Çin'in sadakat kampında", *Karar*, 29.12.2019, <https://www.karar.com/dunya-haberleri/500-bin-cocuk-cinin-sadakat-kampinda-1429262>; Amy Qin, "In China's Crackdown on Muslims, Children Have Not Been Spared", *The New York Times*, 28.12.2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/world/asia/china-xinjiang-children-boarding-schools.html>

<sup>208</sup> "China is putting Uighur..."

according to the tender announcements in East Turkistan.<sup>209</sup>

It is stated that tenders were initiated in July and August 2018 for the construction of at least nine centers for “the protection of disadvantaged children” in Kashgar, Aksu and Kizilsu provinces where ethnic minority groups live. For example, the new orphanage in the Moyu county, which is one of them, was built to have four floors with a total of 22,776 square meters. These numbers do not include the kindergartens and the other schools where the children of the people in the concentration camps study. As there are children of other ethnic groups in schools, it is not possible to determine the number of children of the detained Uighurs.<sup>210</sup> It can be understood that, the “children camps” that could be identified, constitute only a small portion of the existing ones.

It is estimated that some of the camps, which were identified by using satellite images, were established in the Hotan countryside and most of the children in these camps are at the appropriate ages for nursery and kindergarten.<sup>211</sup> Some sources mention more than 50 concentration camps where small children taken from their parents are held.<sup>212</sup> According to the information provided by the Uighurs in exile, there are many guidelines and documents on the construction of new institutions so that these children can be brought to the “desired mindset”.

These documents show that the boarding camp system for children is implemented simultaneously with the concentration camps that are established for adults. The data for just 2017 reveals that the number of children who started to

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attend kindergarten in East Turkistan increased by more than half a million compared to the previous year. 90% of this number consists of children who are part of the Muslim minorities like Uighur Turks. The same official data shows that the state spent \$1.2 billion only for boarding kindergarten constructions in East Turkistan. It is reported that 2,000 children were brought from nearby villages to the huge boarding school called “Yecheng City Number 4”, which is one of such schools, only in April 2019.<sup>213</sup> The Uighurs in the diaspora are concerned that the number of people who are held in concentration camps could be much higher, particularly considering the number of Uighur children who are taken from their families and held in state orphanages and kindergartens.<sup>214</sup>

<sup>209</sup> “‘Ağlamadığım bir gün bile yok!’ Uygur Türkü anne feryat etti...”, *Milliyet*, 22.09.2018, <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/dunya/aglamadigim-bir-gun-bile-yok-uygur-turku-anne-feryat-etti-2747090>

<sup>210</sup> “China is putting Uighur...”

<sup>211</sup> “Doğu Türkistan’da 20’yi aşkın çocuk kampı tespit edildi”, *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 23.04.2020, <https://qha.com.tr/haberler/dogu-turkistan-da-20-yi-askin-cocuk-toplama-kampi-tespit-edildi/192225/>

<sup>212</sup> Balcı, “Utaç kamplarında...”

<sup>213</sup> John Sudworth, “Çin Müslüman Uygur Türklerinin Çocuklarını Ailelerinin Yanından Ayırıyor”, *BBC*, 05.07.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-48880857>

<sup>214</sup> Munawwar Abdulla, “Coronavirus: China’s Xinjiang Camps are a neglected high-risk area and should be closed”, *Hong Kong Free Press*, 08.02.2020, <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2020/02/08/coronavirus-chinas-xinjiang-camps-neglected-high-risk-area-closed/>

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Approved by China in 1992, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the family as a natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. Under the convention, governments are obliged to ensure that children are not separated from their parents for their best interests. Even when alternative care arrangements are required, it is recommended that children are to be put under the care and supervision of close family members, if possible. Depriving a child of his/her family's care is the last option, and such a process should be as temporary as possible. The authorities should ensure that a child who can form his/her own opinions has the right to freely express all matters affecting those opinions. Due attention should be given to the views expressed by a child, based on his/her age and maturity. All decisions regarding alternative care should, in principle, protect the child's main essential interests, the child should be kept as close as possible to his/her familiar place of residence, the necessary measures should be taken to facilitate the child's contact and potential reintegration with his/her family, and it should be ensured that the child can continue his/her education, and cultural and social life.

Children whose parents reside in different countries have the right to maintain personal relationships and to have direct contact with both

parents. The convention also protects children against being deprived of benefiting from their own culture in terms of ethnicity, religion or language, practice the requirements of their own religion, and speak their own language. HRW Director Richardson says, "Other states must oppose the inhumane methods that the Chinese authorities implement on families as part of their oppressive policy in Xinjiang. It should be made clear to China that family reunification is a fundamental human right.", and expresses her reproach on this issue.

Abdulaziz from Hotan, who lives in Turkey, hasn't heard from his wife and four children since July 2017. Having recently learned that the eldest of his children lived with his mother-in-law in East Turkistan, Abdülaziz still does not know where his wife and three other children are. He says that he cannot reach his two brothers in East Turkistan in any way, even though he did his best to hear from his family. Abdülaziz has one wish in life, and that is to see his loved ones once again!<sup>215</sup>

Having been forced to leave East Turkistan and settle in Turkey, Abdurrahman Tohti says his wife and children disappeared when they returned to East Turkistan a few years ago for visiting purposes. Having learned that his wife and parents were arrested, Tohti could not find out anything about the fate of his children. He says that he only saw his four-year-old son in a video on the Chinese social media, and his son spoke Chinese in the video. Tohti states that while he was happy to see his child alive, he was devastated due to his desperation.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>215</sup> "Uygur'un kayıp çocukları ve hikayeleri", CNN, 21.09.2018, <https://www.cnnturk.com/dunya/cinin-yetim-cocuklari>

<sup>216</sup> "Yarım milyon Uygur çocuk asimilasyon kamplarına dolduruldu", *Dünya Bülteni*, 30.12.2019, <https://www.dunyabulteni.net/asya/yarim-milyon-uygur-cocuk-asimilasyon-kamplarina-dolduruldu-h456565.html>

As can be seen, arbitrary practices apply not only to those who are held in concentration camps, but also their next of kin who are their spouses and children. It is understood that the only purpose of the practices, in which family integrity and the psychological development of children are never considered, is assimilation.

Meripet wakes up every morning from a nightmare, because the Chinese government has placed four of her children in an orphanage. When Meripet and her husband left the country to take care of her sick father in Turkey, they left their children at home with their grandmother. However, after the Chinese authorities began to place thousands of Uighurs, who committed “destructive crimes” such as traveling abroad, in concentration camps, their visit turned into an exile. Later, her mother-in-law was also arrested. Meripet learned from a friend that her children, aged three to eight, were placed in an orphanage. After a year and a half spent away from her children, the 29-year-old suffering mother cries, looking at the photograph of a brightly painted building surrounded by barbed wire, where she believes her children are held and she asks, “Will they recognize me when I see them again one day? Will I be able to recognize them?”<sup>217</sup>

The concentration camps that were established in East Turkistan left countless children without parents. For example, journalists who talked to 14 Uighur families living in Turkey and a Kazakh living in Almaty, Kazakhstan, reported

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that there was a total of 56 children whom the families had left behind, 14 of whom were held in orphanages and boarding schools, while the families could not get any information about the fate of the remaining ones. Most of the adult relatives of families, who are likely to take care of the children who are left behind are also placed in concentration camps. There is incalculable evidence that the children of those who were placed in concentration camps and those who were outside East Turkistan, were placed in newly opened orphanages. These institutions are also the most concrete evidence of how children are systematically disconnected from their families and cultures. The Chinese government is building dozens of boarding schools where minority children are taught Mandarin and are punished when they speak their mother tongue.<sup>218</sup> With regard to the situation that Uighurs have been experiencing today, anthropologist Darren Byler says, “Uighurs are an ethnic group whose memory is being erased. What we are facing is a reminder of the settler colonial process in which an entire generation is destroyed.”<sup>219</sup>

<sup>217</sup> “Ağlamadığım bir gün bile...”

<sup>218</sup> “China is putting Uighur...”

<sup>219</sup> “Doğu Türkistan: Stanford...”

## “FAMILIES THAT ARE SIBLINGS WITH THE PARTY”: DESTRUCTION OF FAMILIES, VIOLATION OF PRIVACY

The Chinese administration has launched a project titled “Becoming Family” (*Becoming Family Campaign*)<sup>220</sup> as of March 2017, when the concentration camps were opened, under the assimilation program it applies against the Uighurs. Accordingly, a CPC member (usually male) from a different part of China is forcibly placed near a family, the male individuals of which are sent to concentration camps, without seeking the consent of the family. The Chinese regime explains the purpose of this unethical practice in which privacy is destroyed, as “Improving the living conditions of Uighurs and increasing the communication between the Han and Uighur peoples”! However, as many Uighurs point out, the purpose of this practice is to degenerate the family ties of Uighurs and exert control over all families rather than to allow the cultures to get to know each other.

Another monitoring method of China for Uighur families is the practice of irregular visits to

homes that can be called “compulsory visits”. The Chinese government also accesses the personal information of people living in a household by uploading QR codes to homes. With the “smart door” application, where people entering the house are scanned with mobile devices, the household, visiting guests and activities at home can be monitored. Chinese officials claim that this practice helps with population control and service delivery!<sup>221</sup> However, as many Uighurs say, this practice has no purpose other than the observation of the interior of the house.

China is understood to have taken the first steps of the Becoming Family project years ago. In 2014, after a series of attacks which were alleged to have been perpetrated by Uighurs, and the information that there were some Uighurs fighting in Syria<sup>222</sup>, the Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism, in the words of President Xi Jinping, was launched.<sup>223</sup> In this respect, 200,000 people were sent to East Turkistan be-

<sup>220</sup> Sources include many different terms that are used for the project: “twin relative”, “becoming family”, “match up and become a family”, “sibling family”, “relative family” etc.

<sup>221</sup> According to the statement made to HRW by a person who was previously located at the region where the practice was performed, the houses in the region are entered by QR code as of spring 2017. Officers come in the evenings every day or every two days to scan the QR code and find out how many people live in the house and the purpose of the visit of any guest. For detailed information, see Tom Embury-Denis, “China installing QR codes on Uyghur Muslim homes as part of mass security crackdown”, *Independent*, 11.09.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-uyghur-muslims-xinjiang-province-qr-codes-security-crackdown-hrw-a8532156.html>

<sup>222</sup> Ryan Beitler, “China’s Islamophobia: Uighur Muslims, Authoritarianism and Worldwide Fear”, *Paste Magazine*, 03.04.2017, <https://www.pastemagazine.com/politics/china/chinas-islamophobia-uyghur-muslims-authoritarianis/>

<sup>223</sup> Graham-Harrison, Garside, “Allow no escapes...”

tween 2014 and 2017, and personnel from state enterprises and public institutions were placed in the region as far as including villages. Local people started to be regularly followed and their homes were entered, and the campaign, which was extended indefinitely through political propaganda, was converted to the Becoming Family program in October 16, 2016, and was expanded as of December 2017, to primarily cover rural areas.<sup>224</sup> Officials claim that this initiative known as “fanghuiju” (访惠聚, “Visit People, Provide Benefit to People, and Bring People’s Hearts Together”) is generally designed to maintain social stability.<sup>225</sup> However, in the program, which is introduced by the Chinese authorities as “humane”, families do not have the right to refuse such visits!

Although the government defines the program as “voluntary”, Uighur Muslims know that rejecting any state initiative would be perceived as potential extremism or radicalism. These “new relatives” can be seen when looking at the social media images of Uighur weddings, funerals and other events that were once considered to be private and special!<sup>226</sup>

The CPC members are responsible for collecting information or updating the current information on whether the household is registered, whether the family members are immigrants, their political views, religious beliefs, and what language they speak during their stay with the Uighur families. These individuals observe and report any “problem or unusual situation” ranging from dirtiness to alcoholism and the extent to which religious beliefs are practiced.<sup>227</sup> The officers also carry out political propaganda activities, including the introduction of the “Xi Jinping ideal” and the explanation of the “care and devotion” in the policies of the CPC for East Turkistan, and they also “sincerely” warn people

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to be careful about the dangers of the ideologies and identities that the government finds objectionable, such as pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, and pan-Kazakhism!

Assigned with creating an “ethnic sense of unity” between the Uyghur families and the Han majority, these officials are also responsible for getting the families to sing the Chinese national anthem and the marches praising the CPC, and ensuring that families participate in events such as the weekly national flag hoisting ceremony and the Chinese New Year festivities, group games, dances and sports activities.<sup>228</sup>

It is observed that the implementation period of the Becoming Family project varies by region. According to a news report in March 2019, it is stated that each officer in the Wensu county should stay for at least eight days a month at the villagers’ house, and in an official document dated April 1, it is stated they should stay with Uighur families for five days in two months, while in Kashgar, they should stay for seven days

<sup>224</sup> HRW, “Eradicating Ideological Viruses...”

<sup>225</sup> “2018年,“民族团结一家亲”和民族团结联谊活动这样开展”, 15.02.2018, [http://www.xjztb.gov.cn/2018-02/15/c\\_1122421367.htm](http://www.xjztb.gov.cn/2018-02/15/c_1122421367.htm)

<sup>226</sup> Withnall, “China sends state...”

<sup>227</sup> “【住户心得】多措并举践行“两个全覆盖”住户工作”, 20.04.2018, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/YDEolkmX8MEApU2DQ0ziNg>

<sup>228</sup> HRW, “China: Visiting Officials Occupy Homes in Muslim Region”, 13.05.2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/13/china-visiting-officials-occupy-homes-muslim-region>

in two months.<sup>229</sup> Another similar practice is the permanent placement of government officials in Uyghurs' homes, which causes extreme distress.

The officers are asked to meticulously document their activities, including the submission of the house reports along with photos. These photos and videos show the most intimate aspects of home life, such as family members cooking, making their bed or sleeping, and these images are even shared on social media. It is understood that the consent of the visited families was not obtained for the publication of these videos or photos.<sup>230</sup>

A researcher on the Uighur culture, Darren Byler, shared the following information based on his research published by the Asia Society's Center on US-China Relations: It is a serious problem for an Uighur host to greet his/her neighbor by saying "essalamu alaikum", to have the Quran at home, to pray on Friday or to fast in Ramadan. If the dress of the young girl of the house is a little long or the beard of the young boy of the house is messy, that is sufficient evidence for the informant in the house. Reporting all of this is sufficient for the "criminal" people in the house to be placed in re-education centers, which are argued to have been opened by China against religious extremism.<sup>231</sup>

According to the CPC's official publication, *Newspaper of the Public*<sup>232</sup>, it is stated that 1,120,000 Chinese, who are CPC members, were paired with more than 1,690,000 households by the end of September 2018, and were spending time together for one week every two months.<sup>233</sup> Officers who define themselves as the "relatives" of the families they stay with are also given special powers to protect themselves, where necessary.

HRW emphasizes that Uighur families do not have the option to refuse these visitors, noting that such visits not only violate basic human rights but are also the most severe example of the mandatory assimilation practices which grow and exacerbate the animosity in the region. The organization's researcher for China, Maya Wang, draws attention to the seriousness of the situation with the following statements:

"Muslim families throughout Xinjiang literally eat and sleep under state supervision in their own homes. However, these invasive practices of assimilation that are carried out by China against the Muslims will not only violate basic rights, but also increase and intensify the anger in the region. The Chinese authorities must immediately end the Strike Hard campaign and all the relevant abuses."<sup>234</sup>

One of the many examples of the deviance of the practice is what is told about the 46-year-old Chinese who became a "relative" of a Uighur family in the Korla province of East Turkistan. According to the narration of the Uighurs in exile, although this person acted harmoniously at first, he started to inflict violence on the family members after a while and threatened to report the family to the authorities if he was not treated well, saying that the family was obliged to serve him. Moreover, the same person did not settle for this and wanted to marry the 16-year-old daughter of the Uighur family. After what happened, the family went to the regional police station and reported the situation, but the Chinese police dismissed the family, telling them that they should get along well with the Chinese officer at their home, they should try "not to

<sup>229</sup> "Çin'de kamu görevlileri Uygur ailelerin evlerinde kaldı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 03.01.2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/cin-de-kamu-gor- evlileri-uygur-ailelerin-evlerinde-kaldi/1355151>

<sup>230</sup> "开展"国家通用语言"讲座和文体活动 做好"两个全覆盖"工作", 19.03.2018, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/fnlZkrpxvBKUmER5dlGKyQ>

<sup>231</sup> Chiara Giordano, "One million Chinese people 'move into Muslim homes to report on Islamic or unpatriotic beliefs'", *Independent*, 23.11.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-uygur-muslim-people-move-homes-xinjiang-china-religion-a8648561.html>

<sup>232</sup> "新疆百万干部职工与各族群众结对认亲", 07.11.2018, <http://gongyi.people.com.cn/n1/2018/1107/c151132-30386143.html>

<sup>233</sup> Giordano, "One million Chinese..."

<sup>234</sup> HRW, "China: Visiting Officials..."



upset” him whatever happens, and it would be for their own benefit.<sup>235</sup>

East Turkistanis say that the Chinese administration forces Uighur girls to marry Chinese men, and the family members of the girls who don't accept the marriage that is imposed on them, are also sent to concentration camps.<sup>236</sup> It is also stated that in East Turkistan, where many events like this or other similar ones are experienced, the CPC members who are sent to homes include people who have psychological disorders or have previously been involved in crimes.<sup>237</sup>

Speaking to *The Independent*, the spokesperson of the World Uyghur Congress, Peter Irwin,<sup>238</sup> indicates that the program in question is China's "perverse step forward" project for Muslims, and the program symbolizes the complete destruction of the line between private and public life, and says, "The fact that the Chinese police officers are staying at Uighurs' homes is actually not something new. It's all about keeping them under surveillance as much as possible. This is a program aimed at eliminating people's identities by preventing them from expressing themselves." Stating that he doesn't know whether it is one of China's official policies for the officers to sleep in the same bed with the Uighur families during their visit, Irwin says, "We would think of such a thing as crazy in another country or anywhere in the world. But in China this seems to be normal, of course, considering what has been done in the last two or three years... The practice of officers sleeping in the same beds with family members is a perverse step to an extent that we've never seen before."<sup>239</sup>

Pointing out that there is not enough response to China's assimilation practices in the world, the President of the East Turkistan National Assembly, Seyit Tümtürk, reacts to the events in the region with the following statements:

"Today the men are in camps and prisons. Chinese workers and officers are placed near their daughters, spouses and families under the pretense of the "sibling family" project, and they are exposed to depravity and cruelty. This is an assimilation that has never been seen in history. Can you imagine the Chinese who do not have any cultural, historical or religious ties, enforcedly staying with your wives at your households and homes? This is a practice exclusive to the CPC."<sup>240</sup>

HRW states that this program of visits, which violates the Chinese government's privacy and family privacy rights and the cultural rights of the ethnic minorities, which are protected under the international human rights law, should be immediately terminated.<sup>241</sup>

In short, the Becoming Family project, which China initiated in 2014 and made more systematic by 2017, is a clear violation of human rights, and it is almost a representation of the practices of oppression and assimilation that are experienced in more than 1,200 concentration camps in East Turkistan. This project is a disgrace just like the other rights violations and should immediately end.

<sup>235</sup> "Doğu Türkistan'da 'Kardeş Aile' rezaleti: Evin 16 yaşındaki kızına taciz", *Gökbayrak*, 09.08.2018, <http://www.gokbayrak.com/haberler/dogu-turkistan%E2%80%99da-%E2%80%9Ckardes-aile%E2%80%9D-rezaleti-evin-16-yasindaki-kizina-taciz-2224>

<sup>236</sup> Mustafa Bağ, "RFA: Doğu Türkistanlı kadınlar, Çinli erkek görevlilerle yatağını paylaşmaya zorlanıyor", *Euronews*, 19.11.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/11/19/dogu-turkistanli-kadinlar-cinli-erkek-gorevlilerle-yatagini-paylasmaya-zorlaniyor>

<sup>237</sup> oğu Türkistan Maarif ve Dayanışma Derneği, "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan politikalarına tepkiler", 10.12.2018, <https://www.doguturkistan-der.org/2018/12/10/cinin-dogu-turkistan-politikalarina-tepkiler/>

<sup>238</sup> Peter Irwin, "The world needs to pressure China over the plight of the Uighurs", *The Guardian*, 05.07.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/05/china-plight-ughurs-xinjiang-beijing-muslim>

<sup>239</sup> "Pekin yönetiminden 'sapkın' uygulama! Müslüman Uygur kadınlar, Çinli devlet görevlileriyle aynı yatakta yatmaya zorlanıyor", *Time Türk*, 07.11.2019, <https://www.timeturk.com/pekin-yonetiminden-sapkin-uygulama-musulman-uygur-kadinlar-cinli-devlet-gorevlileri-ayni-yatakta-yatmaya-zorlaniyor/haber-1278566>

<sup>240</sup> Mustafa Bağ, "Doğu Türkistan Milli Meclis Başkanı: Erkeklerimiz kamplarda, Çinliler mahremimize giriyor", *Euronews*, 21.08.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/08/21/dogu-turkistan-milli-meclisi-baskan-erkeklerimiz-kamplarda-cinliler-mahremimize-giriyor>

<sup>241</sup> "2018年, "民族团结一家亲"和民族团结联谊活动这样开展"

## LABOR AT CONCENTRATION CAMPS: MODERN SLAVERY

According to official documents, interviews with experts and the reports submitted by researchers as a result of their visits to the region, China forces the Muslim minority to become workers.<sup>242</sup> There is evidence that the Uighurs who are held in concentration camps are forced to work for free against their will in spinning and textile factories as well as cotton fields.<sup>243</sup> China, which is one of the leading countries in the global cotton production, produces one of every five bales of cotton that are produced globally, and the Uighur people are forcibly employed at such cotton fields.<sup>244</sup>

Subjecting Uighurs to forced labor is not a new practice. Educational institutions at all levels were closed in East Turkistan, as in the rest of China, for 10 years as of the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Universities in particular, became unable to function, and intellectuals were sent to labor camps for “purification”. Some public schools had to wait until 1976 to start operating again, while some universities could only be reopened in 1978.<sup>245</sup> East Turkistan is the only region in China where the Chinese government’s “forced labor” policy is applied. In the system which is referred to

as *hasar* by the East Turkistanis, families who make a living by farming are obliged to send one of their family members to China’s inner regions which are many kilometres away for two or three weeks at a certain time of the year, for them to work in agriculture, infrastructure or other public areas. These people are not paid any wages in return for their work, and they are forced to cover their accommodation and travel expenses themselves. Families who do not send individuals for work are fined, and if there is no man in the family who’s strong enough to work, children and elderly women are forced to work under such conditions.

Another practice that is different from *hasar* involves sending young girls and boys between the ages of 14-25 by force to inner and eastern regions of China for work. Under the “Labor Export Program” launched in 2002, at least one person from every family living in the countryside is sent to work in factories in developed cities, and heavy fines are imposed on families who are unwilling to do this. Since 2005, China has initiated the practice of taking young girls from the villages of East Turkistan to factories in different parts of China as workers. It was

<sup>242</sup> “Modern-Day Slavery...”

<sup>243</sup> “US Reviews Report of...”

<sup>244</sup> Business and Human Rights Resource Center, “China: Ethnic minorities...”

<sup>245</sup> Tuna, p. 80.

## East Turkistan is the only region in China where the Chinese government's "forced labor" policy is applied.

noted that 2,500 young girls from the Yopurga township were taken to the Shandong province of China in 2006 alone.<sup>246</sup> The Chinese government explains the purpose of the program as the improvement of the dialogue between the Han Chinese and Uighurs.<sup>247</sup>

Since April 2017, when the concentration camps began to be opened intensively, the issue of forced labor was considered for those who resisted the Chinese oppression and those who "did not get in line" despite the practices of assimilation.<sup>248</sup> According to a news article in the *New York Times*, members of the Muslim minority are defined as "lazy, hopeless, sluggish, sloppy, disorganized and individual", and it is stated that efforts should be made to reverse these features! The news article, which was written with the title, "China's efforts to transform Muslim minorities into an army of workers", includes the orders of the CPC for the transformation of Uighurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims into an army of workers for factories and large businesses, and the relevant activities.<sup>249</sup>

Although the Chinese administration claims that the participants of the extensive camp network in East Turkistan are provided with vocational education and that the prisoners are being protected against the negative effects of radical Islam for their own good by being directed to the production lines, the emerging facts point to a completely different situation. A report published by the ASPI in early 2020 states that forced labor is supported by violence, and captive workers live in isolated dormitories, and are required to learn Chinese and receive ideological training.<sup>250</sup>

People from all professions and social groups, who are exposed to physical and psychological pressures, are subjected to "job training" and assimilation programs by being placed in labor camps for months, and sometimes years. These people are then employed in jobs such as tailoring, shoe repair and street cleaning, or other different fields.<sup>251</sup> China's goals for controlling and assimilating the Uighur population brought with it the forced labor system in the camps.

A group of US congress members proposed a bill on March 11, 2020 to prevent the goods produced by prisoners in East Turkistan, who are forced to work, from reaching the United States. According to the proposal, companies importing goods to the USA would be required to obtain a certificate indicating that the goods they shipped were not produced as a result of the forced labor of Uighur Muslims. The bill also requires the US firms which work with Chinese firms that exploit the labor of people who are forced to work, to disclose their relationship with East Turkistan.<sup>252</sup>

According to the 2018 report of the Center for Strategic and International Research (CSIS), China, which provides 22% of the global cotton production, obtains 84% of this production from East Turkistan.<sup>253</sup> While most of the textile products that are produced in East

<sup>246</sup> For detailed information, see [https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/tepsili\\_xewer/xitaygha-yotkesh-20070116.html](https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/tepsili_xewer/xitaygha-yotkesh-20070116.html)

<sup>247</sup> Tuna, p. 139.

<sup>248</sup> CJ Werleman, "Indescribably Hideous-China's Harvesting of Uyghur Muslim Organs", *Byline Times*, 16.07.2019, <https://bylinetimes.com/2019/07/16/indescribably-hideous-chinas-harvesting-of-uyghur-muslim-organs/>

<sup>249</sup> "Çin, Doğu Türkistanlıları Köle İşçi Ordusuna Dönüştürüyor", *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 01.01.2020, <https://qha.com.tr/haberler/cin-dogu-turkistanlilari-kole-isci-ordusuna-donusturuyor/138866/>

<sup>250</sup> Lily Kuo, "China transferred detained Uighurs to factories used by global brands-report", *The Guardian*, 01.03.2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/01/china-transferred-detained-uyghurs-to-factories-used-by-global-brands-report>

<sup>251</sup> "Çin, Doğu Türkistanlıları..."

<sup>252</sup> "US Lawmakers Seek to Tighten Ban on Forced-Labor Goods From China's Xinjiang", *The Epoch Times*, 11.03.2020, [https://www.theepochtimes.com/us-lawmakers-seek-to-tighten-ban-on-forced-labor-goods-from-chinas-xinjiang\\_3267951.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/us-lawmakers-seek-to-tighten-ban-on-forced-labor-goods-from-chinas-xinjiang_3267951.html)

<sup>253</sup> Ana Nicolaci da Costa, "Xinjiang cotton sparks concern over 'forced labour' claims", *BBC*, 13.11.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-50312010>

**The ASPI report states that tens of thousands of Uighurs are forced to work in factories in China for 83 global brands. These include the sportswear companies, Adidas and Nike, the US wholesaler, Costco, the fashion-clothing companies, Calvin Klein, Esprit, H&M, Patagonia and Tommy Hilfiger, and the leading companies of the capitalist system such as the Coca-Cola Company and the Campbell Soup Company.**

Turkistan are marketed domestically and in Central Asia, some of them are sent to the USA and Europe.<sup>254</sup>

The ASPI report states that tens of thousands of Uighurs are forced to work in factories in China for 83 global brands.<sup>255</sup> These include the sportswear companies, *Adidas* and *Nike*, the US wholesaler, *Costco*, the fashion-clothing companies, *Calvin Klein*, *Esprit*, *H&M*, *Patagonia* and *Tommy Hilfiger*, and the leading brands of the capitalist system such as the *Coca-Cola Company* and the *Campbell Soup Company*.<sup>256</sup> According to the same report, more than 80,000 Uighurs were sent to the factories in China from East Turkistan between 2017 and 2019.<sup>257</sup>

It is stated that the number of detainees in the region increases day by day after the concentration camps are linked to the factories. This is because China began to look for new formulas to obtain the necessary financial re-

sources to build and operate the concentration camps, and the solution of the problem came from the President of the National Textile and Garment Council of China, Sun Ruizhe, in March 2018. According to the plan he proposed, the workforce in the textile and apparel industry of Xinjiang was projected to be raised to over 100,000 in 2018 with the work of those in concentration camps, their relatives and the poor people.<sup>258</sup> At the end of the process, the Chinese administration announced that the target was achieved earlier than planned. In fact, it is stated that the number of people who were sent to work may have reached 500,000.<sup>259</sup> Another plan envisions the employment of 1 million people from East Turkistan in the textile and apparel industries by the end of 2023!<sup>260</sup>

In October 2018, one of the senior officials of Xinjiang, Shohrat Zakir, said that the government was busy preparing “job assignments” for prisoners who officially completed their “indoctrination and education” processes. Local security and judicial officials stated that ex-prisoners would be under surveillance even after their release, and that they should not leave their place of residence for a year.<sup>261</sup>

It is also possible for prisoners who are sent to the factories to stay in those factories for years. An Uighur, who wishes to remain anonymous, explained that his friend was sent to a concentration camp in March 2018 and was officially released in the fall, but was later told that he had to work in a clothing factory for three more years and that this period could be reduced if he worked hard.

<sup>254</sup> Chris Buckley, Austin Ramzy, “China’s Detention Camps for Muslim Turn to Forced Labor”, *The New York Times*, 16.12.2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/16/world/asia/xinjiang-china-forced-labor-camps-uighurs.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>255</sup> “US Lawmakers Seek...”

<sup>256</sup> “US Lawmakers Seek...”

<sup>257</sup> Ben Fox, “US report finds widespread forced Uighur labor in China”, *AP News*, 12.03.2020, <https://apnews.com/09a6f942039917fb9376e3909351399c>

<sup>258</sup> Buckley, Ramzy, “China’s Detention Camps...”

<sup>259</sup> “‘Komünist’ Çin’in, Vahşi Kapitalizmi: Doğu Türkistanlılara Köle İşçi Muamelesi”, *Kırım Haber Ajansı*, 13.05.2020, <https://qha.com.tr/haberler/komunist-cin-in-vahsi-kapitalizmi-dogu-turkistanlilara-kole-isci-muamelesi/200791/>

<sup>260</sup> “Çin, Doğu Türkistanlıları...”

<sup>261</sup> Kuo, “If you enter a camp...”

The Chinese government continues to define the concentration camps as “vocational education centers”, rejecting international criticisms for the forced labor of prisoners on the grounds that it is an internal affair. Denying the claims on this issue, the spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Geng Shuang, made the following statement: “The legitimate labor rights and interests of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang are protected by law, and there is no such thing as forced labor, as it is alleged”.<sup>262</sup> The statement made by the CSIS on the issue is as follows: “The forced labor system in Xinjiang is part of a system of oppression and abuse that is so extensive that it can rise to the level of crimes committed against religious minorities and humanity.”<sup>263</sup>

Satellite images and official documents that have been leaked to the press show that prisoners do not have any options other than to obey the orders and are forced to work in factories that are built in or near the camps. Mehmet Volkan Kaşıkçı, a researcher of the Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights Association<sup>264</sup> which was founded by the Kazakhs of East Turkistan in 2017, said: “People who are detained are considered as forced and unpaid or low-paid workers for these factories.” One of the people in this situation, Sofiya Talybaiqzy, was sent to the camp to work at a carpet factory, while Abil Amantai, 37, was taken to the camp to work at a textile factory with a monthly salary of \$95. Similarly, the 25-year-old Nural Razila was employed for a low wage at a textile factory that was opened near the camp. Kaşıkçı states that they interviewed at least 3,000 people whose labor was exploited in this way<sup>265</sup> and makes the following assessment:

“Those who are sent to the factories where they are forced to work are placed in jobs such as being security guards and trainers after they “graduate” from the camp where they were held. Many of them still cannot live with their family, and are in camp discipline. East Turkistan is a test subject for China; a laboratory. China seeks to fully control its own citizens.”<sup>266</sup>

It is estimated that 100,000 prisoners from Kashgar, which is considered to be the dynamo of the program, who went through the “vocational education centers” may have been sent to work at factories in August 2018 alone. There is a printing factory, a noodle factory and at least two clothing and textile factories at the camps in the rural areas around Kashgar. There is another clothing factory and bed production facility at a camp in Aksu. An article that was published in the official *Xinjiang Daily* newspaper, stated that “Education will transform them from ‘nomads’ to talented miracles, making them modern people who are useful to society.”<sup>267</sup>

As can be seen, people cannot choose where they will work. It is understood that if the program is implemented in all concentration camps in the region, hundreds of thousands of detainees may be forced to work in factories.<sup>268</sup> According to James Millward, who is a professor of history at Georgetown University, a portion of the billions of yuan which is spent for building camps, recruiting security personnel, and “educating” a large percentage of the local population, will - likely - be compensated by the forced labor of people in the south of East Turkistan.<sup>269</sup>

<sup>262</sup> Fox, “US report finds widespread...”

<sup>263</sup> Catherine Putz, “Cotton and Corporate Responsibility: Fighting Forced Labor in Xinjiang and Uzbekistan”, *The Diplomat*, 14.11.2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/cotton-and-corporate-responsibility-fighting-forced-labor-in-xinjiang-and-uzbekistan/>

<sup>264</sup> The Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights Association was established to help students who do not want to return to East Turkistan and to inform people about what has been going on. The association started to receive both written and video testimonies from victims in line with such activities of theirs. For detailed information, see Selçuk, “Doğu Türkistan Otoriter...”

<sup>265</sup> Buckley, Ramzy, “China’s Detention Camps...”

<sup>266</sup> Selçuk, “Doğu Türkistan Otoriter...”

<sup>267</sup> Buckley, Ramzy, “China’s Detention Camps...”

<sup>268</sup> “China transferred detained...”

<sup>269</sup> Asim Kashgarian, Rikar Hussein, “China’s Plan in Xinjiang Seen as Key Factor in Uighur Crackdown”, *VOA News*, 22.12.2019, <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/chinas-plan-xinjiang-seen-key-factor-uighur-crackdown>

## INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

Article 103 of the Criminal Code of the People's Republic of China stipulates that any activity which is considered to "explicitly provoke separatism and seek to divide the country" should be punished.<sup>270</sup> In this respect, China has banned human rights organizations from entering East Turkistan, Tibet and Inner Mongolia. It is therefore not possible for independent journalists, activists, NGOs and independent delegations to enter the camps and do research. China is known to have taken some groups to centers that were prepared in advance, by organizing make-believe programs to stall the world public, but these visits have no credibility.

Founded in 1949, the People's Republic of China is a huge country with an area over 9.5 million square kilometers and a population of over 1.4 billion. The Chinese government aims to keep the 56 different ethnic groups, which it officially recognizes, together without shaking the principles and administrative system of the CPC. To this end, it has adopted an approach involving the requirement for the creation of a culture that would "neutralize" the differences between the ethnic and religious groups in the "melting pot of the Chinese identity" and foster a sense of unity through a strong army and economy. Although China has strengthened its army and economy year by year for this purpose, it has followed a

strict, sometimes highly strict, but always a strict policy when it comes to unity, and respect and freedom for cultures. In its 5,000-year history, China has a tradition of dissolving and destroying communities. When one thinks of China, the loss of all ethical values, communities of discontented people, and a massive crushing force that destroys almost everything in its path springs to mind.

In November 2018, China had to acknowledge the existence of the concentration camps, which it denied for a long time, with terms such as "voluntary education centers" at first and then "re-education centers". However, the camps have been active since April 2017, and hundreds of thousands of people have been taken from their homes, places of work or streets, and locked in these camps without committing any crimes and without trial. Having deceived the world for a year and a half with its concealment efforts, China had to accept this inhumane practice following the testimonies of those who managed to get out of the camps and their relatives, intensive construction tenders, vacancy announcements for workers, police and security personnel, and camps that are identified by satellite images.

China is a member with a right of veto in the UN Security Council, it extends loans to developing

<sup>270</sup> Tuna, p. 127.

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countries, especially Islamic ones, and it has an economic domination over other countries, which are the most important factors that prevent political steps from being taken against China. The Chinese administration has no difficulty manipulating the UN and other umbrella organizations in covering up the human rights violations it commits in East Turkistan, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Hong Kong and other regions with the extra time it spends in the corridors of power in New York and Geneva. Skillfully using its international position to cover up these violations of law and presiding over four of the UN's 15 important agencies today, China is also the country which provides the highest number of personnel per square meter in the UN with 1,115 officials!<sup>271</sup>

In relation to the demands of both NGOs and press institutions, as well as the states and umbrella organizations such as the UN and the European Union (EU) for the opening up of the concentration camps, in each of which the Chinese government forcibly detains 10,000 to 50,000 innocent people, to independent observers, which have been going on for a long time, the Chinese government either resorts to distraction tactics or tells the world "what a successful vocational education program it implements" by organizing programs for the centers and institutions which it prepares in advance under a certain scenario! The Chinese officials always firmly deny the occurrence of any incidents of violence, harassment and abuse at the opened concentration camps, prisons, or similar detention centers, in all of these programs or "investigations". Describing these camps as centers for vocational education and employment training for "criminals involved

in minor offenses", China never allows these structures to be independently monitored by the UN, NGOs, human rights organizations and the media.<sup>272</sup>

In the report prepared by the HRW observers in September 2018, all of the 58 people who could be interviewed were those who were reached outside of East Turkistan and China, since the observers could not obtain permission from the Chinese authorities to access the concentration camps in East Turkistan.<sup>273</sup> On August 13, 2018, the HRW sent a letter including questions about the report to the Xinjiang Secretary of the CPC, Chen Quanguo, but did not receive any response. Later on, China banned all foreign journalists from entering the region after two foreign reporters sneaked into the region as tourists and took footage in early 2019.<sup>274</sup> In March 2020, China canceled the work permits of three US journalists in mainland China and Hong Kong and requested the return of their press cards within 10 days.<sup>275</sup>

Concentration camps are closed not only to observers but to anyone who independently represents the law. Having been in concentration camps previously, Said Erkin describes his

<sup>271</sup> Sirohi, "China's presence at..."

<sup>272</sup> HRW, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses..."

<sup>273</sup> Those who were interviewed live in Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Norway, Turkey and the USA. Interviews were mostly held through an interpreter in several languages such as Kazakh, Mandarin Chinese, English, German, Kyrgyz and Uighur. 43 of the interviews were made face-to-face, while 15 were made by phone.

<sup>274</sup> Alexandra Ma, "China is reportedly sending men to sleep in the same beds as Uighur Muslim women while their husbands are in prison camps", *Business Insider*, 04.11.2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-ughur-monitor-home-shared-bed-report-2019-11>

<sup>275</sup> "Çin, ABD'li gazetecilerin ülkedeki çalışma izinlerini iptal ediyor", *Euronews*, 17.03.2020, <https://tr.euronews.com/2020/03/17/cin-abd-li-gazetecilerin-ulkedeki-calisma-izinlerini-iptal-ediyor>

**China is a member with a right of veto in the UN Security Council, it extends loans to developing countries, especially Islamic ones, and it has an economic domination over other countries, which are the most important factors that prevent political steps from being taken against China. The Chinese administration has no difficulty manipulating the UN and other umbrella organizations in covering up the human rights violations it commits in East Turkistan, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Hong Kong and other regions with the extra time it spends in the corridors of power in New York and Geneva.**

experiences during that period as follows: “I asked them if I could hire a lawyer. They told me, ‘No, you don’t need a lawyer since you’re not a prisoner. You don’t have to defend yourself for anything, you are at a political education camp. All you have to do is study!’”

The most important source of information about the people working on the camps is therefore from the people who got out of those places and their testimonies. One of those people, a former prisoner named Rustan, describes his experiences at the camp as follows: “We were not allowed to meet with our relatives. We were only allowed to have a phone conversation for five minutes once a week. Since the police were always with us during the conversations, it was not possible to say anything negative about our situation, otherwise our line would be disconnected.”<sup>276</sup>

The introduction section of the report entitled, *Eradicating Ideological Viruses: China’s Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang’s Muslims*, which is published by the HRW in September 2018, includes the following statements:

“Researchers are not able to safely study in Xinjiang. While a few foreign academics, journalists and diplomats have access to the region, such visits are closely monitored by the Chinese government. Gathering information would put the interviewees and family members at serious risk.

“The Chinese government is often hostile to international human rights organizations, and the activities of local civil society groups, particularly those concerned with human rights have been limited for a long time. During the Xi Jinping presidency, pressure on the government to monitor human rights violations has greatly increased.”<sup>277</sup>

The statement of the European Commission Member for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides at the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council, which was held in Geneva between February 25 and March 22, 2019 was concluded as follows: “Finally, the EU reiterates its call for all states to grant an unconditional and unimpeded right of access to those assigned by the UN. In this respect, we urge China to grant access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.”<sup>278</sup>

The European Parliament (EP) also called on China to end their arbitrary arrests against the Uighurs, Kazakhs and Tibetans, and to close all the concentration camps. Convening in

<sup>276</sup> HRW, “Eradicating Ideological Viruses...”

<sup>277</sup> HRW, “Eradicating Ideological Viruses...”

<sup>278</sup> European Union External Action, “HRC 40 - High-level Segment - EU Statement”, 26.02.2019, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/58798/hrc-40-high-level-segment-eu-statement\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/58798/hrc-40-high-level-segment-eu-statement_en)



Strasbourg on April 21, 2019, the EP Plenary decided to urge the Beijing administration to end the arbitrary arrests of Uighurs, Kazakhs and Tibetans without any charges, trials or convictions, with 505 positive votes against 18 negative votes. The decision stated that there was concern about the oppression of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Tibetans, as well as Christians and many other religious and ethnic minorities. In the decision, which emphasized that the circumstances of these people was rapidly deteriorating and even their basic human rights were restricted, it was stated that the information received about the spread of the concentration camps in East Turkistan to other parts of China was also alarming. In this context, the European parliamentarians urged China to immediately close all the concentration camps and detention centers, and unconditionally release the detainees.<sup>279</sup>

Another important step was taken by Western countries against the intense violations of rights committed by China in East Turkistan. 22 countries, most of which are Western, sent a joint letter to the Chinese administration, calling for the immediate release of the Uighurs who were forcibly held in the concentration camps in East Turkistan. The letter dated July 8, 2019, which is addressed to the UN Human Rights Commission, and signed by the ambassadors of 22 countries, displays a common and clear attitude for international players on East Turkistan.<sup>280</sup> The countries who signed this letter, which is a first for concentration camps, are: Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Netherlands, England, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland, Japan, Canada, Northern Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway and New Zealand.<sup>281</sup>

The letter states that there is deep concern about the illegal detention practices in the huge concentration camps and the widespread surveillance, monitoring and restrictions, particularly targeting Uighurs as well as other minorities (Kazakhs, Kyrgyz). The following statements are included in the joint letter of the 22 countries:

“We call on China to uphold its national laws and international obligations, and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief, in Xinjiang and across China. We also call on China to refrain from the arbitrary detention and restrictions on freedom of movement of Uighurs and other Muslim and minority communities in Xinjiang.”

In the letter, which was also sent to China, the Beijing administration was also asked to grant “full access” to East Turkistan for the international delegation of independent experts who would also include the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.<sup>282</sup>

Following the submission of the letter to the UN Human Rights Commission, China quickly made a counter move, getting a letter prepared which included the signatures of 37 countries including Islamic countries, most of which it put under economic pressure, instead of doing what needed to be done in the humanitarian and legal sense.<sup>283</sup>

The number of countries which support China for its Uighur policy rose to 54 in November 2019. In the letter read by the Belarusian UN representative, China’s policies on East Turkistan were supported by the following statements:<sup>284</sup>

<sup>279</sup> Mustafa Bağ, “Avrupa Parlamentosu’dan Çin’e, ‘Uygur toplama kamplarını derhal kapat’ çağrısı”, *Euronews*, 21.04.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/04/21/avrupa-parlamentosu-dan-cin-e-uygur-toplama-kamplarini-derhal-kapat-cagrisi>

<sup>280</sup> For the original letter, see [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/190708\\_joint\\_statement\\_xinjiang.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/190708_joint_statement_xinjiang.pdf)

<sup>281</sup> Westcott, Roth, “UN members issue...”

<sup>282</sup> Mustafa Bağ, “22 ülkeden Çin’e Doğu Türkistan tepkisi; kitlesel gözaltıları derhal durdur, Uygurları serbest bırak”, *Euronews*, 10.07.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/07/10/22-ulkeden-cine-dogu-turkistan-tepkisi-kitlesel-gozaltilar-derhal-durdur-uygurular-serbest>

<sup>283</sup> “37 countries rally...”; Putz, “Which Countries are ...”

<sup>284</sup> For the original text of the letter, see <http://statements.unmeetings.org/media2/23328878/belarus-joint-statement-cerd-chair-oct-29.pdf>

“We commend China’s remarkable achievements in the field of human rights by adhering to the people-centered development philosophy and protecting and promoting human rights through development. We also appreciate China’s contributions to the international human rights cause. We take note that terrorism, separatism and religious extremism has caused enormous damage to people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, which has seriously infringed upon human rights, including right to life, health and development.

Faced with the grave challenge of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a series of counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers. Now safety and security has returned to Xinjiang and the fundamental human rights of people of all ethnic groups there are safeguarded. The past three consecutive years has not seen a single terrorist attack in Xinjiang. People there enjoy a stronger sense of happiness, fulfillment and security.

We note with appreciation that human rights are respected and protected in China in the process of counter-terrorism and deradicalization. We appreciate China’s commitment to openness and transparency. China has invited a number of diplomats, international organizations officials and journalist to Xinjiang to witness the progress of the human rights cause and the outcomes of counter-terrorism and deradicalization there...”

The countries that support China through this letter are: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda,

Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, the Congo, Cuba, North Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Iraq, Iran, Lao, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, the State of Palestine, the Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Togo, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Tanzania, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Some time after these developments, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mevlut Cavusoglu, who participated in the 52nd ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting which was held on July 30, 2019 in Thailand’s capital, Bangkok, met with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and made the following statement after the meeting:

“The issue of Uighur Turks was also raised during our president’s visit (July 2). Our primary expectation is for our Uighur brothers and sisters to live in peace and harmony under a single state of China. During the visit of our President, the Chinese President had proposed that we send a delegation to that region (East Turkistan) from Turkey. Then, on July 24 (2019), the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China came to our Ministry and officially conveyed this invitation. We talked about this today. Our President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had already responded positively to this invitation in principle. We will send a delegation to that region (East Turkistan) of about 10 people consisting of various institutions on the invitation of China and they will see the situation there and then. We therefore had the opportunity to

discuss all these issues today with the Chinese Foreign Minister.”<sup>285</sup>

Although almost a year has gone by after this meeting, Turkey still has not sent a delegation to the region.

Meanwhile, the following statement was made on February 9, 2019 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey upon the allegations of gross human rights violations in East Turkistan, and the death of the folk poet, Abdurrehim Heyit<sup>286</sup>:

“Practices that violate the basic human rights of the Uighur Turks and other Muslim communities in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region have become more severe, particularly in the last two years and have been brought to the agenda of the international community.

The official announcement of the policy for the ‘Sinification of All Religions and Beliefs’ in October 2017, in particular, was a new step towards the elimination of the ethnic, religious and cultural identities of the Uighur Turks and the other Muslim communities in the region.

It is no longer a secret that more than 1 million Uighur Turks, who were subjected to arbitrary arrests, were also subjected to torture and political brainwashing in concentration camps and prisons. Uighurs who are not detained in the camps are also under great pressure.

Our associates and citizens of Uighur origin who live abroad cannot hear from their relatives in this region.

**EP (The European Parliament) called on China to end their arbitrary arrests against the Uighurs, Kazakhs and Tibetans, and to close all the concentration camps. Convening in Strasbourg on April 21, 2019, the EP Plenary decided to urge the Beijing administration to end the arbitrary arrests of Uighurs, Kazakhs and Tibetans without any charges, trials or convictions, with 505 positive votes against 18 negative votes.**

Thousands of children were removed from their parents and became orphans.

The re-emergence of concentration camps in the 21st century and the systematic assimilation policy of the Chinese authorities against Uighur Turks is a huge disgrace for humanity.

We expressed our views on the tragedy that is experienced in the Xinjiang region to the Chinese authorities at all levels.

In such an environment, we learned with deep grief that the great folk poet Abdurrehim Heyit, who was sentenced to eight years in prison because of one of his compositions, died in his second year in prison. This tragic incident has further strengthened the reaction of the Turkish public on the gross human

<sup>285</sup> “Doğu Türkistan’a gözlem heyeti gönderiyoruz”, *Doğu Türkistan Bülteni*, 31.07.2019, <http://www.doguturkistanbulteni.net/dogu-turkistan-gozlem-heyeti-gonderiyoruz/>

<sup>286</sup> After this statement, China became obliged to report that Heyit was alive by making a video notification indicating that the news about the death of Abdurrehim Heyit was not correct.

## 22 countries, most of which are Western, sent a joint letter to the Chinese administration, calling for the immediate release of the Uighurs who were forcibly held in the concentration camps in East Turkistan.

rights violations in the Xinjiang region. We expect this justified reaction to be considered by the Chinese authorities.

We commemorate Abdurrehim Heyit and all our associates who lost their lives for the sake of protecting their Turkish and Muslim identity.

We hereby call on the Chinese authorities to respect the fundamental human rights of the Uighur Turks and close the concentration camps.

We call on the international community and the UN Secretary-General to take effective steps to end the human tragedy in the Xinjiang region.”<sup>287</sup>

Upon its previous application, the EU delegation tried to collect information on the human rights violations in the region with a three-day program in January 2019. This is the first visit to Xinjiang by a multinational body such as the EU, after the recognition of the existence of the camps by the Beijing administration. It was followed by another program for the region, which was carried out with the participation of diplomats from Russia and 11 Asian countries under the guidance of the Chinese government. Three camp visits were also made for a small group of foreign reporters under the program.<sup>288</sup>

The Beijing government also stated that UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet’s request to access Xinjiang to observe the situation in the camps could be accepted, provided that there should be no interference in the domestic affairs of the country, upon which a team of three people, one of whom is an EU official, visited the capital city of Xinjiang, Urumqi and the Kashgar province between January 11-13, 2019. During the program, the team was granted “comprehensive supervised access to locations including mosques, an Islamic educational institute and one “education center”.

An EU official made the following statement about the program:

“While the visited locations were carefully selected by the authorities to support China’s official policy for the region, the visit provided useful information which complemented the other sources. Many of these sources provide compelling and mutually consistent evidence of major and systematic human rights violations in Xinjiang.”<sup>289</sup>

A source commenting on this trip said that the delegation was shown roughly the same locations as those that were shown to the diplomats who had participated in the previous visit, which included an exhibit of the past terrorist attacks in Xinjiang.

The participants of the program said that the Chinese authorities were carefully prepared for the trip to give a good impression; the centers were recently painted; and the surveillance cameras were removed, and they also stated that they had the impression that the responses of the people they talked to were prepared in advance.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>287</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “SC-06, 9 Şubat 2019, Dışişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsü Hami Aksoy’un Uygur Türklerine Yönelik Ağır İnsan Hakları İhlalleri ve Halk Ozanı Abdurrehim Heyit’in Vefatı Hakkındaki Soruya Cevabı”, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_06\\_uygur-turklerine-yonelik-agir-insan-haklari-ihlalleri-ve-abdurrehim-heyit-in-vefati-hk.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_06_uygur-turklerine-yonelik-agir-insan-haklari-ihlalleri-ve-abdurrehim-heyit-in-vefati-hk.tr.mfa)

<sup>288</sup> Ben Blanchard, “China says pace of Xinjiang ‘education’ will slow, but defends camps”, *Reuters*, 06.01.2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-insight/china-says-pace-of-xinjiang-education-will-slow-but-defends-camps-idUSKCN1P007W>

<sup>289</sup> “EU team gets rare access to...”

<sup>290</sup> “EU team gets rare access to...”

Germany's Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance, Bärbel Kofler, made the following statement about East Turkistan on November 26, 2019:

“The ongoing reports of more than a million Uighurs being held in camps in Xinjiang are absolutely appalling. I call on the Chinese Government once again to allow independent international observers to access Xinjiang. Those unlawfully detained in camps in Xinjiang must be released immediately. In the talks that I myself, and also the Federal Government, have held with the Chinese Government in recent months, we have repeatedly called for an improvement of the human rights situation in Xinjiang. We reminded China of its international human rights obligations. China must now undertake clear steps to improve the human rights situation in Xinjiang without delay and in the long term.”<sup>291</sup>

In a statement, Kofler repeated her request saying, “Unfortunately, my request to travel to Xinjiang was refused. I would have liked to have gained a first-hand impression of the situation there and will continue to push for permission to visit Xinjiang soon.”<sup>292</sup>

The US Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan, stated that the UN failed to evaluate China's policies in the region at the UN General Assembly in New York, and described the trip of the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, Vladimir Voronkov to Xinjiang in an official capacity in June 2019, and the visit itself as fiction:

“Instead of bolstering the UN's moral authority by resisting Beijing's cynical offer, we witnessed the erosion of UN leadership and a blow to the reputation and credibility of a body we should instead look to as a clear voice of conscience. This must not happen again!

“We call on the UN to uphold its own values and carry out the many responsibilities we have entrusted to it. The UN must seek the immediate, unhindered, and unmonitored access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights! We urge the UN to investigate and closely monitor China's human rights abuses, including the repression of religious freedom and belief. Beijing wrongly insists that its actions are undertaken in a humane manner. If there were nothing to hide, diplomats and independent investigators would be allowed to travel freely throughout Xinjiang, and for that matter, Tibet. We must ask ourselves: what is the Chinese Communist Party afraid of? What are they trying to hide?”

Sullivan said that UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, was criticized by international groups dealing with human rights issues for failing to openly take a stand against China's mass arrest of Uighurs in Xinjiang. In a letter to Guterres dated September 17, 2019, which was signed by five human rights organizations<sup>293</sup>, Sullivan stated that Guterres preferred to “do special diplomacy” for the Chinese government, and also called on Chinese officials to allow rapid and unimpeded access to the region.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>291</sup> German Federal Foreign Office, “Human Rights Commissioner Kofler on the reports on the situation in Xinjiang”, *Press Release*, 26.11.2019, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/kofler-xinjiang/2282326>

<sup>292</sup> Peter Stubbley, “China refuses top human rights official Access to Uighur Muslim 're-education' camps”, *Independent*, 05.12.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-uighur-muslim-camps-xinjiang-human-rights-internment-barbel-kofler-germany-a8667886.html>

<sup>293</sup> The letter was signed by HRW, Amnesty International, The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the World Uyghur Congress (WUC).

<sup>294</sup> “US Calls on UN to Demand Unfettered Access to Xinjiang to Investigate Reports of Rights Abuses”, *Radio Free Asia*, 24.09.2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/access-09242019171454.html>

In her speech to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on February 26, 2020, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said that permission for “free access” to the camps should be granted for a visit to the Xinjiang region of China, where the tightly controlled Muslim majority lives. Bachelet said: “We will seek to analyze in-depth the human rights situation in China, including the situation of members of the Uighur minority. We will continue to request unfettered access for an advance team in preparation for this proposed visit.” Bachelet first asked permission to visit Xinjiang in December 2018.<sup>295</sup> Louise Arbor was the last UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit China in September 2005.<sup>296</sup>

The World Uyghur Congress also demands the UN to put pressure on China for the free access of the international community to the 3 million Uighurs and other groups of Turkish origin who are arbitrarily held in concentration camps.

On the other hand, while the Regional Governor of CPC, Shohrat Zakir, said in a statement on January 6, 2019, “We will welcome any UN specialist to visit Xinjiang to learn the real situation and hope that their comments would be based on facts.”, the request of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, to visit the region has not yet been given a positive response.

When evaluating the potential visit reports, the President of the World Uyghur Congress, Dolkun Isa, draws attention to the following points:

“We know that China loves to showcase its success, so why did it take so long to invite observers to East Turkistan? If these ‘vocational education centers’ have existed since 2017, why do we hear about them now? It

is quite obvious that this is a Chinese game. The international community should be careful.”

The rapporteurs who visited China in the past, complained about the 10-year long wait for their visit request to be accepted and the severe restrictions they experienced on access. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, conveys his observations and evaluations on this issue as follows:

“In the interviews, victim family members were intimidated by a number of so-called lawyers and human rights defenders and security personnel. The families were placed in police custody, told not to take part in the interview, or the interviews were physically prevented. In addition, “an obvious level of fear and self-censorship” was observed while interviewing the prisoners.”

Nowak called for the following criteria to be met before a possible visit to the region:

- Observers should be given full access to prisons and other detention facilities, including those that are referred to as “vocational education centers”.
- Observers should be allowed guaranteed private access against reprisals for victims, family members and their legal representatives.
- Observers should be given follow-up access to ensure that recommendations are followed.

One of the most important points that Nowak draws attention to is the following:

“Based on commonly available evidence, China’s approach to Uighurs in

<sup>295</sup> “UN demands ‘unfettered access’ for China Uighur region visit”, 27.02.2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/demands-unfettered-access-china-uighur-region-visit-200227111444719.html>

<sup>296</sup> Stephanie Nebehay, “U.N. rights boss expected in China, including restive Xinjiang region, this year: envoy”, *Reuters*, 26.02.2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-rights/un-rights-boss-expected-in-china-including-restive-xinjiang-region-this-year-envoy-idUSKCN20K1ZE>

the last two years is among the crimes against humanity. That is why we advise the international community not to allow China to use this as an opportunity to continue to normalize the practices of the mass arbitrary detention of millions of people.”<sup>297</sup>

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is the largest umbrella organization in the world followed by the UN, and represents the Islamic world which consists of a population of 1.8 billion with 57 members, has generally taken a passive attitude in relation to East Turkistan. The statements that were made after visits to East Turkistan were judgements which avoided any tension and did not go beyond wishes of good faith. This state of ineffectiveness once again raises the discussions about whether the OIC really represents the Islamic world.

The most important initiative of the OIC regarding China’s practices in East Turkistan was realized in 2009 by Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the OIC at the time. During this period, in which Ihsanoglu was intensively engaged in talks with the Chinese government, the Urumqi incidents of the 5th of July, in which hundreds of Muslims lost their lives, had just taken place. At its meeting in Damascus on July 25, 2009, the OIC called for constant communication with the Chinese government for the legitimate rights of Muslim Uighurs to be guaranteed.<sup>298</sup> About a year later, on June 16, 2010, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu paid a one-week visit to the region, including Urumqi and Kashgar, with the invitation of the Chinese government.<sup>299</sup>

At the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, which was held in the cap-

**The OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), which is the largest umbrella organization in the world followed by the UN, and represents the Islamic world which consists of a population of 1.8 billion with 57 members, has generally taken a passive attitude in relation to East Turkistan. The statements that were made after visits to East Turkistan were judgements which avoided any tension and did not go beyond wishes of good faith.**

ital of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, in March 2019, it was stated that the protection of the rights and identities of the Muslim communities and minorities was the primary responsibility of these countries. However, China’s efforts to “care for” its Muslim citizens were also interestingly praised at the same meeting!<sup>300</sup>

The Canada Director of HRW, Farida Deif, said that this latest meeting of the OIC was a surprising victory for Beijing and a great disappointment for millions of East Turkistani Muslims. Comparing what’s going on in the region to the atrocities committed by the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Gulag system, Deif stated that the religious freedoms of the Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang were violated by China; 1 million Muslims were detained in political education camps; and this attitude of the OIC encouraged Beijing to continue to oppress the Muslims.<sup>301</sup>

<sup>297</sup> World Uyghur Congress, “Press Release: China Must Allow Unfettered Access To All Political Indoctrination Camps In East Turkistan”, 07.01.2019, <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/china-must-allow-unfettered-access-to-all-political-indoctrination-camps-in-east-turkistan/>

<sup>298</sup> Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), “East Turkestan: Organization of the Islamic Conference to meet Uyghurs”, 17.08.2009, <https://unpo.org/article/9937>

<sup>299</sup> The Uyghur American Association, “OIC head to visit...”

<sup>300</sup> For detailed information, see <https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=4447&refID=1250>

<sup>301</sup> Helal Aljamra, “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Gives its “Blessing” to China for Violating the Rights of its Muslims”, *Inside Arabia*, 13.05.2019, <https://insidearabia.com/organization-islamic-cooperation-china-violating-rights-muslims/>

Meanwhile, the US Senate approved the bill which calls for the imposition of sanctions on Chinese officials due to their policies of oppression against Uyghur Turks in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, on May 14, 2020. Introduced to the senate by the Republican Senator, Marco Rubio, the bill was unanimously accepted. The bill calls on the Donald Trump administration to impose sanctions against Chinese officials responsible for the repression and violence that Uighurs and other Muslim minorities are subjected to. The bill also requires the US Department of State to prepare a report on human rights violations in the region. The first version of the bill in question, which was the “Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act-2019” was unanimously accepted by the US Senate on September 11, 2019, and then on December 3, 2019, a stronger and amended version of the bill, the “Uighur Intervention and Global Humanitarian Unified Response Act (Uighur Act)” was accepted by the US House of Representatives by a vote of 407 to 1.<sup>302</sup> The House of Representatives made some changes and sent the bill back to the senate in December 2019.<sup>303</sup> If the bill is accepted with its final version by the US Senate, the US government would

need to identify the Chinese officials who are responsible for carrying out torture, arbitrary detention, degrading treatment and other human rights violations against Muslim minority groups, within 180 days.<sup>304</sup>

As explained in detail throughout the chapter, China guaranteed the isolation of the region from the international community with its constitutional article, as stated in article 103 of its Penal Code. Requests for independent visits to the region are accepted on the condition that they “do not interfere with the internal affairs”, however such requests are constantly postponed with delaying tactics as in the case of Turkey, which has been waiting for a confirmation for nearly a year, and the accepted visit requests are passed off with pre-prepared scenarios. China continues to openly commit human rights violations by not stating how many people are in the camps, the reasons for their arrests and how much longer they will be detained. Such human rights violations are carried out not only against those whose freedoms are restricted in the concentration camps, but also against families and relatives in all kinds of misfortune, in short, the entire East Turkistan, which is turned into a prison.

<sup>302</sup> “ABD Temsilciler Meclisi, Uygur yasa tasarısını kabul etti; Çin, “İçişlerimize karışmayın” dedi”, 04.12.2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/12/04/abd-temsilciler-meclisi-uygur-yasa-tasarisin-kabul-etti-cin-icislerimize-karismayin>

<sup>303</sup> “ABD Senatosu Uygur Türkleri için sunulan yasa tasarısını onayladı”, NTV, 15.05.2020, [https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/abd-senatosu-uygur-turkleri-icin-sunulan-yasa-tasarisini-onayladi,SikCS5cbYUckwOqZ\\_rt0-Q](https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/abd-senatosu-uygur-turkleri-icin-sunulan-yasa-tasarisini-onayladi,SikCS5cbYUckwOqZ_rt0-Q)

<sup>304</sup> UNPO, “East Turkistan: US...”



# STEP BY STEP GENOCIDE - ALLEGATIONS OF GENOCIDE IN EAST TURKISTAN

Wars, repressive regimes, and the tendency to ignore those who are different have intensely led to human rights violations. The present international order in which mankind lives today has created a world where more mass murders, exiles, concentration camp or isolation practices, human rights violations that go beyond the boundaries of reason and logic, and intolerable crimes against humanity are committed, rather than a prosperous life.

*Human rights*, literally, refer to the rights that a person has just because she/he is human. Today, human rights, which are perceived as the source of legitimacy of the political regimes and legal orders that regulate social life as a whole, basically reflect an accumulation of the cultural values created by humanity throughout history.<sup>305</sup> While the history of the humanity's struggle for the protection of human rights goes way back, the use of the term "human rights" is quite new; this term became widespread after the 2nd World War.<sup>306</sup>

In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". In addition, the European Council approved the "European Convention on Human Rights"

in 1950. Some articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948 are as follows:

- Article 1- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
- Article 3- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
- Article 4- No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
- Article 5- No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Article 6- Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
- Article 7- All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.
- Article 8- Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent

<sup>305</sup> A. Vahap Coşkun, "İnsan Hakları ve Kültürel Rölativizm", KKTC İnsan Hakları Derneği, <http://trnchumanrights.org/kulturel-rolativizm/>

<sup>306</sup> "İnsan Hakları", *The United Nations Today*, <http://www.unicankara.org.tr/today/4.html>

**The real problem of the countries regarding human rights is not a question of communication, law or theory, but a question of practice and understanding. Although countries try to provide “rational” justifications for the reasons, violations that are committed around the world today sometimes reach a level of violence leading to genocide and hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions of people are punished in the most brutal manner.**

national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

- Article 9- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- Article 11/1- Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
- Article 18- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his/her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
- Article 19- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.<sup>307</sup>

Attitudes towards human rights plays a decisive role in understanding a state order or evaluating a regime. Respect for human rights is one of the basic criteria for the legitimacy of the regimes. If a regime does not respect human rights, this means that such a regime disregards the value of a human being, and therefore the humanity of that person. Doing this for the general interest of society or for something else does not give moral legitimacy to that regime.<sup>308</sup> Rights arising from being a human should be the same for everyone, regardless of where they live.

The real problem of the countries regarding human rights is not a question of communication, law or theory, but a question of practice and understanding. Although countries try to provide “rational” justifications for the reasons, violations that are committed around the world today sometimes reach a level of violence leading to genocide and hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions of people are punished in the most brutal manner. Of these punishments, *genocide* is the deliberate willful and organized elimination of a group with a certain race, religion, political view or ethnic origin, which is an inhumane practice in which all rights violations are committed together. Genocide is a significant and major crime that is technically evaluated based on international criteria, and is one of the most serious violations of the rules of the international humanitarian law.<sup>309</sup>

Genocide was defined in the same way in Article 2 of the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, which was adopted on December 9, 1948 and came into force on January 12, 1951; Article 6 of the Rome Statute; Article 4 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court of Former Yugoslavia; and Article 2 of the International Criminal Court Statute of Rwanda. The only difference in definitions is the use of the term

<sup>307</sup> UN, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

<sup>308</sup> Gökçen Alpkaya et al, *İnsan Hakları*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000, p. 14.

<sup>309</sup> Arzu Beşiri, “Soykırım ve Soykırıma İlişkin Uluslararası Mekanizmalar”, *TBB Dergisi*, <http://tbbdergisi.barobirlik.org.tr/m2013-108-1310>

“contract” in one definition, and the use of the term “statute” in others.

According to Article 2 of the Genocide Convention, genocide is the commitment of the following acts with the intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group solely because of such feature of them:

- Killing the members of the group
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group<sup>310</sup>

As can be seen, the characteristic feature of the crime of genocide is the deliberate intent of the perpetrator. Committing the acts for this material element that is listed in the articles is not sufficient for the confirmation of the crime. These acts must also be committed with the intent of destroying, in whole or in part, “a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” by specifically targeting them. The characteristics of the group identity that the victims have, cause the perpetrator to commit these acts. If the committed act is part of a plan for the destruction of a group or if it carries such an intention, that act is genocide; otherwise it is not genocide.<sup>311</sup>

In Article 3, the punishable acts are listed as follows:

- Genocide
- Conspiracy to commit genocide

- Direct and public incitement to commit genocide
- Attempt to commit genocide
- Complicity in genocide<sup>312</sup>

Article 6 of the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court, gave the authority to try the crime of genocide defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide dated 1948 to the International Criminal Court. This definition was accepted as part of international customary law, and is therefore binding for all states, whether they ratified the Genocide Convention or not.<sup>313</sup>

Specified in paragraph one of Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the “Crimes Against Humanity” covers the following acts that are committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population:

- Murder
- Extermination
- Enslavement
- Deportation or forcible transfer of population
- Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law
- Torture
- Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity
- Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, reli-

<sup>310</sup> UN Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility To Protect, “Genocide” <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

<sup>311</sup> Beşiri, “Soykırım ve Soykırımı...”

<sup>312</sup> UN Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility To Protect, “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, [https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf)

<sup>313</sup> “Soykırım nedir?”, *surgun.org*, 26.05.2018, <http://www.surgun.org/yazilar/9-soykirim-nedir>

**Although it is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that no one can be arbitrarily arrested or exiled, millions of people around the world are deprived of the security and protection that the citizenship of a country can provide to them.**

gious, gender or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court

- Enforced disappearance of persons
- The crime of apartheid
- Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health<sup>314</sup>

In contrast with genocide, crimes against humanity do not need to target a specific group. Instead, the victim of the attack can be any civilian population, regardless of its affiliation or identity. Another important distinction is that in the case of crimes against humanity, it is not necessary to prove that there is an overall specific intent. It suffices for there to be a simple intent to commit any of the acts listed, with the exception of the act of persecution, which requires additional discriminatory intent. The perpetrator must also act with knowledge of the attack against the civilian population and that his/her action is part of that attack.<sup>315</sup>

Human freedom is one of the sine qua nons (essential conditions) in life, perhaps the top one. However, throughout history, people's freedom of life has been restricted and many people

have been faced with unimaginable difficult conditions. Although it is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that no one can be arbitrarily arrested or exiled, millions of people around the world are deprived of the security and protection that the citizenship of a country can provide to them. Even in this period when we are close to completing the first quarter of the 21st century, millions of people are deprived of their liberty and degraded due to their religious and political preferences in their own country or the places to which they emigrated. East Turkistan has also been, and continues to be a place where similar violations have been experienced numerous times since it was annexed by China in 1949.

*Human rights violations, genocide and crimes against humanity*, which are discussed conceptually and whose principles are stated above, completely apply to the people of East Turkistan, since they are implemented on a chosen group; i.e. all the crimes that are mentioned are committed by the Chinese administration in East Turkistan. This study was prepared in the context of these three subjects as briefly as possible, and what is told has become evidence of how a power that lacks an understanding of human rights and justice could write the darkest pages of human history. Those who remained silent to this persecution because of some interests and reckonings are also responsible for the human rights violations, the crime of genocide and the crimes against humanity, which are committed by China! There are dozens of other topics that are not mentioned or only mentioned under titles in the study. East Turkistan is essentially the most challenging geographical area in the world for a person to live in today. One of the things that is so devastating and hurtful for the people who are faced with these cruelties and troubles is that nearly 8 billion humans turned

<sup>314</sup> "Uluslararası Ceza Mahkemesi Roma Tüzüğü", [http://www.ceidizleme.org/ekutuphaneresim/dosya/459\\_1.pdf](http://www.ceidizleme.org/ekutuphaneresim/dosya/459_1.pdf)

<sup>315</sup> UN Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility To Protect, "Crimes Against Humanity", <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>

their backs on their brothers and sisters in East Turkistan. It should be noted that no country or community is independent of the developments that take place in the world today, and what East Turkistan experiences today could be the reality of another country tomorrow!

Looking at the milestones of the human rights violations in East Turkistan in the 21st century, five critical points draw attention:

- September 11, 2001: The attack on the Twin Towers in the USA<sup>316</sup>
- July 5, 2009: The Urumqi incidents<sup>317</sup>
- May 2014: Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism<sup>318</sup>
- January 1, 2016: Counter-Terrorism Law<sup>319</sup>
- March 29, 2017: Enactment of the Regulations on De-extremification in Xinjiang<sup>320</sup>

After these incidents, the world's most widespread and crowded concentration camps, which were further systematized in East Turkistan since April 2017, started to be opened. Although these dates are interrelated, they also point to the periods when new phases were initiated.

China disregards the presumption of innocence by claiming that it carried out the arrests under the "principle of the prevention of crime". Investigations that have been carried out show

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that almost all members of the Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and other Muslim ethnic groups who were placed in concentration camps, actually had committed no crimes. Looking at the methods that are applied, it is understood that the Chinese administration currently considers all Uighurs and Muslim minorities to be "guilty" regardless of their age and gender, and those who are devoted to their religion and traditions as "terrorists". The published "75 signs of extremism" confirms that almost all Uighurs and other Muslim minorities will pass through prisons and concentration camps!

With the appointment of Chen Quanguo to the region in August 2016, 90,866 police were recruited by July 2017 for around 7,500 newly established

<sup>316</sup> China has been one of the strongest defenders of the USA's "Global War on Terror" campaign after September 11, 2001 to intervene in East Turkistan, and approved the US's entry into Afghanistan and Iraq, seizing a great opportunity to further increase its policies of oppression against the Uighur people in East Turkistan and to include the structures that it doesn't want within the scope of terrorism. During this period, the repression in East Turkistan was increased several times.

<sup>317</sup> On July 5, 2009, thousands of Uighurs took to the streets in Urumqi, protesting the killing of Uighur workers in a fight that broke out in a toy factory in the Guangdong province of China and demanding the opening of an independent investigation into the incident. Around 1,000 Uighurs were massacred in the demonstrations, to which China responded with 130,000 soldiers.

<sup>318</sup> Following a few attacks that were carried out by Uighurs who fought in Syria and Uighurs in China, the Chinese President Xi Jinping declared a warning against the "poison of religious fundamentalism", and set the ground for arbitrary arrests, arguing that this policy of oppression should be applied to eliminate radical Islamism. In the prepared reports, the arrests in East Turkistan were claimed to be for the benefit of the Uighur people, and 75 signs of extremism were listed, asking people to report those who exhibit one of such signs. This was followed by the initiation of the Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism in May 2014.

<sup>319</sup> Enacted in 2016, the National Counter-Terrorism Law, gave directives to the relevant government departments to increase not only their armed operations but also their activities in education and propaganda. Therefore, it became possible for any incident in East Turkistan to be associated with terrorism and punished; for the police to freely open fire during interventions in the incidents, and make arrests with night raids, and for people to be imprisoned without a court order. In this process, the East Turkistanis were made into open targets, while the Muslim people began to be treated as terrorists altogether.

<sup>320</sup> In Article 3 of such regulations, "extremism" was officially defined for the first time. Accordingly, 14 ambiguous items such as "refusing to work and live normally, under the influence of religious extremism; having abnormal views, religious thoughts and expressions under the influence of extremism; generalization of the concept of halal; abnormal beard growth and choice of name; other statements and actions which exhibit extremism" are listed for extremism. For detailed information, see Yıldırım, "Çin'deki Toplama Kampları..."

police stations;<sup>321</sup> and the new style of “de-extremification” practices were justified in the Chinese laws with the enactment of the “Regulations on De-extremification in Xinjiang” in 2017.

The rights violations in East Turkistan were extended to include political, economic, religious and cultural rights and anything that is related to them. However, Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” Today, the Uighur people are not free about any rights. Having a tent, a passport or more than one knife, growing a long beard or wearing a headscarf, fasting or avoiding the consumption of alcohol and smoking is more than enough to be labeled as an “extremist” and “terrorist”. People are not able to even give their children the name they want, invite relatives or friends to dinner or breakfast without permission, and hold ceremonies in accordance with their customs and traditions when a relative passes away or for a marriage. People are always controlled. They are obligated to go hundreds of kilometers away to work for free, while paying for the cost of the transportation themselves, work for weeks without being paid a single penny, and pay for the meals and accommodation. It is possible to extend this list even further.

Article 3 states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” Today, the cheapest thing in East Turkistan is human life and nobody is sure whether they’ll stay alive or not! People are followed road by road, street by street, by means of high-tech surveillance systems and through the 1,400 security companies implementing them; cameras are sometimes in the living room of your house and sometimes at the beginning of your street. With the broadly defined terror law and the extraordinary powers

given to the military and police, people can be detained as “terrorist suspects” wherever they are located and held for months, sometimes years, without even informing their family members. Neither the prisoner nor his/her family can do anything in the legal sense against this practice within the borders of China! Even if there was, it would be foolish to dare to do them, considering the consequences! People who have no crimes at all can be sent to detention centers or concentration camps without being tried just because there is a suspicion about them, with their right of defense violated and the presumption of innocence disregarded.

Article 4 of the Declaration is as follows: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.” Today, 80,000 to 500,000 Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who are placed in concentration camps and given “compulsory education” are then employed with no or minimum wage as compulsory workers under the most primitive conditions in factories that are established in the inner regions of China or near the concentration camps. This is so common in East Turkistan that some countries importing goods from China have started to request a certificate from companies indicating that the commercial products of the companies are not “goods produced by forced workers”. China’s goal for 2023 is to raise the number of forced workers to 1 million!

Article 5 is as follows: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” Based on what we found out from the testimonies of people who managed to get out of the concentration camps in East Turkistan, some of the tortures that are carried out at the camps are as follows: Making people stand on hot stones with only their underwear on them in the summer, and barefooted on ice in the winter, beating, electrocuting, not treating disease, sleep deprivation, long-term solitary

<sup>321</sup> “A Summer Vacation in...”

confinement, leaving people handcuffed for a long time, making people wait for a long time with black sacks on their heads, restricting people from going to the bathroom, holding people in overcrowded rooms, depriving people of food and water or not giving them enough food, immersion in water tanks or pouring cold water on prisoners out in the cold, putting out cigarettes on the faces and bodies of female detainees, beating prisoners with a baton, electrocuting them, beating them with various pain-inflicting objects and torturing them while they are hung from their wrists, blinding with intense and bright light, keeping in a tense position for a long time, making people sit without moving on seats called tiger seats for days, making people walk around with their hands handcuffed and their feet shackled, debilitating prisoners and making them obedient by administering drugs, the contents of which they are not informed, performing forced abortions, sterilization, forcing a person to watch someone getting raped, gang rape.<sup>322</sup>

The requirements included in Articles 8, 9 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which indicate that a person has the right to exercise his/her legal and constitutional rights, cannot be arbitrarily arrested, and has the right to self-defense and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty are also not applied to the Muslims in East Turkistan.

The freedom of thought, religion and conscience which are mentioned in Articles 18 and 19 of the Declaration are also compromised in East Turkistan. Since the Chinese regime considers religious belief as the greatest obstacle in completely assimilating the Uighurs, religious oppression against Uighurs in East Turkistan is increasing day by day. The repressions have

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reached their highest level after the Cultural Revolution that is experienced between 1966 and 1976.<sup>323</sup> During this period, most of the mosques and masjids were demolished or turned into entertainment venues. According to the sources, around 10,000 to 15,000 mosques, tombs and other religious buildings were demolished between 2016 and 2019.<sup>324</sup>

Islamic clothes and beards and mustaches were considered to be signs of religious extremism and prohibited.<sup>325</sup> In East Turkistan, those under the age of 18 cannot enter mosques. There are also restrictions for adults on worshiping in large groups, preaching, reading long prayers and reading some verses at mosques. It is forbidden for civil servants, workers, CPC members, students and retirees to go to places of worship and worship, and those who are found to have worshiped are fired, placed under surveillance or fined. Similarly, it is forbidden for women to worship, for private individuals to open religious schools or training centers, and for students to attend religious training centers and

<sup>322</sup> "Çin'in Doğu Türkistan'da kurduğu kampları anlattı: 15 ay güneşi görmedim, her anı işkenceydi", 06.07.2019, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/48661/d%C3%BCnya/%C3%A7in%E2%80%99-do%C4%9Fu-t%C3%BCrkistan%E2%80%99da-kurdu%C4%9Fu-kamplar%C4%B1-anlat%C4%B1-15-ay-g%C3%BCne%C5%9Fi-g%C3%B6rmedim-her-an%C4%B1>; <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/cecc-01072020190715.htm>; Ioanes, "Rape, medical experiments..."

<sup>323</sup> HRW, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses..."

<sup>324</sup> "Çin Heytgâh Camii'nin Motiflerini Söktü", *Türkistan Press*, 28.05.2020, <http://turkistanpress.com/page/cin-heytg%EF%BF%BD-h-camii-39-nin-motiflerini-soktu/1776>

<sup>325</sup> China Uighurs: Xinjiang..."

**China deliberately prevents population growth by taking the males of almost all Uighur families into concentration camps, and it also prevents future births by sterilizing all men and women in the camps. People also lose their reproductive functions due to the torture they are exposed to in general and particularly on their sexual organs.**

schools, and It is stated in similar regulations that all such people will be punished when it is determined that they received a religious education or worshiped, and that an investigation will be launched against the school principal, class officer, and parents of the relevant student. Today, the Chinese administration considers it a serious crime for Uighurs to fast during Ramadan and regards not consuming alcohol as religious extremism. Since all such worship and acts are included in the prohibitions, those who perform any one of them are punished with concentration camps without question.

According to Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide is the commitment of the acts that are listed above in items with the intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group solely because of such feature of them.

There is no concrete document in relation to the killing of the members of the group, and causing bodily or mental harm to members of the group as mentioned in the articles, other than what the witnesses tell about what is experienced at the concentration camps, the details of which are completely concealed. About 70% of those who are able to speak are Kazakh Muslims who took refuge in Kazakhstan, and it is known that

the Kazakh population in the concentration camps is much less than the Uighur population. Uighurs, on the other hand, generally prefer to remain silent, worrying that their relatives will be harmed. However, especially recently, there has been an increase in the posts of Uighur Muslims for “missing people” on social media, including the photographs of their relatives, which serve as both evidence and an instrument for informing the world about the issue. With the efforts of the Atajurt Human Rights Association, HRW and other human rights organizations, these people were able to share their testimonies. The website *shahit.biz* contains the missing persons ads for and personal information of nearly 9,000 victims.<sup>326</sup>

There is also serious proven evidence on the following article of the convention: “Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”. China deliberately prevents population growth by taking the males of almost all Uighur families into concentration camps, and it also prevents future births by sterilizing all men and women in the camps. People also lose their reproductive functions due to the torture they are exposed to in general and particularly on their sexual organs.

The sterilization and compulsory abortion policies have a long history in East Turkistan. While mothers are forced to have an abortion for their “children above the quota”, they are also sterilized without being asked, which is a clear practice of genocide! These people are not able to continue their generation and family life.

The Becoming Family project, which China initiated in 2014 and made more systematic by 2017, is a representation of the all types of practices of oppression and assimilation that are experienced at the concentration camps, which is spread to all the Uighur and Muslim households as an inhumane method. More than

<sup>326</sup> Xinjiang Victim Data Base, <https://www.shahit.biz/eng/>



1 million Chinese civil servants lodge with families, destroying the family's privacy and cases of harassment and rape against the members of the households are experienced. However, families are not able to take any legal action against individuals who commit such acts, since they are mostly state officials. Families who try to file a complaint about this are "advised to keep their compulsory guests happy". This is because these people can easily send other members of the household to the concentration camps with the reports they prepare. In addition, if the young girl of the house wears long skirts or people in the house greet each other by saying "salaam alaikum" (peace be upon you), these are also considered to be signs of extremism!

The 1998 "Akayesu Verdict" of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was a milestone as it was ruled through this verdict that the application of rape as a method to cause serious bodily and mental harm to members of a protected group constitutes a crime of genocide. In addition, the verdict stated that rape could also be used as a means of preventing births in a group. For example, in societies where ethnicity is determined by that of the father, raping a victim to impregnate her may prevent the victim from giving birth to a child who would be included in her group.<sup>327</sup>

In addition to what has been listed until now, the population growth in the region is severely hampered through the Uighur girls who are forced into marriage with the Chinese, those who are sent to work outside East Turkistan, and the 2,805,000 people who are reported to have migrated from the region after the Counter-Terrorism Law of January 1, 2016. Han Chinese settlers are brought to the villages, towns and cities evacuated by Uighurs with very extensive opportunities and job guarantees, and are settled.

The practice of "Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group", which is the last ar-

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ticle of the Genocide Convention, is extensively observed in East Turkistan. If any of the parents of a child in the region is sent to a concentration camp, the children are taken to orphanages, childcare centers and boarding schools without being left under the supervision of other parents or relatives contrary to the UN Child Rights and the Chinese Orphanage Law. Even if any of the child's parents who were in a concentration camp left the camp, she/he can only find out where or which orphanage or center the child is, by chance. There is almost nothing that the child's relatives can do about this.

The total number of the childcare centers and the number of security guards and trainers in the centers in East Turkistan are reported to be 7,778 and 92,200, respectively. There are also 59,400 people who are employed with the status of "Special Officer" in the centers. Considering the number of staff, it is estimated that approximately 2 million children are held in these centers!

According to 2017 data, 40% of all the secondary school students in East Turkistan, i.e. 497,800 of them, are placed in boarding schools where

<sup>327</sup> "Soykırım nedir?"

the compulsory language is Chinese. Although China denies it, this information confirms the existence of “children’s camps”. These centers are structurally no different than the concentration camps. These centers where absolutely no visitors are accepted, resemble detention centers with the barbed wires, fences and surveillance cameras surrounding them, rather than places where the safety of the children is ensured.

## **Attacks that are Perpetrated on the Uighur Identity and Culture: Cultural Genocide**

Cultural genocide” is a type of genocide in which military force is also used by the dominant authority or authorities to damage, change or completely destroy the values and practices originating from the customs, traditions, religions and beliefs that define a society or have been maintained by a society for many years. Essentially, the goal is to ensure that the ethnic-religious group in the geographical region where the genocide is carried out, adopts the culture of the dominant authority or such culture is imposed on them.

The activities that fall under the scope of cultural genocide include, but are not limited to the efforts to destroy other ethnic languages, the destruction of the historical remains and cemeteries of other ethnic groups, psychologically instilling an inferiority complex, and historical distortion. The goal of cultural genocide is to destroy the national feelings of a nation, to ensure that its people feel an inferiority complex, to disrupt its historical, cultural and social internal dynamics and hence, to ensure that such a group is integrated with its own ethnic group. Cultural genocide practices have been encountered in many periods of history. It is known that many ethnic groups that were

In short, it is a crime of genocide for all children who both attend kindergarten and are of primary and secondary school age to be boarding students; to be gathered at certain areas against the wishes of their parents; and be distanced from the cultural domains of their families and relatives. In addition, there is a possibility that all of these children were sterilized with injections and drugs, which makes the current crime of genocide even more severe.

erased from the pages of history were exposed to such practices.

According to Lawyer Rafael Lemkin, who provided contributions to the creation of the concept of genocide, genocide is not only the destruction of the representatives of a nation or ethnicity, but also the destruction of its cultural and national values. However, the concept of cultural genocide was not included in the genocide convention which was adopted by the UN in 1948. Such practices are not included in the definition of genocide which is used in the status, unless any one of the five prohibited acts, which are mentioned in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, is evident and such acts are committed for the purpose of genocide. In its current form, the international law limits genocide to physical or biological destruction.<sup>328</sup> Listed as one of the acts that is defined as cultural genocide, the forced removal of children from their families is identified as a type of genocide.

Acts that are defined as cultural genocide often appear alongside or as a precursor to mass violence. For this reason, non-violent acts that are

<sup>328</sup> Leora Bilsky, Rachel Klagsbrun, “The Return of Cultural Genocide?”, *European Journal of International Law*, 23.09.2018, <https://academic.oup.com/ejil/article/29/2/373/5057075>

aimed at destroying the cultural identity often serve to prove that a mass murder, which could usually qualify as genocide, was deliberately committed. This takes place after decades of restrictions on the rights of the people in the society, such as getting married, having children, and freely receiving education. This situation, which could be considered as atrocities that are committed as part of a brutal campaign, begins to be considered as genocide when addressed in the context of the long-lasting stages of destroying the identity of the society.<sup>329</sup>

The process of cultural genocide in East Turkistan is not new. The Great Leap Forward, which was attempted to be implemented in 1958, and the Cultural Revolution that continued between 1966 and 1976, the year of Mao's death, were devastating for China and East Turkistan. While at least 30 million of nearly 500 million peasants who were settled in 26,000 communes died in the Great Leap Forward project, opposition groups who were alleged to be "public enemies" were sent to concentration camps in the Cultural Revolution.<sup>330</sup>

The Cultural Revolution also turned into a major ideological cleansing movement in East Turkistan against the opponents who criticized the Communist regime at universities, in education, media, arts, literature and other cultural fields. Even the use of *doppa*, the traditional headpiece of Uighurs, was banned; prominent Muslim leaders, scholars and clergymen were attacked and forced to shave their beards. Most of the mosques, places of worship, tombs and visiting places, cemeteries and other similar structures with historic value were closed, some of them were destroyed or demolished, and the rest were used as warehouses, barns, etc. Educational institutions at all levels were

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kept closed in East Turkistan, as in the rest of China, for 10 years as of the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Universities in particular, became unable to function, and intellectuals were sent to labor camps for "purification".<sup>331</sup>

Today, almost a *déjà vu* is experienced in East Turkistan, and what was experienced during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, and perhaps more of it, is being re-inflicted on the Muslim peoples of the region by China. While the practices of the Chinese administration cover the entire region, the new epicenters of the cultural genocide have become the concentration camps where 3 million people are held. While people in the camps are asked to forget their own language, and learn and speak the Chinese language, people who speak Uighur are severely punished. Forcing the adoption of the Chinese language and culture has purposes such as Sinification as well as forcing the rejection of the Uighur culture and the faith of Islam.<sup>332</sup>

The detainees are forced to accept that their old lifestyles are wrong, and are pressured to "regret and confess their wrongdoing". While brainwashing sessions are held every day for

<sup>329</sup> "Çin, Doğu Türkistan'da Şimdilik Kültür Soykırımı Yolunu Tuttu, Ya Sonra", *Türktoyu*, 2019, <https://www.turktoyu.com/cin-dogu-turkistan-da-simdilik-kultur-soykirimi-yolunu-tuttu-ya-sonra>

<sup>330</sup> Tuna, *Doğu Türkistan'da Asimilasyon ve Ayrımcılık*.

<sup>331</sup> Tuna, *Doğu Türkistan'da Asimilasyon ve Ayrımcılık*.

<sup>332</sup> Yıldırım, "Çin'deki Toplama Kampları..."

months and years in these camps, prisoners who stay away from the elements of their own identity and culture during this time, lose their spiritual and physical strength and end up having to succumb to such intense attacks. Vice-chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Gay McDougall, defined Xinjiang as a “no rights zone” and expressed her concerns about what has been going on there at the Geneva session dated August 13, 2018.<sup>333</sup> McDougall said the following on the matter:

“Members of the Xinjiang Uyghur minority, along with others who were identified as Muslim, were placed in concentration camps in secrecy, and these people were treated as enemies of the State based on nothing more than their ethno-religious identity. According to reports of mass detention of ethnic Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities, it is estimated that upwards of a million people are held in so-called counter-extremism centers and another two million had been forced into so-called ‘re-education camps’ for political and cultural indoctrination. All the detainees had their due process rights violated, while most had never been charged with an offense, tried in a court of law, or afforded an opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention.”<sup>334</sup>

As described very well by the international community, the brainwashing sessions in the concentration camps are quite intense. Looking at an ordinary day at the camps, the extent of the cultural genocide is understood more clearly.<sup>335</sup>

Since the cultural genocide practices in East Turkistan are explained throughout the study, they will not be discussed here on a case by case basis, and the violations will only be provided under headings.

- Brainwashing activities for the destruction of the Uighur and Muslim identity
- Publicly conducting Sinification activities under the name of “recognizing the Chinese state, Chinese nation, Chinese culture, Communist Party of China and Chinese socialism”, which is called “five views”, with the propaganda, “All ethnic groups are one family”
- Detaining and brainwashing children at compulsory boarding schools at kindergarten, primary and secondary education level
- Attacks on the Uighur family structure and privacy with the Becoming Family project, and activities on distancing from the current religion and culture, and brainwashing through civil servants who are members of the CPC and are placed in homes
- Attacks against all religious values which are seen as a “contagious disease”
- Banning all clothing that represents the Uighur culture, including the hat called doppa
- Banning the symbols of East Turkistan and the Islamic culture
- Actions on changing the Qur’an
- Demolition of mosques, madrasahs and works of the Islamic culture; at-

<sup>333</sup> James Leibold, “Despite China’s denials, its treatment of the Uyghurs should be called what it is: cultural genocide”, *The Conversation*, 24.07.2019, <https://theconversation.com/despite-chinas-denials-its-treatment-of-the-uyghurs-should-be-called-what-it-is-cultural-genocide-120654>

<sup>334</sup> UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviews the report of China”, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23452&LangID=E>

<sup>335</sup> In the section where the living conditions in the camps are described, the daily program of the prisoners is provided in detail. Also see Birrel, “China’s concentration camps...”

tacks on them, including their misuse as barns, discotheques and bars

- Destroying the Muslim villages and towns along the route of the One Belt One Road project, along with all their cultural and historical components, and exiling the inhabitants of these places to different regions
- Prohibiting persons under the age of 18, civil servants, workers, members of the CPC, students and retirees from entering and worshipping at places of worship, punishing those who are found to have gone to such places and worshiped
- Prohibiting fasting during Ramadan and forcing people to eat and drink at schools and workplaces to make sure they do not fast.
- Restricting and prohibiting people from going to hajj and umrah
- Destroying or relocating Muslim cemeteries
- Forcing Muslim people to eat pork and consume alcohol
- Prohibiting the circumcision of children
- Forcing Uighur tradesmen to sell alcohol at their shops
- Prohibiting the marriage and funeral ceremonies from being performed according to the customs
- Getting Muslim civil servants to sign documents for the cremation of their bodies after their deaths and cremating the bodies of the people
- Compulsory marriage of Turkish girls to Chinese men
- Depriving the community of their leading figures, intellectuals and academics who can guide the community,

by locking them up in concentration camps

- Banning religious and national holidays
- Banning the labeling of products as “halal” and selling halal meat together with pork, which is haram for Muslims.
- Prohibiting education in the mother tongue, which is a right that is granted to Uighurs in the Chinese Constitution and making Chinese the mandatory language at all schools
- Reducing the rate of literacy by constantly changing the Uighur alphabet
- Collecting and burning religious and national works in Uighur and the Qur’ans, prohibiting the reading and possession of such works, sentencing those who act contrary to this, to imprisonment
- Closing the media outlets that are owned by Uighurs and other Muslim minorities, prohibiting access to media outlets broadcasting from abroad
- Closing the libraries that include Uighur works
- Prohibiting the use of names and symbols that connote the national and religious identity
- Implementing inequality of opportunity at universities and compulsory placement of young Uighurs studying abroad in concentration camps
- Publicly insulting and humiliating the Muslims who are placed in concentration camps by letting them be seen by the public at train stations and bus terminals in uniform prison clothes, with their hair shaved and their hands cuffed

## TESTIMONIES

*There's so much pain!  
Is it best to remember or forget?*

*The journalist had attended one of China's camp visits and was about to be convinced of everything. Everything was clear as day anyway. What a noble job China was doing! These were things that no country was ever able to do in history!*

*They had volunteered to save the 15-year-old Fatima, who had never seen any place other than her village, as well as the grandfather Abdülkadir aged 88, from all thoughts of extremism and terror...*

*Yes, China was a great state!*

*All of them; hundreds of thousands, millions of them were enrolled in the vocational education center, and they would be boarding students here who would be educated for free!*

*Fatma would have three meals a day ready for her and she would undoubtedly live the best days of her youth with songs, folk songs, dances and entertainment, just like today...*

*She would never be able to forget these days...*

*Here everything was happening right before her eyes; songs were being sung, dances were being performed and figures she had never seen in her life were being skillfully displayed!*

*One wished that it would never end, that she would always lead such a life...*

*The journalist was so relieved, but she/he was also so regretful!*

*She/he was regretful because there were efforts outside, in the rest of the world, to exhaust China with all kinds of slanders, and the most severe things were said about it for so many years! There*

*was much regret here!*

*The journalist was about to leave the camp with the group with whom she/he came, at the end of a happy day when some writing at the corner of a wall of one of the buildings surrounding the camp, which was obviously written by one of the prisoners, caught her/his eye. She/he had a strong urge to read this writing: "Please continue enduring my heart!"*

We wanted to relate an experienced concentration camp visit, by also using a little imagination. What we're obviously trying to say here is that the world is not fooled by this simple game. Any human being with a little bit of intellect and a little bit of conscience, and who breathes oxygen, would admit that strange things happened at those camps!

It is possible to obtain a lot of information with just a quick search of the resources on the internet. The state, media, NGOs, UN, EU, OIC and other umbrella organizations must certainly be aware of these atrocities. If the institutions that protect the rights, and provide law and justice are not employed when required, it means that we, as humans have lost everything.

This section includes testimonies which will enable the reality of the concentration camps in China to be seen a little more clearly:

*"20 of us, prisoners, were living in a small room. We had handcuffs on our wrists, and our heads were shaved. Our every move was watched by cameras. There was a bucket in the corner of*

the room, which we used as a toilet. Our daily routine began at 06:00 in the morning. We were learning Chinese, memorizing the CPC marches and confessing our misdeeds. There were young people as well as old ones among us. Food was minimal and always the same: soup and a slice of bread.

There were plenty of tools here for torture: nails that they hammered into our nails, pincers to pull our nails out... There was also a dark room where they electrocuted people... We called it the black room.

None of us were tried, but our punishment was fixed. They were constantly giving pills and injections to us. They were saying that it was for disease prevention, but we somehow knew that we were guinea pigs at their hands. They were obviously performing their medical experiments on us. We were losing our consciousness. We had become completely forgetful. Some men had become impotent due to the effect of the drugs they were given. Women were routinely raped.”<sup>336</sup>

“One day the police told us that they would check if our education was successful or not and they gathered 200 prisoners. They told one of the women to confess her sins. The woman stood before us and said that she was a bad person, but now that she learned Chinese, she had become a better person. When she finished her speech, the police officers asked her to undress and raped her one by one in front of everyone. They were also controlling how we reacted while they were raping her. They took away all people who

turned their heads around or closed their eyes or looked angry or shocked- and we never saw them again. It was awful. I’ll never forget the feeling of helplessness, my inability to help her. After this incident, it was difficult for me to sleep at night.”<sup>337</sup>

**Sayragul Sauytbay**

“Failure to comply with the camp rules, including being late for classes, is punished by being handcuffed for 12 hours. Prisoners are usually Uighurs or Kazakhs. These people were placed in the camp, either because they were religious, or because they had contact with someone who is located abroad, or because they visited a country outside of China.

“I was severely tortured during interrogation. I was held with a large number of people in tiny cells. I was subjected to the brutal practices of the Communist Party regime that drove people to commit suicide. I was chained to a metal chair, and not allowed to sleep for three days. The irons were pricking into my body as I moved. I was forced to read the communist doctrine in addition to memorizing and singing Chinese marches.”<sup>338</sup>

**Kayrat Samarkand**

Stating that he was also subjected to brainwashing sessions, Kayrat Samarkand said that he repeatedly hit his head against the walls to kill himself, then fainted and lost consciousness as he couldn’t stand the torture he was subjected to anymore after three months. Those who were interviewed stated that the system of the camps was set up to implement physical and psychological torture. Prisoners who most severely criticize the people, items or other things they like, are

<sup>336</sup> Quotations were compiled from the testimony of Sayragul Sauytbay, a teacher who managed to escape from the “re-education camps”. For detailed information, see Birrell, “Inside China’s concentration camps...”

<sup>337</sup> David Stovrau, “A Million People are Jailed at China’s Gulags. I Managed to Escape. Here’s What Really Goes on Inside”, *Haretz*, 17.10.2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-a-million-people-are-jailed-at-china-s-gulags-i-escaped-here-s-what-goes-on-inside-1.7994216>

<sup>338</sup> Adeel Malik, “Muslims inmates in China detention camp, forced to eat pork, drink alcohol and physical tortured as some commit suicide”, Muslim Council of Hong Kong, 19.05.2018, <https://muslimcouncil.org.hk/muslim-inmates-in-china-detention-camp-forced-to-eat-pork-drink-alcohol-and-physically-tortured-as-some-commit-suicide/>

rewarded, and those who refuse to do so are punished with solitary confinement, beatings and starvation.

“Most of those who are placed in camps consist of scientists, artists and intellectuals. Do these educated people really need to be re-educated? They were making us stand all day in the sun with no food and water, unleashing the dogs on us, and making us repeat all day long that we owed everything we had to the CPC. They required us to eat food, the contents of which we didn’t know, with alcohol.”<sup>339</sup>

**Habibullah Aziz**

“I was told that I should certainly not believe in Islam. I had to submit to it. I also signed a document stating that I did not believe in God and rejected religion. If I didn’t do that, the conditions would have been much more severe. They oblige all Muslims to sign a document stating that they reject religion.”<sup>340</sup>

**Gülziya Mogdunkyzy**

“In 2015, I stayed at the camps in South Hotan. We were getting up an hour before sunrise, and had only one minute to get in line and start running as a morning exercise. There was a special room to punish those who couldn’t run fast enough, and they were beaten with kicks and belts in the room. I was held there for a month in late 2015. Then I somehow managed to escape to Turkey, but now my 74-year-old father and eight siblings are at concentration camps.”<sup>341</sup>

**Ablet Dursun Tohti**

Abdusselam Muhammed, who was arrested for reading a verse from the Qur’an at a funeral in 2014, is one of the Uighurs who were imprisoned

in the concentration camps. The Chinese authorities, who said that he needed to be educated, also imprisoned him in a concentration camp in Hotan. Muhammed is now in Turkey.

Another Uighur who was locked up in a concentration camp in 2015 was taken in because he had a photograph of a woman with a niqab on his phone. It is mentioned that there are many Uighurs who were sent to concentration camps for reasons such as failing to pay the water bill on time and going on pilgrimage.<sup>342</sup>

“On May 22, 2017, while I was in a hotel in Urumqi, three policemen came and arrested me. These were the officers of a unit called the state protection unit, and they questioned me for four hours. I was subjected to terrible tortures there. Then they took me to another location and questioned me again on the same day from 3 pm to 11 pm. They asked me questions like, ‘Did you go to Turkey?’ and ‘Do you perform the salaah?’ Then they took me to a concentration camp. They told me that I was arrested for supporting terrorism. At the camp in Urumqi, they stripped me naked, made me wear a yellow overall, then took me to a prison for men. They performed some tests on me. These tests took many hours. Then they took me to a small ward. There were 20 women with chains weighing five kilos at their feet there; they did the same to me. I started crying, and the woman on duty there told me not to cry and said: ‘Otherwise they will put you in a worse place.’

“I saw young girls who were in a miserable condition, I saw women with needles stuck in their nails. I stayed

<sup>339</sup> Gerry Shih, “Chinese mass-indoctrination camps evoke Cultural Revolution”, *AP News*, 18.05.2018, <https://apnews.com/0d-b368402a214799921a05743b7acff7/Chinese-mass-indoctrination-camps-evoke-Cultural-Revolution>

<sup>340</sup> Balcı, “Utanç kamplarında...”

<sup>341</sup> Sudworth, “China’s hidden...”

<sup>342</sup> Doğu Türkistan Haber ve Araştırma Merkezi, “Çin’in Doğu Türkistan’daki toplama kampları,” 11.05.2020, <https://www.doguturkistan.org/2020/05/11/cinin-dogu-turkistandaki-toplama-kamplari/>



in various wards for three months. 20 people including me, were using the same toilet in one ward. There was also a camera in the toilet. They did not provide us with water for a month; they did not want us to perform an ablution or perform the salaah. We got infested with lice, they did not give us a comb to comb our hair. A month later, they shaved our heads. They were giving two pills a day through the small hole in the ward door. The doctor was coming in, giving an injection and taking blood. Soldiers were coming in and stripping us naked. We were sitting when we were told to sit down, and standing up when we were told to stand up. They weren't giving us enough food; just a little soup made of corn flour and bread. People were becoming forgetful with the side effects of the medication they gave. I now forget everything so quickly.

“I saw many things during my stay there. They brought a woman who had just given birth, they had taken her child away. They took the women who fainted, to places we did not know. Speaking Uighur was forbidden, if they noticed anyone doing so, they would place him/her in a dark ward. There were wards where sewers flowed and there were rats. I saw women who were locked up in such places. There were many people who had lost their minds because of this. The camp life was horrible.

“We were singing the Communist march 10 minutes before a meal. No food was given to anyone who didn't sing the march. On Fridays, they were making us watch TV for 20 minutes.

But there would only be the speeches of Xi Jinping on TV. On Saturdays and Sundays, they were making us write articles about our regrets. After three months, they took me out for questioning. They put a sack on my head and made me sit on an iron chair. I sat there like that for 24 hours. There were two interrogation areas; one of them was inside the camp and the other was outside the camp. Being harassed and sexually abused was something ordinary. The Chinese police were free to do whatever they wanted.”<sup>343</sup>

**Gülbahar Jelilova**

Aibota Serik's father, Kudaybergen Serik, was an imam in the city of Tarbagatay in Xinjiang. In February 2018, the police detained him and Aibota has not heard from her father since then. Holding a small photograph of him, she says in tears, “I do not know why my father was imprisoned. He did not violate the Chinese laws. He was not tried in court.”<sup>344</sup>

Mihrigul Tursun, who lives in Egypt, went to East Turkistan in 2015 to see her family who she missed and was detained as soon as she arrived there. They took away her triplets who she had with her. When Tursun was released three months later, she learned that one of her triplets had died, and the other two had health problems. Tursun had her children operated on. Almost two years after her release, she was arrested for a second time. A few months later, she was detained for the third time and spent another three months in a cramped cell with about 60 women who had to go to the toilet in front of security cameras, take turns sleeping and sing marches praising the CPC.<sup>345</sup>

Mihrigul Tursun says that she and other prisoners were forced to take unknown drugs including pills that caused them to faint and a

<sup>343</sup> Doğu Türkistan Haber ve Araştırma Merkezi, “Doğu Türkistan'daki Çin zulmü vicdanları kanatacak cinsten”, 11.05.2020, <https://www.doguturkistan.org/2020/05/11/dogu-turkistandaki-cin-zulmu-vicdanlari-kanatacak-cinsten/>

<sup>344</sup> Abdualil Abdurasulov, “Uighur crackdown: 'I spent seven days of hell in Chinese camps'”, *BBC*, 12.02.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47157111>

<sup>345</sup> “Interview: 'I Did Not Believe I Would Leave Prison in China Alive'”, *Radio Free Asia*, 11.01.2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/detentions-11012018100304.html>

white fluid that caused bleeding in some women. Witnessing the death of nine women within three months in the cell where she was held, Tursun says that the detainees died of starvation, were beaten and electrocuted and adds:

“My hands would bleed because of the beating they inflicted, my whole body would shake violently every time they electrocuted me, and I would feel the pain in my veins. I would beg them to kill me instead of subjecting me to this unbearable torture.”<sup>346</sup>

“One day, I was placed in a chair called the tiger chair where my hands and feet were fixed and locked. when they put on a helmet-like thing on my head and electrocuted me, my whole body shook violently. Then a white foam came out of my mouth and I started to lose consciousness. I don’t remember what happened next. The last thing I heard before I fainted was that it was a crime for me to be an Uighur.”<sup>347</sup>

**Mihrigul Tursun**

“I lived a life of hell there for seven days. My hands were cuffed, and my legs were tied. They threw me in a pit. They asked me to raise my hands and look up, and at that moment they poured water. I screamed. I don’t remember what happened afterwards. I don’t know how long I stayed in the pit, but it was winter and very cold. They said that I was a traitor, I had dual citizenship, I had debt and I owned land. None of those were true. They said that I could leave if I learned 3,000 words in Mandarin. But why do they handcuff people for this? They detain Kazakhs for being Muslims. They want to eradicate all ethnic origins.”<sup>348</sup>

**Orynbek Koksybek**

Held in camps for four years and currently living in Turkey, a 30-year-old Uighur, Ruqiye Perhat, was raped several times by guards, got pregnant twice and both her pregnancies were terminated by abortion. Perhat says all men and women under the age of 35 were raped or sexually abused.

Zharkynbek Otan, 32, was detained in the Chinese camps for eight months. He explains that every area at the camp was watched by cameras and the camp was a huge structure surrounded by barbed wire:

“At the camp, they took our clothes and gave us camp uniforms. Then they administered a vaccine, saying that it was against the flu and AIDS. I do not know if that’s true or not, but my vaccination spot hurt for a few days. I have been suffering from impotence and forgetfulness since then.

“It was cold. It was always cold. That is why I have health problems. On my second night at the camp, I turned off the lights in the ward so I could sleep. I learned that it was against the rules. So, they raided the ward in the middle of the night. I confessed to them that I turned the lights off. They beat me with batons. Here you can be punished for anything; for example, eating slowly. Even a long stay in the toilet is enough to be beaten.”<sup>349</sup>

“I didn’t know what was going on. What had I done wrong? What crime had I committed? Why was I there? When I asked about this at the camp, they told me that I was guilty of using *WhatsApp*. They claimed that it was against the law. They asked me why I was using a foreign application in China. I told them that I live in Kazakhstan. I had purchased the phone there! I tried to

<sup>346</sup> Narsaj Zatat, “Stop Uighur internment camps or take the Olympics away from China”, *The New Arab*, 08.01.2020, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2020/1/8/stop-uighur-internment-camps-or-take-olympics-from-china>

<sup>347</sup> Danilova, “Woman Describes Torture...”

<sup>348</sup> Abdurasulov, “Uighur crackdown: ‘I...’”

<sup>349</sup> Ben Mauk, “Untold Stories from China’s Gulag State”, 01.10.2019, <https://believermag.com/weather-reports-voices-from-xinjiang/>

explain this to them, but it was obvious that this was just an excuse. If it were not for *WhatsApp*, they would find another reason. Everyone there has a story. Some of those stories were like mine, while some were accused of performing the salaah and reading the Qur'an, and others were there because they wore a headscarf."

**Zharkynbek Otan**

"The strict attitude of the officials at the camp was much worse than the prison. They were treating us as if we were animals. They were beating us during interrogation and keeping us standing up for hours, they were calling us bad nicknames and constantly shouting at us. One day, while going to class, I stumbled and fell. I was punished by being electrocuted for this. There was some bread steamed with a glass of boiled water and boiled Chinese cabbage in the morning, and the same was given in the evening. There was no meat, and perhaps once a month they were serving rice. This went on throughout the year. We were never told when we would be released. Every day was the same. Some people at the camp had been there for a year when I entered. I heard that some were later sentenced to imprisonment for 5 to 25 years. They were claiming that we were being educated, but I think their only goal was to destroy religion, nationality, and tradition."<sup>350</sup>

**Rahima Senbai**

Having spent months at the concentration camps, Rüstem describes his experiences as follows:

"Nobody could move, because they were constantly watching us by video cameras. After a while, a voice coming from the speaker tells you that you can rest for a few minutes. If you move, that

voice reprimands you... We were even being watched in the toilet. We were under constant stress at the political education camp."

What Nur, one of the ex-prisoners, tells about his/her experiences at the camp where she/he was held is as follows: "I resisted their practices... They placed me in a solitary confinement cell all by myself. I had to stand in a very narrow space with my hands cuffed, with no food and water, and without sleeping for 24 hours."<sup>351</sup>

Nabijan says he hasn't been able to communicate with his sister, Zohre Ela, his parents and relatives for more than a year, and he doesn't know which camps they are held in or whether they are even alive or not. Wanting to hear about his relatives, Nabijan hasn't been able to learn anything about their fates so far.<sup>352</sup>

The news of the deaths of Uighurs of all ages in custody continues to come to light. Uighur students, Abdüsselam Mamat and Yasincan Naman, who had left their education in Egypt as they were blackmailed that their families would otherwise be imprisoned, were reported to have died in 2017 while in custody. Taken into custody because of a visit to Turkey in 2016, the 17-year-old Yakupcan Naman was said to have died "due to unknown reasons" at a camp in Kashgar and his father was forced to bury his son under police supervision. In May 2018, an old Uighur woman was reported to have died at the Yamachang camp in the city of Gulja.<sup>353</sup>

Similar information about 8,965 people in relation to "losses" that occurred at concentration camps and other detention centers can be found at <https://shahit.biz/eng/>. We hope and pray that the concentration camps, which are centers for all types of crimes against humanity, including genocide, are closed as soon as possible, and that all the state and umbrella institutions, NGOs and people with a conscience win this honorable struggle together, even though it is so late.

<sup>350</sup> Mauk, "Untold Stories..."

<sup>351</sup> HRW, "Çin: Müslüman..."

<sup>352</sup> UHRP, "21. Yüzyılda Çin'in Uygur..."

<sup>353</sup> UHRP, "21. Yüzyılda Çin'in Uygur..."

## OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN EAST TURKISTAN

Although the concentration camps are the most recent form of human rights violations, the violations experienced by Muslims in East Turkistan manifest themselves in many ways. The fundamental human rights violations which are compiled based on the testimonies of different witnesses at different times, are listed below.

- Since the Chinese regime considers religious belief as the greatest obstacle in completely assimilating the Uighurs, religious oppression against Uighurs in East Turkistan is increasing day by day. The repressions have reached their highest point after the Cultural Revolution which was experienced between 1966 and 1976.<sup>354</sup> Most of the mosques and masjids were demolished or turned into entertainment venues. Chinese flags and photos of Xi Jinping were hung on the existing ones.
- Islamic clothes, beards and mustaches were considered to be signs of religious extremism and prohibited.<sup>355</sup> In East Turkistan, those under the age of 18 cannot enter mosques. There are also restrictions for adults on worshipping in large groups, preaching, reading long prayers and reading some verses at mosques. It was forbidden for civil servants, workers, CPC members, students and retirees to go to places of worship and worship, and those who were found to have worshiped

were fired, placed under surveillance or fined. Similarly, it was forbidden for women to worship, for private individuals to open religious schools or training centers, and for students to attend religious training centers or schools, and it was stated in similar regulations that all people in these listed groups would be punished when it was determined that they received a religious education or worshiped, and that an investigation would be launched against the school principal, class officer, and parents of the relevant students. Today, the Chinese administration considers it a serious crime for Uighurs to fast during Ramadan and regards not consuming alcohol as religious extremism. Since all such worship and acts have been included in the 75 signs of extremism which were declared as of April 2017, those who perform any one of them are punished by being sent to concentration camps without question.

- While the Chinese administration continues to take young Uighur men and particularly single Uighur girls from East Turkistan to the inner parts of China as cheap labor force on the grounds of providing employment, it also transports Chinese settlers to East Turkistan with high-speed trains every day, changing

<sup>354</sup> HRW, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses..."

<sup>355</sup> "China Uighurs: Xinjiang ban on long beards and veils", BBC, 01.04.2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-39460538>

the demographic structure of the region. Around 250,000 Han Chinese move to East Turkistan every year on average. The Chinese population who come to the region is mostly composed of civilians, military-police and Chinese prisoners. It provides free housing, fields and jobs as well as financial support to Chinese settlers who come to East Turkistan, and the most fertile lands and valuable places are given to the Han Chinese settlers. The real owners of East Turkistan are crushed by the heavy tax burden, and their fields and jobs are taken away from them. Since the invasion of East Turkistan by the communist Chinese administration, Uighur farmers have been forced to work for free on various projects for two to three months each year. Uighurs are persecuted so much that they are treated worse than second class citizens in their homelands, where they have rich underground and above-ground resources. While the Chinese government wants to impress the world with the One Belt, One Road project on one hand, it collapses the Uighur economy on the other hand.

- The Chinese administration pursues an eradication policy against Uighur officers, whom it accuses of being hypocritical, and Uighurs who have gained great respect among Uighurs or who have a reputation in their profession.
- Uighur officers are forced to sign contracts to agree to their bodies being cremated after they die.
- Abolishing the right to education in the mother tongue which is granted to Uighurs in the Chinese Constitution, the Chinese administration also tries to destroy the Uighur manuscripts and culture by collecting and destroying Uighur books in the fields of history, literature and religion. People who read or keep the banned books are sentenced to imprisonment for 5 to 20 years. In this way, the use of the Uighur language is discontinued. Since its invasion of East Turkistan in 1949, China has changed the alphabet used by the Uighurs three times, significantly reducing the rate of literacy among Uighurs.
- The official Chinese media outlets reported that 17.5 million people were subjected to health checks and blood tests were performed on them as a result of a four-month study in 2017. However, many people were subjected to such tests by force. In addition, it is highly likely that the organs of many Uighurs who disappeared while in custody or detention and whose fate could not be identified, were stolen.
- Since 2017, China has banned the use of the “Halal” symbol on various food products sold in East Turkistan, and has made it obligatory to sell halal meat products and pork side by side in the delicatessen section of markets and butchers.
- Uighurs are forbidden to marry and hold funerals in accordance with the Islamic tradition. Uighur girls are forced to marry the Chinese with the intention of trying to assimilate national and religious identity.
- Since 2016, the Chinese government has prohibited Uighurs from giving 29 names including Muhammed, Arafat, Islam, and Turkzat, which connote religious and national identity to their newborn children.
- The communist Chinese regime is carrying out a cultural massacre by destroying the historical artifacts of Uighurs.
- The Uighurs who are abroad, have had their communication cut off from their families in East Turkistan.
- After the concentration camps that are opened in East Turkistan, the number of businesses and households whose doors are locked in cities, towns and villages, is increasing day by day. The dependent families of those arrested are having difficult times both financially and morally.
- The Chinese government takes the families of many Uyghur students studying abroad, hostage and pressures them to return to East Turkistan. Uighur students who can't resist such pressures return to their countries, are arrested on charges of being “terrorists” as soon as they land at the airport and many of them are never heard from ever again.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

- As it's evident from its practices in East Turkistan, China is a racist state based on the superiority of the Han nation. Today, being an Uighur, Kazakh or Kyrgyz in East Turkistan is "considered to be a crime", and people are automatically labeled as "enemies and terrorists". Likewise, the situation is no different in Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Hong Kong. China must immediately abandon this attitude.
- Using the concept of "terrorism" to show Uighurs and the other Muslims in the region as an existential threat to the Chinese nation, China also considers Uighur people as an exceptional group who don't have the fundamental rights of humanity. The CPC often associates the word "terrorist" with Muslims. This causes the Chinese leaders and people to perceive terrorism as a threat associated with people in the border region, who are different from themselves. Labeling the Uighur community in this way provides the Beijing administration with a cover for crimes against humanity in international institutions such as the UN.
- China must immediately close the inhumane concentration camps, which are manifestations of disgrace and vandalism!
- The concentration camps that are established in the entire East Turkistan, are punishment centers where an ethnic-religious community has never been so quickly and so extensively imprisoned since World War II. According to estimates, at least one person from every house in East Turkistan is taken to a concentration camp, today.
- In the concentration camps, which number reportedly over 1,200, around 3 million innocent people are being held without having gone through any court proceedings or having been charged with a crime.
- Arguing that it carries out the arrests against the Muslims in East Turkistan under the "principle of the prevention of crime" (!), China disregards the presumption of innocence with this practice. Investigations that are carried out show that almost all Uighurs who were placed in concentration camps, actually had committed no crimes at all.
- Looking at the methods that are applied, it is understood that the Chinese administration currently considers all Uighurs to be "guilty" regardless of their age and gender, and Uighurs who are devoted to their religion and traditions, as "terrorists". The published "75 signs of extremism" almost confirms that all Uighurs will pass through prisons and concentration camps!
- Having been granted exceptional powers through the National Counter-

Terrorism Law which was enacted on January 1, 2016, the Chinese police were instructed to increase not only their armed operations but also their activities in education and propaganda. Therefore, it became possible for any incident to be associated with terrorism and punished; for the police to freely open fire during interventions in the incidents, and make arrests with night raids, and for people to be imprisoned without a court order. This law must be abolished as soon as possible. The extraordinary conditions in the region must be ended immediately!

- Concentration camps clearly constitute a crime against humanity. China should account for all its human rights violations including the crime of genocide, which it has committed against international law in East Turkistan, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Hong Kong. International courts, and the international community should take immediate action for that to happen, as in the examples of Gambia-Myanmar. The Individual applications of Uighur citizens to the International Court of Human Rights should also be accepted once their identities are able to be kept confidential and their security is ensured. All countries that value rights, law and human rights should follow this issue.
- The families and relatives of every person who died, became disabled and incurred damages due to the atrocities they suffered in these camps, and those who are alive should be apologized to and compensated for the misdeeds that were committed.
- The Becoming Family project, which China initiated in 2014 and made more systematic by 2017, is an obvious violation of human rights, and almost a representation of all the types of processes of oppression and assimilation that

are experienced at the concentration camps, which is spread to all the Uighur and Muslim households. With more than 1 million Chinese civil servants staying with families as boarders, privacy is destroyed, families are extensively profiled, and those who exhibit one of the “75 signs of extremism” are placed in concentration camps. The Becoming Family project is a disgrace just like the other rights violations and should be ended immediately.

- The human rights NGOs are prohibited from entering East Turkistan, Tibet and Inner Mongolia on the grounds that they “explicitly provoke separatism and try to divide the country” pursuant to Article 103 of the Criminal Code of the People’s Republic of China. Therefore, independent journalists, activists, NGO officials and independent delegations cannot enter the camps to do research. However, China is known to have taken some groups to centers that were prepared in advance, by organizing make-believe, staged programs to stall the world public. But these visits have no credibility. This is due to the fact that everything is clearly prepared based on a scenario and what is shown in such visits does not reflect the truth.
- The Chinese administration is generally hostile to international human rights organizations, and the period of Xi Jinping is the period in which the government pressure to follow the violation of human rights in China is at its highest level.
- There is a total of 7,778 childcare centers in East Turkistan. The number of security guards and educators in these centers is 92,200. In addition, 59,400 people were employed with the status of “Special Officer”. Considering the number of staff, it is estimated that approximately 2 million children are held in these centers!

- There is not a single person in East Turkistan who can avoid the brainwashing and assimilation practices. Those in the concentration camps, their families, and all the children who are taken to boarding schools and kindergartens are included in this process. In short, the future of Uighurs is being destroyed.
- According to 2017 data, 40% of all the secondary school students in East Turkistan, i.e. 497,800 of them, are understood to have been placed in boarding schools where the compulsory language is Chinese. This information also confirms the existence of “children’s camps”. China must immediately end the practice of compulsory boarding schools, which is an extension of the concentration camps, and education in the mother tongue in schools must be allowed.
- Since 2017, almost all Muslims between the ages of 12 and 65 have been undergoing extensive biometric imaging and DNA testing, including photos of their faces and bodies, which were taken from different angles as well as blood tests, fingerprints, retinal scans, hair samples and voice recordings!
- The high-tech tracking and surveillance systems which are set up in East Turkistan, and enable Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other minority groups to be followed into their homes should be immediately removed, and the security companies, which exceed 1,400, that perform such practices road by road, street by street and house by house should be withdrawn from the region.
- China deliberately prevents population growth by taking the males of almost all Uighur families into concentration camps, and it also prevents future births by sterilizing the people in the camps. This is a clear practice of GENOCIDE! In addition to these, the Uighur girls who are forced into marriage with the Chinese, those who are sent to work outside East Turkistan, and the 2,805,000 people who migrated from the region after the Counter-Terrorism Law which was introduced in 2016 are precursors to the radical demographic changes in the region. An average of 250,000 people coming from China every year are settled in the evacuated Uighur towns and cities with a high level of support provided to them by the state. China wants to have an East Turkistan free of Uighurs and is unfortunately about to achieve this.
- East Turkistan has suffered the removal of not only its people; but also the cities and the historical-cultural fabric have been intensively destroyed, particularly under the One Belt, One Road project, and a cultural genocide is being carried out.
- China considers itself to be above any law. Being highly active in the UN and other international umbrella organizations, China often uses the veto power to which it is entitled through its UN Security Council membership as a bargaining chip and of course, as a punishment tool.
- The UN seems obviously ineffective and passive in the face of the practices involving clear crimes that are committed against humanity, which have been going on in East Turkistan for more than three years. The UN should immediately take genuine steps to stop the atrocities of China in the concentration camps, which severely violate human rights.
- China must be referred to as “the tyrant of the 21st century” by the international community due to its irrational and unthinkable atrocities that it commits at the concentration camps, and all countries must sever their political, commercial and military ties with China



until it clears itself of the shame of the concentration camps.

- The Islamic world and the media organizations in this environment are far from paying the necessary attention to the concentration camps of East Turkistan. This shows that China's international lobbying activities extend to the media organizations in the Islamic world. It should clearly be noted that the Western governments and Western media show more interest in the concentration camps of East Turkistan.
- The OIC, (The Organization Of Islamic Cooperation), which is the umbrella organization of the Islamic world, has almost no presence on the issue of East Turkistan! The OIC has not only taken no initiatives in relation to almost any incident that took place in the region after 2000, but it also has not engaged in any pre-emptive work. Stating that China "makes efforts to pay attention" to the Muslim community in East Turkistan, and remaining silent about the reality of the concentration camps at the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, which was held in Abu Dhabi in March 2019, -despite the ongoing persecution in the concentration camps - are actions or inactions which are more severe than one another. The OIC should either follow its foundation mission or dissolve itself. This is because the current attitude of the OIC encourages China even more.
- One Belt One Road project is one of the important reasons for the silence of the Islamic world. While the Islamic world, whose lands, ports, refineries and factories were gradually sold to China which was pressured in this way, looks at the issue from the perspective of economic benefit today, the Chinese occupation, which will become more evident in the near future, is being overlooked.
- Turkey is one of the countries which is

under threat in this respect. In Turkey where more than 1,000 Chinese companies are reported to have been established as of June 2018, the Chinese are able to receive citizenship in exchange for home purchases in the sum of \$250,000, and even acts of corruption are committed as mentioned in some claims, by showing the value of homes that are bought for prices that are lower than the ones required for citizenship, as the required level. China is also known to make purchases through domestic companies.

- Consisting of 57 countries with a total population of up to 2 billion, the Islamic world is actually an important political, economic and military power compared to China. Owning more than 60% of the world's underground resources, the Islamic countries should use this power against China, and take the necessary steps at the highest levels for Uighur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Muslims in East Turkistan to be immediately taken out of the concentration camps. It should be noted that the biggest trade partner of China, which has a very fragile structure when it comes to tolerating economic losses with its population of nearly 1.5 billion, is the Islamic world!
- Intellectuals and people who are considered as leaders of society were the first to be placed in concentration camps. Targeting them is considered to be the most effective way to speed up the assimilation process and at the same time destroy the Uighur identity.
- With its unprecedented prohibitions and oppressive practices on religious duties, China has practically declared the religion of Islam as "illegal". However, the Chinese Constitution states that "The citizens of the People's Republic of China have the freedom of religion and belief.", and "No government agency, public institution or

individual can force citizens to believe or not believe in any religion, or discriminate against citizens based on the religion that they believe in or don't believe in." In China, prohibitions on beliefs and worship, clothing, and customs and traditions should be lifted as soon as possible, and mosques and all places of worship should be freely used as they should be.

- In China, where illegal sales of organs are made through the state, it is estimated that the annual number of transplants reaches 100,000. It is reported that China earns \$1 billion annually from organ trade and the organs for such trade are mostly harvested from prisoners who were killed in concentration camps.
- There is increasing concern that the coronavirus procedures at the camps, about which no information can be accessed, will be used as an excuse for ethnic cleansing. China should immediately invite the WHO and the independent health institutions to the camps.
- People in the camps are sent to factories against their wishes, transferred from one company to another, and forced to work like slaves for free or minimum wages. While 500,000 people are currently reported to be in this situation, it is stated that the Chinese government aims to increase this number to 1 million by the end of 2023!
- Until China, which treats Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Muslims as slaves, put an end to its unlawful practices, people with a conscience all over the world should BOYCOTT Chinese goods.
- Filling the concentration camps with all the competent Uyghurs from any profession, the Chinese administration apparently plans to cut the lifelines of Uyghurs. Economic pressures, unjustified taxes and confiscations, and forced labor practices in China should end,

Uyghurs should be granted equal competition opportunities with the Chinese in government offices and employment, and the wealth of the region should be used for the welfare of the people. Lands and properties that are confiscated from Uyghurs must be returned to them immediately.

- China attracts attention around the globe not only with its economic moves but also with its lobbying activities. Care and caution must be taken against China's dirty lobbying activities.
- China's inhumane and unlawful practices should be loudly proclaimed all over the world, conscientious NGOs, human rights organizations and civilians should take initiatives to make known publically the persecution at the concentration camps, and this heavy burden should not be left only on the shoulders of the East Turkistan foundations and associations.
- The travel ban on Uyghurs living in East Turkistan and the restrictions on the return of the East Turkistanis who live abroad, to their homeland and their visits to their relatives should be lifted.
- Inspections and surveillance for those who have relatives abroad should be ended, and the freedom of communication and receiving information, which is one of the most fundamental rights, should be restored by removing the barriers for sending money and communication.
- Barriers to language, culture and education should be removed; Uyghurs should be able to study in their mother tongue; historical artifacts, books and libraries should be preserved; and schools and universities should be accessible.
- Prohibitions on freedom of travel, customary marriages and funeral ceremonies, access to halal food and other similar rights should be immediately lifted.

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[https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/tepsili\\_xewer/xitaygha-yotkesh-20070116.html](https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/tepsili_xewer/xitaygha-yotkesh-20070116.html)

## ANNEX: 75 SIGNS OF EXTREMISM<sup>356</sup>

“Basic Information on Activities Involving Religious Extremism (75 Signs of Extremism)” is provided below.

Religious extremism is not a religion, it is what we want to fight against. The religious extremism in Xinjiang is often intertwined with ethnic divisions and violent terrorism. The ultimate goal underlying the distortion of the religious teachings is to create ethnic divisions and engage in violent terrorist activities. If any person in the public sees suspicious people who display the following characteristics, they are requested to report them to the police. Everyone’s contribution is required for social stability!

### Intellectual goals of religious extremism

1. Advocating to divide Xinjiang, establish the “East Turkistan Islamic State” and set up an Islamic administration.
2. Resisting and attacking existing policies and regulations. Advocating the orders of the Qur’an as the authority to regulate all social life and blindly excluding and attacking things that do not comply with Islamic teachings.
3. Excluding those who defend the “idolaters”, isolating the members of the minority party and being against other nations or forcing

others to believe in his/her own religion.

4. Defending violent terrorist acts, performing “jihad” and encouraging people to perform jihad.

### Religious extremism, abnormal activities and their signs

Activities for religious extremism first manifest themselves often as anti-traditional activities, abnormal activities, and signs of opposition to the existing law and political system. The goal is to encourage extremist ideas, and to ensure that they are respected.

5. Disliking and insulting patriotic religious people on the grounds that they are provided with state support, not going to the mosque to participate in normal religious activities.
6. Discussing Islamic knowledge with religious people who are engaged in normal religious activities and promoting extremist ideas.
7. Distorting the history of Xinjiang, not accepting Buddhism and the other religions that are rooted in the history of Xinjiang, excluding other ethnic and religious groups and cultures.
8. Insulting the entry-level staff and party (CPC) members on the grounds of “idolatry” and “irreligiousness”, excluding them, refusing to “shake hands with, greet, establish

<sup>356</sup> “新疆部分地区学习识别75种宗教极端活动 遇到可报警”

- relationships with them; visit them when they are sick; and attend their funerals after their death”.
9. Young and middle-aged men with long beards who wear short trousers, and women with abayas and veils are people who display religious extremism. These are their general features.
  10. Where people who drink and smoke suddenly quit these habits and cut off communications with friends, relatives and even parents who have such habits.
  11. Secretly helping the relatives of criminals who are detained by the government.
  12. Encouraging abnormal marriages with the spouse of a person who is murdered or sentenced to death.
  13. Intentionally expanding things that are “halal”, banning smoking and alcohol on the grounds that they are not halal, and boycotting the sale of such goods for the same reason.
  14. Being opposed to modern, traditional and national clothes, music, dance and poetry on the grounds that they do not conform to religion.
  15. Being opposed to sporting activities such as football, basketball, volleyball, and cultural activities such as reading and singing competitions.
  16. Rejecting the state administration and state subsidies, and damaging the government-issued identity cards, marriage certificates and other documents for religious reasons. Refusing to receive and use such documents or damaging them by disposing and burning them.
  17. Preventing women from going outside for religious reasons and pressuring them to wear religious clothing.
  18. Denigrating “bilingual” education by preventing children from learning Chinese, damaging textbooks, pictures of celebrities and the like.
  19. Leaving school for religious education.
  20. Where restaurants and other food and beverage vendors close their shops during Ramadan and service personnel wear religious clothing.
  21. Abnormally selling houses, lands, goods and other instruments of life and production, suspiciously leaving or attempting to leave the place where the family resides, suddenly deregistering for no reason.
  22. Storing too much food at home or purchasing too much food in a single shopping and engaging in abnormal activities like this.
  23. Having hidden passages, rooms and tunnels in the house and courtyards, having rooms with complex structures and the house being in a secluded area away from settlements.
  24. Many people of the same age who are involved in suspicious activities away from normal contact with the outside world, coming together, and having more than one bed and bed base.
  25. Going to provinces, districts, towns and villages to participate in religious activities without a valid reason.
  26. Suddenly distancing oneself from social life, connecting with people who exhibit mysterious and abnormal behavior, being people who often engage in illegal religious extremism.
  27. Behaving abnormally in communications between neighbors, strangers and children constantly going in and out of the home secretly.
  28. The sudden disappearance of children from families with strong religious motivations.
  29. Wearing t-shirts with a star and crescent on it, wearing rings and necklaces, using wallets, accessories and phone cases, applying star and crescent stickers to motorcycles and vehicles, and using accessories with the logo of East Turkistan.

30. Teaching languages such as Turkish, Urdu, Arabic etc. for cultural promotion and spreading of extreme ideas.
  31. Gathering the congregation at public places other than mosques (open or closed) for worship, performing the salaah and acting as an imam.
  32. Where the identities of the residents of a house are incompatible with their professions; printing, copying, binding, recording illegal propaganda materials, and having other similar propaganda materials.
  33. Purchasing and storing dumbbells, barbells, boxing gloves, sleeves and weights and other similar equipment, as well as maps, compasses, telescopes, ropes, tents and other items for no valid reason.
  34. Purchasing explosive and toxic chemicals such as fireworks, sulfur, phosphorus, ether, potassium permanganate and nitrate without any business purposes; purchasing machetes, daggers, spears, crossbows, arrows, utensils and other similar items or devices.
  35. Purchasing a high amount of pesticides and manufacturing materials such as steel pipes, plugs, etc., as well as matches, oil, timers and remote-control devices.
- Extreme religious activities which are generally suspected of being illegal**
- Extreme religious activities should be prevented as they violate the laws and regulations in the fields of state administration, public security and religious administration, and damage the social administration and the normal social order.
36. Not consuming alcohol, smoking, dancing or singing at weddings. Men wearing black belts instead of white belts and women wearing black headscarves instead of white ones at funerals. Making declarations that will reinforce the belief of Islam instead of reading the Qur'an during a burial.
  37. Trying to destroy national unity by criticizing Muslims for not obeying "the pillars of Islam" and non-Muslims for being "polytheists", creating an extremely religious atmosphere in the region.
  38. Conducting illegal Qur'an teaching, sermon and preaching activities using telecommunications, voice platforms or social chat groups (QQ, WeChat, audio chat rooms, etc.).
  39. Messaging on mobile phone, reading illegal religious propaganda materials on social media outlets such as WeChat and recommending illegal propaganda materials to others.
  40. Where an individual has illegal political religious books and media on him/her or at his/her home, keeping illegal political, religious e-books, audio and video files on computer or mobile storage media.
  41. Unlawfully following and disseminating religious radio and TV programs that are broadcasted abroad on the radio and other similar devices, through satellite receivers and the internet.
  42. Copying and distributing illegal propaganda materials to strengthen religious beliefs, such as distributing "a letter from Saudi Arabia".
  43. Rejecting the government's educational propaganda, TV broadcasts (movies and TV programs), being against the aid efforts for the Xinjiang region and the West-East Gas Transmission lines, and blocking access to the household registration system.
  44. Forcing non-believers to worship or fast.
  45. To force minors and students to worship, teaching them the Qur'an and forcing them to fast.
  46. Encouraging or forcing children or other persons to participate in illegal Qur'an learning activities.
  47. Rejecting the compulsory state education by forcibly separating children from school for the purpose of religious education.
  48. Carrying out religious activities by gathering people in areas which are not intended



- for religious activities, such as mosques, and in public places without approval, disturbing the order of public places, ignoring the deterrent rules of the state, and opposing state officials to fulfill their duties according to the law.
49. Preaching sermons by implementing the legacy of the “clergyman” for the feudal religious privileges and the system of exploitation to be kept alive, and sending imams to people’s homes to collect religious taxes (zakat) by force.
  50. Encouraging, organizing or participating in pilgrimages that are not organized by the government.
  51. Where individuals who are appointed without the permission of patriotic religious organizations, and who do not have a religious education certificate, manage and preside over religious activities and organize religious ceremonies.
  52. Carrying out religious activities by inviting religious education officers from other regions without permission.
  53. Accepting donations from illegal religious organizations or religious organizations that are located abroad or individuals for purposes of religious activities without permission.
  54. Participating in various educational programs and meetings of illegal religious organizations, religious organizations that are located abroad and individuals without permission, carrying out religious activities with these people and organizations.
  55. Building religious sites without permission and registration, restructuring and expanding such sites and reserving other sites for religious activities.
  56. Building large-scale religious sculptures in open areas outside of those for religious activities without permission.
  57. Celebrating priests without permission by declaring oneself a preacher and accepting the celebration of religious organizations abroad.
  58. Creating contradictions and confusion by deliberately fueling the conflicts between different religions and sects or the same sects. (These people should be identified and prevented as they violate the relevant state laws and will likely pose dangers.)
  59. Marrying by “religious marriage” without obtaining a marriage certificate, divorcing through a “talak” without completing the divorce procedures in accordance with the law, having multiple marriages on the grounds that it is permitted by religion, and being involved in family planning policies.
  60. Chasing, humiliating or intimidating people who follow fashion in public places.
  61. Beating or injuring those who consume alcohol for religious reasons, and damaging shops selling tobacco and alcohol, entertainment venues and facilities.
  62. Damaging the graves of the “three old people”.
  63. Damaging public facilities, billboards, stealing and damaging the national flag in the mosque, hanging or sticking the “jihad” flag and documents.
  64. Engaging in provocation through the use of an Uighur hat, women covering their faces, and other sensitive religious issues, and organizing illegal rallies and demonstrations, filing petitions and engaging in other similar activities.
  65. Hurting the judiciary system by forcibly imposing economic or de facto punishments on others against disputes by forming “religious courts”.
  66. Preparing, selling, purchasing, carrying and distributing books optical discs, multimedia cards with extreme religious contents, and clothing such as “hijab”.
  67. Uploading text, image, audio or video files to electronic products such as mobile phones and computers that are under technical maintenance or are on offer for sale.
  68. Logging into and visiting religiously extremist websites that are located abroad, browsing, downloading and distributing

books or audio-visual files that promote religious extremism.

69. Uploading or sharing ideas and texts, images, audio and video materials including religious extremism on social media, platforms and chat groups, personal blogs, Weibo, websites and drives.
70. Having text, image, audio and video materials that introduce ideas promoting religious extremism on mobile phones, social media platforms such as WeChat and flash discs, using methods such as MP3, MP4, multimedia card, hard disk, etc., and disseminating them.
71. Organizing or participating in illegal Qur'an teaching activities, organizing the viewing of audio-visual materials on topics such as "hijrah" and "jihad" or making propaganda about extreme religious ideas in public spaces.
72. Planning and organizing violent terrorist acts such as "jihad" and "hijrah" by learning the techniques for poisoning and explosive preparation through the internet, or sharing websites, audio or video links including terror and violence, using the internet and mobile phone applications.
73. Learning how to make poisons and explosives using *WeChat* and other social media tools.
74. Organizing and planning violent terrorist acts such as "jihad" and "hijrah".
75. Organizing extremist religious groups for "hijrah" and participating in them, planning and implementing violent terrorist acts.



Having attracted attention with its political, economic and military advances since the 2000s, China emerges with two different faces to the east and west of its borders. It hides East Turkistan, where it has been carrying out assimilation and intimidation policies for many years, from the entire agenda of the world, exposing Muslim Uighurs who have lived in this land for centuries, to all kinds of human rights violations. So much so that there is no other community in the world which is in a more difficult position than the Muslim people of East Turkistan in terms of rights and freedoms.

China has intensified the establishment of concentration camps since April 2017 throughout East Turkistan, the number of which is reported to exceed 1,200, and there are at least 3 million people who are estimated to have been kept at such camps.