

Fletcher MUNC II
Human Rights Council
Background Guide
Topic A: The Treatment of Uighur Muslims in China



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The Treatment of Uighur Muslims in China

The Situation:

The Chinese government is afraid of separatist and extremist beliefs growing in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region¹ of China². The area has a history of wanting to separate from China. In 1945, the area had a 75 percent Uighur population, and only a 9 percent Han Chinese population.³ This number has changed to the point where as of 2018 the population was 45 percent Uighur and 40 percent Han Chinese.⁴ While this shift in population has not led directly to tensions in the area, in 2016 a new party secretary named Chen Quanguo brought in many new hardline policies. The Chinese government claims the new policies are to stop Islamist militants and separatists from causing tension between the Uighurs and the Hans in the area.⁵

Once he took power in the region, Quanguo brought in some new laws to try and fight extremism. Some of these include the banning of long beards, and wearing face veils in the open.⁶ The government has also had a recent history with crackdowns in the area. Despite recognizing Islam as a religion in China, the government has been worried it may spark separatist ideals in the people of the XUAR. The government blamed Uighur groups in the region for causing the September 11th attacks, and used the attacks as justification for a raid in the region. Following riots in the area in 2009, the government massacred nearly 200 people.⁷ Since then, the Uighur have been a scapegoat, blamed for any attacks that happen in China.

To try and stop attempts at militant organizations, the Chinese government has formed 're-education' and 'de-extremification' camps. These camps are aimed at stopping any possible militants from joining any extremist organizations. These camps are, however, shrouded in mystery. Many detainees have extremely limited

¹ Henceforth referred to as XUAR

² "[China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang](#)." Council on Foreign Affairs.

³ "[Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region \(XUAR\)](#)." Global Security.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ "[U.N. says it has credible reports that China holds million Uighurs in secret camps](#)." Reuters.

⁶ "[China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang](#)." Council on Foreign Affairs.

⁷ Ibid

access to information about their loved ones, and visa versa.⁸ This has led to cases where detainees just disappear after being taken to a camp. According to reports from inside the camps, detainees are forced to renounce Islam and pledge full allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party.⁹ There are also reports of Uighurs being tortured both mentally and physically. Former detainees say they were suffering from sleep deprivation during interrogations.¹⁰

These reports has caused international backlash towards China. More than 20 countries have called for China to end the mass detention of Uighurs.¹¹ The European Union¹² has stated that they are in opposition to the CCP's treatment of the Uighur. The EU Parliament also advised that EU members send a strong message to the CCP that they are not in support of their practices in the area.¹³ The United Nations Security Council has been looking into the possible abuses of human rights by the CCP.

In October of 2019 the United States¹⁴ announced a visa restriction on Chinese officials, because of the accusations. The US also blacklisted many different Chinese companies that have had links to alleged abuses.¹⁵ The United Kingdom¹⁶ has called for a United Nations¹⁷ led investigation of the camps. The UK has called for the UN to look into the claims of human rights violations. The UK has also been calling for China to allow for a UN investigation. China has not been keen on allowing foreign investigations.¹⁸

The CCP defends its actions by claiming that no terrorist attacks have occurred within China in over two years, which shows proof of these detainments working. China also argues that if they do not continue these detainments, the XUAR will become a Chinese Syria.¹⁹ The CCP also claims the camps are just

⁸ "[The Persecution of the Uighurs and Potential Crimes Against Humanity in China.](#)" Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

⁹ Henceforth referred to as CCP

¹⁰ "[China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang.](#)" Council on Foreign Affairs.

¹¹ "[China rebuked at UN over Uighur detention.](#)" Aljazeera.

¹² Henceforth referred to as EU

¹³ "[The Persecution of the Uighurs and Potential Crimes Against Humanity in China.](#)" Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

¹⁴ Henceforth referred to as US

¹⁵ "[China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang.](#)" Council on Foreign Affairs.

¹⁶ Henceforth referred to as UK

¹⁷ Henceforth referred to as UN

¹⁸ "[UK calls for UN access to Chinese detention camps in Xinjiang.](#)" The Guardian

¹⁹ "[The Persecution of the Uighurs and Potential Crimes Against Humanity in China.](#)" Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

boarding schools that provide education and training according to XUAR governor, Shohrat Zakir.²⁰ Chinese officials have been refusing to let outside sources investigate the camps, claiming that it is an internal issue. As mentioned earlier, CCP officials do not want outsiders to encroach on their judicial methods.²¹ The CCP has been adamant about keeping foreign investigations out.

Work Cited

²⁰ [“China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang.”](#) Council on Foreign Affairs.

²¹ Ibid

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