

WORLD UYGHUR CONGRESS BOLDLINE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PROJECT PROPOSAL

Religious Freedom in China:

Developing a Unified Communication and Advocacy Strategy
Between Persecuted Religious Groups in China



About the World Uyghur Congress (WUC):

The WUC is an international organization that represents the collective interests of the Uyghur people in both China and abroad. The principle objective of the WUC is to promote democracy, human rights and freedom for the Uyghur people and to use peaceful, nonviolent and democratic means to determine their future

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION:

1. Name of organization submitting partnership

World Uyghur Congress

2. Full address and postal code

Adolf-Kolping Straße 9
80336 Munich, Germany

3. For-profit or not-for-profit status

Not-for-profit

4. Industry affiliation (e.g., health care, aviation, energy)

Human Rights

5. Links to biographies of the participants or LinkedIn profiles (preferable) that will be shared with the other participants

Dolkun Isa, WUC President: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dolkun-isa-6a927724/>

Peter Irwin, WUC Project Manager <https://www.linkedin.com/in/peter-irwin-16618897/>

Ryan Barry, WUC Project Coordinator: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ryan-barry-471a07101/>

6. Has your organization ever partnered with the U.S. government? Describe.

The WUC has not officially partnered with the U.S. government. However, we do receive funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for Uyghur human rights related advocacy activities.

7. What stage is your partnership business plan (new idea, existing program going to scale)?

The plan builds on previous work done by the WUC in conducting human rights advocacy on the issue of religious persecution of the Uyghur people in China, by engaging with the UN, EU and states. However, this plan will go in a new direction, emphasizing and promoting solidarity with Tibetan Buddhists, Chinese Christians and other religious groups in China, as well as experts in communication, media and graphic design.

8. Signed commitment statement to participate in the full three-day accelerator program in or around Washington, D.C.

Attached

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The freedom to exercise religious belief for the Uyghur population in China has deteriorated dramatically, particularly since 2012. Under the guise of tackling 'extremism' the Chinese government has established state control over almost every aspect of religious practice in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and has launched a campaign of the 'sinicization' of Islam in particular. This has culminated in the mass arbitrary detention of at least one million Uyghurs in internment camps, due to their religious beliefs or ethnic identity, where they are subjected to political indoctrination aimed at eroding ties to their ethnic identity and religion.

However, Uyghur Muslims are not the only group affected by these repressive policies and face persecution due to their religious beliefs. Tibetan Buddhists, Chinese Christians (such as the Church of the Almighty God) and other religious groups have also encountered similar measures as the Chinese government seeks to establish complete control over religious practice in China.

The World Uyghur Congress, as well as Tibetan and Christian organizations, have raised this issue separately in international fora and with individual states. On occasion, there is some cooperation, but it is not done in any formal or organized arrangement. China evades criticism by falsely denouncing each of these claims separately, blaming 'terrorism', 'extremism' or 'separatism'. There is an urgent need for Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists and Chinese Christians to present this issue as a united front and work with experts from the private sphere to communicate about this issue in a more effective way.

IDEA

The main objectives of the partnership are twofold. First, it will aim to facilitate cooperation between Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists and Chinese Christians to form a common strategy to collectively and effectively raise the issue of the severe religious persecution that each group faces in China.

By raising this issue as one united group, it would help to overcome many of the challenges and complications that we have faced in the past and would amplify each group's voice. Presenting the issue as a broad criticism of China's persecution would depoliticize the issue and reveal the extent and scale of the situation. Each group would also benefit greatly from sharing best practices and strategies.

Secondly, relevant partners from the private sphere would be incorporated into the project, to assist in developing an effective communication strategy, incorporating social media analytics, graphic design and innovative technology to disseminate information and target key decision makers.

To enable this cooperation, two conferences would be organized bringing together relevant civil society actors, community leaders, religious authorities and relevant private actors to discuss and formulate a common and coordinated advocacy strategy and unified message. The partners involved in this project would release joint statements, hold joint press conferences, launch a coordinated social media campaign and publish a joint report highlighting the issue.

This project would support the U.S. Government's priority objective to advance religious freedom, by facilitating a more effective and coordinated advocacy strategy.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The main resource requirements for this initiative would be funding to enable representatives from the specified partner organizations to attend and participate in the series of conferences aimed at fostering cooperation and developing a common strategy.

The WUC would tentatively propose that two 3-day conferences to be held: one in Washington D.C. and the second in Brussels, Belgium. Our total estimates for the costs of holding these conferences are as follows:

Transportation Costs (for an estimated 20 participants):	\$30,000
Venue Rental:	\$6,000
Accommodation for participants (20 ppl for a total of 6 nights):	\$14,400
Food & Drinks (3 meals for 20ppl for 6 days):	\$7,200
Printing & Copying (working papers, reports):	\$500
<i>Estimated Total:</i>	<i>\$58,100</i>

BEST POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The main partners involved in this proposal would be civil society actors, community leaders, religious authorities and relevant private actors. Crucially the project would seek to involve communities directly affected by religious persecution in China, namely Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists and Chinese Christians.

We would propose that representatives from the World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur Human Rights Project represent the Uyghur community.

On behalf of the Tibetan people, ideal partners would include the Tibetan Government in Exile, the International Campaign for Tibet and Students for a Free Tibet.

On behalf of Chinese Christians, ideal partners would be representatives from the Catholic Church and the Church of the Almighty God.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International would be welcome partners on behalf of civil society.

From the private sector, it would be important to include companies or private actors specializing in social media, graphic design and technologically-based advocacy.

Ideal End State

The success of this initiative depends on the formulation and implementation of a common advocacy strategy on the issue of religious freedom in China from Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Chinese Christians and other concerned parties, in cooperation with human rights NGOs.

Renewed attention would be brought to the dire situation facing these religious groups in China through joint media statements, press conferences and related advocacy activities in international fora and with individual states.

It is our hope that through this initiative, the involved parties can effectively mobilize states and other relevant actors to hold China accountable for its serious human rights violations and take concrete action to end the religious persecution of Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and other religious groups in China.