

Forum:	Human Rights Council Commission I (HRC I)
Issue:	Addressing Human Rights Abuses Against Uighurs in Xinjiang (SDG 16)
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Introduction

According to the United Nations(UN), human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination. There are some human rights that are commonly violated: The right not to be tortured, freedom of expression, Freedom of thought, and freedom from discrimination. These human rights abuses result in severe problems such as child labor, child soldiers, and human trafficking. Xinjiang is facing discrimination, one of the human rights abuses, from the Chinese government because of the difference in religion, culture, and ideas.

Xinjiang, officially known as the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR), is an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. Being the largest province of China, Xinjiang is located in the far northwest of the country. Uyghurs are one of the 56 officially recognized ethnic minorities in China and a Turkic minority ethnic group originated from and culturally related to the general region of Central and East Asia.

Xinjiang is part of what ancient Chinese used to call the West which includes the Silk Road and has historically been ruled by nomadic peoples such as the Dolgongites and Mongols. The Uighurs have quickly become Muslims since they adopted Islam in the 10th century. Since then, it was invaded by the Qing empire and was within its control from 1755 to the early 1900s. The First Republic of East Turkestan was established in November 1933, but died out within three months and was rebuilt in 1944. But the republic was annexed to the People's Republic of China in 1949 and became the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955. Since the annexation, many conflicts occurred between Uyghurs who continuously requested independence and the Chinese government who rejects the idea of them

being an indigenous group. Chinese government kept detaining Uyghurs as they have different religions and ideas. The July 2009 Ürümqi riots are the protests that broke out on July 5, 2009 in the city of Ürümqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, Uyghurs demanding the release of Uyghurs who are interned and the independence from China. However, the Chinese government kept confining the Uyghurs by building the "Re-education camp".

Xinjiang is traditionally an agricultural region with abundant reserves of minerals and oil. The nominal GDP was about 932.4 billion RMB (US\$140 billion) in 2015. The nominal GDP showed an average annual increase of 10.4% for the past four years following the discovery of the abundant reserves of coal, oil, and gas as well as the implementation of China Western Development policy. However, the average per capita income of Southern Xinjiang, with 95% non-Han population, has an average per capita income of about half that of Xinjiang as a whole, which indicates economic discrimination against the Uyghurs.

The major religion in Xinjiang is Islam among the Uyghurs and the Hui Chinese minority, whereas many of the Han Chinese practice Chinese folk religions, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. According to a demographic analysis of the year 2010, Muslims form 58% of Xinjiang's population. On the other hand, Muslims are a minority group in China as a whole, representing between 0.45% to 2.85% of the total population. This led to the main human rights abuses in Xinjiang caused by the discrimination of different religions.

The re-education camps were established under General Secretary Xi Jinping's administration and aim at changing the political thinking of detainees, their identities and their religious beliefs. According to the Radio Free Asia and HRW, at least 120,000 members of Kashgar's Muslim Uyghur minority have been detained in Xinjiang's re-education camps. In addition, reports from the World Uyghur Congress submitted to the United Nations in July 2018 suggest that 1 million Uyghurs are currently being held in the re-education camps. Even today, hundreds of writers, artists, and academics had been imprisoned, in what the magazine qualified as an attempt to "punish any form of religious or cultural expression" among Uyghurs.

Definition of Key Terms

Human rights

According to the United Nations (UN), human rights are rights that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone must be entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

Human Rights Abuses

Human rights abuses are a violation of basic human rights. Human rights abuses are occurring all over the world in different forms: Child labor, Child soldier, and human trafficking.

Discrimination

The unjust or biased treatment of different groups of people, especially because of the difference between race, age, or sex.

Persecutions

Hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs.

Detention/ Internment

The action of detaining someone or the state of being detained in official custody, especially as a political prisoner.

Ethnic Minority

A group within a community that has different national or cultural traditions from the majority of the population.

Islam

An Abrahamic and monotheistic religion teaching that there is only one God (Allah), and that Muhammad is a messenger of God

Communism

A theory or system of social organization that all property is owned by the community and each person contributes and receives according to their ability and needs

Counter-terrorism Law

The Counter-Terrorism Act is a law purposed at fighting against terrorism. The counter-terrorism law generally includes specific revisions that allow the state to bypass its laws for reasons of necessity when fighting terrorism-related crimes.

Authorities

Authority is generally the legitimate power that one person or group possesses and practices over another.

Sanction

A threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule.

Background Information

Human rights abuse in Xinjiang Uyghur

Around 1 million Uighurs are locked up in the re-education camp. Thousands of guards equipped with tear gas, Tasers, stun guns, and spiked clubs monitor the “students” who are supposed to break the Uighurs’ lineage, roots, connections, and origins to build them as new, better Chinese citizens. Torture and beatings are reportedly regular occurrences. The satellite images of Xinjiang camp shows that more than 1,000 testimonies from family members of interned Uighurs and Kazakhs reveal terrifying occurrences. Many Uighurs who remain in their homes live under the surveillance of government and are forced to stay at their homes. The government has mobilized more than 1 million uninvited guests to aid the military and police to undertake programs of indoctrination and surveillance.

July 2009 Ürümqi riots

Xinjiang is a large Central Asian region in China that consists of numerous minority groups. The Uyghurs are one of China’s 56 ethnic minorities, mostly living in Xinjiang. But the Uyghurs and the Han Chinese government disagree over which ethnic has greater historical rights to Xinjiang. The Uyghurs believe that their ancestors were indigenous to Xinjiang, whereas the government claims that the Hans are native to Xinjiang. The Chinese government seeks a single language and single culture state and clamps down all activities considered to constitute separatism. This government policy reduces Uyghurs’ freedom of religion and freedom of movement. Accordingly, the Uyghurs have been claiming their independence with terrors and protests. The July 2009 Ürümqi riots occurred on July 5th, 2009 in the city of Ürümqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. Uyghur demanded independence from the Chinese government as they have been under ethnic minority oppression, but the government forcefully suppressed the demand. More than 1,000 Uyghurs (up to 3,000 people) participated in the protest, and the death toll reported by Chinese government agencies stands about 200 people.

Re-education camp

The Chinese government said that the authorities had set up at least 182 re-education camps in Xinjiang in October 2018. The government announced that the re-education camp is a camp for vocational education, and the majority of the inmates are happily back in society. However, it was revealed that China was operating the re-education camp like a wartime

concentration camp in 2019. Information on what is actually happening in the camp is limited, but many inmates who escaped from the camps describe harsh conditions. They swear allegiance to the Central Government and learn to praise for the Chinese communism. There are also testimonies that Muslims were forced to eat pork and drink. Some say the camp is like a prison that uses cameras and microphones to monitor their every move. The detention of inmates also interferes with their families. The remaining Uyghurs at home will be monitored by government officials, while children whose parents are sent to re-education camps will stay in orphanages.

The reaction of other countries

Earlier in November 2019, twelve UN experts made a devastating assessment of the Chinese government's counterterrorism law. Their criticism highlights the claims that the law is being used to justify the encroachment on basic rights and freedoms in Xinjiang. This assessment is not limited to the government's policy to stigmatize religious consciousness as terrorism and force people into detention without due process. The analysis by the UN experts attacks the government's key reason for the suppression of Muslims in Xinjiang, warning that "excessive regulations by the authorities against the minority rights can run the risk of aggravating any security threats." Experts concluded that the counterterrorism law ignored international human rights and that all those who are affected by the policy should immediately regain their rights. They also accuse the government's disregard for human rights can lead to a hindrance to economic and political development throughout society.

Nearly 20 countries, including the United States, Britain, Norway, Denmark, and Australia, have confronted China at the United Nations, expressing anger over the persecution of Xinjiang's Muslims and demanding that the government abide by its international obligations for religious freedom. On behalf of 23 countries such as Australia, Canada, Japan, and United States, Britain's UN Ambassador Karen Pearce issued a joint statement on Xinjiang on November 22nd, 2019. They called for China to abide by its national and international obligations to respect human rights, including religious freedom, and allow UN human rights to monitor and to enter the detention center.

China protested that the situation was in response to national separatism and violent acts of terrorism. At a U.N. conference in Geneva in August 2018, Chinese representatives dismissed the news that a million Uyghur are in re-education camps. But on the sidelines of the U.N. meeting last September, a Chinese official explained to reporters that China has established a professional training center and an education center. Li Ziajun, director of the human rights department at the Chinese intelligence agency said that It is a necessary way to deal with Islam or religious extremism. Additionally, more than 50 countries supporting China tries to recommend China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights to refute the United Nations and

some countries that are criticizing China's Xinjiang Uyghur persecution. They are working to convince the world that China's re-education camps are nothing more than "job training". Also, China has mobilized notorious human rights violators such as North Korea, Egypt, and Russia to counter the UN's concerns.

The new counter-terrorism law in China

The Counter-Terrorism Act is a law purposed at fighting against terrorism. The counter-terrorism law generally includes specific revisions that allow the state to bypass its laws for reasons of necessity when fighting terrorism-related crimes. However, counter-terrorism law is sometimes accused of unfairly suppressing all kinds of public protests. Critics argue that the counter-terrorism law suppresses democracy by creating an exceptional state that allows authoritarian governments.

China's new counter-terrorism law grants the government a wide range of discretion to investigate and prevent terrorist incidents. This allows the public security authorities to take action to deal with extreme terrorism and significant penalties to occur in the event of non-compliance and non-cooperation. It also asks citizens and businesses to cooperate and support the government. Dolkunisa, the director of the Uyghur independence movement based in Munich, Germany, speaks of the way terrorism language is used as a political tool to link terrorism to religious expressions. He said that the newly passed counter-terrorism law in China will open the door to more human rights abuses, especially in Uyghur society. He also argues that the law does not guarantee the safety of the people and will heighten the tension through the criminalization of legitimate activities.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

China

China is a country that is recognized to violate human rights, especially in Xinjiang. As China seeks for monoculturalism, the government regulates most of the cultural activities that oppose the government's concept by building re-education camps and revising the counter-terrorism law.

United States

The United States opposes China for its human rights violation by imposing international sanctions. The US regulated China's tariff and visa issuance for senior Chinese officials. Additionally, Senators of the US are trying to pass legislation calling for sanctions and other measures on Chinese officials to resolve the brutal crackdown on the Uyghur minority in northwestern china in December 2019.

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization responsible for maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation, and being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.

United Nations Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental organization within the UN system consisting of 47 countries that are responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights abuses problems around the world. It has the duty to discuss human rights issues on all topics that require caution throughout the year. The headquarters of UNHRC is in Geneva Switzerland.

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is a New York-based international nongovernmental organization that conducts research and protection of human rights. The group blames some governments, policymakers and human rights violators for violating human rights and puts pressure on them to respect human rights. It especially works for refugees, children, immigrants and political prisoners who are vulnerable to human rights violations.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
July, 2009	July 2009 Ürümqi riots occurred.
June~August, 2011	Many terrors occurred in Kashgar, Xinjiang including bombing and shooting ahead of the Olympics by the armed group that claims separation independence from China.
April, 2017	Some eight hundred thousand to two million Uighurs and other Muslims, including ethnic Kazakhs and Uzbeks, have been detained in the re-education camp.
October 9th, 2019	The United States has imposed visa restrictions on top Chinese officials involved in the Uighur crisis.
October, 2019	Speaking at the UN General Assembly, a representative for the UK issued a statement on behalf of 23 countries raising concerns over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, 11 September 2019
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 Dec 1966 (CESCR)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 18 Dec 2002 (SPT)

Possible Solutions

Firstly, spreading awareness among citizens not only in China but also all around the world is of the utmost importance. In the case of people in China, they have learned by rote to follow the rule of communism and obey the Chinese government. Additionally, other people who are living lives without any human rights abuses might not be concerned about the problem occurring in other countries. However, knowing about the lives of other people is important in the globalized world. The distance among countries, ethnicities, and cultures became closer. People even living peaceful lives should also realize what is happening in the global village. Citizens have the right to learn what they deserve and how to cope with the unjust situation. Chinese people should also be concerned and interested in what is happening in their country. In addition, the Chinese government should realize that their activities are violating give them the freedom to think and express their own ideas. It will a difficult task for the Chinese government who is used to suppress citizens and seek monoculturalism. However, the Chinese government needs to realize the importance of diversity and allow freedom for people. It is the International organizations' work to keep meeting with Chinese high-ranking officials in order to convince them to develop human rights in China. The Chinese government can introduce a national petition system for the citizens to ensure their liberty. For example, people can freely post the difficulties that they face in life so that the government can help the citizens on the open website. Also, establishing a governmental committee that concentrates on human rights can show the effort of China.

In order to restore the human rights of ethnic minorities being discriminated in China and to support the activities of civil society organizations helping the victims of human rights violations in China, it is imperative for the international community to compromise with China. However, it is considered to be difficult to achieve meaningful liberal reforms under the harsh and doctrinaire rule of Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China. Moreover, China does not believe that simply repeating human rights will bring a more stable and peaceful future to Xinjiang and that accepting peaceful criticism is not necessary for China's future. The Chinese government even regards all the moving against its own ideas as a threat to national security. So, the United Nations (UN) and other countries should speak out loud for the sake of world peace so that the victims of human rights violations can live human lives. In this case, China's desire for integration into the global economic and governing

system offers opportunities for other countries that are making an effort to make positive changes to the human rights of the people living in China. First, the Chinese government wants international cooperation as an anti-corruption campaign. The Chinese government is pressing governments around the world to hand over the authorities of the charges for those who fled after taking part in political campaigns against the government. Also, China required international collaboration with its counterterrorism movement. Human rights abuses in Xinjiang can lead to terrorism in minorities, and China recognizes legitimate concern about terrorism. China, in turn, is trying to persuade other countries to justify and cooperate with its efforts to extradite suspected terrorists. Other governments should publicly reject all counterterrorism-related assistance to China until it shows that it can provide some processes that meet international human rights standards. Thus, imposing sanctions on China's activities that require international aids including the rejection of China's demands in cooperation with the international community until china protects its human rights is the primary solution to draw the improvement in human rights in China.

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