

UYGHUR FORCED LABOR PREVENTION ACT TAKES EFFECT



EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION
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ISLAMIC SCHOLARS GATHER IN ISTANBUL TO HIGHLIGHT UYGHUR GENOCIDE, SUPPORT THEIR STRUGGLE WITH CHINA

Istanbul [Turkey], June 14 (ANI): Islamic scholars and intellectuals gathered in Istanbul on Monday for an international conference to highlight the Uyghur genocide and to support their struggle with the Chinese Communist Party.

“This weekend, Islamic scholars and intellectuals of the Muslim world gathered in Istanbul for an international conference that aims to introduce the #UyghurGenocide to the Muslim World and to mobilize public opinion to support the #Uyghurs in their struggle with #CCP. #ChinasWaron-Islam,” tweeted Center for Uyghur Stud-

ies (CUS).

The Center for Uyghur Studies provides strategic policy recommendations and presents research reports to interfaith entities, related international organizations and governments on the people of East Turkistan/Xinjiang.

The Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group, whose origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.

Their native region is considered to be the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People’s Republic of China.

Xinjiang is technically an autonomous region within China. The Uyghurs are Muslim, they don’t speak Mandarin as their native language, and have ethnicity and culture that is different from that of mainland China.

Over the past few decades, as economic prosperity has come to Xinjiang, it has





brought with it in large numbers the majority of Han Chinese, who have cornered the better jobs, and left the Uyghurs feeling their livelihoods and identity were under threat.

This led to sporadic violence, in 2009 culminating in a riot that killed 200 people, mostly Han Chinese, in the region's capital Urumqi.

According to reports, since 2016, over a million Uyghur Muslims have been detained in Xinjiang re-education camps by the Chinese Government.

The main purpose of these re-education camps was to ensure adherence to the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party.

Chinese authorities have been accused of imposing forced labour, systematic forced birth control and torture, and separating children from incarcerated parents.



Several countries, including the US, Canada and the Netherlands, have accused China of committing genocide – defined by international convention as the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group”.

China has been forcibly mass sterilising Uyghur women to suppress the population, separating children from their families, and attempting to break the cultural traditions of the group.

China denies all allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, claiming its system of “re-education” camps is there to combat separatism and Islamist militancy in the region. (ANI)

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLS CHINA'S XINJIANG VIOLATIONS 'SERIOUS RISK OF GENOCIDE'

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution saying China's treatment of mostly Muslim, Turkic-speaking indigenous ethnic groups, such as Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and others in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, amounts to "crimes against humanity" and holds a "serious risk of genocide."

The resolution, approved in a vote by the European Parliament on June 9, condemned "in the strongest possible terms" China's treatment of Uyghurs and other indigenous peoples in the northwestern region.

Although it stops short of calling China's actions genocide outright, the resolution is the strongest yet adopted by the legislature and marks a tougher line toward Beijing by Brussels. The United States has already labelled China's actions in Xinjiang as "genocide" and "crimes against humanity."

The resolution says the Uyghur community in China "has been systematically oppressed by brutal measures, including

mass deportation, political indoctrination, family separation, restrictions on religious freedom, cultural destruction and the extensive use of surveillance."

It also says there is "credible evidence about birth-prevention measures and the separation of Uyghur children from their families amount to crimes against humanity and represent a serious risk of genocide."

The document calls on the Chinese government to put an "immediate end" to the practice of arbitrary detention without charge, trial, or conviction for criminal offenses "targeted" against Uyghurs and other ethnic Turkic peoples, and to close all camps and detention centers and "im-



mediately and unconditionally” release all of those detained under the practices.

As many as 2 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and members of Xinjiang’s other indigenous ethnic groups have been taken to detention centers in the western Chinese region, according to the U.S. State Department.



China denies that the facilities are internment camps but people who have fled the province say that thousands are undergoing “political indoctrination” at a network of facilities known officially as reeducation camps.

The resolution, which is nonbinding, also criticizes UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet for her recent trip to China, where she visited Xinjiang, saying she “failed to clearly hold the Chinese government accountable for human rights abuses against the Uyghurs during her visit.”

Dozens of rights groups called on June 8 for her resignation, charging that she “whitewashed” Beijing’s “atrocities” during her trip to China.

Bachelet has said that during the trip she urged Beijing to review its counterterrorism policies to ensure they comply with international human rights standards.

She also said that her six-day trip was not an investigation into China’s human rights policies but an opportunity to engage with the government.

By RFE/RL



47 COUNTRIES VOICE CONCERN OVER CHINA'S TREATMENT OF UYGHURS IN XINJIANG

Geneva [Switzerland], June 16 (ANI): Forty-seven countries voiced concern about abuses in China's far-western Xinjiang region, and demanded that the United Nations rights chief publish a long-delayed report on Uyghurs' repression.

“We continue to be gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,” Paul Bekkers, the Dutch ambassador to the UN in Geneva, told the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, reported Al Jazeera.



Delivering a joint statement on behalf of 47 countries, Bekkers pointed to a number of “credible reports” indicating that more than one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been arbitrarily detained.

Beijing has admitted that there are camps but that they are “vocational skills training centres” and necessary to tackle “extremism”.

“There are reports of ongoing widespread surveillance, discrimination against Uyghurs and other persons belonging to minorities,” he said.

The joint statement also voiced concern about “reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced sterilisation, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, and forced separation of children from their parents by authorities”.

The concerned countries, Bekkers said, “repeat our call on China to urgently address these concerns”, and to “end the ar-



bitrary detention of Muslim Uyghurs and persons belonging to other minorities”.

The group also called on Beijing to provide UN investigators and experts “meaningful and unfettered access” to independently observe the situation on the ground in Xinjiang, reported Al Jazeera.

After months of demanding “unfettered access” to Xinjiang, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet finally visited China last month – the first visit by a UN rights chief to the country in 17 years.

But she faced harsh criticism for not speaking up more forcefully against China’s alleged abuses prior to and during the trip, which is believed to have been heavily controlled by Chinese authorities.

In Tuesday’s joint statement, the countries asked for “more detailed observations, including on the restrictions the Chinese authorities imposed on the visit” of Bachelet.

The UN rights chief has faced growing pressure to release her long-delayed report on Xinjiang, which diplomats say has been ready for months.

Bachelet, who announced on Monday that she will not be seeking a second term, has promised that the report would be published before she steps down on August 31.

Tuesday’s joint statement urged the report’s “prompt release”, and asked Bachelet to provide “further information on the timeline”. (ANI)

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BACHELET WON'T SEEK 2ND TERM AS UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF

GENEVA (AP) — U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said she will not seek a new four-year term, citing a desire to return to her native Chile after a tenure that has been recently overshadowed by criticism of her response to China's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in western Xinjiang.

Bachelet used her opening address Monday to the summer session of the Human Rights Council to announce that it would be her last at the U.N.'s top human rights body. Afterward, she explained how she had told U.N. Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres in New York two months ago of her decision. Her current term ends on Aug. 31.

"I am not a young woman anymore and after a long and rich career, I want to go back to my country, to my family," Bachelet, 70, who served two terms as Chile's president, said at a brief news conference.

Guterres, who chooses the U.N. rights chief, affirmed his support for Bachelet after she faced criticism from the United States and others for allegedly not doing enough to raise concerns about or look into rights abuses in Xinjiang during her six-day trip to China last month, when she spoke with President Xi Jinping and other top officials.

"Having been president (of Chile) twice, I



have received a lot of criticism in my life,” said Bachelet. “That’s not what makes me do certain decisions.”

In a statement, Guterres praised Bachelet’s “relentless” service to the U.N. in the job.

“In all she has done, Michelle Bachelet lives and breathes human rights. She has moved the needle in an extremely challenging political context — and she has made a profound difference for people around the globe,” he said.

Bachelet took up the job in September 2018 and immediately expressed hopes of visiting China and viewing the rights situation in Xinjiang for herself.

Critics said she hasn’t spoken out enough about the Uyghurs and during the visit didn’t press Chinese authorities enough. She insisted her trip was not an “investigation” and emphasized that she had opened a channel of communication with top Chinese authorities.

Bachelet used Monday’s speech to the rights council to provide new details about her conversations with Chinese authorities, saying she raised concerns about arbitrary detentions and “patterns of abuse” against Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

She said her long-awaited report on the rights situation in Xinjiang — where some critics say Uyghurs have been subject to genocide — is being “updated” and will be shared with Beijing authorities “for factual comments” before it is published.

China has denied any accusations about its treatment of Uyghurs and has defended its “vocational education and training centers” for them that critics have called detention centers.

Bachelet told reporters that the report would be published before she leaves office.

Last week, Human Rights Watch relayed a statement from over 230 groups representing people from Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and other places in China calling on Bachelet to step down. In it, the groups accused her of having “whitewashed the Chinese government’s human rights atrocities” during her visit.

In her address Monday, Bachelet laid out an array of human rights concerns including inflation, growing food insecurity, worries about the environment and country-specific concerns.

She expressed fears about a possibly severe outbreak of COVID-19 in North Korea if a vaccination campaign is not rolled out there and said decried the arbitrary arrests in Russia of a “large number” of protesters against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.

Three years ago, Bachelet’s office issued a scathing report on Venezuela that documented nearly 5,300 killings by security forces linked to cases of “resistance to authority” in 2018 alone. She denounced a “shockingly high” number of extrajudicial killings, as well as repression of political opponents, arbitrary detentions and cases of torture. It came weeks after she traveled to Venezuela and met with President Nicolas Maduro about the human rights situation there.

By JAMEY KEATEN



UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF COULD NOT SPEAK TO DETAINED UYGHURS OR FAMILIES DURING XINJIANG VISIT

Michelle Bachelet says she was supervised by China officials throughout six-day visit that critics have called a propaganda coup for Beijing

Michelle Bachelet has said wasn't able to speak to any detained Uyghurs or their families during her controversial visit to Xinjiang, and was accompanied by government officials while in the region.

The UN human rights chief, who this week announced she would not be seeking another term, told a session of the 50th Human Rights Council in Geneva that there were limitations on her visit to the region in China, where authorities have been accused of committing crimes against humanity and genocide against the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

Bachelet and a team from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) spent six days in Guangdong and Xinjiang for a visit that activists and some western governments described as

a propaganda coup for the Chinese government.

In a statement on Wednesday, Bachelet said she was able to meet members of civil society organisations without government supervision, but in Xinjiang was "accompanied by government officials throughout the visit".

At a press conference in Guangdong held on the final day of her tour, Bachelet was asked directly by the Guardian about her ability to speak to Uyghur civilians and other people "without supervision" and to have free and open discussions about their experiences.

At the time Bachelet said that because of the Covid bubble they weren't able to meet everyone "but with the people we were able to speak to, it was in an unsupervised manner".

On Wednesday she reiterated "limitations" on the visit. "As it would be true of



any high-level visit which by definition is not an investigation mission, there were limitations especially given the prevailing Covid restrictions,” she said.

“I visited Kashgar prison plus a former so-called VETC [vocational education and training centre], where I spoke to the authorities. I was not able to speak to any Uyghurs currently detained or their families during the visit. However, in anticipation of this, I did meet with some former detainees who are now outside the country and with families who have lost contact with loved ones ahead of my visit.”

After her visit Bachelet was criticised by rights groups, some western governments and Uyghur activists for failing to strongly condemn the Chinese government’s abuses in Xinjiang, and for using terminology favoured by the government in her press conference, including “vocational education and training centre”. VETCs are the government’s name for a network of facilities in which an estimated one million Uyghurs have been detained

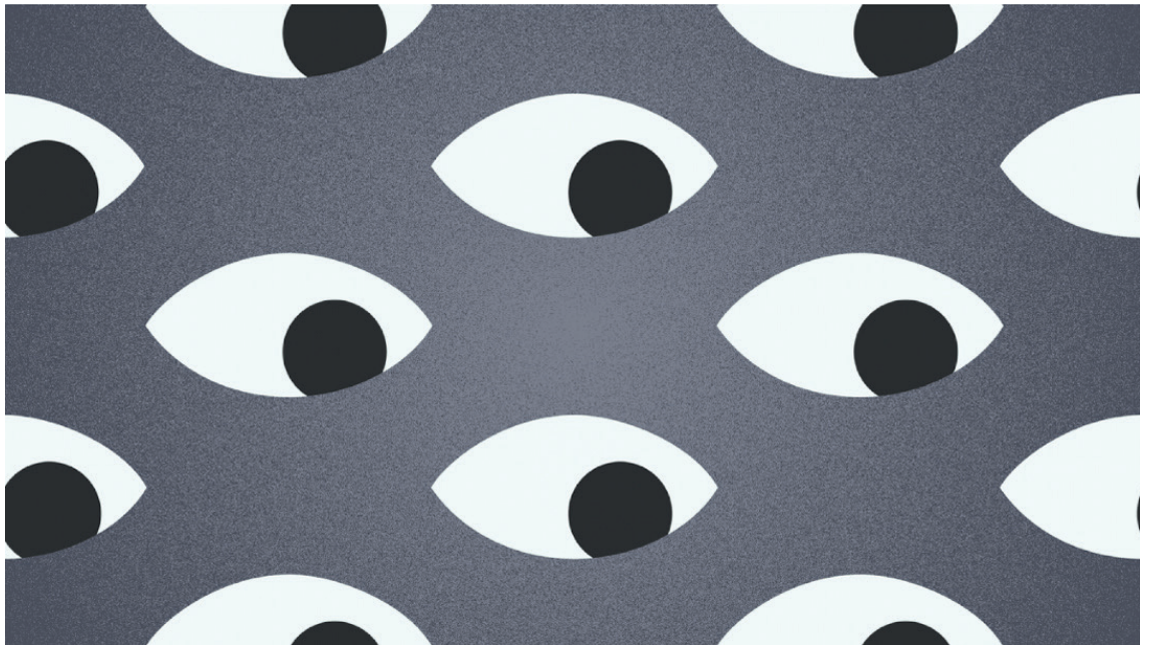
and allegedly subject to human rights abuses.

Activists including Uyghur human rights lawyer Rayhan Asat told media their families in Xinjiang had been prevented from leaving their homes by authorities during Bachelet’s visit. Asat’s brother has been detained in the Xinjiang system since he disappeared in 2016.

The OHCHR has been under pressure to release a long-awaited report on the human rights situation in China, which was completed in late 2021.

On Wednesday during a separate address, Bachelet said her office was working on updates to their assessment of the situation in Xinjiang which would be shared with the Chinese government for comment before publication.

By Helen Davidson in Taipei



REPORT: HIKVISION CAMERAS HELP XINJIANG POLICE ENSNARE UYGHURS

Cameras made by Chinese surveillance company Hikvision are deeply integrated into an intelligence program aimed at tracking and detaining Uyghurs and other ethnic groups in Xinjiang, according to a new report.

Why it matters: The findings add further weight to allegations the surveillance technology giant is complicit in the Chinese government's human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

The report, published today by surveillance technology trade publication IPVM, draws on an analysis of the Xinjiang Police Files, a trove of data and documents from Xinjiang police bureaus recently made public.

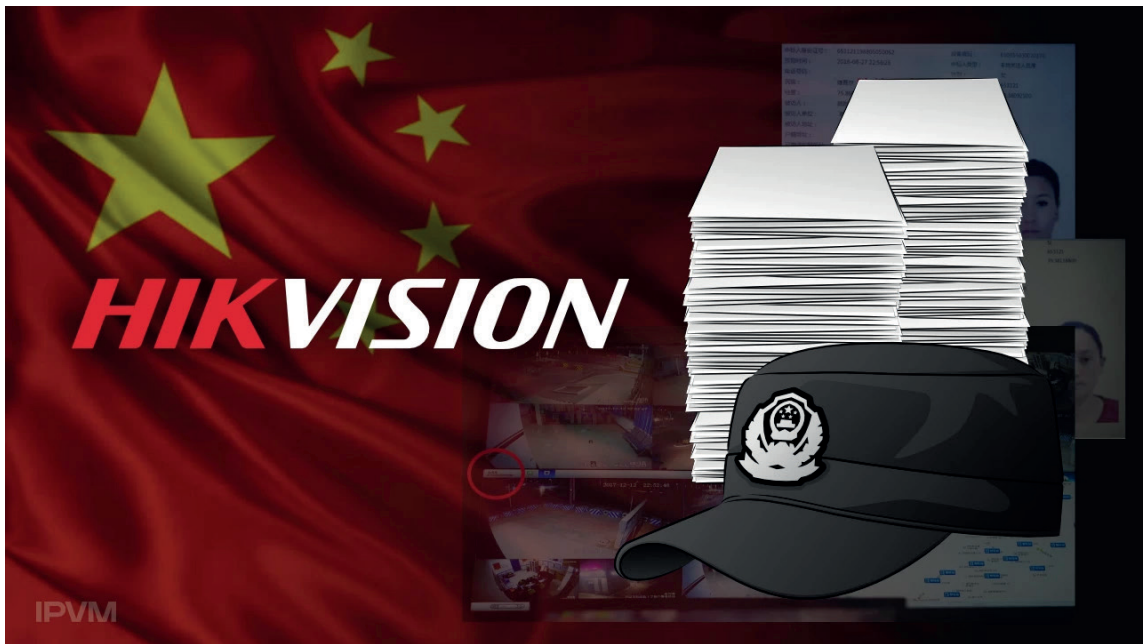
The report shows that Hikvision technology, in some cases identified down to serial numbers of certain cameras, has captured footage that has led to the detention of specific Uyghur individuals.

Hikvision has previously denied reports that its cameras are used in Xinjiang's crackdown on Uyghurs, calling such claims "unsubstantiated."

Hikvision did not respond to a request for comment. The Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., did not respond to a request for comment.

“The big picture: While police in many countries increasingly use surveillance technology, the Chinese government has built the world's most sophisticated surveillance state in Xinjiang, where facial recognition cameras blanket the streets and are often installed outside the doors of Uyghur homes.

Xinjiang police state in internal documents dating to 2018 that mass data collection and surveillance extends to all



of the region's 23 million residents, the IPVM report states.

Authorities have collected biometric data from residents including DNA samples and retina scans, forced many people to install surveillance apps on their phones, and screened all internet and phone messages.

Details: Documents from the Shufu County police bureau in southern Xinjiang lay out several cases from 2018 involving Hikvision's technology, according to the IPVM report.

In one case, police tracked a Uyghur man's car after a Hikvision camera captured footage of the car's license plate. The license plate number was automatically compared to a database and matched to the Uyghur driver's ID number. An alert was automatically sent to the nearest police station flagging the man for "immediate arrest."

The man was flagged for arrest because of links abroad. A campaign carried out by Xinjiang authorities that began around 2017 ordered all Uyghurs with a history of

traveling abroad to be questioned. Those "for whom suspected terrorism cannot be ruled out," as one leaked internal directive stated, were ordered to be placed into a detention camp.

How it works: The system used to process the license plate numbers captured by Hikvision cameras is known as the Integrated Joint Operation Platform (IJOP). It is an intelligence program used by Xinjiang police bureaus and other security officials to process the huge amounts of data generated by surveillance technology in the region. Previous leaks have revealed the existence of IJOP and how it works.

More than a million Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang have been put in mass internment camps, many of them after being flagged for detention through IJOP.

Information from police checkpoints, cell-phone surveillance, video footage, in-per-



son interrogations, gas stations, and many other sources is fed into IJOP and matched to the IDs of Xinjiang residents — usually targeting Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups.

Behavior deemed “suspicious,” which can include such innocuous activities as buying more gas than usual or exiting a home through the back door too frequently, can result in a Xinjiang resident’s name being flagged by IJOP.

That can trigger an alarm that is sent directly to a local police station, or even directly to a local officer’s cellphone. Police then locate the individual and interrogate them, and may take them to a detention facility.

What they’re saying: Details contained in the Xinjiang Police Files “shed additional

light and provide confirmation on the density and intensity of the surveillance,” Adrian Zenz, a researcher with the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation who led the release of the Xinjiang Police Files, told Axios.

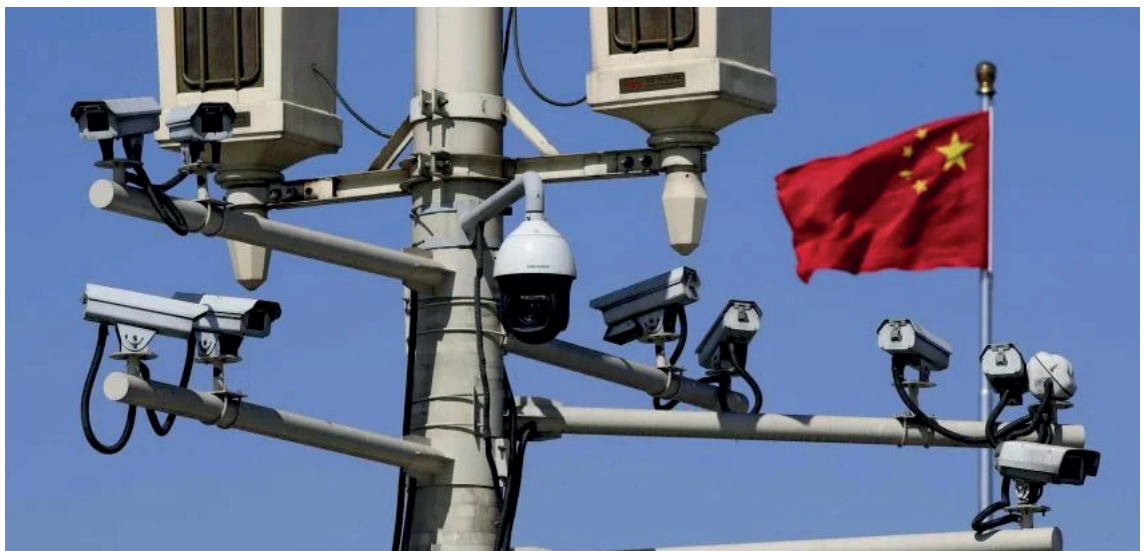
The world already knew Xinjiang was the world’s most sophisticated police state, Zenz said. The new information “indicates the unprecedented level at which some of these measures are implemented.”

What to watch: The U.S. government is reportedly considering sanctioning Hikvision for its involvement in human rights abuses in China.

Such a move would dramatically impact the company, which does business in more than 180 countries and has more than 52,000 employees.

The U.S. has already placed Hikvision on an export blacklist, which forbids U.S. companies from doing business with it unless they obtain a special license.

By Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian





ILO SENDING MISSION TO CHINA TO REPORT ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST UYGHURS IN XINJIANG REGION

the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in late 2020 that Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang were systematically being used for forced labour in agriculture. Rights groups also say at least one million Uyghurs have been incarcerated in “re-education camps” in the western region. Beijing flatly denies all such charges and maintains the camps are vocational training centres aimed at reducing the appeal of Islamic extremism.

Amid allegations of discrimination against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Xinjiang region, International Labour Organization (ILO) members have decided Saturday to send a mission to China.

The ILO’s main annual assembly adopted a committee finding to send a “technical advisory mission” to China to “assess the situation”, stopping short of a higher-level investigation, as requested by the United

States, Britain and other countries.

During the more than two-week International Labour Conference, the committee tasked with assessing China’s compliance with global labour practices had heard allegations, vehemently denied by China, of systemic labour violations especially targeting Uyghur and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

In its conclusions, adopted in full by the



assembly Saturday, the committee “deplored the use of all repressive measures against the Uyghur people, which has a discriminatory effect on their employment opportunities and treatment as a religious and ethnic minority in China”.

It issued a long line of recommendations to Beijing, including to “immediately cease any discriminatory practices against the Uyghur population and any other ethnic minority groups, including internment or imprisonment on ethnic and religious grounds for de-radicalisation purpose”.

It urged Beijing to accept an ILO technical advisory mission and asked it to provide a report by September 1 with information on how it is applying the labour convention against discrimination in employment.

China reacted angrily to the findings, with government representative Qian Xiaoyan insisting that ILO committees should not be used as a “political instrument of some Western countries to smear and denigrate China”.

The committee review came after a group of 20 UN labour experts in February

voiced their “deep concern” after evaluating the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities in China.

They had assessed allegations by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in late 2020 that Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang were systematically being used for forced labour in agriculture.

“Rights groups also say at least one million Uyghurs have been incarcerated in “re-education camps” in the western region. Beijing flatly denies all such charges and maintains the camps are vocational training centres aimed at reducing the appeal of Islamic extremism.

Since China has not completed its ratification of conventions against forced labour, the committee review focused only on the country’s adherence to Convention 111 against discrimination in employment, to which it is a party.

By Chaheti Singh Sisodia



FORMER KUWAITI MP MOHAMMED HAYEF AL-MUTAIRI: THE UYGHUR MUSLIMS SHOULD DEMAND INDEPENDENCE FROM CHINA, DECLARE TURKISTAN AN OCCUPIED, PLUNDERED COUNTRY

Former Kuwaiti MP Mohammed Hayef Al-Mutairi said in a speech at the International East Turkistan Symposium that the Uyghur Muslims should demand independence from China. He said that even if the Uyghurs only achieve autonomy, they should start with a demand for full independence and declare that Turkistan is an occupied, plundered country. The speech was published by the Turkey-based East Turkistan Islamic Union's Olimalar TV on June 10, 2022. For more on Al-Mutairi, see MEMRI TV Clips nos. 5969, 5898, and 3795.

“ Mohammed Hayef Al-Mutairi: “Our Uyghur brothers should demand that Turkistan become independent from China. They should not say that this is a big thing to ask for. You should start big, even if you end up getting less. Even if they end up getting autonomy for Turkistan, they must not demand [just] an autonomy now. They should declare that Turkistan is an occupied, plundered country, and that our Muslim brothers there are being persecuted.”



UYGHUR AMERICAN LAWYER ELECTED AS US COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CHAIR

Uyghur-American lawyer Nury Turkel has been unanimously chosen by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to serve as commission's chair

“ Uyghur-American lawyer Nury Turkel has been unanimously chosen by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to serve as the US commission's chair from 2022 to 2023. According to a press release by USCIRF, he is the Chairman of the ‘Board for the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP)’, a Council on Foreign Relations member and a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Nury Turkel who is a lawyer, foreign policy expert, as well as a human rights advocate, is considered to be the first Uyghur-American appointed to the Commission by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) in May 2020. Further, she reappointed him in May 2022. He has taken part in several hearings, gatherings, and delegations organised by USCIRF, including trips to Uzbekistan.

‘Working to addressing threats to freedom of religion and belief around the world’: Nury Turkel

According to the press release, Turkel, who was born in a re-education camp at the time of China's turbulent Cultural Revolution and spent the first few months of his life detained with his mother, said, “I am truly honoured to be elected as Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and privi-



As per an ANI report, the 12 million Uyghurs living in the Chinese-controlled Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region have suffered much during the course of Turkel's lengthy career in advocacy.

It is worth mentioning that the US and other western nations have labelled China's persecution of Uyghurs in XUAR as genocide. This persecution of the minority community and its language, religion, and culture became more severe in 2017.

leged to lead the Commission as we work towards addressing threats to freedom of religion and belief around the world – a fundamental human right”.

The Uyghur American lawyer went on to say that the bipartisan group of USCIRF Commissioners offers a variety of complementing experiences and a common dedication to the promotion of religious freedom of all faiths, which includes those who choose not to exercise a belief. He also said, “I look forward to working with Vice-Chair Cooper and my fellow Commissioners in urging the White House, State Department, and Congress to implement USCIRF's policy recommendations.”



As part of his objectives as USCIRF chair from 2022 to 2023, Turkel told RFA, that they will keep monitoring China's atrocities against the Uyghurs and other vulnerable ethnic and religious groups, ensuring that their government continues to “call China out for the ongoing Uyghur genocide and advocate for a strong policy response to stop the atrocities committed against the Uyghurs and others in communist China.”

When asked about the USCIRF's outreach to Muslim nations to raise China's genocide against Uyghur Muslims, Nury Turkel added that the organisation will collaborate with US State Department counterparts to work with Muslim majority nations in order to speak out against China's horrific acts and support US-led efforts to put an end to it.

Written By Anwesha Majumdar



US BEGINS ENFORCEMENT OF UYGHUR FORCED LABOR PREVENTION ACT

“ The United States on Tuesday begins enforcing the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which requires companies that import goods from China’s Xinjiang region to provide “clear and convincing evidence” that no component was produced with slave labor. ”

The controversial rule has upset the Chinese government, which has characterized U.S. claims about its oppression of members of the ethnic Uyghur minority as “vicious lies.” But the act is also causing concern among some U.S. businesses, which say the federal government has not provided sufficient guidance on steps they must take to avoid having imports seized at the U.S. border.

Experts warn that compliance with the law will be difficult for many U.S. businesses because of the complexity of their supply chains and the lack of reliable third-party

auditors in China who can testify that specific goods are not made with forced labor. Some are concerned it will force businesses to abandon suppliers in the region entirely.

“It is very likely that the UFLPA will amount to an effective ban on imports from Xinjiang and products that have Xinjiang-produced elements in their supply chains,” Cullen Hendrix, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told VOA.

Hendrix, who is also a professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Stud-

ies at the University of Denver, said that while some programs requiring importers to “prove a negative” have worked, the barriers to success are higher in Xinjiang.

“Other third-party certification schemes have been at least partially successful at proving negatives — for instance, that diamonds were not sourced from active conflict zones or mined with forced labor,” Hendrix said. “But those certification schemes typically weren’t being implemented in places like Xinjiang, which is perhaps the world’s most restrictive information environment.”

Hendrix added, “Third-party audits can work only if the auditors are allowed to do their jobs. They won’t be. For some, that is a feature, not a bug. Some want the policy not just to prevent products made with forced labor (from entering) the United States but to punish and to name and shame.”

Reaction to genocide

The UFLPA was passed with bipartisan support in Congress in December 2021 and signed into law by President Joe Biden. Tuesday marks 180 days since the bill was signed, the deadline for implementation.



The measure is meant to respond to the U.S. government’s determination that China is engaged in genocide in Xinjiang. The U.S. claims the Chinese Communist Party is attempting to destroy the Uyghur people and their culture through mass surveillance, mass imprisonment, forced sterilization, forced intermarriage with non-Uyghurs and other measures.

The U.S. has claimed that the mass imprisonment program includes forced labor in factories and on farms.

The Chinese government has angrily denied the charges of genocide, but the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Lithuania, as well as organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, have reached similar conclusions to the U.S. government.

Guidance needed

The UFLPA takes the unusual step of treating all goods with a connection to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China as the product of forced labor unless the importer can provide “clear and convincing evidence” that they are not.

The U.S. has provided some instructions to importers about how to go about providing the evidence the law requires. On June 13, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service (CBP) issued a 17-page document called “Operational Guidance for Importers” that provides general guidelines

for all goods and specific guidelines for cotton, tomatoes and polysilicon used in solar panels, all of which are widely produced in Xinjiang.

However, that leaves a large number of importers of other goods without specific guidance on the kind of evidence the government would require them to present in order to avoid having their goods seized. Another piece of guidance from the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF) is expected to be released Tuesday, the same day that enforcement begins.

In a statement provided to VOA, U.S.-China Business Council President Craig Allen said the late release of the FLETF plan means “companies will find out what they have to comply with the day that they have to comply.”

He added, “We are expecting implementation to be messy. CBP has had to scramble to implement a complex piece of legislation in only six months. They have released limited information beforehand, and companies won’t know many of the details of what they must comply with until the date they must comply. This will create significant uncertainty, further snarl already stressed supply chains and contribute to inflation.”

Compliance challenges differ

Attorney Richard A. Mojica, who leads the customs practice at law firm Miller & Chevalier in Washington, told VOA that getting up to speed on UFLPA compliance will be more difficult for some businesses than others.

“It may be easier for a solar company to say, ‘Clearly Customs is concerned about polysilicon, so we need to show progress around polysilicon,’” he said.

However, Mojica, a former CBP headquarters attorney, said things will be much less simple for an automaker with hundreds of suppliers.

“The company doesn’t really know where to start,” he said. “And it’s trying to find a way to prioritize and conduct due diligence in a way that is good enough, without knowing exactly what ‘good enough’ looks like.”

In every case, though, companies should expect UFLPA compliance to be an ongoing task

“It’s going to require constant maintenance, because the (bill of materials) of a particular product can change at any given time,” Mojica said. Suppliers, he added, also frequently change. “So, the risk analysis changes, and this is ... something you have to be monitoring all the time.”

China reacts

China has repeatedly warned the U.S. of negative consequences if UFLPA is enforced, something Chinese embassy spokesperson Liu Pengyu reiterated in a statement emailed to VOA.

“The so-called allegations of forced labor in Xinjiang are nothing but vicious lies concocted by anti-China forces,” he said, accusing the U.S. of working to undermine China’s economic development.

“The U.S. acts totally violate market principles and commercial ethics,” he said. “Such moves will only undermine the stability of global industrial and supply chains, disrupt international trade order and hurt the U.S.’s own interests and credibility.”

VOA’s Asim Kashgarian contributed to this report.



LAWYERS CALL ON INTL COURT TO INVESTIGATE UYGHUR TREATMENT

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Lawyers on Monday renewed calls for the International Criminal Court to open an investigation into China's treatment of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim groups in China's Xinjiang region as they presented a dossier of evidence to prosecutors.

Activists and lawyers accuse Beijing of crimes against humanity and genocide against the groups. China's ruling Communist Party has vehemently denied all reports of human rights violations and genocide in Xinjiang.

Monday's filing is the latest attempt to have the global court open an investigation into widespread allegations of abuse against Uyghurs by Chinese authorities.

The group that submitted the evidence said it includes testimony from a witness who escaped from a camp in 2018 and alleges that he and others were tortured and forced to undergo medical procedures including "being injected with unknown substances."

The latest dossier also seeks to support their assertion that ICC prosecutors have jurisdiction despite China not being a

member of the court by arguing that Uyghurs and others are being rounded up on the territory of an ICC member state and transferred to China.

That assertion seeks to use a precedent set when the court's judges ruled that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate abuses against Myanmar's Rohingya minority, despite Myanmar not being a member of the court, because thousands of Rohingyas were forced to flee to Bangladesh, which is an ICC member.

British lawyer Rodney Dixon said evidence presented to the court's prosecutor's office uncovers "a pervasive plan to round up Uyghurs in neighboring countries, including an ICC member State, and elsewhere, to force them back into China."

"The ICC has jurisdiction over these crimes that commence on ICC territory and continue into China, and is urged to act immediately to open an investigation," the group filing the dossier Monday said in a statement.

The filing comes a year after lawyers called on the ICC to open an investigation.

From AP NEWS



CHINA'S AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA XIAO QIAN HECKLED, CALLED 'REPRESENTATIVE OF A GENOCIDAL DICTATORSHIP'

China's newly appointed ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian faced heckling as he gave a speech at a local university in Sydney. Qian, who took up the role in January, was speaking about the future of frosty relations between China and Australia when multiple protestors interrupted him. The protestors wielded signs demanding freedom for Tibet and Hong Kong, while others criticised China's treatment of the Uyghur people as well as the university for inviting a "representative of a genocidal dictatorship."

Faced with the heckling the ambassador said: "People who are coming again and again to interrupt the process, that's not expression of freedom of speech... this should not be welcomed."

The university "welcomes freedom of speech on campus... that right, however, does not extend to speaking over the top of invited guests," said James Laurensen, head of the Australia-China Relations Institute, which had invited Xiao to the campus.

A placard that read "Free Tibet, Free East

Turkistan" was snatched from the hands of one of the protestors. Another protestor was escorted out by security while yelling "The University of Technology cannot platform a representative of a genocidal dictatorship."

Since Canberra cracked down on foreign involvement and demanded a probe into the causes of COVID-19, and Beijing retaliated with broad economic restrictions, China and Australia have been at odds.

Attempts to placate are being made, however. The first ministerial meeting between the two countries in three years took place in recent weeks when Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles met with his Chinese counterpart outside of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

In his speech, Xiao asserted that the centre-left Labor party's victory in Australia's May elections had given the two nations' ties an "opportunity of possible improvement."

Edited By: Moohita Kaur Garg



UYGHUR-HERITAGE CANDIDATE URGES JAPAN TO EMBRACE DIVERSITY

Arfiya Eri is a young, female, multilingual former United Nations official, all of which would already help her stand out as a Japanese political candidate, but she is also of Uyghur heritage.

While her campaign is not centered around her ethnic background, it is attracting attention -- positive and negative -- in a country where politics is still a largely homogenous affair.

Ethnic Uyghurs generally hail from China's Xinjiang province, where the government is accused of detaining more than one million of them and other Muslim minorities in a years-long crackdown that rights groups say includes widespread "crimes against humanity".

Eri, 33, is running for a seat in the Diet's upper house with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, on a platform that emphasizes bread-and-butter issues and her identity as a proud Japanese citizen.

As the first person of Uyghur origin to run as a major party candidate in Japan, Eri acknowledges her campaign is viewed by some through the prism of her family history.

"Instead of my vision and policies as a Japanese politician, people ask me about the Uyghur issue because of my ethnic background," she told AFP. "I can understand why this happens, but it feels a bit strange."

That does not mean, however, that diversity is not a concern for a woman who speaks seven languages and was educated between Japan, China and the United States.

In fact, it helped inspire her to run, after she watched an election in her native Fukuoka region in southern Japan and observed the uniformity of the candidates.

"I see more and more people like myself visibly represented in Japan, with names

that are not traditionally Japanese,” said Eri, whose family name is sometimes mistaken for her first name.

“Women are also more visibly active and successful... But when you look at the world of politics, that diversity is still not being represented, it’s not reflected.”

The July 10 election will see more than 500 candidates running for half of the 248-seat upper house, known as the House of Councillors.

The LDP is expected to win, though Eri’s chances will be partly dictated by where she is eventually placed on the party list.

She plans to campaign for better work-life balance, gender equality and amending the pacifist constitution, which bars the use of force to settle international disputes and is interpreted by some as prohibiting the country from having any military force.

Eri endorses the LDP’s mainstream conservative politics, and insists Japan must “stand firm on our national security”.

Eri also declines to use the name Xinjiang for China’s Uyghur-majority region, and said her familiarity with alleged human rights abuses has shaped her views.

The candidate described “human rights violations at an unspeakable scale in places like the Uyghur region”, and said she believes even a minor rights violation “opens the door” to worse abuses.

Eri’s family moved from Japan to China when she was a teenager, after her father, an engineer, was transferred by his employer.



She graduated from an American international school before studying in the United States, and joined the United Nations in 2016 after a stint at the Bank of Japan.

Her international resume sets her apart from many election candidates, but “rather than my actual experiences and expertise or who I really am, my background has drawn more attention”.

Much of that has been positive, but there has also been online vitriol questioning Eri’s identity, her trustworthiness and even her patriotism.

Candidates like Eri have little to gain from putting their diversity front and centre in mostly mono-ethnic Japan, said Tomoaki Iwai, professor emeritus of Japanese politics at Nihon University.

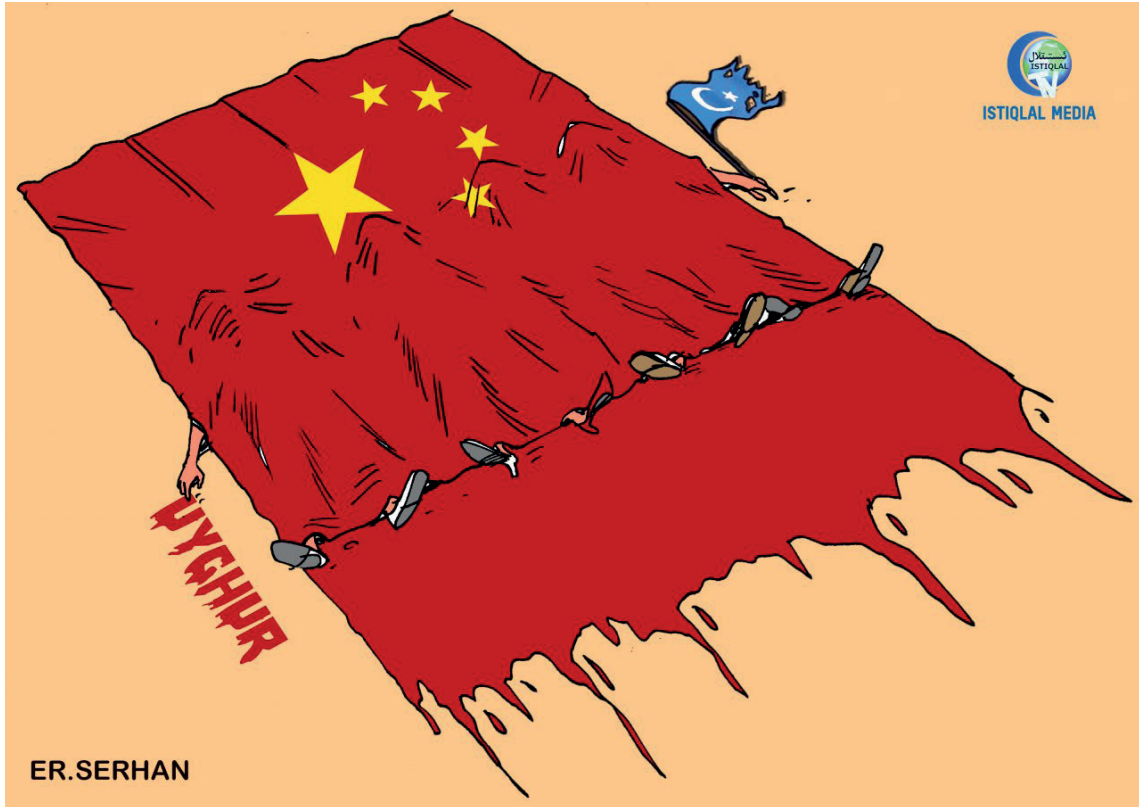
They “can face an adverse voter reaction if they push their ethnicity too much”, he told AFP.

Things are beginning to change, Iwai said, particularly in urban areas, but the pace is gradual.

Eri said Japan must “build a country that embraces diversity”, though she admitted there is a long way to go, including in the LDP.

“I believe that this is vital for the future of Japan,” she said.

By Hiroshi HIYAMA



The Chinese regime has been ignoring global criticism and continuing its genocide crime in East Turkistan.

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Editorial Board East Turkistan Press And Media Association

Publication Type Monthly Journal

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