

Xinjiang

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Western Media Narratives
Concerning the Region & the Uyghur People (2017-2022)

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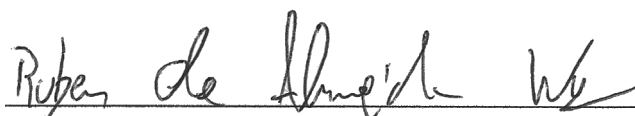
DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN
JOURNALISM

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December 2022

Anti-Plagiarism Declaration

I, Ruben de Almeida Wu, hereby declare on my honour that this dissertation, being an integral part of the conditions required to obtain the Master's degree in Journalism at the School of Communication and Media Studies (Lisbon Polytechnic Institute), is my original work, except when there is a clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others. Furthermore, I declare that this work has never been submitted to any other higher education institutions, being aware that plagiarism is a breach of ethics and that it may lead to the nullification of this work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ruben de Almeida Wu", is written over a horizontal line.

Ruben de Almeida Wu

Dedication

I am grateful for all the people I came across on my academic journey.

The teachers who passionately shared their knowledge and always supported students in their learning.

My fellow student colleagues, who cooperated in projects and tasks with incredible teamwork and dedication.

My coordinator, Prof. Fernanda Bonacho, who always stood by me and remained patient even in my lowest and darkest days.

Last but not least, I dedicate my efforts during the Master's degree to my dear mother Célia, my grandparents Maria Teresa and Manuel, and Diky. For their support, resilience, love, and ability to make me smile.

We keep moving forward. Always.

Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This analysis seeks to examine the journalistic narrative weaved by media outlets like *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* that focuses on the ethnic concerns surrounding the Chinese Government against the Uyghur people, native to the region of Xinjiang. There seems to be a strong bias in the Western media coverage of this subject, which appears to align itself with western state interests. Examples of this can be equally found in articles made by the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) and the *Cable News Network* (CNN), and the similar sources they cite (Sun, 2019).

An attempt will be made to draw a parallel between this western narrative and U.S. geopolitical interests policies, and how often they align. There appear to be some similarities with the grave accusations on China's de-radicalisation strategy in the region and the accusations towards Iraq and their alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The idea that the latter was a narrative pushed by the U.S. media to manufacture consent towards war in the Middle East has been thoroughly examined and confirmed by other investigators (Chomsky & Herman, 2011). Today, the focus has now shifted towards China as the U.S. fears to lose its own influence on Asia (Pilger, 2020).

The Belt and Road Initiative, a sort of modernisation of the Silk Road, would greatly increase China's sphere of influence (Zhou, 2019), of which Xinjiang is an important node for international connection. But much like the controversial Nord Stream 2 Pipeline linking Russia to Europe, they are apparent threats to the U. S. hegemony. The effects of Western media narratives over Iraq's alleged WMD resulted in the destruction of homes and the death of innocents at the hands of the United States and its allies. By manufacturing consent, war was seen as enticing, virtuous even (Jaffer, 2021). The danger of similar media narratives in the

present day is of great concern to me, which is why I decided to write about this subject.

Another reason why I chose to investigate this subject was to understand the reasoning behind these claims and their apparent lack of consistency in the Western media narrative, specifically the biased nature of these allegations which range from “concentration camps”, to “forced labour” and even “genocide”. China’s treatment of the Uyghur minority is not a simple one-sided issue, and as such, should not be covered so matter-of-factly by journalistic discourse in Western media (Hadjab, & Filali, 2021). Sources that go against this narrative are often disregarded as being ‘state-affiliated’ to China, simply because their arguments favour it (Mozur, Zhong, Krolik & Aufrichti, 2021). Journalism should seek the truth of the matter from both sides, without waving aside valid opposing testimonies and reporting.

One must question *cui bono* – who benefits from these media narratives: the media outlets that profit from a narrative that cultivates fear and ends up promoting intolerance against the other (Seneviratne & Muppidi, 2021), or the state government which seeks to maintain their influence and expand its geopolitical ambitions.

Keywords: Media Narratives, Discourse Analysis, Geopolitics, Xinjiang, Uyghurs, Manufacturing Consent.

RESUMO

Esta análise procura examinar a narrativa jornalística tecida por meios de comunicação como o *The Washington Post* e o *The New York Times* que se centra nas preocupações étnicas em torno do Governo chinês contra o povo uigure, nativo da região de Xinjiang. Parece haver um forte enviesamento na cobertura mediática ocidental deste assunto que parece alinhar-se com os interesses de governos ocidentais. Exemplos disso também se encontram em artigos partilhados pela *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) e pela *Cable News Network* (CNN), e as fontes semelhantes que citam (Sun, 2019).

Tentaremos em traçar um paralelo entre esta narrativa ocidental e os interesses geopolíticos dos EUA, e a frequência com que se alinham. Parecem existir algumas semelhanças com as graves acusações contra a China e a sua estratégia de desradicalização em Xinjiang e a alegada posse de Armas de Destruição Maciça do Iraque. A ideia de que esta última foi uma narrativa impulsionada pelos meios de comunicação norte-americanos para “manufaturar consentimento” para a guerra no Médio Oriente foi cuidadosamente examinada e confirmada por outros investigadores (Chomsky & Herman, 2011). Hoje, o foco mudou para a China, no momento em que os EUA receiam perder a sua própria influência na Ásia (Pilger, 2020).

A Iniciativa *Belt and Road*, da qual Xinjiang é um importante nó internacional, é uma via económica que é vista como uma nova “rota da seda” e que aumentaria consideravelmente a esfera de influência da China (Zhou, 2019). Mas tal como o Gasoduto *Nord Stream 2*, é uma aparente ameaça para os Estados Unidos. As consequências de uma narrativa mediática bem sucedida que vai de encontro com os planos dos Estados Unidos é bem exemplificado no contexto da Guerra no Iraque, e da qual resultou um rasto de destruição e morte de inocentes devido às ações dos Estados Unidos e dos seus aliados.

Com o “consentimento manufaturado” do povo, a guerra foi vista como sedutora, e até virtuosa (Jaffer, 2021). O perigo de narrativas mediáticas semelhantes nos dias de hoje é para mim de grande preocupação, e foi por isso que decidi analisar este assunto.

Uma das outras razões pelas quais decidi investigar os discursos críticos dos meios de comunicação ocidentais sobre Xinjiang é a aparente falta de coerência e a natureza duvidosa destas alegações, desde campos de concentração, a trabalho forçado e até genocídio. O contexto da região e a estratégia de desradicalização não é uma questão simples e, como tal, deve ser abordada com cautela no discurso jornalístico dos meios de comunicação ocidentais (Hadjab, & Filali, 2021). Fontes que vão contra esta narrativa são muitas vezes ignoradas como sendo filiadas ao Estado chinês, simplesmente porque os seus argumentos a favorecem (Mozur, Zhong, Krolík & Aufrichti, 2021). O jornalismo deve procurar a verdade da questão de ambos os lados, sem ignorar testemunhos legítimos opostos.

É preciso questionar *cui bono* – quem beneficia destas narrativas mediáticas: os meios de comunicação que lucram com uma narrativa que cultiva o medo e acaba por promover a intolerância contra “o Outro” (Seneviratne & Muppidi, 2021), ou governos como os EUA que procuram manter a sua influência e expandir as suas ambições geopolíticas.

Palavras-chave: Narrativas mediáticas, Análise de discurso, Geopolítica, Xinjiang, Uigures, Consentimento manufaturado.

1. Introduction

The Fourth Estate – a term thought to have originated from Edmund Burke in 1787, is used to describe the news media circle as an addition to the three traditional state powers: the executive, the legislative and the judicial systems (Schultz, 2003).

Perhaps an accurate description due to the instrumental role of journalism in our society. By informing the common citizen to the everyday events that occur in our world, we remain connected in our globalised world, less ignorant to the fortunes and plights that are around us. Some believe that the beginning of the end of the US-Vietnam War begun in the television screens of North-Americans, being one of the first televised wars at the time (Mandelbaum, 1982). Such is the influence of media.

War, like many other things, can be an abstract concept for those who live their everyday lives only learning about it in books or films. It would be naive to think that perceiving the brutality of war in their own home wouldn't have the same kind of impact.

At the same time, history has also shown how the potential of media platforms could be harnessed for geopolitical reasons. Whether knowingly or not, the mainstream media played a pivotal role in normalising the US-Iraq War, thus supporting the foreign policy of the United States (Chomsky & Herman, 2011). American foreign policy has historically been defined by interference in the domestic affairs of other countries (Sirvent & Haiphong, 2019).

This is further exemplified by its extensive history of interference during and after the Cold War, which range from the invasion of Iraq through Afghanistan and Somalia. America has, in fact, always taken a proactive stance in foreign affairs. Whatever the motivations, various administrations have shown some level of willingness to interfere in other countries. Such was the case of the Iraq War,

which toppled Saddam Hussein's regime under the "shield" of humanitarianism (Hadjab & Filali, 2021).

Douglas Kellner, an American academic, once asserted that "In the US and much of the western world, the corporate media have followed the Bush administration in demonising bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and terrorism, while celebrating US military interventions" (Kellner, 2004).

The same could be said of the main subject of this dissertation, that being the apparent bias in Western mainstream media coverage of the Uyghurs in the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. According to the Chinese media, the region was subject to a slew of state-imposed restrictions as a way to combat radicalisation in the area (*Xinjiang Daily*, 2014).

In opposition, Western media in general believes this minority is being kept in concentration camps where they are abused, or as a way to ethnically cleanse them (Eve, 2018). Many of these accusations of forced labour or outright genocide have been refuted by China, which asserted that the Uyghurs enjoy the same freedoms as other Chinese citizens (*Xinhua*, 2017).

This calls into question the United States apparent duplicity approach towards human and Muslim rights. After September 11th 2001, the United States' media coverage and the government's foreign policy ensured that Islam and Muslims were seen as threats to their existence, and thus, were marginalised (Hadjab & Filali, 2021).

Violent actions were taken against Muslim populations in the Middle-East in the name of freedom. And yet, the United States portrays itself as righteous and as a bastion of democracy, defending the rights of Muslim minorities in China. This double standard is very telling, as it seems to align with their geopolitical goals.

Today, China is uncritically represented by several American media outlets as a nation that practices genocide against its own people in much the same way that

Middle-Eastern countries were portrayed as threats such as Iraq, a country accused of being a rogue state in possession of WMD (Hadjab & Filali, 2021).

2. Methodology

This dissertation will analyse the journalistic discourse of some Western media, between 2017 and 2022, with the objective of determining if parallels between the U.S. geopolitical agenda and Western media narratives coincide on the matter of the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang's de-radicalisation measures.

It will delve on Western media platforms such as *The New York Times* (NYT), *The Washington Post* (WaPo), the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) and *Reuters*, with an additional focus on the content produced by NGOs such as the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED), and the *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* (ASPI), as well as their links.

A thorough critical discourse analysis of some of the most relevant articles on this subject, which show up as some of the very first results in a search engine such as *Google*, and a comparison with opposite Western sources and Chinese-based ones is vital to recognise their characteristics: how the language is used and differs, does it rely on neutral or hostile testimonies, which narrative techniques are used to lead the audience, what kind of sources are used, and what exactly it chooses to cover and omit.

This methodology has the objective of proving this hypothesis: On the subject of Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang, Western media has a bias towards spreading narratives that are U.S. underwritten rather than independent journalistic accounts.

3. Historical Context of Xinjiang

Geographically, Xinjiang may be divided into two primary areas: Dzungaria in the north and the low-lying Tarim Basin in the south. The latter is where the Uyghurs have been traditionally present whereas in other areas it is considerably more cosmopolitan, with larger pockets of Kazakh, Hui and Han groups present (Perdue, 2010).

For a very long time, many Chinese emperors had a vital interest in what is now Xinjiang. The first dynasty to create a protectorate in Xinjiang was the Han Dynasty. The Tang would go a step farther and provide military protection in areas as far away as what is now Uzbekistan. Through Xinjiang, Buddhism was introduced to China, establishing influential Buddhist centres of study throughout the early history of this area (Perdue, 2010).

Whilst trade and the maintenance of the Silk Road appear to be the primary reasons for this interest, it would also play a crucial role in the defence of China from nomadic horde raids. Xinjiang's remoteness from Beijing and consequent slack governance lead to many periods of unrest, but nevertheless the Qing Dynasty would maintain steady authority over the region until they were overthrown by the Republic of China and later reunited with Communist Party of China, as they still held a claim over these lands (Perdue, 2010).

4. Dissidence & Terrorism in China

The Tiananmen June 4th Protests of 1989, which was sparked by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its demise on December 26, 1991, as well as difficulties from market reform and Gorbachev's perestroika, caused a generational crisis in China. It was a turning point in where a large number of disillusioned students and upwardly mobile young people fled the country and took up residence in Western countries, such as the United States. Some of them

are given lavish attention and given platforms as "dissidents" (Qiao Collective, 2022).

Erkin Alptekin, Rushan Abbas, Dolkun Isa, Rebiya Kadeer, Omer Kanat, and Nury Turkel are some of the most well-known Uyghur diaspora activists that are frequently referenced in the context of Xinjiang's Human Rights Violations. All of these left China during or after 1989, except for Alptekin and Kanat who had left earlier (1949 and 1971 respectively) (Qiao Collective, 2022).

The Baren Township Conflict (April, 1990) is described as the first terrorist act in a period that lasted until 2016 and during which terrorism was seen as a serious issue in Xinjiang. Additionally, this is the first terrorist attack that China has linked to the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (*Xinhua*, 2019).

China, along with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and the United States would later make a formal request to the United Nations to designate the ETIM as an official terrorist group in 2002. In the UN's own words:

"The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement is an organization that includes components in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and the Xinjiang Province of China. The ETIM's aim is the establishment of a fundamentalist Muslim state to be called "East Turkistan." To that end, from 1990 to 2001 elements of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement have reportedly committed over 200 acts of terrorism, resulting in at least 162 deaths and over 440 injuries." (United Nations Press Statement, 2002)

This proves how the group had connections with other terrorist groups and was active in regions even outside Xinjiang, to the point that the UN acknowledged their presence and danger.

From Baren Township Conflict in 1990, there were several other terrorist attack up to recent years. Among the most violent were the Urumqi Riots in 2009 (197 killed & 1700 wounded) (Xiaoxun, et al., 2009), the 2013 Tiananmen Attack (5

killed & 40 wounded) (*Xinhua*, 2013), the Kunming Train Station Attack (31 killed & 141 wounded) and the Urumqi Attack (39 killed & 94 injured), both in 2014 (*Xinhua*, 2014). In light of the escalation of violence along the years, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region released a statement titled "Striking Hard Against Terrorist Activities Within the Confined of the Law" (*Xinjiang Daily*, 2014), which sought to crackdown on terrorist activities and assure the safety of its citizens through a series of rules and prohibitions.

5. Xinjiang's De-Radicalization Program

China started extensive de-radicalization and economic development initiatives in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the middle of the 2010s. The province, which takes up 17% of China's area and has 65% ethnic minorities as its population, was previously little known to casual Western observers. Fewer yet could discuss the autonomous region's intricate political, cultural, and religious past as well as the nuanced effects of its long history as a crossroads for many peoples (Qiao Collective, 2022)

The "Anti-Terrorism Law," the first of its type in China, was passed by the 12th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in 2015. (*Xinhua*, 2015) This law was later adapted to the environment and circumstances of Xinjiang in July 2016 (Qiao Collective, 2022).

By 2017, the "Xinjiang De-Radicalization Regulations" approved by the National People's Congress were formally adopted in the region. This document offered a general guideline to fight off extremism, first by explaining how this phenomenon manifests and secondly the manner in which the Autonomous Region would act in order to fight it.

Many of the articles appear to be reasonable attempts to encourage integration. Among these in the Xinjiang De-Radicalization Regulations:

Article 10 - “De-extremification should accurately grasp the boundaries between ethnic customs, normal religious activities, illegal religious activities and extremism, distinguish their nature, and implement policies by category, insist on uniting and educating the majority, and isolate the very few.”

Article 11 - “De-extremification should adhere to systematic governance, comprehensive policies, and both symptoms and root causes, and should be closely integrated with the improvement of people's livelihood, poverty alleviation, and the establishment of ethnic unity and progress, so as to achieve mutual promotion.”

Article 13 - “De-extremification should carry out large-scale publicity, large-scale study, and large-scale discussion, use modern scientific and cultural knowledge to educate the masses to uphold science and civilization, use legal knowledge to educate the masses to study the law and abide by the law, use religious faith to clear the source, refute heresy and fallacy, and guide religion. The masses establish righteous beliefs and conduct themselves, and consciously resist extremism.”

Article 14 - “To de-extremify, we should do a good job in the transformation of education, and implement the combination of individual education and centralized education, the combination of legal education and assistance and education activities, the combination of ideological education, psychological counselling, behaviour correction and skills training, and the combination of education transformation and humanistic care. Combined, enhance the effectiveness of education transformation.”

The apparent lack of clarity and vagueness in the document are justifiable causes for concern, as are some of the articles that appear to be rather prohibitive. For instance, Article 9 which seeks to showcase general manifestations of extremism:

Article 9 - “Affected by extremism, the following speeches and behaviours are extremism and are prohibited:

(...)

(7) Those who themselves or force others to wear burqas or extremism symbols;

(8) Those who use abnormal beards or names to play up religious fanaticism;” (*Xinjiang People’s Congress, 2019*).

In June of the same year, the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China released a document titled “Human Rights in Xinjiang – Development and Progress” (*Xinhua, 2017*). In this, it becomes apparent that the government is attempting to reassure the citizens of the region that they are committed to combat extremism and protect their political, civil, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

In the fifth chapter focused on the Cultural Rights of the citizens of Xinjiang, it reads:

“Xinjiang is committed to providing equal access to basic public cultural services, to using the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities, and to protecting cultural heritage, thereby safeguarding the citizens’ cultural rights.”

(...)

“Spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities are extensively used in such areas as judicature, administration, education, press & publishing, radio & television, the Internet and social public affairs. Xinjiang now has 13 publishing houses publishing books, audio and video products, and e-publications in six languages – Uygur, Han Chinese, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Mongolian and Xibe. Xinjiang publishes 110 newspapers, including 52 in ethnic minority languages, and 200 periodicals, including 120 in ethnic minority languages. “

The official provincial-level newspaper, Xinjiang Daily, is published in four languages – Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazakh and Mongolian – making this outlet one of the most accessible to minorities throughout China (*Xinhua*, 2017). Qapqal News is the world’s only newspaper published in the Xibe language. Xinjiang People’s Broadcasting Station now provides 15 radio channels in five languages – Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazakh, Mongolian and Kirghiz. Xinjiang TV provides 12 TV channels in four languages – Uyghur, Han Chinese, Kazakh and Kirghiz; it is, therefore the provincial-level TV station with the most channels and broadcasts in different languages throughout the country” (*Xinhua*, 2017).

In what appears to be a response to the international media coverage of these measures, the Thirteenth Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region would announce in October 2018 an amendment (*Cyber Law Outpost*, 2018) of the “Xinjiang De-Radicalization Regulations”, which added more articles and clarified how vocational education was a vital part for de-radicalization.

It is relevant to note that re-education facilities don’t appear to be isolated to Xinjiang, but rather, it is a measure often adopted across all of China. The PRC’s Ministry of Education in the 2015 National Statistical Communiqué specifies this in the “Adult Training and literacy education”:

“There were 7,258,400 students nationwide who received various types of non-academic higher education, and 9,075,400 who had graduated (completed) that year; 45,615,300 students received various non-academic secondary education, and 49,090,700 who had completed (completed) that year. There were 99,000 vocational and technical training institutions nationwide, a decrease of 6,100 over the previous year; 473,000 faculty members; 284,200 full-time teachers.

There are 14,800 adult primary schools nationwide, with 948,200 students and 29,900 faculty members, including 15,700 full-time teachers; 1,071 adult junior

high schools with 337,000 students and 4,414 faculty members, including 3,692 full-time teachers.

A total of 447,500 illiterate people were eliminated across the country, an increase of 6,000 over the previous year; another 474,800 were participating in literacy studies, an increase of 19,300 over the previous year. There were 22,200 teaching staff in literacy education, a decrease of 3,956 over the previous year; and 10,700 full-time teachers, a decrease of 136 over the previous year.” (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2016).

6. The Chinese media coverage

It was August 30th 2016 when the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan was the stage of a terrorist bombing. This was one of many attacks against Chinese targets along the years that are attributed to the Turkistan Islamic Party/TIP (previously called East Turkistan Islamic Movement/ETIM). As mentioned before, from at least 1990, Xinjiang has been a hotbed to violent attacks with roots in Muslim extremism (*Qiao Collective*, 2022).

Chinese media platforms have since documented these events and often shared the perspectives of the citizens regarding the situation and the need to improve it. At the same time, they have questioned why Western narratives are incoherent in the coverage of Human Rights Violations and their sources, with articles such as “Why are western media silent on China’s documentaries on Xinjiang?” (Tong, 2019), which asks why the violence and terrorism committed against people in Xinjiang and elsewhere have received little attention from Western voices who profess to defend human rights, or “Joint Letter to Mike Pompeo, From Scholars and Religious Personnel in Xinjiang” (*Tianshan Net*, 2019), which contains a joint statement from a hundred academics and religious leaders in Xinjiang condemning the U.S. and the Secretary of State Pompeo’s stance. Next to these articles, of course, are others more which show a different perspective by Chinese citizens.

To tackle extremist movements present in southern Xinjiang, the Chinese government “established education and training institutes” there, by equipping them with practical skills for everyday work and the teaching of the Chinese language and law, in order to better integrate them in Chinese society (*Qiao Collective, 2022*).

According to Chinese media, these facilities were meant to de-radicalize Chinese nationals involved in terrorism, whether through membership in the East Turkestan Independence Movement (removed from the U.S. terrorist list in 2020) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS). It is also significant to highlight that reporting and statistics from the Western narrative often do not distinguish between broad vocational education in Xinjiang—which is a component of measures to reduce poverty in China overall—and vocational education as part of focused de-radicalization initiatives (*Qiao Collective, 2022*).

Many international dignitaries (Xie & Bai, 2019) and foreign journalists (*Xinhua, 2019*) have visited these “re-education camps” and were even invited by the Chinese government. Despite the Western media coverage campaign to condemn the country’s efforts to combat radicalism in Xinjiang, it has failed to persuade a great majority of Muslim nations in denouncing these camps in the same way Western countries have (*Qiao Collective, 2022*).

Such was the case in December 2018 when Foreign Dignitaries from 12 nations such as India, Indonesia, Thailand and Kazakhstan visited the region. (*Xinhua, 2019*) Mumtaz Baloch, the ambassador for Pakistan, shared her experience with *The News International*:

“Our visit reinforced my perceptions about this region that it has a multicultural and multi-ethnic identity, that it is critical for the development of the western regions of China and that it is an important node for regional connectivity under the Belt and Road initiative.”

(...)

“I did not find any instance of forced labor or cultural and religious repression. The imams we met at the mosques and the students and teachers at the Xinjiang Islamic Institute told us that they enjoy freedom in practicing Islam and that the Chinese government extends support for maintenance of mosques all over Xinjiang. I learned that there are over 30,000 mosques all over Xinjiang that form part of the religious life of the people there” (*Associated Press of Pakistan*, 2019). Similar visits from journalists and different international delegations (including the European Union) would occur throughout 2019 (*Qiao Collective*, 2022).

7. The International Response

It appears that a number of influential Western media outlets (e.g. *The New York Times*, *BBC*, *Reuters*) and Western government representatives (e.g. the U.S., the U.K., Australia, France, Germany) scrutinized Chinese government behaviour in Xinjiang, relying solely on a number of think tank publications (e.g. the *National Endowment for Democracy*, the *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, *Radio Free Asia*, and *Human Rights Watch*) and anonymous eyewitness accounts (e.g. HRW’s Xinjiang’s 2018 report) to make escalating accusations of forced labour, slavery, and eventually genocide.

Though the level of extremist violence in Xinjiang had decreased significantly, tensions between the United States and China increased. China was cited as a strategic danger to American dominance in the Trump Administration's first National Security Strategy paper, which sought to justify the trade against the PRC and pave the way towards ideological and diplomatic conflicts (*National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2017).

As part of a (seemingly) concerted effort to isolate China on the global stage, the U.S.A. brought up concerns regarding Xinjiang in international meetings and

federal legislation. For instance, the “2017 Report on International Religious Freedom: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)”, brings attention to the fact that:

“In Xinjiang human rights groups and others reported hundreds of thousands of Uighur Muslims were forcibly sent to re-education camps, and extensive and invasive security and surveillance practices were instituted. According to Human Rights Watch, restrictions on religious dress and expression came into effect in April along with restrictions on giving children names with religious connotations. Authorities increasingly restricted travel for religious purposes, and continued to bar Uighur children from participating in religious activities. Radio Free Asia reported that officials stayed with some families for up to 15 days during Ramadan to ensure they did not fast or pray” (*U.S. Department of State, 2017*).

Around early August 2018, China started receiving harsh criticism from Western sources for their strategy in fighting Muslim radicalism. In particular, Gay McDougall, a U.S. member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), brought up “credible reports” which suggested that millions of Uyghur Muslim minorities were being held in “internment camps” during a routine assessment of China’s compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, but no sources were cited to back up these claims (OHCHR, 2018).

At the UN Human Rights Council in August 18th, McDougall did not cite any sources or reports in support of her claim. However, one study (CHRD, 2018) that the Equal Rights Initiative and the Chinese Human Rights Defenders filed to the CERD that McDougall may have used as evidence for her argument. One can uncover flawed presumptions in this paper: interviews with 8 people (Figure 3) in the Kashgar county led to the “millions” figures for instance, courtesy of a report by Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD, 2018). The interviewees made an educated guess as to how many individuals attended the schools, and after

calculating and averaging these numbers, the NGO applied this extrapolation to the whole region of Xinjiang. By this logic, all citizens who attended these facilities had been incarcerated, based on a very small number of anonymous sources whose legitimacy is unknown.

On the other hand, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an international group with 57 members, 53 of which are Muslim-majority nations and with delegations in the United Nations and the European Union, did not condemn these facilities and in fact approved a motion (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2019) in support of China's strategy. In Abu Dhabi, March 2nd 2019, the OIC stated that "commends the efforts of the People's Republic of China in providing care to its Muslim residents."

This resolution was most likely based on the OIC's week-long visit to the region in January 2019. Four months later in the same year, 37 countries (e.g. Syria, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) within the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) finished with a statement also praising China's stance (Zaobao, 2019).

This happened just days after twenty-two countries had denounced it. Among the countries who had done so, none have Muslim-majorities and some had participated in military actions (e.g. Australia, France, UK) against Muslim nations (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen) during the 21st century.

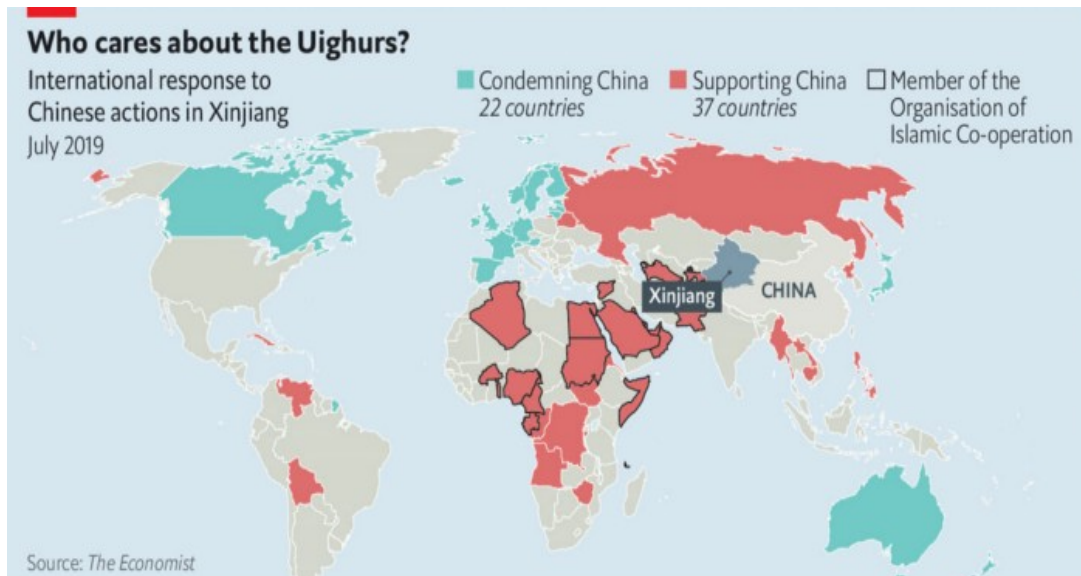


Figure 1. Map of the International Response to the Chinese De-Radicalisation Strategy. (*The Economist*, 2019)

On October 29th 2019, the United Nations General Assembly held a meeting in which a joint statement was issued on behalf of 23 nations to denounce China’s methods once more. In response, 30 other nations released an opposing statement supporting the country. This signalled an increase of support towards China, with more countries in support of it rather than against (*China Daily*, 2019).

“China has undertaken a series of counterterrorism and de-radicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers. (...) The fundamental human rights of people of all ethnic groups there are safeguarded. (...) We express our firm opposition to relevant countries' practice of politicizing human rights issues, by naming and shaming, and publicly exerting pressures on other countries” (*China Daily*, 2019).

By taking into account the PRC's policy toward ethnic and religious minorities, as well as first-hand accounts of delegations from nations and organizations like Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and even the World Bank that visited Xinjiang, neither genocide nor slavery are accurate descriptions of the situation there.

“In line with standard practice, immediately after receiving a series of serious allegations in August 2019 in connection with the Xinjiang Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project, the Bank launched a fact-finding review, and World Bank senior managers travelled to Xinjiang to gather information directly. After receiving the allegations, no disbursements were made on the project. The team conducted a thorough review of project documents, engaged in discussions with project staff, and visited schools directly financed by the project, as well as their partner schools that were the subject of allegations. The review did not substantiate the allegations” (*World Bank*, 2019).

The fact that the Human Rights violation claims have risen in a time of ever-increasing Western hostility towards the PRC (which parallels the Red Scare and McCarthyism) is not an apparent coincidence, but rather an attempt to challenge Western narratives on the East. Instead, the main purpose of these accusations appears to be support for war, intervention, and confrontation with China through a form of “manufactured consent.” Likewise, the countries in support of China’s actions seem motivated to challenge Western narratives on the East.

Between 2019 and 2020, in two separate meetings of the UN Human Rights Council, letters denouncing Chinese actions in Xinjiang were rejected by votes of 22 to 50 and 27 to 46, respectively. 64 countries signed a joint statement supporting China's stance, however no joint statements criticizing China's Xinjiang practices were issued during the 46th Human Rights Council Session in March 2021 (Qiao Collective, 2022).

Some nations that have battled against extremism in their own countries and support Chinese actions in Xinjiang include Iraq, Palestine, and Pakistan. The vast contrast between the Global South's and the U.S. bloc's perspectives on Xinjiang suggests that Western critiques of the province are mostly political in character.

8. The Western media Coverage

Just two months after the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China published "Human Rights in Xinjiang – Development and Progress" (June 2017), the World Uyghur Congress started publishing about "internment camps" and how they were being used to persecute Uyghurs. They identified April and May as the initial months of Uyghur people' detention (WYC, 2017). Other international groups followed suit, with the Human Rights Watch (HRW) also claiming in September 10th 2017, that thousands of prisoners were being held there (HRW, 2017).

In January 2018, Radio Free Asia, a think tank funded by the U.S (Blumenthal & Hedges, 2018), wrote an article titled "Around 120,000 Uyghurs Detained For Political Re-Education in Xinjiang's Kashgar Prefecture", based on the testimony of "the security chief of Kashgar city's Chasa township (...) on condition of anonymity" (RFA, 2018). Later in February, *Foreign Policy* would also publish an article written by an anonymous correspondent titled "A Summer Vacation in China's Muslim Gulag" (Foreign Policy, 2018). The ever-escalating words used in these headlines almost make the reader associate these de-radicalization facilities to Soviet purging camps, with the supposed the aim of erasing the Uyghur's cultural identity.

Despite the lack of information, Western media outlets reported the meeting with headlines that read "U.N. says it has credible reports that China holds million Uighurs in secret camps" (Nebhay, 2018) even though the CERD lacks the authority to speak on behalf of the United Nations as a whole, nor did McDougall possess a credible report (Norton & Singh, 2018):

"A spokesperson from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) confirmed in a statement to *The Grayzone* that the allegation of Chinese "camps" was not made by the United Nations, but rather by a member of an independent committee that does not speak for the UN as a whole. That

member happened to be the only American on the committee, and one with no background of scholarship or research on China” (Norton & Singh, 2018).

Furthermore, this charge is supported by claims from a Chinese opposition group that receives funding from the regime-change branch of the US government and is closely associated with exiled pro-US dissidents. It appears that, in order to apply pressure on China, the US government has sponsored and armed media outlets and groups to spread information about detention camps housing 1 million people (Norton & Singh, 2018).

After CERD released their review, *Reuters* wrote the article titled: “U.N. says it has credible reports that China holds million Uighurs in secret camps.” Other outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* quickly replicated this assertion. Readers were led to believe that the UN had undertaken an inquiry and had officially and jointly levelled these accusations against China when the UN had not, in fact, taken such an action (Norton & Singh, 2018).

In the article, *Reuters* states that “the allegations came from multiple sources, including activist group Chinese Human Rights Defenders, which said in a report last month that 21 percent of all arrests recorded in China in 2017 were in Xinjiang” (Reuters, 2018). It is relevant to note that, in the subject of Chinese Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang, the CHRDR is one of many other commonly cited NGOs which regularly campaign against China and are linked to the U.S. government. Not only are their headquarters in Washington, DC, but they are directly funded by the state itself. *The Grayzone* found evidence of this specific NGO through the IRS, which showed that the vast majority of their funds come from “government grants”(Norton & Singh, 2018).

Form 990 (2015) Page 9

Part VIII Statement of Revenue
 Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part VIII

				(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
				Total revenue	Related or exempt function revenue	Unrelated business revenue	Revenue excluded from tax under sections 512-514
Contributions, Gifts, Grants and Other Similar Amounts	1a	Federated campaigns	1a				
	b	Membership dues	1b				
	c	Fundraising events	1c				
	d	Related organizations	1d				
	e	Government grants (contributions)	1e	819,553			
	f	All other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts not included above	1f	75			
	g	Noncash contributions included in lines 1a-1f \$					
	h	Total. Add lines 1a-1f		819,628			

Figure 2. Chinese Human Rights Defenders’s Statement of Revenue (Norton & Singh, 2018)

It is also relevant to point out that the Reuter’s headline in regards to “secret camps,” is contradicted by HRW’s 2017 publication, which writes that:

“State media in Xinjiang, including the *Xinjiang Daily*, have reported on these facilities. People interviewed and state media generally refer them as “counter extremism training centers”” (HRW, 2017).

If these camps were indeed secret, as Reuters claimed, the PRC was apparently not very efficient in keeping them hidden, since their own state media (*Xinjiang Daily*) had written about these facilities.:

“Ai Li, who had a low level of education, was invisibly affected because he lacked sufficient vigilance against the harm of the "three evil forces". In February last year, he was dispatched from the village to study at the Lasque sub-station of the Hotan Education and Training Center,” the three evils here, being a reference to terrorism, extremism and separatism (Liu, 2017).

Australian NGOs like the *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* (ASPI) also participated in the media coverage of Xinjiang. In a publication dated November

2018 and titled “Mapping Xinjiang’s ‘re-education’ camps”, the group identifies 28 facilities meant to serve as re-education facilities, whilst referencing that “Agence France-Presse (AFP) estimates there are at least 181 such facilities in Xinjiang, while research by German-based academic Adrian Zenz suggests there may be as many as 1,200 facilities (ASPI, 2018).

If one searches for the AFP report in question, the outlet claims that: “The centre featured on state broadcaster CCTV last week is one of at least **181** such facilities in Xinjiang, according to **data collected** by AFP” (Dooley, 2018). No other explanation is given on the origin of this data.

It’s relevant to note that ASPI, similarly to the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED) (which will also be analysed), is a think-tank based in Australia that is funded not only by weapon manufacturers such as *Lockheed Martin*, *BAE*, *Northrop Grumman*, *Thales* and *Raytheon*, but also geopolitical competitors like its own Department of Defence and the U.S. State Department (Robin, 2020). For a think-tank to be concerned with humanitarian issues is rather suspect when their funding is based on industries that thrive through warmongering.

This warring nature, however, does not appear to be limited to its funding. Bob Carr, a politician who served as Premier of New South Wales, described ASPI and those who fund it of fomenting a “one-side, pro-American view of the world,” while former Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) chief John Menadue describes it as lacking “integrity” and bringing “shame to Australia.” Last but not least, Kim Carr, a former Labour Party Senator, would exclaim that ASPI and its patrons are no more than “hawks intent on fighting a new cold war (Robin, 2020),” “hawk” being a description often associated with U.S. individuals who support foreign interventionism, militarily or through subterfuge, by *coup d’etats*.

Although they are part of the eastern hemisphere, Australian-based platforms seem to align themselves with Western media narratives more often than not. This could be explained by their White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP)

heritage, which finds more common ground with the West than the East. Secondly, Australia no doubt has geopolitical interests in its hemisphere and China is a natural challenger of their sphere of influence, so it is only natural that they would ally themselves with Western narratives that challenge China. This indicates a symbiotic relationship between them since they will often cite each other as trusted sources.

Likewise, Adrian Zenz's claim, which is also cited by *The Washington Post* (WaPo) in an opinion piece unsuitably-titled "China finally admits it is building a new archipelago of concentration camps. Will the world respond?" that the WaPo is willing to use biased sources like him:

"People were sent to reeducation by public security agencies without trial or legal procedure; it was widely used for dissidents and petty criminals, according to Adrian Zenz (...). In 2013, China's government wisely closed down this system, seeing it as a relic of the past. At the time, Mr. Zenz estimates, it had 350 facilities with about 160,000 people" (WaPo, 2018).

Zenz's claim originates from his own article 'Thoroughly reforming them towards a healthy heart attitude': China's political re-education campaign in Xinjiang", which will be delved into later in this dissertation.

The U.S. media took such allegations as gospel truth without thoroughly investigating the veracity of these accusations. By comparison, "de-radicalisation strategies" used in Western countries were not covered in the same hostile way, which shows some journalistic incoherence: "France Toughens Stance in Combating Radicals in Prisons and Schools" (Nossiter, 2018), "Denmark De-Radicalization Program Aims to Reintegrate, Not Condemn" (Cobiella, 2015), "De-radicalisation approach needs 'fundamental review' - Prison Officers' Association" (Goldberg & Clifton, 2020). In stark contrast to the Chinese case, these attempts to de-radicalise are praised, or lightly criticised in a discourse that does not resort to extrapolations and politicisations.

Here, it is possible to perceive the harshness in which American media outlets twisted the nature of the vocational training facilities in Xinjiang, and refer back to the influential power of media discourse in developing international narratives. Words that are nefarious and *Orwellian* from the get-go, from “concentration camps” to “re-education camps”, are often based in inferences or questionable sources that are either anonymous or have ulterior motives.

A common talking point in Western media outlets is China’s refusal of entry for investigations to take place (*Qiao Collective, 2022*), but the country has in fact allowed it in multiple occasions. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang stated in January 2019 that: “Xinjiang is an open region, we welcome all parties, including UN officials, to visit, if they abide by China's laws and regulations, and go through the proper travel procedures” (AFP, 2019).

A similar statement was made in June 2019, where Chen Xu, China’s ambassador to the UN expressed how China hopes “to see the high commissioner pay a visit to China including a trip to Xinjiang to see by herself. Seeing is believing” (*Telesur, 2019*).

Numerous news organizations have also produced films on the subject, with outlets such as BBC getting a chance to see the vocational training facilities first-hand. In June 18th 2019 the BBC released a video report based on the visit to these facilities in Xinjiang that reveals a biased point of view in the editing.

Although the video showed Uyghur instructors teaching vocational skills in a decent environment, the British outlet still made an effort to portray these facilities unfavourably by using erroneous translations, inappropriate word choices and an excessive focus on barbed wire, commonly used around any Chinese educational building. At the same time, the video also cast doubt on the claim that these are concentration camps by showing that students were permitted to go home on weekends.

One of the dancers is questioned if he came to the school voluntarily, and he responds that he did (having held radical beliefs in the past) under the suggestion of a police officer. This interaction is translated in the video as him saying that “a policeman told me to get enrolled”, as if it were an order. When correctly translated, it infers a suggestion: “what a great school (that is), you can enroll there, and change your world-view / ideas” (Sun, 2019).

8.1 Irregularities in the Number of “Imprisoned” Uyghurs

The number of Uyghurs who are alleged to be imprisoned by Western media sources vary greatly between outlets. According to them, there are either a million (*Amnesty International*, 2018) Uyghurs in the facilities, three million (Stewart, 2019), or a few hundred thousand (WaPo, 2019).

The source for some of these numbers appears to be Omer Kanat, President of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), and Adrien Zenz, a Senior Researcher in China Affairs at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington, D.C., author of reports that have appeared in media outlets like *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs* and *The New York Times*.

In an interview with Max Blumenthal, from *The Grayzone*, at a Capitol Hill gathering for the National Endowment for Democracy, Kanat appears quite unsure when asked how the 1 million Uyghur prisoners figure was obtained. He falls back and asserts that this information “had come from Western media” (Blumenthal & Hedges, 2018). This reveals an apparent circulatory nature to these claims: the World Uyghur Congress is cited as the source in a sizeable proportion of media outlets, and at the same time, the WUC cites the very same outlets (Blumenthal & Hedges, 2018). This paper trail leads to a report made in August 3rd 2018 by the NGO *Chinese Human Rights Defenders*, titled: “China: Massive Numbers of Uyghurs & Other Ethnic Minorities Forced into Re-education Programs.”

Table 1: Estimated number of villagers detained in re-education camps in 8 villages in Kashgar Prefecture (mid-2017-mid-2018)

	Village Population	Total in “Re-Education” Detention Camp	Percentage of Population
Interviewee 1	3000+	245	8%
Interviewee 2	2000+	400	20%
Interviewee 3	3000+	500	17%
Interviewee 4	2000+	250	13%
Interviewee 5	2000-	300	15%
Interviewee 6	2000+	200	10%
Interviewee 7	2000+	200	10%
Interviewee 8	1500	150	10%
Totals	17,500	2,245	12.8%

Figure 3 – The estimated numbers based on 8 interviewees (*Chinese Human Rights Defenders*, 2018).

By their own admission, the data they acquired was based on the testimony of eight anonymous ethnic Uyghurs and was extrapolated to reach the “million estimate”:

“We have extrapolated estimates of the numbers of rural residents detained in “de-radicalization” camps or forced to attend “re-education” sessions in both Kashgar Prefecture and all of Southern Xinjiang by mid-2018. The extrapolations are based on the limited data drawn from our interviews with Kashgar villagers, numbers provided by high-level XUAR officials, and the XUAR government’s claim that it nearly accomplished its “anti-terrorism” and “de-extremism” targets, including for the re-education programs, by the end of 2017.

Based on the sampling of interviews in villages in Kashgar Prefecture, we have conservatively estimated that at least 10% of villagers there are being detained in re-education detention camps, and 20% are being forced to attend

day/evening re-education camps in the villages or townships, totaling 30% in both types of camps” (CHRD, 2018).

In a region with a total population of 20 million people, the NGO "extrapolated estimates" that "at least 10% of villagers [...] are being detained in re-education detention camps, and 20% are being forced to attend day/evening re-education camps in the villages or townships, totalling 30% in both types of camps" based on this rather small sample of research subjects. (Singh & Blumenthal, 2019).

These estimates would later be cited by the U.S. in their “2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) – China,” which only makes more apparent the symbiotic relation between NGOs, such as CHRD, and the U.S. government, especially when one takes into account the state funding it receives (Norton & Singh, 2018).

8.2 The Link Between the World Uyghur Congress & the National Endowment for Democracy

It is relevant to mention how the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), a group whose objective is to “promote the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine the political future of East Turkistan”, is also promoted by the U.S. government. The NED admits as much, claiming to have, given \$354.000 in 2018 alone (NED, 2018).

“From its inception, the WUC has been backed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). With millions in US taxpayer money, the NED and its subsidiaries have backed opposition parties, “civil society” groups, and media organizations in countries targeted by the US for regime change.

Philip Agee, the late CIA whistleblower, described the work of the NED as a more sophisticated version of the old-fashioned covert operations that Langley used to engineer. “Nowadays,” Agee explained, “instead of having the CIA going

around behind the scenes and trying to manipulate the process by inserting money here and giving instructions secretly and so forth, they have now a sidekick, which is this National Endowment for Democracy, NED (Singh, 2020).

Agee's assessment was confirmed by Allen Weinstein, a former Trotskyist and founding member of the NED. Weinstein told the Washington Post in 1991, "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA" (Singh, 2020).

One could consider this as a humanitarian act by the U.S. to empower ethnic minorities and help them achieve some kind of independence. At the same time, it could also be argued that this encourages a sentiment of separatism, emboldened by Western media narratives which cite these very same groups. Especially when one takes into account how the NED is often associated with *coup d'etats* against countries like Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Russia (Blumenthal & Hedges, 2018).

It brings back the idea of "Balkanisation", in other words, the shattering of another nation into different homogenous states. From a geopolitical point of view, it only makes sense for the U.S. to fund these NGOs in the eventuality that they succeed in weakening rival superpowers. At the very least, it would be as underhanded in nature as a scenario in which China funds Catalan separatist NGOs (in the context of Spain).

8.3 Adrian Zenz

Five months had passed since China's "Anti-Terrorism Law" was adapted and implemented in Xinjiang in July 2016, when Adrian Zenz began his efforts to discredit with a Foreign Affairs piece "exposing" the region's police and surveillance system (Zenz & Leibold, 2016).

In May 2018, he authored an article in *The Jamestown Foundation* (where he regularly made submissions under the "China Brief" segment (Zenz, 2018) which focused on the de-radicalization efforts in Xinjiang, condemning educational

initiatives as de-radicalization efforts (that are permitted under Article 14 of the Xinjiang De-radicalization Regulations).

He estimates that the number of “inmates” is between “several hundred thousand and slightly over one million,” citing a *Newsweek Japan* story by Naoko Mizutani which in turn, cites a Turkey-based media outlet called *Istekral TV*. This outlet is “operated by a Uyghur organization in exile living in Istanbul, Turkey” which apparently had obtained these numbers from an anonymous “reliable local public security source” (Mizutani, 2018).

In his peer-reviewed publication of September 2018 “Thoroughly Reforming Them Towards a Healthy Heart Attitude: China’s Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang”, he confirms that his sources were, in fact, the *Newsweek Japan*’s article and *Radio Free Asia*. (Zenz, 2018).

His foundation, *Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation* (VOC), is a non-profit organisation dedicated to combating the spread of Communism and the influence of their authoritarian regimes. It claims there are more “than 100 million victims of Communism throughout the years”, a number originally from the *The Black Book of Communism* which includes Nazi soldiers killed in combat by the Soviet Union during WWII. A curious choice to say the least (VOC, 2022).

On July 6th 2020, *The Washington Post* editorial board published an opinion piece titled “What’s happening in Xinjiang is genocide,” based in Zenz’s publications. The article states that the re-education facilities are no more than concentration camps with the intention to “eradicate” Uyghur “language, traditions and ways of life”, even though other foreign dignitaries and journalists did not perceive this. At the same time, it mentions that “new evidence has surfaced that China has also imposed on the Uighurs a form of demographic genocide with forced sterilizations and other measures aimed at reducing the population” but it only cites Adrian Zenz’s paper from June 2020 for the

Jamestown Foundation and an "investigative report" from the Associated Press that also draws on Zenz's work (WaPo, 2020).

8.4 Peculiarities in Western media narrative

In contrast of such claims of genocide, a China census conducted in November 2020 reports that Xinjiang's population increased by 18.52% to 25.85 million people from 21.81 million in 2010. Although the Han accounted for 42%, minorities of the region in total accounted for 57.76%, with Uyghurs making up 44.96%. By comparison, this minority had grown by 1.62 million (16%) from an official 2010 census (Xinhua, 2021). From this result, it becomes apparent that either China is committing a genocide, using fake data to hide it, or is just inefficient at it, since systematic murder would inevitably decrease the population, not increase it.

On the subject of ethnic cleansing and torture, two testimonies from these camps, Tursunay Ziyawudun and Rushan Abbas are two notable instances. Ziyawudun recounted that Uyghurs in these camps were being abused and forcefully sterilized (a claim also made by Zenz), herself having experienced this:

“Tursunay Ziyawudun, who spent nine months inside the camp system, told the Associated Press that she was given injections and kicked repeatedly in the stomach. Now, she no longer gets her period and can't have children. (The AP obtained Xinjiang hospital slides revealing that pregnancy prevention injections, including with Depo-Provera, are a commonly used measure for family planning.) Ziyawudun also said a “teacher” at the camp told the women that if they were found to be pregnant, they would have to get abortions” (Samuel, 2021).

However, in a previous interview with the media outlet BuzzFeed, she claimed she had not been “beaten or abused” (Rajagopalan, 2020).

“I wasn’t beaten or abused,” she said. “The hardest part was mental. It’s something I can’t explain — you suffer mentally. Being kept someplace and forced to stay there for no reason. You have no freedom. You suffer” (Rajagopalan, 2020).

Abbas, on the other hand, Rushan Abbas, served as the Uyghur American Association’s (UAA) vice president and also worked for Radio Free Asia (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2022). It is relevant to note that she also appears to have been affiliated to the NED (ISI Consultants, 2018), having previously worked as a Language Specialist at Guantanamo Bay in 2003, a place surrounded with controversy for human rights abuse (Arlan, 2019).

On May 28th 2022, Michelle Bachelet, a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued a statement on the 6 days she spent in the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, two of them in Urumqi and Kashgar, seeing cotton fields, a prison, and the Kashgar Experimental School (a former vocational institution), among other sites. During the visit, she also spoke with Xinjiang's senior authorities, ethnic minority people, academics, religious leaders, detainees, and former vocational centre trainees. All of these encounters, according to High Commissioner, were "unsupervised and planned by us" (Global Times, 2022). Moreover, while High Commissioner Bachelet did mention her worries on China’s de-radicalisation operations in Xinjiang, there was no statement on Western accusations of genocide or forced labour. This sentiment would be contradicted on August 31st when the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report that accused China of being responsible for “serious human rights violations” in Xinjiang (OHCHR, 2022).

In contrast, two NYT articles from before and after the visit show how the outlet sought some kind of validation on Human Rights Abuse allegations. On May 27, one article reads: “As U.N. Rights Chief Visits China, Some Fear She’ll Become Part of the Spin” (Wang & Ramzy, 2022). There, it is mentioned that “critics say Beijing is using her for propaganda”, simply because her remarks did not criticise China enough. The “critics” they cite are related to Mehmet Tohti, the

executive director of a Canada-based Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project: once, again, an NGO with funding from the NED, just like the World Uyghur Congress (Dere, 2022).

The second article, titled “A ‘Toothless Trip to Xinjiang”, displayed an even greater dissatisfaction over the results of the visit:

“In so doing, Bachelet couched her references to Xinjiang — where rights groups and scholars say China has held one million or more people in indoctrination camps — in the language preferred by Beijing: It has described its program as vocational training in response to terrorist attacks,” alluding to the allegations that these facilities are more alike to concentration camps than vocational facilities (Nierenberg, 2022).

This visit was referenced in multiple Western media articles, as was the case of the Portuguese online newspaper *Observador*. In a July 15th article titled “Chinese President visits Xinjiang, where China is accused of human rights abuses”, the first picture already tells a story to the reader: Xi Jinping stares blankly as a worker pours him tea, which could represent an intent to portray the President as nonchalant towards the subject of the article. It is relevant to highlight how the initial paragraphs begin to tell the reader how China views Xinjiang as a key area for the “Belt and Road Initiative” which aims to open “new trade routes between Asia, Europe and Africa”. The geopolitical nature of the region is one of the first concerns of the article (*Observador*, July 15th 2022).

Although it gives a brief background on the dangerous climate of the region due to terrorist attacks along the years, it portrays China’s anti-terror campaign without much nuance, attributing to it an “oppressive” nature from the start. The article then develops this angle by citing the stance of many western government against China, such as the U.S. and the European Union, with the use of sanctions. It ends the article by citing Bachelet’s visit and her plea for Beijing to “avoid arbitrary measures” in Xinjiang, though it does not specify which of their

measures were arbitrary, as well as in what way they were indeed as such (Observador, July 15th 2022).

In another Portuguese article from August 21st by the newspaper *O Público*, the testimony of a Uyghur woman named Gulbahar Haitiwaji takes centre stage, titled “Surviving Xinjiang to scream louder: “Everytime China attacks me, I feel powerful”. She was also part of an article from *The Guardian* titled “‘Our souls are dead’: how I survived a Chinese ‘re-education’ camp for Uyghurs” (Guardian, Jan 12th 2021), of which the very same cover picture of her would also be used in the Portuguese outlet. She details her alleged abuse in a Xinjiang detention centre where she lacked the freedom speak her native Uyghur language, or not be allowed to pray, among others (Público, Aug 21st 2022). This would go against China’s Anti-Terrorism Act, which detailed how cultural and religious practices would be protected in the fight against extremism. She is also one of many other voices which accuse China of forced sterilisation in Xinjiang’s re-education facilities, and she reiterates this accusation in the Portuguese article. The book which she wrote with the aid of a French journalist is featured in the first paragraphs, titled “I Survived the Chinese Gulag”, which implicates a parallel between Xinjiang’s vocational facilities and the Russian prison camps. The language of the article is not neutral, as it appears to take the testimony at face value and without challenging questions that ascertain the veracity of her claims.

It wasn’t until August 31st 2022 that the Office of the High Commissioner released its official “Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China.” In stark contrast to Bachelet’s neutral statement after her six day visit to Xinjiang, China was accused of “serious human rights violations (...) in the context of the Government’s application of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism strategies.” Though it lacked conclusive evidence to ascertain the extent of these violations, it maintained that it “may involve elements of coercion and discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds”, citing Western-based sources such as *Reuters*, *The New York Times* and ASPI to

help determine the scope of these violations (OHCHR, 2022). It failed to find any evidence of genocide, but it still lent credence to “reported instances of the use of coercive measures, including forced abortion and forced sterilization, with a view to limiting births” (OHCHR, 2022).

The positive tone of Michelle Bachelet's statement following her visit to China in May is incongruous with the rhetoric of the report, which may be related to the politicisation of the subject in the Western media. In response to the OHCHR's report, China's ambassador Chen Xu reacted negatively, stating on September 9th that the Office of the High Commissioner had “closed the door of cooperation by itself” and that “such an act deviates from the founding mission of UN human rights bodies, namely promoting and protecting human rights through dialogue and cooperation. It provokes confrontation and division, and poisons the atmosphere of international human rights cooperation, thus brings far-reaching harm to the international human rights cause”.

Reactions to OHCHR's assessment came immediately after on September 1st across multiple Western media articles. A *UN News* article titled “Report about China cites “grave human rights’ violations” in Xinjiang” provides a somewhat neutral and concise summary of the report's main arguments and China's response towards it (UN News, 2022). The article cites António Guterres, who highlights the of the OHCHR as an independent organisation of the UN. Whilst the article appeals to the continued cooperation between China and the United Nations, other Western articles adopted a different approach.

The Portuguese newspaper *Jornal Económico*, in an article titled “Report by the UN about the Chinese region of Xinjiang indicates possible crimes against humanity” (*Jornal Económico*, Sep 1st 2022), writes how the report was under pressure by the United States and unnamed NGOs to be released, whilst China was against its publication for being biased towards Western sources, and thus, aligned with US interests. The importance of this report is not understated, as the article spells out that the report is something akin to a “seal of approval” in favour

of past accusations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The article points out how the term “genocide” was not present in the OHCHR’s assessment, but reiterates the accusation by citing western governments like the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Canada for having done the same. The article then makes reference to the accusation against Bachelet herself for not being thorough enough in this report, made by different NGOs in favour of her dismissal. Last but not least, the Portuguese outlet writes how there are at least “a million Muslims imprisoned in these political re-education camps” (Jornal Económico, Sep 1st 2022). It is relevant to remember that this figure had also been used in 2018 by Omer Kanat (President of the WUC) previously, who in an interview with Max Blumenthal at a gathering for the NED, revealed some insecurity when asked how the 1 million Uyghur prisoners figure was obtained, saying how this figure had come from western media (Blumenthal & Hedges, 2018).

Reuters also addressed the OHCHR’s report in an article titled “Uyghurs in Turkey disappointed by UN report on China’s Xinjiang”, by interviewing Uyghurs living in Turkey about how they felt (Reuters, Sep 1st 2022). According to the news outlet, they also expressed how the report was not “challenging enough” against China’s actions, and that it had come too late. It then reiterates how Bachelet has been criticised for this very reason by “diplomats and rights groups for being too soft on China” (Reuters, Sep 1st 2022), whilst also repeating the accusation of genocide made by the United States.

This bias towards the U.S.A. is further expanded in another article of the same outlet, titled “U.S. welcomes UN report on China’s actions in Xinjiang” (Reuters, Sep 1st 2022). It begins by writing “The United States on Thursday welcomed a United Nations report that said China may have committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, saying it deepened Washington's concerns about what it calls a genocide there against Uyghurs and other ethnic groups.” This accusation takes centre stage in the article, whilst Bachelet’s report which states

that “China’s “arbitrary and discriminatory detention may constitute crimes against humanity” is left in second, which seems to imply a preference towards the U.S.’ attitude against China. It then attempts to discredit Chinese officials by stating how they “initially denied the existence of any detention camps, but later admitted the government had set up “vocational training centres” necessary to curb what it said was terrorism, separatism and religious radicalism in Xinjiang” (Reuters, Sep 1st 2022). This is a straw-man fallacy since China’s Act Against Terrorism never implied the use of detention camps, instead of vocational facilities which are widely used in the rest of the country. Therefore, Chinese officials stating that these facilities are meant for education is not an admittance of guilt on the idea that these were some form of concentration camps.

The *Associated Press* also covered the situation in the article “For exiled Uyghurs, UN report is long-awaited vindication” by giving voice to an alleged Uyghur survivor from Xinjiang on her opinion regarding the report (Kang, Sep 1st 2022). Furthermore, it highlights how the report had been at the centre of a tug-of-war between rights groups and the Chinese government, which had repeatedly sought to stymie its publication. It largely corroborates earlier reporting by researchers, activist groups and the news media, while steering away from estimates and other findings that cannot be definitively proven” (Kang, Sep 1st 2022).

The latter appears to be a reference to the absence of the word “genocide” in the report. The article further highlights how the assessment is significant for being a part of the United Nations, seen as a neutral organisation, because it aligns with the long held accusations by Western countries like the U. S., the U.K and France, while also pointing out the Chinese response towards it, in which Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin accused it of being false information in service of Western powers.

The article further reiterates the idea that China has been manipulating the “narrative” and going as far as coercing residents of Xinjiang into reading scripts

that denounced Western accusations. Another testimony, this time from an ethnic Kazakh who allegedly spent almost a year in detention, reinforces this idea, by stating that “she had she had been forced in the camps to sing and dance for journalists and officials, parrot propaganda and pretend life was great there” (Kang, Sep 1st 2022).

Another piece by the *Associated Press* (AP) titled “UN cites possible crimes vs. humanity in China’s Xinjiang” further emphasized the clash between countries in regards to human rights in Xinjiang: “The report has fanned a tug-of-war for diplomatic influence with the West over the rights of the region’s native Uyghurs and other ethnic groups” (Keaten & Lederer, Sep 1st 2022).

It also cites “Western diplomats and U.N. officials” in stating that this report had been ready “for months”, as well as Agnes Callamard, secretary general of Amnesty International: “Beijing’s repeated denial of the human rights crisis in Xinjiang rings ever-more hollow with this further recognition of the evidence of ongoing crimes against humanity and other human rights violation in the region” (Keaten & Lederer, Sep 1st 2022).

It also highlights how the OHCHR’s report “made no mention of genocide”, when “some countries, including the United States” have accused China of this crime. Additionally, Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazy Matsuno is cited to have welcomed the release of the assessment (Keaten & Lederer, 2022), which is not unexpected given how often Japan aligns itself with the West and its turbulent history with China itself.

The piece also writes that “In a statement from her office early Thursday, Bachelet said she had wanted to take “the greatest care” to deal with responses and input received from the Chinese government last week”, and that “such reports are typically shared with the concerned country before final publication, but generally to check facts — not to allow vetting or influence of the final report.” Here, it seems as though the news outlet is implying that China meddled in the report by

vetoing, in one way or another, its content, which seems to clash with the general narrative given how dissatisfied China's response was towards the report. Clearly, the country had little influence in its release.

It is also relevant to note Bachelet's citation: "To be perfectly honest, the politicization of these serious human rights issues by some states did not help. I appeal to the international community not to instrumentalize real, serious human rights issues for political ends, but rather to work to support efforts to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights", to which the article ends by writing how her trip had been criticised by NGOs, "the U.S. administration and other governments as a public relations exercise for China" (Keaten & Lederer, 2022).

The New York Times, in an article titled "For Uyghurs, U.N. Report on China's Abuses Is Long-Awaited Vindication" (a curiously similar title to the first AP article analysed) reiterates the accusations made against China over Xinjiang (Ramzy, Sep 1st 2022). The author shows an apparent interest that human rights activists "increase pressure on businesses to distance themselves from China", which would more than likely affect the local population first and foremost (when it comes to employment and income) rather than harming the government itself.

The author also brings up how the report "did not go far enough in pushing China for accountability" for not calling it a "genocide", stating how this conclusion was reached by the U.S. and the U.K. in order to increase its validity, as well as correlating "a "stark" decline of Uyghur birthrates, the destruction of shrines and mosques and curbs on Uyghur language instruction" (Ramzy, Sep 1st 2022) to genocide. This viewpoint is shared with Mehmet Tohti who is cited in the article, being the director of Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project (which, as stated previously, is an NGO with funding from the NED).

The BBC reacted positively to the report as well, with an article titled "Uyghurs: China may have committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang – UN"

in which they cite Omer Kanat from the WUC, who urges for a “swift international response” (Murphy, Drury & Wong, Sep 1st 2022). The article includes aerial shots of what they refer to as “Xinjiang’s Dabancheng detention centre”, which shows the expansion of a facility complex from 2017 to 2022 without much description. It too mentions how “The US and lawmakers in several other countries have previously denounced China’s actions in Xinjiang as a genocide, but the UN stopped short of making the accusation”, further emphasizing the role of Western countries in this investigation. It writes that:

“China insists that the camps provide grateful and willing Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities with lessons that steer them away from the dangers of terrorism and extremism. In some regards, they bear a passing resemblance to schools, with the rote learning of Chinese and the reciting of propaganda slogans.

But the cache goes further than ever before in showing the harsh, involuntary nature of these facilities designed to target almost any aspect of Uyghur identity, and replace it with an enforced loyalty to the Communist Party” (Murphy, Drury & Wong, Sep 1st 2022).

This implies that they did not have a good grasp on the Chinese language prior to going to these educational facilities. One could consider that learning the official language of their country would actually be inclusive, and allow one to communicate and participate in their society, rather than remain segregated and divided by ethnic and linguistic reasons. Integration seems to be a key part in China’s Act Against Terrorism, but this is not the message conveyed in this article. Instead, it relies on what the article calls the “Xinjiang Police Files”, which refers to a “cache by a consortium of international journalists of which the BBC is part – have formed the basis of a large part of reporting done by the BBC on the Uyghurs in recent years” (Murphy, Drury & Wong, Sep 1st 2022).

The article, like others before it, also cite Uyghur dissatisfaction towards having expectations that Bachelet would “be firmer on China overall”, whilst also

citing Bachelet's concerns over the "politicisation" of the region by "some countries" (Murphy, Drury & Wong, Sep 1st 2022).

The Guardian (Davidson, Sep 1st 2022) takes a similar stance to its peers, highlighting the accusations of crimes against humanity, arbitrary detention, forced labour, forced medication and sexual abuse and the criticism towards China's anti-extremism strategy in the article "Five key points from the UN report on Xinjiang human rights abuses". It brings up the lack of "genocide" in the report, stating that "the UN didn't call this a genocide, as the US government and others have", to which the article also cites HRW as having determined that China is committing "crimes against humanity" against ethnic minorities in the region (Davidson, Sep 1st 2022).

The author further elaborates on this dissatisfaction in another article, "Our people are still trapped: Uyghur exiles demand action on abuses", in which she goes further and writes how the report "demolished" China's narrative, with the testimony of Uyghurs who share their stories and reactions to the report. A relevant point of this article is that it also mentions how the OHCHR's assessment has "credible indications" of forced sterilisation (Davidson, Sep 5th 2022).

In the French newspaper *Le Monde* (in collaboration with AP and the *Agence France-Presse*), they write: "UN report on treatment of Uyghurs in China warns of possible 'crimes against humanity'" (Le Monde, Sep 1st 2022). Similarly to the previous articles, the idea of a diplomatic "tug-of-war" between countries over Xinjiang persists, questioning China's role in the United Nations amid these accusations. China's viewpoint is also cited, in which Wang Wenbin accuses the UN rights office of becoming an "instrument" of "the US and the West against the vast majority of developing countries".

The criticism against Bachelet over not challenging China enough "when other rights monitors had cited abuses against Muslim Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang" is echoed here, ending the article by reasserting how China's campaign

in Xinjiang imprisoned ethnic minorities in a “network of prisons and camps” (dismissing the term “training centres”), and that it continues to this day. Last but not least, they recall how “some countries, including the United States, have accused Beijing of committing genocide in Xinjiang” (Le Monde, Sep 1st 2022) showing how the U.S. is ever-present in their source.

In an opinion article by *The Washington Post* titled “The U.N. report on China’s atrocities against the Uyghurs is damning” (Washington Post, Sep 2nd 2022), it is quite perceptible to the reader to notice a certain confrontational attitude right in the first lines. They state how “there are no surprises” in the OHCHR’s report on China’s “brutal” human rights violations in Xinjiang (WaPo, Sep 2nd 2022). It is interesting to point out that the term “damning” and its use in “damning report” was, curiously, also a common term in the previous two *The Guardian* articles, which had used them in this particular subject. In the summary of the report, the article spares no time to label the “vocational education and training centres as a “sanitized term for internment camps” or concentration camps (WaPo, Sep 2nd 2022).

The outlet takes the United States’ government words as gospel, stating how the alleged human rights violations “echo what many other institutions had already concluded”, then stating how the U.S. “rightly declared” China’s actions in the region as “a genocide” (WaPo, Sep 2nd 2022). The usage of words such as “rightly” imply a bias, as does their reliance on the words of the U.S. government. They also state that “other organization” had also made similar accusations, making a reference to a HRW article titled “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots”.

In regards to the release of the report by Bachelet, and the subsequent 131-page response from China, the article immediately labels it as “replete with propaganda and diversions”, without so much as an addressing any of their arguments and rebuking them. It then subtly suggests how the Biden administration “should vigorously enforce the Uyghur Labour Prevention Act,

which bans products from Xinjiang unless companies can prove they were not manufactured with forced labour” (WaPo, Sep 2nd 2022), which makes it seem that the WaPo is biased towards sanctioning the region, regardless if these sanctions will hurt the very populace’s lives they claim to care about rather hurt the government.

Last but not least, they make a bold declaration that “Beijing cannot be allowed to continue committing atrocities with impunity” (WaPo, Sep 2nd 2022), and that it is up to the international community to “follow through”. One can only assume this means more sanctions against the country.

In a September 26th article by the Portuguese newspaper *Diário de Notícias* titled “Uyghur activist in Lisbon” (Avó, Sep 26th 2022), Rushan Abbas takes centre stage to bring awareness to a documentary which tells her story as a repressed ethnic minority. The first line of the article tells us that the activist was “radicalised in the U.S.”, which already tells us that her ideology and biases were shaped by her life there, having left China for the U.S. in 1989. As stated previously, Abbas, served as the Uyghur American Association’s (UAA) vice president and also worked for Radio Free Asia (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2022), appearing to be affiliated to the NED (ISI Consultants, 2018), and having worked as a Language Specialist at Guantanamo Bay in 2003 (Arlan, 2019).

The article tells us that Abbas’ is one of the reasons that Xinjiang and the alleged abuses came to be known in U.S. society, and then echoes the term “concentration camps” to describe what “the regime calls re-education camps” (Avó, Sep 26th 2022). The use of the term “regime” is interesting because it is often used to discredit or delegitimise a government for being authoritarian or not as liberal as most Western countries. Very rarely is the word used to describe Western countries, even if they have authoritarian policies. Lastly, the article tells us that Abbas had spoken in the U.S. Congress, having been in some way instrumental for the approval of the Uyghur Labour Prevention Act (Avó, Sep 26th 2022).

On September 30th in another opinion article by *The New York Times*, it reads: “Why China’s Crimes in Xinjiang Cannot Go Unpunished” (Bequelin, Sep 30th 2022). Right from start, the reader is faced with sombre artwork: a lone officer of the UN in bright blue colours and a clear illuminated face, and behind him a legion of CPC officer in bright red colours, as well as darker shades of this very red. Their faces are obscured by shadows, ominous-looking and unemotional. Immediately, this evokes a feeling of uneasiness in the reader, which takes us back to the Cold War-era propaganda posters that warned the West of the “Red Menace”. Far from a neutral choice of artwork.

After a summary of the OHCHR’s findings, the author proceeds to justify a conflict with China by saying how “the stakes extend far beyond Xinjiang’s borders”, accusing China of undermining “the U.N.’s ability to protect human rights”, and Human Rights Council (Bequelin, Sep 30th 2022). It further expands on China’s so called “offensive” by citing the HRW (it’s relevant to point out that the author himself was part of Amnesty International and the HRW) on what it perceives to be an attempt by China to de-fund and discredit anything related to the protection of human rights. It then reveals the “ultimate goal” of the CCP (a misnomer, since it is officially called the Communist Party of China, or CPC): “to cripple the international community’s ability to censure countries for human rights violations” (Bequelin, Sep 30th 2022).

The usage of the word “regime” is once again used as a way to delegitimise, citing the “rise of authoritarianism around the world” and how China uses this as a way to gain leverage on these countries, whilst also implying that China uses “financial assistance and investments” (Bequelin, Sep 30th 2022) as a way to force other countries into siding with them. At the same time, this is also an insult towards these countries, since it implies they lack the sovereignty to make their own decisions.

The author states that it is up to the Human Rights Council to confront China, suggesting options like “a mandate to conduct further investigation, which

has been done for Russian aggression in Ukraine and many other crises, and to press for accountability”. If this does not happen, the author states that “inaction would be a severe blow to the U.N. credibility” (Bequelin, Sep 30th 2022), forgetting the fact that China itself called out the very same credibility after the OHCHR’s report. In other words, one way or another, it appears that both sides have reason to believe the U.N. is losing power in a way that could mirror the downfall of the League of Nations.

Despite the OHCHR’s assessment, and the accusation of genocide by Western countries like the U.S. and the U.K., the vast majority of what is considered to be the Global South joined in support of China on multiple events, such as the 51st Human Rights Council of September 13th, with 28 countries criticising the OHCHR’s assessment, and on September 26th with a total of 68 countries supporting China’s role in Xinjiang. In October 6th, a motion which sought to debate China’s role in Xinjiang was rejected by the Human Rights Council, with 17 countries who voted in favour of a debate:

- Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Netherlands, Paraguay, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, the United Kingdom, the United States

19 who voted against it:

- Bolivia, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Eritrea, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Sudan, UAE, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela

And 11 who abstained:

- Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Gambia, India, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Ukraine.

On this matter, an article by the Portuguese news outlet *O Público* titled “Human Right Council Rejects Motion to Debate Abuse Denouncements in Xinjiang”, the author highlights that the ones in favour of this motion were indeed mostly from what one calls the “Western world”, marking the second time since 2006 that a motion was rejected (Lima, 2022). The media outlet *Reuters* is cited for the result of the motion and the applause that followed it, the majority of which are from the African and the Asian continents.

The article also cites the Chinese HRC Ambassador Chen Xu, who stated that “China rejects any presupposition that comes for this proposition categorically.” The author then references the report made by the OHCHR, which was the basis for the motion itself, citing the testimonies of Uyghur activists such as Haitiwaji and Abbas (in previous articles) and from NGO investigations to give validity to the report. Article makes reference to Michele Taylor, U.S. Amassador of the HRC, who had stated that “no country in the Council has a perfect record” when it comes to human rights, “which includes the U.S. and China” (Lima, 2022). Likewise, Amnesty International is also cited, having shown dissatisfaction over the result and questioning the credibility of the HRC.

More recently at the 76th UN General Assembly on October 31st, 50 countries made a joint statement carried out by Canada condemning China’s actions in China, while 66 countries made an opposing one delivered by Cuba, supporting China. On a diplomatic level, it shows that the OHCHR’s report was not enough to sway all members of the UN into condemning, though some authors will perhaps justify this as a part China’s manipulation through economic investments in the countries that support it.

9. Conclusions

Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to argue that a bias towards China's de-radicalisation efforts permeates Western media narratives. Obviously, this did not take into account every single article the Western media has to offer in regards to China, the Uyghurs and Xinjiang, so I cannot make any kind of generalisation, positive or not, that uniformly applies to every Western media outlet. From the articles I have analysed, a great majority of them appear to follow the same kind of narrative against China, with many sharing the same sources that contradict China's statements.

The reason I believe these sources are worthy of discussion and criticism, is because they were never neutral to begin with. They already had some kind of bias towards China, whether because of foreign policy, desire for autonomy, or ideological incompatibility. This isn't to say that, if Western media were to cite more Chinese sources it would suddenly become neutral. Chinese media has its own bias, in favour of itself. But it would be naive to believe that the media from the West is not as biased as China's.

When the majority of claims in an outlet is almost exclusively from sources like NGOs which display ulterior interests in antagonising China, it becomes imbalanced towards it. Even when Chinese sources are cited, they are seen as almost untrustworthy. And when Western dignitaries go to China and describe their visit in a favourable way, more often than not they are described as not being harsh or thorough enough, or manipulated by state agents.

China, like any other nation in the world, is not perfect and should be scrutinized. But, in terms of media narrative, this should be developed in a concise and coherent manner, striking a balance between confirmed sources from both sides. China's De-Radicalisation Strategy has many issues which can and should be addressed, but the point of this dissertation wasn't to comment on it, but rather analyse the Western media narrative about it, if it was biased, how this bias

displayed itself and if their motives align with the U.S.. And according to the data, I can conclude they are indeed aligned.

Whether knowingly or not, Western outlets cite NGOs which are clearly under the influence of the US, be it ideologically or for their funding. At that moment, the narrative will have a bias that aligns itself with said NGO. In turn, if the organisation in question has a perspective that lines up with US interests, then the State has already reaped the benefits of their funding.

Western propaganda is most powerful when it can dominate the creation of information and truth itself, making any criticism or alternative unimaginable. It is crucial to remember in this situation that the United States and its allies are in the minority when it comes to criticizing Chinese policy in Xinjiang, being commended by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (composed of 57 member states, 48 of them Muslim-majorities) in the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (1-2 March 2019).

Additionally, in the 41st Session of the Human Rights Council (July 9th 2019), 50 countries (e.g. Angola, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Mozambique, Nigeria, Palestine, Russia, Syria, etc.) stood in support of China's policy in Xinjiang, whilst 22 primarily western countries criticised it (e.g. Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, the U.K., etc.). A similar disparity was witnessed in the 74th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (October 29th 2019), with 57 countries supporting China and 24 countries criticising it, as well as the 44th United Nations Human Rights Council (July 2020), with 46 and 27 countries respectively.

What is interesting to note about these results is how they correlate with the Global North, which tends to follow a western viewpoint, and the Global South, which generally defended China in these joint statements (with exceptions on both sides, as is the case of countries like Russia and Serbia which are technically inserted in the Global North but sided with China). This pattern repeated in the

75th Session of the General Assembly (October 6th 2020), the 47th Human Rights Council (June 22nd 2021), the 50th Human Rights Council Session (June 14th 2022) and the 76th UN General Assembly (October 31st 2022).

It is relevant to note that the timing and context of these accusations, coincided with the China-U. S. trade war (which is still ongoing as of 2022) as well as the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which Xinjiang is a key node.

In order to further demonstrate the relevancy of these concerns towards Western media narrative, there are two measures taken by the United States and the United Kingdom as a consequence of the Chinese Human Rights violation narrative: on the one hand, in September 2020, the US imposed sanctions towards the importation of cotton and clothing from Xinjiang due to “forced labour” concerns (Global Times, 2020).

On the other hand, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol would also take over products products (from cotton to tomatoes) which came from the Autonomous Region (CBP, 2021). The U.K. would follow suit and declare similar sanctions. (U.K. Foreign Affairs, 2021). These decisions are well aware of the fact that the cotton and tailoring sectors are crucial for Xinjiang’s economic growth and stability, and how many citizens from the region (not just minorities) depend on it (*Xinhua*, 2018).

One could speculate that this is exactly the intention of Western sanctions, to increase the poverty of the very citizens they claim to be worried about and to incite them towards separatism (Haq, 2018).

From a geopolitical viewpoint, the goal of these denouncements are two-fold: to signal to the world that Western countries are concerned with Human Rights Violations and to create unrest through proxies in the target country: China, perhaps a great example of Chomsky’s fifth filter in his propaganda model: Anti-Communism, Ideology and Fear (Chomsky & Herman, 2011).

One could also highlight how useful such narratives are as a diversion from the West's own societal issues. The narratives towards "Uyghur genocide" or "Uyghur mass internment", combined with the normalisation of keywords such as the "need" to "contain" China (as if it were some kind of disease) further promotes a hostile language, which may decrease tolerance between Chinese and Western societies.

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that Western media narratives adopt a more nuanced overview of countries like China, without labelling those who share opposing perspectives from the country as "paid actors" (Mozur, Zhong, Krolik & Aufrichti, 2021). No matter who is right or wrong, in the end, it appears that the common people are the ones who suffer the most at the whims of the powerful and the world media perception loses insight for what is really going on.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. *Observador's* Article

Presidente chinês visita Xinjiang, onde China é acusada de violar direitos humanos

O Presidente chinês visitou esta semana a região de Xinjiang, onde Pequim é acusada de violações dos Direitos Humanos da minoria étnica chinesa de origem muçulmana uigur.

15 Jul. 2022, 13:10

Oferecer



Agência Lusa
Texto

O Presidente chinês, Xi Jinping, visitou esta semana a região de Xinjiang, no extremo noroeste da China, onde Pequim é acusada de violações dos Direitos Humanos da minoria étnica chinesa de origem muçulmana uigur.

China. ONU não conseguiu falar com povo uyghur

18 Jun. 2022, por Diogo Paredes



De acordo com a agência noticiosa oficial Xinhua, Xi Jinping designou Xinjiang como “área — chave” no projeto internacional de infraestruturas “Uma Faixa, Uma Rota”. Esta iniciativa, lançada por Pequim, prevê a construção de portos, linhas ferroviárias, autoestradas e centrais elétricas, abrindo novas rotas comerciais entre Ásia, Europa e África.

Tratou-se da primeira visita de Xi à região, desde 2014. Aquela estadia ficou marcada por um atentado à bomba, no último dia. Esse ano foi particularmente sangrento, com outro ataque contra civis na cidade de Urumqi e um terceiro na estação de Kunming, no sudoeste da China, que resultaram em dezenas de mortos.

Em 2009, Xinjiang foi palco de confrontos étnicos entre a maioria han e os uigures.

As autoridades lançaram então uma ampla campanha repressiva na região, que resultou na detenção de mais de um milhão de uigures em centros de doutrinação, de acordo com organizações de defesa dos Direitos Humanos.

Vários governos ocidentais classificaram a campanha na região, que dizem incluir também “esterilizações e trabalho forçado”, como “genocídio cultural”.

Os Estados Unidos e a União Europeia impuseram sanções contra funcionários responsáveis por detenções extrajudiciais, separação de famílias e encarceramento de pessoas por terem estudado no exterior ou terem contactos no estrangeiro.

Pequim negou aquelas acusações, apontando que os campos são centros, onde os estudantes recebem “educação e formação vocacionais”, com o objetivo de “eliminar o meio social que gera terrorismo e extremismo religioso”.

Xi reuniu com líderes do Corpo de Produção e Construção de Xinjiang (XPCC, na sigla em inglês), um órgão supra governamental que opera os seus próprios tribunais, escolas e sistema de saúde, sob o sistema militar imposto na região, após a ascensão do Partido Comunista ao poder, em 1949. Esta organização foi também alvo de sanções norte-americanas.

O líder chinês “aprendeu sobre a história do XPCC no cultivo e guarda das áreas fronteiriças”, informou a Xinhua.

Xinjiang faz fronteira com a Rússia, Afeganistão e outros países da Ásia Central, que a China procurou atrair para a sua órbita, por meio de incentivos económicos e pactos de segurança.

Durante uma rara visita à China, realizada em maio passado, Michelle Bachelet, alta comissária da ONU para os Direitos Humanos, pediu a Pequim que evite medidas “arbitrárias” em Xinjiang.

CHINA MUNDO DIREITOS HUMANOS SOCIEDADE



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Oferecer

P

ÁSIA

Sobreviver a Xinjiang para gritar bem alto: "Sempre que a China me ataca, sinto-me poderosa"

EMMANUELLE MARCHADOUR

EXCLUSIVO

Assine já

Gulbahar Haitiwaji conta ao PÚBLICO como os três anos que passou em campos de detenção de uigures mudaram a sua vida e a motivaram a dar voz à "dor" a toda uma comunidade perseguida. Jornalista francesa que a ajudou a escrever *Sobrevivi ao Gulag Chinês* enaltece resistência: "Tentou manter-se sempre humana."

António Saraiva Lima

21 de Agosto de 2022, 7:18

“É proibido falar uigure. É proibido rezar. É proibido discutir. É proibido fazer greve de fome. Se uma pessoa precisar de tratamento médico, não o pode recusar. É proibido não respeitar as ordens que são dadas. É proibido desenhar nas paredes. É proibido não respeitar as ordens de higiene.” As regras de funcionamento do centro de detenção localizado algures na região de Karamay, na província de Xinjiang, no Noroeste da República Popular da China, estão redigidas num cartaz rectangular afixado na parede “cinzenta e fria” da cela 202, em frente às camas.



APPENDIX III. UN News' Article

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AUDIOTECA
ASSINE GRATUITAMENTE

Relatório sobre a China cita “graves violações de direitos humanos” em Xinjiang BR



Onch | Michelle Bachelet esteve na região de Xinjiang e conversou com vários funcionários

1 Setembro 2022 | Paz e segurança

Abusos aos princípios fundamentais de indivíduos e grupos podem ser considerados crimes contra a humanidade, segundo escritório da ONU; China nega ter havido qualquer “violação de direitos em grande escala”; documento analisou alegações recebidas há cinco anos envolvendo uigures e outras comunidades de maioria muçulmana da região autônoma.

Um novo relatório aponta “graves violações” dos direitos humanos cometidos contra a minoria uigur e “outras comunidades predominantemente muçulmanas” na Região Autônoma Uigur de Xinjiang, na China.

O documento foi publicado na quarta-feira pelo Escritório do Alto Comissariado da ONU para os Direitos Humanos, na sequência da visita realizada em maio pela alta comissária Michelle Bachelet.

Detenção

A publicação afirma que os relatos de “padrões de tortura ou maus-tratos, incluindo tratamento médico forçado e condições adversas de detenção, são críveis, assim como as alegações de incidentes individuais de violência sexual e de gênero”.

OUÇA ONU NEWS



00:01

NOTÍCIAS

1'48"

Relatório sobre a China cita “graves violações de direitos h...



Foto: ONU/ Jean-Marc Ferré | Sede do Escritório do Alto Comissariado das Nações Unidas para os Direitos Humanos, em Genebra, na Suíça

A visita da chefe dos direitos humanos em maio aconteceu a convite do governo chinês. Bachelet teve contacto com a região de Xinjiang e conversou com vários funcionários do governo, organizações da sociedade civil, académicos e líderes comunitários e religiosos.

Antes da visita aconteceram interações online com entidades com relação a província de Xinjiang, Tibete, Hong Kong e outras partes da China.

Guterres destaca independência do escritório de direitos humanos

Em resposta a perguntas de jornalistas na sede da ONU em Nova York, nesta quinta-feira, o porta-voz do secretário-geral, Stéphane Dujarric, disse que António Guterres leu o relatório que "identifica claramente graves violações de direitos humanos na região de Xinjiang, na China".

Dujarric disse que o secretário-geral "espera muito que o governo da China leve em consideração as recomendações apresentadas na avaliação", ao mesmo tempo em que observou que o relatório "também ressalta a importância da independência" do Escritório de Direitos Humanos da ONU.

Em resposta a uma pergunta sobre o que isso significa para as relações futuras, O porta-voz disse que Guterres "valoriza a cooperação sistêmica entre a China e as Nações Unidas em uma série de questões. A China é um parceiro muito valioso e esperamos muito que essa cooperação continue", e advertiu que é "importante que todos vejam a resposta chinesa" ao relatório detalhado.

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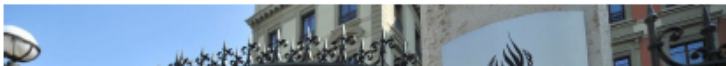
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CHINA | XINJIANG | CRIMES CONTRA A HUMANIDADE |
REGIÃO AUTÔNOMA UIGUR DE XINJIANG | UIGHURS | DIREITOS HUMANOS | UIGUR

O apelo chinês é que a comunidade internacional tenha clareza sobre verdade da campanha antiterrorista na região e "ver através das performances desajeitadas e motivos maliciosos das forças anti-China nos EUA e no Ocidente, que tentativa de usar Xinjiang para conter a China".


A China quer que em vez disso, a ONU e outras organizações internacionais investiguem "os desastres de direitos humanos causados e vários crimes cometidos pelos EUA e alguns outros países ocidentais, tanto em casa quanto no exterior".



APPENDIX III. *Jornal Económico's* Article

[Mais](#)

Relatório da ONU sobre região chinesa de Xinjiang indica possíveis crimes contra a humanidade

 [Jornal Económico.com Lusã](#), 01 Setembro 2022, 08:56

A Alta Comissária da ONU para os Direitos Humanos, Michelle Bachelet, conseguiu manter a promessa de publicar o relatório sobre a região chinesa de Xinjinag antes de deixar hoje o seu cargo, após quatro anos à frente do organismo das Nações Unidas.



O relatório da ONU sobre a região chinesa de Xinjiang, publicado na quarta-feira, apontou possíveis “crimes contra a humanidade” e mencionou “provas críveis” de tortura e violência sexual contra a minoria uigur, pedindo a intervenção da comunidade internacional.

“A extensão da detenção arbitrária e discriminatória de membros dos uigures e de outros grupos predominantemente muçulmanos (...) pode constituir crimes internacionais, em particular crimes contra a humanidade”, referiu o relatório, com menos de cinquenta páginas nas suas conclusões.

A Alta Comissária da ONU para os Direitos Humanos, Michelle Bachelet, conseguiu manter a promessa de publicar o relatório sobre a região chinesa de Xinjinag antes de deixar hoje o seu cargo, após quatro anos à frente do organismo das Nações Unidas.

O documento, que não parece conter revelações importantes em relação ao que já se sabia sobre a situação em Xinjiang, traz o selo da ONU às acusações feitas há muito tempo contra as autoridades chinesas.

A publicação do relatório foi alvo de intensa pressão particularmente pelos Estados Unidos e pelas principais organizações não-governamentais (ONG) de direitos humanos, e, inversamente, Pequim não queria que fosse divulgado, nomeadamente por considerar o relatório uma “farsa” orquestrada pelo Ocidente, com Washington na liderança.

Nesse documento, a ONU pediu à comunidade internacional que aja com urgência diante das acusações de tortura e violência sexual na região chinesa de Xinjiang que a organização considera “críveis”.

Uma rápida busca no texto da ONU não traz a palavra genocídio. Por outro lado, esta foi a acusação feita contra Pequim pelo Governo norte-americano.

Em janeiro, a Assembleia Nacional Francesa, seguindo os passos da representação do Reino Unido, Holanda e até do Canadá, também qualificou como “genocídio” o tratamento dos uigures pela China.

Xinjiang e outras províncias da China foram atingidas por várias décadas, em particular de 2009 a 2014, por ataques atribuídos pelo Governo chinês a islâmicos ou separatistas uigures.

Michelle Bachelet defendeu-se de ser muito branda com Pequim em relação aos direitos humanos, acreditando que o diálogo “não significa fechar os olhos”.

“O diálogo e tentar entender melhor [a situação] não significa que sejamos tolerantes, que desviemos o olhar ou que fechemos os olhos. E muito menos que não possamos falar com franqueza”, disse Bachelet.

O atual mandato de Bachelet foi marcado pelas críticas à sua resposta ao tratamento dado pela China aos uigures e a outras minorias muçulmanas. No início de junho, mais de 230 organizações de direitos humanos, incluindo portuguesas, exigiram a demissão de Bachelet, acusando-a de “branqueamento de atrocidades” durante uma visita ao território chinês.

A região de Xinjiang, um vasto território semidesértico no noroeste da China, tem sido cenário de ataques violentos, que Pequim atribui a elementos separatistas e islamitas.

Os uigures, que são maioritariamente muçulmanos e falam na sua grande maioria uma língua relacionada com o turco, são um dos 56 grupos étnicos que existem no território chinês. Esta etnia representa um pouco menos de metade dos 25 milhões de pessoas que vivem na região de Xinjiang.

A China tem sido acusada de concentrar minorias étnicas chinesas de origem muçulmana em campos de doutrinação e reeducação no extremo noroeste do território chinês. As denúncias apontam para pelo menos um milhão de muçulmanos retidos nestes campos de reeducação política.

Pequim tem sempre rejeitado este alegado plano de “genocídio cultural” de minorias muçulmanas na China, alegando que estas instalações são centros de formação profissional, destinadas a ajudar a população a encontrar trabalho e a mantê-la afastada do extremismo e do terrorismo.

Durante uma rara visita à China em maio passado, a primeira em 17 anos de um Alto-comissário da ONU, Michelle Bachelet pediu a Pequim que evitasse medidas “arbitrárias” em Xinjiang, denunciando “atos violentos de extremismo” na região.

APPENDIX IV. Reuters' Article



2 minute read · September 1, 2022 7:48 PM GMT+1 · Last Updated 3 months ago

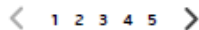


Uyghurs in Turkey disappointed by UN report on China's Xinjiang

Reuters



[1/6] Ethnic Uyghur girls attend a protest against China, in Istanbul, Turkey August 31, 2022. REUTERS/Dilara Senkaya



ISTANBUL, Sept 1 (Reuters) - Uyghurs in Turkey expressed disappointment on Thursday after a UN report found China's detention of Uyghurs and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity.

Uyghurs interviewed by Reuters in Istanbul said the UN report, issued on Wednesday, came late and should have gone further in challenging China over its treatment of their community in Xinjiang.

Some 50,000 Uyghurs are estimated to live in Turkey, the largest Uyghur diaspora outside Central Asia. Turks have close ethnic, religious and linguistic ties to the Uyghurs.

Mukerrem Abitoglu, a Uyghur who came to Turkey with her youngest daughter in 2017, said the report did little for her people.

"We filed our complaints to 15 countries. Journalists came. We spoke to them but it was no good," Abitoglu said as she cried in her small shop where she sells Uyghur-designed gifts.

"China kills our people, it kills our children, our babies, our children"

"China kills our young people, leaves our children orphaned so what they (the United Nations) do now is not enough," said Abitoglu, who has not heard from her husband and her two children for the past five years.

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U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, who has faced criticism from some diplomats and rights groups for being too soft on China, released the report just minutes before her four-year term ended.

The report said China's "arbitrary and discriminatory detention" of Uyghurs and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity. [read more](#) The United States has accused China of genocide.

China has vigorously denied any abuses in Xinjiang and issued a 131-page response to the 48-page UN report.

The head of the NGO group East Turkestan New Generation Movement, Abdusselam Teklimakan, said the report came late, while Uyghurs were year after year worrying about the fate of their loved ones in Xinjiang.

"When a nation is destroyed, it is not appropriate for humanity to watch them being destroyed for a couple of years. In this respect, this is a disappointment," Teklimakan added.

The UN Human Rights Office said in the report that serious human rights violations had been committed in Xinjiang and recommended the Chinese government take prompt steps to release all those detained in training centres, prisons and detention facilities.

Reporting by Bulent Usta Writing by Ezgi Erkoyun Editing by Nick Macfie

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APPENDIX V. Reuters' Article



China

2 minute read · September 1, 2022 8:32 PM GMT+1 · Last Updated 3 months ago



U.S. welcomes UN report on China's actions in Xinjiang

Reuters



The Chinese national flag flies over a mosque in the old city in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China, May 4, 2021. Picture taken May 4, 2021. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

WASHINGTON, Sept 1 (Reuters) - The United States on Thursday welcomed a United Nations report that said China may have committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, saying it deepened Washington's concerns about what it calls a genocide there against Uyghurs and other ethnic groups.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Wednesday released the report, which found China's "arbitrary and discriminatory detention" of Uyghurs and other Muslims in the western Chinese region may constitute crimes against humanity. [read more](#)

China has vigorously denied any abuses in Xinjiang and issued a 131-page response to the 48-page U.N. report, calling it "completely illegal and void." Chinese officials initially denied the existence of any detention camps, but later admitted the government had set up "vocational training centers" necessary to curb what it said was terrorism, separatism and religious radicalism in Xinjiang.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement that the report authoritatively described China's "appalling treatment" of ethnic and religious minority groups.

ethnic and religious minority groups.

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"This report deepens and reaffirms our grave concern regarding the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity that PRC government authorities are perpetrating against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang," Blinken said, referring to the People's Republic of China.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield said separately that the United States would work with allies and partners to demand an end to China's abuses.

"It is critical that the full Human Rights Council membership have an opportunity to formally discuss the findings of this report as soon as possible and that the perpetrators of these atrocities are held accountable," she said in a statement.

Reporting by Michael Martina, David Brunnstrom, and Karishka Singh in Washington; and Michelle Nichols in New York. Editing by Chris Reese and Rosalba O'Brien

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APPENDIX VI. *Associated Press*' Article



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For exiled Uyghurs, UN report is long-awaited vindication

By **DAKE KANG** September 1, 2022



BEIJING (AP) — When Zumret Dawut heard that the United Nations had declared that China's crackdown in its far-western Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity, she burst into tears.

Her mind flashed back to her cellmates in the camp she was detained in, to her father who died while in Xinjiang police custody. She felt vindicated.

"I felt there was justice, that there are people who care in this world," she said. "I felt like our testimonies, our efforts to raise awareness have finally paid off."

For Dawut and other camp survivors now outside China, the U.N.'s report on mass detentions and other rights abuses against Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang was the culmination of years of advocacy, a welcome acknowledgement of abuses they say they faced at the hands of the Chinese state.

The long-delayed assessment released late Wednesday by the U.N. human rights office in Geneva concluded that China has committed serious human rights violations under its anti-terrorism and anti-extremism policies and called for "urgent attention" from the U.N., the world community and China itself to address them.

The report was at the center of a tug-of-war between rights groups and the Chinese government, which had repeatedly sought to stymie its publication. It largely corroborates earlier reporting by researchers, activist groups and the news media, while steering away from estimates and other findings that cannot be definitively proven.

The significance of the assessment, survivors say, is the weight and authority of the United Nations. Though individual governments, including the United States and the parliaments of France and the U.K., have criticized the crackdown before, such declarations were brushed aside by Beijing as political attacks by Western countries.

"This time, China can't avoid this accusation," said Tahir Imin, a Uyghur publisher in exile with dozens of relatives in prison. "The United Nations is a neutral organization, the highest organization. ... It's a stain on the Communist Party."

The Chinese government swiftly

Relatives in Xinjiang blocked her calls and texts. Two weeks later, an ex-neighbor called, saying her father had died while in police custody. The exact circumstances are unclear.

Now, Dawut said, it was all worth it.

"I felt like I did the right thing," she said. "I am walking the path of truth."

The U.N. report corroborated different aspects of the crackdown reported over the years, including forced labor, pervasive surveillance, family separations and coercive birth control measures.

But the focus of the report was squarely on the mass detentions. The rights office said it could not confirm estimates that a million or more people were detained in the internment camps in Xinjiang, but that it was "reasonable to conclude that a pattern of large-scale arbitrary detention occurred" at least between 2017 and 2019.

Interviews and AP visits to the region show that China appears to have closed many of the camps, which it called vocational training and education centers. But hundreds of thousands of people continue to languish in prison on vague, secret charges, with leaked data showing one county in Xinjiang has the highest known imprisonment rate in the world.

Among those who fled Xinjiang, there was a palpable sense of relief, as they had worried that the U.N. report would be suppressed or watered down. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet had said little after visiting Xinjiang on a government-organized tour in May, prompting criticism and concern from Uyghur groups.

Dina Nurdybay, an ethnic Kazakh who spent almost a year in detention, said she was worried when she heard Bachelet had visited Xinjiang at Beijing's invitation. Nurdybay said she had been forced in the camps to sing and dance for journalists and officials, parrot propaganda and pretend life was great there. She worried that outside investigators would be tricked.

"It's all lies," she said. "You think it's voluntary?"



Now, she said, she hopes the U.N. will help people like her escape harassment and live in peace. Every time she speaks to journalists, she said, Chinese police haul away her uncle and interrogate him for days at a time, telling him he should make her “shut up.”

Mihrigul Tursun, who testified about the camps before the U.S. Congress in November 2018, said the price she paid for speaking out was constant threats to her safety and a state-sponsored smear campaign. She’s been called a liar, followed by cars, photographed at restaurants by strangers. She is now under FBI watch, she said, after men dressed in hoodies broke her window and slipped a threatening letter under her door, forcing her to move seven times.

Before she went public, she spent sleepless nights sobbing, pondering whether to speak out. If she did, she knew she could never go back home, that she might never see her parents again.

But she remembered the women held in the cell with her. They had sworn an oath together: Whoever made it out would speak out about what they had witnessed inside, no matter the consequences.

“I feel like a dead person. They killed my dreams, they killed my hopes. I lost everything when I was in the camps,” Tursun said. “But today I feel a little better, because all that hard work has born some fruit.”

But, she added, the report is just the beginning. She won’t be satisfied, she said, until all the detention facilities are closed.

“We need results, we need action,” she said. “I need to know after the U.N. report, what can we do after that?”

AP NEWS

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APPENDIX VIII. *Associated Press'* Article

Government and politics

UN cites possible crimes vs. humanity in China's Xinjiang

By JAMEY KEATEN and EDITH M. LEDERER September 1, 2022



GENEVA (AP) — China's discriminatory detention of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups in the western region of Xinjiang may constitute crimes against humanity, the U.N. human rights office said in a long-awaited report Wednesday, which cited "serious" rights violations and patterns of torture in recent years.

The report seeks "urgent attention" from the U.N. and the world community to rights violations in Beijing's campaign to root out terrorism.

U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet, facing pressure on both sides, brushed aside multiple Chinese calls for her office to withhold the report, which follows her own, much-criticized trip to Xinjiang in May. Beijing contends the report is part of a Western campaign to smear China's reputation.

The report has fanned a tug-of-war for diplomatic influence with the West over the rights of the region's native Uyghurs and other ethnic groups.

The report, which Western diplomats and U.N. officials said had been all but ready for months, was published with just minutes to go in Bachelet's four-year term. It was unexpected to break significant new ground beyond sweeping findings from researchers, advocacy groups and journalists who have documented concerns about human rights in Xinjiang for several years.

But the 48-page report comes with the imprimatur of the United Nations and its member countries — notably including rising superpower China itself. The report largely corroborates earlier reporting by advocacy groups and others and injects U.N. heft behind the outrage that victims and their families have expressed about China's policies in Xinjiang.

"Beijing's repeated denial of the human rights crisis in Xinjiang rings ever-more hollow with this further recognition of the evidence of ongoing crimes against humanity and other human rights violation in the region," Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International's secretary-general, said in a statement.



CHINA'S UYGHURS

AP Exclusive:
China's Uighurs
work to fend off
pull of jihad

China's
crackdown on
Uighurs spreads
to even mild
critics

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in Syria take aim
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Digital police
state shackles
Chinese
minority

The run-up to the report's release fueled a debate over China's influence at the world body and epitomized the on-and-off diplomatic chill between Beijing and the West over human rights, among other sore spots.

China shot back, saying the U.N. rights office ignored human rights "achievements" made together by "people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang."

"Based on the disinformation and lies fabricated by anti-China forces and out of presumption of guilt, the so-called 'assessment' distorts China's laws, wantonly smears and slanders China, and interferes in China's internal affairs," read a letter from China's diplomatic mission in Geneva issued in response to the U.N. report.

China released a 122-page report titled "Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism in Xinjiang: Truth and Facts" that defended its record and was distributed by the U.N. with its assessment.

The U.N. report says "serious human rights violations" have been committed in Xinjiang under China's policies to fight terrorism and extremism, which singled out Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim communities, between 2017 and 2019.

The report cites "patterns of torture" inside what Beijing called vocational training centers, which were part of its reputed plan to boost economic development in region, and it points to "credible" allegations of torture or ill-treatment, including cases of sexual violence.

Across all, perhaps, the report warns that



...the “arbitrary and discriminatory detention” of such groups in Xinjiang, through moves that stripped them of “fundamental rights ... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity.”

The report called on China to release all individuals arbitrarily detained and to clarify the whereabouts of individuals who have disappeared and whose families are seeking information about them.

The report was drawn in part from interviews with former detainees and others familiar with conditions at eight detention centers. Its authors suggest China was not always forthcoming with information, saying requests for some specific sets of information “did not receive formal response.”

The rights office said it could not confirm estimates of how many people were detained in the internment camps in Xinjiang, but added it was “reasonable to conclude that a pattern of large-scale arbitrary detention occurred” at least between 2017 and 2019.

According to investigations by researchers and journalists, the Chinese government’s mass detention campaign in Xinjiang swept an estimated million or more Uyghurs and other ethnic groups into a network of prisons and camps over the past five years.

Beijing has closed many of the camps, but hundreds of thousands continue to languish in prison on vague, secret charges.

The report said that reports of sharp increases in arrests and lengthy prison sentences in the region strongly suggested a shift toward formal incarceration as the principal means for large-scale imprisonment and deprivation of liberty — instead of the use of the “vocational training centers” once touted by Beijing.

“This is of particular concern given the vague and capacious definitions of terrorism, ‘extremism’ and public security related offenses under domestic criminal law,” the report said, saying it could lead to lengthy sentences, “including for minor offenses or for ~~ensuring~~ in conduct



protected by international human rights law.”

Some countries, including the United States, have accused Beijing of committing genocide in Xinjiang. The U.N. report made no mention of genocide.

In Tokyo, Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno welcomed the publication of the report and said, “We will continue asking China to explain with transparency as well as requesting them to make a clear positive move.”

Bachelet said in recent months that she received pressure from both sides to publish — or not publish — the report and resisted it all, treading a fine line while noting her experience with political squeeze during her two terms as president of Chile.

In June, Bachelet said she would not seek a new term as rights chief and promised the report would be released by her departure date on Aug. 31. That led to a swell in back-channel campaigns — including letters from civil society, civilians and governments on both sides of the issue. She hinted last week her office might miss her deadline, saying it was “trying” to release it before her exit.

Bachelet had set her sights on Xinjiang on taking office in September 2018, but Western diplomats voiced concern in private that over her term, she did not challenge China enough when other rights monitors had cited abuses against Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang.

In a statement from her office early Thursday, Bachelet said she had wanted to take “the greatest care” to deal with responses and input received from the Chinese government last week. Such reports are typically shared with the concerned country before final publication, but generally to check facts — not to allow vetting or influence of the final report.

“I said that I would publish it before my mandate ended and I have,” she said after the report was published.

Critics had said a failure to publish the report would have been a glaring black



mark on her tenure, and the pressure from some countries made her job harder.

"To be perfectly honest, the politicization of these serious human rights issues by some states did not help," said Bachelet, who early on staked out a desire to cooperate with governments.

"I appeal to the international community not to instrumentalize real, serious human rights issues for political ends, but rather to work to support efforts to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights," she added.

Her trip to the region in May was widely criticized by human rights groups, the U.S. administration and other governments as a public relations exercise for China.

Hours before the publication, the spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Stephane Dujarric, said the U.N. chief had "no involvement" in how the report was drafted or handled, citing his commitment to Bachelet's independence.

Sophie Richardson, China director at Human Rights Watch, said Bachelet's "damning findings explain why the Chinese government fought tooth and nail to prevent the publication of her Xinjiang report, which lays bare China's sweeping rights abuses."

Richardson urged the 47-member Human Rights Council, whose next session is in September, to investigate the allegations and hold those responsible to account.

—

Lederer reported from the United Nations. Ken Moritsugu in Beijing contributed to this report.

APPENDIX IX. *The New York Times'* Article

The New York Times | <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/asia/china-xinjiang-uyghurs.html>

For Uyghurs, U.N. Report on China's Abuses Is Long-Awaited Vindication

The report's assessment that China's crackdown in Xinjiang could amount to "crimes against humanity" gives new momentum to a campaign to pressure Beijing.



By Austin Ramzy

Sept. 1, 2022

HONG KONG — At first China said there was "no such thing" as re-education centers that held vast numbers of people in its far western Xinjiang region. Then, as more reports emerged that hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and members of other largely Muslim groups were being detained, Beijing acknowledged the camps' existence but described them as vocational training centers.

When overseas Uyghurs spoke out about the authorities' abuses in Xinjiang, China targeted their families back home, sentencing their relatives to long prison terms and using the full weight of state media and prominent Chinese diplomats to denounce the activists as liars and frauds.

For the many Uyghur activists who have campaigned — often at great personal cost — to bring China's intense crackdown in Xinjiang to light, a United Nations report released on Wednesday that largely validated their claims was a powerful, if long-delayed, vindication.

The 48-page report, which said that China had committed grave human rights abuses in Xinjiang, sharply undercuts Beijing's aggressive efforts to discredit Uyghurs who dared to speak out. It also gives new momentum to the Uyghur activists' cause and an opportunity for rights campaigners to put the issue before the U.N. Human Rights Council later this month and increase pressure on businesses to distance themselves from China.

"As I was reading the entire report, I was fighting back tears," said Rayhan Asat, a Uyghur lawyer in Washington whose brother, Ekpar, was sentenced in 2020 to 15 years in prison in Xinjiang. "It was a long-awaited recognition of the suffering of my brother and millions like him."



Rayhan Asat with a portrait of her brother, Ekpar, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison in Xinjiang. The U.N. report "was a long-awaited recognition of the suffering of

my brother and millions like him," she said. Gabriella Demczuk for The New York Times

Many overseas Uyghurs and other activists had doubted that the United Nations office would release such a forceful report, given Beijing's growing influence over the international body and the reluctance of Michelle Bachelet, who stepped down on Wednesday as the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, to criticize China.

But in the final minutes of her term in office, Ms. Bachelet's office released a document that said China's crackdown in Xinjiang may amount to crimes against humanity, a stark assessment that surprised some critics who felt her office was increasingly willing to pull its punches in exchange for access and better ties with Beijing.

"I am heartened that courageous survivors' voices were given their deserved weight," said Ms. Asat, the lawyer in Washington. She said that it was difficult to read some sections of the report, which described credible reports of torture, mistreatment and sexual assault while in custody.

"I know my brother was subject to brutal torture and all sorts of inhumane treatment," she said, referring to his experience when he was in internment camps for three years until 2019. "I try not to think about it. It's self-defeating and doesn't help me remain vigilant about why I'm fighting."

Activists said they had grown increasingly concerned during Ms. Bachelet's final days in her job, when she hinted that the report, which had already been delayed for nearly a year, might not come out before she left. China had urged her office not to release the document and submitted lengthy replies after the government was shown a draft, per the standard procedure of the U.N. office.



Michelle Bachelet, the former U.N. high commissioner for human rights. Her office released the Xinjiang report just minutes before her term ended on Wednesday. Fabrice Coffrini/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

The United Nations attached China's 131-page response as an annex. It called the report a "so-called 'assessment'" that was "based on disinformation and lies."

While several Uyghur activists said it would have been useful to see the report far earlier, they hoped its release would give added weight to a campaign that they say has been eclipsed by the coronavirus pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and other international issues.

"Hopefully, it will ignite another fire, and so it will get more attention from other countries, other NGOs and the U.N. and there will be more action to stop it," said Ferkat Jawdat, a Uyghur in Virginia whose mother was imprisoned in Xinjiang and now is in isolation at her home in Urumqi, the regional capital.

Some activists remained critical of the U.N. human rights organization, saying it did not go far enough in pushing

China for accountability. They noted it did not call the repression in Xinjiang a “genocide,” a conclusion reached by the United States and an unofficial tribunal in Britain, even as the report outlined components of such an assessment, including a “stark” decline of Uyghur birthrates, the destruction of shrines and mosques and curbs on Uyghur language instruction.

“Despite well-documented evidence of state-sponsored torture and the intended destruction of the entire Uyghur ethnic groups through massive concentration camps, physical and mental torture, slave labor, massive displacement, enforced sterilization to prevent population growth and separation of children from their parents, the U.N. report came short of calling the crime by name,” said Mehmet Tohti, executive director of the Ottawa-based Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project. “It seems to me that the report has gone through serious haircuts.”



An indoctrination center in Hotan, Xinjiang, in 2019. Gilles Sabrié for The New York Times

Still, for the those who have seen their family members imprisoned and themselves attacked publicly by the Chinese state, the report offers a victory, even as it falls short of their goal of freedom for their relatives.

The report gives evidence to China’s critics that they can take before the Human Rights Council, the United Nations’ leading rights body, to push for greater accountability. Rights groups have called on the council to set up formal mechanisms to investigate China for violations of international law and identify those responsible, although Beijing and nations that support it could thwart such an effort.

“It is imperative that nations take this report and make concrete steps toward stopping these crimes against humanity and holding China accountable for them,” said Rushan Abbas, a Uyghur American activist and former Defense Department translator whose sister was sentenced to 20 years in prison in apparent retaliation for Ms. Abbas’s efforts to speak out about the repression in Xinjiang.

“I hope that the U.N. will use their influence and position to advocate for the freedom of all the innocent Uyghurs like my loving sister.”

APPENDIX X. BBC's Article

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Uyghurs: China may have committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang - UN

1 September



GETTY IMAGES

China is accused of detaining up to a million Uyghurs and other Muslims in detention camps in Xinjiang

By Matt Murphy & Flora Drury & Tessa Wong
BBC News

The UN has accused China of "serious human rights violations" in a long-awaited report into allegations of abuse in Xinjiang province.

China had urged the UN not to release the report - with Beijing calling it a "farce" arranged by Western powers.

The report assesses claims of abuse against Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities, which China denies.

But investigators said they found "credible evidence" of torture possibly amounting to "crimes against humanity".

Human rights groups have been sounding the alarm over what is happening in the north-western province for years, alleging that more than one million Uyghurs had been detained against their will in a large network of what the state calls "re-education camps".

The BBC's own reporting in recent years has uncovered documentation - including police files detailing those in detention - which appear to support the claims, as well as allegations of rape, torture and forced sterilisation.

China has always vociferously denied any wrongdoing.

However, the UN's report concluded that "the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups ... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity".

It also found:

- "Allegations of patterns of torture or ill-treatment, including forced medical treatment and adverse conditions of detention, are credible, as are allegations of individual incidents of sexual and gender-based violence"
- "Credible indications of violations of reproductive rights through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies since 2017"
- "Similarly, there are indications that labour and employment schemes for purported purposes of poverty alleviation and prevention of 'extremism'... may involve elements of coercion and discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds"

The report recommended that China immediately takes steps to release "all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty".

Beijing has already rejected the findings, with Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin telling reporters the "so-called suggestions were pieced together based on disinformation to serve political objectives".

- [The faces from China's Uyghur detention camps](#)
- [Who are the Uyghurs?](#)

The World Uyghur Congress welcomed the report and urged a swift international response.

"Despite the Chinese government's strenuous denials, the UN has now officially recognised that horrific crimes are occurring," Uyghur Human Rights Project Executive Director Omer Kanat said.

Xinjiang's Dabancheng detention centre





Source: Planet



There are about 12 million Uyghurs, mostly Muslim, living in Xinjiang. The UN said non-Muslim members may have also been affected by the issues in the report.

The US and lawmakers in several other countries have previously denounced China's actions in Xinjiang as a genocide, but the UN stopped short of making the accusation.

Beijing - which saw the report in advance - denies allegations of abuse and argued that the camps are a tool to fight terrorism.

China has always insisted that Uyghur militants are waging a violent campaign for an independent state, but it is accused of exaggerating the threat in order to justify repression of the Uyghurs.

Its delegation to the UN human rights council in Geneva on Thursday rejected the findings of the report, which it said "smeared and slandered China" and interfered in the country's internal affairs.

The Xinjiang Police Files - the title given to the cache by a consortium of international journalists of which the BBC is part - have formed the basis of a large part of reporting done by the BBC on the Uyghurs in recent years. Here, the BBC's former China correspondent John Sudworth reveals some of what the cache of documents have been able to tell us.

In the most significant document in this part of the dataset, officers are ordered to be prepared to use the weapons in the event of an escape.

When the alarm is triggered, the papers say, the perimeter roads must be sealed off, the buildings locked down and the camp's own armed police "strike group" sent in.

After a warning shot is fired, if the "student" continues to try to escape, the order is clear: shoot them dead.

China insists that the camps provide grateful and willing Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities with lessons that steer them away from the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

In some regards, they bear a passing resemblance to schools, with the rote learning of Chinese and the reciting of propaganda slogans.

But the cache goes further than ever before in showing the harsh, involuntary nature of these facilities designed to target almost any aspect of Uyghur identity, and replace it with an enforced loyalty to the Communist Party.

- [Read the full piece here: Xinjiang Police Files: Inside a Chinese internment camp](#)

The report has long been the subject of intense international attention, with UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet admitting last week she had been under "tremendous pressure to publish or not to publish".

Some Western human rights groups alleged Beijing was urging her to bury damaging findings in the report, especially after publication was delayed several times.

Ms Bachelet defended the delay, arguing that seeking dialogue with Beijing over the report did not mean she was "turning a blind eye" to its contents. But Amnesty International called it "inexcusable".

In the end, the report was made public just 13 minutes before the end of her four-year tenure.

- [The cost of speaking up against China](#)
- [China's 'tainted' cotton](#)
- [Inside a Chinese internment camp](#)

And while it has been welcomed by many, some have expressed disappointment - including the World Uyghur Conference. Spokesman Zumretay Arkin said they had "expected her to be firmer on China overall".

Olaf Wientzek, director of the Geneva office of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, went on to accuse Ms Bachelet of having "avoided the aftermath" of the report's publication.

Ms Bachelet, meanwhile, has blamed the "politicisation" of the issue by some countries, saying it made "engagement more difficult and... trust-building and the ability to really have an impact on the ground more difficult".

Now attention will turn to what will happen next.

Uyghur rights activists are calling for a commission of inquiry to be set up, and asking businesses around the world to cut all ties with anyone abetting the Chinese government in its handling of the Uyghurs.

Tom Tugendhat, an MP and chair of the UK's foreign affairs select committee, said the findings of the report represented an "extremely serious charge" and rejected Beijing's argument that the allegations were stoking anti-Chinese sentiment. Germany has called for the release of all arbitrarily detained Uyghurs.

However, there is unlikely to be much pressure from inside China: the issue of Uyghur human rights abuses has long been a taboo topic and heavily censored - as of Thursday afternoon, the UN report had yet to be mentioned in Chinese mainstream media or social media platforms.



| China's ambassador: 'There is no such concentration camp in Xinjiang'

More on this story



[China 'has created dystopian hellscape'](#)

APPENDIX XI. *The Guardian's Article*

Uyghurs

• This article is more than 3 months old

Five key points from the UN report on Xinjiang human rights abuses

Damning report cites human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims in north-west Chinese province



📷 Security staff at the visitors' hall of a Xinjiang detention centre that has room for at least 10,000 people. Photograph: Mark Schiefelbein/AP

Helen Davidson in Taipei

🐦 @heldavidson

Thu 1 Sep 2022 13:44 BST

China has committed “serious human rights violations” against Uyghur Muslims in [Xinjiang](#) province that could amount to crimes against humanity, the outgoing UN human rights commissioner has said in a long-awaited and [damning report](#).

Crimes against humanity

The top line of the UN high commissioner for human rights (OHCHR) report is that the commissioner’s office found credible evidence of torture and other human rights abuses that were likely to be “crimes against humanity”.

The report included allegations of people being strapped by their hands and feet to a “tiger chair” and beaten, women raped, and others held in extended solitary confinement. Others appeared to have been waterboarded, as the report described individuals “being subjected to interrogation with water being poured in their faces”.

Rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch [have also determined](#) that crimes against humanity are being committed against Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. The UN didn’t call this a genocide, as the US government and others have.

Anti-extremism

The report was highly critical of the Chinese government’s anti-extremism doctrine, which underpins the crackdown. It said the laws and regulations were vague and ill-defined, open to individual interpretation, and blurred the line between indicators of concern and suspected criminality. Both categories also contained a copious number of benign acts classed as extremism despite having no connection to it, such as having a beard or a social media account.

Such indicators may simply be “the manifestation of personal choice in the practice of Islamic religious beliefs and/or legitimate expression of opinion” it said.

Accusations of extremism could result in people being referred to detention facilities at multiple stages along the investigative process by police, prosecutors or the courts.

Arbitrary detention

The report found there was an acute risk of arbitrary detention and that it was “reasonable to conclude that a pattern of large-scale arbitrary detention occurred in [vocational education and training centre] facilities, at least during 2017 to 2019”. It pushed back on Beijing’s claims that the facilities were schools or training centres where participants were free to join and leave. The report said such “placements” amounted to a form of deprivation of liberty.

“A deprivation of liberty occurs when a person is being held without his or her consent,” it said.

“Consistent accounts obtained by the OHCHR, however, indicate a lack of free and informed consent to being placed in the centres; that it is impossible for an individual detained in such a heavily guarded centre to leave of their own free will.”

Two-thirds of the former detainees interviewed by the OHCHR reported being subject to treatment that would amount to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

Forced labour

The report also pushed back on China’s rejection of forced labour accusations, finding them to appear discriminatory in nature or effect, and to involve elements of coercion. It said the labour schemes were closely linked

to the anti-extremism framework and arbitrary detention, which “raises concerns in terms of the extent to which such programmes can be fully voluntary”.

Forced medication and sexual abuse

Detainees were also forced to take medication or injections without explanation of what it was. It noted persistent claims of sexual abuse and violence in the facilities, and government denials which often used “personal or gendered attacks” against the women reporting allegations.

The report also found the Chinese government made a “clear link between frequency in child births and religious ‘extremism’”. It said there were “credible indications of violations of reproductive rights through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies”, including allegations of forced abortions, contraception and sterilisation. It noted Xinjiang’s rate of sterilisation was 243 procedures for every 100,000 inhabitants, compared with a national average of 32.

APPENDIX XII. *The Guardian's Article*



Uyghurs

'Our people are still trapped': Uyghur exiles demand action on abuses

Campaigners criticise failure of UN report to label China's crackdown on Muslim minorities genocide



Helen Davidson *in Taipei*

🐦 @heldavidson

Mon 5 Sep 2022 12.59 BST

I feel like my house is on fire, it's burning down and my children, my family is trapped inside," said Zumrat Dawut via video link. "I scream and scream for the world to come, and help me put out the fire, but at times I feel like no one is coming to our rescue."

Last Wednesday, as Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, finished her term and released a [long-awaited report](#) on abuses in Xinjiang, Dawut was protesting alongside other Uyghur exiles in Washington DC.

"The report was all we could think about," she said. "We were eager to find out about how reflective it would be about what has happened to our people. Any kind of crime you can think of is happening to [Uyghurs](#)."

The 45-page report was published years after the world first learned of a huge crackdown on Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the Chinese region of [Xinjiang](#), including mass detention, re-education, and religious and cultural oppression.

From the time of receiving the first notifications to publication, the report took half a decade to compile. It determined that the Chinese government had been committing long-running human rights abuses against Uyghur and other ethnic Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, likely to the level of crimes against humanity.

The report demolished Beijing's counter-terrorism framework, which it used to justify the crackdown, and found credible evidence of torture and assault, mass arbitrary detention, forced medical procedures and "credible indications" of coerced family planning, including forced sterilisation.

Victims and rights groups had feared a watered-down report more in line with the statement delivered immediately by Bachelet after a highly orchestrated and [controversial visit](#) to Xinjiang. But instead it was - within the confines of the UN's cautious language - damning. China's government, which had praised Bachelet's post-visit statement as informed and truthful, furiously dismissed the investigative report as smears and lies.

Dawut is an outspoken advocate for Uyghur victims of oppression, particularly women, and has told her story again and again, in the hope of spurring global action. She and her family fled to the US in 2019, after she spent more than two months in the detention camps, where she says she was shackled, interrogated, beaten and forcibly sterilised.

The UN report added little to what is already known, but the fact that it came from the world's leading human rights body, of not one

government but hundreds, gave relief and hope to many victims.

Rayhan Asat, a Uyghur activist and human rights lawyer based in the US, said: “On a personal level, it’s been one of those few nights I feel like I can sleep knowing that the atrocities will soon end ... I am hopeful, optimistic.

“The Chinese government says [the report] does no good to anybody. That is utterly wrong. It helps all the victims whose voices and agency are totally taken away. Let the victims speak for themselves.”



Rayhan Asat's brother Ekpar disappeared into Xinjiang's detention network in 2016. Photograph: Jeenah Moon/Reuters

The report also noted the evidence of Chinese government reprisals against those who spoke out - including by “personal or gendered attacks” - and their families.

The Chinese government has named Dawut in press conferences, releasing personal information and photos, and calling her a liar. She - like many others - has cut off contact with loved ones for their protection. Asat’s family remains in Xinjiang and she cautiously speaks to them occasionally, but says they were barricaded in their home during Bachelet’s visit to the region.

Asat said: “We should be able to express our grievances and sorrow with our family.”

Zubayra Shamseden has not spoken to her siblings for more than five years, including one brother indefinitely detained since 1998, and has lost a number of other family members.

She had been expecting a highly censored report, dictated by Beijing, but “fortunately, it confirmed what we’ve been telling the world and trying to make world understand about [the] Uyghur situation for many decades”.

Shamseden hopes the UN can use its power to hold [China](#) accountable and launch “worldwide action”.

She said: “I wish to see actions now, not just statements, reports, ‘concerns’ only. The Uyghur matter should be discussed at the UN security council and the human rights council.”

Human rights groups have called for the UN’s human rights council to [swiftly table](#) the report, and pass resolutions for an immediate and independent investigation.

Asat, whose [brother disappeared](#) into Xinjiang’s detention network in 2016, said locating and releasing missing Uyghurs must be a priority.

“Many Uyghurs have disappeared and we don’t know what happened to them,” she said. “For Syria, they established missing persons mechanisms ... In other instances its done though the ICC [international criminal court] but we’re far from there yet.”

All those the Guardian spoke to criticised the report’s lack of comment on whether China is [committing genocide](#), as has been declared by the US government, as well as the Canadian and Dutch parliaments, and several rights and legal groups.

Shamseden said: “It described in detail China’s abuses ... against my people, which may be crimes against humanity. But it is not strong enough in terms of naming that [sic] atrocities, which is a genocide.”

Dawut said such statements cannot stand on their own. “They declared it’s a genocide but didn’t do anything to stop it,” she said of the US, Dutch and Canadian declarations.

“We had family, parents, friends; we loved each other, we had a dynamic society. When we faced this genocide, the whole world, almost all the countries, pushed us away to suffer by ourselves.”

She returned again to the analogy of the fire in the house. “Our people are still inside, trapped,” said Dawut. “Without any action, it is all meaningless.”

APPENDIX XIII. *Le Monde's* Article

INTERNATIONAL

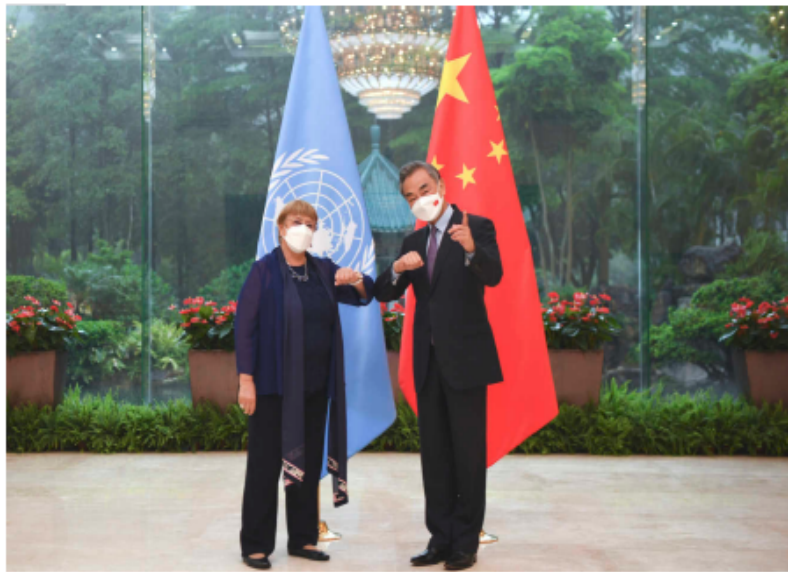
UN report on treatment of Uyghurs in China warns of possible 'crimes against humanity'

In the past five years, the Chinese government swept an estimated million Uyghurs and other ethnic groups into a network of prisons and camps in the Xinjiang region.

Le Monde with AP and AFP

Published on September 1, 2022 at 00h18, updated at 10h31 on September 1, 2022

- 2 min.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet in Guangzhou (China), on May 23, 2022. DENG HUA / XINHUA VIA AP


The office of United Nations Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet published its long-awaited report on alleged rights violations in China's western Xinjiang region on Wednesday, August 31, brushing aside Beijing's demands to keep a lid on it.

The report says that torture allegations are credible and cites possible crimes against humanity: "The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups, pursuant to law and policy, in context of restrictions and deprivation more generally of fundamental rights enjoyed individually and collectively, may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity," the report said, adding that the world must now pay "urgent attention" to the human rights situation in the Xinjiang.

The report, which Western diplomats and UN officials said had been all but ready for months, fanned a tug-of-war for diplomatic influence with the West over the rights of the region's native Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups. It was published with just minutes to go in Ms. Bachelet's four-year term. The report was not expected to break significant new ground beyond sweeping findings from independent advocacy groups and journalists who have documented concerns about

human rights in Xinjiang for years.

But it comes with the imprimatur of the United Nations, and the member states that make it up. The run-up to its release fueled a debate over China's influence on the world body and epitomized the on-and-off diplomatic chill between Beijing and the West over human rights, among other sore spots.

Read more  ['Xinjiang Police Files': Exclusive documents reveal China's machine of repression against the Uyghurs](#)

Beijing 'firmly opposed' to the release of the report

China on Thursday said the report was being used as a "political tool" against Beijing. "The so-called critical report you mentioned is planned and manufactured firsthand by the US and some Western forces, it is wholly illegal and invalid," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing.

"The report is a hodgepodge of misinformation, and it is a political tool used as part of the West's strategy of using Xinjiang to control China," he added. Wang said the UN rights office had "sunk to (becoming) the thug and accomplice of the US and the West against the vast majority of developing countries".

Michelle Bachelet said in recent months that she received pressure from both sides to publish – or not publish – the report and resisted it all, treading a fine line all the while noting her experience with political squeeze during her two terms as president of Chile.

Read more  [Beijing tries to discredit forthcoming UN report on Uyghur repression](#)

In June, Ms. Bachelet said she would not seek a new term as rights chief, and promised the report would be released by her departure date on August 31. That led to a swell in back-channel campaigns – including letters from civil society, civilians and governments on both sides of the issue. She hinted last week her office might miss her deadline, saying it was "trying" to release it before her exit. Ms. Bachelet had set her sights on Xinjiang upon taking office in September 2018, but Western diplomats voiced concerns in private that over her term, she did not challenge China enough when other rights monitors had cited abuses against Muslim Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang.

In the past five years, the Chinese government's mass detention campaign in Xinjiang swept an estimated million Uyghurs and other ethnic groups into a network of prisons and camps, which Beijing called "training centers" but former detainees described as brutal detention centers. Beijing has since closed many of the camps, but hundreds of thousands continue to languish in prison on vague, secret charges. Some countries, including the United States, have accused Beijing of committing genocide in Xinjiang.

More on this topic [China's brutal machine of repression is running at full speed](#)

APPENDIX XIV. *The Washington Post's* Article

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

THE POST'S VIEW

Opinion | The U.N. report on China's atrocities against the Uyghurs is damning

By the [Editorial Board](#)

September 2, 2022 at 5:48 p.m. EDT

There are no surprises in the long-awaited United Nations report on China's brutal human rights violations in the region of Xinjiang. But its contents, and the circumstances around its release, should bring renewed attention to China's persecution of the Uyghur people — and Beijing's determination to cover it up.

The report, released Wednesday by U.N. Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, concludes that China's actions in Xinjiang "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity." The details are chilling. Investigators found that, under the guise of "counterterrorism," the Chinese government perpetuated "severe and undue restrictions on a wide range of human rights." Central to this campaign was the mass detention of Uyghurs in "vocational education and training centers," a sanitized term for internment camps. Former detainees and camp workers described a litany of abuses and torture, including beatings with electric batons while strapped to "tiger chairs" and solitary confinement. In addition, survivors spoke of being given unidentified injections or pills that made them drowsy, while some women reported sexual violence and rape.

Investigators also documented allegations of enforced disappearances, family separations and the targeting of Uyghurs abroad, and raised concerns about the apparent destruction of religious sites. Crucially, they found "credible indications of violations of reproductive rights," including first-hand accounts of forced birth control and abortions.

These findings echo what many other institutions had already concluded. The United States rightly declared last year China's repression of the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang a genocide. Other organizations have also accused Beijing of crimes against humanity. But the United Nations's imprimatur is significant, particularly because many advocates and survivors worried the report would never see the light of day.

In December, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights Office said the report would be released in "a matter of a few weeks." In May, after Ms. Bachelet embarked on a highly restricted visit to China, she released a tepid statement that invoked Beijing's own rhetoric on Xinjiang. Her anodyne comments are all the more galling in light of the damning report, which was well underway. As recently as last week, Ms. Bachelet claimed her office had faced "tremendous pressure to publish or not to publish" it. She finally released the document on her very last day in office, alongside a 131-page rebuttal from China replete with propaganda and diversions.

Despite the delay, the report offers a strong, clear accounting of China's violence and oppression against Uyghurs — and should be a call to action. It will need to be formally presented to the U.N. Human Rights Council, so member states can begin discussing next steps. The Biden administration, for its part, should vigorously enforce the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which bans products from Xinjiang unless companies can prove they were not manufactured with forced labor. It should also use its authority under the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act to impose sanctions on officials complicit in the persecution of Uyghurs. Meanwhile, all governments must move to protect whistleblowers and dissidents from reprisal by Chinese authorities.


Beijing cannot be allowed to continue committing atrocities with impunity. The U.N. report represents a small, overdue step toward accountability and justice. Now, it's on the international community to follow through.

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INÍCIO / INTERNACIONAL

Ativista uigur em Lisboa

Rushan Abbas deu visibilidade à perseguição de Pequim à sua etnia, e mais ainda quando a sua irmã desapareceu. A história pode ser vista num documentário exibido esta segunda-feira em Lisboa, com a presença da protagonista.



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César Avó
26 Setembro 2022 — 01:16

f t g +

TÓPICOS

- Documentário
- Internacional
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- uigures

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DESPORTO
Namorada de Ronaldo: "Que Deus e o teu amigo Fernando continuem de mãos dadas"

Relacionados

Internacional. [EUA dizem que Pequim tem de responder por "genocídio" uigur, após relatório da ONU que deixou China irada](#)

Direitos Humanos. [Rushan Abbas: "Guterres está a apoiar um regime genocida"](#)

A sua história, bem como a da repressão da sua minoria étnica, foi retratada em *In Search of my Sister*, documentário realizado por Jawad Mir, cineasta de origem paquistanesa radicado no Canadá. Nesta segunda-feira, às 15.30, ambos vão estar em Lisboa, na Faculdade de Ciências Humanas da Universidade Católica, para a exibição do filme e disponíveis para responder a perguntas do público, tal como o dirigente do Congresso Mundial Uigur Abdulhakim Idris.

O papel de Abbas foi determinante para dar a conhecer aos norte-americanos a existência da política de Pequim relativamente ao seu povo, que alguns classificam de genocida, e que passa pela criação de campos de concentração (o regime chama campos de reeducação), nos quais os uigures sofrem todo o tipo de abusos.

Rushan Abbas foi ouvida mais do que uma vez no Congresso dos EUA, que aprovou a lei de prevenção do trabalho forçado, a qual proíbe a importação de produtos daquela região chinesa.

A alta comissária dos Direitos Humanos da ONU Michelle Bachelet despediu-se do cargo, no início do mês, com a publicação de um relatório a condenar a China pelas "graves violações de direitos humanos no contexto da aplicação das estratégias governamentais de contraterrorismo e contra o extremismo" sobre os uigures e outras minorias de fé muçulmana e disse ter sido sujeita a "tremendas pressões" para não divulgar o relatório.

COMENTÁRIOS

APPENDIX XVI. *The New York Times'* Article

The New York Times | <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/opinion/international-world/china-human-rights-xinjiang-un.html>

GUEST ESSAY

Why China's Crimes in Xinjiang Cannot Go Unpunished

Sept. 30, 2022

By Nicholas Bequelin

Mr. Bequelin is an expert on China's human rights situation.

For years, China denied committing human rights violations in Xinjiang, denounced its accusers and tried to block a United Nations investigation. Now we know why.

The U.N.'s long-delayed findings by the United Nations, released late last month, confirmed the most chilling allegations by ethnic Uyghurs: systematic mass internment, disappearances, torture, cultural and religious erasure and political indoctrination of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

The U.N.'s human rights office, which compiled the report, said these allegations may amount to crimes against humanity, the most severe violations, along with genocide and war crimes, under international law. Despite China's long record of documented human rights abuses, this was the first time it faced such grave accusations from the United Nations.

The international community, working through the U.N., must respond with meaningful steps to end the abuses, free prisoners and hold Beijing to account.

The stakes extend far beyond Xinjiang's borders.

Strong action is essential to draw a line in the sand against an orchestrated campaign waged for years by China to gut the U.N.'s ability to protect human rights. This goes well beyond China's frequent use of its Security Council veto to shield abusers like Myanmar and Syria. Chinese efforts include a behind-the-scenes war of attrition to undermine mechanisms like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the 47-nation Human Rights Council, which is tasked with addressing violations.

China's offensive takes many forms, ranging from its attempt to defund the human rights component of U.N. peacekeeping operations in 2018 to intimidating civil society groups, blocking their U.N. accreditations and manipulating the Human Rights Council.

The Chinese Communist Party's ultimate goal is to cripple the international community's ability to censure countries for human rights violations. The party's constitution candidly defines its rule as a "dictatorship," and it sees human rights — and global scrutiny — as threatening its ability to crush challenges to its monopoly on domestic power and potentially impeding Beijing's programs to build overseas influence like its Belt and Road Initiative.

China's leverage is growing. The rise of authoritarianism around the world provides a widening base of support from like-minded regimes. Global dependence on Chinese trade, investment and financial assistance allows China to strong-arm other countries into silence. Chinese nationals lead or occupy high positions in several U.N. agencies, and Beijing exercises growing control over other appointments and financial affairs. Its readiness to interfere with vital U.N. work was made clear in its obstruction of World Health Organization efforts to determine the source of the coronavirus.

Xinjiang shows how effective this strategy can be.

Reports emerged in 2017 that China was incarcerating up to a million Uyghurs and other minorities in re-education camps. (Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, have made up the bulk of Xinjiang's population for centuries and have long chafed under Beijing's control.) China eventually acknowledged that the camps existed, saying they were part of Islamic deradicalization efforts.

Horrifying allegations poured out: children separated from parents, Uyghurs punished when relatives spoke out overseas, women forcibly sterilized or sexually abused and what the U.N. report called an "unusual and stark" decline in Uyghur birthrates. In leaked documents on the Xinjiang crackdown, President Xi Jinping called in 2014 for "absolutely no mercy."

Denying abuses, China sought to prevent global action. The U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet repeatedly postponed publishing the investigation and during a visit to Xinjiang in May recited Chinese talking points. Her office released its report just minutes before her four-year term ended at midnight on Aug. 31, allowing her to avoid addressing its findings, and broke with precedent by refraining from recommending further international action.

The foot dragging hasn't stopped there.

Despite condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and human rights abuses in Myanmar, Iran and elsewhere, the U.N. secretary general, Antonio Guterres, has been largely silent on the Xinjiang report, omitting it from a Sept. 20 address to the General Assembly in which he lamented other rights abuses around the world. Volker Türk, who will replace Ms. Bachelet in October, has likewise not yet indicated any plans to follow up.

This is deeply concerning because, for all its defects, the United Nations plays a crucial role in protecting human rights.

Before the world body was founded after World War II, no international framework existed for addressing the ethnic cleansing, mass murder, colonial brutality and other human rights abuses that states routinely committed, often against their own people.

U.N. founders absorbed the grim 20th-century lessons of two world wars, tens of millions of deaths and the Holocaust, realizing that protecting human rights was essential for world peace. Nazi Germany was viewed as proof that political repression often precedes the rise of belligerent regimes.

The United Nations Charter embraced human rights, resulting in 18 international treaties that obligate signatories to protect everything from free expression to children's rights. Human rights crises are frequently addressed by the Security Council, which can refer them to the International Criminal Court when international crimes are suspected. Following up on findings of violations often clashes with geopolitical and economic realities, but human rights finally have a seat at the table of world politics.

China is working to undo this.

It is up to the Human Rights Council, in session until Oct. 7, to decide on any follow-up. Potential options include a mandate to conduct further investigation, which has been done for Russian aggression in Ukraine and many other crises, and to press for accountability.

China, a member of the council, will fight tooth and nail. It has already denounced the U.N. investigation as "illegal," calling the human rights office a "thug and accomplice of the U.S." Beijing has garnered less support than expected at the council in defending its policies in Xinjiang, possibly reflecting discomfort with the enormity of the abuses. But meaningful action will require vigorous engagement by member states and courageous leadership from Mr. Guterres and Mr. Türk.

Confronting China over Xinjiang won't automatically halt its sabotage of the U.N.'s human rights mission. But inaction would be a severe blow to U.N. credibility and risks putting the world back on a slippery slope where violations are once again tolerated or even normalized. China is pushing the world in that direction. It's time to

push back.

Nicholas Bequelin (@bequelin) is a human rights expert and China specialist. He was Amnesty International's Asia director and a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch and is now a visiting scholar at Yale University's Paul Tsai China Center.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 22 of the New York edition with the headline: China's Crimes in Xinjiang Cannot Go Unpunished

APPENDIX XVII. *O Público's* Article

CHINA

Conselho dos Direitos Humanos da ONU chumba moção para debater denúncias de abusos em Xinjiang

Foi apenas a segunda vez na sua história que o organismo rejeitou uma moção. China critica iniciativa "perigosa", liderada pelo Ocidente, mas celebra resultado da votação.

António Saraiva Lima

6 de Outubro de 2022, 16:28



Uma mulher e o seu filho em Kashgar, na província de Xinjiang THOMAS PETER/REUTERS

O Conselho de Direitos Humanos das Nações Unidas rejeitou esta quinta-feira uma moção que tinha como objectivo agendar para o próximo ano um debate sobre as denúncias de abusos e de violações de direitos humanos por parte das autoridades chinesas contra minorias étnicas na província autónoma de Xinjiang, localizada na região Noroeste da República Popular da China.

Apresentada e apoiada por países como Reino Unido, Estados Unidos, Canadá ou Turquia, e com adesão de grande parte dos Estados do chamado mundo "ocidental", a moção foi chumbada por 19 votos contra, 17 a favor e 11 abstenções.

Foi apenas a segunda vez desde 2006, ano da fundação do organismo com sede em Genebra, na Suíça, que a maioria dos seus 47 membros rejeitou uma moção.

#HRC51 (https://twitter.com/hashtag/HRC51?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) | Draft resolution A/HRC/51/L.6 on holding a debate on the situation of human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of #China (https://twitter.com/hashtag/China?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw), was REJECTED. pic.twitter.com/TTbWnqQaKe (<https://t.co/TTbWnqQaKe>)

– UN Human Rights Council ?? #HRC51 (@UN_HRC) October 6, 2022 (https://twitter.com/UN_HRC/status/1578003299827171330?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Entre os Estados-membros do conselho que votaram contra (https://twitter.com/UN_HRC/status/1578003299827171330), ao lado da China, estão, sobretudo, países africanos, asiáticos e aliados de Pequim no Médio Oriente. No grupo dos que se abstiveram, estão países como Argentina, Brasil, Índia, Ucrânia ou México.

Segundo a Reuters, o resultado da votação foi celebrado com aplausos pelo lado vencedor da contenda.

“Desta vez, a China foi o alvo. Amanhã, qualquer outro país em desenvolvimento pode ser o alvo”, criticou Chen Xu, embaixador chinês no Conselho de Direitos Humanos, reforçando que Pequim se “opõe firmemente e rejeita categoricamente” os pressupostos da moção.

Mesmo sabendo que seria muito difícil fazer aprovar uma iniciativa desta natureza, contra uma potência mundial como a China, que tem vários aliados por todo o mundo, e que, ainda por cima, é membro permanente do Conselho de Segurança, os promotores da moção entenderam avançar com base no conteúdo do relatório (<https://www.publico.pt/2022/09/01/mundo/noticia/relatorio-onu-fala-possiveis-crimes-humanidade-xinjiang-2019047>) mais recente do Alto-Comissariado da ONU para os Direitos Humanos (ACNUDH) sobre o assunto.

Na sequência da controversa visita (<https://www.publico.pt/2022/05/29/mundo/noticia/bachelet-criticada-ido-xinjiang-visita-estritamente-controlada-china-2008135>) da então alta-comissária, Michelle Bachelet, à região chinesa, em Maio, o ACNUDH admitiu a possibilidade de se terem cometido “crimes contra a humanidade” contra a minoria muçulmana uigur e contra membros de outros grupos étnicos de Xinjiang.

“A extensão da detenção arbitrária e discriminatória de membros dos uigures e de outros grupos predominantemente muçulmanos (...) pode constituir crimes internacionais, em particular crimes contra a humanidade”, sublinhava o relatório.

“Campos de reeducação”

Com base em testemunhos (<https://www.publico.pt/2022/10/03/mundo/noticia/rushan-abbas-nao-haver-neutralidade-genocidio-escravatura-2022143>) de sobreviventes (<https://www.publico.pt/2022/08/21/mundo/noticia/sobreviver-xinjiang-gritar-bem-alto-china-ataca-sintome-poderosa-2016488>) e em diversas investigações (<https://www.publico.pt/2019/11/25/mundo/noticia/documentos-revelam-china-faz-transformacao-ideologica-uigures-xinjiang-1895053>) realizadas nos últimos anos, várias organizações de direitos humanos e alguns governos e parlamentos ocidentais acusam o Governo e o Partido Comunista chinês de já ter detido cerca de um milhão de uigures em centenas de campos de trabalho forçado de Xinjiang, onde são levados a cabo abusos físicos e psicológicos de vários tipos.

Pequim rejeita todas as acusações – particularmente aquelas que falam em “genocídio” (<https://www.publico.pt/2021/02/23/mundo/noticia/parlamento-canadiano-acusa-china-genocidio-tratamento-uigures-1951792>) – e diz que as infra-estruturas em causa são “campos de reeducação” (<https://www.publico.pt/2018/10/16/mundo/noticia/pequim-diz-que-os-campos-de-reeducacao-de-muculmanos-lhes-torna-a-vida-mais-colorida-1847786>) destinados a “capacitar” quem lá se encontra, para que percam a disposição e a vontade de promoverem ou se juntarem aos movimentos separatistas e terroristas da região.

Michele Taylor, embaixadora dos Estados Unidos no Conselho de Direitos Humanos da ONU, lamentou o chumbo de uma moção que, garante, apenas pretendia “criar um fórum neutral para o debate” sobre o tema, que daria, inclusivamente, uma oportunidade à China para se defender das acusações num palco privilegiado.

“Nenhum país aqui representado tem um historial perfeito de direitos humanos”, assumiu, citada pela Associated Press. “Nenhum país, não importa o quão poderoso é, deve ser excluído de debates no conselho. Isso inclui o meu país – os Estados Unidos – e inclui a República Popular da China.”

Apesar da rejeição da moção, Taylor garantiu que os EUA “vão continuar a trabalhar de forma muito próxima com os seus aliados para procurarem justiça e atribuírem responsabilidade pelas vítimas de abusos e violações de direitos humanos, incluindo os uigures de Xinjiang”.

A Amnistia Internacional também reagiu de forma crítica ao resultado da votação desta quinta-feira, dizendo que o mesmo “protege os autores de violações de direitos humanos em vez de proteger as vítimas” e que põe em causa a reputação do Conselho de Direitos Humanos da organização mundial.

“Que Estados-membros do conselho votem contra discutir uma situação em que a própria ONU diz que podem ter ocorrido crimes contra humanidade é uma ridicularização de tudo aquilo que o Conselho dos Direitos Humanos supostamente devia defender”, lamentou a secretária-geral da organização, Agnes Callamard, num comunicado (https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/china-xinjiang-vote-failure-betrays-core-mission-of-un-human-rights-council/?utm_source=TWITTER-IS&utm_medium=social&utm_content=7813423167&utm_campaign=Amnesty&utm_term=-No).
