

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Maltreatment of Uyghur Turks**

Approved by President of the general assembly

**Letter from the President of the General Assembly**

Today, humanity faces the repercussions of its unwillingness to recognize the patterns that constitute the great mosaic of the history of humankind. As Andre Gide once said, “Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens, we have to keep going back and beginning all over again.” The global community is under the threat of a pandemic, and it’s trying to find ways to adapt itself to the structural change after the pandemic, which is called the new normal. However, are we really adapting to a new normal when we have already gone through similar paradigm shifts, especially during the past century?

This new normal gave people and governments an insight into their broken systems, an insight into this dispersed world, with everything that's going wrong with the world right now people are trying to go back and find a “ remedy for a dispersed world “ which will be our theme for this year. In the words of Leo Tolstoy, “everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself.” At SafirMUN we will be tackling most of this year's rising topics that were exposed. We will be presenting our delegates with a platform that can hopefully help them find a remedy for this dispersed world.

***Sary Matar***

***PGA of SafirMUN***

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**Introduction to the Committee**

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental organization within the United Nations framework tasked with ensuring the advocacy and defense of human rights around the world, as well as investigating and making decisions on cases of human rights abuses. Every year, it has the opportunity to address all thematic human rights topics and problems that demand its intervention. The diplomatic discussion takes place at their office in Geneva, Switzerland.

The United Nations General Assembly elects the Council, which is made up of 47 UN Member States. The previous United Nations Commission on Human Rights was substituted by the Human Rights Council.

1. Functions & Mandate

* With insight from other relevant parties, the Council serves as a platform for dialogue among states. The Council may adopt resolutions calling on states to take certain measures or enforce those values as a result of its deliberations, or it may establish processes to examine or oversee areas of importance.

* Multiple “special procedures” have been developed or renewed by the Human Rights Council. Experts assigned to oversee human rights in particular countries with significant human rights issues are known as special procedures. Specific specialists or working committees may be seen as special methods. The UN Human Rights Council also oversees the Universal Periodic Assessment, which examines each UN Member State's overall human rights record.

* The Council also collects reports claiming a trend of human rights abuses, which are investigated by the Working Group on Communications and forwarded to the Working Group on Situations if necessary. The Working Group on Situations makes recommendations to the Council based on substantiated claims of recurring trends of gross violations.

**Introduction to the Agenda Item**

As per the topic, the focus centers upon understanding the historical crisis of the mistreatment of Uyghur Turks, and how this human rights contravention has been ongoing until this point. As this involves the government of the Republic of China, we need to understand the root causes of such tribulations with reference to the variables below:

1. Historical & Political Context
2. Origins of Uyghur Turks
3. Reassertion of identity and Islamic revival among the Uyghurs of Xinjiang

The instability in Xinjiang (formerly known as East Turkestan) has become worse over the last two decades, and Uyghur nationalism has become stronger. This study guide attempts to shed focus on the factors that have contributed to the recent emergence of Uyghur nationalism, as well as the varying degrees it has taken alongside the arbitrary abuse towards them.

The deciding role of a socio-political backdrop shaped by colonial concepts will be highlighted, in order to understand how nationalist ideology has been strengthened with the aim of returning political authority to the Uyghurs—or, more broadly, the Turkic-speaking community of Xinjiang, within a fully autonomous or even separate state. We shall also underline the impact of recent changes within the political context of China and Central Asia.

Conclusively, with the comprehensive outline of the Uyghur Turks context, there will be observations made whether the United Nations has undergone necessary actions to investigate and intervene in this humanitarian issue.

**Key Terms**

1. **Nationalism:** ideology based on the idea that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests.
2. **Arbitrary treatment:**
3. **Socio-political:** of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and political factors.
4. **Autonomous:** having the right or power of self-government.
5. **Buffer Zones:** a neutral area separating conflicting forces.
6. **Great Han chauvinism: an** updated version of Han Chinese nationalism, a term which Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Mao Zedong coined in order to describe the chauvinism of the Han Chinese, first on March 16, 1953, in order to criticize the ethnocentrism which existed among the dominant Han people of China.

**Focused Overview**

1. Historical & Political Context

* June of 1990 saw a head-spinning transformation of the region with the new economic policies announced by the Chinese government. Starting with the regional capital Ürümqi, many cities began changing at incredible speed. China has given great importance to the region’s infrastructure investments for its political and economic integration, including opening airports for the smallest administrative units and building highways.



* The 1.452 km2 Southern Xinjiang Railroad project, a prominent example, was completed in May 1999. Xinjiang is China’s wealthiest region in terms of underground resources. 8o% of all the oil extracted in China comes from this region, as well as 45% of the gas and 75% of the gold. The abundance of underground resources and the state’s investment in this sector are also among the factors in economic development.

* In March 2000, the Chinese government started a new economic program encompassing western provinces, the Uyghur region among them. However, this transformation and economic development has not produced the desired outcome in Uyghur integration. The principal reason behind this is that while the indigenous population cannot make full use of the existing transformation and developments, the Han that have migrated from the outside are able to get a larger share of resources.

* The capital Ürümqi is an explicit testament to this situation. While prosperity and progress are felt clearly in predominantly Han neighborhoods, poverty is prevailing in areas where the Uyghur reside.

**Focused Overview**

1. Origin of Uyghur Turks

* Today, up to 20 ethnic groups, including Uyghur, Han Chinese, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Kazakh, live in this autonomous region of China. Xinjiang, where Uyghurs constituted the majority up until the 20th century, has not experienced stabilization but continuously changing administrations. Like other nations in the world that live in buffer zones, Uyghurs have long paid the cost of being situated between China and Central Asia. Both internal and external regional powers, on the other hand, have been put in a position where they were to adjust their maneuvering according to the ascendance or weakening of China’s central power.
* Hence, the lands that were a part of China during the powerful eras of Chinese dynasties have been witness to locally centered defiance and struggles for independence at the time of China’s weakness. In 1884, China changed the name of the region to Xinjiang, meaning “new frontiers”, declaring it a Chinese province.



* Making use of the turmoil of the Civil War and the shift from the empire to republic, local powers managed to establish the First East Turkestan Republic in 1933. This short-lived experience was followed by the declaration of independence of the Second East Turkestan Republic in 1944. China re-established control after the People’s Liberation Army entered the region. Beijing replaced the region’s provincial status on October 1st 1955 declaring it the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

**Focused Overview**

1. Reassertion of identity and Islamic revival among the Uyghurs of Xinjiang

* The revival of the Uyghurs’ Islamic culture and identity has also led, during the 1980s, to the formation of student associations aiming to promote the rights and culture of the Uyghurs: the Tengritakh Association (Tianshan), the Youth Association of East Turkistan, the Students’ Cultural and Scientific Association**.** Some of these student associations, which reflect the growing strength of the democratic student movement in China and challenge “Great Han chauvinism”, seem quickly to have adopted a militant style.

* In the thirty years between 1949 and 1979, almost no demonstration was held by the Xinjiang minority students in Xinjiang, but after 1980, student demonstrations have broken out one after another. This is a new phenomenon. Uyghur students from seven universities and colleges including Xinjiang University in Urumqi demonstrated on December 12th 1985. They were openly against the Central Government's decision.

* Some of the students from Xinjiang University got together and organized this well-planned and well-organized political incident for which the Xinjiang University became the headquarter. Before and after that incident, some pro-separatism posters and flyers with contents such as: “Chinese out of Xinjiang”, “Independence for Xinjiang”, “Cut off the railroad from China proper to Xinjiang” were discovered in Urumqi and other districts. In June 1986, another demonstration was organized by a student association in Xinjiang University. Using the “support for the minority education” as a cover, they attacked the Central Communist Party's minority autonomy policy, damaging the good relationship among the nationalities. They used slogans such as “No big Chinese Nationalism”, “No Chinese population transfer to Xinjiang”, and created a very bad influence in the society.
* Outside the campuses, the revival of the *meshrep*expresses the wish to revitalize Uyghur culture and identity. At the start of the 1990s, young Uyghurs of the region of Ghulja (Yining) launched a movement to re-invigorate these gatherings which have spread rapidly. However, the movement has also taken, according to the Chinese authorities, a “counter-revolutionary” turn. Fearing that it might become a focus for protest and “local nationalism” (*difang minzuzhuyi*), the regional government banned the *meshrep* in 1995; the people who had launched the movement were also imprisoned**.**

**Focused Overview**

1. Current Situation

* As of 2016, the Chinese government has used a massive surveillance scheme and heavy policing to brutalize ethnic Muslims in western China. The operation of concentration camps (“re-education camps,” according to the Chinese government) in Xinjiang Province has concerned the United Nations, human rights organizations, and a bipartisan alliance of US lawmakers. In the camps, an estimated 1 million Uighurs and other Muslims have been imprisoned.

* In late 2018, allegations surfaced that China was constructing a vast network of constructs in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It was being used to arrest hundreds of thousands, if not over a million, Muslim Uighur community members accused of participating in or sympathizing with protests and strikes on government bodies. The Chinese government reportedly dismissed the existence of such a scheme, but later accepted the camps, claiming that they were centers for training Uighurs and redeploying them into active employment.

* While the dispute between the Uighurs and the Chinese government in Xinjiang has escalated in recent years, it is not unprecedented. The current repression is the state's latest leap in an ethno-religious and political battle that has raged for years and, in various ways, for centuries: it did not begin with the Chinese Communist Party's rise to power in 1949. It did not begin with the spread of political Islam from the Middle East or Afghanistan, as some have thought. While there is evidence that some Uighurs have collaborated with both factions, Al-Qaeda and ISIS are not the primary perpetrators of the violence in Xinjiang.

* It is difficult to comprehend the present situation without first grasping the historical context. This is well known, and the current generation of Uighurs, many of whom are descendants of preceding activists, are acutely aware of the unique course of Uighur culture, which is interconnected with, though not entirely subsumed in, the local history of the Republic of China.

* The Chinese government officially confirmed in late July 2019 that the majority of Uighur prisoners have been freed from the camps, but journalists and analysts have found proof that the camps are still in use. Despite satellite photographs and eyewitness testimony, the Chinese government continues to deny that human rights violations are occurring.

**The Blockade**

As this ongoing mistreatment towards Uighur Turks centers upon conflicting political context and support towards the People’s Republic of China, the blocs will be divided into three (3):

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| 1. Condemning China’s Action |
| Ensure that the country you are representing is involved with imposing sanctions on officials in the Republic of China, and also vocally condemning the mass genocide against the Uighur Turks. |

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| 1. In support of China’s Action |
| Countries which made a joint UN statement in 2020, showing support towards China’s action on the basis that a series of measures in response to threats of terrorism and extremism in accordance with the law to safeguard the human rights of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.  Another reason for defending China is their appreciation of China in the principle of non-interference in other countries' affairs and have therefore placed significance on their economic and political relations. |

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| 1. Neutral stance |
| Set of countries which did not sign any formal and official letter or joint statement condemning or questioning the inhumane acts carried out by the government of China.  And also, the silence of the leaders or government which is due to their country’s stance upon non-interference in foreign issues. |



**Involved Major Parties and Their Views**

1. **Japan**

* In response to a query about China's treatment of Uighurs at a December news conference, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said that it is critical that fundamental principles in the international community, such as democracy, protection for basic human rights, and legal system, be maintained in China.

* At a regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in July, Japan was the only Asian country among a delegation of 22 that called on China to stop oppressing Uighurs in Xinjiang. The Japanese government has been outspoken on topics involving China, such as the Hong Kong protests and the mass monitoring and imprisonment of Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang region.

* However, instead of resorting to lackluster critiques that have little to no political effect, Japan should take more proactive measures in resolving China's human rights concerns, as it did at the Human Rights Council in July.

1. **European Union**

* Chen is accused by the EU of illegal detentions and degrading treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities, as well as systemic violations of their right to freedom of faith or belief.

**Timeline of Events**

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| 1759 | After nearly a century of conflict with the Zunghars, the Qing dynasty gains dominance in the modern-day Xinjiang region. Since then, the province has been referred to as "Xinjiang”. |
| 1762 | For the area, the Qing created a military government. Indirect rule is overseen by a general, while local Turkic and Mongol officials run the administration. |
| 1864 | In the oasis of Kucha, so-called "Muslim uprisings" erupt. Muslims targeted Qing garrisons and non-Muslims after years of discontent with new taxation and rumors that the military government was preparing to massacre Muslims. |
| 1877–1884 | The Hunan Army rebuilds Xinjiang, resettling tens of thousands of displaced citizens and new Chinese refugees and establishing an ethnic assimilation policy. |
| 1933 | Kashgar is the birthplace of the first East Turkestan Republic. This short-lived state brought together the interests of many groups from Xinjiang's different oases, including both Turkish nationalists and Islamists. |
| 1937–1938 | Following Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union, Warlord Sheng orders a roundup of intellectuals. Many Uyghur, Kazakh, and other autochthonous scholars and political leaders are imprisoned or murdered by his administration. |
| 1946 | While its leadership retains control of the region, the Second East Turkestan Republic is officially disbanded and incorporated into Xinjiang province. |
| 1955 | The province is replaced by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Uyghurs made up more than 70% of the population, according to the first national census in 1953. |
| 1997 | Several people have died in a series of protests in Yining, Xinjiang's northwestern region (9 by official account, around 100 by dissident accounts). According to dissident sources, this results in the imposition of a two-week curfew and the detention of over 1,600 citizens. |



Question a Resolution Must Answer (QARMAs)

1. Define the root causes with reference to the mass surveillance of the Uyghur Turks under the Chinese government.
2. Why does the Chinese government value Xinjiang, the place where the majority of Uighurs live?
3. What are the repercussions based on the arbitrary treatments of the Chinese governments towards Uyghur Turks?
4. What kind of questions does the Chinese government ask to determine if anyone, specific to Uighur Turks, is "safe, normal, or unsafe"?
5. What are the ramifications of a government declaring an individual or a group of people "unsafe"? What happens to Uighurs considered "unsafe" by the Chinese government?
6. What is the concept of a surveillance state? Why would intrusive government monitoring of people jeopardize citizens' civil rights?

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