

Global Imams Urge Muslims to Boycott Beijing Olympics

By al-Mashareq, 2022-01-05

Islamic leaders of all denominations have told Muslims not to attend or participate in the games over China's ongoing oppression, torture and sexual abuse of Muslims in Xinjiang.

In solidarity with China's oppressed Uyghur Muslim population, the Global Imams Council has called on Muslims around the world to refrain from participating in or attending the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

The event "directly serves the interests of the tyrannical and despotic regime responsible for the genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Uyghurs", the Muslim religious leaders said in a December 30 statement. "The Chinese government continues to violate Chinese Muslims' basic human and fundamental rights through oppression, torture and dictatorship," it said. "We stand in support of, and united with, the oppressed Uyghur Muslims."

The Global Imams Council is the world's first and largest transnational



non-governmental body of Muslim faith leaders from all Islamic denominations and schools of thought, according to its website. It is based in Baghdad. Beijing has been committing a litany of violations in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, which has a majority Muslim population, according to numerous media and NGO reports that have sparked global outrage.

More than a million people, most of them Uyghurs, have been arbitrarily detained in "political re-education" camps in Xinjiang.

Independent investigations and interviews with former camp inmates have brought to light physical and mental torture, brainwashing, systematic rape and sexual abuse inside the camps, which effectively serve as prisons.

Additionally, Chinese authorities have used various pretexts to damage or destroy two-thirds of the region's mosques and other sacred Islamic sites, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a detailed report in April. The Beijing Olympics are set to kick off February 4

and will continue through February 20.

Call to 'end genocide'

The council's move comes after the United States, United Kingdom and Australia last year announced a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

Washington, which has described Beijing's measures against Uyghurs as genocide, has ramped up sanctions against China.

President Joe Biden on December 23 signed into law a bill that bans imports from Xinjiang in response to concerns over forced labour.

The Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act bans the import of all goods from the Chinese region unless companies offer verifiable proof that production did not involve forced labour.

Xinjiang is one of the world's major producers of cotton, which has been singled out

for high priority enforcement action, along with tomatoes and polysilicon, a material used to produce solar panels.

An estimated 20% of garments imported by the United States each year include some cotton from Xinjiang.

The law gives the government "new tools to prevent goods made with forced labor in Xinjiang from entering US markets", US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

It will "further promote accountability for persons and entities responsible for these abuses", he added, calling on the Chinese regime to end "genocide and crimes against humanity".

The law also requires the US president to impose sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in the region.

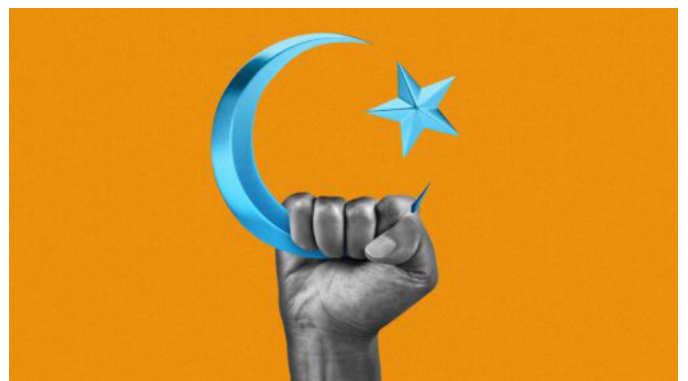
Global Imams Council Takes on China

By ANS, Posted by Sameer, 2nd February 2022

Chinese state media had published an article titled "NGO of Muslims fooled by anti-China WUC to call for boycott of Beijing Games"

New Delhi: The Chinese government has launched a defamatory and libellous campaign to discredit the Global Imams Council (GIC) and to character assassinate whoever advocates for the freedom of the Uyghur people, the GIC has said.

"We are China's latest victims. We consider these false allegations, manipulations, and accusations a provocation by the Chinese go-



vernment," the GIC said.

"Through our Imams, which exceed 1,300 members, we oversee the affairs of over 800 centres, mosques and organisations globally. We will not be intimidated, and we shall mul-

tiply our efforts by ensuring that the most leading Grand Ayatollahs, Muftis and Islamic Authorities in the Muslim world, Sunni and Shia, issue independent statements against the Chinese government's violations of human rights," the body said.

On January 28, Chinese state media Global Times published an article titled "NGO of Muslims fooled by anti-China WUC to call for 'boycott' of Beijing Games", containing lies and fabrications with the sole intention of distracting the public from its violations of human rights, and to defame this Council, the GIC said.

This statement is not a response to Global Times, as their agenda, ownership and history of justifying injustice are clear, it said. Instead, these clarifications are for the vulnerable readers they may have deceived, the GIC statement said.

The first claim was that the Global Imams Council was "fooled" by the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) to ban Muslim participation in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

"This is a lie, as we have an active Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the WUC, and we share the concerns of the Uyghur people that the Chinese government is

persecuting. The statement was our initiative and was not requested by the WUC," it said.

The second claim was that the Muslim leaders carbon copied onto our statement had opposed our statement.

"This is also a lie. Chinese Embassies threatened and pressured two of the mentioned Muftis to deny signing the statement, despite the fact that a 'CC' does not mean 'signature'. We then clarified this matter and personally contacted those Islamic authorities. Furthermore, we issued a separate statement assuring Muslims that we supported sporting activities but were only opposed to an event that served the interests of the Chinese government," the statement said.

The third claim was that the President of the Global Imams Council, Imam al-Budairi, was interviewed by a journalist in Iraq where he had supposedly stated that the World Uyghur Congress funds this Council.

This is another lie because not only was the name of the interviewer not disclosed, the President of this Council was never actually interviewed on this matter, nor did he meet with a journalist, the GIC statement said.





1/February/2022

STATEMENT ON THE FALSE CLAIMS BY CHINA'S STATE MEDIA

On the 28th of January 2022, Chinese state media “Global Times” published an article titled “NGO of Muslims fooled by anti-China WUC to call for 'boycott' of Beijing Games”, containing lies and fabrications with the sole intention of distracting the public from its violations of human rights, and to defame this Council. This statement is not a response to Global Times, as their agenda, ownership and history of justifying injustice are clear. Instead, these clarifications are for the vulnerable readers they may have deceived.

The first claim was that The Global Imams Council was “fooled” by the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) to ban Muslim participation in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. This is a lie, as we have an active Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the WUC, and we share the concerns of the Uyghur people that the Chinese government is persecuting. The statement was our initiative and was not requested by the WUC.

The second claim was that the Muslim leaders CC'd (Carbon Copied) onto our statement had opposed our statement. This is also a lie. Chinese Embassies threatened and pressured two of the mentioned Muftis to deny signing the statement, despite the fact that a ‘CC’ does not mean ‘signature’. We then clarified this matter and personally contacted those Islamic authorities. Furthermore, we issued a separate statement assuring Muslims that we supported sporting activities but were only opposed to an event that served the interests of the Chinese government.

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U.N. May Visit Chinese Region Shrouded by Rights Accusations

By Stephanie Nebhay and Gabriel Crossley, January 28, 2022

GENEVA/BEIJING, Jan 28 (Reuters) - The United Nations' human rights chief is talking with China for a potentially imminent trip to Xinjiang region, her office said on Friday, in what could provide rare close-up foreign scrutiny of accusations of abuses against ethnic Uyghurs.

Michelle Bachelet has long sought access to investigate an issue that has soured relations between Beijing and the West, bringing genocide accusations from Washington and a diplomatic boycott of the upcoming Winter Games.

China has denounced an international smear campaign.

Bachelet's office in Geneva said conversations were underway for a possible trip to the area in northwest China in the first half of the year. The South China Morning Post reported that a visit had been agreed for after the Feb. 4-20 Olympics.

"The parameters of that visit are still very much under discussion," Bachelet's spokesperson Rupert Colville told a U.N. briefing, adding that she would need access to civil society actors and high-level engagement from the government.

China has held some visits for journalists and diplomats in recent years, albeit in tightly-controlled conditions.

Rights groups accuse China of widescale abuses against Uyghurs and other minority



People walk by a street decoration for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics at National Olympic Sports Center on November 24, 2021 in Beijing, China. (Chen Xiaogen/VCG via Getty Images / Getty Images)

groups, including torture, forced labour and detention of 1 million people in internment camps.

China calls them re-education and training facilities, denies abuses, and says it is combatting religious extremism.

'CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY'?

Citing unidentified sources, The Morning Post said approval for Bachelet's visit was granted on condition it be "friendly" and not framed as an investigation, with no ensuing report.

Colville said the proposed trip was separate from a pending U.N. report on Xinjiang. "I can assure you they (our team) will be fending off any untoward approaches," he added.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, said Bachelet had been invited to visit a long time ago for the purpose of exchange and cooperation, and added that China opposed any “political manipulation” of a trip. With the U.N. Human Rights Council’s five-week session set to start on Feb. 28, activists and diplomats say the window is closing for Bachelet to publish the report. It is thought to be based so far on research and interviews with alleged victims and witnesses inside and outside of both Xinjiang and China.

U.S. lawmakers had wanted it released before the Olympics and activists are frustrated at the delay.

“No one, especially the world’s leading human rights diplomat, should be fooled by the Chinese government’s efforts to distract attention away from its crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic communities,” said Sophie Richardson, China director of New York-based Human Rights Watch, last week.

Japan Parliament Adopts Resolution on Human Rights in China

By Reuters, February 1, 2022



Lawmakers stand up to show their support as Japan’s parliament adopts resolution on human rights in China at the lower house of the parliament in Tokyo, Japan February 1, 2022, in this photo taken by Kyodo. Mandatory credit Kyodo/via REUTERS

TOKYO, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Japan's parliament adopted a rare resolution on Tuesday on what it called the "serious human rights situation" in China, and asked the government to take steps to relieve the situation.

Japan has already announced it will not send a government delegation to the upcoming Beijing Winter Olympics, following a U.S.-led diplomatic boycott over concerns about China's human rights condition, although Tokyo avoided explicitly labelling its move as such. Since taking office in October, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said on multiple occasions that Japan would not mince words with China when necessary, and in November appointed former defence minister Gen Nakatani as his aide on human rights.

The resolution, adopted by the lower chamber, said the international community has expressed concerns over such issues as internment and the violation of religious freedom in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Tibet and Hong Kong.

"Human rights issues cannot just be domestic issues, because human rights hold universal values and are a rightful matter of concern for the international community," the resolution said.

"This chamber recognises changes to the status quo with force, which are symbolised by the serious human rights situation, as a threat to the international community," it said. China's foreign ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that the resolution "ignores the facts, maliciously slanders China's human rights situation, seriously violates international law and basic norms governing international relations, grossly interferes in China's internal affairs, and is extremely egregious in nature."

When Japan launched a war against other countries, it committed countless crimes,

the statement added.

U.S. President Joe Biden in December signed into law legislation that bans imports from China's Xinjiang region over concerns about forced labour. Washington has labelled Beijing's treatment of the Uyghur Muslim minority genocide.

China denies abuses in Xinjiang, a major cotton producer that also supplies much of the world's materials for solar panels.

The conservative wing of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) sought the adoption of the resolution ahead of the Feb. 4 opening of the Beijing Winter Olympics although there were worries in the government about a potential economic impact, Jiji news agency has said.

There have long been competing views within the LDP about the approach to China. The party's more conservative wing is hawkish on China policy and seen as concerned primarily with defence issues. Other members of the party have pushed to preserve Japan's deep economic ties with its neighbour.

The parliamentary resolution called on the Japanese government to work with the international community in addressing the issue. "The government should collect information to grasp the whole picture ... , monitor the serious human right situation in cooperation with the international community, and implement comprehensive relieving measures," it said.

The resolution did not directly use the word "China" anywhere in the text, and steered clear of such expression as "human rights violation", saying, instead, "human rights situation", in a possible nod to close bilateral economic ties.

Japan relies on China not only as a manufacturing hub, but also as a market for items from automobiles to construction equipment.

Uyghurs Jailed for Religious ‘Crimes’ Believed to Be in Xinjiang Women’s Prison

By RFA, Shohret Hoshur, 2022.02.01

Zahire Memet and Gulbostan Ibrahim are from a family that has been devastated by China’s crackdown in the region.

Two female members of an extended Muslim Uyghur family serving long prison sentences for committing religious “crimes” are believed to be held in a women’s prison in the town of Sanji (in Chinese, Changji) in China’s far-western Xinjiang region.

Additionally, two male members of the family and an in-law are also serving life terms, the wife of one of them said.

The women are Zahire Memet, who is now 38, and her sister-in-law Gulbostan Ibrahim, who is now 33. Zahire Memet was sentenced to 15 years in prison for wearing a hijab, while Gulbostan Ibrahim, who is also known as Bostan Ibrahim, was sentenced to 17 years for not confessing to holding religious activities at home.

They are from a family in Korla (in Chinese, Kuerle) that has been ripped apart by China’s persecution of the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, sources told RFA. Zahire Memet’s mother Halcham Pazil and sisters Melikizat and Patigul Memet are also serving between seven and 20 years in Sanji Women’s Prison for religious activities in which they took part in 2013, according to a verdict issued by the Korla Municipal People’s Court in April 2019 and recently seen by RFA.

They all were retroactively sentenced after China criminalized such activities in 2018 when it issued de-extremification regulati-



Detained Uyghurs Zahire Memet (L) and her sister-in-law Zohregul Hudaberdi (R) in undated photos.

ons targeting Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang, purportedly to prevent acts of terrorism and ensure social stability.

The charges against the family were brought by the Korla Municipal Procuratorate. Korla is the second-largest city in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Zahire Memet, the third daughter of the family, “used to wear hijab and did not remove her hijab on time,” the verdict announcing her sentence said. Even though Chinese government officials repeatedly asked her not to wear a hijab, she continued doing so from 2010-2015, it said.

She was also convicted of attending religious preaching, providing a venue for religious instruction, and giving birth to one more child than permitted by law in 2015, the verdict said. She obstructed the law by “relying on superstition” because she did not abort her child, the document states.

Gulbostan Ibrahim was convicted of not admitting she had held religious teachings at her home, even though others who attended reported having done so. The verdict did not mention other crimes.

Although Chinese court and prosecutorial officials in Korla initially did not provide any information to RFA about where Zahir and Gulbostan were serving their sentences, one later confirmed that Zahir was serving her sentence at the women's prison.

"Cell block No. 5," the official said when asked where she was confined inside the detention center.

Another prison official confirmed to RFA that Zahir Mehmet was serving time there also. But another official took the phone and said they would not disclose information on Gulbostan Ibrahim because it was a "state secret" before hanging up.

After RFA ran earlier reports on the family, Yusup Firdavis, a Uyghur who lives in exile in Turkey, sent a message saying that he was the family's neighbor in Korla. He told RFA over the telephone that the family had not done anything harmful to society.

"They have not committed any crimes that can make them prisoners," he said. "This case is an example of Chinese racism against the whole Uyghur nation. I believe they are the victims of the Chinese policy to wipe out the Uyghurs from the surface of the earth. They are the victims of the Uyghur genocide."

Chinese government officials began confiscating copies of the Quran and prayer mats from Uyghur families in Korla in 2017. At that time, an official from the Korla village of Qarayulghuz said that some of the religious activities that had been permitted were now banned because they endanger national security.

Yusup Firdavis said that Uyghur families were

initially confused about what religious practices they could maintain and which ones they had to abandon.

Brothers locked up for life

Kifaye Yaqup, who married into the family and lives in Istanbul, told RFA that four other family members were also convicted of similar crimes, with three receiving life sentences, including her husband, Mehmet Memet, her brother-in-law Musajan Memet, and Musajan's wife, Zohregul Hudaberdi. She did not mention the name of the fourth person.

Mehmet and Musajan are two of the three sons of Halchem Pazil.

Kifaye said Mehmet, 47, became a successful entrepreneur after he resigned from his job. She has not been able to communicate with any of them since their arrest.

In late 2015, Kifaye and Mehmet went to Turkey to enroll their children in school there, she said. While she stayed with the children, Mehmet returned to Xinjiang but visited Turkey periodically until October 2016 when the Chinese government confiscated his passport.

"My husband is innocent," Kifaye said. "He didn't commit any crime that warrants any prison term, let alone life in jail."

Musajan Memet was expelled from Xinjiang University after he was found to have been



Detained Uyghur brothers Musajan Memet (L) and Mehmet Memet (R) in undated photos. Photos courtesy of an RFA listener

praying while a student there, Kifaye said. Afterwards, he was arrested twice when the Xinjiang government stepped up measures against the Uyghurs to combat “terrorism” under China’s new antiterrorism law.

The law, which took effect in January 2016, expanded the government’s powers to monitor peaceful citizens, tighten censorship, and give officials greater legal cover to imprison ethnic and religious minorities.

Musajan was sentenced to five years after his first arrest in 2008 and to three years after his second arrest in 2015. He was released on bail in 2017 just as authorities began a major crackdown on Uyghurs, she said.

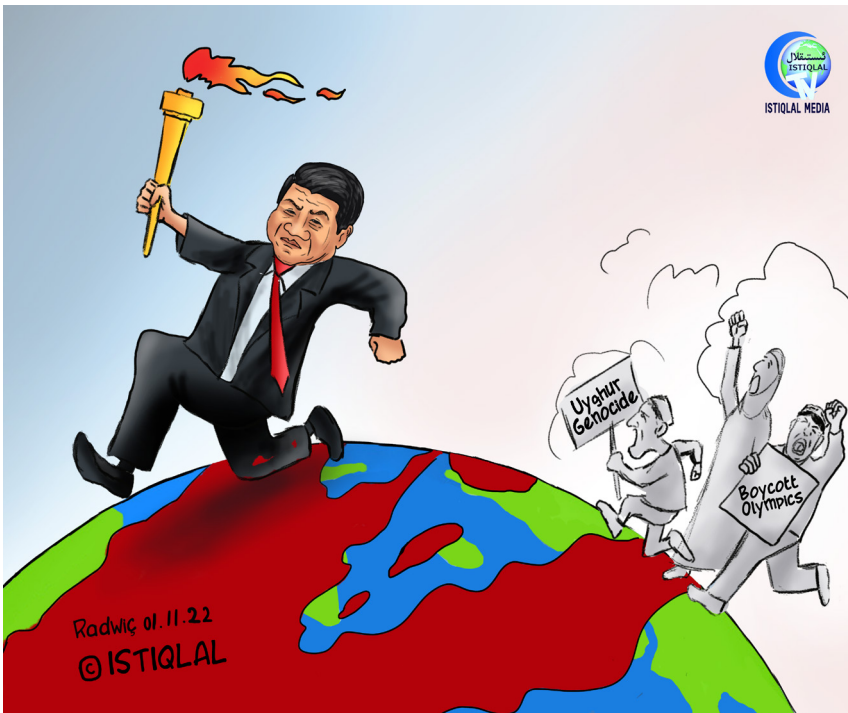
Musajan was later detained a third time and sentenced to life in prison, Kifaye said. His wife, Zohregul Hudaberdi, was also arrested then and received a life sentence. Her resignation from her job in the Korla municipal

government was cited as evidence of her “crime.”

Chinese government officials in Korla contacted by RFA refused to give any information about the two Memet brothers. But a security official from a neighborhood committee in Korla confirmed that Mehmet had been sentenced to life in prison and that Musajan had been charged with “terrorism,” though he could not provide further details.

“He is now in prison,” the official said. “He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Musajan was arrested earlier.”

RFA obtained a list from the Yangguang neighborhood committee in Korla of the names of local residents who had been sentenced. It listed Musajan as sentenced to life in prison on “terrorism” charges and serving his term in the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps prison in the city.



Boycott the Genocide Games



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