

China's Labour Policies in Xinjiang Are Discriminatory, ILO Body Says

By Emma Farge, February 11, 2022

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GENEVA, Feb 11 (Reuters) -An International Labour Organization committee has expressed “deep concern” about China’s policies in its far western region of Xinjiang, calling them discriminatory and asking Beijing to bring its employment practices into line with global standards.

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The report on the region, home to China’s minority Muslim Uyghurs, risks stoking geopolitical tensions between China and the United States at a sensitive time for Beijing as it hosts the Winter Olympics.

The United States accuses China of genocide and along with other Western nations has imposed a diplomatic boycott of the Games over China’s treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Allegations of rights abuses include some that are reviewed by the ILO committee, such as China’s alleged use of forced and prison labour. China denies the accusations.

“The Committee expresses its deep concern in respect of the policy directions expressed in numerous national and regional policy and regulatory documents and requests therefore the government to ... review its national and regional



Workers walk by the perimeter fence of what is officially known as a vocational skills education centre in Dabancheng in East Turkistan, September 4, 2018. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

policies with a view to eliminating all distinction, exclusion or preference,” the report released by the U.N. agency on Thursday said.

Specifically, the committee asked China to repeal provisions “that impose de-radicalisation duties on enterprises and trade unions” in Xinjiang and to amend political re-education provisions.

“As a ILO member state, the Chinese government is firmly committed to respecting, promoting and realizing the full access to productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all China’s ethnic minority groups including Uyghurs in Xinjiang,” its diplomatic mission in Geneva said on Twitter, adding that U.S. labour practices had previously fallen foul of the same committee.

The United States and Britain welco-

med the committee's findings and called on Beijing to take the steps requested.

An ILO official told Reuters that the alleged violations would be raised at a major conference in June.

This could lead to a formal complaint and the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate abuses on the ground, as occurred in Myanmar in the 1990s.

In its report, the ILO committee examined a number of allegations by the International Trade Union Confederation, including that Beijing has used a "widespread and systema-

tic" programme of forced labour throughout Xinjiang that violates an Employment Policy Convention.

The Chinese government called the allegations "untrue and politically motivated" in remarks summarised in the report.

China has been a member of the Geneva-based ILO since 1919 and has ratified many of its legally binding conventions.

The ILO committee is an independent body made up of 20 jurists to provide an impartial evaluation of all member states' application of global labour standards.

U.S. Adds Chinese Entities to Red-Flag Export List, WuXi Bio Shares Plunge

By Reuters, February 8, 2022

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -The U.S. Commerce Department said on Monday it had added 33 Chinese entities to its so-called 'unverified list', which requires U.S. exporters to go through more procedures before shipping goods to the entities.

The department said it was taking the step as it was unable to verify the legitimacy and reliability of those entities in relation to their use of U.S. exports. The entities included listed companies, universities as well as aerospace and electronics suppliers.

China's commerce ministry hit out at the U.S. decision, saying on Tuesday Washington should correct its "wrongdoings" and the United States should return to the track of cooperation and contribute more to the



FILE PHOTO: China's and U.S.' flags are seen printed on paper in this illustration taken January 27, 2022. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/IllustrationREUTERS

global economic recovery.

Stock in WuXi Biologics, whose units in Wuxi and Shanghai were added to the unverified list, plummeted more than 25% on Tuesday to wipe HK\$77 billion (\$9.9 billion) off its market value. Trade in shares

of the company, which makes ingredients for vaccines including AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, was later halted.

WuXi Bio said that while it had imported manufacturing equipment subject to U.S. export controls, Washington's move would have no impact on its business or ongoing services to global partners.

CEO Chris Chen told an investor call on Tuesday that WuXi Bio was prevented by U.S. export controls from reselling or re-exporting items purchased from the United States but that the Commerce Department had been unable to conduct checks that WuXi Bio was in compliance due to the pandemic. "Because of COVID-19, they have not been able to travel here in the last two years to verify us, so they have put us on this 'unverified list'," he said.

"The affected companies are only in Shanghai and Wuxi and our factories in Shanghai

and Wuxi have already been built, so there is no longer any need to buy large amounts of hardware for bioreactors."

The company's lawyers plan to negotiate with the U.S. Commerce Department, he added.

Shares in Hymson, a manufacturer of laser and automation equipment, slid more than 7% after a unit was added to the list.

Hymson said in a statement that the addition would not have any significant or adverse effect on its operations or financial situation. It added that it would evaluate what impact the listing could have on the company's future development.

(\$1 = 7.7947 Hong Kong dollars)

(Reporting by David Brunnstrom and Doina Chiacu; Additional reporting by Roxanne Liu, Brenda Goh and Jason Xue; Editing by Louise Heavens, Catherine Evans and Bernadette Baum)

China's Inclusion of Uyghur As Olympic Torchbearer A 'Distraction,' US Diplomat Says

By Alim Seytoff and Lobsang Gelek, 2022.02.07

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Meanwhile,
a soldier involved
in a Himalayan clash,
who also carried the
torch, draws rebuke
from India
”

China asked a Uyghur athlete to light the Olympic cauldron at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Games to distract viewers from the genocide of the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs in China's far-western Xinjiang region, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said.

"This is an effort by the Chinese to distract us from the real issue here at hand, that Uyghurs are being tortured and Uyghurs are the victims of human rights violations by the Chinese. And we have to keep that front and center," Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told chief White House correspondent



A card calling the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics 'The Genocide Games' is displayed as an activist rallies in front of the Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles, California, calling for a boycott of the Games due to concerns over China's human rights record, Nov. 3, 2021.

Jake Tapper on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday.

Cross-country skier Dilnigar Ilhamjan, also spelled as Dinigeer Yilamujiang, was the final torchbearer along with Zhao Jiwen, a skier from China's dominant Han majority, at the opening ceremony on Feb. 4, as Chinese President Xi Jinping looked on.

Dilnigar Ilhamjan, a 20-year-old from Altay (in Chinese, Aletai) prefecture in Xinjiang, competed in the women's 7.5km + 7.5km skiathlon on Feb. 5 in Zhangjiakou, finishing 43rd out of 65 participants. She later declined to meet with reporters, even though Olympic athletes typically answer questions after their performances.

More than a dozen countries, including the U.S., decided not to send governmental representatives to Beijing to protest China's dis-

mal human rights record, including its persecution of the Uyghurs.

The U.S. and lawmakers from other Western nations have declared that China's violence against the Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang constitutes genocide and crimes against humanity. Beijing has denied the accusations and has said countries like the U.S. are trying to politicize the Olympics. "This is not business as usual," Thomas-Greenfield said. "We know that a genocide has been committed there. We've called them out on it. [President Joe Biden] has called them out on it. And we've made clear that crimes against humanity are being committed in China," she said.

When asked by Reuters at a press conference on Monday if the selection of a Uyghur

torchbearer was intended to be symbolic, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said there were clear criteria for selecting torchbearers for the Games, including competitive results, age, popularity and ethnicity, to ensure broad representation.

“At the opening ceremony, the Olympic flame passed through three generations of Chinese athletes, representing the continuation and inheritance of the Olympic spirit,” he said. “We are glad to see athletes from all ethnic groups, including Dinigeer Yilamujiang, join the Chinese delegation for the Beijing Olympic Winter Games.

“This reflects that China’s policy of vigorously developing winter sports and promoting people’s health is benefiting people of all ethnic groups, and that China is a big family boasting ethnic unity,” the spokesman said. Zhao went on to say that the “so-called genocide in Xinjiang is the biggest lie of the century.”

“The above-mentioned remarks of some American politicians about ‘human rights abuses against the Uyghurs’ are nothing less than lying through their teeth,” he said.

UN secretary-general’s request

A day before Thomas-Greenfield’s comments, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres told Xi and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Olympic Games that he expected them to allow U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet to visit China, including Xinjiang, according to a U.S. readout of the meeting.

Guterres, who supported the Winter Games being held in Beijing, “expressed his expectation that the contacts between the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Chinese authorities will allow for a credible visit of the high commissioner to China, including Xinjiang,” it said.

For about three years, Beijing has denied Bachelet unfettered access to Xinjiang to conduct an independent assessment of the situation there.

A statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry about Guterres’ meeting with Xi omitted the secretary-general’s request and said that he commended China for successfully organizing a large and safe Winter Olympics.

Dolkun Isa, president of the Germany-based Would Uyghur Congress, said he was surprised that the U.N. secretary-general urged the Chinese government to let Bachelet visit Xinjiang, given Guterres’ “silence over the Uyghur genocide in the past four years, in spite of international condemnation of China’s atrocities.”

“We welcome his statement because the U.N. has the ultimate authority to investigate atrocity crimes in countries where they’re taking place,” he told RFA. “China has denied the U.N.’s legitimate request to investigate the crimes against Uyghurs in the past three years under all kinds of pretexts.”

Of the 176 athletes competing in the Olympics for China, 20 represent Uyghur, Tibetan, Hui and other ethnic minority groups.

Meanwhile, many Uyghurs applauded Tur-



Olympic torch bearers Dilnigar Ilhamjan (L) and Zhao Jiawen (R) hold the torch in the middle of a giant snowflake during the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games, at the National Stadium, known as the Bird’s Nest, in Beijing, China, Feb. 4, 2022. Credit: AFP

kish ski jumper Fatih Arda İpçioğlu for wearing a helmet and skis that appeared to display the flag of the independence movement of East Turkistan, the Uyghurs' preferred name for the Xinjiang region for which they aspire to gain independence from China and establish their own nation.

The flags of Turkey and East Turkistan are similar. Both feature a white crescent and a single white star, though Turkey's are set against a red background and East Turkistan's are on a light blue background. Olympic rules forbid displays of political and religious symbols as well as unofficial flags.

The 24-year-old wore the gear when he competed on Saturday. A day later he declined to say if the crescent and star on his blue skis was a statement in support of China's Uyghurs, the Associated Press reported.

Bülent Aksoy, an economics professor at Hacı Bahram University in Ankara, Turkey, tweeted in Turkish: "The first Turk, Fatih Arda İpçioğlu, to qualify in ski jumping branch at the

Winter Olympics, competed with the East Turkistan flag on his helmet and skis, protesting the Chinese persecution in China. Congratulations, Fatih Arda."

PLA Olympic torchbearer

A Chinese People's Liberation Army soldier who served as a torchbearer on Feb. 2 during the Winter Olympics torch relay also raised concern because of his involvement in a deadly clash between Chinese and Indian security forces in a disputed area of the Himalayan Mountains in June 2020.

Qi Fabao sustained head wounds in the conflict in the Galway Valley, which marked the first time soldiers were killed in a confrontation between the two militaries in more than four decades.

On the eve of the start of the Games, India announced that its top diplomat in China would skip the opening and closing ceremonies because of the decision to let Qi carry the Olympic torch.



Turkey's Fatih Arda İpçioğlu competes during the ski jumping men's normal hill individual trial round at the Zhangjiakou National Ski Jumping Center during the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, China, Feb. 6, 2022. Credit: AFP

Chinese government spokesman Zhao Liji-an repeated that the Olympic torchbearers must meet selections standards and broadly represent China.

“What I want to say is that we hope [the] relevant party can view the torchbearers in an objective and rational way and refrain from making [a] politicized interpretation,” he said.

But Arindam Bagchi, spokesman and joint secretary of India’s Ministry of External Affairs, said it was China that had chosen to politicize the Winter Olympics, which is why the charge d’affaires of the Indian Embassy in

Beijing would not attend either the opening or closing ceremonies.

India’s public broadcaster, Doordarshan, also announced that it would not present a live telecast of the ceremonies.

Having Qi Fabao participate as a torchbearer “clearly shows the desperate act on the part of China attempting to politicize the Games,” said veteran journalist Aditya Raj Kaul.

Translated by Alim Seytoff for RFA’s Uyghur Service and Tenzin Dickyi for RFA’s Tibetan Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

Uyghurs Still Push For Accountability 25 Years After Ghulja Massacre

By *Gulchehra Hoja*, 2022.02.13

The 1997 incident in Xinjiang is now seen as a harbinger of the brutality to come.

On a cold winter day 25 years ago, young Uyghurs in the western Chinese city of Ghulja (in Chinese, Yining) staged a protest to call for an end to religious repression and ethnic discrimination.

The events of that day would instead come to be known as the Ghulja Massacre of 1997, an incident that Uyghurs now look upon as a harbinger of an even greater level of persecution and violence against the largely Muslim community in China that has unfolded in stages since then.

As many as 200 hundred people may have been killed in the massacre — one report said thousands may have died — but it received little international attention at the time. As much of the world’s attention is drawn to China for the 2022 Winter Olympics in Be-



Uyghur protesters face Chinese security forces on a street in Ghulja in East Turkistan, February 1997, in a screenshot from a video of a Chinese television report smuggled out of China. UK’s Channel 4 News report/YouTube

ijing, Uyghurs are using the anniversary of Ghulja to press for an international investigation into what transpired that day and to seek accountability for those behind the bloodshed.

“Twenty-five years ago, the Ghulja Massacre

was exemplary of the treatment of the Uyghur people by the Chinese authorities and its crackdown on freedom of expression and assembly,” said Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), in a statement issued Feb. 4. “Now, the Chinese government’s genocidal policies are ensuring to prevent the Uyghur people from ever speaking out again.”

Today, nearly 2 million Uyghurs are thought to have been sent to mass internment camps in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region by a government desperately trying to maintain control of an ethnically and religiously diverse population.

On Feb. 5, 1997, the crowd had gathered to protest a prohibition of Uyghur social gatherings known as meshrep, a celebration of the community’s culture and traditions.

But the protesters were met by Chinese security and armed forces who used water cannons to disperse the crowd. When that didn’t work, they then used their guns, according to witnesses.

The Chinese government at the time claimed that only 10 people died during the protest. Its official organ called the protestors “insurgents.”

But Uyghur organizations and international rights groups later said at least 200 demonstrators were killed. Thousands of others were arrested.

Gaining the upper hand

China has continued to hunt down Uyghurs connected to the incident. Many arrested for participating in the protest and in other demonstrations ended up in China’s “re-education” camps — what Uyghurs say are concentration camps.

China began its mass internment campaign in the region in 2017. An estimated 1.8 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities are believed to have been detai-

ned in an extensive network of hundreds of camps since then.

Witness testimonies and investigative reports have since alleged that the Chinese government has tortured detainees, sterilized Uyghur women, and conscripted Uyghurs for work in factories.

A year before the Ghulja Massacre, the Chinese Communist Party’s Politburo issued the “No. 7 Document” outlining measures to prevent the rise of religious and ethnic extremism. It called on law enforcement to suppress any independence movements. Many Uyghurs want Xinjiang to break away from China and to form a new country called East Turkistan.

“The document called for speeding up assimilationist policies such as moving more Chinese into East Turkistan by giving them Uyghurs’ land and providing them with better jobs while repressing the Uyghurs on all fronts, be it employment, family planning, and so on,” said Mehmet Tohti, a Uyghur political activist in Canada.

“The basic goal of Chinese regime was to gain upper hand in East Turkistan politically, economically, and in number of populations,” he said.

‘An unforgettable tragedy’

Behtiyar Shemshidin, who was a police officer during the Ghulja Massacre but later re-



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

signed and left Xinjiang, told the WUC and other rights groups that Chinese authorities opened fire on unarmed protesters.

A Uyghur rights activist now in Canada, Behtiyar said the protesters were arrested and tortured. Many detainees, including the demonstration's leader, Abduhelil Abdulmejid, were tortured to death in prison, Behtiyar said. The violence continued for weeks, he said.

Zubayra Shamseden, the Chinese outreach coordinator at the Uyghur Human Rights Project, a documentation and advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., said her two younger brothers and a cousin were among those who were arbitrarily arrested in the crackdown.

One brother, Abdurazaq Shemsidin, was arrested in Ghulja in 1998 and sentenced to life in prison for "political crimes." He remains incarcerated in Urumqi's No. 1 Prison.

The other brother, Sedirdin Shemsidin, was assassinated in Kazakhstan in June 1998. Zubayra Shamseden's cousin, Hammet Muhammad, was killed by Chinese armed forces in a clash in Ghulja a little over a year after the massacre.

"The Feb. 5 Ghulja Massacre is an unforgettable tragedy that befell not only my family but the entire Uyghur people," Zubayra said.

Large-scale 'clean-up' operation

In the aftermath of the crackdown, an article titled "Let's uncover the terrorist mask of East Turkistan terrorists" published by China's official Xinhua news agency called the demonstrators, "insurgents."

Following the incident, the Chinese government used the protest as a pretext to carry out a year-long large-scale "clean-up operation" throughout Xinjiang under the guise of tracking down suspects, Uyghur sources said.

When the Chinese government began detaining Uyghurs in its networks of internment camps in 2017, former prisoners tied to the Ghulja protest were picked up and sentenced yet again.

The world began to learn of what happened at Ghulja when a video of the protest and crackdown was smuggled out of China and aired in the United Kingdom in 1997. But there were few consequences for China.

In April 1999, a report from London-based Amnesty International said thousands of Uyghurs may have been killed in the incident without reason. Amnesty's account was based in part on witness testimonies, said T. Kumar, former advocacy director for Asia and the Pacific at Amnesty International in Washington D.C.

"At that time, I would say that the lack of information is one of the reasons our report was helpful to bring the issue to the forefront," he said.

But, Kumar added, there was little external outcry.

"That was the sad part because but even the U.N. and the international community did not make any noise at that time," he said.

"If that would have happened — if the international community, the U.S., and others would have made a serious attempt to raise



A wanted poster calling for two Uyghur leaders of the 1997 protest in Ghulja to surrender to authorities, hangs on the wall of a hotel in Ghulja in East Turkistan, Nov. 7, 1998. Credit: AFP

the massacre at that time and try to call for justice — the Chinese would have been extremely nervous about continuing the practice of persecution, and now to the extent of imprisoning or detaining around 2 million people.”

Awareness of rights violations

Uyghur activist organizations remain steadfast in calling on the international community to hold China accountable for the massacre.

“This year the commemoration coincides with Beijing Winter Olympic Games, so we have raised an awareness of the Ghulja Massacre along with our other activities on the international stage,” said Gheyur Qurban, a WUC spokesman in Germany.

“The incident is not only important in the

recent history in East Turkistan, but also important internationally to raise awareness of Uyghur rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese regime.”

In the generation since the massacre, China’s economic and political strength has significantly grown. Its leaders believe they can get away with extensive abuses against the Uyghurs, Kumar said.

“Twenty-five years ago, they were not as powerful as today, so the challenges are greater for everyone who cares about human rights and the plight of Uyghurs,” he said.

The U.S., U.N., and the legislatures of some democratic governments have declared that China’s rights violations in Xinjiang amount to genocide and crimes against humanity — a charge that Beijing vehemently denies.



The Chinese regime is using Beijing Winter Olympic as a propaganda tool to cover up its genocide crime in East Turkistan.



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