



WHERE DID THE UYGHUR PILGRIMS DISAPPEAR?



EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION
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AT WHITE HOUSE, UYGHURS PROTEST CHINESE 'GENOCIDE' ON ANNIVERSARY OF MASSACRE

By Adam Schrader

UPI, JULY 5, 2023

July 5 (UPI) -- On Wednesday's 14th anniversary of what is known as the Urumchi Massacre, a group of Uyghurs demonstrated outside of the White House to protest what they said is China's continued genocide against their people.

The protest was organized by the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, a nonprofit organization that seeks the independence of the Uyghurs from China. The Uyghur people are an ethnic minority in China made up mostly of Muslims native to the region who speak their own language.

"Time to stop the genocide. Time to stop

the genocide," protesters chanted while carrying the white and blue flags of East Turkistan, the name used by Uyghurs for what they claim is an occupied sovereign nation in what is officially Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China.

The East Turkistan government-in-exile was declared in 2004 and is based in Washington, D.C. It is not recognized by the United States or other governments worldwide. Exile governments are political groups that claim to have legitimate sovereignty of a nation but are unable to exercise that claim.

The protesters used the messages of the U.S. Independence Day to call for the administration of President Joe Biden

and other governments worldwide to recognize East Turkistan as an occupied sovereign nation.

The genocide of the Uyghur people has grown exponentially since the Uramchi Massacre, protesters said, leading to increased calls for the independence of East Turkistan.

The likelihood of East Turkistan being considered an occupied country are slim, as the United States maintains its One China Policy regarding Taiwan; but, the Uyghur people make the claim on the basis that two previous iterations of an East Turkistan Republic briefly existed before and after World War II.

“We, the East Turkistani people, resolutely uphold our unfailing desire to restore our freedom and independence. But we cannot do this alone,” the advocacy coordinator for East Turkistan National Awakening Movement said in his speech.

The demonstrators played the national anthems for the United States and for the hopeful breakaway government of East Turkistan.

“East Turkistan has not been a part of China and never will be,” one of the demonstrators said in a speech Wednesday.

Aziz Sulayman, a member of the parliament of the East Turkistan government-in-exile group, said the protesters had gathered to mourn those who died during the “horrific” massacre.

Uramchi, the capital city of the natural

resource-rich region, suffered from what the World Uyghur Congress has described as a “massacre” in 2009. The World Uyghur Congress is an international organization established in Germany to promote democracy in the Uyghur region.

The so-called massacre left 138 Han Chinese people and 46 Uyghur people dead, according to the Chinese government, though the World Uyghur Congress contests those figures.

Tensions between Uyghur and Han Chinese people in the region were high after Uyghur workers at a toy factory were accused of raping two Han Chinese girls. Chinese officials later said there was no evidence to support the rape allegations.

Uyghur and Han Chinese workers at the Guangdong toy factory clashed on June 25, 2009, leading to deaths and injuries of the Uyghur workers. The Chinese government said two Uyghur workers were killed.

“The WUC believes that this is an incorrect representation of what happened,” the World Uyghur Congress, which was later blamed for planning subsequent riots, said in a statement.

“It is unlikely that one accusation posted on the Internet can mobilize several thousands of Han workers to take up iron pipes and other weapons, to come to the factory campus, and to start beating any Uyghur worker, in most cases until they died.”

After the violence at the toy factory, Uyghur people gathered at the Grand

Bazaar in Uramchi to protest on July 5, 2009, but the protests soon turned violent.

The cause for what led to the violence has remained unclear, though accusations have been made to suggest that Chinese military forces fired on the Uyghurs.

The World Uyghur Congress claimed at the time that “scores” of the protesters were killed and dozens were injured by Chinese security forces.

Since 2017, China has been credibly and repeatedly accused of arbitrarily detaining more than a million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in so-called re-education camps in East Turkistan.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the United States, under President Donald Trump, declared that China’s treatment of Uyghurs amounted to genocide.

The United States maintains China has arbitrarily imprisoned Uyghurs in East Turkistan, where they are subjected to forced sterilization, torture, forced labor and draconian restrictions on freedom of religion, expression and movement.

“On July 5, 2009, the streets of Uramchi were stained with the blood of innocent Uyghur men, women and children. The world was in horror of the Chinese authorities’ brutal crackdown resulting in the loss of countless lives,” Sulayman said.

“July 5 is a somber occasion that compels us to reflect on the painful truth that the Uramchi massacre was not only a tragedy in [and] of itself but a precursor to the ongoing genocide in East Turkistan.”

Sulayman called on the world to recognize that the Uramchi massacre was “not an isolated event” and foreshadowed the



“relentless campaign” that has unfolded and “escalated” since that incident.

Sulayman said that the Uyghur people have since faced mass enslavement, forced abortions, forced sterilizations, state-sponsored rape and executions by the Chinese government.

“Many governments around the world recognize the genocide but fail to take meaningful action,” Sulayman said. “Empty words and hollow condemnations are simply not enough.”

Sulayman said Turkistani concerns are falling on deaf ears and that the Uyghur people continue to suffer.

“The international community must first recognize East Turkistan as an occupied

country and not a part of China,” Sulayman said. “By acknowledging its occupation, governments send a powerful message.”

In March, Salih Hudayar -- the prime minister of the Uyghur exile government of East Turkistan -- called for the International Criminal Court to issue an arrest warrant for China’s President Xi Jinping for the genocide of his people.

Those calls were echoed by the protesters on Wednesday.

Rayhan Asat, a leading human rights lawyer of Uyghur origin, told UPI last month that punitive actions made by other nations to address the Uyghur genocide have not gone far enough.

WHERE DID THE UYGHUR PILGRIMS DISAPPEAR?



WHERE DID THE UYGHUR PILGRIMS DISAPPEAR

In the meantime, the absence of Uyghur pilgrims from East Turkistan has attracted attention. Although in previous periods China used to send Uyghur pilgrims in order to deceive the international community, cover up its crimes and spread its false propaganda, which lies in its claims to follow religious freedom, and it was forcing Uyghurs to say “I am a Chinese citizen”.

According to reports on the official website of the so-called “Islamic Society of China”, the only official website of the Chinese regime related to Islam, the first Hajj delegation from China this year reportedly arrived at Medina International Airport in Saudi Arabia on May 27 on a chartered plane from Ningxian, and stated that it marked the beginning of the Hajj ceremony to Saudi Arabia, and that the first group of pilgrims consisted of 386 people from Yinchuan, Xizhoushan and other places in Ningxia.

The Chinese consul in Jeddah Wang Qimin, the vice-president and secretary-general of the Chinese Islamic Association, the executive vice-chairman of the Chinese Hajj task force Ma Zhongping went to the airport to welcome the first group of pilgrims, and repeated his statements on such topics as the so-called “kind religious policy” of the CPC, Hajj activities, epidemic prevention and control and safe, organized and civilized pilgrimage.

However, the website does not contain any information about Uyghur pilgrims, but there is only one old news about Uyghur pilgrims in 2016, under the title “the Hajj

delegation from East Turkistan started a series of activities to celebrate the National Day”. According to the report, although East Turkistan Muslims have gone on hajj with all their life savings, China has also organized a series of so-called “patriotic” activities to celebrate China’s National Day in the Holy Land, and did not allow them to perform Hajj without interference. Throughout the pilgrimage, she forced them to organize so-called patriotic events for China’s National Day, and forced them to say “I am a Chinese citizen” in interviews about their feelings.

In addition, among the sentences they were forced to say: “we can say that our delegation is the best of all the delegations of the world. After coming to Saudi Arabia, we really felt how strong our country is. We are proud to be Chinese citizens”. While another praised the policy of China (forced) by saying: “in recent years, our Turpan region has changed a lot. If you compare it with Saudi Arabia when you visit, you will know that our Turpan region is better than it,” he said. The news report also said that in order to celebrate the so-called “national day” of China, the last gave a speech on the topic under the title “homeland in my heart, I celebrate my country’s birthday,” and chanted with shouts like: “the homeland is great, long live the homeland!”

At that time, this was used as a shameful false propaganda campaign, as the pilgrims said as they swore: “after returning home, we must make strict

demands on ourselves, strive to be good pilgrims with worthy thoughts and deeds, be good citizens who love the country, religion and obey the law, consciously oppose extremist ideas, adhere to integrity, contribute to the harmonious and stable development of Xinjiang (East Turkistan) society with practical measures. Today we don't know where those pilgrims are now or in which concentration camps they are being held.

According to information from Mecca, although a large number of Tunisian pilgrims came from China this year, there were no Uyghurs. In fact, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj determines the number of pilgrims according to the number of Muslims in each country every year, and informs those countries about a thousand people per million inhabitants. The total population of Turkey is almost 85 million, and according to the official statement of the Turkish Directorate of religious affairs, more than 83,000 people will perform the Hajj from Turkey this year.

Accordingly, even if the Chinese authorities calculate the number and declare it to be 11 million to deliberately reduce the number of Uyghurs, at least 11,000 people from East Turkistan should come for the pilgrimage. This includes "Hui" Chinese Muslims and other Muslims throughout China.

But at these moments, with only a few days left for the pilgrimage, the absence of Uyghur pilgrims from East Turkistan despite the severe pressure that China is being subjected to by the international community, once again confirms how strong the policy of genocide and the policy of extermination of religion pursued by the Communist Chinese authorities in East Turkistan is

The statement published on the official website of the Chinese Islamic Society stated that it has selected and sent just over 60 employees to provide comprehensive services such as educational guidance, medical prevention, epidemic prevention, security, catering, transportation, accommodation and visiting pilgrims during this year's Hajj season. It is clear that the figure is very small.

Observers around the world, many states, parliaments, human rights organizations and official reports of the UN have clearly noted that the people of East Turkistan are facing genocide and are being forgotten in the world. In the Hajj season, which is considered the brightest embodiment of the unity of all Muslims, Muslims should raise their voice and make a clear statement against the Chinese regime that deprives the people of East Turkistan of the opportunity to perform Hajj with Muslims from all over the world. explanations provided by the



The Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, met with the Communist Xi Jinping in Beijing. Abbas has openly expressed the Palestinian government's support for the genocide being waged by China against the Uyghurs.

On June 14, Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Beijing, on Wednesday. Xi expressed satisfaction with Abbas' visit to China, noting that the two leaders attended the first Sino-Arab Summit held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, at the end of last year, and that they reached a common consensus on many issues during their bilateral meeting.

Xi also thanked Abbas, who sent him a congratulatory letter on the occasion of his re-appointment as Chinese dictator in March, and said that Abbas is the first Arab president to be hosted in China this

year, and that the visit symbolizes the firmness of Sino-Palestinian relations.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has expressed his support for the genocide against the Uyghurs. According to China Central Television, Mahmoud Abbas met with Chinese prime minister Li Qiang, expressed support for all China's policies and positions towards Taiwan and Hong Kong, and said about the homeland of the Uyghurs: "the issue of Xinjiang (East Turkistan) is never a human rights issue. It is about fighting terrorism and extremism, eliminating separatism. Palestine is strongly opposed to interference in China's internal affairs for the sake of the Xinjiang (East Turkistan) issue," he said.

Mahmoud Abbas' statements are in line with the Chinese government's slogan called the "three-pronged attack", and expressed support for the genocide committed by the Chinese government

against the Uyghurs for years under the pretext of “eliminating terrorism and extremism”.

Observers reported that the Palestinian leader openly supports the genocide that the Chinese authorities have been applying for years against the people of

East Turkistan (Uyghurs) under the pretext of “eradicating terrorism and extremism” in East Turkistan. They stated that the oppressed Uyghurs worked hard day and night for the Palestinian people, and always stood by them in demonstrations.



A RESPONSE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PALESTINIAN SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

On June 14, Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Beijing, on Wednesday. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has expressed his support for the genocide against the Uyghurs. According to China Central Television, Mahmoud Abbas met with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, expressed support for all China's policies and positions towards Taiwan and Hong Kong, and said about the East Turkistan issue: “the Xinjiang (East Turkistan) issue is never a human rights issue. It is

about fighting terrorism and extremism, eradicating separatism. Palestine is strongly opposed to interference in China's internal affairs for the sake of the Xinjiang (East Turkistan) issue,”he said.

The position of the Palestinian president on the issue of East Turkistan aroused the Turkistan people and the Turkish people, because the people of East Turkistan have been known to stand by the cause of Palestine for a long time. In response to the Palestinian President, the leader of the Nationalist Movement party, Dolat

Bahceli, criticizing Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said: “We have always stood by the oppressed Palestinians, but Mr. Abbas’s description of the Turkish Uyghurs as terrorists is shameful for him, Abbas’s position is completely rejected.

In addition, the chairman of the board of Palestinian scientists showed “ Dr. Nawaf takrury, an opposition reaction to the position of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, published a post on his social media account in which he wrote:

“Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s description of the oppressed Uyghur people in East Turkistan with terrorism is an incorrect and unjust description and it does not represent our Palestinian people who suffered injustice and faced the oppressors and demanded that all people stand by their side because they are oppressed, our people cannot be with the oppressor against the oppressed.

We, the Palestine Scholars Association, condemn this statement, and consider it unjust against our people in East Turkistan, who have been oppressed by the Chinese government, and we tell them that your brothers and your people in Palestine are supporting you, and they are not represented by those who say such statements, as a compliment to your oppressor and bias to the invalidator on the right”.

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HISTORIC KASHGAR MOSQUE OPENS FOR TOURISTS, BUT NOT FOR WORSHIPERS

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**Authorities begin to sell
tickets to visitors, but
Uyghurs not allowed to pray
except for special day**

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By Shohret Hoshur for RFA Uyghur
2023.07.03

Chinese authorities have begun selling tickets to tourists to visit the historic Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar – where they have prohibited Muslim Uyghurs from praying for years except for certain holy days and for propaganda purposes, officials in the ancient city in East Turkistan said.

The mosque has been mostly closed for worship since 2016 amid a severe crackdown by Chinese authorities on the religion and culture of the Uyghurs in East Turkistan in a bid to stamp out religious extremism China believed to be behind terrorist attacks.

Information about the issuance of tickets to visit the mosque first circulated last week on the Chinese short-video platform Douyin and later on Facebook by Uyghurs.

It also appeared in the marketing material of a travel agency based in the East Turkistan. which said visitors had to pay 20-40 yuan (US\$2.75-5.50) for tickets, based on their ages, and that entry was free for people 65 years of age and older.

Authorities allow small groups of elderly worshipers to pray during Ramadan and other Islamic holy days, or for propaganda purposes when arranging visits for dignitaries from other parts of the world to give an impression that Uyghurs are not prohibited from praying, sources say.

Those who saw the recent social media post about tickets being sold assumed that the Chinese had turned the Id Kah Mosque into a museum.

Kashgar police told Radio Free Asia that the mosque was open for visitors but not for worshipers, and suggested contacting Systematic campaign



Since about 2017, up to 16,000 mosques, or roughly 65%, of all mosques have been destroyed or damaged as a result of government policies, according to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, a U.S.-based activist group. Other mosques have been closed but left standing, and a few famous ones remain open but under surveillance.

The moves are part of a larger campaign of repression to erase Uyghur religious practices culture, along with the arbitrary detention of an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in internment centers and prisons.

In May 2022, when Michelle Bachelet, former U.N. high commissioner for human rights, visited the mosque, the imam, Memet Jume, told her that the facility was open for normal religious activities, even though it was not.

When asked why there were so few worshipers in the mosque, he said that the faithful were busy with their work and that some had changed their viewpoints.

Residential committees paid Uyghurs to perform a dance outside the mosque in an apparent bid to show that all was well ahead of Bachelet's visit.

Bachelet's office issued a report in August 2022 documenting cases of torture, forced labor and other severe rights abuses against Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

For years now, foreign visitors have noticed the absence of prayers inside the Id Kah Mosque. One of them posted a travel blog on YouTube, showing thousands of worshippers praying in the mosque between 2011 and 2016, but then an empty holy place in 2019.

Turghunjan Alawudin, a vice chairman of the executive committee of the World Uyghur Congress, said under Islam, it was never permissible to take money from those who enter a mosque, including tourists.

"If the tourists say they will donate to the mosque, they will," he told RFA. "A mosque is only a place to worship Allah."

"Therefore, it is completely fraudulent to say that we made half of the mosque a picnic ground and the other half a prayer ground," he added.

Translated by RFA Uyghur. Edited by Roseanne Gerin and Malcolm Foster.

By Kit Maher and Shawna Mizelle



WHAT'S A UYGHUR?': MIAMI MAYOR AND 2024 GOP HOPEFUL SUAREZ FUMBLES QUESTION ON CHINA

CNN, Tue June 27, 2023

Miami mayor and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Francis Suarez indicated in an interview on Tuesday that he was unfamiliar with the plight of Uyghur Muslims, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority in China whose treatment has been the subject of worldwide condemnation for years.

In an interview on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, the Republican presidential candidate was asked, "Will you be talking about the Uyghurs in your campaign?"

Suarez responded, "The what?"

"The Uyghurs," Hewitt said, prompting Suarez to ask, "What's a Uyghur?"

At the end of the interview, Suarez told Hewitt, "You gave me homework, Hugh.

I'll look at — what was it? What'd you call it, a weeble?"

In a statement to CNN Tuesday afternoon, Suarez denied that he was unaware of the Uyghur situation and the human rights abuses China is accused of committing.

"Of course, I am well aware of the suffering of the Uyghurs in China. They are being enslaved because of their faith. China has a deplorable record on human rights and all people of faith suffer there. I didn't recognize the pronunciation my friend Hugh Hewitt used," Suarez said in a statement to CNN.

China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims has been the subject of a great deal of international condemnation. In 2021, the State Department officially determined China is committing genocide and crimes

against humanity against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities in the northwestern region of Xinjing. The following year, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights found China's treatment of Uyghurs constituted "crimes against humanity."

China denies allegations of such human rights abuses in East Turkistan. It has insisted that its reeducation camps are necessary for preventing religious extremism and terrorism in the area, which is home to about 11 million Uyghurs, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority that speak a language closely related to Turkish and have their own distinct culture.

The situation has reached the two most recent presidents of the United States. Then-President Donald Trump in 2020 signed a bill that aimed to punish China and officials responsible for carrying out torture and human rights abuses against the Uyghur Muslim population through sanctions, including asset blocking, visa revocation and ineligibility for entry into the United States.

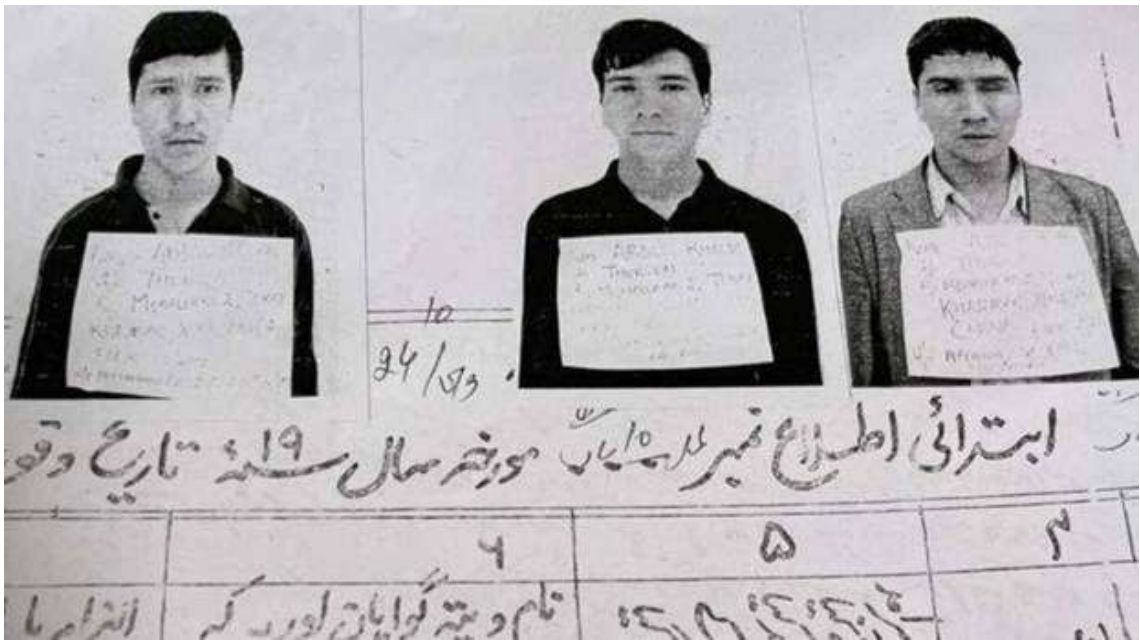
Additionally, President Joe Biden signed a law in 2021 banning imports from East

Turkistan in response to the country's treatment of Uyghur Muslims.

Suarez's gaffe on Tuesday was quickly pounced on by fellow 2024 GOP hopeful Nikki Haley.

"We promised never again to look away from genocide and it's happening right now in China. And no one is saying anything because they're too scared of China," Haley said at an American Enterprise Institute event. "Part of American foreign policy should always be that we fight for human rights for all people. And what's happening with the Uyghurs is disgusting. And the fact that the whole world is ignoring it is shameful."

It's not uncommon for presidential candidates whose political careers have focused mostly on domestic affairs to make embarrassing mistakes when pressed about foreign policy. Suarez's response on Tuesday evoked a similar flub made by Libertarian presidential nominee Gary Johnson in 2016 when, asked about the Syrian refugee crisis in Aleppo – which at the time was a dominant story in American media – he replied, "And what is Aleppo?"



THREE UYGHUR BROTHERS WHO FLRD INTO INDIA A DECADE AGO AIM TO SEEK ASYLUM IN CANADA

**Authorities begin to sell Detained since 2013,
the brothers face threat of deportation to China,
lawyer says**

By Jilil Kashgary for RFA Uyghur
2023.06.21

Three Uyghur brothers who escaped from China's far western East Turkistan a decade ago – and have been detained in India ever since – are aiming to seek asylum in Canada, their lawyer said.

After 10 years of being detained in India and unsuccessfully seeking asylum there, they face the growing prospect of being

deported to China, said their lawyer, Muhammed Shafi Lassu.

"This (Indian) government feels threatened by China, which is why they are hesitant to release these individuals and grant them political asylum, which they are actively avoiding," Lassu told Radio Free Asia in an interview last week. "In a way, they prefer to keep them detained."

Since their arrest in 2013 in the northern India-administered region of Jammu &

Kashmir, the brothers – Adil, Abduhalig and Abdusalam Tursun – have been moved around to various detention centers in Kashmir. They are now being held in a prison in Jammu city, Lassu said.

Lassu said that if any country were to offer the three Tursun brothers political asylum, he would petition the Supreme Court of India to seek their release.

In February, Canada offered to resettle 10,000 Uyghur refugees, giving them new hope.

To help people apply for asylum, a humanitarian group called the Canadian Uyghur Rights Advocate Project has set up an online application that Lassu said he plans to use on the brothers' behalf.

Hopefully that will bring better results than his previous attempts to write the Canadian government to request asylum, which have not elicited any response, he said.

Lassu said he also wrote to several Arab countries on behalf of the brothers, but said officials there “showed no concern for the violation of human rights.”

The United States and the United Nations have urged against the repatriation of Uyghur refugees to China, where there is a growing body of evidence documenting the detention of up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and others in “re-education” camps, torture, sexual abuse and forced labor.

Crossing mountains

Facing persecution from the Chinese government in the East Turkistan, the three Tursun brothers in 2013 – aged 16, 18 and 20 at the time – trekked through the rugged Karakoram Mountain Range and crossed into India in the Ladakh region of Kashmir.

They were apprehended by the Indo-Tibetan Armed Police Force, a division of the local Indian Border Guard Forces, and



detained for about two months.

The brothers admitted to crossing the border and were transferred to a police station in Leh in Jammu, Kashmir, Lassu said. In July 2014, they were charged with illegal entry and sentenced to 18 months in prison.

But Indian authorities later re-indicted the brothers under a special security law in Kashmir and have extended their detention every six months for the last 10 years, Lassu said.

“This law is exceptionally stringent, allowing the government to detain individuals without trial,” he said.

The brothers have managed to maintain their religious worship and have learned Urdu, Hindi and English during their time in captivity, Lassu said.

“They pray five times a day in prison and read the Quran,” he said. “They fast during Ramadan. They have always maintained

their religious dedication.”

Risk of deportation

They are in danger of being sent back to China, according to Akash Hassan, an independent Kashmiri journalist who has written several articles about their case.

Hassan said the Indian government has instructed “relevant authorities to initiate the repatriation process. Therefore, there is a possibility that these individuals will be sent back to China at any moment.”

Lassu said he has also reached out to the UN refugee agency, or UNHCR, for help with the asylum request.

“They emphasized that if the government officially recognizes these individuals as refugees, the UNHCR will provide them with all kinds of support and assistance,” he told RFA.

But UNHCR doesn’t have those same requirements for other refugees in India, including Rohingya refugees who began



fleeing Myanmar in 2012.

RFA sent a list of questions to Rama Dwivedi of UNHCR's office in India about the brothers' case on June 13 but has not received a response.

Even if Lassu or another lawyer is able to bring the brothers' case to the Supreme Court of India, it is very unlikely that the court will rule in their favor, said Hassan, the journalist.

Double standard?

India has a double standard when it comes to treatment of Uyghur and Tibetan refugees, he said.

"On one hand, India welcomes thousands of Tibetan refugees who have fled from the Chinese-controlled Tibet region, and a significant number of Tibetan refugees reside in India," he said.

"However, the treatment of Uyghurs differs. I believe this discriminatory and disparate treatment is associated with the Muslim identity of the Uyghurs," he said. "It appears that India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, is increasingly embracing right-wing Hindu nationalism."

The Indian government should cease returning Uyghur individuals to China and refrain from treating them as criminals, Meenakshi Ganguly, the South Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said to RFA in a June 13 interview.

Even though India hasn't signed the U.N. Refugee Convention, it still has an obligation to abide by international law in cases concerning Uyghurs, she said.

Edited by Matt Reed and Malcolm Foster.

A UYGHUR FAMILY FLED AND BEIJING FOLLOWED, PUSHING FOR PRISON AND EXTRADITION IN TURKEY AND MOROCCO

**The precarious life of
a Uyghur family in exile.**

Ruth Ingram

The China Project 15, 2023

Zeynure, 29, a Uyghur mother of three exiled in Istanbul, spoke to The China Project in June about the challenges of building a stable life after fleeing East Turkistan to escape genocide, as Beijing keeps up pressure to silence her husband.

Upon arrival in Turkey in 2013, the young couple were given a two-year, renewable humanitarian visa. Zeynure's husband, Idris Hasan, set up a small graphic

design firm called Shabnam — Uyghur for “Hope” — and began to publish, with friends, a newsletter of the same name filled with useful information for their community of exiles.

Turkey is home to more than 50,000 Uyghur refugees who have made the country their home since political upheavals began in China in the early 1950s. The latest wave arrived between 2015 and 2017, following an official crackdown on Uyghur culture in East Turkistan, an area in northwest China



roughly the size of Alaska.

In 2014, when Idris applied for Turkish permanent residence for his family, local police detained him, pressured, Zeynure said, by China, where authorities claimed he was a national security threat. After two weeks, Idris was released, but for the next seven years, he was detained repeatedly without explanation, often for months at a time.

Zeynure's two-bedroom apartment in suburban Istanbul is filled with her children's toys. As she sifts through a mountain of paperwork connected with their father's case, the three kids run in and out, jumping on a small trampoline and scribbling new vocabulary words in three languages on a large whiteboard.

Their mother is keen that they keep up their Uyghur, her tongue, even as she insists they not fall behind in Turkish and the English that will gain importance as they move through the world.

In 2016, during one of Idris's periods free from detention, Zeynure's parents came to Istanbul to visit their growing family for two weeks. After they went back to China, she called them and an uncle answered the phone. He told Zeynure that he was looking after the family sheep while her parents were away "studying," using code for their having been sent to one of the hundreds of reeducation camps China established to stamp out Uyghur culture. Since then, Zeynure has had no news of her parents.



"I don't know whether they are alive or dead," she said.

Zeynure puts on a brave face, evenly recounting her parents' disappearance, Idris's multiple arrests, and the long stretches of not knowing where he was and what might be happening to him at a series of detention centers around Turkey: first in Istanbul, then in Kayseri, next in Erzurum, and finally back in Istanbul's Kumkapi quarter.

His first arrest happened in 2014, while getting a health check as a part of his application for Turkish permanent residence for the family. Zeynure stopped nearby to feed their first child, Abdulkерim, then three months old. When Idris failed to return, she panicked. She was alone with an infant in a strange city and had no idea how to find her way home.

Abdulkерim is now nine years old. His younger sisters are Nefise, born in July 2016, and Uyguray, born in June 2019. In their short lives, they have seen their father come and go without explanation. Zeynure has learned to numb her emotions.

"I have had to be strong for the children," she said.

Turkey as haven

Zeynure and Idris both came from families that valued education, hers from the south of the East Turkistan, his from the north. Both left the Uyghur homeland on scholarships to study at universities in China's interior. She earned a diploma in nursing and Idris got his degree in

chemistry.

At colleges in third-tier Chinese cities where Uyghurs like them were in the minority, Zeynure and Idris were allowed to practice their religion. She covered her head and wore a long dress. Both visited mosques near campus to pray. She was comforted that both Han Chinese students and staff respected her faith.

Starting around 2011, as Beijing's policies restricting Islamic observance descended on their hometowns in East Turkistan, Zeynure and Idris each came to the realization that if they wished to continue to practice their faith, they would have to leave China.

A common friend who noticed they shared the same ambition arranged a blind date near Zeynure's hometown of Kashgar. Idris traveled more than 600 miles to meet the 19-year-old stranger, whose piety and longing to leave China attracted him.

"We were so young and shy then," Zeynure said, laughing as she recounted sitting opposite each other with their heads down, hardly daring to look up. "In our culture, girls and boys rarely meet alone before marriage, especially in my village. We had nothing to say and just ended up talking about the person who introduced us."

When the meeting ended, Zeynure had no idea what impression she'd made on Idris as he stood for his long journey home.

"He didn't say anything to me," she said.

When Idris called her to suggest they marry, Zeynure agreed immediately. The main draw was his wish to leave China and start afresh somewhere else.

A simple wedding followed and they were on their way. She left via Egypt and he via Malaysia, with a plan to meet in Turkey.

Dreams dashed

In and out of detention in Turkey all the way through the COVID pandemic, Idris and Zeynure, like many Uyghurs

in Turkey, lived in fear that politicians in Ankara were under pressure to hand Uyghurs over to China in exchange for the vaccine. There was talk that Turkey could ratify a proposed extradition treaty with China at any time.

In 2021, the stress became too great and Idris bought a ticket to Morocco that required no visa, hoping that from there he could get to Europe and build a life free from China's global influence for



Zeynure and their young children.

Zeynure explained that despite Idris's departure from Turkey, the Chinese state had not finished with him. When he landed in North Africa, Moroccan police arrested him, choosing to honor an Interpol Red Notice issued by Beijing.

Red Notice requests intended to catch bona fide criminals fleeing justice in their own lands are prone to abuse, according to a panel convened recently in the U.K. The notices, served by law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, have been misused by states such as Russia and China to rein in persons deemed enemies of the state, often with very little proof of criminality.

In 2022, a Casablanca court annulled the Red Notice against Idris, citing a lack of evidence to support Beijing's claims. Still, 23 months after his arrest by Moroccan authorities, Idris remains in prison in Tiflet, 40 miles east of the capital, Rabat, where politicians squabble over his fate with Chinese authorities a continent away.

Zeynure said that her husband's calls to her are more despondent with each week that passes and that Moroccan prison guards continue regular threats of extradition to China.

Ruth Ingram is the pseudonym of a researcher who has lived and traveled in the Central Asian region for a couple of decades, with a particular interest in East Turkistan. She writes under a pen name

HOW TO FIGHT CHINA'S MEMORY-HOLDING OF THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE

By Hugh Hewitt

Contributing columnist

July 3, 2023 *The Washington Post*

After nearly a decade, the genocidal crackdown waged by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against the Uyghurs — a distinct, mostly Muslim ethnic minority of about 11 million people primarily living in East Turkistan — appears to be lessening in severity. “Now the final stage has begun: an official forgetting,” *Post* reporters Eva Dou and Cate Cadell wrote last fall, after a nine-

day reporting trip through East Turkistan. “As with the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, Tiananmen in 1989 and other violent campaigns since, the party is moving to erase traces of its actions in East Turkistan from history.”

At the height of the genocide, 1 million to 2 million Uyghurs were held in concentration camps. Former detainees reported “reeducation” that included mental and physical torture, with Uyghur women subjected to forced abortions and sterilization. In a form of cultural eradication, Uyghur women were also



reportedly forced into “marriage” to men of the Han ethnic group, China’s largest. Last summer, the United Nations issued a report strongly suggesting that China had engaged in crimes against humanity. The reeducation sites seem to be emptying, according to Dou and Cadell, but they “stand as ominous warnings to residents to stay in line” and in any case, the “intense surveillance and intimidation of local residents” continues.

A brutalized people appears beaten into submission, but the Uyghurs’ suffering goes on, and we have no way of knowing when it will truly abate — if ever. But we are certain it happened. Mike Pompeo, as the outgoing secretary of state in 2021, formally declared that China had committed genocide against the Uyghurs; current Secretary of State Antony Blinken has reaffirmed that assessment.

Yet it seems that many Americans are only vaguely aware of the Uyghurs’ plight. That knowing-but-not-knowing,

unfortunately, is often the case when governments perpetrate evil against their own people and don’t want the world to know. The extent of the horror isn’t known until later, when it can be documented, as with Nazi Germany’s death camps or the killing fields of Pol Pot’s Cambodia. China might indeed have permanently turned away from the genocidal path that culminates in mass slaughter, but nothing should be assumed about China’s retreat until the evidence is irrefutable.

In the meantime, Beijing’s campaign of “official forgetting” about its treatment of the Uyghurs must be resisted — let’s not allow China’s sordid record to be treated as just another example of a bad government violating human rights. It is not. The Chinese Communist Party is uniquely evil in that it joins great power with its willingness to go to any extreme to preserve its hardcore Leninism at home while working to spread that malignant ideology around the world.

Which brings me to my June 27 radio

interview with Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who recently declared his candidacy for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. As we discussed China, it became painfully clear that he was unfamiliar with the term “Uyghurs” and knew nothing about the genocide against them or what it tells us about the CCP regime.

Suarez’s face-plant prompted plenty of online ridicule, as well as a Twitter protest in his defense that he didn’t recognize my pronunciation of “Uyghur.” While there is sometimes confusion about the word’s proper spelling, the pronunciation isn’t a problem. The mayor was simply uninformed, and knew it — he joked about “Weeble” and promised to do his “homework.”

Key point: Asking about the Uyghurs is not remotely a “gotcha” question; it would have been just as acceptable to ask a Cold War politician about the Soviet gulag prison system. Now we are in a new Cold War, one that has become as obvious as it is ominous. Any Republican who aspires to become the next president must be ready on Day 1 to deal with the biggest

threat to the United States: the Chinese Communist Party.

The CCP’s record in Tibet, in East Turkistan, in Hong Kong and now perhaps in Taiwan must be front of mind for everyone on the GOP’s presidential debate stage when those gatherings commence in August. The Republican National Committee is setting rules for those debates; a good one to consider would be designating an entire debate to the sole topic of the CCP — including its many abuses of the Chinese people and its threats to the world.

Would ratings for that debate be lower than one devoted to hot-button domestic issues? Perhaps. But the debates ought to be for the benefit of Republicans choosing a candidate. They need to know that their nominee is smart about China.

Opinion by Hugh Hewitt

Hugh Hewitt is a nationally syndicated radio host on the Salem Radio Network. He is also a professor at Chapman University School of Law, where he has taught constitutional law since 1996.
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SECRET DOCUMENT REVEALS CHINA'S PARANOID EFFORTS TO KEEP EAST TURKISTAN NEWS SECRET

An old man died crushed by a wall. The CCP immediately mobilized 171 agents to investigate—not the incident but who had reported it to Radio Free Asia.

by Kok Bayraq

Bitter Winter, 06/20/2023

According to a recently leaked document from China, a news item broadcast in 2018 by Radio Free Asia about the death of an elderly person in Kashgar shocked the

entire prefecture. The report was about an 80-year-old man brought to village of Yekshenbebazar in Yopurga County in northern Kashgar prefecture, where his children were being “re-educated.” He had been crushed by a wall that fell in his decrepit house. All the officials in

the county where the incident took place were alarmed and “decisively” “dealt with the “leaking incident.”

The newly leaked document is titled “Reflection report of Yopurga County on the bad impact of US’s Radio Free Asia’s news about the county.” In the document, the county leaders, with an overwhelming tone of regret and guilt, apologize to the prefectural authorities for allowing such a leak of secret information.

The document was sent to the author by an anonymous source. The authenticity of the document is proved by matching its contents with the RFAs news archive.

The news from RFA that was mentioned in the document aired on March 8, 2018.

According to the document, at midnight, on March 9, 2018, the county government held a countywide mobilization meeting and began an investigation: about the news leaking, not about the death of the

old man. Four separate working groups of 171 people launched a two-day operation against all families known to have foreign connections in the county. They examined 328 home phones and 171 office phones in Yekshenbebazar, where the news leaked, and analyzed the last three months’ call records. All phone numbers that had been used for more than three years were changed to avoid similar incidents and to prevent further leaks. All those responsible and suspects in the county were held accountable “according to the law.”

The leaked document was written on March 11, 2018—within three days of the RFA’s news airing.

Kashgar is a prefecture with a population of 4.5 million, and Yopurga is a county with a population of nearly 200,000. How can a single piece of news shock the governing body of a large prefecture the size of a small country so much? Is



this the paranoia of a petty dictator, or the typical criminal psychology of a genocidal murderous state in the midst of its crimes?

An explanation and definition of the “leaking mistakes” in the document provides some clues to the answers: ‘Despite the prefecture’s repeated warnings and our careful delivery, the secrecy awareness of some cadres and residents is still not adequate. We violated the prefecture’s ‘two never’ policy [to] ‘never accept calls from abroad’ and ‘never speak, even if you unknowingly accept it.’”

The document goes on to state, “Our understanding and implementation of the orders of ‘keep the rules and regulations of vocational training centers confidential’ is insufficient...We failed to follow the ‘4 breaks’ order, especially the order to break their connections.”

The latter refers to the order to “Break their [of the Uyghurs] lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins,” which appeared in other leaked documents from China and is seen by the international community as one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the Uyghur genocide.

Thus, through this document, Yopurga County apologizes to the governor’s office for not breaking strongly enough the “connections” of the Uyghurs and expresses its determination to correct this “mistake.”

The document does not say how many

people were punished for this “crime” of leaking state secrets.

The news referenced in the document is ordinary compared to other news broadcast by the Uyghur Service from RFA. It was not translated into English and was not yet known by the international public. If ordinary news shocked the prefecture this much, what happened when RFA reported breaking news in the past? What about when it was reported that 120,000 Uyghurs were detained in a camp in Kashgar, when the location of the five camps in Ghulja was discovered for the first time, and when 156 people died in camps in Kucha? Which officials and how many personnel acted in those days, and how many people were punished for their involvement?

Of course, the officials of the places where the breaking news were reported did not get any less nervous than in Yopurga County.

According to RFA’s original report, the elderly man died under collapsed walls during the government’s implementation of a new village restoration project. The death was also caused by the fact that his children had been taken to the “vocational” camp and he had been left alone at home. At the time, RFA reported this incident based on information provided by the local hospital, but county officials denied it happened.

In the leaked document, officials confirmed the accuracy of RFA’s news by stating, “This death occurred because

we disregarded the order to notify the neighborhood committee when we demolished the house...When the separatists were given the opportunity, they actually politicized a construction incident and tarnished the image of our country.”

Why was there such uneasiness about one person being killed when Uyghur social media platforms report on the death in

the camps almost every day? Perhaps the worry was not for the dead but rather for the possibility of the world finding out the truth on this and other cases.

Whatever the reason, the point of note for the world community is this: What you see in this document is the true intent and spirit of China—a superpower candidate in the 21st century that wants to bring a new order and new rules to the world.



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