



## UYGHURS PROTEST CHINESE OCCUPATION



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# UYGHURS PROTEST CHINESE OCCUPATION

**Uyghur Turks living in different countries, primarily in Istanbul, organized a Press Statement and Protest demonstration in front of Chinese consulates under the leadership of the International Union of East Turkistan Organizations NGOs in order to take a stance against the occupation of the Chinese Communist regime and the systematic genocide that has been carried out against innocent people for 75 years.**

Many NGOs operating in Turkey, representatives of political parties and many East Turkistan people participated in the demonstration held in Istanbul, while the activists raised the Turkish flag and crescent in the sky and chanted slogans against China.

Reading the press statement, the International Union of East Turkistan Organizations President Hidayetullah Oğuzhan drew attention to the systematic genocide, assimilation and marketization policies carried out by the occupying China for 75 years, and emphasized that there is no other way than independence for the liberation of the oppressed East Turkistan people, and continued his

words by calling on the Turkish-Islamic world and the international community to support the Uyghurs.

Dear members of the press and participants,

Today, on the 75th anniversary of the East Turkistan occupation by fascist China, we have gathered here to once again condemn the occupation, colonialism, and oppression policies carried out by China in our region, to condemn the increasing genocide and ongoing human rights violations, and to once again demonstrate the determination of the East Turkistan people for independence. At the same time, we are making this press statement in order to commemorate our martyrs who sacrificed themselves for this struggle and to strongly express our resistance against the occupation.

East Turkistan has been a free and independent land since the history of humanity, and has been the homeland of the Uyghur and other Turkish tribes since time immemorial. This ancient geography is the cradle of thousands of years of Turkish culture and civilization, and the Chinese have never been able to establish either cultural or political dominance over this region. East Turkistan has continued its existence as a sacred homeland where the Turkish nation has always preserved its spirit of independence. However, in 1949, the brutal Red Army of the Chinese Communist Party barbarously invaded East Turkistan and usurped the independence of these ancient lands. From that day on, the right of East



Turkistan people to self-determination was ruthlessly taken away from them, and their freedom and independence were disregarded. This occupation by China not only seized our lands, but also marked the beginning of a brutal colonial and genocidal project aimed at destroying thousands of years of Turkish heritage.

After occupying East Turkistan, China launched a ruthless colonial and genocidal policy to bring the region under its economic and cultural hegemony. It

plundered the region's natural resources and transported them to China, and the Uyghur people were never able to benefit from these riches. Immediately after the occupation, fascist China implemented assimilation policies aimed at destroying the religious and national identity of East Turkistan people. It banned Islamic worship, closed or destroyed tens of thousands of mosques, and arrested or executed religious leaders and scholars. The Uyghur language was removed



from education and public life, and the Chinese language and culture were forcibly imposed. Today, this systematic genocide carried out by China in East Turkistan has become one of the greatest tragedies in human history. Millions of innocent people have been held captive in concentration camps, and as documented in a UN report, nearly one million children have been deprived of their culture, religious identity, and language under so-called state protection, and are being forcibly educated in China's brainwashing camps. With millions of Chinese settlers settling in the region, the demographics of the region are being changed, and the existence of the Uyghur and other Turkic peoples is being threatened with forced abortions, sterilizations, arbitrary arrests, and extrajudicial executions. All of these clearly show that China is carrying out

genocide before the eyes of the whole world.

In this context, the entire international community must understand that China's occupation of East Turkistan is not only a national issue, but also a global danger that threatens the world order. In particular, China is ruthlessly expanding its international economic hegemony under the name of the "One Belt, One Road" project and disrupting the economic balance in the world. With this project, it is seizing global trade routes and strategic resources, especially in Asia, and dragging countries into a debt trap. It is intervening in the internal affairs and political structures of small countries in Asia and Africa by putting them into financial dependency and using this dependency. Moreover, China is triggering a global ecological disaster





that threatens the environment and human life as the country that causes the largest carbon emissions in the world. In addition, China is exporting the oppressive and mass surveillance tools it has implemented in East Turkistan to the world by strengthening its authoritarian governance approach. These surveillance technologies are used not only to keep the Uyghur people under control, but also to spread despotism and a new fascism around the world. With these oppressive methods, China is becoming a global threat that threatens freedoms.

In addition, in recent years, the occupying China has been shamelessly staging a

game to cover up the genocidal policies it has been carrying out in East Turkistan. It has been taking delegations from Muslim countries on carefully designed fake routes and making them say that the people in the region are living “happily and peacefully.” The pawns of this dirty propaganda include academics, businessmen with vested interests in China, media organizations, journalists, celebrities, and even religious leaders. While these treacherous collaborators are trying to whitewash China’s genocidal crimes, they are also taking part in the suffering and oppression of the Uyghur people. The people of occupied East Turkistan will consider this cooperation of



their religious and linguistic brothers with China as treason and will never forgive it. China's occupation of East Turkistan is a cruelty and savagery that threatens not just one region but the entire world. This occupation, which has been ongoing for 75 years, has been engraved as a black mark on human history with massacres, assimilation, and genocide. This cruelty will not end until the occupation ends. It is a moral responsibility not only for East Turkistan people but also for all of humanity to put an end to the Chinese occupation of East Turkistan and to oppose and stop the genocide and human rights violations that are currently

being implemented. The international community should not remain silent against this genocide. The United Nations, human rights organizations, and all conscientious people should raise their voices and take action against these oppressive policies of China.

#### AS THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF EAST TURKISTAN NGOS:

- We demand that all states accept East Turkistan as a territory occupied by China and support our struggle for independence, which we are carrying out through legitimate means.
- We call on the UN, EU, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Organization of Turkic



States, and all other states to take action to stop China's racist attitude, restrictions on human rights and freedom of belief, and the "Contemporary Nazi Torture Camp" practice, which it continues under the pretext of "terrorism and religious extremism."

- We call on the UN General Assembly and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to appoint a special representative for East Turkistan, send an independent monitoring team, and hold a negotiation session.

- We call on governments and international organizations to apply diplomatic pressure on China to find solutions to the human rights violations and cultural oppression in East Turkistan.

- We encourage all consumers and businesses worldwide to be aware of supply chains that may involve forced labor from East Turkistan and to ensure that products are sourced ethically.

Today, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the East Turkistan occupation, we once again condemn China's policies of colonialism, oppression, and genocide. China must be held accountable for its crimes against the people of East Turkistan and must immediately end its occupation of the region. Our struggle for the freedom and independence of East Turkistan will continue with determination. On this occasion, we would like to thank everyone who supports the just cause of East Turkistan people and invite you to raise our voices even higher with your support

for our people's struggle for freedom."

## CONDEMNATION FROM NGO REPRESENTATIVES AND POLITICIANS

Following this, Hoca Ahmed Yesevi Association Board of Trustees Member and International East Turkistan NGOs Union Chief Advisor Mr. İlyas SAKA, Nation Party Istanbul District Chairman Özcan YAY, Master Journalist Halis Özdemir, World Uyghur Congress Foundation Chairman Abdureşit Abdulhamid made separate speeches.

Towards the end of the demonstration, opinion leader Abdulkadir Yapshan made a speech, saying that he always felt sad when he remembered the situation of East Turkistan people, that the East Turkistan issue was perceived only as a "human rights issue" on a global scale, whereas the real issue in East Turkistan, which is an ancient Turkish homeland, was the cause of the homeland, and that the Chinese were concerned with destroying all Turkish existence in the region, and that they had been pursuing terror policies against civilians for 75 years for this purpose.

Finally, the press release and protest demonstration ended peacefully after the prayers made by the Deputy Chairman of the East Turkistan Scholars Union, Abdusalam Alim Hocaefendi, addressed the English-speaking community.

## PROTESTS AGAINST CHINA ALL OVER THE WORLD

On the other hand, on September 29, a protest was held against the 75-year



Communist Chinese occupation in Dam Square in Amsterdam, Netherlands, with the participation of Uyghurs, Tibetans, Mongolians, Taiwanese, Hong Kongers and dissident Chinese.

The demonstration began with the East Turkistan National Anthem, and the press release was read by Uyghur Turk Abdurrehim Ghani.

On the same day, Uyghurs living in Canada, carrying East Turkistan and Canadian flags, chanted slogans against

the genocidal crimes committed by China in East Turkistan. They gathered in front of the Chinese consulate to protest China's occupation of East Turkistan.

Uyghurs living in Sweden gathered in front of the Chinese embassy in Stockholm on October 1, under the leadership of the Swedish Uyghur Education Association, and chanted the slogan "Murderer China, Get Out of East Turkistan" against China's occupation of East Turkistan and the ongoing genocide in the region.

## PROTESTS AGAINST THE 75-YEAR OCCUPATION OF CHINA HAVE BEEN HELD AROUND THE WORLD



*On the 75th anniversary of China's occupation of East Turkistan and the ongoing genocide, Uyghurs around the world have been protesting.*



In particular, on October 1, more than 100 Uyghurs living in Sweden protested in front of the Chinese Embassy in Stockholm. The protest was organized by the Swedish Uyghur Education Association and was held under the theme “Aggressor China, Get Out of East Turkistan” against the 75th anniversary of China’s occupation of East Turkistan and the ongoing genocide in East Turkistan.

Despite the fact that the protest happened on a working day, the majority of Uyghurs living in Stockholm participated, and the protesters chanted anti-Chinese slogans and protested the genocide committed by China in East Turkistan.

On September 29, a protest against 75 years of Chinese occupation was held at Dam Square in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Uyghurs, Tibetans,



Mongolians, Taiwanese, Hongkongers, and anti-CCP democratic Chinese also participated in the protest. First of all, the East Turkistan national anthem was

read in the demonstration. At the protest, Mr. Abdurrehim Ghani read a statement against the 75-year occupation of China.



Uyghurs living in Canada also held a protest on September 29 to mark the 75th anniversary of China's occupation of East Turkistan. The protest was held in front of the Chinese consulate, and Uyghurs holding East Turkistan and Canadian flags saw anti-Chinese posters and shouted slogans against the genocide committed by China in East Turkistan.

On October 1, Uyghurs living in Australia protested against the 75th anniversary of the Chinese occupation in Adelaide. The demonstration, organized by the East Turkistan Australian Association, was held in front of the Parliament Building in Adelaide, Australia. More than 100 Uyghurs living in Adelaide participated in the demonstration. Demonstrators





chanted and held placards with various slogans against the 75th anniversary of China's occupation and the ongoing genocide.

The Uyghurs in Kazakhstan also organized an event against the 75th anniversary of the Chinese occupation. In the event, they recalled the history of the brutal

repression and crimes committed by China during the 75 years of occupation of East Turkistan, and recited the Qur'an for the souls of those who were persecuted during the historical repressions and the genocidal policy currently being carried out by China.





# YOUNG TURKS IN GERMANY EXPOSED CHINA'S FALSE PROPAGANDA

By visiting East Turkistan, youths such as German Turkish YouTuber Anas Kapli revealed that China is deceiving the international community, especially the Islamic world, in the genocide it is committing in East Turkistan

Several young people, including German Turkish YouTuber Anas Kapli, visited some parts of East Turkistan in May this year and released a video entitled "Destroyed Graves" on his YouTube channel on September 24. The video shows that although the Turkish youths tried to visit the Sultan Sutuk Bugrakhan mausoleum

in East Turkistan, the Chinese officials locked the gate of the cemetery to prevent the youths from entering the mausoleum. The young people who could not visit the cemetery deeply felt the current sad situation in East Turkistan.



While the young Turks were visiting East Turkistan, Chinese tourists watched them along the way every day. This film shows that the false propaganda of the so-called “Uyghurs are living happily with guaranteed human rights and religious freedom” by the Chinese propaganda media is nothing more than deceiving the international community, especially Islamic countries, and the ongoing genocide that China is currently carrying out in East Turkistan.

While visiting East Turkistan, Turkish youths such as Hasan from Germany are not limited to seeing the fake dance halls and exhibitions made by China to distort the Uyghur-Islamic culture, like the majority of previous visitors. , tried to talk to the Uyghurs as much as possible. But the Uyghurs were afraid to talk to them and did not approach them. The Chinese gathered around them and took pictures.

When they went to visit the mausoleum of Sultan Sutuk Bugrakhan, they found that the gate was locked and there was no visitor to visit this famous mausoleum. They waited a long time for the gate to open but to no avail. Turkish youths helplessly visited a cemetery near his mausoleum. Seeing that the cemetery was in ruins and littered with debris, they were saddened and left after praying.

During this visit, they made it clear that the mosques, which the majority of visitors could not or deliberately did not see, which China has always tried to hide, and which have been left unlit to deceive the international community, were almost

completely closed. He revealed to the international community that there are no Muslims left to pray, and even the Uyghurs are forbidden to say Salam Alikum (the greeting of Islam).

In order to avoid the crimes of China, which has faced international criticism and pressure due to the crimes of genocide and religious repression committed in East Turkistan in recent years, it has set up tourist sites in various parts of East Turkistan, and organized groups from the Islamic world under various ~~names~~ to visit prearranged limited locations in East Turkistan. China tried to deceive the international community by proclaiming to the outside world that the people's religious and national identity is fully protected, religious freedom is fully guaranteed, and genocide does not exist.

In addition, China is promoting the improvement of the situation by conditionally allowing a small number of Uyghurs to leave East Turkistan, and allowing some Uyghurs who have adapted to China abroad or maintained ties with China to return to East Turkistan.

However, China is strictly enforcing the genocide in East Turkistan and its policy of suppressing Islam and Muslims, which is part of this crime, and so far nearly 16,000 mosques have been burned down or vandalized. All activities related to religion are strictly prohibited. In China's internal propaganda and policies, it continues the crime of genocide with the so-called “Sinicization of Islam” and “subjugation of religion to socialism.”

Some unsold visitors to China, such as young German Turks, are fulfilling their humanitarian and religious duty by

showing the world the true situation of East Turkistan under strict supervision and limited opportunities.

## A STATEMENT WAS ISSUED AGAINST PAKISTAN'S SCHOLARLY DELEGATION'S COMPLIANCE WITH CHINA'S FALSE PROPAGANDA





The Council of Islamic Theories in Pakistan recently visited East Turkistan at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the end of the ten-day visit, the chairman of the Council of

Islamic Theories, Muhammad Hussain Raghieb, made statements that matched China's false propaganda.

In a statement, the organization expressed

## PRESS RELEASE

The International Union of East Turkistan Organizations (IUETO) strongly condemns the recent visit of a delegation led by Dr. Muhammad Raghieb Hussain Naimi, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, to occupied East Turkistan. This visit, conducted at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a clear attempt by the Chinese government to manipulate global perception of its ongoing genocidal policies against Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic people in the region.

27.09.2024



International Union of  
The East Turkistan  
Organizations

its strong displeasure with the recent visit of a delegation headed by the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Theory, Muhammad Raghieb Hussain Naimi, to East Turkistan, which has been oppressed by China. He said that it is to hide the crime of genocide from the international community, to distort the opinion of the international community, and to deceive the eyes.

The Council of Islamic Theories said on its Facebook account on September 25 that an 11-member delegation led by its chairman, Mohammad Ragheep Hussain Naimi, completed a 10-day visit to China and East Turkistan organized at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the process, the delegation visited the Chinese cities of Beijing and Xi'an, and the cities of Kashgar and Urumqi in East Turkistan. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited the delegation to visit the ancient mosque in Xi'an, the Igah Mosque in Kashgar, and the so-called "Xinjiang Islamic Institute" and met with Abduraqib Arinniyaz and Mamat Fami, who are working loyally to China. These so-called religious leaders, who are cooperating with China against the will of the people of East Turkistan, tried to mislead the visiting delegation by making misleading statements about the current situation in East Turkistan.

After the visit, the chairman of the Council of Islamic Theory, Raghieb Naimi, said: "Muslims in the Muslim province of Xinjiang, which is located in the west of

China, have entered the path of economic and religious freedom under the influence of China's positive policies. "China has been concerned about the reconstruction of places of worship and the performance of rituals by the converts," he said.

In a protest statement, the organization said that these statements are nothing more than a deception by China, that China is carrying out a genocidal policy against Uighurs, including mass abductions, forced labor, religious repression, and the destruction of Islamic culture. Although it is being promoted internationally, Astrittin said that it is actually part of a campaign aimed at destroying the identity of the Uyghurs.

China is currently strictly enforcing the policy of suppressing Islam and Muslims, which is part of the genocide crime in East Turkistan, by issuing so-called new laws and regulations to legitimize the sinicization and suppression of Islam. The plan continues to be implemented, and so far nearly 16,000 mosques have been demolished or vandalized. Some of the remaining mosques have been converted into other event venues, such as bars and teahouses. All religious activities were completely banned, and the people were forced to renounce Islam altogether.

At the same time, China organizes groups from the Islamic world under various names to visit prearranged limited locations in East Turkistan, announcing to the outside world that the people's religious and national identity is fully protected and religious freedom is fully



guaranteed.

On October 19 last year, a so-called “delegation of religious leaders” from Indonesia visited East Turkistan at

China’s invitation, conformed to China’s false propaganda, and received strong criticism from East Turkistan people and organizations abroad due to their confusing statements after the visit.

# THE US CONGRESS PASSED A SECURITY AGREEMENT AGAINST CHINA



*The U.S. Congress has passed a security agreement with Pacific island nations aimed at countering China’s influence.*

According to Voice of America, US lawmakers on September 25 passed a hundreds of pages of continuing funding to prevent a government shutdown. The decision marks the final step in the administration's implementation of a 20-year-old security agreement with Pacific island nations, cementing America's commitment to regional security in the face of an increasingly powerful China.

The United States provides financial assistance to Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia under the Free Association Agreement. In return, these countries would allow US forces separate access to their land, sea, and airspace. And China will have the right to deny them access to ports and high seas.

According to the agreement, the United

States will provide seven billion dollars in economic aid to these three Pacific island countries over a period of 20 years. Congressman Ed Keyes, a Democrat, said in a statement to VOA that those services were extended in the interim spending plan passed Wednesday.

Ed Case added: "In doing so, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the people of Palau, which it sees as fully cooperating for a shared future, and by helping Palau to counter its dependence and pressure on China." This kind of pressure shows China's intention to try to control the Pacific countries.

"Reassuring the people of Palau that these services will continue is an important message from the people of the United States to the people of Palau," Palau President Surangel Whipps told VOA during a United Nations conference.







## **A DECADE AFTER UYGHUR SCHOLAR'S LIFE SENTENCING CALLS FOR ACTION GROW**

**This week marks 10 years since Ilham Tohti, a 54-year-old Uyghur economist and human rights advocate, was sentenced to life in prison by Chinese authorities.**

**For some, like Enver Can, a 75-year-old German-based Uyghur rights activist who leads an organization advocating for Tohti's release, the fight for his release continues to this day.**

**"South Africa had Nelson Mandela, India had Mahatma Gandhi, and we Uyghurs have Ilham Tohti," Can tells VOA.**

Tohti, a former professor at Minzu University in Beijing, was sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2014 on charges of separatism. He is widely recognized for promoting dialogue between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. In 2019, he was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought by the European Parliament.

Like Tohti, Can was born in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region where the Uyghur remains imprisoned. At the age of 12, Can fled Xinjiang with his family. In the 1970s, he moved to Germany and worked as a journalist for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty until the early 1990s.

In 2016, two years after Tohti's life sentence, Can founded the "Ilham Tohti Initiative" to campaign for his release. Earlier this month, Can was particularly busy meeting European parliamentarians and other groups to push for Tohti's release from Chinese detention.

"To my knowledge, Ilham Tohti is one of the very few Uyghurs who dared to speak up for Uyghur rights while living under the Chinese regime. He articulated his demands eloquently and clearly, framing them within both international norms and Chinese law," Can told VOA in a phone interview.

## EU PRESSURE CONTINUES

In a statement released on Monday, the European Union reiterated its call for the "immediate and unconditional release" of Ilham Tohti and other human rights defenders, lawyers, and intellectuals

"arbitrarily detained" in China.

"The imprisonment of Ilham Tohti is representative of the deeply worrying human rights situation in Xinjiang," the EU said, citing reports from U.N. bodies and the 2022 assessment by the U.N. Human Rights Office.

Since Tohti's arrest in 2014, concerns about human rights abuses in Xinjiang have worsened with significant attention drawn to the issue around the beginning of 2017, when reports of mass detentions of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the region started to emerge.

Advocacy organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been vocal about the situation in Xinjiang, with notable reports and statements escalating around 2018.

In particular, the U.N. Human Rights Office has issued assessments and reports highlighting the situation, including a U.N. rights report released in August 2022 that detailed human rights violations in Xinjiang. China's response has consistently been to deny these allegations, labeling them as part of a Western agenda to undermine its sovereignty and stability in the region.

Can told VOA that the time for mere statements is over.

"Just calling for Ilham Tohti's release is not enough," he said. "There have been countless petitions and open letters over the past decade. We need concrete actions."



Can urged tougher measures against China, including sanctions on officials, visa restrictions, and re-negotiating trade terms.

### CHINA'S DEFENSE

In an email to VOA, Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, defended the sentencing of Ilham Tohti, asserting that he is guilty of “splitting the country” and that the evidence against him is “conclusive.”

“As a teacher, Ilham Tohti once publicly called terrorist extremists ‘heroes’, incited, lured and coerced some people to go abroad to participate in the activities of the ‘East Turkestan’ separatist forces, and planned, organized and carried out

a series of criminal activities to split the country,” Liu said.

He insisted that China’s judicial system acted strictly in accordance with Chinese law and that “China’s internal affairs and judicial sovereignty must not be interfered with.”

Jewher Ilham, the daughter of Ilham Tohti and a human rights activist in the U.S., disputed the Chinese government’s portrayal of her father’s case, asserting that his imprisonment resulted from his peaceful advocacy for marginalized Uyghurs rather than any legal violations.

“A normal and healthy society allows for more than one voice or opinion,” Ilham told VOA. “The Chinese government did



not tolerate different opinions 10 years ago, and it is clear they still do not.”

### FAMILY'S HEARTBREAK

Jewher Ilham last saw her father on February 2, 2013, in a Beijing airport interrogation room, where they shared their final goodbye. During that encounter, Ilham urged her to leave China for the U.S., despite the presence of Chinese authorities.

“Look at them, look at how they treat you and me. Do you still want to stay in this country? I would rather you sweep the streets in America than be treated like this here,” Ilham recalled her father’s words.

At the time, Ilham Tohti was prevented from departing for a year-long visiting scholar position at Indiana University, and

those parting words continue to resonate with his daughter to this day.

After 11 months of house arrest, Chinese authorities arrested Tohti on January 15, 2014, while Jewher was in the United States.

“On January 15, 2014, over 20 police officers came to arrest my father. My youngest brother was three-and-a-half years old, and the oldest was seven. They were napping when the police broke in and aggressively took him away,” Ilham told VOA in a phone interview. She kept in touch with her family and friends until early 2017, and that’s how she learned what had happened.

“My stepmother wasn’t home because she was working away. My grandmother found out about my father’s arrest later,





and she became very sick. I recently heard that my grandmother passed away two years ago,” she said.

Eight months later, on September 23, 2014, Chinese authorities sentenced Tohti to life imprisonment on alleged charges of “splitting the country.”

“September 23 is a devastating date for my family. My father Ilham Tohti was sentenced to life on this date 10 years ago,” Jewher told VOA. “Just like my father never stopped advocating for the voiceless, I will not stop, no matter what.”

# HOW CHINA TARGETS UYGHUR JOURNALISTS ABROAD

## THE CHILLING STORY OF A REPORTER EXILED IN THE US



*Reporters Without Borders (RSF) shares the testimony of a Uyghur journalist exiled in the United States, whose friends still in China were detained in retaliation for his work.*

Even in exile, Uyghur journalists find no escape from repression. International newsjournalist Kasim Abdurehim Kashgar left China for the United States in 2017, due to the regime's intense repression in Xinjiang. Yet, as Kashgar recounted to RSF, his persecution continues to this day.

In the wake of Kashgar's emigration, his entourage in China was interrogated and, in some cases, imprisoned: "The Chinese authorities wanted me to stop my investigations and work for the regime's propaganda. In the months following my refusal, at least twelve people with whom I had worked in a language school were arrested and questioned about me. Some were even sentenced to up to seven years in prison," explains the journalist who investigates crimes committed against Uyghurs for the American public media Voice of America (VOA).

One friend, Mirkamil Ahmed, was sentenced to nine years in prison. While four of Kashgar's former colleagues were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on obscure charges, only one was released. The fate of the others remains unknown. Working under a pseudonym for many years, Kasim Abdurehim Kashgar revealed his identity in the documentary "From Fear to Freedom: A Uyghur's Journey," broadcast by VOA in June 2023.

"This journalist's chilling testimony illustrates the full extent of the transnational repression carried out by the Chinese regime to prevent exiled

journalists from revealing the atrocities it is committing in Xinjiang. The international community must mobilise to protect journalists making the difficult decision to go into exile, as well as their families who remain in China.

CÉDRIC ALVIANI

RSF ASIA-PACIFIC BUREAU DIRECTOR

Kashgar's mental health suffered as his close circle was targeted. "After learning about their detention, I developed anxiety and depression," he said. "I am asking the authorities to release them because they have nothing to do with my work." Despite the pressure, Kashgar remains determined to continue his investigations. Through extensive investigation, Kasim discovered his former colleagues were being detained. "It took me three years to reveal their arrests. I only decided to go public recently, when I had gathered solid evidence from five different and unrelated sources," he told RSF.

Since 2016, Beijing has conducted a violent campaign of repression in Xinjiang province in the name of the "fight against terrorism," which international observers characterise as a "genocide," and which does not only affect the Uyghur community. In 2024, the Chinese police arrested two journalists from the Kazakh minority working for the local public channel Xinjiang Television, as well as several other journalists whose identities have not yet been confirmed. According to RSF's latest count, 79 journalists and press freedom activists are being held in

Xinjiang, including Sakharov Prize winner Ilham Tohti.

China – the world’s biggest prison for journalists and press freedom defenders,

counting at least 121 detainees – is ranked 172nd out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2024 World Press Freedom Index.



Kasim Kashgar, centre front, is photographed with, from right, Semet Ababekri, Abdukadir Rozi, Akber Osman, Mirkamil Ahmed and Mehmüt Abdukeyum, his currently detained colleagues, during a school party in Urumqi in August 2015.



# **CULTURAL GENOCIDE IN EAST TURKISTAN SYSTEMATIC ERASURE OF UYGHUR IDENTITY THROUGH STATE-RUN BOARDING SCHOOLS**



*The Chinese government's systematic campaign against the Uyghur population has intensified over the past decade, with state-run boarding schools in East Turkistan serving as tools of cultural genocide.*

According to an article published by Bitter Winter on September 5, more than half a million Uyghur children are reportedly enrolled in state-run boarding schools in Xinjiang, where they are forcibly assimilated into Han Chinese culture, stripped of their language, religion, and identity.

The ongoing repression of Uyghurs has roots in a long history of cultural marginalization. Since 2014, under the guise of combating “religious extremism,” the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has

escalated its crackdown, resulting in over one million Uyghurs detained in re-education camps. The campaign extends beyond adults, targeting children left behind. These children, often classified as “special needs,” are placed in state-run boarding schools designed to sever their cultural ties.

Reports indicate that these schools enforce a strict Mandarin-only policy, with the Uyghur language prohibited. Children endure physical and emotional abuse, including beatings and isolation, while



being indoctrinated with pro-Chinese state ideology. The separation from their families exacerbates their trauma, leading to a loss of cultural identity and fluency in

their native language.

Expert analysis highlights this approach as a “systematic campaign of social re-engineering and cultural genocide.” The



United Nations has expressed concern over the discriminatory nature of these policies, emphasizing the violation of children's rights to education, family life, and cultural identity. With the number of boarding schools rapidly increasing, critics argue that these institutions are part of a broader strategy to mold minority children into conforming to Han

cultural norms.

China claims it is expanding the number of boarding schools allegedly to improve educational access, especially in remote rural communities. But Uyghur families say such schools are also institutions where children with both parents detained or imprisoned are sent, against family wishes.





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China destroys Uyghur languages



**What is happening in East Turkistan?**

**What is true and what is false?**

**The “ISTIQLAL” journal uses reliable sources, evidence and witnesses to reveal China’s genocide crime and shine a light on the oppression in East Turkistan as well as expose China’s fake news propaganda.**

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**Graphic Design Radwa Adel**

**Editor Radwa Adel**

**Caricature Radwa Adel**

**Editorial Board East Turkistan Press And Media Association**

**Publication Type Monthly Journal**

**Address Kartaltepe Mah. Geçit Sok. No: 6 Dükkan 2  
Sefaköy K.çekmece İSTANBUL**

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