

## FACES OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS



EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION  
شەرقىي تۈركىستان ئاخبارات ۋە مەدېيا جەمئىيىتى





## AHEAD OF UN VISIT, BEIJING WARNS UYGHURS NOT TO TALK ABOUT 'RE-EDUCATION'



**Ahead of the UN team's much-anticipated visit to Xinjiang, the Chinese government has issued a new directive that forbids Uyghurs from discussing the network of internment camps.**

The directive also mandates the people of the northwestern province from accepting calls from international phone numbers, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported.

A police officer in the region told RFA that police received special government notices on how to prepare for the visit this month by Michelle Bachelet, the UN's high commissioner for human rights.

The policeman, who is a Chinese Communist Party member, said that he was playing a leading role in disseminating the notices during political study sessions and enforcing their mandates.

"The political study sessions are being held on Wednesdays, and prefectural and autonomous regional notices are being studied as they arrive," he said.







“The preparatory team has begun work and the two sides are discussing the specific arrangements for the visit,” he said.

Several rights groups have said the planned visit to China by the UN high commissioner for human rights should meet minimum standards to be considered credible.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (/topic/human-rights-watch) (HRW) and 59 other groups earlier urged High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet (/topic/un-rightschief-michelle-bachelet) to take several steps to prevent the Chinese government from manipulating the visit.

China on Wednesday welcomed the upcoming visit of the UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet (/topic/un-rightschief-michelle-bachelet) to the Xinjiang province this month amid reports of human rights abuses in the northwest region.

“The preparatory team of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has arrived in China and is currently undergoing quarantine in accordance with relevant anti-COVID-19 protocols,” China’s foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a daily press briefing.

Dozens of rights groups say the Chinese government has committed widespread and systematic policies of mass detention, torture, cultural persecution, and other offenses against Uyghurs and members of other Turkic groups in Xinjiang that amount to crimes against humanity. (ANI)





## XINJIANG OFFICIALS SAID TO PAY UYGHURS TO PERFORM DANCE AT KASHGAR MOSQUE

The dance precedes an anticipated visit from the UN's human rights chief.

**Authorities in Kashgar allegedly paid Muslim Uyghur men to dance outside the most famous mosque in northwestern China's Xinjiang region to celebrate the end of Ramadan, a performance that was filmed and released by state media ahead of an anticipated visit by the United Nations human rights chief later this month.**

Kashgar locals told RFA that people were not allowed to pray at Id Kah Mosque

but instead were organized to dance on Eid al-Fitr on May 3, as shown in a YouTube video posted by China News Service (Zhongxinwang) on Tuesday. Chinese tourists can be seen observing the dancing and taking photos in the square.

A police officer from the city's Kumdarwaza police station told RFA that prayers have not been allowed at the Id Kah Mosque since 2016. The dance was organized by residential committees, Chinese Communist Party organizations that oversee neighborhood units in cities and towns across China, he said.

"Several of our colleagues went to the square and met residential committee officials, and they told them that they had brought people to perform the Sama," the officer, who did not provide his name, said.

The Muztagh and Donghu residential committees sent about 500-600 people to perform the Sama, the officer added.

“Several weeks before the festival, the residential committees created a list with the names of those who would attend the Sama,” he said. “On one list, I saw there were four to five people I knew on one floor of our building.”

The U.S. and other countries have accused China of waging a campaign of genocide against the Uyghurs and other Turkic communities in Xinjiang through draconian policies designed to wipe away native cultures and traditions in the region, allegations the Chinese government has angrily disputed.

The filmed dance may be the country’s latest effort to show all is well ahead of the visit from U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet. Uyghur rights groups have pressed Bachelet to visit the region and release an overdue report on well-documented allegations of torture, forced labor and other severe rights abuses against the local population.

**The Donghu residential committee paid 120-150 yuan (U.S. \$18-23) to those who went to Kashgar to perform the dance because it would take them at least half a day, the police officer said. A typical worker in Kashgar earns about 250-300 yuan a day.**

The Muztagh residential committee did not pay the Uyghurs, who comprise 90% of the residents in the community, to dance, he said.

“No one can reject the demands of the residential committees, especially in the communities where Uyghurs live,” the of-

ficer said

“I watched the video, and I guess some people missed the Sama dance because they haven’t danced it for six years,” he said. “Some people try to show themselves as being alive and happy — that’s what the residential committees want.

“Moreover, after 2017, people became worried about approaching the mosque,” he added. “There is no such thing as running to Sama now. That’s why they paid them.”

### ‘Forced to attend’

In 2017, Chinese officials ratcheted up a crackdown on Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities, detaining hundreds of thousands in a network of government-run detention camps that China says are vocational training centers meant to prevent religious extremism and terrorism.

Zumrat Dawut, a former Uyghur internment camp detainee who has said she was forcibly sterilized by government officials, said that if residential committee members sent notices to people via phone to appear at a particular place, they had to go to the site within 20 minutes.

“There is sometimes a payment for those who participate in organized activities when investigators arrive,” said Dawut, who now lives in the U.S. “For example, when my father went to the mosque, he was paid 100 yuan for a day’s stay in the mosque.”

Mamattohti Emin, a Uyghur who lives overseas, said he learned from acquaintances in Xinjiang that some of the Uyghurs who performed the Sama were paid by residential committees.

“Some of them were family members of





Uyghurs in captivity,” he said. “They were forced to attend and warned that otherwise they would no longer be able to see their relatives onscreen.”

Ilshat Hassan Kokbore, a Uyghur political observer who lives in the U.S., posted a video clip of mostly men dancing in the square outside the historic mosque. A few women who appear to be Chinese tourists also are dancing.

“Carefully observe a group of young people in uniform French style in front of the camera, not only do they not know how to dance Sama, but they also look around, obviously they are arranged actors!” Kokbore tweeted in Chinese.

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has not yet set foot on the land of East Turkestan, the performance of ‘Made in China’ has begun!” the tweet says.

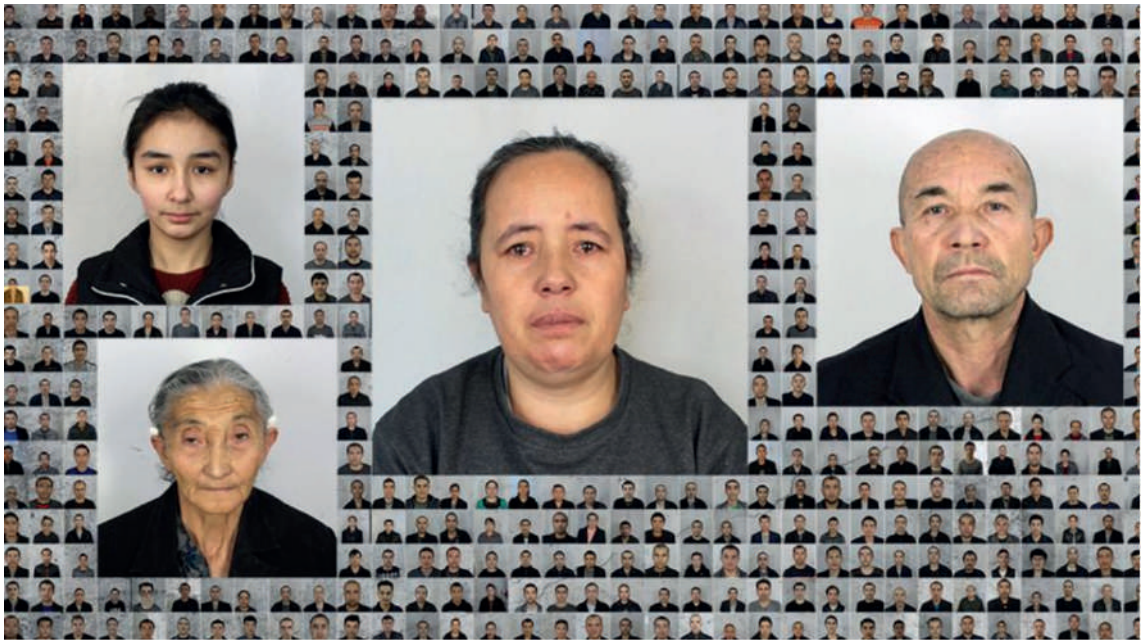
“If the High Commissioner for Human Rights can finally make the trip, they will

see a group of Uyghurs dancing with the wind, with tears of happiness, drinking the northwest wind, singing praises, and thanking the party-state!” Kokbore tweeted.

In May 2021, the Xinjiang regional government invited foreign diplomats from more than 15 countries to observe live-streamed Eid al-Fitr festivities at several mosques in Xinjiang, including the Id Kah Mosque, the state-run Global Times reported.

“This is the first time that the Xinjiang regional government held such a reception for Eid al-Fitr and invited foreign diplomats to observe — a move, officials and observers said, that showed the region’s sincerity and openness amid outside slander, as Xinjiang has nothing to hide,” the report said.

*By Shohret Hoshur*



## THE FACES FROM CHINA'S UYGHUR DETENTION CAMPS

**Thousands of photographs from the heart of China's highly secretive system of mass incarceration in Xinjiang, as well as a shoot-to-kill policy for those who try to escape, are among a huge cache of data hacked from police computer servers in the region.**

The Xinjiang Police Files, as they're being called, were passed to the BBC earlier this year. After a months-long effort to investigate and authenticate them, they can be shown to offer significant new insights into the internment of the region's Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

Their publication coincides with the recent arrival in China of the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, Michelle Bachelet, for a controversial visit to Xinjiang, with critics concerned that her itinerary will be under the tight control of the government.

The cache reveals, in unprecedented detail, China's use of "re-education" camps and formal prisons as two separate but related systems of mass detention for Uyghurs - and seriously calls into question its well-honed public narrative about both.

The government's claim that the re-education camps built across Xinjiang since 2017 are nothing more than "schools" is contradicted by internal police instructions, guarding rosters and the never-before-seen images of detainees.

And its widespread use of terrorism



charges, under which many thousands more have been swept into formal prisons, is exposed as a pretext for a parallel method of internment, with police spreadsheets full of arbitrary, draconian sentences.

The documents provide some of the strongest evidence to date for a policy targeting almost any expression of Uyghur identity, culture or Islamic faith - and of a chain of command running all the way up to the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping.

The hacked files contain more than 5,000 police photographs of Uyghurs taken between January and July 2018.

Using other accompanying data, at least 2,884 of them can be shown to have been detained.

And for those listed as being in a re-education camp, there are signs that they are not the willing “students” China has long-claimed them to be.

Some of the re-education camp photos show guards standing by, armed with batons.

Yet claims of coercion have been consis-

tently denied by China’s most senior officials.

“The truth is the education and training centres in Xinjiang are schools that help people free themselves from extremism,” Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in 2019.

Many have been detained just for ordinary, outward signs of their Islamic faith or for visiting countries with majority Muslim populations.

With the threat of physical force again visible in the background, this woman’s photo highlights the widespread use of “guilt by association”.

Documents describe her son as having “strong religious leanings” because he doesn’t drink alcohol or smoke. As a result, he was jailed for 10 years on terrorism charges.

But she appears on a list of “relatives of the detained” - among the thousands placed under suspicion because of the “crimes” of their families.

This composite image contains 2,884 photographs of detainees from the cache.





The photos provide a unique visual record of the way whole swathes of Uyghur society have been swept up - into both camps and prisons - person by person.

The Xinjiang Police Files - the title being used for the cache by a consortium of international journalists of which the BBC is part - contain tens of thousands of images and documents.

They include classified speeches by senior officials; internal police manuals and personnel information; the internment details for more than 20,000 Uyghurs; and photographs from highly sensitive locations.



The source of the files claims to have hacked, downloaded and decrypted them from a number of police computer servers in Xinjiang, before passing them to Dr Adrian Zenz, a scholar at the US-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation who has previously been sanctioned by the Chinese government for his influential research on Xinjiang.

Dr Zenz then shared them with the BBC, and although we were able to contact the source directly, they were unwilling to reveal anything about their identity or whereabouts.

None of the hacked documents is dated beyond the end of 2018, possibly as the result of a directive issued in early 2019 tightening Xinjiang's encryption stan-

dards. That may have placed any subsequent files beyond the reach of the hacker.

Dr Zenz has written a peer-reviewed paper on the Xinjiang Police Files for the Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies and he has placed the full set of detainee images and some of the other evidence online.

"The material is unredacted, it's raw, it's unmitigated, it's diverse. We have everything," he told the BBC.

"We have confidential documents. We have speech transcripts where leaders freely talk about what they really think. We have spreadsheets. We have images. It's completely unprecedented and it blows apart the Chinese propaganda veneer."

The Xinjiang Police Files contain another set of documents that go even further than the detainee photographs in exposing the prison-like nature of the re-education camps that China insists are "vocational schools".



A set of internal police protocols describes the routine use of armed officers in all areas of the camps, the positioning of machine guns and sniper rifles in the watchtowers, and the existence of a shoot-to-kill policy for those trying to escape.

Blindfolds, handcuffs and shackles are

mandatory for any “student” being transferred between facilities or even to hospital.

For decades, Xinjiang has seen a cycle of simmering separatism, sporadic violence and tightening government control.

But in 2013 and 2014, two deadly attacks targeting pedestrians and commuters in Beijing and the southern Chinese city of Kunming - blamed by the government on Uyghur separatists and radical Islamists - prompted a dramatic shift in policy.

The state began to see Uyghur culture itself as the problem and, within a few years, hundreds of giant re-education camps began to appear on satellite photos, to which Uyghurs were sent without trial.

Xinjiang’s formal prison system has also been massively expanded as another method for controlling Uyghur identity - particularly in the face of mounting international criticism over the lack of legal process in the camps.

It is in a set of 452 spreadsheets that this dual approach is most starkly exposed, complete with the names, addresses and ID numbers of more than a quarter of a million Uyghurs - showing which of them has been detained, in which type of facility and why.

They paint a picture of relentless internment in both camps and prisons, with row upon row documenting the prejudicial prying of Chinese officials sent deep into Uyghur society - backed with big data surveillance tools - to arbitrarily detain at will.

There are countless examples of people being punished retrospectively for “crimes” that took place years or even

decades ago - with one man jailed for 10 years in 2017 for having “studied Islamic scripture with his grandmother” for a few days in 2010.

Many hundreds are shown to have been targeted for their mobile phone use - mostly for listening to “illegal lectures” or having encrypted apps installed.

Who are the Uyghurs and why is China being accused of genocide?

Others are punished with up to a decade in prison for not using their devices enough, with well over a hundred instances of “phone has run out of credit” being listed as a sign that the user is trying to evade the constant digital surveillance.

The spreadsheets show how lives are sifted in search of the slightest of pretexts, which are turned into the broadest of charges - “picking quarrels” or “disturbing the social order” - and then punished as serious acts of terrorism; seven years, 10 years, 25 years, the columns of sentences stretch on and on.

If the terrorism label is ever justly applied, it’s impossible to discern among a sea of data pointing to the internment of a people not for what they’ve done, but for who they are.



Tursun Kadir’s spreadsheet entry lists some preaching and studying of Islamic scripture dating back to the 1980s and



then, in more recent years, the offence of “growing a beard under the influence of religious extremism”.

For this, the 58 year old was jailed for 16 years and 11 months. Photographs in the cache show him both before and after the Chinese state determined his expression of Uyghur identity to be illegal.

Even for those not in a camp or prison, the Xinjiang Police Files reveal the gruelling impact of such high levels of scrutiny and surveillance.

The images show that Uyghurs still living in their homes were summoned in large numbers to be photographed, with the associated image timestamps showing whole communities - from the very elderly to families with young children - called into police stations at all hours, including in the middle of the night.



A similar file-naming system as that used for the photos taken in the camps and prisons suggests a possible common purpose - a huge facial recognition database that China was building at the time.

It’s hard to tell whether their faces betray the knowledge of the camps, into which many thousands were already disappearing, but the accompanying spreadsheets make the danger all too clear.

Five months after their police photos were

taken in 2018, husband and wife Tursun Memetimin and Ashigul Turghun were sent to a detention centre after being accused of having “listened to a recording of an illegal lecture” on someone else’s mobile phone six years earlier.

Two of their three daughters’ photographs are also in the hacked files - Ruzigul Turghun, who was 10 at the time of their parents’ disappearance - and Ayshem Turghun, who was six.

The spreadsheets give few details about the fate of such children whose parents have both been detained.

It’s likely a significant number have been placed into the permanent, long-term care of a system of state-run boarding schools built across Xinjiang at the same time as the camps.

In fact, the closely shaved hair visible in so many of the images of children is a sign, overseas Uyghurs have told the BBC, that many are already made to attend such schools at

least during weekdays, even if still under the care of one or both parents.

The photographs give human form to a policy designed to deliberately target Uyghur families as a repository of identity and culture and - in China’s own words - to “break their roots, break their lineage, break their connections, break their origins”.

As well as exposing the inner workings of China’s system of incarceration more

clearly than ever before, the Xinjiang Police Files provide fresh clues about its scale.

Most of the spreadsheets relate to a county in southern Xinjiang, known as Konasheher in Uyghur, or Shufu in Chinese.

An analysis of the data by Dr Zenz shows that in just this one county, a total of 22,762 residents - more than 12% of the adult population - were in either a camp or a prison in the years 2017 and 2018.

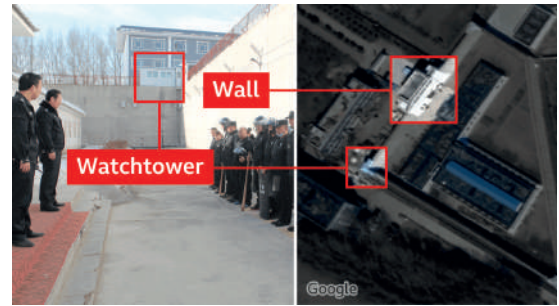
If applied to Xinjiang as a whole, that figure would mean the detention of more than 1.2 million Uyghur and other Turkic minority adults - well within the broad range of estimates made by Xinjiang experts, which China has always dismissed.

Working with a consortium of 14 media organisations from 11 countries, the BBC has been able to authenticate significant elements of the Xinjiang Police Files.

Uyghurs living in Europe and the US were asked for the names and ID numbers of their missing relatives back home in Xinjiang. Multiple matches in the spreadsheet data were discovered, providing firm evidence that the information contains real people.



The BBC also asked Professor Hany Farid, an image-forensics expert at the University of California at Berkeley, to exam-



ine a subset of the photographs of Uyghur detainees.

He found no evidence that the images had been fabricated, with none of the usual tell-tale signs found in computer synthesised “deep fakes” nor any other indication of malicious, digital manipulation.

A strange effect visible on the edges of some of the images - as if they’ve been copied and then rotated slightly - can be explained in a way that also lends weight to the idea that they form part of China’s huge surveillance network in Xinjiang.

The glitches, Prof Farid believes, are likely to be the result of a commonly-used standardisation process for facial recognition databases, where any portraits that are slightly offset are automatically rotated to align the eyes with the horizontal.

“This is, of course, a completely innocuous manipulation,” he concluded in a written report for the BBC.

Further authentication can be provided by arranging the images in order of their accompanying timestamps and then observing the common details visible in the background, which show them to have been taken in real time and in real places.

After approaching the Chinese government for comment about the hacked data, with detailed questions about the evidence it contains, the media consortium received a written response from the Chi-



nese Embassy in Washington DC.

“Xinjiang related issues are in essence about countering violent terrorism, radicalisation and separatism, not about human rights or religion,” the statement said, adding that the Chinese authorities had taken “a host of decisive, robust and effective deradicalisation measures”.



“The region now enjoys social stability and harmony as well as economic development,” it went on, saying that these things offer “the most powerful response to all sorts of lies and disinformation on Xinjiang”.

But there was no response to any of the specific evidence in the cache.

The Xinjiang Police Files contain another set of unique photographs that appear to only further highlight the extreme levels

of physical control that Uyghurs are subjected to in the attempt to forcibly reengineer their identity.

They show what appear to be drills for subduing inmates - using similar methods to those described in the police documents for the camps - but this time in a detention centre.

There are also what look like indoctrination sessions, again showing the overlap between camps and prisons.

The descriptions on the back of the detainees’ uniforms place them at the Tekes Detention Centre in northern Xinjiang.

Satellite images of the exterior layout of this known detention facility in the city of Tekes...

...match perfectly with some of the photographs, making clear that the images are genuine and lending further credibility to the dataset as a whole.

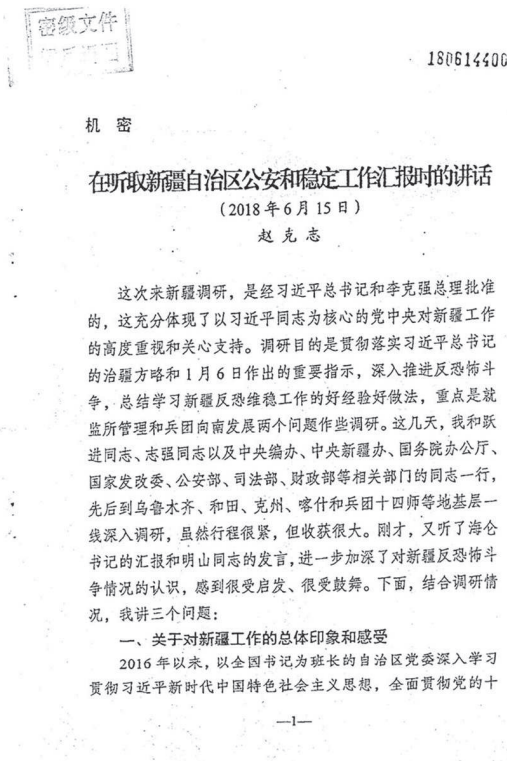
The hacked files contain a number of speeches from high-ranking Party officials that allow an insight into the mindset behind the policies, as well as some of the clearest evidence so far for where responsibility ultimately lies.





In a speech, stamped as “classified” and delivered by Zhao Kezhi, China’s Minister for Public Security, on a visit to Xinjiang in June 2018, he suggests that at least two million people are infected with “extremist thought” in southern Xinjiang alone.

Chinese leader for his “important instructions” for the construction of new facilities and an increase in funding for prisons to cope with the influx in detainees necessary to reach that two million target.



And if the mass internment of Xinjiang’s Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities really does flow from orders given by the Chinese leader, then there are hints too about the kind of timeframe he has in mind.

The cache contains another secret speech, delivered in 2017 by Chen Quanguo - until recently Xinjiang’s hardline Communist Party secretary.

“For some, even five years re-education may not be enough,” he tells his audience of senior military and police cadres, a seeming admission that for as long as any Uyghur continues to feel a loyalty to identity or faith at least as strong as to the Party, there’s no end in sight.

“Once they are let out, problems will reappear, that is the reality in Xinjiang,” he says.

Peppered with references to President Xi Jinping, the speech heaps praise on the

By John Sudworth





## JOSH ADAMS, FAHMIDA AZIM, HICKEY, DEL COL WIN 2022 PULITZER PRIZE

The team of Josh Adams, Anthony Del Col, Fahmida Azim, and Walter Hickey have been awarded the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Illustrated Reporting and Commentary for the work “I Escaped a Chinese Internment Camp,” published on Insider.com. Commenting on the award on Facebook this afternoon, Adams dedicated the award to his father, comic book industry legend Neal Adams, who passed less than two weeks ago on April 28. As Adams notes, his father “used comics and the platform it gave him to discuss serious topics and to fight for people in need.”

The last few weeks have been the most difficult time in my life. There’s been untold ups and downs. No low point worse than the loss of my father.

Less than an hour ago I received word that I, along with Anthony Del Col, Fahmida Azim, and Walter Hickey have won a Pulitzer Prize for last year’s Insider Comic “I Escaped a Chinese Internment Camp.” It’s the first Pulitzer in Insider’s history. My eternal appreciation and thanks to Anthony, Fahmida, and Walt for their work. Personally, I just wanted to share this because I want to dedicate this to my dad, who used comics and the platform it gave him to discuss serious topics and to fight for people in need.



**In making the award, the Pulitzer Committee described “I Escaped a Chinese Internment Camp” as “using the comics medium to tell a powerful yet intimate story of the Chinese oppression of the Uyghurs, making the issue accessi-**

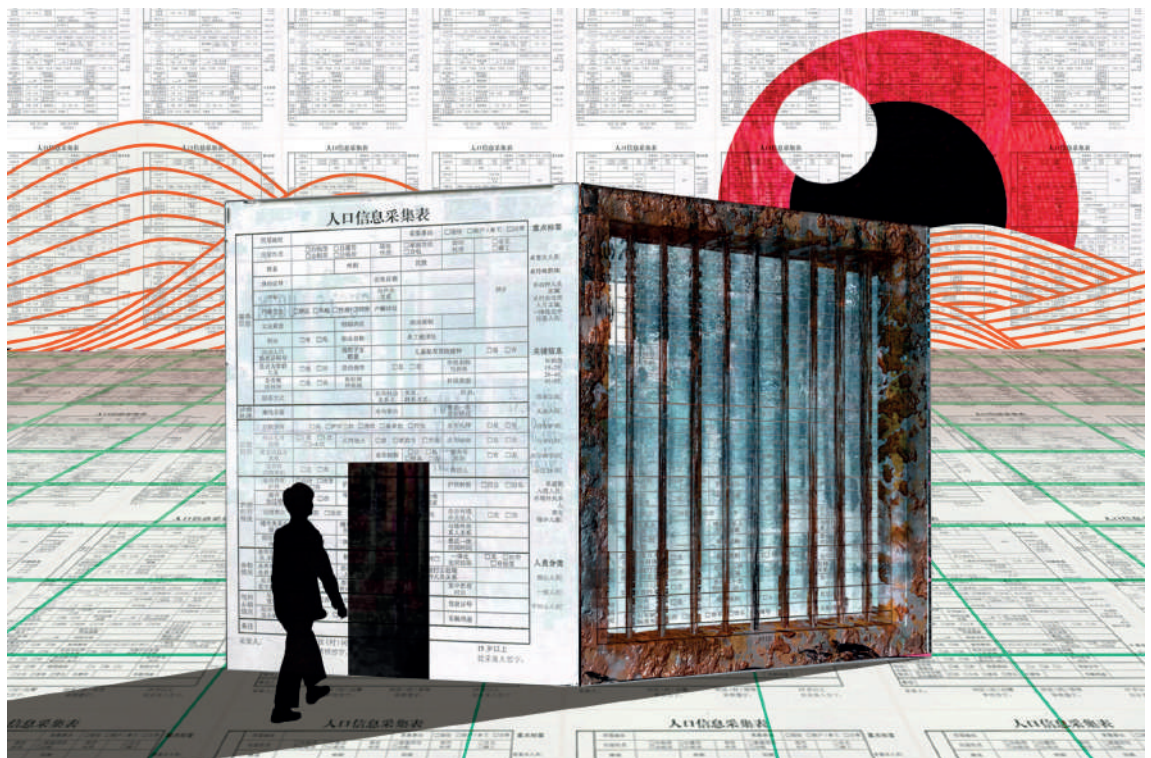
ble to a wider public.” The comic on Insider.com tells the story of Zumrat Dawut, a mother of three from Ürümqi, the capital of the Xinjiang autonomous region in China. Dawut was arrested by the Chinese government in 2018 and sent to a detention facility for Uyghur women. The comic story was developed from interviews given by Duwat and her testimony to the United Nations Human Rights Council. “I Escaped a Chinese Internment Camp” features artwork by Fahmida Azim, editing by Walter Hickey, art direction by Adams, colors by Rebecca Good, and letters by Taylor Esposito. It was condensed and edited by Anthony Del Col.

According to Pulitzer.com, 2022 is the first year of the Illustrated Reporting and

Commentary category for the awards. They describe the general criterion for the category as “For a distinguished portfolio of editorial cartoons or other illustrated work (still, animated, or both) characterized by political insight, editorial effectiveness, or public service value.” Pulitzer Prizes were first awarded in 1917.

In 2020, Adams and Del Col created the comic “What the President Did to Get Impeached and Then Acquitted” for Insider.com. Anthony Del Col is the co-creator of Kill Shakespeare at IDW Publishing. Josh Adams has done production art for the Syfy Channel and worked on Doctor Who for IDW, and was a contributor to Bleeding Cool from its earliest days, notably with the column “What Would Josh Do?”.

*By Mark Seifert*







## UYGHUR COUNTY IN CHINA HAS HIGHEST PRISON RATE IN THE WORLD

BEIJING (AP) — Nearly one in 25 people in a county in the Uyghur heartland of China has been sentenced to prison on terrorism-related charges, in what is the highest known imprisonment rate in the world, an Associated Press review of leaked data shows.

**‘A list obtained and partially verified by the AP cites the names of more than 10,000 Uyghurs sent to prison in just Konasheher county alone, one of dozens in southern Xinjiang. In recent years, China has waged a brutal crackdown on the Uyghurs, a largely Muslim minority, which it has described as a war on terror.**

The list is by far the biggest to emerge to date with the names of imprisoned Uy-

ghurs, reflecting the sheer size of a Chinese government campaign by which an estimated million or more people were swept into internment camps and prisons. It also confirms what families and rights groups have said for years: China is relying on a system of long-term incarceration to keep the Uyghurs in check, wielding the law as a weapon of repression.

Under searing international criticism, Chinese officials announced the closure in 2019 of short-term, extrajudicial internment camps where Uyghurs were thrown in without charges. However, although attention focused on the camps, thousands of Uyghurs still languish for years or even decades in prison on what experts say are trumped-up charges of terrorism.

Uyghur farmer Rozikari Tohti was known as a soft-spoken, family-loving man with three children and not the slightest interest in religion. So his cousin, Mihrigul

Musa, was shocked to discover Tohti had been thrown into prison for five years for “religious extremism.” She said she knew others more likely to be swept up in Xinjiang’s crackdown on religion, such as another cousin who prayed every week, but not Tohti.

“Never did I think he would be arrested,” said Musa, who now lives in exile in Norway. “If you saw him, you would feel the same way. He is so earnest.”

From the list, Musa found out Tohti’s younger brother Abilikim Tohti also was sentenced to seven years on charges of “gathering the public to disturb social order.” Tohti’s next-door neighbor, a farmer called Nurmemet Dawut, was sentenced to 11 years on the same charges as well as “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”

Konasheher county is typical of rural southern Xinjiang, and more than 267,000 people live there. The prison sentences across the county were for two to 25 years, with an average of nine years, the list shows. While the people on the list were mostly arrested in 2017, according to Uyghurs in exile, their sentences are so long that the vast majority would still be in prison.

Those swept up came from all walks of life, and included men, women, young people and the elderly. They had only one thing in common: They were all Uyghurs.

Experts say it clearly shows people were

targeted simply for being Uyghur – a conclusion vehemently denied by Chinese authorities. Xinjiang spokesman Elijan Anayat said sentences were carried out in accordance with the law.

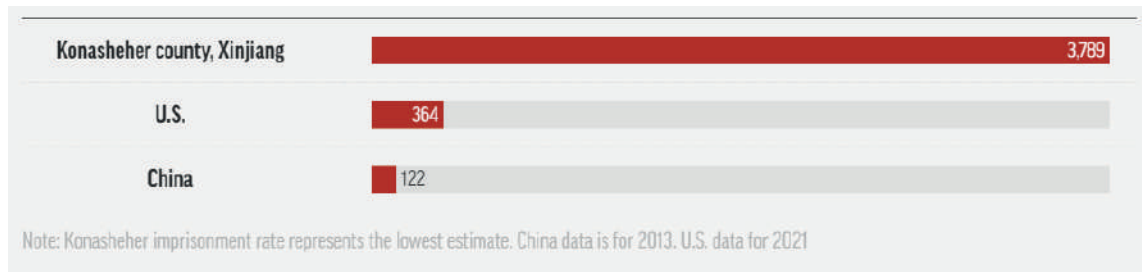
“We would never specifically target specific regions, ethnic groups or religions, much less the Uyghurs,” Anayat said. “We would never wrong the good, nor release the bad.”

The list offers the widest and most granular look yet at who is in prison in Xinjiang. It was obtained by Xinjiang scholar Gene Bunin from an anonymous source who described themselves as a member of China’s Han Chinese majority “opposed to the Chinese government’s policies in Xinjiang.”

***Konasheher county imprisonment rate greater than China, U.S.***

***Because of differences in legal systems, calculation methods, and a lack of data, comparing imprisonment rates across countries is difficult and imprecise. However, the list reveals that the imprisonment rate in Konasheher county is at a minimum roughly ten times higher than the U.S., one of the world’s leading jailers.***

The list was passed to The AP by Abduweli Ayup, an exiled Uyghur linguist in Norway. The AP authenticated it through



interviews with eight Uyghurs who recognized 194 people on the list, as well as legal notices, recordings of phone calls with Chinese officials and checks of address, birthdays and identity numbers.

The list does not include people with typical criminal charges such as homicide or theft. Rather, it focuses on offenses related to terrorism, religious extremism or vague charges traditionally used against political dissidents, such as “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” This means the true number of people imprisoned is almost certainly higher.

But even at a conservative estimate, Konasheher county’s imprisonment rate is more than 10 times higher than that of the United States, one of the world’s leading jailers, according to Department of Justice statistics. It’s also more than 30 times higher than for China as a whole, according to state statistics from 2013, the last time such figures were released.

Darren Byler, an expert on Xinjiang’s mass incarceration system, said most arrests were arbitrary and outside the law, with people detained for having relatives abroad or downloading certain cell phone applications. He has documented arrest quotas for local police, in some cases resulting in the men from entire villages being rounded up and whole families uprooted from their homes.

“It is really remarkable,” Byler said. “In no other location have we seen entire populations of people be described as terrorists or seen as terrorists. .... The state is trying to reframe the narrative and say, you know, all of these people are actually criminals.”

China has struggled for decades to control Xinjiang, where Uyghurs have long

resented Beijing’s heavy-handed rule, resulting in violent clashes with the Han-dominated government. With the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Chinese officials began using the specter of terrorism to justify tight controls.

The crackdown kicked into high gear in 2017, after a string of knifings and bombings carried out by a small handful of Uyghur militants. The Chinese government defended the mass detentions as both lawful and necessary to combat terrorism.

In 2019, Xinjiang officials declared the short-term detention camps closed, and said that all of whom they described as “trainees” had “graduated.” Visits by Associated Press journalists to four former camp sites confirmed that they were shuttered or converted into other facilities.

But the prisons remain. Xinjiang went on a prison-building spree in tandem with the crackdown, and even as the camps closed, the prisons expanded. At least a few camp sites were converted into centers for incarceration, including one that was turned into a pre-trial detention center twice the size of Vatican City and estimated to have capacity for 10,000 people or more.

Satellite imagery obtained and analyzed by BuzzFeed suggests that by April 2021, the Chinese government had enough prison space in Xinjiang to cover a third of the island of Manhattan. In the meantime, China declared success in keeping Xinjiang safe.

“In the past five years, Xinjiang has been free from violent terrorist incidents,” said China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi in February. “People of all ethnicities have lived a happy and peaceful life.”



China is using the law “as a fig leaf of legality” in part to try and deflect international criticism about holding Uyghurs, said Jeremy Daum, a criminal law expert at Yale University’s Paul Tsai China Center.

“But following the law doesn’t mean justice or fairness,” said Daum, who reviewed the data and was not involved in its leak. “It just means it’s ‘legal.’”

Over the last eight years, experts say, Chinese authorities expanded the definition of extremism to include displays of religion such as growing a long beard or wearing a veil. Some charges for prisoners on the list are new and specific to Xinjiang, such as “preparing to carry out terrorism,” a charge that was newly defined in 2016. The sheer volume of the convictions was “extraordinary,” Daum added.

The plight of Nursimangul Abdureshid’s family shows how so-called “students” released from internment camps can simply be sent to prisons by the Chinese government instead.

“It’s a total lie, they just try to whitewash their crime,” said Abdureshid, who lives in exile in Turkey.

In 2017, a relative told Abdureshid that both her parents and her younger brother had been taken away to study, a euphemism referring to the short-term detention camps. It was only three years later,



in 2020, that the Chinese embassy called her with information that all three had been arrested and sentenced to prison for more than a decade.

The leaked list was the first outside confirmation of what had happened to her brother since that call, she said. Her brother, Memetali Abdureshid, 32, had been sentenced to 15 years and 11 months on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” and “preparing to carry out terrorist activities.”

Nursimangul Abdureshid saw eight names she recognized on the list, but not those of her parents. She and six other Uyghur exiles who spoke with the AP believe the list is incomplete because they did not see some people they were close to, meaning the imprisonment rate could in fact be even higher.



The secretive nature of the charges against Memetali and others imprisoned is a red flag, experts say. Although China makes legal records easily accessible otherwise, almost 90% of criminal records in Xinjiang are not public.

The handful which have leaked show that people are being charged with “terrorism” for acts such as warning colleagues against watching porn and swearing, or

praying in prison. In the most egregious cases, camp detainees were forced to confess their “crimes” in group sham trials and transferred to prisons, with no independent lawyers to defend them.

Another Uyghur from the township of Bulaqsu now living in exile said he knew 100 people on the list, including neighbors and cousins. Included were fathers and sons, both sentenced to jail, said the man, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution from Chinese authorities,

By the time Mahmutohti Amin, 81, a former spice trader who lives in Turkey, arrived in the Kashgar region of China in 2017, his son, Ghappar Tohti, had been arrested. His other son, Polat Tohti, also was arrested, his daughter-in-law told him.

But Amin only found out how long their sentences were when he saw the list. Ghappar got seven years; Polat got 11.



Abduweli Ayup, the Uyghur exile who passed the list to the AP, has closely documented the ongoing repression of his community. But this list in particular floored him: On it were neighbors, a cousin, a high school teacher.

“I had collapsed,” Ayup said. “I had told other people’s stories .... and now this is

me telling my own story from my childhood.”

**The widely admired teacher, Adil Tursun, was the only one in the high school in Toquzaq who could teach Uyghur students in Chinese. He was a Communist Party member who had previously won a Model Worker award, and he tutored children during his free time. Every year, the students from his class had the best chemistry test scores in the town.**

The names of Tursun and others on the list made no sense to Ayup because they were considered model Uyghurs. Some were even eager to assimilate into the Han Chinese mainstream.

“The names of the crimes, spreading extremist thoughts, separatism...these charges are absurd,” he said.

But when Ayup circulated the list among the Uyghur diaspora to ask people to vouch for those they recognized, only eight out of 30 agreed to speak publicly. Ayup was disappointed, yet nonetheless determined to document the lockdown of his people.

**“We will win at the end, because we are on the side of justice,” he said. “We are on the right side of history.”**

*By HUIZHONG WU and DAKE KANG*



## ELITE CHINESE POLICE COLLEGE DREW ON UK'S PREVENT STRATEGY FOR UYGHUR POLICY

Report warns UK partnerships with China are at risk of being exploited by Beijing to lend legitimacy to counter-terrorism policies

**6 A new report has found that the London Policing College (LPC) has declared partnerships with eight universities in China, at least some of which have ties to policing in Xinjiang, where Muslim minorities have faced brutal treatment.**

LPC is a private UK company that provides police training internationally and receives UK taxpayer money for some of its work.

Among the institutions highlighted in Tuesday's report, compiled by the rights group Freedom from Torture, was the Beijing-based People's Public Security University of China (PPSUC), the country's

elite policing university, which the report says focuses heavily on counter-terrorism training and learning about the UK's own Prevent strategy.

The PPSUC engages in training cooperation with Xinjiang Police College and the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, which were sanctioned by the United States for their roles in human rights violations in 2020. The latter was also sanctioned by the UK in 2021.





Freedom from Torture said the LPC's partnership with the PPSUC appeared "at risk of being exploited by China to lend legitimacy to "counter-terrorism" policies which have seen minorities in Xinjiang sent to brutal internment camps for reasons as absurd as having a beard".

Entitled, "Dangerous Liaisons: UK partnerships with Chinese policing institutions linked to crimes against humanity in Xinjiang", the report found that the LPC, which has close ties to the UK police, has received UK Overseas Development Assistance funding via the British Council China for its partnerships with Shanghai Police College and Hunan Police Academy.



**Hunan Police Academy declares that it has a cooperative relationship with Xinjiang Police College, which was sanctioned by the USA in 2019 for its role in human rights violations, and its website shows evidence of training exchanges between the two institutions.**

### 'Genocide'

The Chinese government is accused of detaining more than one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and subjecting them to abuses that some have labelled a "genocide". China denies

the allegations of abuse.

In its report, Freedom from Torture wrote: "In the context of egregious human rights violations perpetrated by police in Xinjiang, the risks posed by any UK-China police partnership cannot be underestimated.

"As an absolute minimum, any proposal for such partnerships should be treated with extreme caution and intense scrutiny.

"Links revealed in this report between LPC's Chinese partners and crimes against

humanity in Xinjiang make this crystal clear."

The rights group also pointed out that the LPC had received UK taxpayer money at the same time that the UK government had condemned the Chinese government's actions in Xinjiang.

The report comes on the same day that the UK's Guardian newspaper reported on leaked draft extracts from a review of the Prevent strategy which said the government's counter-terrorism programme had been too focused on right-wing extremism and should now crack down on Islamist extremism.

The review said there had been a "double standard" approach to tackling different forms of extremism, the Guardian wrote, with individuals targeted for expressing mainstream right-wing views because the definition of neo-nazism has expanded too widely, while the focus on Islamist extremism has been too narrow.

The long-delayed and highly contentious review of Prevent by William Shawcross, a former head of the UK's charity watch-



dog, is expected to be published in the next few weeks.

Peter Fahy, the former police lead for Prevent, told the Guardian that the extracts of the review suggested Shawcross's findings were an unwarranted attempt to "politicise counter-terrorism policing" and it was "quite dangerous to play off one ideology against another".

## UK expertise

In February, the People's Review of Prevent, which describes itself as an "alternative" to the government's report, raised its own concerns about Prevent-related work in China, given the situation in Xinjiang.

**The report highlighted a one-day event in Beijing, organised by the Royal United Services Institute, a British defence and security think tank, described by the UK's foreign office as "bringing together UK experts on CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) with Chinese officials and academics work-**

**ing on these issues in Xinjiang to demonstrate the effectiveness of UK best practice in CVE and identify ways this can be adopted in China".**

The event, which took place in 2016, received a budget of nearly £19,000 (\$24,000) from the UK foreign office.

The People's Review of Prevent was conducted by Layla Aitlhadj, the director of Prevent Watch, a campaign group that supports people affected by the strategy; and John Holmwood, an emeritus professor in sociology at the University of Nottingham, and is backed by human rights campaign groups and Muslim community organisations.

*By MEE staff*



## UN RIGHTS ENVOY RECEIVED \$200,000 FROM CHINA WHILE ACTING FOR BEIJING

**GENEVA, May 18, 2022 —** A watchdog organization today called on a UN human rights envoy to return \$200,000 that she received from the Chinese state while she helped the regime whitewash its ethnic cleansing of the Uyghurs.

Alena Douhan, the UN Human Rights Council’s “Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures,” today concluded a controversial 11-day visit to Iran in which she spurned appeals by Iranian rights activists to meet dissidents.

Instead, in her concluding report, Douhan turned a blind eye to the regime’s brutal suppression of protests across the country over the past week, choosing instead to blame Iran’s poor conditions on sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other Western states.

A professor at the Lukashenko-controlled Belarus State University, Douhan was

appointed in March 2020 to a position—initiated by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement—that defines Western sanctions against rogue regimes as violations of human rights.

According to disclosures buried in an 83-page UN filing, Douhan last year received \$200,000 from China — at the same time as she lent the imprimatur of her UNHRC mandate for the most extreme forms of Chinese disinformation, including a regime-sponsored propaganda virtual event with the banner, “Xinjiang is a Wonderful Land.”

Douhan headlined China’s September 8, 2021 online program, lending UN legiti-



macy to propaganda videos and speeches from Chinese government officials aimed at covering up the regime's herding of 1 million Uyghurs into camps by falsely portraying Xinjiang as a utopia.

On the show with Douhan was the Chinese ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Chen Xu, who claimed that “people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, based on their own hands and diligence, live a life of happiness”; Chinese official Erkin Tuniyaz who accused the U.S and other Western countries of turning “blind eyes to the tremendous efforts Xinjiang has made in employment promotion for its people of all ethnic groups,” and of concocting a “smear that the Xinjiang government deprives local ethnic workers' fundamental rights.”

The program also screened videos claiming that “Xinjiang's policies conform to international labor and human rights standards, and support the will of all ethnic groups to live a better life.”

By legitimizing the program, Douhan helped China get away with persecuting millions of Uyghurs. Likewise, in September 2021, Douhan was the lead speaker at a Chinese-sponsored event against Western sanctions, co-sponsored by Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

## Watchdog Urges UN Rights Envoy to Return China's \$200,000



**“It is clear that China is now willing to pay unprecedented sums of money to influence Alena Douhan's UN human rights office, in wake of last year's decision by the U.S., EU, UK and Canada to announce sanctions on China for its persecution of the Uyghurs,” said UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer.**

“They want her UN title to legitimize the dictators' false and absurd narrative that sanctions on brutal regimes constitute a violation of human rights.”



“A UN human rights investigator accepting money from China's abuser regime would be like the Chicago Police Department receiving subsidies from Al Capone,” said Neuer.

“It beggars belief that a supposed independent human rights expert can accept money from regimes at the same time as she endorses their events designed to cover up atrocities.”

“Like all UN human rights envoys, Douhan has a duty to uphold the principles of independence, integrity, probity, impartiality, honesty and good faith. Her taking \$200,000 from the Chinese regime—as she works to promote their most dangerous propaganda—simply does not pass

the smell test. She’s in breach of the UN’s most fundamental ethical principles.”

**“We call on Alena Douhan to return the money immediately, and to remove the well-founded suspicions that a UN human rights expert is actively helping the Chinese regime whitewash their crimes against the Uyghurs.”**

“We urge UN chief Antonio Guterres, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, and US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield to ensure that Douhan is held to account.”

### **Alena Douhan Has Lobbied for Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, Zimbabwe**

Douhan’s first report to the UNHRC complained about Western sanctions that target the regimes of Iran, Syria, Venezuela and Cuba. Instead of calling out their gross abuses, Douhan blamed problems



in those countries on Western sanctions.

In February 2021, she undertook a major propaganda visit to Venezuela, portraying the Maduro regime as a victim of U.S. sanctions. Maduro then cited Douhan in his latest speech to the UN General Assembly.

In October 2021, Zimbabwe strongman rolled out the red carpet for a similar propaganda visit by Douhan.

*By unwatch*





## ACTIVISTS SAY UN RIGHTS CHIEF'S CHINA VISIT WHITWASHED ABUSES

■ Top scholar says Bachelet used Beijing's propaganda language

■ Trip came as hacked files gave new evidence of alleged abuse

The United Nations' human rights chief should resign for failing to condemn China after visiting its remote Xinjiang region where the US accuses Beijing of genocide, according to one prominent scholar.

Adrian Zenz, senior fellow in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, told Bloomberg TV on Monday that he considered Michelle Bachelet's trip to China's far western region "a disaster."

"There are now calls to either abandon the UN Human Rights Commission, or to have her step down immediately," said the US-based researcher. "I think the Uyghurs are feeling profoundly betrayed."

Bachelet said she'd encouraged Beijing to review its counterterrorism policies to ensure they complied with international human rights standards at a Saturday news conference marking the end of her six-day tour. As part of that, she visited Xinjiang where a 2019 UN assessment found 1 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs had been held in detention camps. Beijing says the facilities are job training centers created as part of an anti-terror campaign, and vehemently denies accusations of genocide.

"What China is doing in Xinjiang is not counterterrorism," Zenz said, criticizing Bachelet for whitewashing China's actions by adopting Beijing's propaganda language. "If you look at the reasons people are locked away, it's religious discrimination and cultural assimilation."

*By Bloomberg News*





**UN human rights envoy Alena Douhan received \$200,000 from China and helped the regime whitewash its genocide crime against the people of East Turkistan.**

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# istiqlal

**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 crimes against humanity and shine a light on the oppression in East Turkistan as well as exposing China’s fake news propaganda.**

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Sefaköy K.çekmece İSTANBUL**

**info@turkistanmedia.com**

**www.turkistantimes.com/en**

**www.istiqlalhaber.com**

**www.istiqlalmedia.com**

**+90 212 540 31 15**

**+90 553 895 19 33**

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