

Bill to Boost US Businesses Includes New Protections for China's Uyghurs

By Alim Seytoff, 2022.01.26

The legislation would create a special coordinator to monitor the minority group's rights.

Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday released a wide-ranging bill intended to support the U.S. tech industry while also confronting China on human rights abuses, including the persecution of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the country's Xinjiang region.

The legislation, which is titled the America COMPETES Act, would spend at least \$52 billion to increase domestic production of semiconductors and address vulnerabilities in the U.S. supply chain, which some economists blame in part for rising inflation.

The roughly 2,900-page measure, a collection of previously introduced bills, also contains a number of foreign policy provisions, including language pertaining to China's treatment of Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Hongkongers.

For example, it would impose new sanctions on China for its mistreatment of Uyghurs and provide refugee protection for Uyghurs and



A Uyghur protester participates in 'Resist CCP: Global Day of Action' in front of the Capitol Reflecting Pool in Washington, DC, Oct. 1, 2020.

Hongkongers persecuted by their government. The bill also seeks to strengthen U.S. relations with Taiwan.

"America COMPETES builds a foundation for America to succeed for decades to come, not just in our competition with the PRC [People's Republic of China], but in our fight for a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world," U.S. Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a statement issued Tuesday.

The U.S. has already said China's violence against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang constitutes genocide and crimes against humanity. The U.S. imposed a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics in a show of opposition to the host country's dismal human rights record.

The bill introduced this week would create a special envoy for Uyghur issues who would be responsible

for coordinating the government's response to "the gross violations of universally recognized human rights occurring in Xinjiang," the bill states.

The violations include the mass detentions of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, and the deployment of advanced surveillance systems and police detection methods that undermine basic rights in the region, the bill says.

Its text also includes a reference to the Uyghur journalists working for RFA who have been punished by the Chinese government and seen some family members imprisoned in Xinjiang.

"Congress finds that the People's Republic of China maintains one of the worst media environments in the world and seeks to curtail political speech inside and outside the country, including by ... seeking to intimidate American-based journalists working for Radio Free Asia and reporting on gross human rights violations in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region by jailing or otherwise harassing members of their families," the bill says.

There was no immediate response to the bill's text from the Chinese government.

Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress, a Germany-based Uyghur rights advocacy group, welcomed the bill's release. "The passage of the act will help stop China's ongoing genocide of the Uyghurs," he told RFA. "The Uyghur Genocide has been ongoing for the past five years. And China hasn't changed its intentions on committing the genocide."

Isa also said that the passage of the bill would help resettle Uyghur refugees in many countries "living under the thumb of China and worrying for their safety" and that the appointment of the special envoy would help prioritize the U.S. response to the Uyghur genocide and eventually stop it.

Omer Kanat, executive director of the Uyghur Human Rights project in Washington, said his organization hoped that the appointment of a special envoy to coordinate the response would "wake up the rest of the international community that has so far been silent."

Two decades ago, the U.S. Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 established a special coordinator for Tibetan issues within the State Department to promote dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government and push to protect the human rights and "fundamental freedoms" of the Tibetan people.

In December 2021, the Biden administration appointed veteran diplomat Uzra Zeya as the new coordinator, prompting a warning from Beijing for the U.S. to keep out of its internal affairs.

The U.S. has taken other legislative measures against China for its rights violations against the Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang. In 2020, Congress passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, which sanctions Chinese officials who are found to be responsible for arbitrary incarceration, forced labor and other abuses in Xinjiang. The same year, the House of Representatives also passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which requires U.S. publicly listed companies to review and actively audit supply chains for forced labor. In December 2021, U.S. lawmakers passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act to block the importing of goods produced by forced labor in Xinjiang.

Translated by RFA's Uyghur Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.



China Agrees to Xinjiang Visit by UN Human Rights Chief After Olympics: Report

By Reuters, , Jan 28, 2022

BEIJING: China has agreed that the UN human rights chief can visit Xinjiang after the Beijing Olympics, the South China Morning Post said, citing unidentified sources, but activists and a Western diplomat expressed doubt after years of stalled talks.

Rights groups have accused China of wide-scale abuses against Uyghurs and other minority groups in its far western region of Xinjiang, including mass detention, torture and forced labour. The United States has accused China of genocide.

Beijing denies all allegations of abuse of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims and has described its policies as necessary to combat religious extremism.

The newspaper said approval for the visit by Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, after the Games conclude on Feb 20, was granted on condition that it should be “friendly” and not framed as an investigation.

Beijing had asked Bachelet’s office not to publish a report on the situation in Xinjiang, the paper said on Thursday (Jan 27).

Bachelet’s spokesperson said: “It is important that such a visit be meaningful, with unsupervised access to a wide range of civil society actors and locations as well as high-level engagement with government officials. As the high commissioner has said, me-



FIJILE PHOTO: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet attends the launch of a joint investigation into alleged violations of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law committed by all parties to the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, November 3, 2021. REUTERS/Denis Balibouse

aningful, unfettered access to the Xinjiang region is crucial.”

A Western diplomat cast doubt on the SCMP report, saying China and Bachelet had been discussing a visit for years but had yet to agree the terms of reference, which, on Bachelet’s side, include free and unfettered access to people of her choice.

A spokesman of China’s foreign ministry, Zhao Lijian, said Bachelet had been invited to visit Xinjiang a long time ago for the purpose of exchange and cooperation, and added that China opposed any “political manipulation” based on the visit.

With the UN Human Rights Council’s five-week session set to start on Feb 28, activists

and diplomats say the diplomatic window is closing for Bachelet to publish the report, expected to be based on her office's own research and interviews with alleged victims and witnesses in and out of Xinjiang and China. US lawmakers had urged the UN human rights office to release its assessment before the Olympics.

Activists have voiced frustration for months about the delay in publishing the report. In December, Bachelet's spokesperson told a UN briefing in Geneva that her office was finalising its assessment of the situation.

As in 2008, the Olympics have again cast a spotlight on China's human rights record,

which critics say has worsened since, leading Washington to call Beijing's treatment of Uyghur Muslims genocide and prompting a diplomatic boycott by the United States and other countries.

"No one, especially the world's leading human rights diplomat, should be fooled by the Chinese government's efforts to distract attention away from its crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic communities," Sophie Richardson, the China director of New York-based Human Rights Watch, told Reuters in an email on Friday.

SPECIAL REPORT: China's Winter Olympics Should Be Renamed the GENOCIDE Games

By RIATH AL-SAMARRAI FOR THE DAILY MAIL
January 26, 2022

A million Muslims have been sent to camps where rape, torture and forced abortion are rife. So, one week out, why is Beijing seen as a suitable host?

Rahima Mahmut is strong. Very strong. But she is also scared, which is why she wants her words to go to higher places and travel faster.

More than anything, she just wants people to know, to understand the horrors she sees behind those five Olympic rings.

They are horrors that make her voice tremble across a harrowing conversation. Horrors that make her eyes moist. Horrors she claims are intensifying in a spiral of atrocities and oppression, but whose alleged perpetrators, the government of China, are being legiti-



Protestors have called for a boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games being held in Beijing

mised by sport. Scrubbed clean by curling brooms, you might say if it wasn't so gravely serious.

'The Winter Olympics in Beijing should be

remembered as the Genocide Games,' she tells Sportsmail and a few days out from the opening ceremony, those words fill the air for a while.

It is a popular phrase these days, sports washing. But it is one that can detract from the details of awful testimonies and claims.

They are the testimonies of people like Mahmut, if you believe her. And the claims that up to one million Uyghur Muslims are detained arbitrarily in hundreds of camps in the Xinjiang region, if you believe Human Rights Watch.

They talk about crimes against humanity on a mass scale and of torture, forced labour, sterilisation and rape.

By the time she finishes her story, she will make a comment that ought to draw a deep breath from anyone who plans on watching these Winter Olympics in Beijing.

'The Berlin Olympics in 1936 - the signs were there,' she says. 'They were criminalising the Jews. The Holocaust hadn't happened by then but it could have been prevented. Now we have all this information about what is happening in China. There is drone footage, classified documents that have been leaked, academic research, survivor testimonies.

'We have this now. The world cannot say it did not know.'

Mahmut is speaking from her home in London. Aged 51, she uses her story as one example in a far wider discussion that has become her life's work.

'I have lost contact with my sisters and brothers since January 2017,' she says. 'My answer is I have no idea if they are in a camp or alive. My last conversation with my brother was in January 2017.'

Those were the early days of the escalation of a clampdown in Xinjiang that had begun many years earlier against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, according to human rights organisations.

It is widely cited that a key point in the alleged persecution was the launch in 2014 of the 'Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism' by the government of president Xi Jinping, who is held up as China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong.

Pointing to official statistics, Human Rights Watch say that by the end of 2017, arrests in Xinjiang were accounting for nearly 21 per cent of all arrests in China, despite the region holding only 1.5 per cent of the national population.

Amnesty International published a 160-page report last year, honing in on 'extreme measures taken by Chinese authorities since 2017 to essentially root out the religious tradition under the guise of fighting "terrorism".'

Satellite imagery has shown the rapid emergence of hundreds of camps that are officially described as re-education facilities. Human Rights Watch estimate as many as a million are interred there, others suggest substantially more.

On the ground, the limited testimonies of survivors paint a picture of appalling terror, of being detained arbitrarily for months or years amid 'indoctrination' and atrocious abuses that contravene international law.

It has been claimed by Human Rights Watch that up to a million Uyghur Muslims are being detained across hundreds of camps in East Turkistan



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Dr Sophie Richardson, the China director of Human Rights Watch, told Sportsmail: 'Over the years we have written about everything from pervasive restrictions on the practise of Islam, all the way to enforced disappearances, and in the last couple of years we have documented mass arbitrary detention. People are being rounded up simply for being Uyghur, not for committing a crime.'

'High-tech surveillance is being used to track behaviour as part of the basis for detaining people. Last year we concluded that all of these policies taken together constitute crimes against humanity.'

It would be easy to dismiss the allegations as problems in a far-off land, a standard pre-Olympics morality narrative before the ice skating and snowboarding starts.

That is why it is essential to listen, which takes us back to Mahmut and her brother.

'After two or three months of trying, I couldn't get hold of anyone,' she says. 'But on January 3, 2017, I called my brother repeatedly. In the end, he picked up. After saying hello, it was strange because he did not say (the Muslim greeting) "assalamu alaikum". Instead he said "wei", which is very much a Chinese way of answering. I asked why no one was answering for months and he just said, "They did the right thing".

'Then he said, "Please leave us in God's hands and we'll leave you in God's hands". My tears were falling and I didn't know what to say. We have not spoken since, nor to any of my family there.

'Around then I learned people were being taken away. There was not any information so you must understand the confusion. I have thought about it all so much and I understand what he meant. If anyone even answered my phone call by mistake or not knowingly, then I would put them in danger.'

Her brother's name? 'I wouldn't want to give too much to you about him,' Mahmut says,

her voice wavering.

She believes, as an activist, she has been monitored by the Chinese government for years. 'I'm already very worried about him. I don't know if he or any of my siblings are alive. There is no escape for people living there. There are many, many families like this. It is painful.'

The rest of Mahmut's claims come from her work with the Uyghur World Congress.

'At the Congress we have more than 10 camp survivors,' she says. 'They were all in very different facilities and their account is almost exactly the same on the way people were treated, from food deprivation to how crowded it was, chained all the time. Rapes became systematic.

'China is always saying these are actors, well paid by the US or the World Uyghur Congress. But you can watch the Uyghur tribunal on YouTube and see their accounts.

'Millions of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and many other Turkic Muslims are enduring intense, unspeakable terror. Families are being torn apart, children taken away, millions of women sterilised and forced abortions. It is happening now.

'In late 2019 there were three data leaks. If you followed the news, one was 407 pages - detailed information about these camps. They confirm these are not so-called re-education camps or vocational training. These



Protestors in support of Uyghur Muslims speak of terror and abuse that contravenes the law

are prisons, places for indoctrination. Many, many, many innocent people are disappearing.'

At this point, we return to sport.

'Repeatedly the World Uyghur Congress has given the International Olympic Committee detailed information about what is happening and requesting that a country committing such atrocities shouldn't be honoured to host the Olympics,' Mahmut says.

'Yet the IOC completely ignored the call from the World Congress, from Hong Kong and from Tibetans. You have this Games that celebrates bringing athletes together. There will be ceremonies and happy faces as if everything is normal. The world is giving this to Beijing knowing what is happening.'

How did we get here? How did they get there? It is relevant to note the bidding for these Games started with a three-way race between Norway, Kazakhstan and China. When Norway dropped out, it left Beijing up against Almaty ahead of the vote by the IOC in 2015.

To think, almost seven years on, one of those cities started 2022 in a state of emergency amid civil unrest and the other is accused of crimes against humanity. If these are the answers, then perhaps it is time for the IOC

to find a new equation around how the Olympics are allocated.

That Beijing won is at best a curiosity. The National Alpine Ski Centre in Yanqing, roughly 50 miles north-west of Beijing, had just 2cm of snow between January and March 2021. For context, London and Madrid had more, so there will be 300 snow guns coating the slopes to even get the show going. The Covid situation makes the logistics even more complicated. There will be a 'closed loop bubble', stringent testing and no tickets are being sold to spectators, so only a hand-picked few will watch in person.

Those are unique challenges of the era, but more troubling is the advice being followed out of necessity by Team GB and many journalists to travel with temporary 'burner' phones and devices. That is because China is akin to an 'Orwellian surveillance state', according to Human Rights Watch's Dr Richardson.

Neither are they seen as especially tolerant of dissent, as we have seen most recently through the saga of tennis player Peng Shuai, which throws open the question of what would happen if an athlete uses the platform of the Games to raise concerns about human rights. Sportsmail knows of at least one who intends to do so.



The Beijing Games is being run as a 'closed loop bubble' with stringent testing of athletes and there will be no tickets sold to spectators due to the Covid situation at this time in China



Protestors in France demonstrate near the National Assembly in Paris with metal chains

So it may be an Olympic-scale understatement to say these Games are troubled. But as ever the show rolls on, with activists worried that many of the terrifying stories and allegations will soon melt away in the public consciousness, like the fake snow.

In the course of our conversation Mahmut suggests Sportsmail speaks to the World Uyghur Congress president Dolkun Isa. Now based in Germany, having fled China in 1994, he says his mother recently died in a camp and that two of his brothers have been given long prison sentences for no crime.

China have long labelled him a terrorist, which he puts down to his 'peaceful' human rights activities, and he is endorsed by Dr Richardson. 'If he is a terrorist I'm the Easter Bunny,' she says.

So that is the backdrop to these Games. The IOC evidently do not see any issue, with their flimsy claim to be 'beyond all political disputes'. In the view of Dr Richardson, they are 'putting fingers in their ears and chanting in a childlike fashion "a force for good, a force for good".'

Certainly there has been no obvious outcry from their major partners who, as ever, keep the lights on.



Sportsmail spoke to 13 major partners of the 2022 Games about claims around the alleged mistreatment of Uyghur Muslims and not one strayed from empty corporate platitudes

Sportsmail emailed all 13 of them on Monday - Coca-Cola, Panasonic, Omega, Allianz, Toyota, Visa, Samsung, Procter & Gamble, Intel, Bridgestone, Atos, Alibaba Group and Airbnb.

We asked for their position in relation to accusations of serious human rights violations and only Allianz, Atos, Intel, Omega and Toyota replied. None strayed from corporate platitudes.

Maybe it is easier to say nothing. Maybe we should expect better. Maybe we have been here before.

Protesters accuse the Chinese state of committing genocide and torture against the Muslim Uyghur minority. Dozens of demonstrators from China's Uyghur Muslim ethnic group have protested in Istanbul, calling for a boycott of next month's Winter Olympics in Beijing over China's treatment of the minority.

Uyghurs in Turkey Call for Boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics

By Aljazeera -January 23, 2022

The protesters gathered outside the city's Turkish Olympic Committee building on Sunday, waving the blue-and-white flags of the independence movement of East Turkistan, a group Beijing says threatens the stability of its far western region of Xinjiang. "China, stop the genocide; China, close the camps," chanted the demonstrators, some holding up a banner reading "Stop Genocide Olympics".

"China does not have the right to host the Olympics while committing all the torture, cruelty and genocide against Uyghurs," said Uyghur housewife Munevver Ozuygur, who said she had relatives in camps in China.

United Nations experts and rights groups estimate more than a million people, mainly from the Uyghur and other Muslim minorities, have been detained in recent years in camps in Xinjiang.

Beijing denies genocide or the existence of forced labour camps in Xinjiang and has accused Uyghurs testifying overseas about conditions inside the northwestern region of being paid liars.

After initially denying the existence of the Xinjiang camps altogether, China later defended them as vocational training centres aimed at reducing the appeal of "extremism". The United States and many of its allies, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan and Denmark, have said they will not send official diplomatic delegations to the games in protest against China's rights record. The Winter Olympics begins on February 4.

The US has slapped sanctions on a growing list of Chinese politicians and companies over the treatment of the Uyghurs, leading to tit-for-tat measures from Beijing.

China has sanctioned European, British and US legislators, as well as academics who

study Xinjiang and a London law firm.

'Deceiving people'

Some 50,000 Uyghurs, with whom Turks share ethnic, religious and linguistic connections, are believed to reside in Turkey, the largest Uighur diaspora outside Central Asia. Last month, 19 Uyghurs filed a criminal complaint with a Turkish prosecutor against Chinese officials, accusing them of committing genocide, torture, rape and crimes against humanity.

Uyghurs living in Turkey have criticised Ankara's approach to China.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said this month he conveyed Turkey's "views, expectations and sensitivities" over the Uyghurs to his Chinese counterpart during talks in Beijing.

"The world, Turkic countries and Islamic countries need to wake up. China is committing genocide right now," said protester Abdurrahman Taymaz.

"They are deceiving people. We want these Olympic Games to be boycotted as soon as possible."

"Business first and before human rights should be replaced by human rights first," Director of Human Rights without Frontiers, Willy Fautré, told FOX Business. "Liberal democracies should revise their commercial relations with China in the light of this reality." Other critics of these companies argue that





The Chinese regime, which is committing genocide in East Turkistan, is trying to suppress voices of criticism against the Beijing Winter Olympics.



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