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U.S. House Panel on China Highlights Abuse of Uyghurs in Second Hearing

By Michael Martina, Reuters, 2023.3.24

A new U.S. congressional committee on China held its second hearing on Thursday, highlighting what Washington says is an ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang region.

Rights groups accuse Beijing of abuses, including forced labor, mass surveillance and having placed 1 million or more Uyghurs - a mainly Muslim ethnic group - in a network of internment camps in Xinjiang.

Congressman Mike Gallagher, Republican chairman of the House of Representatives Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, told reporters ahead of the hearing that the situation in Xinjiang "should serve as a warning for what the world would look like under CCP leadership."

China vigorously denies abuses in Xinjiang and says it established "vocational training centers" to curb terrorism, separatism and religious radicalism.

The hearing is the latest in a series of events planned for the next two years while Republicans control the House to convince Americans that they should care about competing with China, and to "selectively decouple" the countries' economies.

The House panel heard from Gulbahar Haitiwaji, a Uyghur woman who, speaking through a translator, recounted her experience in what she said were years spent in camps where she faced abuse and forced patriotic education.

Qelbinur Sidik, an ethnic Uzbek assigned as a



teacher in one such camp, also spoke through a translator, describing prison-like conditions in which she said detainees faced torture and interrogation.

Both women managed to travel to Europe where they now reside.

Testimony was also heard from Nury Turkel, a prominent Uyghur American lawyer, Adrian Zenz, a German researcher who has sought to document the extent of internment camps in Xinjiang, and Naomi Kikoler from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A spokesperson for China's Embassy in Washington, Liu Pengyu, said the committee's planned witnesses have been "fabricating Xinjiang-related lies" based on ulterior political motives.

"We hope the American people can recognize the true face of these anti-China forces and not be misled by rumors and lies," Liu said, adding that the human rights of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang have been "protected to the fullest extent."

The U.S. government and parliaments in Britain, Canada and other countries have described China's birth prevention and mass detention policies in Xinjiang as genocide. A

United Nations report last year said China may have committed crimes against humanity in the region.

The bipartisan committee will not write legislation but will make policy recommendations, at a time when a hard line toward China is one of the few policies with bipartisan support in the deeply divided U.S. Congress.

The holocaust museum's Kikoler said the Chinese government was using subtle tactics to "intentionally destroy the Uyghur people," including mass surveillance and detention, torture, the transfer of children, and limits on reproduction.

Zenz said that, while the Chinese government has said it closed camps in Xinjiang in recent years, these were lower-security "re-education" centers, while there appeared to be a coinciding expansion of higher-security prisons or forced labor facilities.

"We can assume that hundreds of thousands have been shifted into these facilities, which have been dramatically expanded," Zenz said, adding that there were indications that mass internment peaked in 2018.

China Tries to Block Prominent Uyghur Speaker at UN

By VOA, 2023.3.23

China attempted on Thursday to block a prominent Uyghur activist from speaking at the United Nations Human Rights Council, where he demanded the body urgently address allegations of serious violations by Beijing.

Dolkun Isa, a Uyghur activist based in Germany and president of the World Uyghur Congress, spoke up during a general debate about concerns around the world.

Pointing to a number of recent reports, including one from former U.N. rights chief Michelle Bachelet warning of possible crimes against humanity being committed against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China's far-western Xinjiang region, he said the allegations "require the immediate and urgent attention of the council."



China objects

As soon as he began speaking, China's representative in the room Mao Yizong demanded the floor to object.

"We have reason to challenge the qualification of the speaker," Mao said, insisting that Isa was "not the representative of an NGO, and still less a human rights defender."

"Rather he is an anti-China separatist, violence element," Mao said, speaking in Chinese through an interpreter, warning that "allowing him to engage in separatist activities in the council would be in serious violation of the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, as well as the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Council."



'Government is trying to stop me'

After Mao's objection, U.S. representative Sam Birnbaum took the floor to insist on Isa's right to address the council, the top U.N. rights body.

And council President Vaclav Balek of the Czech Republic pointed out that NGOs are free to pick the speakers who represent them during the debate, and ruled Isa was entitled to finish speaking.

Isa had been invited by the non-governmental organization Global Human Rights Defense to take its brief speaking slot during the NGO portion of the debate, which comes after the council's 47 member states and numerous observer countries have voiced their positions.

"It's not the first time the Chinese government is trying to stop me," Isa told AFP later, saying "China is trying to manipulate the U.N. rights system."

As Isa completed his statement before the council, he lamented it had failed last October to agree to even put the Xinjiang issue on the agenda, despite the findings in Bachelet's report.

That report, published minutes before Bachelet's term ended on August 31 last year, highlighted credible allegations of widespread torture, arbitrary detention and violations of religious and reproductive rights.

It brought U.N. endorsement to long-running allegations that Beijing detained more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslims in prison camps.

Isa told AFP his mother died in such a camp a few years ago, and that two of his brothers were serving lengthy sentences.

During China's intervention in the U.N. debate, representative Li Xiaomei alleged the U.S. and others "out of their own political agenda fabricate and spread disinformation" about the rights situation in China.

U.S. ambassador Michele Taylor flatly rejected that statement, pointing to the numerous expert findings of "evidence of serious abuses, including possible crimes against humanity."

TikTok Chief 'Evasive' on 'Pretty Easy Question' About China's Uyghur Abuses

By Peter Aitken, Fox News, 2023.3.23



TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew proved evasive on direct questions about China's human rights abuses after repeatedly insisting that he does not take orders from his platform's parent company or party officials.

"Do you agree that the Chinese government has persecuted the Uyghur population?" Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-AZ, asked at the start of her allotted time during the House Energy And Commerce Committee hearing on TikTok's security concerns Thursday.

"If you use our app, and you open it, you will

see our users who give all sorts of content," Chew said before getting cut off.

"That's not what I said," Lesko said, then repeated her question.

When put on the spot, Chew said, "While it is deeply concerning to hear about all accounts of human rights abuse, my role here is to explain what our platform does," and again was cut off.

When asked a third time, with Lesko accusing Chew of being "evasive" on a "pretty easy question," Chew stressed, "Congresswoman,



I am here to describe TikTok and what we do as a platform, and as a platform, we allow our users to freely express their views on this issue and any other issue that matters to them.

“Well, you didn’t answer the question,” Lesko said.

Michael Beckerman, Head of Public Policy in the Americas for TikTok and regularly touted as the company’s top lobbyist, repeatedly dodged the question during an interview in December. Beckerman responded to the question of China’s treatment of the Uyghur population by saying, “That’s not something that I focus on,” adding that TikTok does “not censor content on behalf of any government.”

When pressed again to answer the question, Beckerman said, “I’m just not an expert on what’s happening in China, so it’s not an area that I’m focusing on. But you can look on the app, and you’ll find plenty of content about that as well,” according to National Review.

Lesko followed up her first hit with a list

of major countries, including the United Kingdom, India, New Zealand and Canada, that have banned TikTok from government devices for security concerns, asking how “all these countries ... have been wrong” about the app’s security threat.

Chew said he is “eagerly awaiting discussions” to address the issue. He also dodged questions from Rep. Tony Cardenas, D-Calif., on whether parent company ByteDance is a Chinese company, saying that ByteDance “owns many businesses and operates in China.”

“Is it a Chinese company or not?” Cardenas asked, to which Chew said he “frequently” discussed the topic of what to consider a “global company,” but Cardenas ultimately gave up on trying to get a straight answer.

Earlier in the hearing, Cardenas described Chew as “dancing” around questions, with other congressional members accusing Chew of providing “nebulous” answers to their questions.

Malaysian Muslim Youth Representatives Visit Dalai Lama, Discuss Issues of Religious Harmony

By ANI, 2023.3.23

Representatives from the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) visited the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso at his official residence in Dharamshala, India, the Star reported.

ABIM President Muhammad Faisal Abdul Aziz said that the issues discussed during the visit included promoting religions as tools of peace.

“It is important for us as the religious community to work together to promote religions as the source of peace, not conflict,” he said in a video posted by the Dalai Lama on Facebook.

The Tibetan spiritual leader, who donned a traditional Malay songkok given by Muhammad Faisal, said he was committed to promoting interfaith harmony, the Star reported.



“One of my commitments, in this life, is the promotion of religious harmony. We’re all brothers and sisters of this world. There’s no reason (to) quarrel in the name of religion,” he said to an audience that also comprised other NGOs from the United States and Sweden.

On Twitter, Muhammad Faisal said ABIM also gifted the Dalai Lama with an English translation of the Quran and a copy of the “Islam and Buddhist Eco-Dialogue” book, the Star reported.

In the meeting, ABIM touched on issues related to Islamophobia, how the society together as a religious community clarifies the misunderstanding of society about religion,

especially Islam, the Star reported.

“Leaders of various religions, especially Islam and Buddhism, should be more active in exploring solutions to the world’s problems together, including those that touch on aspects of climate change. Thus, religion should be seen as playing an important role in being a source of peace and security and not conflict or violence,” ABIM President Muhammad Faisal Abdul Aziz said in a tweet.

On the Uyghurs issue in China, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated that “I feel pain and sadness when I hear about my Uyghur friends who are oppressed”, ABIM President tweeted.

More Uyghur Criticism of Donnie Yen: Wasn't He More Guilty than Will Smith?

By Kok Bayraq, Bitter Winter, 2023.3.20

Will Smith slapped Chris Rock and was banned from the Oscars for ten years. Donnie Yen slapped the Hongkongers and the Uyghurs. He was not banned.

In 2022, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) banned Will Smith from attending the Oscars for ten years for slapping host Chris Rock. Unfortunately, in



2023, the Academy failed to follow this protocol by inviting action star Donnie Yen, whose participation was a slap to Hongkongers and Uyghurs.

As discussed in Bitter Winter last week, in January this year Donnie Yen was appointed a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the highest political advisory body in China.

China's policies toward the Uyghurs have been recognized as genocide or at risk of causing genocide by more than twenty countries and organizations, including the United Nations, the European Union, and the US government. That means Donnie Yen was appointed to a council advocating genocide. China is not even hiding its plans of genocide, by ordering to officials in Uyghur region "To break their lineage, break their roots."



Yen appeared on screen at two meetings held in China last week and stated, "It is a great honor to be a new member of the CPPCC." Who wouldn't consider this a slap to the Uyghur people—the target of the genocide—the prisoners who fought for their rights, human rights activists abroad, and journalists and researchers who reported on the genocide?

He previously accused peaceful Hong Kong protesters of being rioters. Additionally, his

praise for China's development also covers up China's genocide and crimes against humanity, and further hurts millions of people imprisoned in China and its occupied territories—East Turkistan, Tibet, and South Mongolia.

Will Smith's attack on Chris Rock was more than a physical blow; it was a blow to Rock's dignity, and it deserved punishment. Knowing that violence is such a great threat, how can AMPAS ignore a state that commits genocide? Despite the loud calls with 109 thousand signatures against Donnie's appearance at the Oscars, the actor and his wife, walked the red carpet on the morning of March 13.

If AMPAS were unaware of the genocide, let them look at Havagul's tears and the state of the hostages! Let them look at leaked documents that call for "no mercy" for



Uyghurs! If AMPAS hasn't heard that more than one million families have been torn apart and have suffered for six years due to the concentration camps set up by China, then the movie organization is disconnected from the realities of major human rights problems in the world.

Donnie Yen once stated that he did not wish to get political. Isn't it meddling in politics to take on the role of a political adviser to a

country that is committing genocide? Isn't it a form of political intervention to help distracting from the genocide in China by complaining about CNN and the BBC, which exposed it? Isn't Yen at the forefront of politics by acting in Mulan—a tool of China's colonial history propaganda—and bragging “I have soul in my movies” to the world?

Donnie Yen knows very well that his films will be banned from the Chinese market if they would include any criticism of the CCP. Therefore, his desire for “non-political involvement” is a fake.

Donnie Yen's bio also verifies that he has no integrity. He was born in Guangzhou, China, moved to Hong Kong when he was 2 years old, and moved to the United States when he was 11. In 2009, after living in the United States for 35 years, he renounced his American passport and accepted Chinese citizenship—because he no longer needed American education and training. Simultaneously, he gained significant money and fame. He wanted to appeal to the Chinese market of 1.5 billion consumers and thus sold his betrayal as patriotism, stating, “I am 100% Chinese.”

It is clear that Donnie Yen, who grew up taking advantage of the democratic system that helped him becoming famous, did not find these advantages suitable for 1.5 billion Chinese. This means his Chinese patriotism is also a fake.

What is a hypocrite like Donnie Yen, who grew up in the free world and has denied freedom to others, doing at the most prestigious art scene in the free world?

The AMPAS, has banned actor Richard Gere from attending the Oscars for twenty years for his criticizing China for the “horrendous, horrendous human rights situation” in Tibet. This is another ludicrous move compared to the invitation extended to Donnie Yen, who supports and serves in the CCP's inhumane regime. The sins of the six American actors who have been banned from the Oscars are less serious than the sin of Donnie Yen in his support of a genocide.

What is the rationale and standard of this decision? Is a pre-condition for being featured at the Oscars to support and not criticize China? Are actors supporting China promoted, and those who oppose the regime banned? Aren't supporters of the CCP just as involved in politics as its critics?

Will Smith and Richard Gere told no lies; their actions and intentions were clear, and Smith's admission of his mistake was another indicator of his honesty. Will Smith has been banned from the red carpet for ten years. Therefore, Donnie Yen should not be allowed anywhere near the Oscars until he apologizes for his complicity with dictators and compensates the victims. Will Smith slapped the face of a friend, but Donnie Yen is crushing the hearts of millions of people.



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Contact Us:

Adres: Kartaltepe Mah. Geçit Sok. No: 6 Dükkan: 2
Küçükçekmece / İSTANBUL
Gsm: +90 553 895 19 33 +90 541 797 77 00
info@istiqlalmedia.com turkistantimes.com