

# Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Should Support Xinjiang's Muslims

By Lama Fakih, HRW, 2022-10-05



Member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) face a moment of truth as the current session of the United Nations Human Rights Council nears its conclusion in Geneva: Will they support a discussion of the recent report by the former UN high commissioner for human rights exposing the Chinese government's systematic targeting and repression of Muslims in the Xinjiang region of China, or will they remain conspicuously silent?

The report details Chinese authorities' religious profiling of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang as "extremists," based on criteria such as "wearing hijabs," "abnormal" beards, "closing restaurants during Ramadan,"

"giving one's child a Muslim name," and other conduct that the high commissioner described as "nothing more or less than personal choice in the practice of Islamic religious beliefs and/or legitimate expression of opinion."

The report also highlights a broader program to suppress Uyghur language, culture, religion and identity, noting that "alongside the increasing restrictions on expressions of Muslim religious practice are recurring reports of the destruction of Islamic religious sites, such as mosques, shrines and cemeteries." It concludes that the extent of these and other violations may constitute international crimes, "in particular crimes against humanity."

Under the OIC Charter, all member states shall “safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States.” The OIC and its members have rightly defended the rights of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, condemned apartheid against Palestinians by Israeli authorities, and denounced acts of Islamophobia in Western countries.

During a racism debate at the current session of the UN Human Rights Council, Pakistan, as OIC coordinator, noted that “the OIC is gravely concerned over systematic targeting of individuals on the basis of their religion or belief,

especially against Muslim individuals or communities.” Pakistan deplored anti-Islamic conduct in countries including France, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway, but said nothing about the Chinese authorities’ targeting of Muslims in Xinjiang.

Some OIC countries, such as Turkey and Albania, have commendably cosponsored the draft decision calling for a debate on the high commissioner’s report. Others should follow their lead. Failure to support even a discussion of the report would severely undermine the credibility of the OIC to address Islamophobia elsewhere in the world.

## **The UN Xinjiang Report, One Month Later: Where Do We Go From There?**

*By Ruth Ingram, Bitter Winter, 2022-10-04*

Will the UN nail its colours to the mast and back its own findings on Xinjiang, or will it go down in history as reneging on its mandate to protect the human rights of its most vulnerable members?

China must account for the crimes against humanity meted out against its Turkic peoples, say representatives of democratic nations and rights groups as the 2022 UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly gather in Geneva. Not to summon China before the members to answer for its crimes, would risk making a mockery of everything the UN stands for, and fail the victims of Beijing’s latest purge on its North Westernmost frontier.

Citing damning evidence unveiled by the UN itself in a report released one month ago, Western diplomats are pressing for a resolution on China that would launch an investigation concerning the abuses that have seen millions surveilled 24/7 in a province that has become little more than an open prison, with up to three million illegally incarcerated for indefinite periods, the destruction of language, culture, and heritage, and the mass, forcible sterilization of swathes of the population.

Beijing on the other hand, propelled by Xi Jinping’s view that the world should “abandon ideological prejudice” and move





on from its “outdated Cold War mentality,” has garnered support from around the world from an army of indebted “friends” promising that all efforts to counter China would be “doomed to failure.” Already since the publication of the UN report, Beijing, having denied every allegation against it, has pushed back further, claiming that China and its allies would “work together to defend true multilateralism and resist US hegemony which is under the guise of human rights.”

Attacking the “small group” of Western countries urging a special debate over human rights in Xinjiang, Beijing, according to CCP mouthpiece Global Times, has presented its host of backers, with Pakistan leading the way. Boasting an entourage of seventy countries, united in their calls

to “stop interference in China’s internal affairs,” and a further twenty countries, opposing the “politicisation of human rights and double standards,” numbers on China’s “side” are mounting.

Over its 16 year history, many have tried but none to date succeeded in calling out China over its human rights record.

But now is the time, claim Uyghur rights groups, fearing that continued inaction gives Beijing a licence to continue unopposed. Citing the UN report as a “game changer,” Uyghur Human Rights Project Executive Director Omer Kanat said, “Despite the Chinese government’s strenuous denials, the UN has now officially recognized that horrific crimes are occurring.”

“The report offers the most definitive assessment of the issues faced by Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples from the world’s leading human rights body,” he said invoking the damning verdict that China’s actions in Xinjiang “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity.”

The myriad recommendations to address the wide reaching impact of CCP actions against his people, should not be buried, urged Kanat.

The Campaign For Uyghurs advocacy group welcomed the call by the US and other like-minded countries to organise a debate. Former camp survivors hope to add weight to the pressure on the Council by holding a hunger strike in front of the White House and calling for an end to the

continued persecution of their people.

Executive Director Rushan Abbas hoped that freedom-loving nations would stand up to the superpower. “Each and every state must stand up against China’s ongoing campaign of genocide against Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic groups,” she said, warning that failure to make a stand might backfire. One day the oppression might reach their own shores, she said.

Failure to act, according to Western diplomats interviewed by Reuters, would diminish the West’s moral authority. “There’s a cost of inaction, a cost of action and a cost of a failed attempt to act,” said one speaking on condition of anonymity. But failure to do anything would risk “missing the biggest opportunity to bring accountability in years.”

## **China Bans Residents From Leaving Xinjiang, Just Weeks After Its Last Covid Lockdown**

*By Jessie Yeung, Yong Xiong and Nectar Gan, CNN, 2022-10-06*

China has banned residents from leaving Xinjiang over a Covid-19 outbreak – just weeks after the far-western region began relaxing restrictions from a stringent extended lockdown, fueling public frustration among those scarred by food shortages and plunging incomes.

On Tuesday, the region – home to 22 million people, many belonging to ethnic minorities – reported 38 new asymptomatic Covid cases.

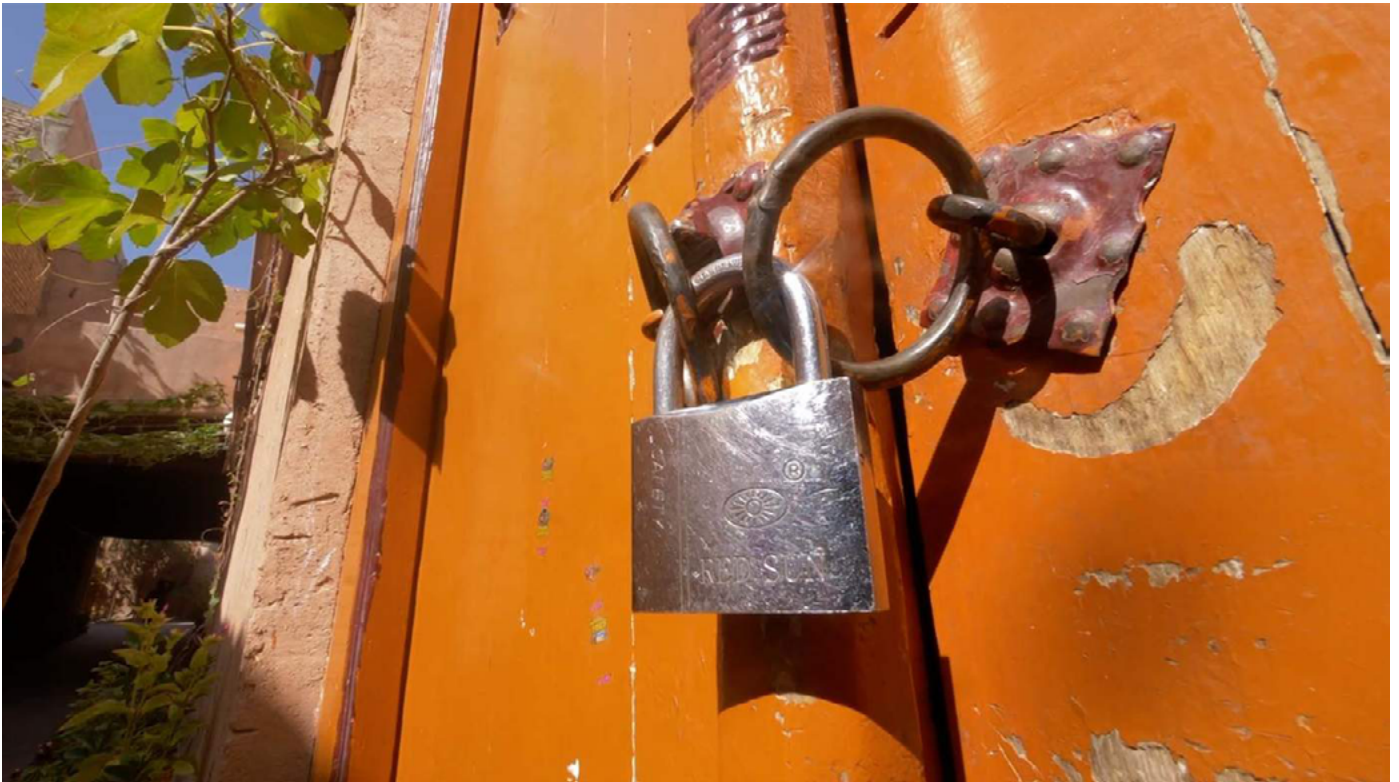
It was enough to alarm officials, with

Xinjiang’s Vice Chairman Liu Sushe vowing to “strengthen the control of cross-regional personnel and insist that people do not leave the region unless it is necessary.”

Liu added that Xinjiang will strengthen control measures in airports, train stations and checkpoints to prevent the virus from spreading to other parts of the country. All outbound trains, inter-provincial buses and most flights will be suspended until further notice.

At the airport in Urumqi, the regional





capital, 97% of departing flights and 95% of arriving flights were canceled on Wednesday, according to data from flight tracking company Variflight. Meanwhile, all flights departing Kashgar, a southern oasis town home to Xinjiang's second-largest airport, were canceled – except for two heading to Urumqi.

China is the world's last major economy still enforcing strict zero-Covid measures, which aim to stamp out chains of transmission through border restrictions, mass testing, extensive quarantines, and uncompromising snap lockdowns.

"The current round of Covid-19 outbreak is the fastest spreading, most widespread, most infectious and most difficult to control public health emergency in the history of Xinjiang," Liu said.

Since July 30, Xinjiang has reported a total of 5,790 infections.

Liu said that Xinjiang would make sure to "create a favorable environment" for the success of the 20th Party Congress – a meeting of the party elite later this month, where Xi Jinping is expected to be appointed to a third term in power, further cementing his status as the most powerful Chinese leader in decades.

The run-up to the congress, the most significant event on the Chinese political calendar, is particularly sensitive, with authorities nationwide working to smooth the way and contain any potential hiccups – like an untimely Covid outbreak.

But in Xinjiang, the news of the region's shuttered borders dismayed many residents for whom the pain of the last lockdown is still fresh.

### **Back-to-back lockdowns**

Many parts of Xinjiang were placed under

strict lockdown from August to September, with people in affected areas banned from leaving their homes – causing severe shortages of food, medicine and other basic necessities.

Yang Fei, 34, has been trapped in Urumqi since he traveled there in July to visit his girlfriend, with the city locking down on August 10. He requested a pseudonym, fearing retaliation for speaking out.

As a cancer survivor, Yang had most of his stomach removed and needs to have smaller but more frequent meals – something that became extremely difficult during the extended lockdown due to food shortages.

Over 30 days, he said he received just three deliveries of groceries from community authorities, and fainted from hunger twice. He said he repeatedly called the mayor's hotline and the police, to no avail; social media calls for help went unanswered. He ran out of food by early September; after not eating for 24 hours, he finally called for an ambulance with his remaining strength before passing out.

Community workers eventually broke into his apartment, and brought him a food package comprised of three potatoes, a cabbage, a leek, and some peppers and garlic. Yang had to ration the package over three days.

By early September, ~~Xinjiang~~ residents – from Urumqi to the cities of Yining and Korla – had taken to social media en masse to cry for help, drawing attention to the

pain of the extended lockdowns.

On September 3, Urumqi officials apologized at a press conference for the “shortcomings and deficiencies” in the city's Covid control, including the shortage of groceries, medicine and infant formula in some residential communities. Officials in Yining and Korla later also apologized.

On Wednesday, Yang – who is still stuck in Urumqi – told CNN that starting last week, he had been allowed to leave his residential compound for three hours every day to buy groceries. Residents were still banned from leaving the city, or entering other districts within Urumqi.

This limited reopening only lasted seven days before the regional lockdown was announced – dashing any hope of him leaving ~~Xinjiang~~.

“I haven't been able to work for two months. And I have no income, the only thing I can do is to not starve,” he said.

Yang added that Covid restrictions elsewhere in China pale in comparison to the harshness of the lockdown in Urumqi. In tightly-controlled ~~Xinjiang~~, where Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been subject to years of intense crackdown, authorities have taken a hardline approach – both to carry out zero-Covid policies, and to snuff out any sign of dissent.

The sweeping surveillance systems put in place to target ethnic minorities are now used to track the digital footprints of residents speaking out against Covid

restrictions online. Yang and many social media users say they have received phone calls or home visits from the police, who told them to delete their posts criticizing the lockdown.

And though Tuesday's announcement made no mention of people needing to stay home, the regional lockdown sparked panic anyway.

"People are hoarding supplies again today in our residential compound ... Do I have to stock up?" one Weibo user posted. "Who can endure another round of suffering?"

Many worried that the border closures could interfere with their postgraduate exams, required for admission into all graduate schools in China. Scheduled for December, it only takes place once a year – alarming some in Xinjiang who booked

their exams in test centers outside the region.

Others voiced an increasingly common sense of fatigue and depression after nearly three years of unending restrictions and isolation from the rest of the world.

"We have been wearing masks, doing daily PCR tests – this sudden outbreak really shouldn't have happened," one Weibo post read.

"I'm so tired, I almost can't go on," another user posted. A commenter commiserated: "Me, too ... the lockdown began in summer and now it's winter already. If we still go back to where we started, after all the losses we suffered from the two-month lockdown, I really can't live my life anymore."

## UN Council Rejects Uyghur Resolution on China by Narrow Margin

*By Jessie Yeung, Yong Xiong and Nectar Gan, CNN, 2022-10-06*

The 47-member U.N. Human Rights Council has rejected a resolution to hold a debate next year on alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang by a narrow margin of 19 votes against, 17 in favor and 11 abstentions.

The vote was preceded by a vigorous debate in which several member states presented their positions for and against the draft resolution. The United States, one of 10 Western sponsors, introduced the resolution.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Human

Rights Council Michele Taylor noted that evidence of human rights violations in China's Xinjiang province was recorded in a U.N. report published more than a month ago. She said it was important to hold a debate on the issue in a neutral forum.

"The evidence in this independent assessment was compiled over a three-year period," said Taylor. "It relied extensively on China's own records. It corroborates several concerns raised by special procedures, independent

HRC 51th session

A/HRC/51/L.6 - Debate on the situation of human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

3:00

ABST	ARGENTINA	YES	HONDURAS	YES	NETHERLANDS
ABST	ARMENIA	ABST	INDIA	NO	PAKISTAN
ABST	BENIN	NO	INDONESIA	YES	PARAGUAY
NO	BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)	YES	JAPAN	YES	POLAND
ABST	BRAZIL	NO	KAZAKHSTAN	NO	QATAR
NO	CAMEROON	ABST	LIBYA	YES	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
NO	CHINA	YES	LITHUANIA	NO	SENEGAL
NO	COTE D'IVOIRE	YES	LUXEMBOURG	YES	SOMALIA
NO	CUBA	ABST	MALAWI	NO	SUDAN
YES	CZECHIA	ABST	MALAYSIA	ABST	UKRAINE
NO	ERITREA	YES	MARSHALL ISLANDS	NO	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
YES	FINLAND	NO	MAURITANIA	YES	UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
YES	FRANCE	ABST	MEXICO	YES	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NO	GABON	YES	MONTENEGRO	NO	UZBEKISTAN
ABST	GAMBIA	NO	NAMIBIA	NO	VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)
YES	GERMANY	NO	NEPAL		

media, academic researchers and most importantly, by Uyghurs themselves.”

The report was issued on August 31 by former U.N. high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet. It documents credible evidence of torture or other ill-treatment and sexual and gender-based violence against the Uyghur minority. The report says the violations may constitute crimes against humanity.

More than a million Uyghurs and other Muslim groups reportedly are incarcerated in so-called vocational centers in Xinjiang. China has consistently denied the allegations in the past and did so again at the council.

China's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, Chen Xu, said the draft proposal was not pro-human rights but was another example of politicization. He accused the United States and other Western countries

of fabricating lies and spreading rumors to smear China.

He warned the draft decision will not promote dialogue but only lead to new confrontations. He spoke through an interpreter.

“If China is targeted, tomorrow, any other developing country is going to be targeted,” said Chen. “To allow the adoption of such a draft decision is tantamount to supporting Western countries’ interference in China’s internal affairs under the pretext of Xinjiang-related issues and will damage the work of the council and the international human rights cause in the long run.”

This is the first time the council has considered a proposal to debate the human rights situation in Xinjiang. China has always been seen as too powerful to take on.

Pressure exerted on the 13 African member



countries has paid off. Eight voted no, four abstained and Somalia cast the only vote in favor of the draft resolution. Four important Muslim states voted against the resolution. One abstained.

Human Rights Watch has called the council's failure to adopt the proposal an abdication of responsibility and a betrayal of Uyghur victims. Another leading rights organization, Amnesty International, said the vote protects the perpetrators of human rights violations rather than the victims and makes a mockery of everything the Human Rights Council is supposed to stand for.



International Union of  
The East Turkistan  
Organizations

Press Release

#### About the 51. Session of UN Human Rights Council on Uyghur Genocide

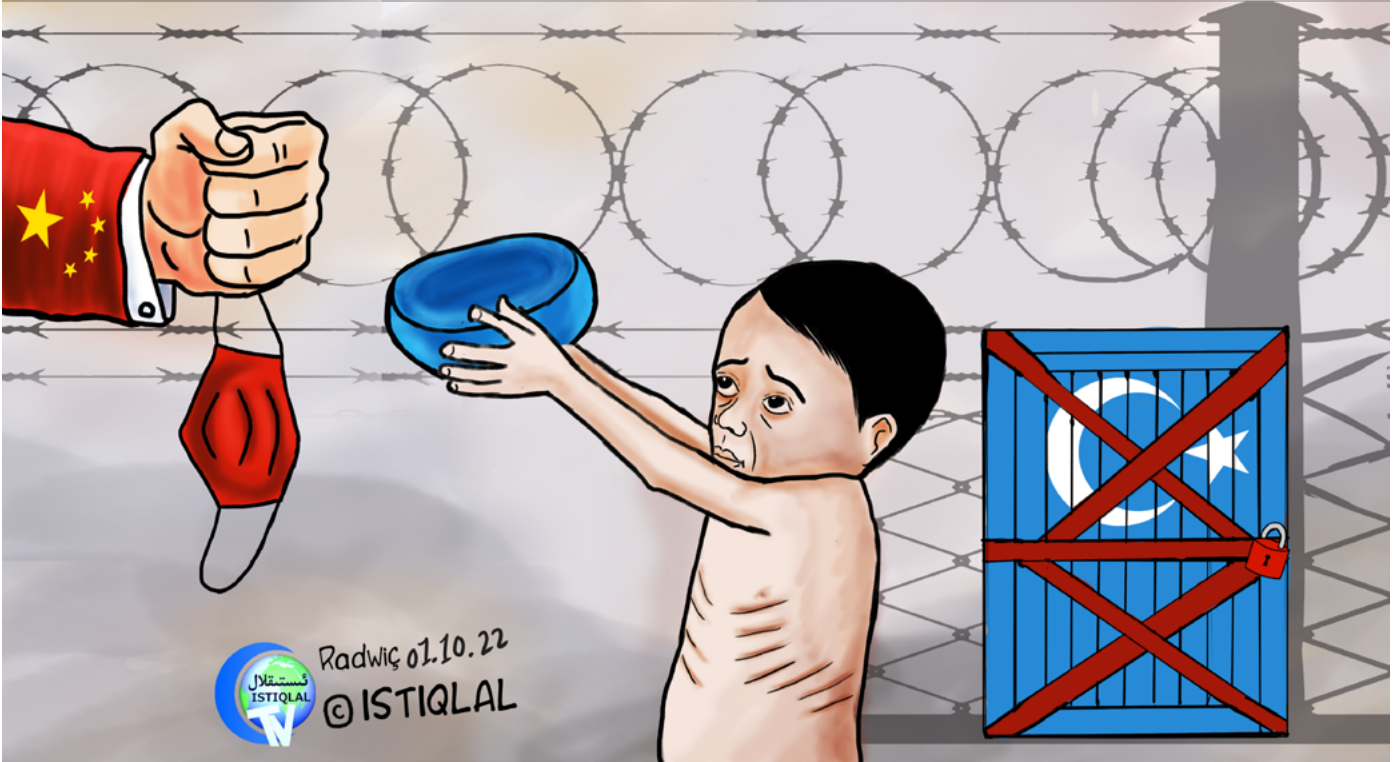
The UN Human Rights Council held a session to vote on October 6, 2022, for holding a special debate session to discuss the human rights violations that China is committing in East Turkestan, and the resolution was rejected as a result of 19 votes against 17.

**The Union President Hidayet Oğuzhan:** On August 31, 2022, Michelle Bachelet's office published a report on the genocide in East Turkestan, and it concluded that there is a high risk of systematic crime against humanity which is being committed by the East Turkistan Chinese administration. In the report and previous documents, it has been proven that millions of people have been arrested innocently, the genocide has been designated in the parliaments of 10 states, and the Independent Uyghur Tribunal in London has clearly ruled that genocide is being committed.

While China commits genocide and crimes against humanity in this way, the dysfunction of the UN and its affiliated institutions, especially the Human Rights Council and the High Commission for Human Rights, has paved the way for China to legitimize its genocidal practices and go further. We protest these countries voted no among the member countries and express the sadness of the people of East Turkistan because the UN Human Rights Council could not reach a decision in line with its founding purpose and did not fulfill the responsibilities required by the human rights convention and being a member of the said council.

In this context, we express our gratitude for Somalia being the only Muslim country to vote yes and Türkiye's sensitivity even though it is not a member, and we call upon the UN Human Rights Council and other relevant UN agencies to be more determined to stop the genocide and human rights violations in East Turkistan and to take effective and efficient steps.

International Union of East Turkistan Organizations  
06/10/2022



*The entire areas in East Turkistan are currently under lockdowns, and the Chinese regime continues its starvation genocide crime under the name of “zero-COVID policy”.*

## 5th East Turkistan National Unity Council and 14th Global East Turkistan Brotherhood Forum Held in Istanbul



**EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION**  
شەرقىي تۈركىستان ئاخبارات ۋە مەدەنىيەت جەمئىيىتى

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