

Don't be Selective About Injustice, Say Uyghur Supporters

By Reshna Reem Ganesan, Free Malaysia Today, 2022-10-10



The government has been accused of practising a double standard by abstaining during a United Nations vote on abuse of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China.

Azmi Abdul Hamid, president of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organisations, said Malaysia should not be selective when it comes to standing against injustice.

He said Malaysia had upheld itself as being “very principled” about human rights and voicing the plight of the oppressed. However, the country made an exception

about taking a stand on the alleged abuses faced by the Uyghur community.

Azmi said the government must explain its decision. Malaysia should not allow itself to be dictated by “oppressive powers”, he said.

Last week, Amanah deputy president Salahuddin Ayub and Terengganu Amanah chief Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah questioned the government’s decision, with the latter describing it as embarrassing.

Another group of Uyghur supporters said Malaysia had chosen, by its abstention, not to seek truth and help those being

persecuted.

Zuhri Yuhyi, president of the Malaysia4Uyghurs group, said: “We have kowtowed to China because our leaders don’t want it to interfere with trade relations. Our silence is complicity.”

Malaysia4Uyghurs is a coalition of Islamic, Christian and human rights groups advocating the plight of Uyghurs.

On Friday, the UN Human Rights Council voted 19-17 against holding the debate on

Xinjiang and the Uyghurs. Malaysia was among 11 countries which abstained. The others were Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Gambia, India, Libya, Malawi, Mexico and Ukraine.

In a report on Xinjiang last month, former UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet cited potential “crimes against humanity” against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities being carried out in the Chinese province.

Ghulja: Facing Starvation, the Miracle of Uyghur Solidarity

By Kok Bayraq, Bitter Winter, 2022-10-12

One of the most brutal commands of today’s dictators is Xi Jinping’s edict against the Uyghurs: to break their lineage, break their roots, break their ties, and break their origins.

This edict has been put into practice in East Turkestan (Xinjiang to China) in many ways since 2017, including mass detention, kidnapping, mass surveillance, separation of families, forced labor, and violations of reproductive rights.

In recent weeks, during the COVID-19 lockdown period in Ghulja City, Uyghurs have exhibited their strong lineage and connections by conducting an unprecedented aid campaign against the hunger crisis of the residents in the city.

Evidence of their unbroken ties can be seen in many recent social media posts:

Post 1

A baker

“I have prepared 2,000 loaves of bread and 2 tons of meat to help the starving people in the lockdown of the city of Ghulja, but the residents’ committee won’t let me do that. Look, what’s wrong with what I want to do?”

Post 2

A businessperson

“I am a small entrepreneur. I can’t stand the crying of hungry mothers and children in Ghulja. I want to sell my factory to help them.”

Post 3

Anonymous

“I have prepared 10,000 yuan, and I will help Ghulja. Those who are collecting



A view of Ghulja City before the COVID-19 lockdown

donations, please contact me. Please, don't think that what I'm doing is for fame. Don't call it patriotism either. Just think of it as a personal matter, because what happened to my brothers in Ghulja today will happen to me tomorrow, and I'm doing this so that I won't be alone and needy at that time."

What Xi Jinping originally wanted was to cut off Uyghurs by "breaking their connections,"—the love and brotherhood among the Uyghurs. To break them apart, he has sent thousands of leading intellectuals, such as Abduqadir Jalalidin, Yalkun Rozi, Zulpiqar Ozbash, and others, who nurtured the spirit of brotherhood among the Uyghurs, to detention camps. From the messages above, it seems that the camps have not achieved their original purpose. The Uyghurs have declared

that their lineage has not been broken, despite six years of hardships since the establishment of the camps.

Post 4

An elementary school teacher

"My students have breakfast in the classroom. Each student is given a piece of bread, a carton of milk, and an egg. Today, [the] students only ate [the] bread. I asked why [they] didn't eat [their] eggs and drink their milk. 'Please send it to the mothers and children in Ghulja,' replied the class president."

Three daily meals are served in boarding schools, called "Angels Schools," in the Uyghur region. The students in these schools were separated from their families when their parents were sent to the camps. Today, more than 500,000 children are

studying at these “Angels School.” Every day, these children are taught that their parents are bad, and they are told not to be like them. Their parents’ greatest sin is their adherence to Uyghur traditions.

From the gestures of the students, we can see that Xi Jinping was able to physically separate the children from their parents but not from their inherent goodness. The children’s roots remain unbroken. I believe this shows that the seed sown by God in the human soul is more fruitful than the seed planted by hate (here, via the state).

Post 5

A blogger

“Today, 100 trucks of goods arrived in Ghulja from all over Xinjiang. As the trucks were entering the city streets, the residents came to their windows and called out, ‘Thank you, my people.’ Truck drivers also greeted residents by stopping their vehicles and descending to the ground; the eyes of the residents and the drivers alike were filled with tears. This is an unforgettable moment in my life. Because I was witnessing [what] wonderful people we are!!! Another thing that struck me was [that] all [the] residents did not accept more food than they needed, and some even gestured to impoverished communities to give it to those more vulnerable than themselves.”

The scene reminded me of a military parade. It is not a government paid campaign. It is not at the direction of any civil organization. It is the actions of normal citizens who organized on TikTok. By saying



he wanted “to break their connections,” Xi Jinping meant breaking their ability to organize. To do this, he has jailed many educational and public leaders, such as Taşpolat Teyip, Halmurat Ghopur, Sattar Sawut, Abdurahman Ebey, Arslan Abdulla, and Qurban Mamut. Fortunately, the seeds of connection they planted are still sprouting through social media.

Post 6

Anonymous

“I can’t sleep because of [my] excitement. I watch our brothers collect donations from all sides. I have so much to say, but all I can say is, ‘Thanks, my people.’”

Hundreds of similar responses reflect the national pride, love, and unity of the Uyghurs. Xi Jinping had sent poets Perhat Tursun and Gulnisa Imin and writer Ehtem Omer, who were educating on and advocating for this spirit, to prisons to

destroy their voices.

However, national consciousness has been formed not only by national education and literature but also by national, ethnic, and state oppression. The misfortunes that have befallen the Uyghurs over the last six years have strengthened and reinforced the common feelings and consciousness that have always existed in this nation and its people.

As always, the Chinese may arrest and imprison philanthropists participating in this aid campaign on charges of separatism or terrorism after a certain period of

time. They may also accuse bloggers of spreading gossip or leaking state secrets. However, the voices in the posts above prove that arresting and killing are not solutions to colonialism and ethnic issues. They show that it is impossible to break the lineage and roots of a people united for thousands of years, especially in the 21st century, where technology can act as an ally.

Once China realizes this truth, it will acknowledge its failure. It will stop the Uyghur genocide and take steps to escape the punishment of history.

Volkswagen Plans Joint Venture with China's Horizon Robotics

By Expatica, 2022-10-13

Volkswagen is investing 2.4 billion euros (\$2.3 billion dollars) in a joint venture with China's Horizon Robotics, the German auto giant said Thursday, despite a growing debate over Berlin's economic relationship with Beijing.

The partnership with VW's software arm, Cariad, is intended "to speed up customisation of automated driving solutions for the Chinese market", the group said in a statement.

Ralf Brandstaetter, a member of the management board for Volkswagen in China, said the move was "a central cornerstone of our strategy to realign and further strengthen our activities in our most important market worldwide".

Cariad will hold a 60 percent stake in the new company, with the deal set to close in the first half of 2023.

As part of its transition to electric vehicles, Volkswagen has long been investing in China and has already created several joint ventures there, particularly in the field of batteries.

However, the German government's relationship with Beijing has been soured lately by China's strict zero-Covid policy, the escalation of tensions over Taiwan and concern over human rights issues in the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang region.

Reliance on raw materials from China has also become a key concern after Germany's dependence on Russia became its Achilles



heel when Moscow invaded Ukraine.

In May, Germany refused investment guarantees in China to Volkswagen due to concerns over human rights abuses in Xinjiang, where the auto giant has a facility.

Former Volkswagen CEO Herbert Diess in June said he was “concerned about the basic attitude of the German government towards China”.

Germany would have “less growth, well-being and employment” without a strong partnership with China, Diess told Der

Spiegel magazine.

German carmaker Opel in September said it had stepped back from a planned entry into the Chinese market.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz has said that Germany should not decouple its economy from countries including China.

But Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has also warned that Berlin should “no longer make ourselves existentially dependent on any country that does not share our values”.

Kazakh Camp Detainee to Sue UK, Claiming Cotton Imports Used Forced Labor

By Adile Ablet for RFA Uyghur, RFA, 2022-10-12

A Kazakh former internment camp inmate is suing the United Kingdom’s trade secretary for allowing imports of cotton he believes were obtained through forced labor in northwestern China’s Xinjiang region.

Erbakit Otarbay was arrested in Xinjiang in 2017 for watching illegal videos on Islam and installing the WhatsApp instant messaging service on his cell phone, amid a crackdown there by the Chinese government on Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

The next year, Otarbay was detained in an internment camp, where he was tortured and forced to work in an apparel factory, he said.

“There was an auto repair shop, a bakery, a sweet shop and a barber shop,” he told Radio Free Asia. “I told them I was not good at baking, and that I liked sewing.”

Otarbay joined a group of mostly women at the garment factory, who included not only Uyghurs, but also other ethnic minorities such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. He produced cloth loops for belt buckles.

After he was released in 2019, Otarbay wanted to call attention to the suffering of detainees and those being forced to work, he said.

“If you ever get out, go as far as you can to every country and call for our release and tell them what the Chinese government is doing to us,” he said.

As many as 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslims are believe to be held in network of internment camps that China has set up to prevent purported “religious extremism” and “terrorism.” Inmates have been subjected to torture, rape, forced sterilizations of female detainees and forced labor.

Beijing has insisted that the camps were vocational training facilities and that they are now closed.

The United States and nine Western parliaments have declared that the



Erbakit Otarbay testifies at the Uyghur Tribunal in London, Sept. 12, 2021.

repression of predominantly Muslim groups in Xinjiang amounts to genocide and crimes against humanity.

Call for import restrictions

In a pre-action letter to Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch, Otarbay called on the U.K. government to address an “ongoing failure” to impose any restrictions on cotton imports from Xinjiang, the U.K’s Sky News reported on Oct. 9.

China is a major cotton producer, with most of it coming from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The U.N.’s Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights issued a report at the end of August saying that China’s repression of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang province “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity.”

But China has vowed to fight any U.N. action on human rights abuses against Uyghurs in Xinjiang cited in the OHCHR report.

In December 2021, an independent tribunal in London found that China committed genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, based on testimony from dozens of witnesses, including formerly jailed Uyghurs and legal and academic experts on China's actions in the region.

Otarbay also testified at the tribunal about his detention, saying that authorities confined him to a metal tiger chair, used to immobilize suspects during interrogations, for hours.

Otarbay emigrated from China's Xinjiang to Kazakhstan with his family in 2014, but returned three years later. He was arrested and sent to a "re-education camp." After a year, he was taken to another detention

center where he was forced to work without pay in a clothes factory inside the facility, until he was released in May 2019.

"What I tell the U.K. government is ban all the goods from Xinjiang," Otarbay told RFA. "They have to take measures. They should globally expose the genocide that China is committing."

"They have to inspect all the imported goods from China, where they were manufactured, who made them and so on, and they should take actions to stop the forced labor," he said.

Though the U.K. government has measures in place to ensure that its companies are not complicit in alleged forced labor practices in Xinjiang or involved in the region's supply chain, but critics say



enforcement is lax.

“It is very disappointing that the British government have not taken a lead in this issue,” said Otarbay’s attorney, Paul Conrathe. But he said he is hopeful that the court will recognize that the government’s actions are “unlawful.”

14 days to respond

The trade secretary now has 14 days to respond, he said. Their next steps will depend on the reply.

Rahima Mahmut, U.K. director of the World Uyghur Congress, or the WUC, said the British government has not gone far enough to stop goods made with Uyghur forced labor from entering the U.K.

“Even though the U.K. government openly and loudly criticized China’s horrific treatment of the Uyghurs, so far it has not taken any meaningful actions in terms of ending Uyghur forced labor,” she told RFA. “It has not stopped the flow of products [made with forced labor] into [the UK].”

Otarbay is “the best plaintiff to pursue this case” against the U.K. trade secretary, and WUC is working closely with him, she added.

To address concerns about Uyghur forced labor, the United States enacted the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in 2021, which assumes goods made in Xinjiang are produced with forced labor and thus banned under the U.S. 1930 Tariff Act. The law requires U.S. companies that import products from the region to prove that they have not been manufactured at any stage with Uyghur forced labor.

The European Union has proposed a total ban on all goods produced using forced labor at any stage of production, harvest or extraction, including clothing, cotton and commodities, irrespective of where they have been made.

“It is very commendable that the American government has taken a lead in effectively banning imports that derive from Xinjiang, and also that the European Commission is looking at doing something similar,” Conrathe said. “This is a very important case dealing with one of the most appalling situations in terms of human rights abuses in the world today.”



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