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Chinese Police Using Spies to Ensure Uyghur Muslims Do Not Fast During Ramzan: Report

By ANI, 2023.4.13

Chinese police have been using spies to ensure that Uyghur Muslims do not fast during the holy month of Ramzan.

The spies, which Chinese officials call “ears”, are drawn from ordinary citizens, police and members of neighbourhood committees, Radio Free Asia reported citing a police officer from an area near Turpan, or Tulufan in Chinese, in eastern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Speaking to Radio Free Asia, the police officer said, “We have many secret agents.”

China started banning Muslims in Xinjiang from fasting during Ramzan in 2017 when authorities started arbitrarily detaining Uyghurs in “re-education” camps amid efforts to diminish Uyghur culture, language and religion, as per the news report.

The restriction announced by Chinese authorities was partially relaxed in 2021 and 2022, permitting people above the age of 65 years to fast and police even reduced the number of home searches and street patrol activities. This year, the Chinese government has banned everyone from fasting irrespective of age, gender or profession, Radio Free Asia reported citing a political official at Turpan City Police Station.

During the first week of Ramzan, Chinese authorities summoned 56 Uyghur residents and former detainees to question them about their activities and said that 54 of them violated the law by fasting, Radio Free Asia reported citing a policeman from Turpan City Bazaar Police Station.

As per the news report, neither he nor



another police officer at the police station would discuss what happened to those who were determined to have violated the law. Police stations in Turpan have engaged two or three spies from each village to watch people previously questioned and detained for fasting during Ramzan and those released from prison, Radio Free Asia reported citing officials.

“Our ‘ears’ came from three fields — the ordinary residents, the police and the neighbourhood committees,” the police officer from an area near Turpan said. She said that they recruited Uyghurs to surveil other Uyghurs due to the language barrier. She further said, “In my workplace, there are 70-80 Uyghur policemen who either directly work as ‘ears’ or lead other civilian ‘ears’.”

The Turpan City Bazaar Police Station recruited two or three “ears” meaning spies to surveil the activities of residents during

Ramzan. According to a policeman, some villages even have four to five spies, according to Radio Free Asia report.

Police will carry out an investigation into those who previously violated the law by fasting during Ramzan as well as people who organize fasting activities, according to a police officer.

A staffer at the Turpan Prefecture Police Bureau said authorities there had spies working within the police to check if Uyghur officers were fasting from dawn to dusk. She said that they have so far not detected any officer who is fasting, as per the news report.

A police officer from a police station in Turpan City said that this year’s policy includes home searches, street patrols and mosque searches. Authorities have been questioning Uyghur Muslim families to check if they are waking up before dawn to eat and gathering for a meal after sunset.

Congress Warns That Chinese Shopping Apps Could Enable Uyghur Forced-Labor Imports

By Jimmy Quinn, National Review, 2023.4.11

The members of Congress behind the law that combats the import of goods produced by Uyghur forced labor are warning that some importers are taking advantage of a loophole intended to avoid scrutiny of the products that they’re bringing into the U.S. — and that increasingly popular Chinese e-commerce apps might facilitate breaches of the law.

The group of senators and House members — Representatives Chris Smith and Jim McGovern, and Senators Jeff Merkley and

Marco Rubio — sounded the alarm in a letter today to the Department of Homeland Security, in their capacity as leaders of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

“Despite the welcome introduction of the new [Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act] Statistics Dashboard, we remain concerned that Congress lacks sufficient information and transparency to accurately assess whether implementation of the law comports with congressional intent,” the



lawmakers wrote, in a letter addressed today to Robert Silvers, DHS's under secretary for strategy policy and plans.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which Congress passed at the end of 2021, applies to all imports from China's Xinjiang region with the assumption that they were produced using forced labor and are therefore inadmissible. The law followed well-documented evidence of a Chinese Communist Party-orchestrated forced-labor campaign that involves enslaving Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Those atrocities have been recognized by the U.S. and other governments, the U.N., and numerous human-rights groups.

While Customs and Border Patrol, which is tasked with implementing the law, says it has blocked forced-labor-tainted imports worth hundreds of millions of dollars under the law, lawmakers have previously warned that importers are taking advantage of a workarounds to circumvent the prohibition on those imports.

One newly identified loophole involves the popular Chinese e-commerce apps TEMU — which has been downloaded at least 33 million times since its launch in the U.S. — and Shein, another popular app.

The lawmakers said that current rules allow “vendors to send materials without having to report basic data, such as country-of-origin and manufacturer, if they claim that the value is under \$800.” They requested further information about how CBP treats the Uyghur forced-labor law with regard to the ascendant Chinese shopping apps, referring to TEMU's purchase of several Superbowl ads as an indication of its rapid U.S. scale-up effort.

“The fact that the Google Play Store recently suspended the app of TEMU's Chinese parent company Pinduoduo (PPD) — citing security concerns about malware — only makes a concerted response to TEMU based imports all the more urgent,” they wrote.

While security concerns surrounding TikTok have claimed the spotlight, members of



Congress are viewing a broader crackdown on Chinese apps. One bill, the RESTRICT Act, would codify a Trump-era executive order granting the Commerce secretary powers to implement measures to mitigate the risks raised by apps with ties to foreign adversaries of the U.S.

The CECC lawmakers also addressed a loophole that they'd previously identified, writing that some importers whose shipments are initially impounded have simply claimed that the forced-labor law doesn't apply and received an "applicability review" from CBP — creating a workaround that doesn't require reports to Congress. "Such reviews seem to skirt the intent of UFLPA, which already gives importers the opportunity to rebut CBP's detainment orders," they wrote today.

The lawmakers further alleged that importers "have had cargo released, even though CBP initially stopped it because of evidence of a link to the forced labor of Uyghurs outside" of ~~Xinjiang~~. They also said that close to 300 shipments were stopped but later released — merely because the importer claimed that the Uyghur forced-labor law didn't apply.

They also outlined a series of other

enforcement issues, including shipments through third countries and the enforcement of forced-labor prohibitions under the U.S.–Mexico–Canada agreement.

The CECC intends to empower CBP and the DHS's forced-labor enforcement task force so that they can be "at the forefront of this critical fight against modern slavery," the lawmakers wrote.

After publication, a DHS spokesperson responded to National Review's request to comment with a lengthy statement defending the department's record, describing enforcement of the Uyghur forced-labor law as a top priority, and welcoming Congress's support and input on the matter.

"DHS's swift and unprecedented action to enforce the UFLPA has resulted in successful implementation in record time ahead of ambitious statutory deadlines," this person said. "At DHS, we stand on the front line to make sure goods made in whole or in part with forced labor from ~~Xinjiang~~ province, or anywhere else in the world, do not enter the U.S. economy."

The commission will hold a hearing on DHS's implementation of the Uyghur forced-labor law on April 18.

China's Repression of Uyghurs Extends Beyond Borders, Report Says

By Asim Kashgarian, VOA, 2023.4.14

Najmudin Ablet, a Uyghur man from ~~Xinjiang~~ in northwest China, traveled to Turkey in 2016 with a Chinese-issued passport. But since 2017 he has been unable to reach his family

still living in ~~Xinjiang~~, including his wife, two sons and three brothers.

All of them were detained and subsequently

sentenced for various alleged offenses. One brother died in prison, and another died two months after leaving an internment camp, according to a recent report published by the University of Sheffield in England.

Many Uyghurs have similar stories of persecution by Chinese authorities, but in Ablet's case, the report's authors say Chinese police also tried to use Ablet's family as leverage to recruit him as an informer against other Uyghurs in Turkey.

On Tuesday, the two authors of *We Know You Better Than You Know Yourself: China's Transnational Repression of the Uyghur Diaspora* presented their findings in the report during a panel organized by the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project.

According to the authors, David Tobin, a lecturer in East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield, and Nyrola Elima, an independent researcher, the report mainly focused on China's transnational repression of the Uyghur diaspora in Britain, Turkey and Thailand.

Offer from Chinese police

Tobin said Chinese police in Xinjiang contacted Ablet through WeChat, a Chinese messaging app, and offered him the opportunity to see his imprisoned son through a camera. They then asked him to work for them, taking photos of Uyghurs in Turkey, and promised to release his son and pay him in exchange. Ablet refused.

According to Tobin, Uyghurs were offered information about their detained family members in exchange for conducting surveillance of Uyghur diaspora activists.

He discussed the story of one Uyghur woman who was called by a Chinese police officer ordering her to take photographs and collect information about Uyghur friends in Turkey. When she refused, the police responded, "We know you better than you know yourself."

Tobin said that "although she is a Turkish citizen living in Istanbul, thousands of miles from her homeland, she was under constant surveillance and always governed by the party state."



According to the Sheffield report, while China claims that its approach to international relations is guided by principles of state sovereignty and noninterference, in practice, Chinese authorities consider all citizens, former citizens and their family members, regardless of where they are living in the world, to be under Beijing's legal and moral jurisdiction.

"The PRC's transnational repression globally exports its domestic model of governance and genocidal oppression to target all Uyghurs and their family members," the report stated.

In recent years, Beijing has been accused of arbitrarily detaining more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in ~~Xinjiang~~ since as early as 2017. The U.S. and some parliaments around the world have accused Beijing of perpetrating genocide or crimes against humanity. The U.N. has reported the existence of significant evidence of mistreatment in the region, which may constitute "crimes against humanity."

Chinese officials have consistently denied allegations of human rights abuses against Uyghurs, dismissing them as "lies" and "fabrications." They contend that their policies in ~~Xinjiang~~ are geared toward combating extremism and fostering development. Chinese officials have accused Western countries of interfering in China's internal affairs and attempting to destabilize the country.

Elima said more than 100 participants took part in the report's survey, and fewer than half were interviewed individually.

"We interviewed more than 50 Uyghurs about their experiences on transnational repression,"

Nyrola said during the panel. "The majority of them have faced transnational repression."

According to the authors, about two-thirds of Uyghurs surveyed in Britain had been directly threatened, and 80% of the Uyghur diaspora in Turkey reported feeling unsafe from the Chinese party-state. About 4 in 5 Uyghurs reported being directly threatened or having their families threatened by Chinese authorities while living in Turkey. Only half of Britain-based Uyghurs felt safe from the Chinese party-state.

Immigration quotas

For national governments, the report suggests implementing immigration quotas based on the Canadian model to enhance human rights by ensuring safe passage and protection for Uyghurs at risk of persecution. In February, the Canadian Parliament passed a resolution to accept 10,000 Uyghur refugees living in third countries, such as Turkey.

Additionally, the report suggests introducing Magnitsky sanctions to punish individual Chinese police officers, security personnel and cadres who perpetrate transnational repression.

For U.N. agencies, the report recommends the UNHCR should increase its outreach among and support for Uyghurs in Turkey and Thailand, and also investigate their claims of deportations and harassment. Additionally, the report calls for the appointment of a U.N. special rapporteur for transnational repression to outline and explain its actions to counter potential Chinese crimes against humanity in ~~Xinjiang~~.



Malaysian Women Take the Lead in Uyghur Human Rights Issues

By Fernando Fong, The Rakyat Post, 2023.4.15

Malaysian women working through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have expressed concern about the Uyghur people.

The NGOs are working with their Uyghur counterpart from Turkiye to provide advocacy, enlightenment and awareness about the situation of the Uyghur people in China's northwest region of Xinjiang, also known as East Turkistan.

The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim) and Global Peace Mission (GPM) said their women leaders met with their Uyghur counterparts from the International Union of East Turkestan Organisation (IUETO).

Abim exco Wan Noor Fadhilah Wan Ibrahim said the purpose of the meeting is to consolidate the fight for Uyghur rights,

especially for women and children.

Besides continuous advocacy programs, they also look at exchanging ideas and expertise.

She added that plans are also in the pipeline to conduct mass programs to achieve more networking and public involvement from Malaysians in the current era.

A round table discussion was recently held and has reached several resolutions centred mainly on awareness creation.

The NGOs will also help provide food aid, medical support, trauma and psychosocial rehabilitation, especially for children.

They will also look into other long-term needs such as educational needs, employment, and resettlement of Uyghurs.



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