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Japan's First Uyghur Representative Says Uyghurs "Deserve to Thrive"

By Bethany Allen, Axios, 2023.5.16

Arfiya Eri, who last month became the first Japanese person of Uyghur heritage to be elected to the country's National Diet, hopes to show the world that while Uyghurs face genocide in China, elsewhere they are succeeding in politics, business and other fields, she told Axios in an interview.

What she's saying: "We are of course victims of genocide. But we are so much more than that. We also deserve to succeed and we deserve to thrive, and that's something I hope to model through my work," Eri told Axios.

The Chinese government has put more than 1 million ethnic Uyghurs into mass internment camps in the country's northwest region, according to estimates by human rights groups, as part of a sweeping campaign of repression that several governments have designated a genocide.

The upper and lower houses of Japan's parliament have both adopted resolutions expressing concern over human rights violations in Xinjiang, though neither labeled the government's actions there as genocide.

What's happening: In April, Eri was elected to the Diet, Japan's representative assembly, as a member of the Liberal Democratic Party for Chiba, which is near Tokyo.

Eri was born in Japan, attended Georgetown University, and later worked for the United Nations.

Details: Her main goals in office include:

Improving disaster preparedness in case of earthquakes and tsunamis.

Strengthening child care support, including free lunch programs and free national health care for all children in Japan.

Stronger national security and constitutional reform, meaning changing Japan's pacifist constitution to allow for a stronger military.

Improving mental health support for refugee communities and the Uyghur community.

Eri also said her experiences as a member of the Uyghur community have motivated her to push for greater diversity and inclusion in Japanese society, long perceived as highly homogenous.

"When I talk about representation, I'm definitely

referring back to my own experience with seeing what happens when we don't take democracy seriously, when we don't take representation seriously."

There are approximately 2,000 Uyghurs in Japan, according to some estimates.

Despite the grief that Uyghurs carry every day, Eri said, she hopes also "to celebrate our life and celebrate our successes."

Fashion Groups Face New Uyghur Forced Labour Complaint in France

By France24, 2023.5.17

Rights groups announced on Wednesday they had filed a new complaint in France against clothing giants including Uniqlo and Zara owner Inditex for allegedly profiting from forced labour of the Uyghur minority in China.

The complaint, filed on Tuesday, includes allegations of crimes against humanity, aggravated reduction to servitude, genocide and human trafficking.

The companies denied using forced labour in their supply chains.

The complaint was filed by anticorruption association Sherpa, the Ethique sur l'étiquette (Ethics on Labels) collective, the European Uyghur Institute and a Uyghur woman who had been held in a camp in China's far west region of Xinjiang.

An investigating judge is expected to be appointed in response to the filing.

The complainants say they want to bring to light "the possible responsibilities of clothing multinationals who profit from the forced

labour of Uyghurs for the production of their products", particularly cotton items.

A previous case filed to the national anti-terror prosecutor's office in Paris, which looks into purported crimes against humanity, was dropped in April because it lacks "jurisdiction to prosecute the facts contained in the complaint".

They had accused Uniqlo France, a subsidiary of Fast Retailing, along with Inditex, the Spanish owner of Zara and other brands, the French fashion group SMCP, and footwear manufacturer Skechers of marketing products that were manufactured at least in part at factories where Uyghurs are subjected to forced labour, according to rights groups.

The plaintiffs believe the companies do not have sufficient control over their subcontractors.

'Zero-tolerance policy'

The plaintiffs' lawyer William Bourdon hopes the French justice system will recognise their



claim “on the basis of concealing crimes against humanity.”

“Textile companies must account for having knowingly enriched themselves, at the cost of the most serious international crimes”, contrary to the ethical facade they present, he said.

In addition to the four companies, other major brands such as Nike have faced similar accusations.

Rights groups say more than one million Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities have been held in re-education camps in Xinjiang, with a slew of abuses that include forced labour.

Beijing denies the accusations, describing the facilities as vocational centres designed to curb extremism.

Inditex said the latest accusations were “unfounded”.

“The company has rigorous traceability controls to ensure the provenance of its products and a zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of forced labor,” Inditex said.

Fast Retailing said it had no been notified by the authorities but that, if and when it happens, it “will cooperate fully with the investigation to reaffirm there is no forced labour in our supply chains”.

SMCP said it had “already denied with the greatest firmness these accusations”.

It added that it expected its name would be dropped, as it had been following previous allegations stemming from a March 2020 report by Australian NGO Strategic Policy Institute, which ultimately removed SMCP and other groups from its findings.

Washington and lawmakers in other Western nations have called the crackdown in Xinjiang a “genocide” of Uyghurs and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has referred to their treatment as crimes against humanity.

The Unknown Fate of Uyghur Refugees Detained in India

By Umer Maqbool, Fair Planet, 2023.5.16

For Uyghurs fleeing persecution in China, crossing the border into India marks the beginning of a new ordeal.

In 2013, three Uyghur siblings had run

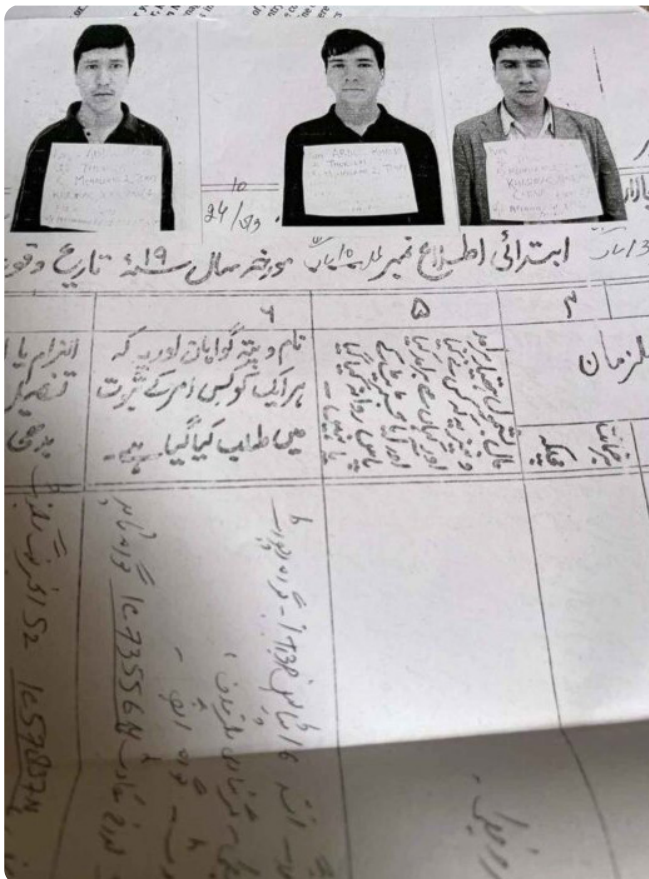
away from their home in Xinjiang to escape Chinese persecution - but their freedom was short-lived: The young siblings were nabbed by military personnel at a border outpost in Ladakh, along the de-facto border between

India and China in Indian-administered Kashmir.

The three were then handed over to civilian authorities, stood trial and were sentenced. But despite completing their jail term, the siblings continue to languish in prison under a law that allows the authorities in Kashmir to detain any person without trial. They also face the prospect of being deported back to China.

67-year-old Muhammad Shafi Lassu, a rights activist and a lawyer fighting to obtain the siblings asylum status in Kashmir, told FairPlanet that he has been pleading with the Indian authorities to stop their repatriation to China.

"I have approached the authorities multiple times to seek their release and allow them to stay in India, but my pleas remain unanswered," he said.



siblings held in detention in Indian-administered Kashmir

Documents reviewed by FairPlanet show that the three siblings - Adil, Abdul Khaliq and Salamu - who were aged 23, 22 and 20 respectively when they fled China, were apprehended by the Indian army on 12 June, 2013 near the Sultan Chusku glacier in Ladakh's Let district and handed over to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, a paramilitary force guarding India's border with China, the very next day.

The Xinjiang province of China, where Uyghurs live, shares a border with Indian-administered Kashmir, which was bifurcated in 2019 into two Union Territories that are run directly by the federal government.

After being questioned for nearly two months, the paramilitary force handed the siblings to the local police, which charged them for entering India without valid legal travel documents and possession of knives. On 17 July, 2014, a court sentenced them to a year and a half in prison, claiming it was issuing a lenient sentence due to their young age.

"They ran away because Chinese authorities were torturing and imprisoning youngsters. They told me some of their acquaintances were tortured," said Lassu, who met the three for the first time in 2013 when they were brought to a court in Ladakh.

"How long will they remain in jail? Are they destined to die in jail?" he asked.

Lassu stresses that the siblings should not be handed over to China, "Everyone knows how Uyghurs are maltreated and persecuted in their homeland. They would be executed or imprisoned if they are repatriated."

Lassu's concern surrounding their return to China stems from human rights abuses



committed against Uyghur and other Muslims in Xinjiang province by the Chinese authorities.

Last year, the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner said that China's arbitrary and discriminatory detention of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim minorities may constitute crimes against humanity. Rights groups claim that the Chinese government has imprisoned more than a million Uyghurs in internment camps.

ARREST, TRIAL AND SENTENCE

The trio completed their sentence in 2015, but were immediately booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) - a detention law mostly used against armed militants and dissident politicians seeking independence in Indian-administered Kashmir. The authorities continue issuing fresh detention orders against the siblings every six months to keep them behind the bars.

In the latest detention orders signed against them, Kashmiri authorities state that it is necessary to detain the siblings under PSA until arrangements are made for their repatriation to their native country.

The Uyghur siblings also petitioned India's federal Home Ministry against their deportation to China, citing the atrocities committed against Uyghurs in Xinjiang province. The Indian Home Ministry told them that it has already ordered their repatriation to China, a decision the siblings then challenged in court.

NO CLEAR ASULYM PROCESS

The Indian government's refusal to grant the siblings asylum stems from its indifferent stance on human rights violations in Xinjiang and the absence of a law or policy to deal with Uyghur refugees.

India doesn't have friendly relations with China, but it has nonetheless maintained a neutral position on the persecution of Uyghurs and avoids criticising Beijing over it. Last year, India abstained from voting on a draft resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council to hold a debate on the human rights situation in Xinjiang region.

In the past, the Indian federal government cancelled a visa it had granted to prominent Uyghur activist Dolkun Isa who was scheduled to attend a conference in India after China protested through diplomatic channels.

The prolonged detention of the Ughyur siblings in Kashmir has also shone the spotlight on a broader issue: India's incoherent asylum process.

India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and does not have a well-defined national policy on refugees. While it hosts thousands of refugees from Tibet and Sri Lanka, the absence of a law or policy on asylum issues allows India to deal with them arbitrarily.

The country has become increasingly hostile towards Muslim refugees after the Hindu nationalist party led by now Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. Modi's government told India's Supreme Court that Rohingya refugees pose a serious potential threat to national security and detained 150 of them in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"The Government of India should consider it a humanitarian issue, and not look at it through legalities and technicalities," Phunchok Stobdan, India's former ambassador to Kyrgyzstan and a foreign policy expert, told FairPlanet.

Suraj Girijashanker, assistant professor at Jindal Global Law School in Haryana, India and an expert on refugee issues, said that the government should have the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) decide on the matter.

“Given that India does not have a national asylum law or asylum process, the state should defer to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Delhi,” he told FairPlanet. “UNHCR conducts what is known as refugee status determination for select nationalities on behalf of the government in India in the absence of state

procedures.”

He added that they may also be able to look into the possibility of repatriating some Uyghur asylum seekers to third country.

Girijashanker argued that the Indian government cannot forcibly return anyone without first determining whether or not they are refugees. “If they are at risk of torture in China, then forcible return is also not permitted. Forcible returns from India in practice, however, is another matter,” he said, adding that states are particularly sensitive about relations with China.

CCP Scholars Suggest to Build China’s “Second Capital” in Xinjiang

By Kok Bayraq, Bitter Winter, 2023.5.19

Two Chinese scholars—Zhou Wen of Fudan University and Mi Jun of Sichuan University—developed the idea of building a second capital in East Turkestan (Xinjiang to China), arguing that this is necessary to establish an economic balance between different regions of the country. Given that their recommendation is based on a four-year government-funded study, it is more a political plan than a scientific suggestion.

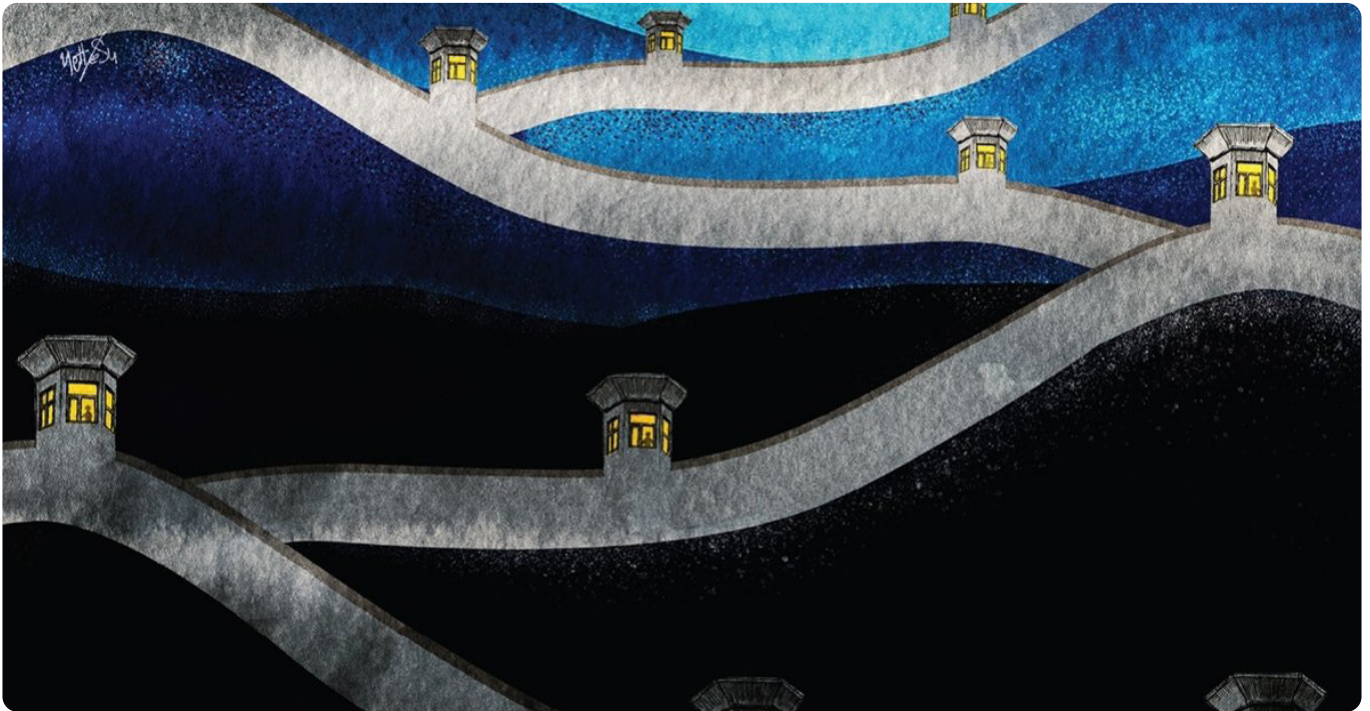
As it is known, the main goal of China’s Uyghur policy is an eternal stability. To achieve this, China is struggling on the military, political, economic, and ideological fields for decades.

In the ideological field, especially in defending the thesis that East Turkestan has been part of China since ancient times, China has encountered several obstacles.

One such obstacle is the location of the Great Wall of China. East Turkestan is outside the Great Wall.

According to China, Uyghur “separatists” maliciously use the Great Wall location to argue that “the Chinese have not ruled us throughout history, on the contrary, they have greatly benefited from being protected by us.” Some “hostile forces,” they claim, use venomous sentences such as “Urumqi is closer to Tashkent than to Beijing.” Chinese propaganda depicts the Uyghurs as “the restless people in the westernmost part of China.” However, history and geography cannot be changed, and East Turkestan cannot be placed inside the Great Wall.

How can China overcome these obstacles? It is not possible to move East Turkestan



inside the Great Wall of China, nor to move the Great Wall so that it would include East Turkestan. Chinese propaganda has used items such as a pair of *hai* (Chinese traditional shoes made of cloth), a Chinese-written paper, or a Chinese-like skeleton found in East Turkestan as evidence that the region has always been “Chinese.” But this “evidence” is unconvincing.

Zhou Wen and Mi Jun believe that the solution is not in the past but in the future, with the concept of a “second capital.” They stated, “This plan is good for stability, relations between nationalities, and the integrity of the country.” They believe that, if this vision is realized, the Uyghurs will become a people living in the heart of China, not in its westernmost part. Urumqi or Kashgar would be politically closer to Beijing, rather than to Tashkent or Baghdad.

However, the Great Wall is not the only problem for China’s theory of “territorial integrity” claiming that the Uyghur land

is “Chinese.” History aside, there are five facts that place China in a difficult position:

1. Uyghurs dominate the population of the region.
2. The Turkish-Islamic cultural identity of Uyghurs is fundamentally different from Chinese identity.
3. Uyghurs have never relinquished their will for independence, and the resistance movement has endured for centuries in the region.
4. Uyghurs have Eurasian ethnic characteristics.
5. The name “~~Xinjiang~~” means “new border,” and reflects the colonial Chinese idea of the region.

These facts clearly confirm the historical position of East Turkestan, without even the need for further explanation, interpretation, or research.

Over the past twenty years, China has taken concrete and drastic measures

to remove and weaken the top three obstacles. It tackled the fact that the region has a Uyghur majority through immigration and family planning. It tried to eliminate cultural differences through the campaign against religious extremism. It repressed the Uyghur will for independence through a ruthless anti-terrorism campaign.

Regarding the name “Xinjiang,” China now insists the region was a “new frontier” for the Qing Dynasty but was not so for the earlier Han Dynasty. Uyghurs answer that in the last 2,000-year history of Sino-Uyghur relations, Chinese and Uyghurs have been together for no more than 200 years—and these years are at the origins of present-day hostility between the two peoples. As for visible ethnic differences, in recent years, interethnic marriages have been “encouraged” hoping to eliminate them. Uyghurs have resisted this policy, and its success has been but limited.

Today, there are scholars who suggest to take another step: build China’ “second capital” in “Xinjiang.” Undoubtedly, the goal of the “second capital plan” is more political than economic. If the goal were to restore economic balance, it might have been achieved by giving a fairer share of the natural resources of the region to locals, stopping the influx of Chinese immigrants, and allowing locals, traditionally skilled in commerce, to trade freely with neighboring countries. Additionally, if the aim were to promote them, three million Uyghurs would not have been imprisoned and deprived of a normal life.

Zhou Wen and Mi Jun explained the additional motivations supporting the

“second capital plan” as follows: “If the second capital is built, not only funds but also population will be transferred to the region. This increase [of Han Chinese population] will affect the demographics of the region, the culture, the thoughts and feelings of local people, and ultimately increase the sense of patriotism.”

What else can be said? Scholars writing in China cannot reveal state secrets or cast in doubt the official Party line. The idea of a “second capital” in East Turkestan is a paradoxical attempt to move the Great Wall of China. This is physically and historically impossible but, the scholars believe, may become politically possible.

As part of the same strategy, by taking advantage of the historical opportunity of the “war on terrorism,” China has mobilized all its internal and external resources to carry out the Uyghur Genocide as a final solution of the Uyghur “problem” for the last six years. However, even after six years of genocide, China still feels unsure about stability. Perhaps the “second capital plan” may achieve the result, after the genocide could not get the CCP to its final destination as quickly as it hoped. Although China destroyed the lives of three million Uyghurs detained in the camps, another fifteen million with a heart full of desire for vengeance continue to be a threat for China and a scourge for the future.

Therefore, considering all possibilities, China may want to move one step further with the “second capital plan.” In this case, future generations will know that this “second capital” was established on Uyghur land.



The famous traveler Zhang Qian's business trip to the West and Lin Zeshu's deportation to Gulja (Yili) are used to support the theory that East Turkistan was part of ancient China. Creating a second capital of China in East Turkistan would

be a hundred times more effective. East Turkistan will no longer be the homeland of the Uyghurs. China wants to expand the Great Wall beyond East Turkistan as part of its ideological battle against "Uyghur separatism."

Statement Regarding China- Central Asia Summit

By UDTSB, 2023.5.19

STATEMENT

IUETO calls on Central Asia states to uphold legal and moral obligations towards the people of East Turkistan to ensure accountability for alleged violations of international law and assure pressure on China to end its occupation of East Turkistan.



International Union of
The East Turkistan
Organizations

The International Union of East Turkistan Organizations (IUETO) is gravely concerned about the attendance of Central Asia states at the China- Central Asia Summit which has been taking place between May 18-19 in Xi'an in China.

Central Asia is the heart of Asia and a cradle of civilizations that inspired many societies in the world. Central Asia has

historically, culturally, linguistically, and religiously connected with East Turkistan and its people. Whilst Central Asia nations regained their sovereignties due to the split of the Soviet Union, unfortunately, East Turkistan has continuously been an occupied nation. Since China's forceful invasion of East Turkistan in 1949, Human rights violations in East Turkistan have

been one of the gravest issues in the world, and torture, repression, and arbitrary detention have unabatedly continued since the beginning of 2017, the Chinese government has stepped up its colonial repressive policies against Uyghurs and other Turkic people in East Turkistan, imprisoned approximately three million people in concentration camps, where they are being systematically indoctrinated and their language, religious and cultural identity is being erased and homogenized. These crimes have been recognized as an ongoing genocide by international stakeholders.

Parallely China's violating international law and breaching international peace by conducting genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic people in East Turkistan, China has used its increased influence on Central Asia in order to keep silent on its crime. The Chinese investment, trade, energy industry partnership, and belt road initiatives promise developments in Central Asia economically, but it aims definitely to undermine the sovereignty of the Central Asian countries, as we witnessed the same results in some African and Asian regions. The ongoing occupation and worsening genocide in East Turkistan threaten the regional security and independence of Central Asia, as China's economic, military, and political expansion to the West strategy includes Belt and Road Initiative.

Therefore Central Asia states should have the consideration that the national interest, domestic and regional sovereignty, and development of states will be achieved by independent politics, strategies, decisions, and standing against the ongoing genocide towards the people of East Turkistan. Furthermore, Central Asia states have a moral, historical, political, and legal responsibility to hold China accountable for this ongoing genocide in East Turkistan.

Meanwhile, IUETO strongly condemns China's ongoing genocide policies in East Turkistan, IUETO calls on Central Asia states to stand up for the rights of the people of East Turkistan and realize their responsibilities under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention and take all necessary measures to end the ongoing genocide in East Turkistan. IUETO calls on Central Asia states to uphold legal and moral obligations towards the people of East Turkistan to ensure accountability for alleged violations of international law and assure pressure on China to end its occupation of East Turkistan.

With high respect:

International Union of East Turkistan Organizations



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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