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Hong Kong: Government Must Reveal Whereabouts of Uyghur Student Detained at Airport

By Amnesty International, 2023.5.26

Hong Kong authorities must reveal the whereabouts and fate of a Uyghur student who has been missing since he arrived in the city from South Korea earlier this month, amid fears he has been unlawfully extradited to mainland China without due process and is at risk of arbitrary detention and torture, Amnesty International said today.

Abuduwaili Abudurehman has not been heard from since he sent a text message to a friend on 10 May. In the message, Abudurehman said he was being interrogated by Chinese police after arriving at Hong Kong airport.

“The unknown fate of Abuduwaili Abudurehman is deeply worrying, given the background of crimes against humanity committed against Uyghurs by the Chinese government in Xinjiang, and its ongoing pursuit of Uyghurs who have travelled overseas,” said Alkan Akad, Amnesty

International’s China Researcher.

“That Abuduwaili appears to have been detained on arrival and interrogated raises questions about the potential complicity of the Hong Kong government in human rights violations being committed against Uyghurs by the Chinese government.”

Abuduwaili Abudurehman was born in the city of Karamay, Xinjiang, in western China. He spent the last seven years studying in Seoul – completing a PhD in Sports Industry and Leisure in 2022. His friend described him as a softly spoken, hard-working student whose favourite hobby is to play football.

On 10 May 2023, Abuduwaili travelled to Hong Kong to visit a friend, but he has been missing since his text message that evening, saying that he was being questioned at the



airport by Chinese police. The friend has made Abuduwaili's disappearance public after becoming increasingly concerned for his safety.

Amnesty International understands that Abuduwaili was on a Chinese government "watch list" of Uyghurs and other Muslims from the Xinjiang region, based on the fact that he had a history of overseas travel. Amnesty International has documented numerous instances of the Chinese government targeting Uyghurs both at home and abroad with arbitrary incommunicado detention, lengthy imprisonment and torture purely based on the fact that they had travelled outside of China.

The Chinese authorities have increasingly pursued and threatened victims outside of China's borders, to silence dissent or even force their repatriation. In some cases the Chinese authorities have requested that other governments detain Chinese Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims with a view to transferring them back to China. Such extradition violates the UN Convention Against Torture and general international law if the individual is at real risk of torture or other serious human rights violations.

"The Hong Kong authorities must urgently reveal the whereabouts of Abuduwaili Abudurehman, who has not made contact with loved ones for more than two weeks and is at grave risk of torture based on his ethnicity and religion. If he is detained, he must be provided with access to a lawyer and relatives, and protected against any ill-treatment," Alkan Akad said.

"Unless there is sufficient and concrete evidence pointing to an internationally recognizable crime, Abuduwaili Abudurehman must be immediately released."

Since 2017, there has been extensive documentation of China's crackdown against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, carried out under the guise of fighting terrorism. In 2021, a comprehensive report by Amnesty International demonstrated that the systematic state-organized mass imprisonment, torture and persecution perpetrated by Chinese authorities amounted to crimes against humanity. Many of Amnesty's findings were confirmed by a report by the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights' in August 2022.

Amnesty International's Free Xinjiang Detainees campaign has, to date, profiled more than 126 individuals who are among the perhaps one million or more people in arbitrary detention in internment camps and prisons in Xinjiang.

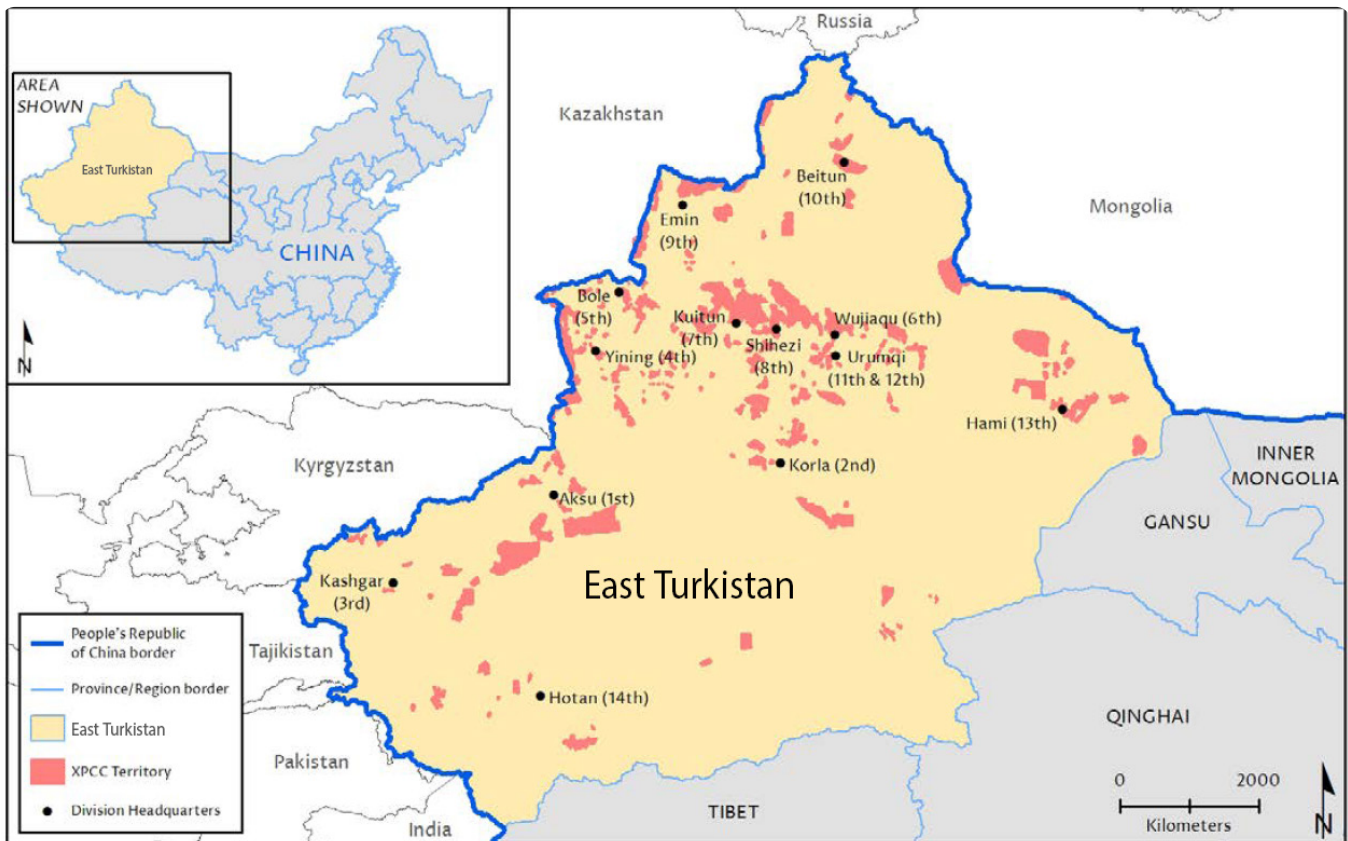
China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997, but a "one country, two systems" model remains in place. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region exercises its own immigration control. In 2019, the then Chief Executive proposed an amendment bill to enable Hong Kong to enter into 'special surrender arrangements' with mainland China. The proposal was dropped after an unprecedented wave of mass protests broke out in the city.

The Complex Reality of Uyghur Forced Labor: Unveiling the Products Implicated

By Kuldeep Singh Chauhan, The Diplomat, 2023.5.24

A recent report released by the Helena Kennedy Centre in the United Kingdom sheds light on the extensive role of Uyghur forced labor in

global supply chains, far beyond the commonly recognized sectors of cotton, tomato, and polysilicon production. The study highlights the



need for enhanced due diligence strategies and procurement protocols to tackle this human rights crisis effectively.

The Helena Kennedy Centre report emphasizes that the Chinese government's systematic exploitation of Uyghur labor extends across various industries and regions, not limited to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) alone. While media and academic reports have focused on specific sectors, the report indicates that forced labor occurs within the XUAR, as well as in other parts of China.

The report reveals that the Chinese government has invested substantial resources in developing an extensive network of compulsory labor, violating internationally recognized labor rights conventions. This system encompasses a wide range of industries, including those that have not yet garnered significant attention from the media or academia.

One of the key findings of the study is that the

involvement of Uyghur forced labor goes beyond direct suppliers. The XUAR serves as a source of raw materials, component parts, and products that can be incorporated into finished goods at various stages of the manufacturing or production process. This implies that Uyghur forced labor may exist in a diverse array of industries and goods, even if the final product is not directly produced in the XUAR.

Furthermore, the report highlights that intermediary manufacturers located outside of China can complicate efforts to trace the origins of semi-finished goods, obscuring the presence of Uyghur forced labor in global supply chains.

In response to these alarming findings, the report emphasizes the need for a comprehensive examination of supply chains across all tiers. It stresses that due diligence strategies and procurement protocols must be significantly strengthened to address this pervasive issue effectively.



The report calls on companies and organizations to take proactive measures in verifying their supply chains and adopting responsible sourcing practices. By prioritizing transparency and actively combating Uyghur forced labor, stakeholders can play a crucial role in eradicating this human rights violation from global supply chains.

The issue of forced labor and human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang region has garnered significant international attention. The plight of Uyghur forced laborers has become a subject of concern as reports continue to shed light on the extensive range of products potentially associated with labor abuses. Beyond the widely known cotton and tomato paste, numerous industries may be entangled in this troubling web. Let us explore the depth of this complex reality and the broad range of products that have been implicated.

Cotton, Textiles, and Apparel: Xinjiang produces a substantial share of the world's cotton, and there have been disturbing reports of forced labor being employed in cotton farming and processing. Consequently, cotton-based products, including textiles and apparel, have come under scrutiny. From T-shirts to bed sheets, consumers may unknowingly encounter items linked to the labor abuses suffered by Uyghur workers.

Tomato Paste and Food Products: The production of tomato paste and other tomato-based products has also been linked to forced labor in Xinjiang. As a major producer of tomatoes, the region's supply chain has faced allegations of exploiting Uyghur forced laborers. Consumers should be aware that the tomato paste they find on supermarket shelves may be tainted by human rights abuses.

Polysilicon and Solar Energy: Polysilicon, a vital component in the production of solar panels

and electronics, has raised concerns regarding its association with forced labor. While not all polysilicon is sourced from Xinjiang, reports indicate that some production facilities in the region have been linked to labor abuses. This raises ethical questions surrounding the renewable energy industry and the products dependent on polysilicon.

Aluminum, PVC Plastic, and Mineral Resources: Xinjiang's role in the global production of aluminum, PVC plastic, and various minerals cannot be overlooked. While it is essential to note that not all production in these sectors is directly linked to forced labor, reports suggest that labor abuses exist within these industries. The sheer scale of China's production output makes it challenging to ascertain the origins of these materials, leaving room for potential association with Uyghur forced labor.

Spices, Supplements, and Health Products: China is a major producer of spices, including paprika, with Xinjiang being a significant source. Reports have indicated that a substantial percentage of China's paprika originates from the region, raising concerns about forced labor practices associated with its production. Similarly, marigold flowers cultivated in Xinjiang are utilized in health supplements and products. The usage of Uyghur forced labor in these industries highlights the intricate web of exploitation.

Electronics and Automotive Industries: China's dominance in electronics and automotive manufacturing sectors implies that some products may have links to Uyghur forced labor. From smartphones to automobiles, the global supply chains of these industries require careful scrutiny to ensure the absence of labor abuses. The location of manufacturing facilities in Xinjiang makes it imperative to address these concerns to

uphold ethical practices.

The extent of the products potentially made by Uyghur forced laborers in Xinjiang is vast and includes cotton, tomato paste, polysilicon, aluminum, PVC plastic, spices, marigolds, electronics, automotive parts, and mineral resources. However, it is important to note that identifying specific products associated with forced labor remains a complex challenge. Efforts by organizations, advocacy groups, and consumers themselves play a crucial role in uncovering and raising awareness about this issue.

As international recognition of the Uyghur forced labor issue continues to grow, it becomes increasingly apparent that concerted efforts are necessary to address the full extent of this problem. These reports serve as a wake-up call, urging the international community to join forces

in combating the exploitation of Uyghur labor and protecting the fundamental rights of all individuals involved in global supply chains.

Combating Uyghur Forced Labor: Global Actions and Consumer Responsibility

As the list of products potentially associated with labor abuses continues to grow, it is crucial to examine the actions taken by countries and the role consumers can play in preventing these products from entering their markets. By addressing this issue collectively, we can strive towards a future free from the taint of forced labor.

In several countries, governments have taken steps to address the issue of Uyghur forced labor and restrict the entry of implicated products into their markets.

Some countries have introduced or proposed legislation that requires companies to conduct



thorough supply chain due diligence to ensure their products are free from forced labor. These measures aim to hold businesses accountable for the transparency and integrity of their supply chains.

Certain nations have implemented import bans or restrictions on products linked to Uyghur forced labor. By refusing entry to these goods, governments send a strong message that they will not tolerate the perpetuation of human rights abuses.

Finally, governments are also actively working to enhance transparency in supply chains. Through partnerships with industry stakeholders and initiatives such as the Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labor, efforts are being made to create a framework that promotes ethical sourcing practices and prevents the use of forced labor.

While governments play a crucial role, consumers also hold significant power in driving change. Here are steps consumers can take to prevent products associated with Uyghur forced labor from entering their markets:

Educate Yourself: Stay informed about the issue of Uyghur forced labor and familiarize yourself with the industries and products implicated. Resources from human rights organizations and ethical consumer platforms can provide valuable insights.

Research Brands and Companies: Before making purchases, research the brands and companies behind the products you intend to buy. Look for those that demonstrate a commitment to responsible sourcing and have implemented robust supply chain transparency measures.

Support Ethical Certifications: Look for products that bear recognized ethical certifications such as Fair Trade, Responsible Sourcing, or Labor

Standards certifications. These labels indicate that the product has met certain standards and undergone rigorous auditing to ensure fair and ethical practices.

Engage with Companies: Reach out to companies directly to inquire about their sourcing practices. Express your concerns about Uyghur forced labor and urge them to take proactive steps to ensure their supply chains are free from exploitation.

Support Advocacy and Consumer Movements: Join or support organizations and campaigns that advocate for responsible sourcing and the eradication of forced labor. By amplifying collective voices, consumers can encourage change at both the corporate and governmental levels.

Use Consumer Influence: As consumers, our choices have economic impact. By consciously boycotting products associated with Uyghur forced labor and voicing our concerns through social media, reviews, and public forums, we can exert pressure on companies to reassess their supply chains and sourcing practices.

The issue of forced labor and human rights violations in the Xinjiang region is a matter of significant concern. Addressing the issue requires a multifaceted approach involving both government actions and consumer responsibility. Governments must implement legislation and strengthen due diligence requirements.

As consumers, it is incumbent upon us to support responsible and ethical sourcing practices. By staying informed, engaging in dialogue, and encouraging transparency from corporations, we can contribute to the global efforts aimed at eradicating forced labor and human rights abuses in all industries, ensuring a more just and equitable world.



Veteran-Owned Clothing Brand Discovers Supplier Using Cotton From China's Slave Labor Region

By Richard Pollina, New York Post, 2023.5.22

Veteran-owned clothing brand, Nine Line Apparel, made a concerning discovery after a test showed one of their suppliers was allegedly using cotton grown in a slave labor region in China.

"We've identified one supplier that fell below the standards we expected," Tyler Merritt, the brand's CEO and US Army Special Operations aviation veteran, said in a Youtube video in April. "We decided to return any products purchased from that supplier until further test confirms that all products come from sustainable sources."

The test revealed that cotton allegedly used by Next Level — a wholesaler of blank apparel — was grown in Xinjiang, a northwestern region

in China where detained Uyghur Muslims are forced to manufacture goods for cheap in labor camps, according to the US Department of Labor.

Merritt said his brand purchases material from multiple suppliers, but only Next Level's returned positive for cotton grown in the Xinjiang region.

"It's very similar to a DNA test. So, it compares isotopes from a region in Xinjiang, China — This is a region where people are forced to work indefinitely for the simple fact of being born a Muslim," Merritt told Fox & Friends. "what came back consistent with Xinjiang cotton, not once, but a second time that we tested at a different lot, a different batch from

a different distribution center came back as being consistent as well.”

The Army veteran said he’s spoken to the CEO of Next Level and was told the company has a “zero tolerance policy” for forced labor, but did not expand on what that entailed.

Merritt said Next Level’s lawyers have consistently told him to “stop testing” and that the company has “got this under control,” calling out their pursuit to do their own testing “unacceptable.”

“Forced labor is considered a zero-tolerance issue and any confirmed instances of forced labor by our suppliers with any factories and mills that produce garments, accessories or fabric, or use of cotton grown in Xinjiang may result in termination of the business relationship,” Next Level shared in a statement of Fox News.

Nine Line Apparel has partnered with Oritain — an organization that verifies the origin of products from around the globe to help its clients choose ethically sourced goods.

After becoming aware of Next Level’s alleged link to the slave labor region of China, Merritt

is encouraging other businesses to be more conscious of where their company’s materials may be sourced from.

Since 2017 large numbers of Uyghurs have reportedly been incarcerated by the Chinese government in detention facilities built in the middle of the desert — away from the attention of the international community and the local population.

It’s unknown how many Uyghurs are currently being detained, but eyewitness and leaked documents have estimated over a million people have been forced into these camps, where they allegedly are subjected to dehumanizing treatment, such as torture, rape, forced labor, and routine humiliation.

“I do private labels for some of my military units. I do it for church groups and school groups that my kids go to. And a lot of people don’t realize that their product may derive from the slave trade. And these are church organizations or school groups that people who, you know, visit my stores that are extremely patriotic. And at the very least, we want ethical sourcing,” Merritt said.

Bipartisan China Panel Issues a Blueprint to Address Taiwan and Uyghur Mistreatment

By Kyle Stewart, NBC News, 2023.5.25

The bipartisan House select committee on China adopted its first set of policy recommendations Wednesday, focused on how to prevent a military conflict in Taiwan and end the mistreatment of Uyghurs by the Chinese government.

The pair of reports, approved unanimously

by the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, are intended to serve as a blueprint for action in the 118th Congress.

“This is not a comprehensive list of everything that needs to be done,” committee Chairman Mike Gallagher,



R-Wis., told NBC News in an interview. “But it is an actionable list of things that we think this Congress can get done and will have a meaningful impact.”

The report on Taiwan includes 10 findings and proposals on how to “preserve peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.” Most of the ideas presented concern military readiness in the event China takes aggressive action in the region.

The report warns that “the United States will likely be unready to deter an invasion of Taiwan” if “urgent steps” are not taken.

The committee, which was established in January, has so far held multiple hearings, met with business leaders such as Disney CEO Bob Iger and held a war game tabletop exercise to determine how a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would play out.

Members of the committee also traveled with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to California in April to meet Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen.

Gallagher said his strategy in leading the committee was to focus first on human rights abuses before shifting to military and economic concerns. He said he wanted to “set the tone from the start” that Congress has “no quarrel with the Chinese people who are often the primary victims of the CCPs totalitarian repression and aggression.”

The reports released Wednesday are “only a first step,” Gallagher said in a joint statement with Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., the top Democrat on the panel. “And we will continue operating in a bipartisan way to send a message that we are committed to deterrence in the Taiwan

Strait and that we won't turn a blind eye as the CCP commits genocide, 'the crime above all crimes,' against the Uyghur people."

The committee's new report focused on the treatment of ethnic minority Uyghurs found that goods made in forced labor camps in China continue to enter the U.S. despite existing prohibitions. The committee recommended that Congress give the Department of Homeland Security additional resources to strengthen enforcement.

As the committee continues its work, Gallagher said, he measures success in two ways.

"One, that we have actually meaningfully impacted our colleagues in terms of explaining to them why they should care about the threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party," he said.

"But the second thing is on a more practical level is that the committee identifies via these policy recommendations, which then wind up as legislation, we've identified the center of gravity in the 118th Congress when it comes to what we can do to combat CCP aggression in a bipartisan fashion."

One indicator of success early on for Gallagher has been the level of bipartisanship on the committee.

"In most of our hearings, you could have closed your eyes and you wouldn't have known whether it was a Democrat or Republican speaking," he said. "In fact, we've been criticized for being too bipartisan in our approach to China. So that tells me we're on the right track."



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