

Thailand Deny Uyghurs Deportation to China

By Bob Scott, The Thaiger, 2022-07-28



Fears Thailand is in the process of deporting asylum-seeking Uyghurs back to China have been denied by the government.

News broke yesterday that dozens of Uyghurs from all around Thailand had been rounded up and impounded in a detention facility in Bangkok, raising fears among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that the government plans to deport them back to China.

It sparked a sharp response from Thailand's Islamic council, and seven local NGOs, who released a joint statement questioning the Uyghur detainees' transfer to Bangkok.

"This action raised concerns among the civil society network monitoring the Uyghur situation that the Thai government will force the Uyghurs to return to their country of origin at the request of the Chinese government."

Chalida Tajaroensuk, director of the People's Empowerment Foundation, a Thai NGO that assists Uyghur refugees in the country believes the Uyghurs' relocation to the capital is because three Uyghur men escaped from an immigration detention centre in central Thailand on July 11. The whereabouts of the three men are still unknown.

“Our sources have told us that Uyghurs were brought from different detention centres across the country and are now all held together at the Suan Plu Immigration Detention Centre. We fear they could be sent back under China’s pressure. So far, they are still here, as far as we know.”

Chalida made it known that about 56 Uyghurs have been left in limbo in Thailand after entering the country illegally while fleeing from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China in 2014.

The NGOs believe the Uyghurs are being held in detention centres because Thailand is under pressure to send them back to China and does not know what to do with them. But Thailand denies this.

Panitan Wattanayagorn, the chief security adviser to Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, yesterday said the Uyghurs were moved to a detention centre in Bangkok for safety reasons.

Panitan, who refused to answer whether the Thai government would send the Uyghurs back to China, said...

“For a broad overview of solving the troubles,

we can say that they escaped death to stay with us. We have to handle them according to international standards and obligations.

“We won’t breach their basic rights. That is there is no separation of the families. But the problem is more convoluted than that, and we try to solve it bit by bit.”

Chalida insists national human rights commissioners should be informed of the Uyghurs’ relocation and be allowed to visit to monitor their health.

The NGOs, and Muslim council, also told the government to be mindful of an incident in 2015 when it deported 109 Uyghurs to China. The fates of those are still unknown.

“Thailand must not make the same mistake twice. There is no reasonable reason for the Chinese government to ask the Thai government to force these Uyghurs to return to China where they will face persecution.”

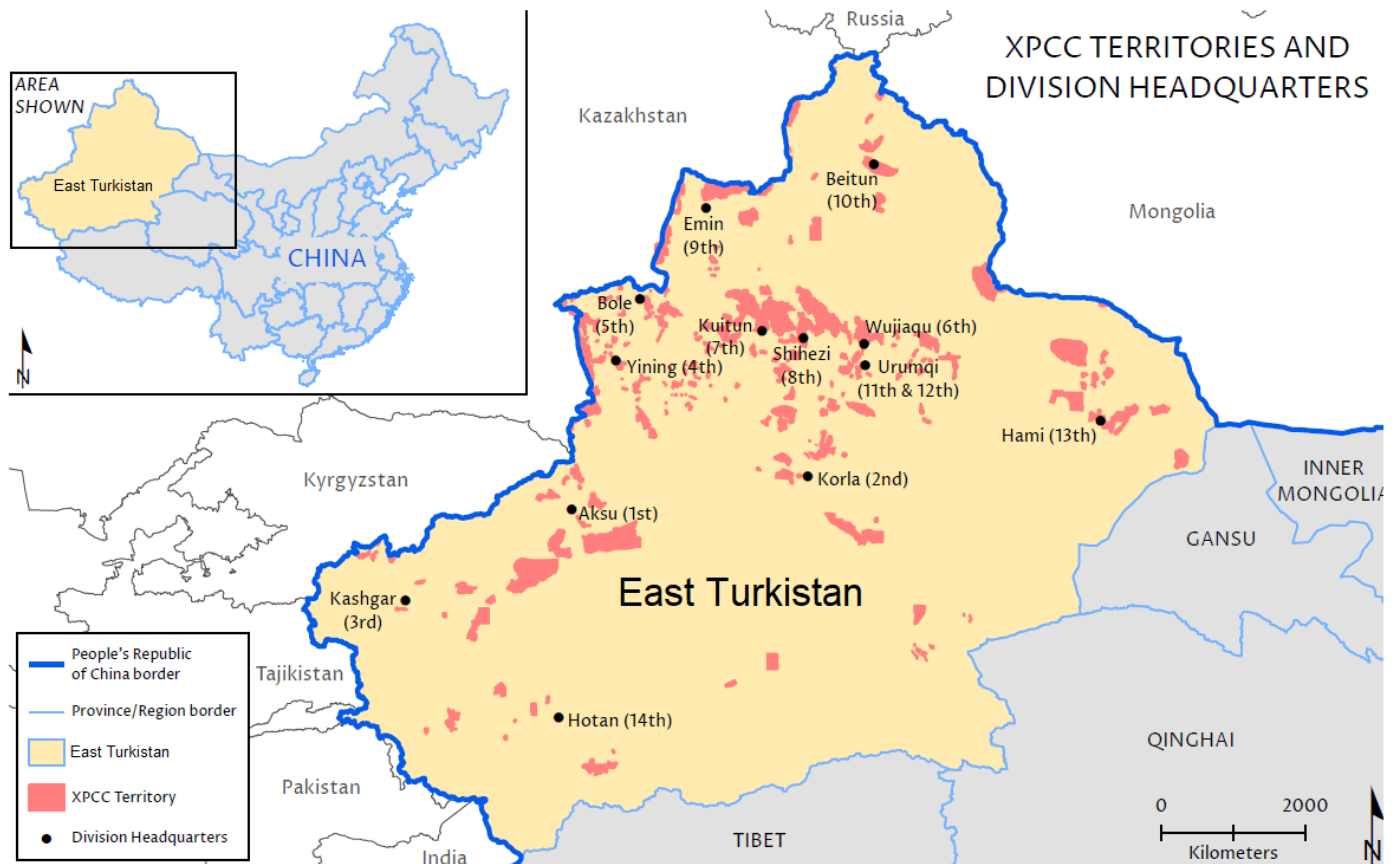
The Uyghur people are a Muslim minority who have endured repression by the Chinese government for a number of years after several terrorist attacks on the mainland were carried out by extremists. The last of which was believed to be in 2017.

Report: Xinjiang Paramilitary Group Has “Central Role” in Genocide

By Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, Axios, 2022-07-26

A Chinese state-run paramilitary group in Xinjiang is more deeply involved in the regional government’s repressive policies

towards Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities than previously understood, a new report found.



programs in the last five years to create a reign of terror,» says the report, published Tuesday by the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University in the U.K.

The group was «dispatched by the top levels of the party-state to act as a military and industrial force to suppress Uyghur dissent» and «plays a critical and central role» in the genocide now underway in Xinjiang.

Here's how the group enables the repression, per the report:

Land expropriation: XPCC officials pressure rural Uyghur landowners to transfer their land ownership to others, and instead work in factories or other industries. In one village, the report found, 70% of the land had been

south, where the Uyghur population has been most affected by mass internment.

Mass internment: The XPCC has always operated prisons. But around 2016, under orders from the government, the XPCC began filling those prisons with Uyghurs and building new prisons to accommodate even more detainees.

Many farms and factories operated by the XPCC have historically used prison labor. The newly expanded system of internment and indoctrination facilities also include factories built inside prison walls or right next door, according to the report.

By the numbers: The XPCC has corporate holdings that may be linked to up to 862,000 entities around the globe, according to

business intelligence firm Sayari Labs.

The XPCC also holds a majority stake in at least 2,873 companies, according to research organization C4ADS.

The organization manages a quarter of Xinjiang's arable land.

What they're saying: «The explicit mission of the XPCC is the repression of the Indigenous people and cultures of the Uyghur Region,» said Laura Murphy, co-author of the report and professor of human rights and contemporary slavery at Sheffield Hallam University.

«It is clearer than ever that governments need to ban the import of goods made by the XPCC or any of its subsidiaries,» Murphy told Axios.

The Chinese embassy in Washington, D.C., did not respond to a request for comment.

The backstory: The Chinese government

created the XPCC in the 1950s, a few years after the founding of the People's Republic of China, to establish control over Xinjiang, the homeland of the Uyghur people.

The XPCC is organized into regiments and divisions, which often govern the settlements, land, assets and in some cases universities where they are located.

What to watch: The report calls for governments around the world to publicly disclose customs data and to share lists of XPCC-owned companies.

It also calls on development banks to stop all dealings with XPCC companies.

«The whole architecture of repression in Xinjiang should be enough for other countries to sanction the XPCC too,» said Luke de Pulford, director and co-founder of Arise, a non-profit that combats slavery and co-funded the report. «But they haven't.»

Activist Arrested Over Fake 'Bomb Threat' After London Pro-Uyghur Protest

By Middle East Eye, 2022-07-19

An Australian human rights activist protesting against the oppression of Uyghur Muslims in China was arrested in London after authorities were sent a false bomb threat that had allegedly been delivered to the Chinese embassy in the city.

Drew Pavlou held a protest outside Beijing's embassy in the British capital, displaying a Uyghur flag to highlight the plight of Turkic Muslim minority communities in China's Xinjiang region.

Pavlou was arrested just minutes into the



protest, after officers alleged that he had emailed a bomb threat to the embassy. He has since been released.

The fake email allegedly said: «This is Drew Pavlou, you have until 12pm to stop the Uyghur genocide or I blow up the embassy with a bomb. Regards, Drew.»

The 23-year-old activist strongly denied sending the email, describing the allegation as «shocking».

«The UK police arrested me. They said the Chinese embassy had reported me as a terrorist, as a bomb threat. I was so shocked, I've always been a peaceful protester,» he said in a video posted to Twitter.

«They've made up this email claiming that I sent in the bomb threat. It's just absolute insanity. Why would I throw away my life like that? I'm a peaceful protester. It's just so, so shocking.»

«Denied consular access»

In a thread posted on Twitter, Pavlou said that he had been detained by London's Metropolitan police incommunicado for 23 hours, with no access to a lawyer.

He claimed that his phone had been seized and that he was pressured into handing over his password. He added that he was denied access to Australian consular officials.

Australia's foreign affairs ministry confirmed the arrest in a statement.

«The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has offered consular assistance to Drew Pavlou, an Australian who was arrested, and subsequently released, in the United Kingdom,» it said.

The ministry added that it would raise Pavlou's claims of being denied consular access whilst being detained with UK authorities.



Drew Pavlou

@DrewPavlou · Follow

The Chinese Embassy in London reported me as a terrorist for peacefully protesting outside, UK police arrested me and held me incommunicado so no one knew where I was, I was inside for 23 hours, I want to go home I miss my family but they've threatened to arrest me at the border



3:52 AM · Jul 23, 2022



Standards or the UK Independent Office for Police Conduct.»

Pavlou has a long history of protesting against human rights abuses by China, including interrupting a speech by China's ambassador in Sydney earlier this year to denounce Beijing's treatment of Muslims.

The Chinese government is accused of detaining more than one million Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in the western Xinjiang region, and subjecting the community to abuses that some have labelled a «genocide». China denies the allegations of abuse.

Last month, Pavlou held up a sign during the Wimbledon final with the words «Where is Peng Shuai?», referring to a Chinese tennis player who briefly disappeared after alleging that she had been sexually assaulted by a senior official in the Chinese communist party.

A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said that it does not confirm or comment on the identity of anyone arrested who has not been charged with a criminal offence.

«Anyone who wishes to complain about their treatment by the Metropolitan Police can contact the Met's Directorate of Professional

Joe Biden Never Mentioned Genocide, Slavery in Xi Jinping Call, China Says

By New York Post , 2022-07-29

China's Foreign Ministry accused the White House of lying on Friday when it claimed President Biden discussed the genocide and enslavement of Uyghur Muslims with his Beijing counterpart, Xi Jinping, on Thursday.

Press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters hours after the call that Biden had "raised genocide and forced labor practices by the [People's Republic of China]."

"That is something that he raised about human rights, as he always does," she said. "This is, as we've said, that anytime the president has an opportunity, he raises that when he meets with another leader, and called on [the] PRC to cease its ongoing human rights abuses across China."

When asked how Xi had responded, the press secretary said: "They would have to respond



on their own. I cannot speak for President Xi.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijan responded by blasting the administration in a Friday press conference.

“I can tell you that allegations of ‘genocide’ and ‘forced labor’ in Xinjiang are pure lies,” Zhao said. “You said the White House press secretary claimed that ‘genocide’ and ‘forced labor’ came up in last night’s call. That is disinformation.”

Neither country’s official readout of the call mentioned the Uyghurs, with the US statement saying only that the two leaders “discussed a range of issues important to the bilateral relationship and other regional and global issues.”

“I’m not going to get into a back and forth

with a PRC government spokesperson,” a National Security Council spokesman told The Post Friday. “The president raised concerns about human rights with President Xi, as he always does. He was crystal clear about his concerns. He also raised the need to resolve the cases of American citizens who are wrongfully detained or subject to exit bans in China.”

China has long been accused of human rights abuses in the northwestern Xinjiang region, where Uyghurs are held under horrendous conditions while undergoing systematic torture and forced sterilizations.

The US formally slapped the Asian superpower with sanctions in March 2021 and led a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games earlier this year.

In December of last year, Biden signed off on the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which prohibits the importation of goods from the Xinjiang region unless the importer can prove they were not manufactured using forced labor.

Biden chose not to sign the bill on camera. However, then-White House press secretary

Jen Psaki insisted the move wasn't to spare China embarrassment.

"He signs bills on camera. Off camera sometimes, sometimes on camera," Psaki said. "We support the bill and obviously we've been leading the effort in the world to call out human rights abuses."

China Puts Weight Behind Extending China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan

By Riyaz ul Khaliq , 2022-07-30



China has conveyed to the interim administration in Kabul that Beijing supports extending the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Friday.

"China hopes to push the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the development strategies of Afghanistan," China's top diplomat Wang Yi told Afghan interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

Wang also announced zero tariffs on 98% of Afghan imports and the resumption of the issuance of visas to Afghan citizens beginning early next month, according to a statement.

The two met in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit of foreign ministers. Afghanistan is a member of the SCO.

Wang said Beijing “supports the extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan, and share China’s development opportunities.”

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a multibillion dollar economic and infrastructural developmental arrangement between Pakistan and China under which Beijing has invested more than \$25 billion in the South Asian nation since 2014.

After the complete withdrawal of US-led foreign forces from Afghanistan, Islamabad and Beijing appear to have agreed to extend the CPEC to Afghanistan where the Taliban has ruled since last August.

The Taliban administration has also insisted on stabilizing the war-torn country to become the transit between Central and South Asia.

Wang told Muttaqi that China “appreciates the Afghan interim government’s unremitting efforts in overcoming the four challenges posed by the winter, earthquake, flood and sanctions, in reconstruction and recovery and the improvement of people’s livelihood, and its steady progress toward the goal of lasting peace and stability.”



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