

UK Activists Raise Public Awareness of China's Uyghur Repression

By South West Londoner, 2022-08-20



Several activist groups have vowed to do more to raise the public awareness in the United Kingdom about China's repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Activists said they have kept lobbying British MPs on the issue in recent years but responses remained lukewarm.

A Uyghur community group said it hopes the British government will show a tougher stance against China over Uyghurs' human rights issue.

Ahammed Hussain, chief executive of civil liberties pressure group Muslim Public

Affairs Committee UK, said: "Whenever we talk to some MPs or elites in the community in the first few times, they are usually very reluctant to listening to us.

"But it does not mean that we quit. We must be pragmatic.

"There is no point in being naive and blind to the fact that China is the factory of the world and that its economic strength has an influence on the UK, as well as the European Union and the West in general."

Hussain said as the Chinese economy is weakening, Beijing's influence on the West

will decline over time.

He added: “Besides, people in the UK are not aware of what is going on. There is an educational need and a need for long-term campaign and action.

“We may not be able to see the results immediately. We need to be patient. More and more people will hear our work and do their own work.”

Protests in six cities

Dozens of muslim groups rallied outside the Chinese Embassy in London to support Uyghurs on July 31.

The London protest was led by Islam21c, an organization which provides an online platform for British Muslims to share their art and culture.

This protest and five others held in Manchester, Edinburgh, Toronto, Washington DC and Brisbane on the same day were a part of an international campaign called Stand4Uyghurs, which aims to show solidarity to Uyghurs.

Mustafa Al-dabbagh, spokesperson of Muslim Association of Britain, a British Sunni Muslim organisation, said: “We are here to show the solidarity to our brothers and sisters in East Turkestan (Xinjiang), who are being brutally murdered or put in concentration camps by the Chinese Communist Party.

“A lot of our work involves lobbying MPs and doing community work. It’s a challenge to get the voices out there and raise people’s awareness of all the crimes against humanity happening across the world.”

“Today injustice happened to our Uyghur brothers and sisters. Tomorrow it will be Palestinians and the next day it will be Kashmiris.”

What is happening in Xinjiang?

The recent Xinjiang issue started with a protest in Urumqi on 5 July 2009 as hundreds of Uyghurs demanded an investigation into a case that two of their people were killed in a brawl in a toy factory in southern China’s Guangdong province in late June.

The rally eventually became a violent fight between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. According to the official Xinhua News Agency, 184 people died in the incident.

The Chinese government enacted the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-Radicalization in March 2017.

In a white paper published in March 2019, it said ‘education and training centres’ had been set up to help Uyghur people learn job skills and change their religious extremism.

But Adrian Zenz, a German anthropologist, said at least 1.5 million Uyghurs had been arbitrarily detained in camps in Xinjiang.

The BBC was given a rare opportunity to visit a re-education camp in Xinjiang in June 2019. Its footage appeared to show some Uyghurs dancing and studying happily inside.

But a former detainee, who had left China, said she had been abused in one of the camps.

A 35-year-old Uyghur man, a volunteer of the UK Uyghur Community, a non-government



organization, said he fled from China to the UK eight years ago as he wanted to get back his human rights and continue to practice his religion.

The man said he prefers to stay anonymous as his siblings and parents are still in East Turkestan and he does not want his children in the UK to be identified.

He said: “The UK government has done as much as they can to help the Uyghur refugees. But the work is still not enough.”

Sino-British diplomacy

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament published a report titled “Never Again: The UK’s Responsibility to Act on Atrocities in Xinjiang and Beyond” in July last year.

The report said the evidence of severe human rights abuses and crimes against the Uyghur people was already overwhelming and indisputable, so the Parliament had called it as genocide.

A spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the UK said last year: “The accusations against China in the report are groundless and full of lies.

“There are no so-called ‘internment camps’ in Xinjiang. The vocational education and training centers set up in Xinjiang in accordance with laws are schools.”

The British government in January last year announced measures to help UK organisations ensure that they were not contributing to the forced labor of the

Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. But it fell short of calling the oppression a genocide.

Young supporters

While activists are skeptical about the effect of their campaigns, a 15-year-old girl wrote an article in her GCSE project to show support for Uyghurs earlier this year.

The girl, who does not wish to be named, said: "When I first did the project, not many classmates knew what it was. After I got

more information, we had some emotional responses to it."

"Genuinely no one should deserve to go through what Uyghur people are going through on a daily basis. It could have been us or anyone. We are very lucky as we are in the UK."

She added that people do not need to have a racial or religious relationship with Uyghurs to care about them.

UN Rapporteur Finds Evidence of Forced Labor in Xinjiang, Tibet

By Asim Kashgarian, VOA, 2022-08-17



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Coerced labor among Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic groups has been taking place in China's Xinjiang and Tibet, according to

a report released by Tomoya Obokata, the U.N. special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery.

Special rapporteurs, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, are “independent experts appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council with the mandate to monitor, advise and publicly report” on human rights situations in specific countries and on human rights violations worldwide.

The report, «Contemporary forms of slavery affecting persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minority communities,” released Tuesday, found some instances of forced labor in Xinjiang and Tibet “may amount to enslavement.”

“Further, given the nature and extent of powers exercised over affected workers during forced labor, including excessive surveillance, abusive living and working conditions, restriction of movement through internment, threats, physical and/or sexual violence and other inhuman or degrading treatment, some instances may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity, meriting a further independent analysis,” the report said.

According to the report, China implemented two state-mandated systems to subject local people to forced labor. They include a system through vocational training centers where “minorities are detained and subjected to work placements” and a method of “poverty alleviation through labor transfer” that transfers surplus rural laborers “into secondary or tertiary sector work,” the report stated.

The report also determined a similar forced labor system has been established in Tibet “where an extensive labor transfer program

has shifted mainly farmers, herders and other rural workers into low-skilled and low-paid employment.”

Beijing has described these programs as ways to create job opportunities for minorities to enhance their incomes. But the report said the “involuntary nature of work rendered by affected communities» has been present in many cases in Xinjiang and Tibet.

Some think tanks, rights organizations and the U.S. have accused China of Uyghur forced labor in recent years. In June, the U.S. government implemented the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act to ban imports of products related to forced labor from Xinjiang.

Beijing has long denied the accusation of forced labor in Xinjiang and said the labor arrangements in the region are only for poverty alleviation and that people of different ethnic groups can choose their work freely.

Response from US

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China said in a Twitter post that the report “identifies forced labor by Uyghurs, Kazakhs and others as a contemporary form of slavery [and] urges countries to conduct due diligence in supply chains similar to» the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

The Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) urged the U.N. Office on Genocide Prevention “to immediately assess and respond to the treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples, in light of the U.N. expert’s report asserting that



Chinese government actions may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity.”

“The case against the Chinese government at the U.N. level continues to build,” UHRP Executive Director Omer Kanat said. “It should now be impossible for U.N. agencies and member states to ignore atrocities of this magnitude.”

Response from China

On Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin criticized Obokata, saying he had chosen to “abuse his authority, blatantly violate the code of conduct of the special procedure [and] malignly smear and denigrate” China.

A «[c]ertain special rapporteur chooses to believe in lies and disinformation about

Xinjiang spread by the U.S. and some other Western countries and anti-China forces,” Wang said at a press conference in Beijing. “There has never been ‘forced labor’ in Xinjiang. The Chinese government follows a people-centered development philosophy and attaches great importance to protecting the rights and interests of workers.”

Last Friday, at a ceremony held at the International Labor Organization (ILO), China’s U.N ambassador ratified two ILO Fundamental Conventions on forced labor.

On Monday, Wang said China’s U.N. permanent representative, Chen Xu, passed the Instruments of Ratification of the Forced Labor Convention and the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention to ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

“They are the most important international legal instruments in the area of forced labor elimination,” Wang said at a press conference in Beijing on Monday. “The Chinese government is consistently against

forced labor. By completing the ratification of the two conventions of its own accord, the government of China has once again made clear its resolute position on opposing and fighting against forced labor.”

The “Origins of Chinese Civilization” Project: Xi Jinping Explains Why It Matters

By Massimo Introvigne, Bitter Winter , 2022-08-18

Xi Jinping opening on September 24, 2014, the symposium commemorating in Beijing the 2565th birthday of Confucius. From Weibo.

There are projects on which the CCP invests enormous resources that get little or no coverage in Western media. Yet, they are important to understand how the CCP operates. One spectacular case is the “National Research Project on Tracing the Origins of Chinese Civilization”, which lasted from sixteen years from 2002 to 2018 and mobilized more than 400 scholars and CCP ideologists, and 70 universities. It originated with Hu Jintao, but was concluded by Xi Jinping.

On July 15, the theoretical journal of the CCP, “Seeking Truth” (Qiushi) published a long article by Xi Jinping, derived from his speech of May 27, 2002, at the 39th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CCP’s Central Committee devoted to examining the results of the “Origins of Chinese Civilization Project.” Here, Western readers need to pause and consider what exactly happened. The Politburo, i.e., the highest body of the CCP, in the middle of several national and international crises, devoted his time to study the origins of Chinese civilization, and

Xi Jinping himself gave the main speech.

There are long-term and short-term reasons for this, and both should be understood. The 1993 essay and 1996 book by Samuel Huntington on the clash of civilizations are somewhat out of fashion in the West but continue to be studied in China. Xi Jinping himself refers to them in the article, stating that the CCP should reject the part about the “clash” but be inspired (which does not mean following it blindly) by the notion of “civilization.”

It is a CCP mantra that China is the civilization par excellence, the only one that has an uninterrupted 5,000-year history. More precisely, Xi reminds us that the “Origins” project has affirmed that China has “a million-year human history, 10,000 years of cultural history, and more than 5,000 years of civilizational history.”

Being proud of a nation’s past happens in all countries, and certainly China has a lot to be proud of in terms of art, culture, and science. However, Xi Jinping’s presentation of the “Origins” project is not limited to this legitimate pride. There is the disturbing idea that “those who control history control the country,” that history in itself political, and

that it should be ultimately controlled by the CCP, not by professional historians.

Those who do not adhere to the guidance of the CCP are “historical nihilists” or “cultural nihilists.” These are not merely controversial positions in Xi Jinping’s China. They are crimes, and those accused of “historical

are Marxist historicists.” In interpreting, teaching, and present history, Xi insists, “we must adhere to the fundamental guiding ideology of Marxism.”

In the article, Xi himself provides a clear example of ideological interpretation of Chinese history. He has personally



nihilism” lose their academic positions and earn a good chance of going to jail.

Another point is that history, Xi Jinping insists, should be interpreted through the lenses of Marxist ideology. While some Western theories submit ideologies to the test of history, the CCP fully intends to submit history to the test of ideology. “Our Party, Xi explains, has always viewed the history of the Chinese nation with the standpoint and method of historical materialism... We

participated in ceremonies honoring Confucius, but states, attributing the idea to Chairman Mao, that “Confucius became a sage because he was a revolutionary and participated in rebellions everywhere.” There is much we do not know about Confucius, but from what we know he was rather a traditionalist who wanted to restore a lost social order and praised social stability. Twisting history, making even Confucius into a proto-Marxist revolutionary, also serves

more immediate aims. Xi insists that Chinese civilization is inherently peaceful, based on “dialogue and tolerance,” and “has been famous for its openness and inclusiveness since ancient times.” In fact, like all great empires, China has had its imperialistic times and has expanded by conquering and destroying neighboring states. However, the argument that China is historically peaceful and surrounded by imperialistic neighbors has been used by Chinese propaganda and “wolf warrior diplomacy” in recent territorial disputes with India and Japan.

Xi is even more interested in building a narrative “proving” that all the populations included within the present borders of the People’s Republic are part of the Chinese civilization and included in the famous 5,000-year uninterrupted Chinese history. One of the aims of the “Origins” project was to counter Western interpretations of archeological findings that point to the presence of non-Chinese civilizations in present-day China.

Chinese archeologists who discovered the so-called Sanxingdui civilization in Sichuan, dating back to some 1,100 years before Christ, were highly praised, but the “Origins” project devoted considerable resources to counter Western theories that the Sanxingdui culture was so distinctive that it cannot be included in a Chinese continuity. In fact, in the same issue of the Qiushi Xi Jinping’s article was followed by one by the staff of the Sanxingdui Museum arguing that

the Sanxingdui culture was Chinese, and if anything proved the “pluralistic unity” of the Chinese civilization.

Xi Jinping made abundantly clear why controlling history and making the “pluralistic unity” of the Chinese civilization co-extensive to the present borders of China is essential when earlier this month he visited Xinjiang. He made a stop at the Museum of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and stated in so many words that the Uyghurs are Chinese, too. “Chinese civilization is extensive and profound, has a long history stretching back to antiquity, and is composed of outstanding cultures of all its ethnic groups,” Xi said. He called for “further study on the history of the community for the Chinese nation.”

He added that “we should make full and effective use of the historical facts, archaeological objects, and cultural heritage on the exchanges between various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, to prove that this region inhabited by many ethnic groups has been an integral part of China since the ancient times, and that various ethnic groups in Xinjiang have been important members of the big Chinese family in weal and woe.”

The Uyghurs do not believe that they are “members of the big Chinese family.” However, history will be twisted as much as needed to argue that they live in “an integral part of China since the ancient times.” Tibetans may expect just the same.



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