

# OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Uyghur Region Must Spur Action at the Council's 51st Session

*By HRW, 2022-09-15*



## Joint NGO Letter

To Members and Observers of the UN Human Rights Council:

OHCHR assessment of human rights concerns in the Uyghur region must spur action at the Council's 51st Session

On August 31, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights published its long-awaited assessment of the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Uyghur Region). This report comes after years of work by the Office and, despite criticism for its delay, has been welcomed by Uyghur groups and survivors worldwide as an essential first step toward accountability.

It is now your responsibility, as members and observers of the Human Rights Council, the UN's top human rights body, to respond to the OHCHR's findings with tangible action.

The evidence laid out in this report details the way in which Chinese government policies cast individuals and communities as "extremist" - and therefore in need of "re-education". The report notes that "broad interpretations of 'extremism', often explicitly targeting standard tenets of Islamic religion in practice" lead to an environment in which "religious or cultural practice or expression is conflated with 'extremism'". As a result, Chinese laws and policies are being used to target Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims for "manifestations... of

nothing more or less than personal choice in the practice of Islamic religious beliefs and/or legitimate expression of opinion”.

The OHCHR summarizes its legal overview by noting that “in the context in which this [anti-terrorism law] system is implemented, it also carries an inherent risk of unnecessary, disproportionate and discriminatory application to the ethnic and religious communities concerned”.

The report concludes that the extent of these abuses “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity”. As conditions in the region remain conducive for such violations “to continue and recur”, the situation requires “urgent attention by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies and human rights system.”

The report grounds this conclusion in the meticulous documentation of widespread abuses, including arbitrary detention, an absence of due process, torture and ill-treatment, involuntary medical treatment and sexual violence in the context of what Chinese officials euphemistically call “vocational education and training centres”, or “VETCs”. It bears noting that despite OHCHR’s requests, China refused to provide any curriculum for this so-called “education and training”; individuals interviewed for the report recalled being “forced to sing patriotic song after patriotic song every day, as loud as possible and until it hurts, until our faces become red and our veins appeared on our face”.

The report also notes concerns with the situation throughout the Uyghur Region,

including the destruction of Islamic religious sites, limits on linguistic rights of minorities, mass surveillance online and off, and violations of reproductive rights of Uyghur women, including forced birth control. It addresses credible allegations of forced labour; family separation, including as a result of enforced disappearance; and intimidation, threats and reprisals against individuals seeking information about their loved ones, or publicly sharing their personal experience in the “VETCs”.

Despite the High Commissioner’s emphasis on cooperation, including during her country visit, this has since been thoroughly rejected by the Chinese government. Chinese officials have sought to undermine the mandate given to her Office by the UN General Assembly and stated on 9 September that - rather than discussing the report’s findings on their merits - they would “close the door” to cooperation to address the violations.

This illustrates that the Chinese government is only willing to “cooperate” with those who embrace its false narrative while turning a blind eye to possible crimes against humanity. Chinese officials’ blanket denials and attacks on the Office, its experts and its leadership stand in stark contrast to the objective, detailed analysis of the OHCHR - which is grounded in China’s own laws and policies, as well as wrenching first-person testimony.

The UN Human Rights Council and UN member states have not yet taken meaningful steps to address the abuses and violations that occurred and that are ongoing in the region.

As the 51st session of the Human Rights Council opens, we urge your government to: Ensure that the UN Human Rights Council, according to your respective commitments and widely-accepted 'objective criteria', takes urgent action to place the situation in the Uyghur Region on the Council's agenda; and

Take immediate, concrete steps to advance accountability, including by mandating an independent international investigation into human rights violations against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other primarily Muslim ethnic minority groups in the People's Republic of China, grounded in the OHCHR assessment report's findings and in the structural and

systemic challenges outlined by UN Special Procedures.

It is necessary that urgent and tangible action is taken at the Council, and beyond, to hold the perpetrators accountable and to offer some measure of justice to the victims and their families.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International

Human Rights Watch

International Commission of Jurists

International Service for Human Rights

Uyghur Human Rights Project

World Uyghur Congress.

## **Rights Groups Say EC Proposal on Forced Labor Needs Work**

*By Asim Kashgarian, VOA, 2022-09-15*

The European Commission, the legislative arm of the European Union, released a 60-page proposal Wednesday that would ban products made by forced labor, a measure to stop goods tainted with forced labor from entering and exiting the union's market.

The proposed regulation was published one year after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen introduced the initiative in her 2021 State of the Union speech.

"The proposal covers all products, namely those made in the EU for domestic consumption and exports, and imported

goods, without targeting specific companies or industries," the European Commission said in a statement.

The release of the proposal follows a new U.S. law called the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which bans products made with forced labor from Xinjiang, a western Uyghur region in China. Enforcement of the U.S. legislation began in June.

### **The details**

While the European Commission's forced labor proposal is generally similar to the U.S. law, it does not specify a region such as Xinjiang. Instead, the proposal is much





broader and applies to all products made globally, including from within the EU's borders.

Some critics say the European version is weak because it lacks a clear procedure for an entire industry, and it does not have a targeted regional ban, said Koen Stoop, EU representative of the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress.

"The draft text raises concern about whether the proposal is meaningfully drafted to address state-imposed forced labor (such as Uyghur forced labor)," Stoop told VOA in an email. "We hope amendments will be made to strengthen the regulation."

The proposal seeks to address the problem

of forced labor globally, stating, "The use of forced labor is widespread in the world. It is estimated that about 27.6 million people were in forced labor in 2021."

"This proposal will make a real difference in tackling modern-day slavery, which affects millions of people around the globe. Our aim is to eliminate all products made with forced labor from the EU market, irrespective of where they have been made. Our ban will apply to domestic products, exports and imports alike," said Valdis Dombrovskis, the European Commission's executive vice president and commissioner for trade.

### **Lengthy process**

Rights groups expect the legislative process



from proposal to adoption to be a lengthy one since the European Parliament and the council need to agree on a final text.

“There is no time limit on the ‘first reading’ at the Parliament and council, so it depends on how fast they can reach an agreement, both amongst and between themselves,” Stoop told VOA. “This usually takes at least a year. But even when the law is adopted, it will take two years to enter into force. So, taken together, it will take at least three years for the ban to start being enforced.”

Each EU member state will implement the law by assessing forced labor risks based on many different sources of information.

“These may include submissions from civil society, a database of forced labor risks focusing on specific products and geographic areas, and the due diligence

that companies carry out,” stated the European Commission.

“Competent authorities and customs will work hand in hand to make the system robust. We have sought to minimize the administrative burden for businesses, with a tailor-made approach” for small and mid-sized enterprises, Dombrovskis said. “We will also further deepen our cooperation with our global partners and with international organizations.”

### **China and forced labor accusations**

While China is not singled out by the EU proposal, the United States, the United Nations and rights groups have accused China of using Uyghur forced labor and have said Beijing’s treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang constitutes crimes against humanity. Rights groups hope the European Commission’s



proposal will specifically address Uyghur forced labor.

"We're certainly encouraged by steps taken by the commission, and we want to see a proposal that's up for the task when it comes to combating forced labor in the Uyghur region," Peter Irwin, senior program officer for advocacy and communications at the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project, told VOA in an email. "The law needs to include procedures to compel companies to remove this kind of state-imposed forced labor from their supply chains."

China has repeatedly denied accusations of forced labor as U.S.-propagated "lies of the century" designed to use criticism over Xinjiang to contain China.

On Thursday, in response to the EU proposal, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters

in Beijing, "There's no so-called 'forced labor' in China. We firmly oppose using the so-called 'forced labor' or any Xinjiang-related issue to interfere in China's internal affairs."

Activists outside China, however, see the proposal as a boon for Uyghurs who live in China.

"This resolution adds to the growing economic pressure on the Chinese government to dismantle its system of state-sponsored forced labor in the Uyghur region, as well as to end corporate complicity in these abuses," said Jewher Ilham, forced labor project coordinator at the Washington-based Worker Rights Consortium.

By banning products made with forced labor, Ilham told VOA, the EU aligns its market with global standards and other legislatures.

## **British Fury Over China Attending Queen Elizabeth II's Funeral: 'An Insult'**

*By Darragh Roche, News Week, 2022-09-17*

A group of U.K. lawmakers have expressed anger that representatives of the Chinese government have been invited to attend the state funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II on Monday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has been invited to attend but he's not expected to be present. However, Vice-President Wang Qishan is expected to come to the funeral

in London's Westminster Abbey.

A group of seven lawmakers sent a letter to Foreign Secretary James Cleverly on Thursday calling for the invitation to Xi to be rescinded and strongly criticizing China for its treatment of the largely Muslim Uyghur community.

The signatories included former Conservative Party leader Sir Iain Duncan



Smith and Tim Loughton, a Conservative and chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee as well as Lord Alton, a crossbench peer, and the Labour Party's Baroness Kennedy.

Loughton called the invitation «an insult» in a statement to Newsweek on Friday.

Loughton also welcomed the fact Chinese officials have been barred from attending the late Elizabeth II's lying-in-state at Westminster

All the seven signatories have been sanctioned by China because of their criticism of the country's treatment of the Uyghurs. Last year, the House of Commons declared that a genocide was taking place against the Uyghurs.

China has denied allegations of abuse against the Uyghurs and said camps where

the members of the majority Muslim community have been held are for «re-education» and combatting terrorism.

The British lawmakers wrote that they were «greatly concerned» that Chinese officials had been invited and noted that representatives from other countries, such as Russia and Myanmar, had not been invited to attend.

«Given that the United Kingdom Parliament has voted to recognize the genocide committed by the Chinese government against the Uyghur people it is extraordinary that the architects of that genocide should be treated in any more favorable way than those countries who have been barred,» they wrote.

The letter went on: «I hope you will agree that it would be wholly inappropriate

that any representative of the Chinese government should be able to attend such an important occasion as the state funeral of our late monarch and that you can give us your assurance that the invitation will be immediately withdrawn.»

Loughton told Newsweek: «Given the unanimous vote in the United Kingdom House of Commons recognizing human rights atrocities by the Chinese government as genocide it is bizarre that the UK government should be extending a welcome to Chinese leaders to attend the state funeral on the same basis as the representatives of the vast majority of other countries who are able to recognize and abide by the international rule of law.»

«We should not be rolling out the red carpet for a regime that has been exposed for committing genocidal acts and continues its industrial-scale human rights abuses against the Uyghurs and increasingly against the people of Hong Kong with their close ties to Britain,» Loughton said.

«Inviting the Chinese government is an insult to the memory of the Queen and should be rescinded immediately,» he continued. «The government of China should be on the same banned list as the likes of Russia, Belarus and Myanmar.»

«Those sanctioned parliamentarians, including me, particularly welcome to swift

action of the Speaker of the Commons in confirming that the ban put in place to prevent the Chinese ambassador coming to the Palace of Westminster still applies to him and any other Chinese government officials during the lying-in-state and beyond whilst the sanctions against British parliamentarians remain in place,» Loughton said.

The Embassy of China in London told Newsweek on Friday: «The state funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is an important activity of the UK. Foreign delegations attend the activities at the invitation of the UK side to show respect to the late Queen and the people of the UK. As the host, the UK side should be familiar with diplomatic protocols and proper manners of receiving guests.»

The lawmakers also sent their letter to the speakers of the House of Commons and the House of Lords and pointed to the sanctions and the fact that the Chinese ambassador to the U.K. was told last year he could not visit parliament following the imposition of the sanctions.

The funeral will take place on Monday at Westminster Abbey and Chinese officials are expected to attend unless their invitations are rescinded. A large number of foreign dignitaries will be attending, including President Joe Biden.



# Press Release: Call on UN General Assembly to Take Urgent Action Against the East Turkistan Genocide

*By International Union of East Turkistan Organizations, 2022-09-13*



International Union of  
The East Turkistan  
Organizations

Press Release

## Call on UN General Assembly to Take Urgent Action Against the East Turkistan Genocide!

Since the Chinese occupation of East Turkistan in 1949, systemic assimilation methods toward East Turkistan people have been implemented. In this process, China is destroying the identity of East Turkistan people, changing the demographic structure of East Turkistan by the occupation forces, and destroying historical artifacts, mosques, and civilization symbols unique to East Turkistan, as well as prohibitions such as language, religion, free travel ban, birth ban. As a result of such policies of China, millions of East Turkistan people have lost their lives for 73 years.

Since the day of occupation, the Chinese government has been subjecting the Uyghurs and other Turkic ethnic groups to genocide through direct killing, extrajudicial executions, and life imprisonment. As a result of China's new genocidal policy that started in 2013, millions of people are subjected to brainwashing, gang rape, sinicization, medical experiments, organ harvesting, and various tortures in more than 1200 concentration camps built by China in East Turkistan. In addition, the crimes of genocide are committed by violating all the articles in the international conventions on human rights with brutal murders such as breaking up families, child camps, depriving parents of their right to educate their children and promote their language and culture, and forcibly adopt children whose parents were killed or imprisoned in camps to the Chinese. In the last 9 years, more than 20 thousand mosques have been destroyed, and religious scholars and intellectuals have been arrested or tortured to death.

Recently, the Chinese regime has been implementing very strict quarantine measures in East Turkistan within the scope of the "Zero Covid" policy. In the footage shared on social media from the region, it is known that people in the city of Ghulja are completely banned from leaving their homes, the basic food needs of the people are not met, and production and daily life in the city are completely stopped, the people are left starving, and because of this, dozens of people have died of starvation in their homes. At the same time, as a result of the policies implemented under the name of quarantine, access to the hospital or any treatment method is cut off, and it is reflected in the social media posts that the elderly, the sick, the pregnant, and those infected with Covid couldn't reach proper medical treatments and many have lost their lives.

Finally, we, the International Union of East Turkistan Organizations, call on the UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the UN High Commission For Human Rights to take immediate action to stop this genocide that is taking place in East Turkistan, in the new session of the UN general assembly. We also request UN Secretary-General António Guterres to appoint a special representative for East Turkistan. In this respect, we urge Mr. Volker Türk, the new elected UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to make all necessary efforts to pursue all suggested methods to stop all kinds of human rights violations in East Turkistan as stated in the report published by the office of former President Michelle Bachelet. We believe that the report published by the UN High Commission for Human Rights is incomplete in characterizing the human rights violations in East Turkistan and we call on the new administrative office to publish a comprehensive report on the East Turkistan genocide.

International Union of East Turkistan Organizations  
13/09/2022



EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION  
شەرقىي تۈركىستان ئاخبارات ۋە مەدېيا جەمئىيىتى

### Contact Us:

Adres: Kartaltepe Mah. Geçit Sok. No: 6 Dükkan: 2  
Küçükçekmece / İSTANBUL  
Tel: +90 212 540 31 15 Gsm: +90 553 895 19 33  
+90 541 797 77 00 info@turkistanmedia.com