

UN Team in China Ahead of Rights Chief Visit to Xinjiang

By Voice of America, 2022-04-26



U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet speaks at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Nov 3, 2021

A United Nations team has landed in China ahead of a long-delayed visit by the U.N. human rights chief to Xinjiang, where rights groups and some Western governments allege the Chinese government is committing genocide and serious abuses against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

The U.N. human rights office said Tuesday its staffers arrived in southern China on Monday to prepare for the visit by High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, expected in May.

«The advance team of five is initially spending time in Guangzhou, where they are quarantining in line with COVID-19 travel

requirements,» spokeswoman Liz Throssell said.

Bachelet announced in March that her office reached an agreement with China's government that she could visit Xinjiang in far-western China. The rights chief has long talked about hoping to visit Xinjiang, and her office has also been compiling a long-awaited report into alleged human rights abuses in the region.

Almost 200 rights groups have urged Bachelet to release her report, which diplomats said has been ready — or very close to it — for months.



The advance team is in China to make sure that Bachelet would gain «meaningful access» to fully understand the human rights situation in China, Throssell said.

Rights groups and researchers accuse China of locking up more than a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and members of other minority groups in re-education camps, forced labor, forcing women from the region to undergo contraceptive measures and separating children from incarcerated parents.

The U.S. government has declared that Beijing's policies against the Uyghurs amounted to genocide and crimes against humanity. Legislatures in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Canada have done the same.

China denies the allegations and maintains its policies were meant to de-radicalize those influenced by jihadi propaganda following years of violent outbursts against Chinese rule in the region.

Uyghur Internment Camp Survivors DemonstRate Outside UN Office in Geneva

By ANI, 2022-04-27

Uyghur activists, many of whom are survivors of the internment camps set up by China in the Xinjiang region on Monday demonstrated for a week outside the United Nations compound in Geneva demanding a meeting with the UN human rights chief, a media report said.

The activists also demanded that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet issue an overdue report detailing rights abuses in Xinjiang, Radio Free Asia reported.

Bachelet had announced last month that she had reached an agreement with the Chinese government for a visit in May, including the turbulent western China region.

The Uyghurs want Bachelet to release the human rights report before she visits China. They offered to accompany the former Chilean president on the trip, the report said.

"I'd be happy to take them to the camps and prisons in Urumqi," Gulbahar Jelilova, an activist said, referring to Xinjiang's capital. "If we don't accompany them, China will play a lot of games not to show them the reality. That's why we're requesting to go on this trip," she added.

Gulbahar Jelilova further said she could show the U.N. team a location where Uyghurs were executed and a hospital that removed organs from dead prisoners.

Jelilova said that she was detained on accusations of "aiding terrorism" while on a business trip to Urumqi and put into three





different camps over a period of 15 months beginning in May 2017, the report said.

She returned to Kazakhstan in September 2018, as a direct result of appeals from her two children in Kazakhstan, who sought diplomatic assistance from the Kazakh government.

Jelilova has since alleged that she witnessed a number of atrocities inside the camps, including the torture and the deaths of innocent people, Radio Free Asia said.

Omir Bekali, an Uyghur of Kazakh descent who said he was tortured by authorities during the nine months he spent in three camps on allegations of terrorist activities, said the demonstration outside U.N. headquarters was "one of the first solid steps we have taken to end the ongoing genocide of our people and to free them sooner."

Bachelet's office has been under pressure

from rights activists to issue an overdue report on rights violations by Chinese authorities targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic communities in the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and others have been held in a vast network of internment camps operated by the Chinese government under the pretext of preventing religious extremism and terrorism among the mostly Muslim groups, the report said.

The Chinese government has publicly refuted any reports of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, however, China has been rebuked globally for the crackdown on Uyghur Muslims by sending them to mass detention camps, interfering in their religious activities, and sending members of the community to undergo some form of forcible re-education or indoctrination.

China Using Diplomatic Leverage to Target Uyghurs Abroad

By ANI, 2022-04-28

China is using its diplomatic heft with countries in Central, West, and South Asia to hunt down and target Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities who have taken refuge abroad, a media report said.

Using a complex tool kit of intimidation, harassment, surveillance, detentions, and extraditions, Beijing's transnational campaign has grown to unprecedented depths across the world, Radio Free Europe said citing a report titled, 'Great Wall Of Steel', by the Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China and the United States.

The new research shows how China's

global rise — exemplified by its outsized economic influence through projects like the multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) — has granted Beijing newfound leverage over governments and allowed it to co-opt them as partners in a spreading repression campaign, Radio Free Europe reported.

The study's dataset has documented 5,532



cases of Uyghurs facing intimidation, 1,150 cases of Uyghurs detained in a host country, and 424 cases of Uyghurs deported or extradited to China, from 1997 to January 2022, the report said.

As the study notes, of the 10 countries where Uyghurs as well as ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other groups remain most vulnerable to detention or extradition, China is the largest financial creditor for five of them: Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Cambodia,

massincarceration program in Xinjiang, where China really began ramping up algorithmic surveillance (across the province)," Bradley Jardine, a fellow at the Wilson Center and the author of the study said.

Jardine further said how China has built and established a number of tools in Central Asia like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and using them to sign treaties that allow for mutual extradition with no questions asked between member states.



and Myanmar, leading to deals in which leaders "trade human rights for economic opportunity," according to the report.

"The onset of the (US) War on Terror (in 2001) provided China with new rhetorical tools for building alliances and coalitions for pursuing Uyghur dissidents and diaspora communities; and then, in 2017, with the

"This (type of cooperation) has really accelerated (and) made the region very dangerous and hostile (for Uyghurs)," Jardine said.

Furthermore, China has also signed an extradition treaty with Turkey, during a Belt and Road summit forum that was later ratified in December 2020, Jardine highlighted.V

"Turkey is still the largest destination,



although there is a small exodus of particularly prominent figures, such as Kazakh activist Serikzhan Bilash, who relocated [to] the United States. So there is no real space for them at the moment unless there's more political will in the West to increase its [refugee] quotas. This is where they would be safest," he said.

Beijing launched a brutal crackdown that has swept more than 1 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities into detention camps and prisons in its western Xinjiang Province under the pretext of fighting Islamist extremism. These efforts have led to allegations of imposing forced labor, mass internment, forced birth control, erasing Uyghur cultural and religious identity, as well as accusations of genocide.

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Uyghur High School Principal Fom Xinjiang's Ghulja City Said to be Detained

By Shohret Hoshur, RFA, 2022-04-27

A Uyghur educator and high school principal in Ghulja in northwestern China's Xinjiang region who went missing nearly a year ago is being detained in the city, municipal education officials told RFA.

Dilmurat Abdurehim has been missing since the Eid al-Fitr Muslim religious holiday on May 13, 2021, that marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan. He left his home in the city's Dongmehelle area but never returned, said the source who requested anonymity for security reasons.

Ghulja (in Chinese, Yining) is the third-largest city in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) after Urumqi (Wulumuqi) and Korla (Kuerle) and the seat of the Ili Kazakh (Yili Hasake) Autonomous Prefecture.

Abdurehim's family members did not give any information to their friends and neighbors about the principal's disappearance, the

source said. Nevertheless, friends and neighbors began to suspect he had been abducted by police, who warned his family not to disclose his whereabouts, the source added.

Abdurehim graduated with a degree in history from Xinjiang University in 1990. He began teaching at Ghulja's No. 7 high school and later became a principal at the Nos. 3, 8 and 9 high schools, the source with knowledge of the matter said.





A staff member at the No. 3 High School told RFA that Abdurehim had worked at the school but moved to another school years ago. The official also said he was aware that Abdurehim was in custody.

An official at No. 8 High School, where Abdurehim had his longest tenure, said the educator had been detained while he was working at the No. 9 High School. He did not mention the reason for Abdurehim's arrest and suggested that RFA contact officials at the No. 9 High School for more information.

"I don't know how long has it been since he was detained," he said. "I don't know the reason behind his arrest since he was not detained while he was in our school."

After calls to No. 9 High School went unanswered, RFA again contacted the No. 8 High School and asked whether Abdurehim was being held in a prison or an internment camp.

The official said the information was a

"state secret" and that the school was not authorized to comment.

Authorities have targeted teachers and intellectuals in Xinjiang as part of an effort to weaken Uyghur culture and identity, Abdureshid Niyaz, an independent Uyghur researcher based in Turkey, told RFA in a 2021 report.

More than 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities are believed to have been held in a network of detention camps in Xinjiang since 2017. Beijing has said that the camps are vocational training centers and has denied widespread and documented allegations that it has violated the human rights of Muslims living in in the region.

The United States and the legislatures of some Western countries have said Chinese policies toward the Uyghurs constitute a genocide and crime against humanity.

Translated by RFA's Uyghur Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

Does Elon Musk's Twitter Deal Give China Influence Over The Site?

By Alan Ohnsman, Forbes, 2022-04-25



Tesla CEO Elon Musk celebrating the opening of the carmaker>s Shanghai plant on Jan 7, 2020. XINHUA NEWS AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

As the world sorts out the implications of Elon Musk's bombshell deal to purchase Twitter observers are asking whether the acquisition also opens a door for China to exert indirect control over the social media platform, given Tesla's reliance on its Shanghai plant and local suppliers for its profit.v

Twitter's board on Monday, after rebuffing Musk's initial overtures, said it would accept Musk's \$44 billion offer for the company, ending a weeks-long saga over whether the company would accept his unsolicited bid. «Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning



democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated,» the mercurial entrepreneur said in a statement.

In 2021 China became Tesla's highest source of vehicle production and likely its secondbiggest source of sales. Given lower costs of production there, including for battery cells, materials and worker pay, it's also "by far" the electric-car maker's source of profit, Wedbush equity analyst Dan Ives recently told Forbes. China, which has little tolerance for public criticism, banned Twitter in 2009, according to New York Times's Michael Forsythe, long-time correspondent covering the country. While the country previously had no influence over Twitter, "that may have just changed" with Musk's deal, Forsythe said in a tweet.

That caught the attention of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos who asked in response:

"Did the Chinese government just gain a bit of leverage over the town square?"

Tesla was the first foreign carmaker in China allowed to wholly own its auto-assembly plant there. Previously, global giants including General Motors, Volkswagen, Ford and Toyota were required to partner with local Chinese companies, who typically owned a majority stake in joint-venture factories. Funding to build the "Giga Shanghai" facility included \$1.3 billion of loans from local banks including China Construction Bank Corp, Agricultural Bank of China, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. China watchers believe Tesla was given special dispensation as the government hoped the (formerly) Silicon Valley-based company would push Chinese automakers to up their game to compete with the brand. It seems to have worked as local companies including



Tesla posted pictures of the opening ceremony in the city of Urumchi, where people were shown holding «Tesla Loves Xinjiang» signs.



BYD and NIO have become fast-growing rivals to Tesla in that market with a range of attractive, compelling new electric models.

Musk, the world's wealthiest person with a net worth Forbes estimates at \$268.2 billion, has shown a willingness to comply with Chinese government wishes in ways that he often doesn't in the U.S. The most notable difference relates to his response to health rules related to Covid-19. When the pandemic began in early 2020, Musk bristled at a stay-at-home policy by local officials that temporarily suspended production work at Tesla's Fremont, California, plant.

"To say that (people) cannot leave their house, and they will be arrested if they do, this is fascist," he said in a Tesla earnings call in April 2020. "This is not democratic. This is not freedom. Give people back their goddamn freedom."

And yet when the company had to halt production at its Shanghai plant for three weeks, starting in late March, because of the Chinese government's zero-tolerance approach to stopping the spread of omicronvariant of covid, Musk was silent. Tesla began building Model Ys and Model 3s last week, under strict protocols that included having

workers temporarily live at the plant and not returning to their homes.

Early this year Tesla also opened a showroom in China's Xinjiang province, where the government is accused of carrying out an assimilation program and operating internment camps for ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups. Musk hasn't commented on that decision, which Tesla's Chinese unit announced in January in a post on Weibo, China's popular, Twitter-like social-media platform.

"Elon Musk has a Tesla factory in China and he wants to sell more cars there, as many China observers note. What happens if Beijing leans on him about say, a Uyghur or Hong Kong activist account? Or about Chinese disinformation bots leveraging this platform?" Vice News reporter Melissa Chan said in a tweet.

"If Elon Musk thinks because he's the world's richest man that he can tell China to piss off if Beijing ever starts leaning on him about Twitter, he'll find out how efficiently the Chinese state can gobble up that Tesla Shanghai factory, taking with it as much IP as it can," Chan tweeted. "Few countries are as effective with linkage diplomacy as China is."

German Parliament to Hold Discussion on Situation of Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang

By ANI, 2022-04-30

In a bid to create pressure on China regarding human rights violations of the Uyghur community in the country, the German Parliament will hold a discussion on the situation of Uyghurs on Saturday.



Ahead of the upcoming discussion on April 30, Enver Can of Ilham Tohti Initiative organized a press conference on Friday (local time). The conference witnessed the participation of a camp survivor Sayragul Sauytbay, author Alexandra Cavelius, researcher Adrian Zenz, Uyghur American attorney Nury Turkel, and Prof Marie Holzman.

In the conference, the participants elaborated on the deteriorating situation of Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region [XUAR] and also talked about the torture, religious restrictions, cultural cleansing, and forced abortions and sterilization of ethnic nationalities in China.

Notably, the discussion on Uyghurs in the German Parliament may create monumental pressure on China.

This comes after Beijing launched a brutal

crackdown that has swept more than one million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities into detention camps and prisons in its western Xinjiang province under the pretext of fighting Islamist extremism.

These efforts have led to allegations of imposing forced labour, mass internment, forced birth control, erasing Uyghur cultural and religious identity, as well as accusations of genocide.

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