

US Lawmakers Form Uyghur Caucus to Address Rights Abuses in China's Xinjiang

RFA, By Roseanne Gerin, 2021-07-29

The US 'cannot be silent as Xi Jinping tortures and seeks to eradicate an entire population,' says Rep. Chris Smith.

Lawmakers from the U.S. House of Representatives formed a Uyghur Caucus on Thursday to highlight the Chinese Communist Party's abuse of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The caucus led by Reps. Tom Suozzi and Chris Smith also will support legislation aimed at addressing the human rights abuses, including the detention of about 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a vast network of internment camps, torture of inmates, sexual assaults, forced sterilization of women, and the use of forced Uyghur labor, and efforts to eradicate Uyghur culture and religion.

"Put simply, we're talking about the largest coordinated human rights abuse campaign of the 21st century being perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party," Suozzi said in a statement. "Not only as Members of Congress, but as human beings we have a responsibility to uphold the values of fundamental human dignity and religious freedom abroad."

Smith, a veteran lawmaker who for decades has criticized Beijing over its human rights record, said the U.S. must speak out on egregious abuses being perpetrated against the Uyghurs and others in northwestern China,



Uyghur women hold placards and flags to express their concern about the ratification of an extradition treaty between China and Turkey during a demonstration near China's consulate in Istanbul, March 8, 2021.

which have been well-documented by rights organizations, international media, and the United Nations.

"The United States cannot be silent as [Chinese President] Xi Jinping tortures and seeks to eradicate an entire population," he said in the statement. "In solidarity with the oppressed, the Uyghur Caucus will call attention to the Communist Chinese government's atrocious human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and work to end one of the world's worst human rights tragedies."

In January, the U.S. State Department determined that the Chinese government's actions against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim minorities in the XUAR constituted genocide and crimes against humanity.

There was no immediate response from the Chinese government to the announcement about the Uyghur Caucus.

Rushan Abbas, executive director of the Washington-based Campaign for Uyghurs, hailed the creation of the caucus.

"Day after day, we are faced with new horrors coming out of East Turkistan," she said in a statement on Thursday, using the name for the XUAR that Uyghurs prefer. "These atrocities, this genocide, require a response that is proportional to its depravity."

"With this caucus, we now have a way to organize our allies in the United States and turn activism into concrete policy actions that address this unspeakable crime," Abbas said. "Together, we will see this genocide ended, and those responsible brought to justice."

The Germany-based World Uyghur Congress (WUC) also welcomed the development.

"This is such a welcomed initiative, and it comes at an opportune time when Uyghurs most need strong allies to restore their freedoms, and end the Uyghur genocide," said WUC president Dolkun Isa in a statement.

The Uyghur Caucus joins other such caucuses — groups where U.S. lawmakers meet to pursue common legislative objectives — focusing on ethnic minorities or people living in



Another propaganda picture posted by Chinese embassies on Twitter.

territories that are repressed or targeted by China.

A bipartisan Congressional Taiwan Caucus set up in April 2002 has 139 members and is focused on enhancing and strengthening U.S.-Taiwan relations and ensuring that Taiwan remains democratic. Its counterpart in the Senate was established in September 2003 and has 24 members.

Smith created a Congressional Hong Kong Caucus in September 2014 to monitor China's actions in the territory where at the time pro-democracy activists held massive street demonstrations clamoring for free elections.

Two former Congressmen formed a Congressional Tibet Caucus in 2009 to draw attention to the Chinese government's policies there and to mobilize support for the Dalai Lama, Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader.

Neither of those groups appear to be active, but the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, formerly known as the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, now takes up rights issues concerning Uyghurs in the XUAR, Hong Kong, and Tibet.

The 17-member bipartisan, bicameral Congressional-Executive Commission on China (ECCC), an independent agency of the U.S. government, also monitors human rights and rule of law developments in China.

Beijing must not host Winter Olympics, Uyghur American pleads in heartbreaking testimony

By Tyler O'Neil | Fox News. August, 7, 2021

Chinese Communist Party shouldn't host the Olympics "while they are tearing families apart," Uyghur American says

A Uyghur American opened up about her mother's disappearance at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party and urged the international community to boycott the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing or to insist that the Olympics take place elsewhere.

"I'm here today not as a professional activist, expert, or a scholar but just as a daughter, someone directly affected by the atrocities" in Xinjiang, Ziba Murat, the Uyghur American, said in a news conference hosted by the Heritage Foundation on Thursday. Her mother, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, disappeared in 2018. Murat recalled that she last heard her mother's voice in September 2018. "She sent me a message saying I should sleep when the baby sleeps, referring to my then-infant daughter. I haven't heard from her since."

"When she last visited us in 2016, she promised us she would be back soon," she added. Three months after Murat's daughter was born, her mother disappeared. "That little



Screenshot of Ziba Murat speaking at a Heritage Foundation event. (YouTube)

girl is now 3 years old, and she still hasn't met her grandmother," she said, on the verge of tears. "On her third birthday a few months ago, she pointed at my mom's picture and asked, 'Is she coming for my birthday?' In that moment, I choked as if something was in my throat... I don't know the answer to that question."

"For over two years, we have had no information whatsoever as to why she was detained, her whereabouts, or her condition. But then

in December 2020, we learned that she was sentenced to prison on fabricated charges in a sham trial,” Murat explained. The Chinese authorities sentenced her to 20 years in prison.

Abbas was not a famous scholar, a renowned intellectual, or even politically active. “She was a doctor, she was a healer, but she still was swept into this genocide,” Murat said. “It’s a nightmare I wish I could wake up from.”

Murat recalled sleepless nights and vowed that she would do everything in her power to oppose the Communist tyrants who imprisoned her mother.

“The Olympics should be an event that symbolizes the value of humanity and the hope for international community. But this is simply not the case with the Beijing Olympics,” Murat said. She insisted that the Chinese Communist Party must not be allowed to host such an important event “while they are tearing families apart, separating the American grandbabies from their grandmothers.”

Olivia Enos, a senior policy analyst at Heritage’s Asian Studies Center, laid out the concrete steps that countries like the United States can take to deny the CCP the moral authority of hosting the Olympics without punishing American athletes.

Enos called on the U.S. government to launch an international bipartisan coalition to postpone and move the 2022 Winter Olympics to another location. She cited the ongoing Uyghur genocide, the Chinese government’s authoritarian crackdown in Hong Kong and its misinformation campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the U.S. government cannot pursue

this postponement, for whatever reason, Enos presented a backup option: that diplomats only participate in the events surrounding the Olympics on conditions of transparency and the ability to provide relief to the Chinese people.

Enos also suggested that athletes should protest the Communist government at the games, that journalists should speak up about the oppression and that the business community should also protest. The analyst suggested that NBC should refuse to carry the opening ceremonies and that companies should refuse to run ads connected to the Olympics.

“Beijing should not be hosting the most prestigious sporting event in the world when they’re carrying out ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity,” Enos declared.

The Chinese Communist government has allegedly imprisoned 1 million members of the Uyghur Muslim minority in what Beijing defends as de-radicalization and retraining centers. Human rights activists have compared the camps to prisons and worse, claiming that inmates are sentenced there with little due process. Authorities have reportedly compelled Uyghurs to denounce their religion, language and culture to pledge allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party and President Xi Jinping. According to an Associated Press investigation, the CCP has forced Uyghur women to use birth control or undergo involuntary sterilization.



New China PLA Chief in Xinjiang Follows Repressive CCP Boss Over From Tibet

RFA, 2021-08-06

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Lt. Gen. Wang Haijiang, like Xinjiang party chief Chen Quanguo, moves to Urumqi after a Lhasa stint.

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China's new military commander in Xinjiang, confirmed on social media this week, is likely to support repressive mass surveillance and incarceration policies pioneered by the region's hardline Communist Party boss when the two men served in Tibet, exile Tibetan and Uyghur sources said.

Lt. Gen. Wang Haijiang's transfer to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region from Tibet comes five years after Chen Quanguo took over as XUAR Communist Party chief and locked up some 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a network of internment camps in the name of fighting terrorism and extremism.

The 58-year-old commander of the People's Liberation Army's Xinjiang Military Region will oversee some 70,000 troops in the high-altitude northwestern region that borders Afghanistan, Pakistan, and three Central Asian states. Analysts say instability in Afghanistan and other neighbors is used by



Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers assemble during military training at the Pamir Mountains in Kashgar, East Turkistan region, Jan. 4, 2021.

Beijing as a cross-border security concern driving the repression in the XUAR.

Wang's posting to Urumqi was officially announced Wednesday on the Xinjiang Military District's WeChat social media account, but an April report in the official Beijing Youth Daily said he had been transferred to the XUAR earlier this year.

XUAR Communist Party Secretary Chen moved to Urumqi in August 2016 after five years as party boss in the Tibet Autonomous Region where he built up security measures and surveillance. Chen moved to suppress support for the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritu-

al leader whom Beijing accuses of being a separatist, and criminalized many ordinary religious and cultural activities.

“A system of intense security and forced assimilation that Chinese Communist Party official Chen Quanguo first developed in Tibet is now being used in Xinjiang, where Chen and his forces have locked up at least 1 million ethnic Uyghurs and Kazakhs in prison camps because of their ethnicity, culture and religion,” the International Campaign for Tibet said in a 2018 analysis of Chen’s record in Tibet.

When he moved to the XUAR, Chen ushered in a systematic crackdown on Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Turkic Muslims, featuring intrusive surveillance measures, banning and punishment of cultural and religious practices, and the internment camps that have brought charges of genocide from Western capitals and legal experts.

“As we know that former Chinese Communist Party official Chen Quanguo, who first developed the system of intense security in Tibet, is appointed in Xinjiang now, where Chen is implementing the same routine and harsh policies that were executed in Tibet,” said Jamphel Monlam, a former Tibetan political prisoner now living in the United States.

Because Tibet and Xinjiang are two of the most political-

ly sensitive regions in China, the appointment of military commanders are usually supervised directly by the central government, which selects soldiers who are hard-line authoritarians, he told RFA.

Ilshat Hassan, director of China affairs at the Germany-based World Uyghur Congress, said Chen and Wang know each other and support each other’s mission.

“Wang’s arrival only means he’ll be instrumental in supporting Chen Quanguo’s genocidal policies against the Uyghur people in East Turkestan,” he said, using the name for the XUAR that Uyghurs prefer. “His arrival will bring nothing new except for further disaster.”

Legislatures and governments of several Western democratic countries, including the U.S., have declared that China’s harsh policies against the Uyghurs and others in the XUAR constitute genocide or crimes against humanity.

Wang served in China’s brief 1979 border war with Vietnam and held previous posts as deputy commander of the Southern Xinjiang Military Region, and deputy commander and, recently, commander of 40,000 troops in the Tibet Military Region, according to state media reports.

In 2019, he was promoted to lieutenant general by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also chairman of the Central Military Commission, the country’s national defense organization.

Xi’s push for a tough assimilationist approach to ethnic minorities in China also drives the heavy-handed campaigns Chen has imposed on the far-western regions, analysts say.

Reported by Kurban Niyaz for RFA’s Uyghur Service and by Tenzin Dickyi for RFA’s Tibetan Service. Translated by Alim Seytoff and Tenzin Dickyi. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.



As China targets Uyghurs worldwide, democracies must prevent Interpol abuse

BY EDWARD LEMON AND BRADLEY JARDINE,
OPINION CONTRIBUTORS — 08/01/21

On July 19, Uyghur activist Yidiyesi Aishan was detained in Morocco at the request of the Chinese government. As Aishan sits in Tiflet Detention Centre, he knows that if he is sent back to his homeland in Xinjiang, he almost certainly will be detained for “re-education” in the Chinese Communist Party’s vast network of concentration camps or sent to prison.

Aishan was arrested based on a Red Notice issued by Interpol, an organization that brings together police forces from 194 countries. A Red Notice is an electronic alert published by Interpol at the request of a member state and circulated among law enforcement worldwide. Improvements in technology have led to a surge in Red Notices in recent years.

In 1998, Interpol published only 737 Red Notices, but in 2019 it published 13,377 such notices. Although the constitution of Interpol forbids countries from using it to pursue political opponents, autocrats nevertheless have taken advantage and used Interpol to clamp down on dissent.

China has been active in using Interpol against its opponents — in particular, Uyghurs. The Chinese government issued a Red Notice against the head of the Uyghur World Cong-



ress Dolkun Issa in 1999, leading to his detention in South Korea, India, Turkey and Italy. This appears to be part of a broader campaign to target China’s Muslim minorities globally. A recent report by the Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs and the Uyghur Human Rights Project documented 1,546 cases of Uyghurs being detained or deported from 28 countries since 1997. This leaves Uyghurs especially vulnerable to being targeted abroad. But it is not just China that is abusing Interpol. Authoritarian regimes from Russia to Iran and Venezuela have used Interpol to pursue opponents abroad. Following the alleged coup attempt by the Gülen Movement in Turkey in 2016, the Turkish government attempted to upload over 60,000 requests for arrests into Interpol’s databases. Turkey will host the organization’s next General Assembly in the fall.

Meanwhile, despite accounting for just 0.12 percent of the world's population, Tajikistan, an autocratic republic in post-Soviet Central Asia, had 2,528 Red Notices in circulation via Interpol by 2017 — 2.3 percent of the total in circulation at the time — including one against Muhiddin Kabiri, leader of the country's main opposition party.

Autocrats also have sought to buy influence in the organization. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), for example, has donated \$54 million through a charity called the Interpol Foundation for a Safer World, equaling the statutory contributions of all of the other 194 members combined. In a sign of its growing influence, the UAE hosted the 2018 General Assembly and was slated to host the 2020 version before the COVID-19 pandemic caused its postponement.

Autocrats also have used Interpol to reach into the United States. Despite the Department of Justice not recognizing Red Notices as sufficient grounds to arrest someone, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has detained a number of individuals wanted by Russia, Kazakhstan and other authoritarian states based on Red Notices from their governments. Although all individuals were later released, some spent months in immigration detention centers.

Why is Interpol so vulnerable to abuse? Part of the problem is that it operates on the basis of equality between member states. In other words, it views an arrest request issued by China as equal to that of the United States. There is also a matter of capacity. As Red Notices have surged, Interpol's small staff simply cannot give all of them the scrutiny they require. While progress has been made to beef up checks and allow those with refugee status to have their Red Notices deleted, Interpol remains opaque, secretive and lacks

accountability.

In order to push back against autocratic abuse, the international community must work to form a democratic caucus within Interpol. Democracies make up 14 of the 15 top statutory funders of the body. These democracies could caucus together on key general assembly votes, support common candidates for key positions and adopt policies to insulate Interpol against abuse, including banning abusive states from accessing Interpol's database, as the organization's own rules allow. Democracies can also fight back using their own institutions, as the United States is trying to do. Legislation was introduced to both houses of Congress in May. The Transnational Repression Accountability and Prevention (TRAP) Act is designed to ensure Interpol adheres to its constitution, imposes penalties on countries for egregious violations of Interpol, and that U.S. government agencies do not arrest people solely based on Red Notices. If the international community does not act, autocrats will continue to use Interpol as a tool to consolidate their power and stifle dissent around the world, including for those who have sought safe haven in democracies.



The Turkistan Rescue Team of international union of the East Turkistan organizations, East Turkistan News Agency, New Generation Movement of East Turkistan, and Blue Crescent Society for Humanitarian Aid, in Turkish fire areas preparing Uyghur food for Workers and families affected.



The East Turkistan aid team, providing aid and assistance to firefighters in the forests that were ravaged by the massive fires in Turkey.



The Sinicization policy has been increasingly intensifying in occupied East Turkistan.



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