

Eid al-Adha in Xinjiang: Propaganda vs Reality

By Laila Adilzhan and Serikzhan Bilash, 07/26/2021

Beijing used the feast to broadcast fake videos of Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs celebrating in a strange way. Some concessions were made this year, but within a climate of terror.

presents. They sacrifice a cow, a sheep, or a camel. They make a donation. What Muslims do not do on Eid al-Adha is dancing or playing music in public squares.

Last week, the CCP posted several photos and videos of Turkic populations joyfully celebrating Kurban in Xinjiang. In the videos, Muslims were dancing in traditional costumes in public squares. The Chinese Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, also published on Twitter a video of Muslims in Hotan celebrating by dancing and playing musical instruments. In a few hours, the tweet gat-

Eid al-Adha, called Kurban by Turkic populations including the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, is one of the two official holidays for Muslims, commemorating Abraham's (Ibrahim's) willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. On that day, men from each family traditionally go to the mosque for a special morning prayer, wear their best clothes, cook the most appreciated dishes. They visit relatives, parents, and neighbors, and welcome guests to their homes. Young people greet their older relatives and neighbors by kissing their hands as a sign of respect. They give each other



Chinese propaganda about Eid al-Adha in East Turkistan posted on Twitter.

hered hundreds of critical comments and ridicule. Muslim netizens were shocked by this way of celebrating the holiday. They wrote comments such as, "Who are they? Which Muslim would celebrate the holiday like this?," "Muslims do not dance in the squares during the feast. All of them

go to visit their elders. The perceptions you are trying to fabricate do not work. I wish freedom to our brothers and sisters as soon as possible,” “What kind of people are these, no Muslim people we know have such an Eid al-Adha celebration, so I’m asking, did you just fabricate them?!” Nobody believed the videos, and everyone assumed some Muslims were forced to celebrate in such a way just to take photos and videos and show them to the world. It looked ridiculous, that the CCP doesn’t even know how Muslims in Xinjiang usually celebrate the holiday.

However, it would be untrue to state that nothing changed this year. Ethnic Kazakhs in Xinjiang told Bitter Winter that the attitude of Xinjiang authorities regarding the holiday was somewhat different. For the first time since 2017, the CCP allowed ethnic Kazakhs to celebrate the holiday and slaughter sheep for Kurban. For the first time since 2017, Xinjiang authorities allowed ethnic Kazakhs to go to their graves to pray for their deceased family members, and to mosques for the obligatory prayers.

These concessions were obviously the result of international pressure, including from human rights activists in Kazakhstan. However, ethnic Kazakhs are still very much scared in Xinjiang. Since 2012, several mosques in Xinjiang have been under tightened control, and those who enter must register. As a result, there are very few people going to the mosques. In counties, towns, and villages where mosques were once crowded, now prayers there gather 3 or 5 Muslims at best.

In some mosques in Xinyuan County, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture (Kaz. Kunes), the believers found that the mosque’s presiding imam was not present, as several Muslim religious leaders had been arrested and sentenced to heavy prison terms back in 2017 and 2018. The believers did not dare pray on



Another propaganda picture posted by Chinese embassies on Twitter.

their own, and dispersed automatically. According to the Islamic rules, without a presiding imam the believers can temporarily choose a person with religious knowledge to lead the collective prayer service, but they all left without praying for fear of being arrested by the Security Bureau for “illegal religious activities.” Before the holiday, Xinjiang authorities had decided that five categories of people would not be allowed to attend mosques, including those on low-income insurance, government officials, those under 60, CCP members, and those without “worship permits.”

Sanctions by the United States and other Western countries made the CCP realize that it should make some compromising gestures to deceive the West for economic gain, and reduce diplomatic pressure. But these gestures remain of limited practical scale, although they are magnified by the propaganda. On Ethnic Kazakh issues specifically, Chinese Communist authorities are facing a dilemma. If they keep arresting Kazakhs in Xinjiang, the independent Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights Organization will continue to expose the CCP crimes, fueling the Kazakhs’ opposition to the Belt and Road project in Kazakhstan. This will

attract Western sanctions, and resistance and hatred from Kazakhs against the CCP's Belt and Road program in Kazakhstan. If the detained Kazakhs are released or allowed to return to Kazakhstan to reunite with their long-lost families, with the help of Atajurt

many will bravely come forward and expose their suffering in the Xinjiang transformation through education camps. This would add to the international condemnation of the CCP throughout the world.

Morocco arrests exiled Uyghur activist at China's request

BY TARIK EL BARAKAH AND ANGELA CHARLTON, ASSOCIATED PRESS
JULY 27, 2021

RABAT, Morocco — Moroccan authorities have arrested a Uyghur activist in exile based on a Chinese terrorism warrant distributed by Interpol, according to information from Moroccan police and a rights group that tracks people detained by China.

Activists fear Idris Hasan will be extradited to China and say the arrest is politically driven and part of a broader Chinese campaign to hunt down perceived dissidents outside its borders.

Morocco's General Directorate for National Security said Tuesday that a Chinese citizen was arrested after landing at Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca on July 20 upon arrival from Istanbul.

He "was the subject of a red notice issued by Interpol due to his suspected belonging to an organization on the lists of terrorist organizations," the directorate said.



Idris hasan in Istanbul in 2019. (Safeguard Defenders / Associated Press)

The red notice — the equivalent of being put on Interpol's most-wanted list — was issued at the request of China, which is seeking his extradition, the directorate said. It said Moroccan authorities notified Interpol and the Chinese authorities about the arrest, and the Chinese citizen was referred to prosecutors pending the extradition procedure.

Moroccan police didn't publicly name the arrested man, but the nongovernmental organization Safeguard Defenders identified him as Hasan. The group specializes in cases of people detained by China.

Hasan, a 33-year-old computer engineer and father of three, has been based in Turkey since 2012, where he worked as a web designer and activist and has residency papers, according to friend and colleague Abduweli Ayup. Hasan worked on a Uyghur diaspora online newspaper and assisted other activists in media outreach and collecting testimonies of abuse in China's Xinjiang province.

After repeated arrests in Turkey, Aishan left Istanbul for Casablanca on the evening of July 19, Ayup said. Hasan called his wife on Saturday and said he was being deported, according to Ayup, who is in touch with Hasan's family.

Interpol and the Chinese Embassy in Morocco didn't immediately respond to requests for comment on the arrest. The exact charges against him are unclear.

Morocco ratified an extradition treaty with China in 2017, among several such treaties China has made in recent

years.

China has described its sweeping lockup of a million or more Uyghurs and other largely Muslim minorities as a "war against terror," after knifings and bombings by a small number of extremist Uyghurs native to Xinjiang. Researchers say many innocent people have been detained for things like going abroad or attending religious gatherings.

Safeguard Defenders has appealed to the Moroccan ambassadors in Washington and Brussels for Morocco to refuse to extradite Hasan. It is "not uncommon" for Chinese authorities to obtain Interpol red notices for Uyghur and other dissidents abroad, said Peter Dahlin of Safeguard Defenders.

In a similar case, a Chinese teenager who says he's a U.S. permanent resident was arrested at China's request at the airport in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he was changing planes in April. Chinese officials had sought Wang Jingyu, a 19-year-old student, over his online comments about deadly border clashes between Chinese and Indian forces last year. The State Department called it a human rights concern. Wang was freed in May, and he and his fiancée fled to the Netherlands.

Experts say both cases feed into growing fears of extraterritorial reach by China.



US lawmakers press corporate sponsors to boycott Beijing Winter Olympics

ANI, JULY 28, 2021

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US Congressmen invited the representatives from domestic firms who sponsor the Olympics to a hearing to address how they could leverage their influence to insist on concrete human rights improvements in China.

Senator Jeff Merkley, chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), in his opening remarks said the hearing was not meant to attack or embarrass individual companies but rather to explore how key Olympic movement stakeholders, corporate stakeholders, could use their influence to ensure the Olympics live up to its values.

“Holding the 2022 Winter Olympics in China and allowing its authoritarian government to reap the rewards in its prestige and propaganda of hosting this globally-beloved event does not



uphold the Olympic spirit,” he said.

Representative James McGovern said, “unless things change quickly, the Beijing Games will be held under a cloud as well - a different cloud, of genocide, crimes against humanity, gross violations of human rights and denial of religious freedom.”

“As US-based Olympic sponsors, your companies represent America on the world stage. We ask whether you are willing to stand up for universal values and use your leverage against genocide and crimes against humanity,” McGovern said.

The hearing comes a few days after a group of US lawmakers had called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to postpone the Beijing Winter Olympics and relocate the games unless China ends the ongoing “genocide” against Uyghurs and other minority groups.

Senator Jeff Merkley and Representative McGovern, released a letter last Friday to Thomas Bach, President of the IOC asking him to postpone the 2022 Winter Olympics and to relocate them if the host government does not end its “egregious human rights abuses.”

The letter said that no Olympics should be held in a country “whose government is committing genocide and crimes against humanity.”

Several countries including the US and UK recognise that Beijing is carrying out genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Despite mounting evidence, China continues to deny genocide and has described the camps as vocational training centers.

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



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.

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, 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 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 Chi-



na'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.

PRESS RELEASE: WUC HIGHLIGHTS THE 7TH ANNIVERSARY OF YARKAND MASSACRE

WUC, 28 July 2021

On the seventh anniversary of the Yarkand massacre, the World Uyghur Congress remembers all those who were killed on, and in the days following, July 28, 2014. Seven years ago, Chinese security forces violently suppressed a largely peaceful protest in Yarkand, leading to the deaths of many innocent Uyghurs. Since then, we have witnessed an escalation in discriminatory state policies that have led to the estimated three million Uyghurs and other Turkic people to being arbitrarily detained in concentration camps.

In the year preceding Yarkand, Uyghurs had been killed consistently in a number of violent incidents with security forces and police. What occurred in July 2014 and in the days following, however, would mark the deadliest episode since the unrest in Urumqi in July 2009, and many details about what transpi-



red remain murky to this day. All communication to and from the region was suspended in the months following the incident as internet and cell communication disappeared.

"The Yarkand Massacre was once again a reminder of the Chinese government's brutal crackdown in East Turkistan," said WUC

President Dolkun Isa. "The international community failed to condemn and act in the aftermath of the Urumchi Massacre, and it failed once again after the Yarkand Massacre. We must act now to restore fundamental freedoms for the Uyghur people".

According to Uyghur sources, the major cause of the initial protests was the response of the Chinese government to a protest that took place in Bashkent Township that led to the extrajudicial killing of a Uyghur family of five during house searches in the area. As a result, many Uyghurs fled to nearby Elishku Township, where they took part in the protests.

According to the Chinese government, 96 civilians, including 59 Uyghurs were killed when police and security forces clashed with protesters. Chinese state media labelled the incident a "premeditated terrorist attack on a police station in Xinjiang." Although the attack took place on Monday, July 28, state media took a full day to release any official reports about the incident.

Uyghur groups, however, reported that the incident involved residents protesting against "Chinese security forces' heavy-handed Ramadan crackdown and extrajudicial use of lethal force in recent weeks.

The Chinese government has consistently used the spectre of 'terrorism' to justify har-

sh repressive measures against the Uyghurs. A Counter-Terror Law that was passed in 2016 and roundly criticized by rights groups for its overly broad and vague language, has provided further cover for the state to apply inappropriate labels to Uyghurs critical of state policies.

To this day, the problems that instigated the protests still persist and have deteriorated further. Religious practices have been effectively been criminalised, freedom of press and expression are nonexistent and freedom of movement is extremely limited, thus transforming the region into an Orwellian state.

Countless questions remain unanswered about the true number of those arrested, killed and disappeared. The lack of transparency, accountability and any semblance of justice for the families of the missing and deceased has been striking.

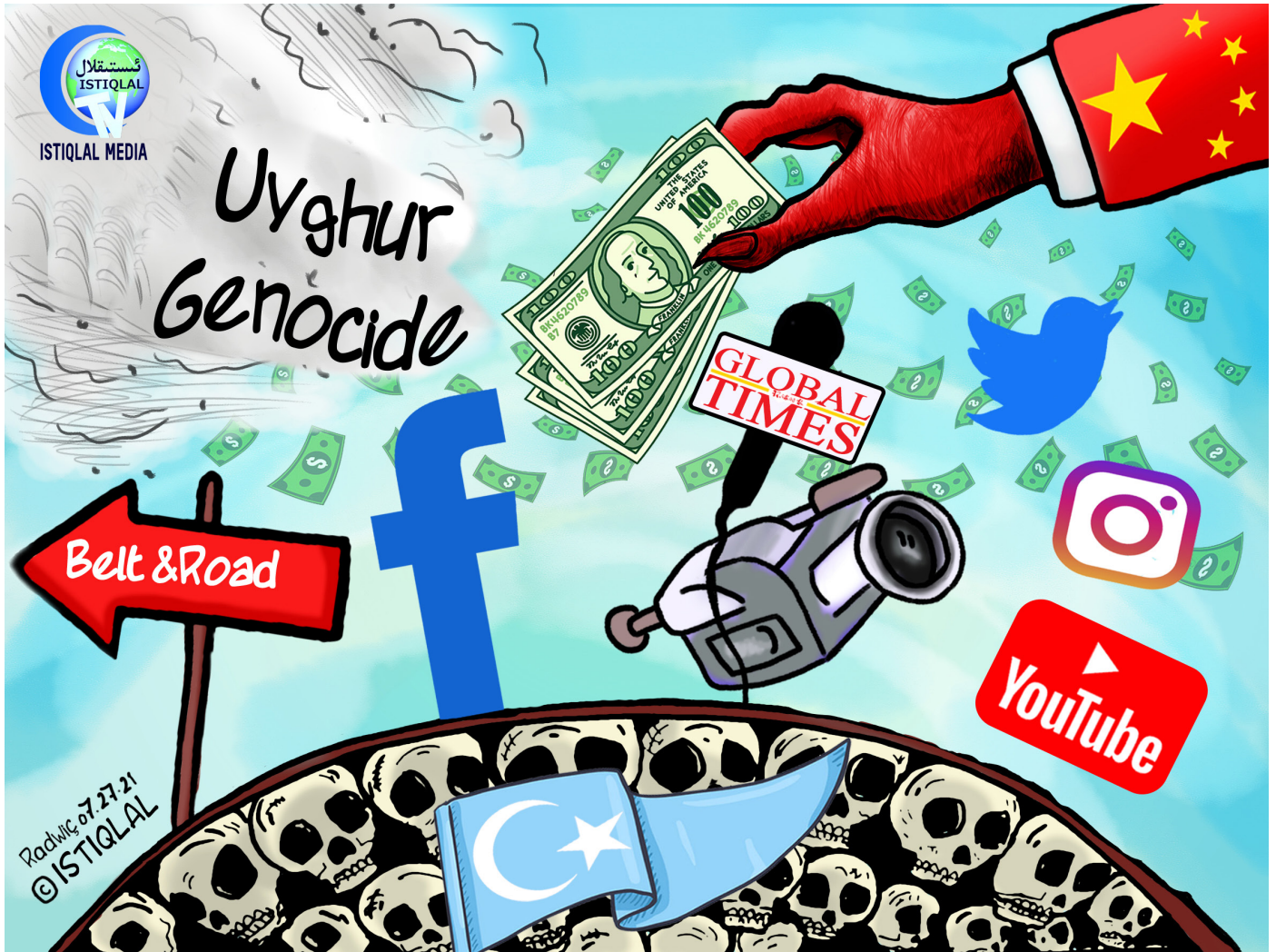
The WUC demands that the Chinese government acts immediately and transparently to disclose the whereabouts and fate of the missing and deceased to their family members and the wider community.

We, once again reiterate the urgency of the crisis in East Turkistan and call on the wider international community, including states, NGOs and international organizations to come together to address the Uyghur genocide in a meaningful way.

On July 28, 2014, Abu Bakr, who revealed to the world through social media about the Elishku massacre in Yarkent in which thousands of Turkistani people were killed by the Chinese Communist authorities, as well as China's complete destruction of two villages, was sentenced to imprisonment without being subject to any investigation by the court or To have the right to defense.



The Chinese regime has invested heavily in the global propaganda campaign to cover up its genocide crime against the people of East Turkistan.



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