

# Tibetans, Uyghurs Remember Those Who ‘Disappeared’ at China’s Hands

RFA, 2021-08-30

News of detentions and of disappearances and deaths in custody is frequently delayed in reaching outside contacts because of communication clampdowns imposed by Chinese authorities.

*In Tibetan areas of China, at least 40 cases of enforced disappearance have been recorded during the last three years, said Dharamsala, India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) in a statement on Aug. 30, the 38th annual International Day of the Disappeared.*

*Victims have included monks and nuns, writers and artists, farmers and community leaders, and students and other intellectuals, TCHRD said in its report, adding that the majority of those disappeared were described by authorities as suspects in cases of “endangering state security” or “disclosing state secrets.”*

*In one recent case, two residents of the Tachu township in the Nagchu (in Chinese, Naqu) municipality of the Tibet Autonomous Prefecture were detained in 2019 for resisting forced patriotic education during the run-up to the 70th founding anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, TCHRD said.*

*Norsang, 36, one of those detained, was taken into custody in September, and another man, Lhadar, 37, was detained a month later.*

*“In May 2021, it was learned that Norsang had died in custody a week after his detention in 2019,” TCHRD said, citing a source who informed the rights group that the man had been subjected to severe beatings and torture, leading to his death.*

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*Tibetan writer and environmental activist Sey Nam, now believed held in an unknown location, is shown in an undated photo.*

ching outside contacts because of strict communications clampdowns imposed by Chinese authorities in Tibetan areas.

"[But] Tibetans continue to disappear every year, crippling family life and community cohesion," TCHRD added, calling on China to ratify the United Nations' Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

"There are so many Tibetans who are arrested by the Chinese government, yet their whereabouts and the reasons for their arrests remain unknown for a very long time," Pema Gyal, a researcher at the London-based rights group Tibet Watch, told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"Some even die, but the information about them remains unknown."

"The Chinese government enforces its control on Tibetans by means of political threats and punishments, so Tibetans have no political or civil rights or the right to freedom of expression," Gyal said, adding that China claims to be a country that respects the law and that it will become a "rule-of-law" nation by 2035.

"However, we know that there are no human rights or freedom for Tibetans living in Tibet, so the claim they are a law-abiding nation is a complete lie," he said.

### **'Dark deeds'**

Also on Monday, the Washington-based Campaign for Uyghurs said that China has now become "a primary perpetrator of force disappearances," adding that China's ruling Communist Party has moved over a million Uyghurs into internment camps and prison cells, targeting the mostly Muslim ethnic group because of its religion and national identity.

"Their dark deeds are performed with the full knowledge of the existence of the United Nations and international governments, and yet

the Chinese government is still being given every opportunity to shine on the world stage," the Campaign said in its statement.

*Beijing will soon be hosting the 2022 Winter Olympics while engaged in the forced disappearance of Uyghur intellectuals, scholars, and civil servants as part of an ongoing program of active genocide, the Campaign said.*

*"We must not allow the Beijing Olympics to serve as a platform for this regime to display its false human rights record on the international stage," the rights group added.*

*As many as 50,000 people may have vanished at the same time into programs of "residential surveillance" and other systems of detention in China's mainland, according to Safeguard Defenders, a rights group based in Madrid and with offices across Asia.*

China now uses at least six methods for forced disappearance, including holding persons incommunicado in residential locations and retaining persons in custody after their sentences end, Safeguard Defenders said.

Other victims disappear after their formal release from prison, are registered under false names in pre-trial detention centers, or are held in administrative detention, while others more rarely are simply kidnapped, the rights group said.

*Reported by Sangyal Kunchok for RFA's Tibetan Service and by the Uyghur Service. Translated by Tenzin Dickyi. Written in Eng-*



# Xinjiang Genocide Conference Aims to Up Pressure on China

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, September 1, 2021

*London (AP) -- Leading scholars and lawyers are joining politicians and human rights groups in Britain Wednesday for the first large-scale conference to discuss the Chinese government's alleged genocide against the Uyghur ethnic group in the northwest Xinjiang region.*

The three-day conference at Newcastle University brings together dozens of speakers, including senior British judges and lawmakers, and is the first to gather so many experts on Xinjiang and genocide. It is the latest move aiming to hold China accountable for alleged rights abuses against the Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim and Turkic minorities.

Speakers will cover evidence of alleged atrocities targeting the Uyghurs, including forced labor, forced birth control and religious suppression, and discuss ways to compel international action to stop the alleged abuse.

"We want it to not just be a scholarly affair — we are gathering all these people to combine their expertise and influence to up the ante, to increase pressure on China, to think of ways to bring an end to the harm on the Uyghur people," said organizer Jo Smith Finley, an academic specializing in Uyghur studies.



A watchtower is seen on a high-security facility near what is believed to be a re-education camp where mostly Muslim ethnic minorities are detained, on the outskirts of Hotan, in East Turkistan, China, in 2019.

Photographer: Greg Baker/AFP/Getty Images

"This is a major humanitarian disaster which is increasingly urgent," she added. "Is this genocide or cultural genocide, or crimes against humanity, and how can we prosecute that? We are really trying to refocus on what can we do to make this stop."

Academic Adrian Zenz, whose research on forced sterilizations among Uyghur women drew widespread attention to the issue, will present official documents backing claims that Beijing wants to forcibly reduce the Uyghur population, Finley said.

Researchers say an estimated 1 million people or more — most of them Uyghurs — have been confined in vast re-education camps in



Xinjiang in recent years. Chinese authorities have been accused of imposing forced labor, systematic forced birth control and torture, erasing the Uyghurs' cultural and religious identity, and separating children from incarcerated parents.

Chinese officials have rejected the genocide and rights abuse allegations as groundless and characterized the camps as vocational training centers to teach Chinese language, job skills and the law to support economic development and combat radicalism. China saw a wave of Xinjiang-related terror attacks through 2016.

Xu Guixiang, a Xinjiang spokesperson, denied the allegations at a news conference in Beijing this week. He said the government's policies had curbed militant attacks and restored stability to the region.

"They say more than 1 million people have been locked up in Xinjiang, but in fact most of the graduates of the training and education centers have gotten stable jobs and lead happy lives," Xu said.

The U.S. government and parliaments in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Canada have declared that Beijing's policies against the Uyghurs amount to genocide and crimes against humanity. The United States have blocked imports of cotton and tomatoes from Xinjiang and companies linked to forced labor in the region, and the European Union and Britain have also imposed sanctions on Communist Party officials.

Despite such moves and a growing

body of evidence documenting abuses, critics say there has not been enough international political or legal action. It is unclear if the economic sanctions would compel Beijing or Chinese companies to change their ways. China has also retaliated by imposing sanctions on Western individuals and institutions, and called for boycotts against leading retailers such as Nike and H&M after they expressed concerns about forced labor in Xinjiang.

*Finley, the conference organizer, was one of several British individuals slapped with Chinese sanctions and banned from visiting China earlier this year for her work.*

*One of the main goals of the conference is to consider whether diplomatic actions — such as a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing — can be effective in pursuing Chinese accountability.*

*"There's a lot we can do in terms of shaming," Finley said.*

The conference runs until Friday and will be livestreamed online.



# ‘When I Found Out What Happened in Xinjiang, It Really Broke my Heart’: Interview

RFA, 2021-09-02



Models wear gowns made by designer Louise Xin while displaying signs and a banner during a digital fashion show in Stockholm, Sweden, August 2021.

Louise Xin is a Chinese-Swedish fashion designer who launched her eponymous Stockholm-based brand in November 2020 as Scandinavia's first rental-only couture label. Xin turns upcycled materials into elaborate and colorful handmade dresses for customers to rent instead of purchase, hoping to change consumption patterns in the name of sustainability. She dedicated her digital fashion show on Aug. 31 to the Uyghurs to raise awareness about the genocidal poli-

cies targeting the predominantly Muslim minority group in northwestern China's Xinjiang region. The five-minute video presentation ended with a model wearing a newspaper print coat and unraveling a banner that said "Free Uyghur: End All Genocide." The China-born Xin spoke to reporter Nuri-man Abdurashid of RFA's Uyghur Service on Thursday about her why she decided to use couture to call attention to the plight of the Uyghurs, what inspired her to do a fashion



*show-cum-protest, and how she has enlisted the help of Jewher Tohti, daughter of detained Uyghur academic Ilham Tohti, to draw attention to the use of Uyghur forced labor in the apparel industry. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

**RFA: How did you come to use couture to promote awareness of the plight of Uyghurs?**

Louise Xin: I also believe that all the problems caused by humans in this world are really based on the false belief that we are separate, that there is a “we” and a “them” — that we are Africans, Chinese, Christians, Muslims, that we are different. And that we only see the differences instead of how similar we all are and how we are to united, that there’s nothing that one person can do that will not affect someone else in the end. Everything is really connected — not only us, but also the animals in nature. And we just understood that we would not use our advantage against each other or against nature or against

animals. We will understand that everything we do will come back to us. It’s with this belief that I started this plan that for me, it’s not a trend to focus on sustainability or diversity. For me it’s one and the same problem or issue. We need to do whatever it takes to contribute to a better society. With everything we do, we should leave the world a little bit better than how we found it. If everybody had the same mindset, we would have an amazing, magical world. So, for my very first fashion show I dedicated it to the Uyghur community because I’m Chinese myself. When I found out what happened in Xinjiang, it really broke my heart. At first I couldn’t believe it because it was against everything I believed in growing up as a kid. I just couldn’t understand how we can let something as terrible as this happen today in 2021, and that we’re not doing more about it.

I tried doing things with political parties and contacting the government and assistance organizations, but I got “nos” from everybody. I never felt so hopeless in my whole life, [and] I never felt so small in my whole



life. And then I just stopped for a moment and [realized that] the only way I could help would be through my creativity, my fashion, my dresses. And that's how the show came about. Today I just put up a GoFundMe [fund-raising appeal] for Uyghur kids in exile. Most of them are in Turkey at the moment. I really think that if you give a person a fish they will have food for a day, but if you teach them how to fish, they will have food for life. There is this school that educates [Uyghur] kids and keeps them safe like a kind of community and family. I think it's amazing, and I really want to support that. These kids are just like us. There's no difference between us and them. They too have dreams and hopes. I really hope that with this GoFundMe [appeal] and with this [fashion] project that we can make their dreams come true.

**RFA: What inspired you to do this kind of fashion show?**

Louise Xin: It came to me when I was at a really low point in my life and I felt so sad with everything that was going on with my personal life. Then [I thought] that what the people I said I was going to help are going through is about 10,000 times worse than anything I've ever gone through in my entire life. [I told myself that] I could not sit there and pity myself when there's so many people out there who don't have even their own voice and that that had become such a strength for me. So, it gave me all the fuel and power needed to create this fashion show. For me, this has been a cause that I have been very passionate about for over a year's time now ever since I started this brand. It's something that is not just a trend, but something I've tried to educate myself about and try to do what I can do in a longer period of time. At the same time, I spoke to a friend and told

her that I couldn't understand how other people didn't feel as devastated as I was about the genocide [of the Uyghurs], because this is the worst thing that has happened after the Holocaust. How can people know but not care more about it? What she said was that everybody relates to different things depending on their own background. I relate to this because I come from China, and it's so close to me. That's why I invited all these models [to take part in the digital fashion show]. They are all come from different backgrounds and most of them made it on their own with their passion alone. They celebrate human rights causes, and because I'm using this show to raise a voice for the Uyghur community, I want them to raise their voices for what they are passionate about as well.

**RFA: Even though certain apparel manufacturers know about Uyghur forced labor in the production of clothing, they have continued to do business with China. What is your message about this to the apparel industry?**

Louise Xin: I would like to say that, first of all, I understand them. I understand that they have a lot to lose because at the end of the day we're all humans and we just want to try



Louise Xin is a Chinese-Swedish fashion designer who launched her eponymous Stockholm-based brand in November 2020 as Scandinavia's first rental-only couture label.

to make a living. Behind a huge corporation, a huge brand, there's also a person who has a heart and feelings and who cares. That very person is the person I'm talking to right now. I really hope that we can understand how powerful we actually are and that we don't need to be afraid because if people are united they can really do so much to change [the world]. The power [of individuals] is more powerful than that of any corporation or state or anything that can be against us. I believe that once you warm people's hearts, everything else will [follow]. So the worst thing is that they will lose money, maybe in the beginning, if you endorse them. Maybe that's why a lot of brands are very afraid of doing that. But what can be worse than to lose your humanity? ... I totally understand them. I understand that there's a lot at stake. But I think that if we just act out of courage and face instead of fear, it will be a totally different kind of industry and totally kind of society.

**RFA: Do you have any other plans to continue to raise awareness about the Uyghur forced labor issue?**

Louise Xin: In doing this show, I came into contact with this amazing friend. Jewher [Tohti], with whom I'm going to have a live Instagram talk. We're going to talk about [Uyghur] forced labor and how important it is [and] how we can use our power as a company to end [it.]. She will be talking about the importance of how we need to endorse the call to action. I really hope that as many people as possible can join this live talk because what she has to say is extremely important. I've learned so much about her and about this whole situation just in the two or three days after we met each other.

**Reported by Nuriman Abdurashid for RFA's Uyghur Service. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.**

## FBI Warns PRC Targeting US-based Uyghurs

*By Donald Maye, Sep 02, 2021*

“US-based Uyghurs face threats and harassment from PRC authorities, according to a recently unclassified August 2021 FBI counterterrorism bulletin that IPVM obtained. The FBI warned such targeting violates US laws, yet continues “even as the US government (USG) has sanctioned Chinese officials.”



*This shows growing interest by the US government to counteract the human rights abuses occurring, adding to surveillance manufacturers Dahua and Hikvision being sanctioned in October 2019.*

### **PRC Targeting US-based Individuals**

The FBI bulletin included warnings to Uyghurs and other Chinese refugees and dissidents, including Tibetans, Falun Gong members, and Taiwan and Hong Kong activists. The FBI said these groups face in-person and digital targeting designed to “silence dissent, issue instructions, collect information, and compel compliance.”

IPVM has reported extensively on PRC manufacturers’ use of surveillance technology to target Uyghurs in China. Moreover, IPVM reporting exposed how Hikvision and Dahua co-authored Uyghur targeting standards for the PRC government. Both companies made millions from security contracts in Xinjiang, where the FBI bulletin notes an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs are detained:

Since 2017, Chinese authorities have detained more than 1.8 million Uyghurs in Chinese re-education camps where they are subjected to a variety of abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, forced labor, forced sterilization, political indoctrination, sexual violence, and disappearance.

### **Range of Tactics, Families Targeted In China**

The FBI highlighted four instances of US-based individuals facing harassment, including a Uyghur-American’s mother, aunt, and uncle being placed in a Chinese internment camp as a reprisal for his meeting with the US Secretary of State in 2019.

In another case, the FBI said Chinese officials attempted to stop a US-based Uyghur from publicly discussing the group’s mistreatment through the WeChat texting app. This per-

son’s family was also imprisoned in China. Other tactics, according to the FBI, include: Detainment of a US-based person’s family or friends in China, seizure of China-based assets, sustained digital and in-person harassment, Chinese government attempts to force repatriation, computer hacking and digital attacks, and false representation online.

### **Ongoing Threat, Reporting Suspected Abuse Encouraged**

The FBI encouraged law enforcement and the public to remain vigilant and report suspected abuses:

Members of the public are similarly encouraged to report suspected Chinese government-backed transnational repression activity of any kind to the FBI.

To report Chinese government-backed threats and harassment, contact your local FBI field office (details available at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)) or submit a tip via 1-800-CALL-FBI (or 1-800-225-5324) or via [www.fbi.gov/tips](http://www.fbi.gov/tips). You can also make an anonymous tip to the FBI by phone or online.

### **Outlook**

The FBI’s attention and warnings about these illegal activities show that the US government is ramping up efforts to counter this and that those working with such entities should be concerned about their participation.



**Millions of Uyghur children whose parents were incarcerated in concentration camps or prison are being targeted by the Chinese regime's brainwashing and Sinicization policy.**



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**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