

Brief summary of the Uighur Act of 2019

The original version of S. 178 adopted earlier this year, the “Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019,” contained strong measures calling for the Secretary of State to create a new position, the Special Coordinator for Xinjiang, to coordinate the U.S. response to the human rights violations in Xinjiang. It also requested that the Secretary of State develop a thorough report on the number of persons detained in re-education camps, the conditions in those camps, and the surveillance methods used by authorities in the region.

However, the new version of Senate Bill 178, the “Uighur Act of 2019,” contains several House amendments that considerably strengthen it compared to its original version, particularly with regard to commercial sanctions.

Some of the most important additions to the bill include:

- ☐ Explicit calls for sanctions on China under the International Religious Freedom Act and against specific Chinese government officials under the Global Magnitsky Act, including Chen Quanguo, a powerful member of the politburo and a main architect of the government’s Xinjiang policy.
- ☐
- ☐ Requires the president, no later than 120 days after enactment, to identify and place items and technologies on the Commerce Control List that provide a critical capability to the Chinese government for suppressing human rights. Special licenses may be granted by the President for the export, re-export, or in-country transfer to or within China for these critical technologies but the bill would contain a presumption of denial when applying for such licenses.

These measures make the bill the strongest legislation yet for the Uighur cause. By passing the bill, the U.S. Senate would be taking a huge step forward in the effort to stop the ongoing human rights crisis against Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other beleaguered minorities in northwest China.

Action Item: Please pass the strongest possible sanction legislation before the end of the year.

Background

The Xinjiang administrative region of northwestern China has become a new flashpoint in the global struggle to protect human rights. At least a million innocent Uighur Muslims and members of other ethnic minorities have been rounded up without trial or charge and sent to indoctrination centers, while the broader region, particularly its major cities, have been effectively turned into high-tech, miniature police states, with advanced surveillance technologies and extensive security personnel closely monitoring the movements of minority groups.

The Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, located in the far northwest of the People's Republic

of China, is the largest administrative province in the country. It covers a vast geographic expanse of about 1,600,000 sq. kilometers – larger than Iran and three times as large as France. It borders eight different countries and is home to about twenty million people from thirteen major ethnic groups, of which the Uighurs are the largest. In Mandarin Chinese, “Xinjiang” translates literally as “new frontier,” but many of its non-Han local residents and émigrés in other countries often refer to the region as East Turkestan, or *Sharqi Turkestan* in the Uighur language.

The Islamic Republic of East Turkestan was a short-lived nation state founded in 1933, in which the Uighur community enjoyed political independence, however briefly. After the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1948, this region was decisively subordinated to Chinese governmental control and assimilated into the new state.

Current, trustworthy estimates of the total number of people of either Uighur ethnicity or Muslim identity who are being held in extrajudicial detention in Xinjiang range from one to two million. According to the reports of numerous human rights monitors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the U.S. Department of State, in the Chinese government's “re-education centers” – essentially extralegal detention camps – Uighurs, Kazakhs, and members of other ethnic minorities are subjected to sustained, compulsory programs for ideological indoctrination. They are also compelled to work in forced labor programs, classified by the government as “vocational training,” essentially providing a cheap manufacturing workforce. The camps are set up outside the country's official court system, existing off the grid and outside legal oversight. Moreover, they are part of a larger apparatus of government surveillance that has been explicitly set up to monitor Uighur activity in the region. As the Washington Post described the whole network of control in a recent article:

“In the past two years, China has established a network of indoctrination centers in Xinjiang that operate outside its courts and have systematically interned up to 1 million people, according to the United Nations. The detentions have been accompanied by efforts to dilute Uighur language and culture as well as all-encompassing digital surveillance and collection of DNA on a practically unprecedented scale.”¹

Every day, the oppression of the Uighurs grows more severe. And it is only going to get worse, as Xinjiang is extraordinarily rich in energy resources and lies directly in the path of China's plans for westward economic expansion through its Belt and Road investment program. They view the Uighurs, the vast majority of whom only wish to live their lives in peace, as a restive, problematic population who must be pacified if the state's economic development goals are to come to fruition.

¹ Gerry Shih, “U.S. Senate revives bill that could sanction China over treatment of its Muslims,” *Washington Post*, January 18, 2019: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-senate-revives-bill-that-could-sanction-china-over-treatment-of-its-muslims/2019/01/18/9c3ee14c-1af6-11e9-a804-c35766b9f234_story.html?utm_term=.9ecf992b2b87, accessed February 7, 2019.

CHINA MUST RELEASE MILLIONS OF UIGHUR MUSLIMS FROM THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Right now up to three million Uighurs and other Turkic people are in Chinese concentration camps, where they are forced to denounce Islam, their ethnic identity, and are subject to torture and death.

The United States government describes it as “the largest mass incarceration of a minority population in the world today.” This is China’s attack on Uighur society - with the long-term aim of eradicating it, all under the guise of fighting extremism. In East Turkestan, a nation occupied by China and renamed by China as Xinjiang, a territory half the size of India, China has been targeting Muslims through a campaign of torture, surveillance, crackdowns on basic religious practice, and engaging in a systematic campaign of forced brainwashing. This has intensified since the country’s current President, Xi Jinping, a hard-line nationalist, came to power in 2013. The US State Department estimates that up to three million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims are now in concentration camps.

ONE MILLION CHINESE FORCED IN UIGHUR HOMES

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

In East Turkestan, unwanted Chinese guests monitor Uighur families 24/7. Muslim families across the occupied territory are now literally eating and sleeping under the watchful eye of the state in their own homes. Chinese Communist officials are regularly imposing themselves on families in Xinjiang in “home

stays.” According to a scholar who studied this practice and wrote on ForeignPolicy.com, almost a million Chinese communists are involved in this forced “guest” or “relative” exercise. They also take part in determining which Uighurs should be sent to the concentration camps.



Satellite image of one of the concentration camps of China. Hundreds of such camps have been developed in the last year.

The Washington Post

“All who believe in the principle of “never again” after the horror of the Nazi extermination camps and Stalin’s gulag must speak up against China’s grotesque use of brainwashing, prisons and torture.” -Washington Post Editorial

PRAYING WHILE UIGHUR

Uighurs praying is forbidden and could lead to lengthy prison terms or detainment. , some Uighurs have found ways that the authorities won’t notice; such as praying covertly while sitting casually in a chair, praying hidden in a shrub, simply at home, or maybe in a bathroom if a forced “Chinese guest” is present at home. Uighurs are also not allowed to fast in Ramadan.

CHINESE OCCUPIED EAST TURKESTAN



WHO ARE THE UIGHURS?

The Uighurs, also spelled as Uyghur, are a Turkic ethnic group who hail from East Turkestan, a nation that has been under the occupation of Communist China since 1949. Now China calls it the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, although it is now the least bit autonomous. Xinjiang literally means “new colony.”

Most Uighurs are Muslim. The official Chinese census claims the Uighur population to be around 12 million, while other Uighur sources and activists say the number is over 20 million.

East Turkestan spans over 1.6 million square kilometers, making up half the size of India. The region has the highest concentration of fossil fuel reserves of any region in China.

East Turkestan borders Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The ancient Silk Road trade route linking China and the Middle East passed through East Turkestan, a legacy that can be seen in the traditional open-air bazaars of its oasis cities, Hotan and Kashgar.

BABIES CANNOT BE NAMED MUHAMMED & FATIMA

Parents are forbidden from naming their children an Islamic name deemed “extremist” by the Chinese government. Families who fail to comply risk denial of services such as healthcare and education. Here is a short list of banned names: Muhammed, Imam, Islam, Arafat, Quran, Mecca, Medina, Jihad, Haji, Turknaz, Azhar, Wahhab, Fatima, Muslima, and Seyfulla.

UIGHUR WOMEN FORCED TO MARRY CHINESE MEN

One way China is attempting to get rid of the next generation of Uighurs is by forcing Uighur women to marry Han Chinese men, while most of the Uighur men have been sent to camps or prisons.

RAPED WHEN SHE REFUSED TO SAY “COMMUNIST PARTY AKBAR” INSTEAD OF ALLAHU AKBAR



Sr. Ruqiye Perhat is the only survivor of her six member family. She was arrested when she was 16 years old. When she refused to say “Communist party Akbar”, instead of “Allahu Akbar,” while in detention, she was tortured and repeatedly raped until she became pregnant and miscarried twice. Now she resides in Turkey. Her 3 brothers and her father were hafiz and Quran teachers. They were accused of practicing and teaching religion illegally. Here are highlights of what happened to her family.

- Three of her brothers and father were executed.
- She was forced to witness the execution of two of her brothers.
- Her mother died due to the trauma.
- Sr. Ruqiye’s face was burned with cigarettes as she was asked to “Call your God for a rescue.”
- She has more than 100 scars on her face and body due to torture.

Watch her video testimony: <https://youtu.be/AGfPqG7f2F4>



Thousands of Uighurs abroad languish in pain and trauma as they wonder where their missing family members are. Most have been completely cut off from communicating with their loved ones, with fear that doing so would cause further retribution from China.

Photo Credit: Fergus Hunter

LIFE OUTSIDE THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS



While 10% to 30% of all Uighur are now in concentration camps, those outside are also in extremely bad conditions. Many are surviving by declaring themselves as Communists who do not care for their faith. Some have joined Chinese police and concentration camp guards to survive. Others use bribery, obedience and appeasement to keep out from the concentration camps. Several thousands have run away from China to other countries. Here is a glimpse of life in Xinjiang outside the camps.

MASS FAMILY SEPARATION CHILDREN IN ORPHANAGES

1. An estimated 500,000 Uighur toddlers and children have been sent to state-run orphanages or boarding schools, while their parents languish in concentration camps or prisons. In these schools, children are forcibly assimilated into Chinese culture and are subject to abuse and torture.

FORBIDDANCE OF RELIGION CANNOT EVEN SAY SALAM

1. All aspects of practicing Islam are forbidden. Praying, fasting, or even saying "Assalamu Alaykum" can lead to lengthy prison terms or being sent to a concentration camp.
2. Masjids have been closed down, destroyed, or converted into cultural propaganda centers.
3. Uighurs cannot have Islamic weddings at home. Chinese reward up to USD \$7500 for whistle-blowers to report it
4. Halal food is banned in East Turkestan. Uighurs are forced to drink alcohol at festivals. Uighur owned shops must sell alcohol and pork.

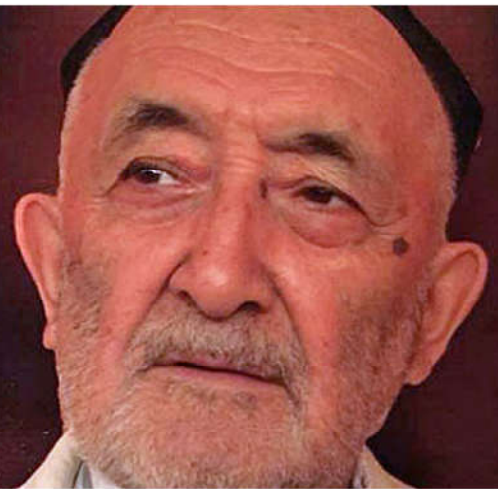
MASS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM THE FAMILY SPY

1. China has assigned 1.2 million Chinese officials to live in Uighur homes to monitor the families and assess their views.
2. An Uighur must go through multiple checkpoints, facial recognition machines, and get their ID's checked just to go to the store or walk a few blocks outside.
3. Uighurs must install a spyware application on their phones that allows the government to monitor their digital activity.
4. Each Uighur car must be fitted with tracking devices.

MODERN DAY SLAVERY FORCED LABOR

1. China has built hundreds of factories within the concentration camp facilities to force Uighurs to work with little or no pay. They are detained in the facilities and cannot go home to their families.
2. Chinese authorities confiscate farmland and property of Uighurs and redistribute it to Chinese communists.

UIGHUR TRANSLATOR OF THE QURAN MURDERED IN THE CAMP



Imam Muhammad Salih Hajim, a prominent translator of the Quran, died in Chinese camps 40 days after he was detained along with his daughter and other relatives. Just in the historic city of Kashgar around 70% of all masjids have been demolished. Those mosques which are still standing do not have any imams since most imams have been taken to the concentration camps.

CHINA LIES TO THE WORLD



China has responded to international criticism for its crimes against humanity by claiming that Uighurs are the happiest people on earth and that they have full religious freedom. China first denied the existence of the camps, then admitted to them but called them "re-education" or vocational training centers, where detainees are admitted for language and job training. This claim, however, is bogus as many Uighur detainees are people with well-founded careers, well-educated, and are fluent in Chinese. The camps are like prisons -- rampant with abuse, hunger, torture, forced sterilization, and no way to escape.

The above photo was taken from a staged tour of a "re-education center". Uighur detainees are dressed in their traditional clothing and forced to perform for the journalists and foreign delegations.

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