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UIGHUR GENOCIDE

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DEFINITION OF GENOCIDE

The Chinese government's extensive human rights violations against the Uighur population meets the United Nations' definition of genocide. The criteria for genocide as set forth by the Geneva Convention constitutes the following acts: "killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions for life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." As seen in the systemic and calculated measures to destroy Uighur culture, origins, families, and communities, the Chinese government has established its intent to exterminate the Uighurs on the basis of who they are.



THE UIGHURS

The Uighurs are a Turkic ethnic group that predominantly practice Islam and comprise a population of around 20 million. The Uighurs and other Turkic people in the region lived through centuries of independence before being invaded by the Manchu Qing Dynasty in 1759. The Manchu Qing Dynasty collapsed in 1911, putting East Turkestan under the rule of Nationalist China. The Uyghurs carried out numerous rebellions and were able to establish the East Turkestan Islamic Republic in 1933 and 1944, both of which briefly lasted before the Chinese government reoccupied the region through the military intervention and political interest of the Soviet Union. In 1949, Communist China came to power and formally invaded the land.

Currently, the nation is currently under Chinese occupation and otherwise recognized by the government as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang means “new territory” in mandarin). Known for its abundance of oil, coal, and natural gas as well as its shared borders with eight nations, the region has become an integral player in President Xi Jinping’s geopolitical and economic objectives. Peaceful Uighur protests in the 90s and in 2009 accompanied a surge in the criminalization and crackdown of Uighur expression under a national security pretext (“Why is there tension between China and the Uighurs?”, 2014).



D.1. KILLING

Human rights violations have plagued China's organ transplant industry for decades. Following the growth of China's internment network, the Uighurs have increasingly become an at-risk population for forced organ harvesting. China's organ transplant trade reaps in around a billion dollars for the economy each year. To meet demands overseas, the government now relies on Uighur prisoners of conscience as an organ bank.

The journal BioMed Central (BMC) Medical Ethics has projected that over 90,000 Uighurs and other minorities are being killed each year in aim to outsource their organs (Doffman, 2019). The manipulation of organ transplant datasets, testimonies from former detainees, and the mass disappearances of Uighurs all point to state-sanctioned murder being committed against the Uighurs.



D.2. DELIBERATELY INFLECTING ON THE GROUP CONDITIONS WHICH BRING ABOUT PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART

The Chinese government relies on its data-driven surveillance systems to intrusively monitor the Uighur community and consequently instill fear in the population. Facial recognition technology, biometric screenings, internet and social media spyware, and vigilant armed enforcement are military-grade policing tools that are disproportionately employed on the Uighurs. These cyber systems are wired to flag arbitrary observances of the Uighurs' religion and culture as "suspicious behavior" for state authorities to look into (Cumming-bruce, 2019). Actions such as sending a Quranic verse over text, growing a beard, traveling abroad, and talking to family members overseas have triggered alerts that correspond to increased surveillance and government detainment. Political dissenters and Uighur scholars have also been found to be victims of the same policing. As intended, the threat of state punishment has severely inhibited the Uighurs from basic religious and cultural expression.

The launch of the 'Double Relative Program' represents another tactic employed by the Beijing government to exert control over the Uighur population. Framed as a cultural exchange initiative, over one million Han Chinese communist cadres have been sent to Uighur homes to serve as government informants. During bi-monthly visits of two week periods, these workers are deployed to gather information on the Uighurs' devoutness, CCP party loyalty, and their assimilation to Han Chinese culture. In some circumstances, women who are forced to share beds with Chinese men have been raped and sexually assaulted. Uighurs living abroad testified that any religious or cultural expression could become a fatal "misstep" that results in detainment or other disciplinary action (Adam Withnall, 2018). China's surveillance state underscores its creeping, yet deliberate methods to create circumstances that erase the Uighur peoples and their identities.



Al Jazeera

D.3. CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY OR MENTALLY HARM TO THE GROUP

The Congressional-Executive Committee on China reported an estimate that over two million Uighurs and other religious minorities have been unlawfully detained in hundreds of Nazi-style concentration camps. While the Chinese authorities attempt to frame these camps as “transformation through education”, leaked CCP internal memos reveal that the objective behind the detainment campaign has been to “wash brains, cleanse hearts, support the right, remove the wrong” (“Secret documents Revealed..”, 2019).

Inside these camps, Uighurs are forced to disavow their religious and ethnic identities or otherwise face psychological and physical danger. Qairat Samarkan, a Muslim businessman, spent three months in an internment camp after being accused of “disturbing public order” due to his travels abroad. Every day, he stated, the authorities forced him to speak Mandarin, rather than his mother tongue, and recite Communist praises (Qairat Samarkan, 2017). Additional detainees have testified to being subjugated to electrocution, waterboarding, repeated beatings, and the force-feeding of pork and alcohol – actions that are forbidden in Islam. While detained, Samarkan attempted to commit suicide by running headfirst into a wall. These internment camps subjugate Uighurs to physical and psychological torture for the purpose of permanently harming the Uighur population.

Uighurs and other Turkic detainees have also testified to mental harm, whereby prisoners are forced to take unknown drugs that cause memory loss and other psychological symptoms. Businesswoman Gulbakhar Jalilova, a former detainee, recalled how the

“injection makes you feel like you have no memory. You don’t miss your family, you don’t feel like you want to get out. You feel nothing—it’s a very strange feeling.”

(Brugen, 2018)



Sourcing Journal

FORCED LABOR

One in five cotton garments sold in the global market contain cotton from East Turkestan. These cotton goods that are exported out of China are being produced off the backs of the Uighurs. Thousands of Uighurs are being taken from the detainment camps to work for Chinese factories under abusive working conditions. There, the Uighurs are subjected to increased surveillance, the suppression of religious practices, political indoctrination, long working hours, excessive physical exertion, and violence.

Many of the world's leading brands and companies such as Gap, Victoria's Secret, and Nike are complicit in these human rights violations. These labor camps, similar to other government programs, aim to break up Uighur communities and create poor health conditions that lead to the destruction of the Uighur people.



D.4. FORCIBLY TRANSFERRING CHILDREN OF THE GROUP

With the rapid growth of China's internment camps, Uyghurs have been made increasingly vulnerable to the reality of intergenerational separation. State authorities are primarily relying on boarding school facilities as shelters to house the children of exiles and detainees. Uyghurs have likened these facilities to aggressively-secured "prisons" where students' movement outside of the schools is restricted to only holidays and weekends (Wang).

Detainment is only one of the mechanisms behind the mass separation of families. Tahir Uighurian, an academic based in the US, disclosed his story as to how China systematically broke apart his family. Following media coverage on his harrowing experience as a Uyghur in China, the Chinese government responded by sentencing his mother and three cousins to over ten years in jail. Uighurian additionally revealed that eleven children in his family have been sent to de facto orphanages without familial consent over the span of two years (Uighurian, 2019). According to the Human Rights Watch, China's objective is to place all Uyghur children in state run orphanages by 2020. By isolating Uyghur children from their families and their cultures, state authorities are given the power to engineer new lives for the children that deny their heritage and embrace an exclusively pro Communist, pro Han Chinese vision.



D.5. IMPOSING MEASURES INTENDED TO PREVENT BIRTHS WITHIN THE GROUP LABOR

Hundreds of thousands of Uighur women are being subjected to undergo forced pregnancy checks, abortions, sterilizations, and other birth control measures as a part of a deliberate, systemic campaign to curb Uighur birth rates and eliminate their futures. Across East Turkestan, the birth rate dropped around 24% just in this past year – almost 6 times higher than the national rate (“China cuts Uighur births with IUDs..”, 2020). This mode of demographic suicide coincides with the eruption of the mass detention campaigns. Parents of three or more children are at risk for incarceration. Once inside the camps, female detainees are regularly administered drugs that disrupt their menstrual cycles and other bodily functions without their consent. China’s population control measures are written as nationwide policy. However, the Xinjiang region remains the campaign’s epicenter with it comprising 80% of the nation’s new IUD placements in 2018 – despite only accounting for 1.8% of the national population (Board, 2020).

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