ETHR

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Editor-in-Chief: Vildan Kadıoğlu Sarıyaşar
Author: Zehranur Ertek
Research Team: Erva Özyurt, Nihal İmamoğlu, Yusuf Tusun, Zehranur Ertek
Contributors: Cemal Ucatlı, Elif Çekim, Melike Feyza Artiş, Nihal Başaran, Sümeyye Korkut
Editor: Amine Tuna Ertürk

Cover Design: Bilge Cantimur
Graphic Design: Ayşenur Şirin

East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025
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Address: Karagümrük Neighborhood, Sarmaşık Street, No: 43, 34091 Fatih/Istanbul, Türkiye
Tel: (0212) 524 69 99
https://ethrw.org/
info@ethrw.org

Distinguished Members of the Public and Human Rights Stakeholders,

As the East Turkistan Human Rights Association (ETHR), we present our third index in the process we embarked upon in 2019 with the aim of documenting systematic human rights violations in East Turkistan and reporting them to the global public. Since its establishment, ETHR has been an independent organization guided by universal human rights principles, meticulously monitoring the sociopolitical dynamics in East Turkistan, reporting violations, and producing qualified data on human rights abuses.

While this index builds upon the accumulated work of our previous studies, it also introduces several significant methodological innovations. The primary feature distinguishing this study from our first two indices is its updated methodological framework, which adopts a case-oriented approach and enables closer monitoring of violations. In line with this framework, the index covers the period between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025, and does not merely list violations under thematic headings; rather, it is designed as a comprehensive monitoring study that aims to provide a comparative reading in terms of time, category, and method.

This study classifies cases confirmed by official Chinese publications and international media outlets into 14 main categories, demonstrating that each example is not merely a statistical datum, but concrete evidence of the existential threat faced by the people of East Turkistan. Each section of this index incorporates an academic perspective that emphasizes that the presented cases are not simply news reports, but materials that allow for in-depth analysis. These analyses serve as a strategic guide to help the reader comprehend the historical and legal foundations of the violations.

We hope that this comprehensive study will serve as a fundamental reference source for all international organizations, academic circles, and civil society stakeholders. We call upon readers to regard the data presented in this report as legal evidence and to act with a shared sense of responsibility in the protection of human dignity.

Abdureşid Eminhaci

President, East Turkistan Human Rights Association (ETHR)

Consistent with its efforts to erase Uyghur identity, the Chinese government has stepped up its efforts in recent to limit access to information about developments across that region. It limits physical access to the region, threatens people in the region to prevent them from sharing information with people in other countries, and publishes vast quantities of propaganda to present an image that all is well there.

The East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 is a critical corrective to Beijing's fictions. This methodical collection of data and analysis across more than a dozen topics, ranging from arbitrary detention to religious repression to forced labor, provides information that is increasingly difficult to obtain. In addition to drawing together information from multiple language sources, the Index gives a sense of change over time, particularly with respect to key trends in 2024 and 2025.

The Index's information and analysis should help catalyze a new global outrage over Beijing's vast and ongoing abuses of Uyghurs inside and outside China. Absent accountability for some of international human rights law's worst violations, it is difficult to imagine why Beijing should pursue less abusive policies. This Index is a key addition to that quest for accountability.

Dr. Sophie Richardson

Co-Executive Director, Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)

Human rights violations in East Turkistan have reached a level that can no longer be explained as isolated incidents or temporary security measures. What is unfolding in the region represents a systematic, sustained, and centrally coordinated policy framework that directly targets fundamental freedoms, cultural identity, and human dignity. From restrictions on religious practice and violations of children's rights to forced labor, mass surveillance, and transnational repression, these practices pose a profound challenge to the integrity of the international human rights system.

The East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 has been prepared in response to this challenge. Rather than merely documenting individual cases, the Index offers a structured and analytical approach that situates diverse violations within a coherent policy continuum. By consolidating data drawn from official sources, open-source intelligence, academic research, and verified media reporting, the study transforms fragmented information into a systematic, comparable, and policy-relevant body of evidence.

This Index aims to expose the structural discrepancies between official narratives and realities on the ground, highlighting how legal instruments, ideological frameworks, and administrative practices interact to institutionalize and normalize human rights violations over time. In doing so, it provides not only a snapshot of current conditions but also a longitudinal perspective on how repression in East Turkistan has evolved into an entrenched governance model.

The primary objective of this work is to contribute to evidence-based discussions within international institutions, policy circles, academia, and the media. It seeks to strengthen accountability-oriented analysis, support informed decision-making, and reinforce the principle that systematic human rights violations—regardless of geopolitical considerations—must remain visible, measurable, and subject to sustained international scrutiny.

At a time when silence, ambiguity, and selective attention risk becoming the norm, this Index stands as a deliberate act of documentation and accountability. It affirms that credible data, rigorous analysis, and persistent monitoring remain indispensable tools in the global effort to uphold universal human rights standards.

Finally, I extend my sincere appreciation and commendation to the researchers, analysts, and contributors who prepared this Index with diligence, integrity, and intellectual rigor. Their commitment to methodological precision and ethical responsibility has resulted in a reference work that will serve the international community in understanding, assessing, and responding to the situation in East Turkistan.

Mustafa Tutkun

Director General of the Governance Office, Kızılay

Foreword

This work is an annual monitoring study prepared to make the human rights violations that persisted throughout 2025 in East Turkistan visible and to reveal both their continuity and their evolving nature. The findings, organized under fourteen thematic categories—including systematic repression of freedom of religion and belief, forced labor, arbitrary detention, digital and biometric surveillance practices, violations of children's rights, cultural and linguistic assimilation policies, transnational repression mechanisms, and violations of the principle of non-refoulement—demonstrate that China's genocidal policies in East Turkistan have become increasingly institutionalized, technologically sophisticated, and transnational in scope year by year. Index 2025 shows that policies legitimized through the rhetoric of "security," "development," and "ethnic unity" manifest in practice as the restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms, the transformation of the social structure, and the erosion of the collective identity of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples. In this respect, the study constitutes a comprehensive annual document aimed at presenting the scope and depth of human rights violations in East Turkistan to the attention of the international community.

Within the framework of preparing Index 2025, events that occurred throughout the year were compiled through open-source research conducted in Arabic, Chinese, English, Uyghur, and Turkish sources, and developments under each thematic category were presented in chronological order. In these chronologically structured sections, news reports were largely summarized without altering their content and with careful preservation of their original news language, in order to maintain an objective approach to data presentation. In the analytical sections, these data were evaluated from a critical perspective within the framework of international human rights law, universal norms, and China's official policy documents. This methodological distinction aims to preserve the boundary between data and interpretation while more clearly demonstrating the structural nature of the violations.

In this context, Index 2025 focuses not only on the quantitative dimension of human rights violations in East Turkistan, but also on how these violations have been normalized over time, integrated into institutional structures, and reproduced through interaction with the international system. In a closed region where independent observation, field research, and verification mechanisms are systematically restricted, there is a significant risk that violations may be perceived as isolated and temporary developments. To mitigate this risk, the Index addresses fragmented and short-term news flows within a thematic framework, aiming to make visible the continuity, recurring patterns, and structural character of the violations. In this respect, the study goes beyond being a report that merely documents the current situation and instead serves as an analytical reference framework contributing to the monitoring of developments in East Turkistan, comparison with the previous year, and the strengthening of accountability for international human rights mechanisms, policymakers, and civil society actors.

Abbreviations

CCP:	Chinese Communist Party
CPPCC:	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
EU:	European Union
FLETF:	Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force
GONGO:	Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organization
IJOP:	Integrated Joint Operations Platform
IUD:	Intrauterine Device
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organizations
PRC:	People's Republic of China
UFLPA:	Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act
UN:	United Nations
UNCHR:	United Nation Commission on Human Rights
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US/USA:	United States of Americaı
XJTV:	Xinjiang Television

***Regarding the Use of QR Codes:** The original sources of the news reports and visual materials used in the preparation of the 2025 Index can be accessed directly through the relevant QR codes provided at the beginning of each section of the report.

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CHAPTER 1

Censorship and Restriction

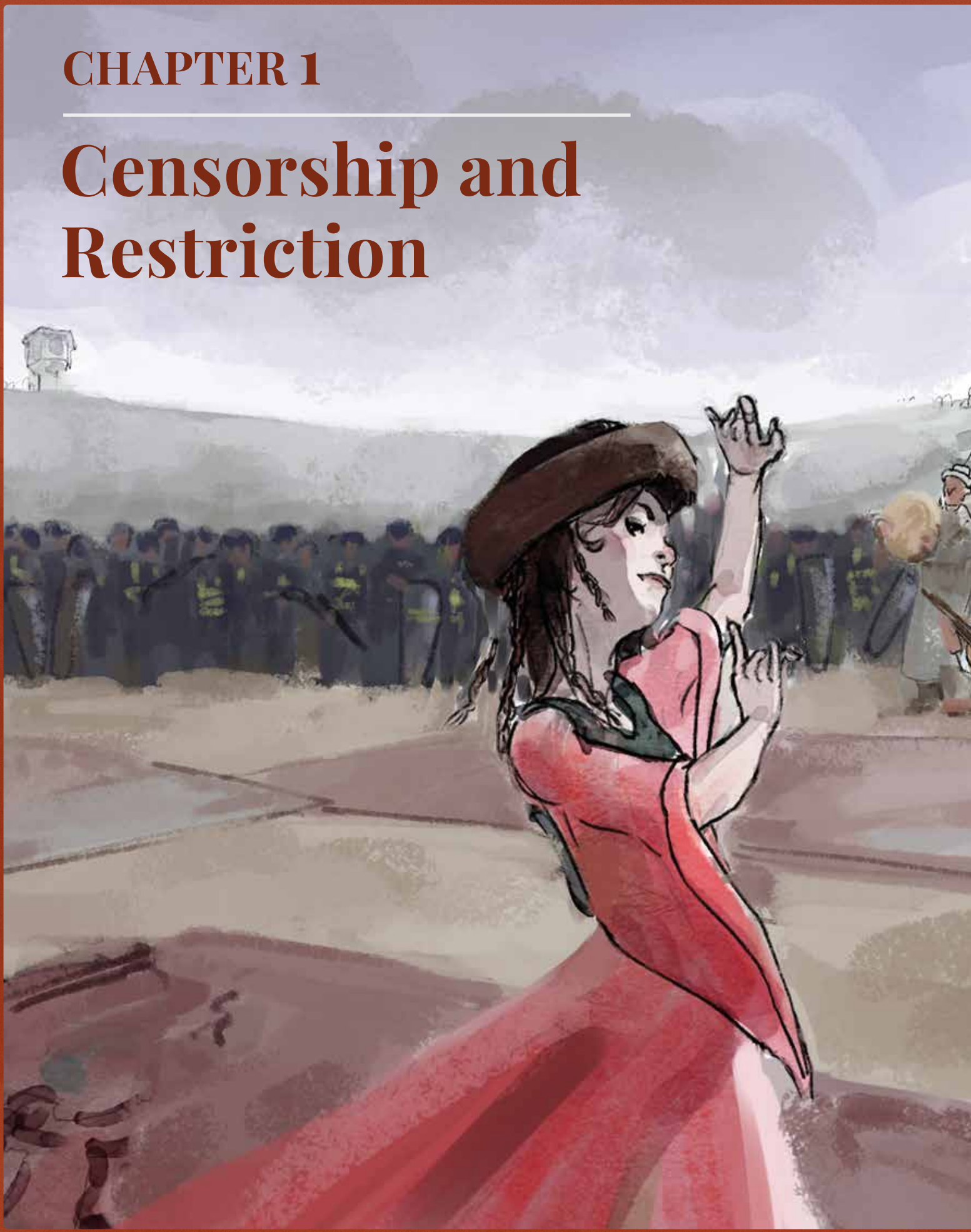


Illustration: Lutpulla

East Turkistan is a region where the Muslim Uyghur identity faces an existential threat and is subjected to a large-scale process of eradication. This process constitutes a form of cultural genocide, in which the fundamental building blocks of identity—language, faith, customs, traditions, and arts—are systematically eroded.

In this context, meticulously documenting each human rights violation is of vital importance for recording systematic assimilation and preserving historical memory. Today, East Turkistan functions as an information black hole, where knowledge is tightly controlled by the state and heavy censorship mechanisms are enforced. Every fragment of data that manages to reach the outside world represents a form of resistance to these systematic assimilation policies and a pursuit of truth.

At this point, this Index assumes critical value as it classifies the realities in East Turkistan with academic rigor, presenting them to the conscience of the international community and legal mechanisms. In a region where information flow is so severely restricted, such studies are indispensable strategic tools for ensuring that the issue attains the visibility it deserves in the international public sphere and for establishing a foundation for global awareness.

Hafize Zehra Kavak

Publications Specialist, Kızılay Academy

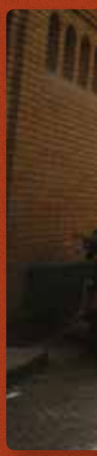
Resources:

15.01.2025

XiaoHongShu (小红书), a China-based social media and content sharing platform, began to rapidly gain popularity among American users following the U.S. ban on TikTok on January 19th. The app censored content reporting on the 1989 Tiananmen Square and the detention of 1.8 to 3 million Uyghurs in concentration camps in East Turkistan. In a notice issued by the company, it was stated that the content in question was placed under review within the scope of the platform's community guidelines and this process was conducted with the aim of "maintaining a safe, compliant, and orderly online environment."

28.01.2025

DeepSeek, an artificial intelligence firm headquartered in China, initially provides answers to questions on issues such as forced labor, mass detention, and ideological repression in East Turkistan, however, after a few seconds, it completely deletes the response, replacing it with the message: "I cannot answer this question." Regarding this issue, the company states that the chatbot is designed to comply with Chinese laws and therefore compelled to provide responses on certain topics that either reflect the official stance of the Chinese government or exclude the subject entirely.



ANALYSIS

The restrictive policies implemented by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in East Turkistan encompass all dimensions of daily life by subjecting Uyghurs to a multi-layered surveillance and control regime across travel, economic activities, and digital spheres.

Since 2016, as part of its "Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism," the Chinese government has severely restricted the rights of Uyghurs to leave the country, seizing their passports and considering contact with those abroad as a criminal element. Although limited travel permissions have recently been granted to some Uyghurs, these permissions are restricted by conditions such as strict surveillance, letters of guarantee, the obligation to return within a specific period, and the requirement not to speak against China in foreign countries (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Additionally, financial pressure and restrictions aimed at Uyghurs is one of the less visible but most effective tools of China's control mechanism. The economic activities of Uyghurs have been placed under strict surveillance;

01.02.2025

Local authorities in cities across East Turkistan announced the launch of an initiative dubbed "Winter Operation," covering the holiday period between January 28th and February 4th. It was reported that the operation aims to maintain public order in "regions with complex security situations" and to prevent "violent terrorist activities." Within the scope of the operation, local police units were mobilized in cities and counties such as Kumul, Ghulja, Yarkand, Altay, Charchan, and Makit. Furthermore, on January 4th, the Public Security Bureau of the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture held a mobilization meeting in Kumul, announcing that "intensive cleanup and rectification" would be carried out in "complex" security zones.

Chinese Artist Guo Zhenming

17.04.2025

Chinese artist Guo Zhenming was fined 75,000 yuan(approximately 10,700 USD) on the grounds of "illegal filming" for recording Uyghur folk musicians in East Turkistan. It was reported that police raided Guo Zhenming's apartment in Urumqi on February 25th, taking his equipment and works under review within the scope of "unauthorized filming." Furthermore, it was revealed that he is subject to constant checks to verify his presence at home and is required to provide notice even when traveling.

bank transactions, money transfers, and individual savings have become direct targets of state oversight. Indeed, Rushan Abbas, founder of the Washington-based Campaign for Uyghurs, expresses this situation with the following words: "The entire Uyghur Region is a police state. Every space, every property, any amount of money in the bank, everything is being surveilled. They know everything. Every Uyghur person has a mandatory spyware app installed on their phone. If you have any kind of communication with your bank on banking apps, they see how much money is coming in and out, which businessman has how much money... The government knows everything" (Human Rights Foundation, 2025).

The internet is another element brought under restriction in the region. China emphasized the concept of "internet sovereignty" by publishing its first "internet white paper" in May 2010. With Xi Jinping's increasing influence in the administration in 2012, censorship on all social platforms intensified. Upon taking the leadership of the CCP in 2016, Xi Jinping declared that state media must strictly follow the party line. Furthermore, he has conveyed censorship instruc-

28.04.2025

According to a report by the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), China obstructs independent civil society actors' access to United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms. The report indicates that China leverages its membership in the UN NGO Committee, increases the number of state-sponsored GONGOs, and employs methods of intimidation and reprisal to prevent human rights defenders from attending UN meetings and meeting with diplomats, in addition to barring them from taking the floor. It is stated that Uyghur, Tibetan, and Hong Kong activists are particularly targeted, with actions directed at these groups including prolonged accreditation deferrals, surveillance, harassment, travel bans, and threats against their families.

May 2025

Xinjiang Television (XJTV,), a local television network station operating in East Turkistan, shut down two channels broadcasting in Uyghur and Kazakh as of this year. Furthermore, while Channel 3, which previously broadcasted in Kazakh, now continues its broadcasting in Chinese. It was observed that Chinese content is also being included in the entertainment programs of other channels broadcasting in Uyghur. Currently, the vast majority of television and radio broadcasting organizations in East Turkistan broadcast in Chinese.

中国新疆电视台
CHINA XINJIANG TELEVISION STATION

tions every week to state media editors through the Communist Party Propaganda Department and the Bureau of Internet Affairs (Xu & Albert, 2017).

To keep the internet under state control and prevent the spread of information deemed contrary or harmful to the interests of the Chinese Communist Party, China developed the "Great Firewall," one of the world's most advanced internet censorship mechanisms. Through this mechanism, the access of peoples in geographies like East Turkistan to global information is restricted, political and ideological control is maintained, and the use of international applications not subject to Chinese regulations (Google, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) is effectively blocked, consolidating control over the public and digital spheres. The Great Firewall is also used to strengthen party propaganda by closely following developments in artificial intelligence. In this context, the four areas where the fastest increase in the CCP's use of AI was observed between 2023 and 2025 are: the censorship of politically sensitive images, the integration of AI into penal and justice processes, the industrialization of online information control, and

27.06.2025

During the 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council, held in Geneva between June 16th and July 9th, 2025, international human rights organizations, including Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and Amnesty International, a joint statement stating that the crackdowns against human rights lawyers in China continue. The statement notes that within the scope of the "709 Crackdown" that began in 2015, hundreds of lawyers have been subjected to practices such as detention, imprisonment, disbarment, and constant surveillance. The organizations emphasize that these crackdowns are not limited to lawyers alone but are part of a broader framework of rights violations encompassing Uyghurs, Tibetans, and human rights defenders in Hong Kong.

01.07.2025

The Chinese Communist Party made a significant appointment to the administrative leadership in East Turkistan in June 2025. The Party appointed Chen Xiaojiang, who has served in the field of ethnic affairs and held high-level roles in the United Front Work Department, as the Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary. The fact that Chen was the first individual of Han origin to be appointed as the head of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission in the past is evaluated as a tendency by the central government to conduct ethnic and religious policies in the region in a stricter and more centralized manner.

Chen Xiaojiang, Secretary of the Xinjiang Communist Party

the use of AI-driven platforms in the overseas activities of Chinese companies. All these areas reveal that China's capacity to direct information flows, control human behavior, and shape economic outcomes in its favor has strengthened over time (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2025).

China's digital censorship, aimed at making human rights violations invisible and suppressing criticism in the international public eye, also manifests itself in Chinese-origin applications. China based DeepSeek accepts questions regarding human rights violations in the 1989 Tiananmen Square, East Turkistan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as "sensitive" and either refuses to answer or requests to change the flow of conversation by saying, "Sorry, that's beyond my current scope. Let's talk about something else." Similarly, TikTok censors content related to the human rights violations faced by Muslim Uyghurs, and many sources report that TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, prioritizes content aligned with Beijing's state ideology (Mulla, 2025).

Another target of China's virtual and physical restrictions is local and international media workers. Many journalists strive

11.07.2025

Chinese teacher and activist Su Shangwei was detained at the end of November and held in prison for approximately one month following an event he attended to commemorate the victims of the fire that took place in Urumqi. Su states that during this period, he was subjected to physical violence and harsh interrogation methods by the police and was threatened through his family.

09.11.2025

According to the High Frequency Coordination Conference (HFCC), China is increasing its radio broadcasting capacity in East Turkistan and Tibet. According to current information released for the winter season, the official national radio broadcaster China National Radio (CNR) has increased its number of frequencies, particularly in the Tibetan and Uyghur languages. This increase occurred simultaneously with the Trump administration halting the funding provided to the U.S. Agency for Global Media and Radio Free Asia (RFA), and the subsequent suspension of these institutions' activities.

30.11.2025

At the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in Geneva, 15 countries—including Albania, Australia, Czechia, Estonia, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Palau, Paraguay, San Marino, Ukraine, the US, and the UK—issued a joint statement condemning China's human rights abuses at home and abroad. The statement accused China of arbitrary detentions, forced labor, heavy surveillance, and restricting religious and cultural freedoms, targeting groups like Uyghurs, Tibetans, Christians, and Falun Gong practitioners. It also noted the separation of children into state-run schools, torture of detainees, and destruction of cultural heritage. The countries urged China to follow UN Human Rights Office recommendations and grant independent observers full access to the region.

to uncover the genocidal policies carried out by China in East Turkistan and announce these policies to the public, yet they face various obstacles. For example, in 2021, BBC correspondent John Sudworth was subjected to personal attacks and smear and disinformation campaigns conducted by official authorities following his reports on East Turkistan, eventually being forced to move to Taiwan. Similarly, in 2022, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) closed its Beijing bureau after its correspondents' visa applications remained unanswered for months. A facial recognition system was developed in Henan Province that categorizes foreign journalists by risk level using a "traffic light" sys-

23.12.2025

The "CDT Report Summary" by China Digital Times for the end of 2025 shows that China's internet censorship has evolved from a simple "wall" into a multi-layered, AI-driven "information management system." In 2025, 121 reports highlighted the fusion of censorship, surveillance, and stability mechanisms with AI, especially targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan. AI-powered surveillance, facial recognition, biometric data, and predictive policing have become tools of systematic oppression, extending abroad through "transnational repression" against the Uyghur diaspora and dissidents via digital harassment and threats. The traditional "Great Firewall" has been replaced by the "Locknet," a proactive system that anticipates and blocks social discourse before it even emerges.

The restrictive policies implemented by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in East Turkistan encompass all dimensions of daily life by subjecting Uyghurs to a multi-layered surveillance and control regime across travel, economic activities, and digital spheres.

26.12.2025

Souls: Poems of Uyghur Prisoners in China, edited by Aziz Isa Elkun and published by Hertfordshire Press in 2025, amplifies the voices of Uyghur poets imprisoned under cultural oppression in East Turkistan. Featuring poems from 25 of roughly 500 detained or disappeared Uyghur intellectuals since 2016, the collection—introduced at the Yunus Emre Institute in London—explores themes of language destruction, loss of freedom, exile, separation, and resistance. Elkun highlights that the book serves as both memory and testimony against policies aimed at erasing Uyghur culture.

tem; journalists are regularly called for meetings under the name of being "invited for tea," preventing them from reporting against the CCP through indirect threats, intimidation, and psychological pressure (Ray, 2025).

This holistic picture demonstrates that the restrictions applied by China in East Turkistan are not limited to isolated security measures; they are part of a systematic and long-term control strategy that encompasses the economy, the digital world, media, and other dimensions of daily life, aiming to keep the Uyghur society under constant surveillance.

CHAPTER 2

Digital Surveillance and Cyber Attacks

As of 2025, reporting and open source evidence indicate that the repression of Uyghurs in East Turkistan is ongoing, though increasingly managed to appear normalized and invisible. Content from Chinese social media platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, and WeChat continues to show tightly choreographed images of daily life that obscure coercion while revealing constant surveillance, ideological messaging, and the absence of genuine religious or cultural freedom. Testimony from travel vloggers and YouTubers who have visited the region, both in public videos and in private accounts shared with our Save Uyghur Campaign, consistently describes guided movement, scripted interactions, and warnings against unsupervised filming or conversation.

Uyghurs from the diaspora who have been permitted short visits report heavy monitoring, pressure to perform loyalty, and fear of repercussions for family members who remain behind. The lack of unfettered access for journalists, researchers, and independent observers persists, and this sustained opacity is itself strong evidence of continuing large-scale abuse. At the same time, there are growing reports of transnational coercion, with Uyghurs abroad being contacted by Uyghur police officers operating within the Chinese security apparatus. These individuals are pressured to provide information, influence community members, or act as informal agents in exchange for money or the promise of permission to visit East Turkistan without repercussions. Taken together, these patterns show a system that has not ended, but rather adapted, relying on digital control, managed visibility, and coercion beyond borders to sustain repression today.

Arslan Hidayat

Justice for All, Save Uyghur Campaign
Team Leader

Resources:

30.01.2025

A report by Intelligence Online alleged that UPSEC, a Chengdu-based cybersecurity company linked to China's Ministry of Public Security, was behind cyberattacks targeting Tibetans and Uyghurs living in China and the diaspora during the 2023–2024 period. Although the company presents itself as an ordinary technology provider working for the police, it is stated that it actually develops advanced spyware that infiltrates the Android and Windows devices of Uyghurs and Tibetans using an attack tool named MOONSHINE and a backdoor named DarkNimbus. DarkNimbus is capable of accessing all personal information, including contacts, call logs, messages, location data, screenshots, photos, and instant messaging content.

08.04.2025

The World Uyghur Congress filed a complaint with the Paris Prosecutor's Office against Huawei France, Hikvision France, and Dahua Technology France, alleging complicity in the Uyghur genocide in East Turkistan. The complaint alleges that the firms in question contributed to the establishment of the surveillance infrastructure that enables the repression and mass human rights violations conducted by the Chinese government against Uyghurs. The petition further accuses these companies of "concealed complicity" in genocide, aggravated servitude, human trafficking, and crimes against humanity.

ANALYSIS

East Turkistan is defined by many experts as a modern "digital apartheid" and "the most advanced police state of the 21st century" (Traversing Tradition, 2025). This definition is supported by the existence of comprehensive surveillance and control systems in the region; under the heading of "digitalization" the Chinese government is equipping East Turkistan with facial recognition cameras, biometric data collection centers, QR-coded door marking, and AI-powered monitoring mechanism through which Uyghurs are categorized via digital security scores.

The National Data Administration of China has announced its 2025 action plan, "AI Plus," which aims to enhance digital infrastructure and state capacity (Xinhua, 2025). The plan intends to comprehensively expand the state's capacity in areas such as infrastructure modernization, the data industry, and digital talent development. In this way, artificial intelligence applications are being integrated into state governance, data collected from different regions is being consolidated into a nation-

28.06.2025

Hikvision, having previously faced sanctions from Western countries due to surveillance activities in East Turkistan and allegations of human rights violations against Uyghurs, has now been subjected to sanctions in Canada as well. The Canadian government ordered Hikvision, a China-based surveillance camera manufacturer, to cease all operations in Canada on the grounds of national security concerns. Minister of Industry Melanie Joly stated that the decision was the result of a multi-stage review conducted in light of information provided by Canada's security and intelligence agencies. It is reported that Canada will not only halt operations but will also ban the procurement of Hikvision products in government offices and ensure that existing products are not used in the future by auditing their usage.

al data pool, and vast amounts of video, audio, location, and communication data can be analyzed rapidly. By integrating multiple camera feeds and data streams to establish networks known as a "city brain," these systems enable the state to monitor events in real time and intervene before dissenting protests can emerge (Lin, 2025).

Digitalization is also utilized to control the daily lives and religious practices of the region's population. In 2018, Huawei applied for a patent for a technology that identifies whether a person is Han Chinese or Uyghur, and Hikvision received government contracts to install facial recognition systems in indoctrination camps and more than 900 mosques. Similarly, through malware embedded in applications that appear religious at first glance—such as 99 Names of Allah, Hefz Quran, Hijri Calendar, and Nur—China has accessed users' location, microphone, camera, messages, and other personal data. In this way, it has tracked Uyghurs in their daily lives and exploited religious sensitivities for surveillance purposes.

03.11.2025

In the report prepared by CDT, the international dimension of China's digital surveillance capacity and the global responses to it are examined. According to the report, while successive U.S. administrations have for years publicly criticized China's human rights violations and the security risks in regions such as East Turkistan, they have, in practice, allowed American companies to sell cameras, artificial intelligence, and surveillance technologies to China—and in some cases, even facilitated these sales. The Associated Press reveals that these technologies are utilized in pervasive monitoring and repression systems in areas like East Turkistan and Tibet. The report further notes that Congressional attempts to block China from accessing advanced technology via U.S. cloud services failed due to intensive lobbying by tech companies, whereas China continues to procure billions of dollars in equipment and services from the United States.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping

Furthermore, through the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP)—which was developed by public security units and functions as the central digital infrastructure for regional security management—China transfers the personal information, social activities, and relationship data of citizens in East Turkistan into a massive data pool. Assisted by artificial intelligence, this platform identifies potential candidates for detention and provides real-time communication capabilities to authorities. Consequently, those acting outside of party policy are quickly identified and detained. In this context, in June 2017, within just seven days, 15.683 residents of East Turkistan flagged by the IJOP were detained and placed in indoctrination camps. As noted by Zhou Fengsuo, Executive Director of Human Rights in China (HRIC), this comprehensive technological infrastructure provides the Chinese government with a level of precise and effective control that past totalitarian regimes could never have possessed.

Local authorities in East Turkistan cities have not limited digital surveillance to individual monitoring; they have transformed it into a comprehensive system that also tracks the employment and income status of the population. In 2021, 12 million households were examined under the approach of "early prevention, early intervention, early assistance". Approximately 400.000 officials belonging to party cadres were stationed in homes; through these cadres, the income, employment, and land status of households in East Turkistan were scanned, resulting in hundreds of thousands of households being placed under constant surveillance.

Another target audience for digital surveillance is Uyghurs in the diaspora. Activists struggling for the cause of East Turkistan are specifically targeted through cyberattacks and malware operations. Through these attacks, activists' communication networks are monitored, their personal data is seized, and systematic pressure and intimidation mechanisms are established over both themselves and their family members in East Turkistan.

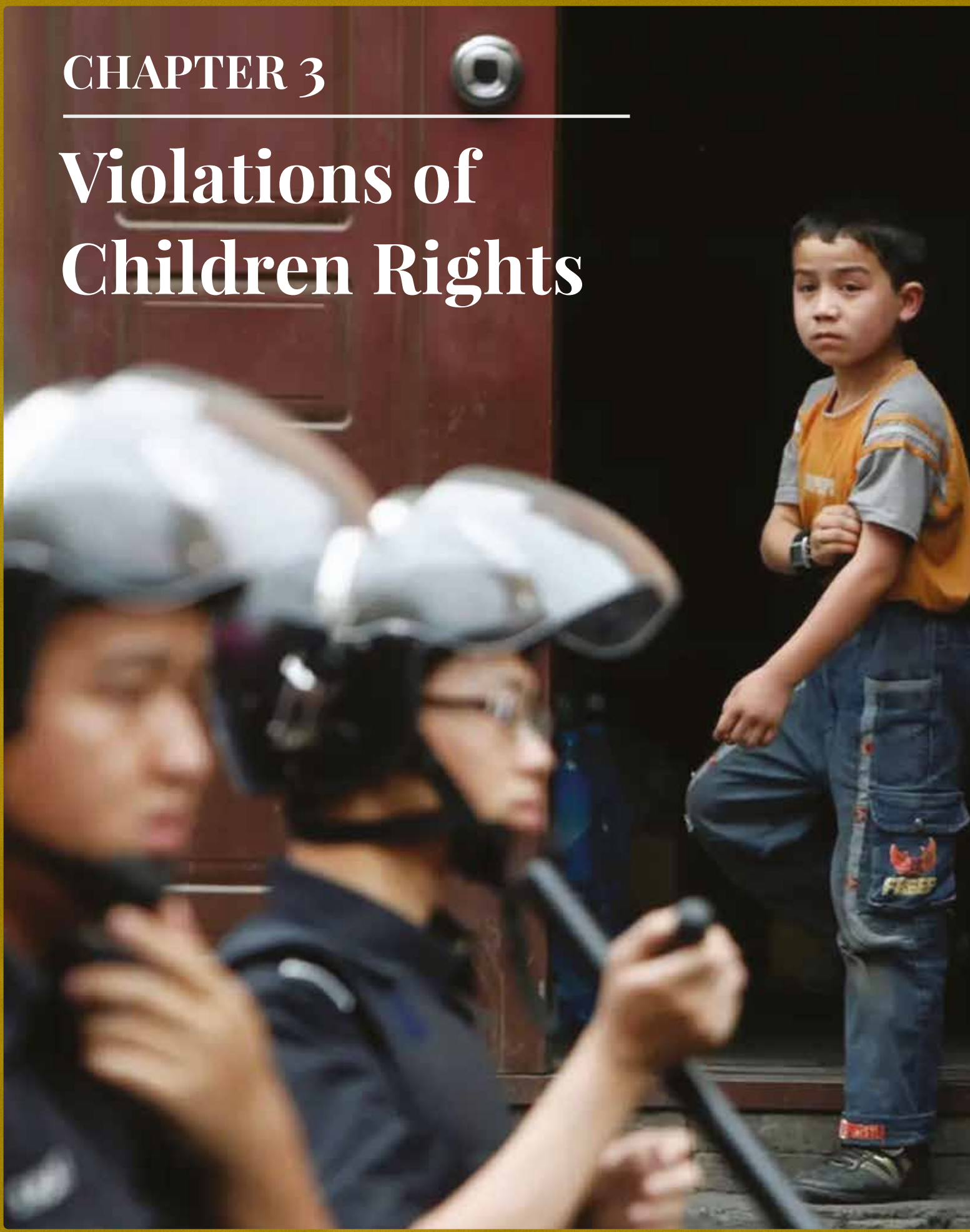
In this regard, Uyghurs in the diaspora have been targeted through malicious software disguised as a "reliable Uyghur word processing and spell-checking program" and have been subjected to defamation and character assassination campaigns using AI-supported "deepfake" content. Additionally, attempts have been made to collect the location, calls, messages, and personal data of Uyghur GSM users through the use of fake base stations.

In conclusion, this multi-layered digital surveillance and control infrastructure established in East Turkistan clearly demonstrates that technology has been stripped of its role as a tool for security and development to become a central element of ethnic, religious, and political control. It reveals that the Uyghur community is being subjected to a systematic, continuous, and transnational regime of repression both within the region and in the diaspora.

In June 2017, 15.683 residents of East Turkistan flagged by the IJOP were detained and placed in indoctrination camps within just seven days; this advanced technological infrastructure has provided the Chinese government with a level of precise and effective social control capacity that historical totalitarian regimes could not have achieved.

CHAPTER 3

Violations of Children Rights



According to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights encompass the legal protection of all children worldwide regarding their inherent rights to education, health, and shelter, as well as their inviolability against physical and emotional exploitation, neglect, and all forms of abuse. Viewed through this lens, East Turkistan is one of the most difficult and dangerous places in the world for a child.

Under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, "deliberately preventing births within a group" and "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" constitute acts of genocide, and China is clearly committing such genocidal crimes.

In East Turkistan, over two million children are being forcibly separated from their parents and other family members in orphanages, so-called "angel homes," and boarding schools functioning as "child collection camps," systematically deprived of their cultural and social rights, including religion and language, and subjected to assimilation. Children have their names changed, are placed with Chinese families, kept away from relatives, and are subjected to sterilizing drugs and brainwashing programs, stripping them of generational security and distancing them from their faith and culture. Reports also indicate that children are forced to work as slave laborers, subjected to experiments, and in some cases, have their organs harvested.

Murat Yılmaz

President, Yetim Foundation

Resources:

16.01.2025

It is reported that China continues to open new orphanage-style boarding schools and expand existing ones in East Turkistan for the children of Uyghur parents detained in camps through systematic detentions conducted since 2017. According to research by Radio Free Asia (RFA), there are at least six schools operating in the Yarkand, Aksu, and Hotan regions. It is claimed that authorities monitor the psychological and ideological conditions of the children and keep detailed records through special police officers tasked with collecting, placing, and guarding the children.

ANALYSIS

According to data published by the United Nations in 2018, more than 1,8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic origin peoples are held in indoctrination camps established by China under the guise of 'combating terrorism and extremism.' The children left behind by parents detained in the camps are placed in boarding schools named "Little Angels," which are surrounded by barbed wire and where entry and exit are under police control (Hoshur, 2025). In a planning document belonging to the Chinese Ministry of Education, it is stated that the number of Uyghur children separated from their families and placed in state-run boarding schools between 2017 and 2019 increased by 76,9%, rising from 497.800 to 880.500 (Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, 2021).

In East Turkistan, local authorities target not only the children of parents described as 'double-detained' but also children living with their families. In an official announcement published by the Xinjiang Education Department in 2020, it was stated that all kindergartens in the Karakax county of Hotan would be converted into boarding schools. Under this system, it is planned for parents to drop their children off at school on Monday morning and pick them up on Saturday, with the children not meeting their parents during the time they are at the boarding school. Adrian Zenz, a China Studies expert at the Washington-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, emphasized that this situation is part of the government's planned strategy of intergenerational separation and that the intergenerational distance will further increase as the time children spend in state institutions increases (Erkin, 2020).

Also, in boarding schools, children are forced to use Mandarin Chinese almost exclusively, and furthermore, according to a United Nations Human Rights Office report, local schools where Uyghur is used as the language of instruction are being closed (RFA Uyghur, 2023). This practice prevents children from developing their own cultural and linguistic identities, weakens their communication with their families, and accelerates the process of social assimilation. Indeed, Adrian Zenz drew attention to this danger with the words: "... The government views young children as a strategic target group, and the fact that language acquisition occurs during a critical period when worldview is shaped forms the basis of this approach. This practice does not stem from a genuine social need; it is completely artificial and a step towards a policy of assimilation" (Zenz, 2019).

In recent years, the budget allocated by China for education in East Turkistan has been used primarily for security purposes. Schools are being transformed into virtually quasi-military facilities through facial recognition cameras, electric fences, multi-layered security barriers, and digital patrol systems (Kuo, 2020). Furthermore, security personnel serving in the Aksu region stated that schools keep children under surveillance 24 hours a day and that police and security guards not only ensure security but also provide 'political education' to students (Hoshur, 2021). This situation appears as an extension of China's strategy to bring Uyghur children under state control at an early age and erode their cultural identities. The integration of education policies with a security perspective is evaluated as a reflection of the CCP's goal to weaken social opposition in the region in the long term and to shape the new generation in an ideological direction.

Siblings Aysu and Lutfullah Kuchar, who previously stayed in state-run boarding schools and recounted the process firsthand, stated that they were torn from their families and forced to stay in a state boarding school for nearly 20 months. They expressed that during their stay in the dormitory, their heads were shaved, they were frequently subjected to physical violence, locked in dark rooms as punishment, and when they were finally allowed to return home, they had forgotten how to speak Uyghur (Idris, 2024).

The child rights violations implemented by China in East Turkistan are evaluated within the scope of the act of 'forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' defined in Article II(e) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) and constitute the crime of genocide. Within this framework, Uyghur children are torn from their families and cultural environments and placed in state-controlled educational institutions; they are systematically deprived of their rights to receive education in their mother tongue, practice their religious beliefs, and maintain their cultural traditions.

In East Turkistan, while Uyghurs are held in indoctrination camps under the pretext of "counterterrorism," hundreds of thousands of children separated from their parents are placed in state-controlled boarding schools.

CHAPTER 4

Arbitrary Detention ve Extrajudicial Execution

"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 9

"Arbitrary arrest and detention not only violate individual freedoms but also constitute a systematic undermining of the right to a fair trial and the rule of law."

United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Information Note No. 26

Resources:

09.06.2025

Japanese journalist and former Beijing correspondent Nobuhiro Sakamoto stated that he was detained seven times by Chinese authorities for his role in exposing China's oppressive policies and forced sterilization practices against the people of East Turkistan. Sakamoto revealed that, using official Chinese statistics analyzed during his tenure in Beijing between 2020 and 2023, the forced sterilization rate among Uyghurs increased 19-fold between 2018 and 2022. The journalist noted the intense surveillance and control in the region, adding that Uyghurs' everyday items are tracked via QR codes and that the indoctrination camps referred to as 'schools' actually feature windows with iron bars.

Nobuhiro Sakamoto (second from the left)

Alinur Turhanbay and his wife

22.07.2025

Alinur Turhanbay, a former Chinese citizen, was detained by security forces in East Turkistan on July 22nd. His wife stated that this detention might be linked to a complaint he had previously filed regarding individuals who had been detained. The family of Turhanbay, who works as a truck driver in Kazakhstan, stated that there are witnesses confirming that he was placed on China's "blacklist" and detained at the border crossing.

ANALYSIS

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention defines arbitrary detention as the deprivation of an individual's liberty without a clear legal basis, or detention for peacefully exercising fundamental rights such as freedom of movement, thought, conscience, and religion. Furthermore, the complete disregard for the right to a fair trial or the existence of serious violations of this right, as well as the deprivation of liberty based on discriminatory grounds such as ethnic origin, language, religion, or opinion in violation of international law, also fall within the scope of this concept (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.).

Following Chen Quanguo's appointment as the Xinjiang Regional Party Secretary in 2016, China's multi-layered and systematic policy of repression against non-Han communities in East Turkistan gained momentum. Although Uyghur and other Muslim peoples began to be detained en masse on the grounds of "radicalism," research has shown that in reality, people are detained even for everyday behaviors such as growing a beard or having religious content on their phones (Klimeš & Smith Finley, 2020). Detained

28.12.2025

According to a leaked meeting recording obtained by the Associated Press, authorities in East Turkistan warn that downloading, listening to, or sharing Uyghur songs on social media could lead to prison sentences. In a meeting held by police and local officials in Kashgar in October 2025, it was stated that dozens of Uyghur songs containing religious references or identified as 'problematic' were banned. Experts emphasize that most of the banned songs were written by detained Uyghur artists and that these measures are part of the long-standing cultural and religious repression in the region.

Activist Rahime Mahmut

By deeming cultural, historical, or religious expressions that do not align with the official narrative as security threats, the CCP arbitrarily detains large numbers of Uyghurs without any legal basis, notification, or judicial safeguards.

individuals face forced assimilation, political brainwashing, and strict surveillance policies in indoctrination camps referred to by the Beijing government as 'Vocational Education Centers.' According to a statement issued by the United Nations in 2018, at least 1.8 million Uyghurs and members of other Turkic origin peoples are held in these camps. The arbitrary detention policies implemented aim to establish a permanent mechanism of fear and obedience not only over individuals but over the entire Uyghur society.

Citizens can be targeted by the CCP with accusations of "splittism" for researching Uyghur culture, "separatism" for voicing injustice in Uyghur-Han relations, and "spreading illegal religious elements" for including details of mosques in travel videos. In addition, the mismatch between factual information regarding Chinese history and the government's official narrative is considered grounds for "inciting ethnic hatred," and even speaking Chinese—which has become mandatory as a result of the ban on the mother tongue in education—with a "bad accent" can be evaluated as a criminal element. In line with these and similar grounds,

Arrest Datas by Year in East Turkistan (2013-2022)

Source: Xinjiang High People's Procuratorate Work Reports

the fate of Uyghurs whose relatives suddenly disappear in East Turkistan and China is often determined by arbitrary detentions implemented without notifying the families of the arrested individuals, without providing access to a lawyer, and without explaining the legal justification for the detention procedures.

This situation manifests in the detention process of dual citizens holding Chinese passports, where their second citizenship is ignored and the individual's fate is left to the unilateral discretion of the state based solely on Chinese citizenship. At the same time, the detention of foreign nationals without even informing the consulates of the relevant countries within the scope of "hostage diplomacy" is another reflection of this practice. Indeed, in interviews conducted by Amnesty International with a total of 55 people—16 women and 39 men—who were held in indoctrination camps in East Turkistan from 2017 onwards and subsequently released, it was revealed that all former detainees were arbitrarily detained for behaviors considered completely legal according to international standards and that they had not committed any internationally recognized crime. All of the detainees were deprived of the right to a fair trial during and after their initial detention, and none were provided access to a lawyer (Amnesty International, 2021).

Arbitrary detentions often lead to indefinite detention periods and even processes resulting in death. Deaths occurring during state surveillance and detention practices in China have been documented with concrete examples in various human rights reports. Radio Free Asia reported that at least 150 people died in camps in Kucha between June and December 2018, specifically in the No. 1 Indoctrination Camp in the Yengishehir region; that the deaths were confirmed by the testimony of a police officer who served in the camp; and that the bodies were delivered to families and buried under strict police supervision (Hoshur, 2019). Furthermore, the Aksu and Karakax lists appear as another piece of evidence revealing how the comprehensive surveillance and arbitrary detention system established in East Turkistan operates in practice, through official government records. These documents reveal that detention decisions are based on everyday and legally non-criminal behaviors such as religious practices, birth policies, digital activities, travel mobility, and ideological evaluations. In this context, the documents contain government records pertaining to more than 2.000 people in Aksu and more than 3.000 in Karakax. The reasons for the detention of the individuals in question are mostly defined by vague concepts such as "untrustworthiness" or "extremist thought" (Amnesty International, 2021).

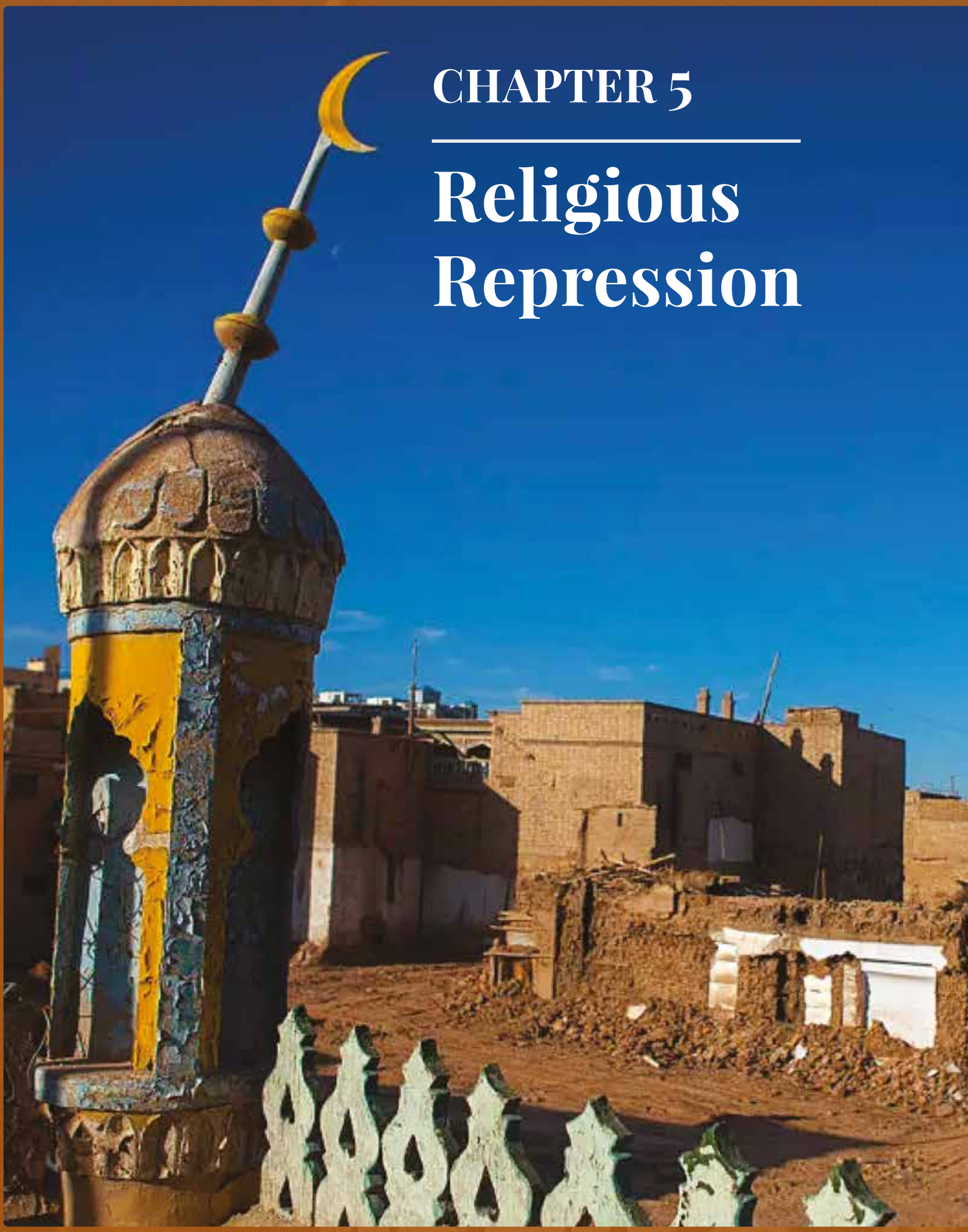
Consequently, the closed judicial system in China pushes the people of East Turkistan into inaction in the face of existing lawlessness, because attempts to seek justice can result in the imprisonment of remaining family members as well. This situation demonstrates that the law has been removed from being a protection mechanism and transformed into a tool of deterrence and intimidation. Making the pursuit of justice a punishable act aims to control not only the detained individuals but also their families and the wider social environment through fear. In this context, it can be argued that the detentions in question are a tool employed by the Chinese state to target linguistic, religious, and cultural identities, limit fundamental rights and freedoms, and suppress attempts to seek justice without a legal basis.

Arrest Numbers by Region in East Turkistan (2017-2025)

Source: Xinjiang Victims Database – Statistics

Arbitrary detentions often lead to indefinite imprisonment and, in some cases, processes that result in death. Various human rights reports have documented concrete instances of deaths occurring during state surveillance and detention practices in China.

Dabancheng Indoctrination Camp Satellite Image



CHAPTER 5

Religious Repression

There has been a long-standing process of genocide against the people of East Turkistan. Initially, this process advanced through social and administrative practices framed as assimilation and adaptation to Chinese culture. Over time, the political framework became more severe, systematically eroding and attempting to eliminate the region's culture, language, and faith.

Similar mechanisms of repression and control had previously been applied to Tibetans and Buddhist communities. In the case of the Uyghurs, however, these policies gradually evolved into widespread exclusion, discrimination, and ethnic assimilation. Today, particularly over the past decade, with the implementation of strict security policies, mass detentions, and pervasive repression, the situation in East Turkistan has escalated beyond a single-dimensional human rights violation to a multidimensional level of genocide, encompassing cultural, social, and physical elements.

Yıldız Ramazanoğlu
Writer

Resources:

18.03.2025

In a post shared on the social media platform Douyin, a resident of Payzawat county in Kashgar stated that they are required to record a video of themselves eating lunch every day during the month of Ramadan and submit these recordings to neighborhood or village-level Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials. A police officer serving in Payzawat confirmed that residents, including Uyghur officers, are not permitted to fast during Ramadan and that daily video evidence of eating is demanded by local authorities to prove compliance. It was reported that this practice has been implemented in the townships of Gulbagh, Bayawat, and Terim within Payzawat county.

In front of Iydgâh Mosque

21.03.2025

Authorities in East Turkistan are reportedly forcing Uyghurs to work in an effort to prevent them from fasting and praying during the month of Ramadan. Under the pretexts of "combating extremist religious activities" and "maintaining social order" local authorities are resorting to practices that effectively hinder the Muslim Uyghur population from fasting, in some instances demanding video or similar proof that individuals have dates during the day. Additionally, it is reported that those who refuse to work are detained for seven to ten days in local administration or cadre offices. If individuals show resistance, it is stated that they are threatened by officials with being transferred to indoctrination camps.

ANALYSIS

The historical background of religious oppression in East Turkistan is primarily rooted in the occupation of the region by China in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong. From this date onward, religion was viewed as an element that must be controlled by the state; however, religious oppression policies intensified significantly, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). During this process, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) abandoned its initial approach of aiming to "gradually limit" religion in the public sphere and shifted toward a harsher policy line aimed at "completely eliminating" religious life. Following 2014, under the leadership of Xi Jinping, this oppression gained a more institutional and visible character in line with the goal of harmonizing religious beliefs and practices with the CCP's socialist ideology. The steps taken during this period prepared the ideological and political ground for the strategy of the "sinicization of religions", which officially came into effect in 2017; thus, religion has become an area that is not only brought under control but also subjected to state ideology (ETHR, 2024).

The related strategy was expressed in the report presented by

17.04.2025

In its report "It Does Matter Where You Stay" published in April 2025, the Uygur Human Rights Project (UHRP) states that 155 international hotels are actively operating in East Turkistan, while at least 74 others are in the construction, planning or development phases. The report notes that this expansion progresses in parallel with the Chinese government's policy of "normalizing" the region as a global tourism hub. It is alleged that international brands such as Hilton, IHG and Wyndham operate in areas managed by the state-sponsored Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (Bingtuan) and that some hotels have been constructed on the sites of demolished mosques.

Chinese President Xi Jinping

25.09.2025

China has released a new White Paper that recasts its policies of control and assimilation in East Turkistan as "cultural progress". Published during Xi Jinping's visit to the region for the 70th anniversary celebration, the document departs from previous counter-terrorism and stability-based narrative, instead portraying East Turkistan as a "wonderful land" and a model of "modernization" and "ethnic harmony". The White Paper emphasizes the "Sinicization" of religious and cultural life, asserting that religious activities must be state-sanctioned and aligned with socialist values. Furthermore, it categorizes independent religious practices as a potential threat.

Xi Jinping at the 19th Congress of the CCP in October 2017 as follows: the basic policy of the Party on religious affairs will be fully implemented, and active guidance will be provided to religions to adapt to socialist society by supporting the principle that religions in China must be Chinese-oriented [zhongguohua]. Furthermore, it was emphasized at the congress that socialist ideology and the Marxist heritage would be integrated into the religious values and beliefs of individuals (Vermander, 2019).

Although Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China states that it guarantees the religious freedoms of citizens, all religious groups and affiliated organizations must be registered by the state under the Religious Affairs Regulations. The state creates a comprehensive control mechanism over religious life by holding the authority to determine which religious activities are legal within the context of these registered groups (Turkel, 2022). This contradiction between the aforementioned constitutional guarantee and actual practice deepens as the legal framework drawn by the Religious Affairs Regulations is implemented through institutional and administrative

24.10.2025

Investigative journalist Taha Kılınç reported that he personally observed systematic pressure specifically on religious life during his visits to Ghulja, Kashgar, Yarkand, Hotan, Urumqi, and Turpan. According to Kılınç, religious practices are viewed as a security threat by the Chinese administration, and fundamental religious elements such as headscarves, beards, greetings, and the adhan are banned on the grounds of "radicalism". Kılınç stated that he did not hear even a single sound of the adhan throughout his journey and that mosques have lost their religious and social functions by being converted into museums or symbolic venues. Furthermore, he reported that religion in East Turkistan is being systematically purged from both public and individual spheres.

Taha Kılınç

tools by the State Administration for Religious Affairs ([Guojia Zongjiao Shiwu Ju]), and it becomes even more evident as the religious sphere is directly tied to party-state supervision. Indeed, starting in 2018, the State Administration for Religious Affairs published seven separate management measures in various fields such as religious groups (2020), pilgrimage (2020), clergy (2021), religious educational institutions (2021), online religious information services (2022), and venues for religious activities (2022, 2023), bringing religious activities under supervision in a progressive manner (Lavička, 2024).

The Xi Jinping government, which defines Islam as a "contagious disease" has been targeting many places of worship since 2016 in line with the "counter-terrorism" narrative, and either attempts to harmonize structures found in Islamic architecture—such as mosques, madrasas, minarets, and domes, which it describes as "Arabized" structures—with China's traditional architecture or converts these places into structures serving different purposes such as hotels, restaurants, or bars (ETHR, 2024). In this context, as of 2017, more than 16.000 mosques have been demolished or converted, and approximately 65% of all mosques in the region have been confiscated by the Chinese government (Traversing Tradition, 2025).

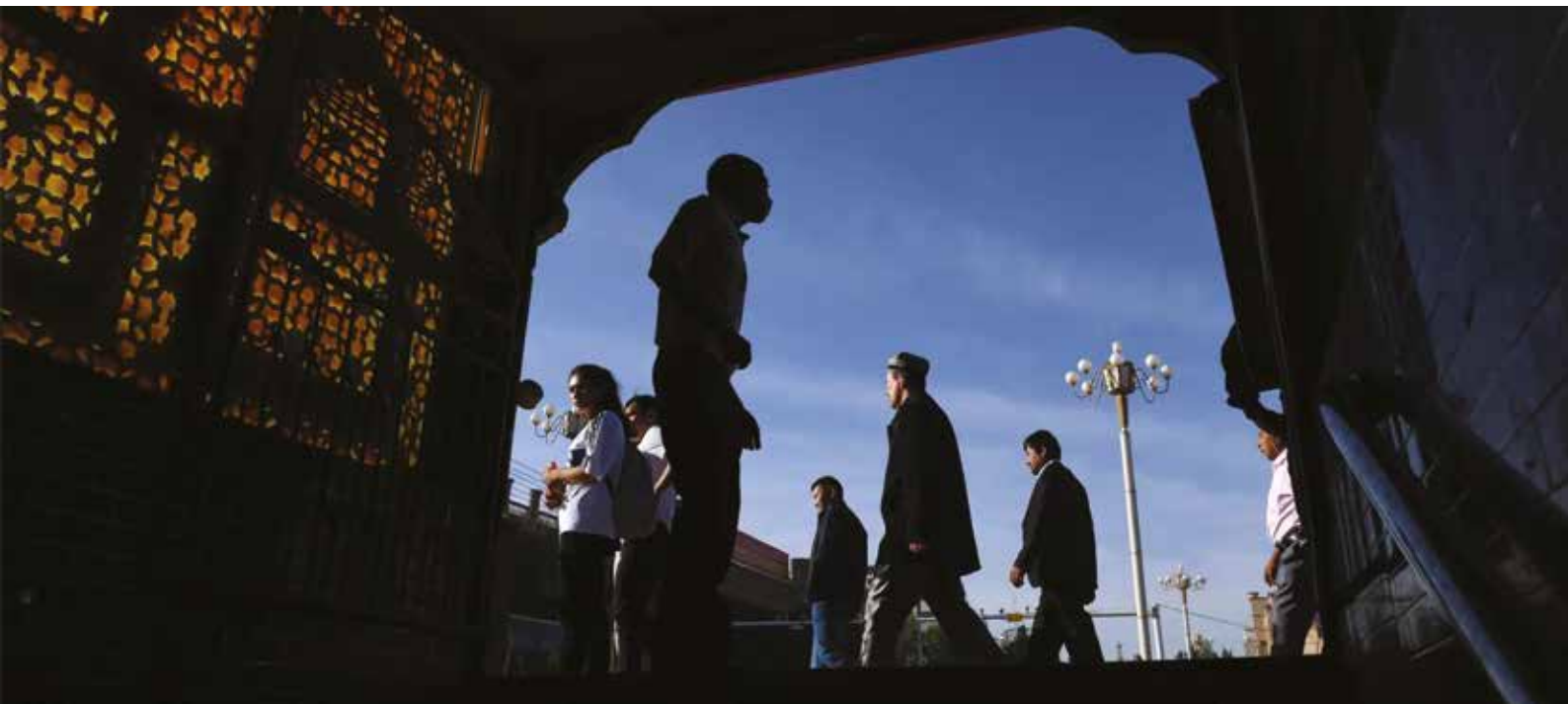
The policies of the CCP targeting religious beliefs, particularly Islam, are driven by: religious belief acting as a "rival power" to party ideology as individuals show loyalty to a value above the party; the religion becoming an independent identity that the Party cannot control as a result of the failure to erase religious beliefs from society; and the potential of individuals belonging to the same religion to become solidary and independent social forces clashing with party authority. This situation demonstrates that religious beliefs are perceived as an existential threat (Turkel, 2022).

The religious oppression policies implemented by China against the peoples of East Turkistan have gained momentum in the last 15 years with the innovations brought by technological developments. In this context,

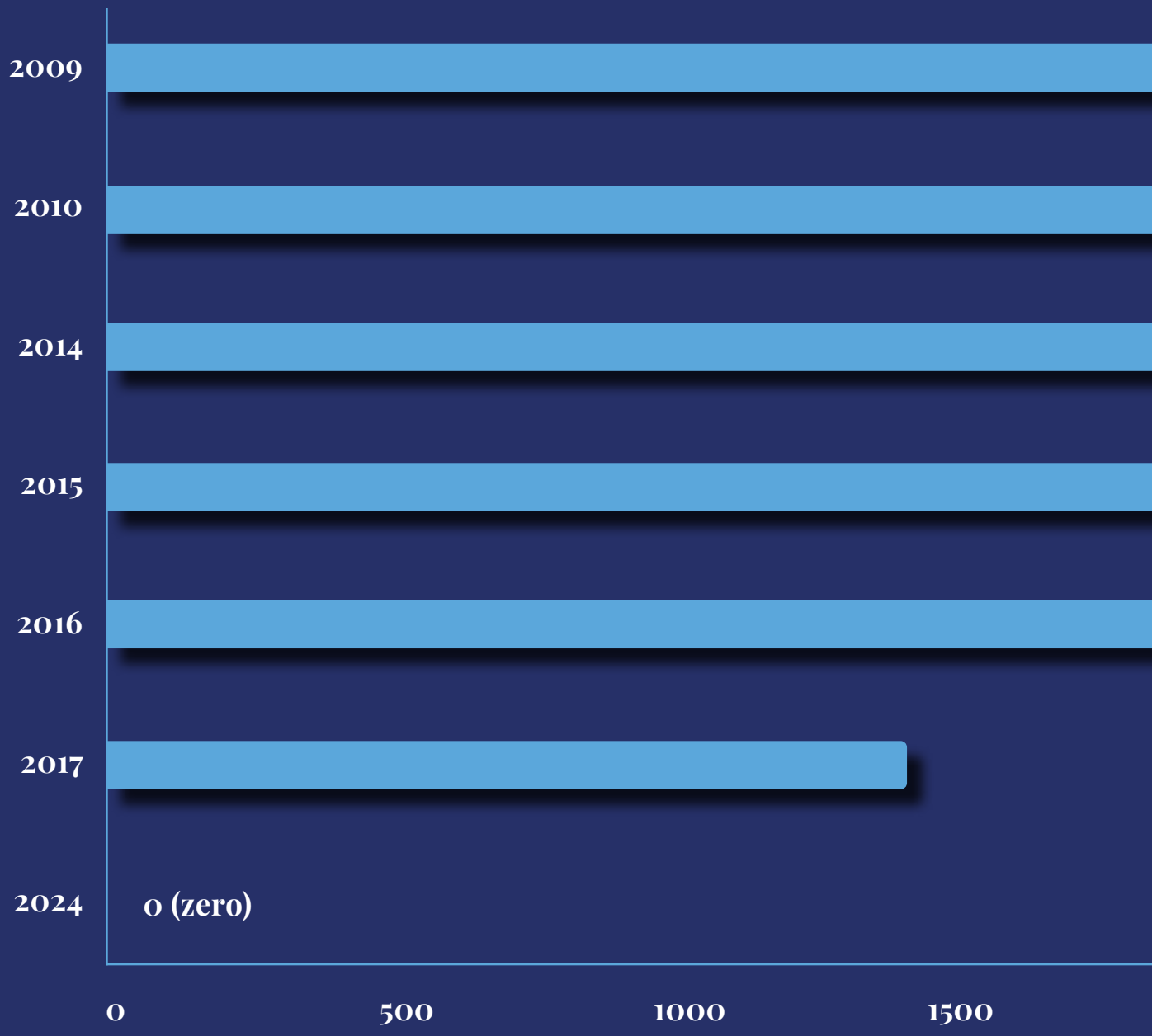
cities and villages in the region are equipped with facial recognition software to track the religious activities of citizens through video cameras; even online activities such as sharing a religious text can be considered a "radical tendency" (Nardi, 2019). In addition to these monitoring mechanisms, comprehensive restrictions targeting religious practices for Muslims are implemented. Within this scope, women are prohibited from wearing headscarves and men from growing beards; Muslims are requested to provide footage while eating to prove they are not fasting during the month of Ramadan. Citizens who do not act in accordance with the government's demands are accepted as a "religious extremist" and taken to indoctrination camps, where they are subjected to both psychological and physical violence.

To manipulate public opinion regarding this systematic religious oppression carried out on the Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples in East Turkistan, China organizes regional visits for journalists and delegations from various countries and tries to cover up human rights violations by drawing attention to economic developments in the region through local development indicators. In contrast, independent researchers and field observers who have had the chance to go to the region reveal that the picture shown by China completely contradicts the actual living conditions. Indeed, one of the most recent names to visit the region, journalist-researcher Taha Kılınç, stated in his book written after the field visit that he did not see Muslim women with headscarves or bearded men on the streets; that the few mosques open to tourist visits could only be entered through ID or passport control performed by officers at the door; that no one other than those whose names appeared on lists held by officers was allowed to enter local mosques; that he did not hear any sound of the adhan during prayer times; that no Arabic works were included on the shelves inside the mosque; and that he avoided even asking Uyghurs questions regarding "where one could pray" in order not to endanger the Uyghurs in the region (Kılınç, 2025).

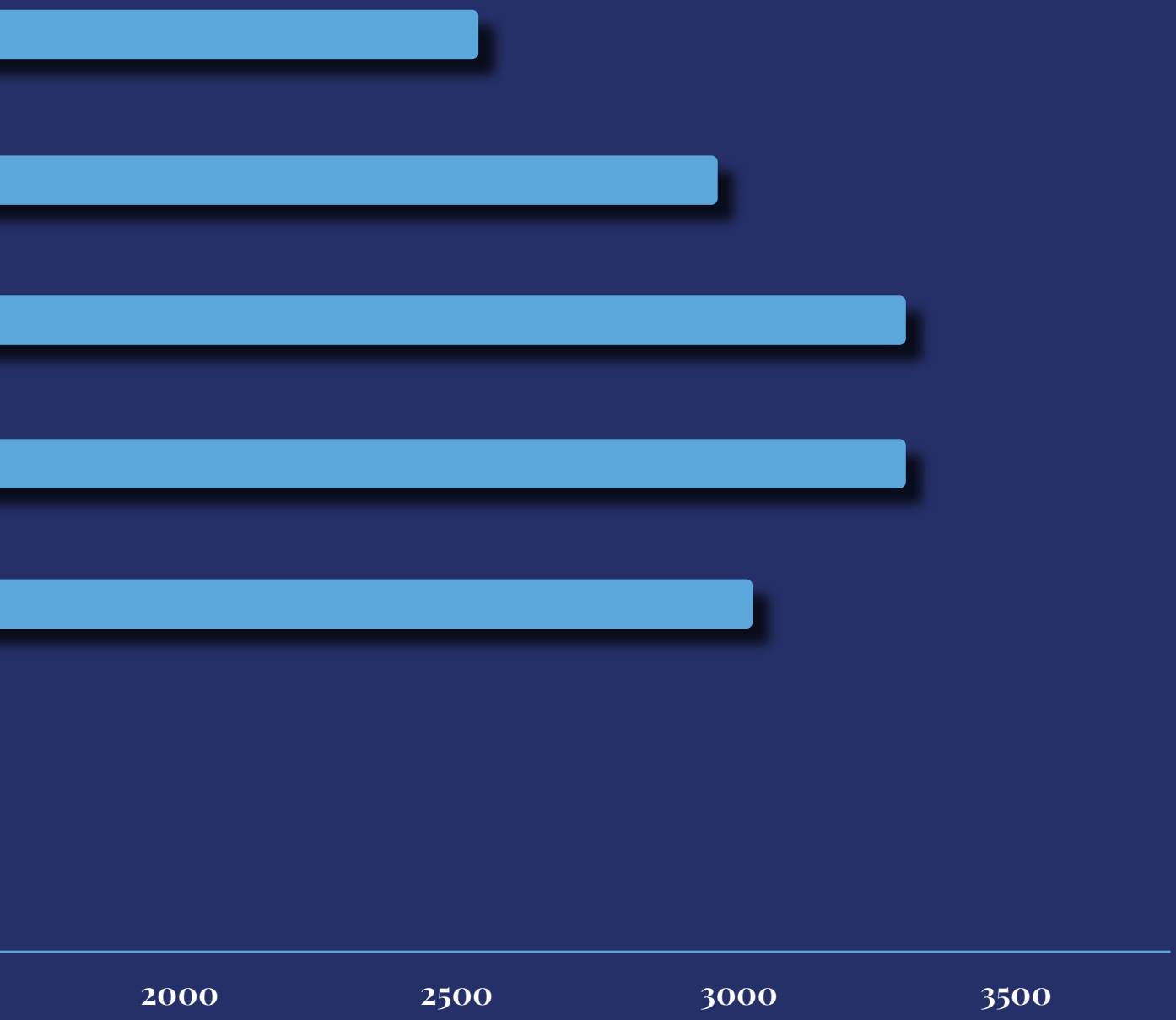
China's policies against the people of East Turkistan clearly contradict fundamental international human rights norms that guarantee an individual's freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. These practices not only violate the principle of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion guaranteed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) but also, constitute a breach of an individual's freedom to choose, live, and practice their religion, which is explicitly protected under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966). In this framework, the policies in question demonstrate that international obligations for religious beliefs to be lived freely not only in the private sphere but also in public and social life are being systematically violated.



Pilgrims from East Turkistan who traveled



to Saudi Arabia for Hajj (2009-2024)



Source: China Arabic, 2009; Yangtze River Daily, 2010; China National Radio, 2014; China National Energy Broadcasting Network, 2015; China National Radio Xinjiang Channel, 2016; Deutsche Welle, 2018; Radio Free Asia, 2024.

1949

The People's Republic of China was established, and East Turkistan was occupied.

1955

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region was established.

1958

During the "Great Leap Forward," religion was defined as "reactionary," and Islamic practices were suppressed.

1966-1976

During the Cultural Revolution, religion was banned, and mosques were closed or demolished.

1980

During the Reform period, limited freedom was granted to worship and religious institutions.

2025

The Chinese administration institutionalized oppression on religious freedoms by continuing its policies of "Sinicization" and digital surveillance in East Turkistan.

2024

The scope of regulations for the "Sinicization of Islam" was expanded with the revision of the XUAR Religious Affairs Regulation.

2022

Thousands of files known as the "Xinjiang Police Files," containing instructions for camp police and images of detainees, were leaked to international media.

2019

Major leaks regarding mass surveillance and indoctrination camps were published; in response, Chinese officials claimed the camps were closed due to international pressure.

Source: ETHR, Religious Persecution Report in East Turkistan (2024)

1989

The security-oriented approach was strengthened post-Tiananmen; religion was viewed as an "ethnic threat".

1994

Religious activities were strictly regulated and tied to state permission.

2001

Using 9/11 as a justification, oppression was intensified through the "counter-terrorism" narrative.

2014

Xi Jinping established indoctrination camps under the name of "re-education centers" in East Turkistan through the "Strike Hard Campaign against Terrorism." In the same year, the Xinjiang Religious Affairs Regulation was revised, tightening controls over religious rights.

2015

Xi Jinping called for the "Sinicization of Religions" at the United Front Work Conference.

2016

With Chen Quanguo becoming the Party Secretary, state intervention toward East Turkistanis increased, and many were taken to indoctrination camps. Chinese officials launched the "IJOP System" for strict surveillance.

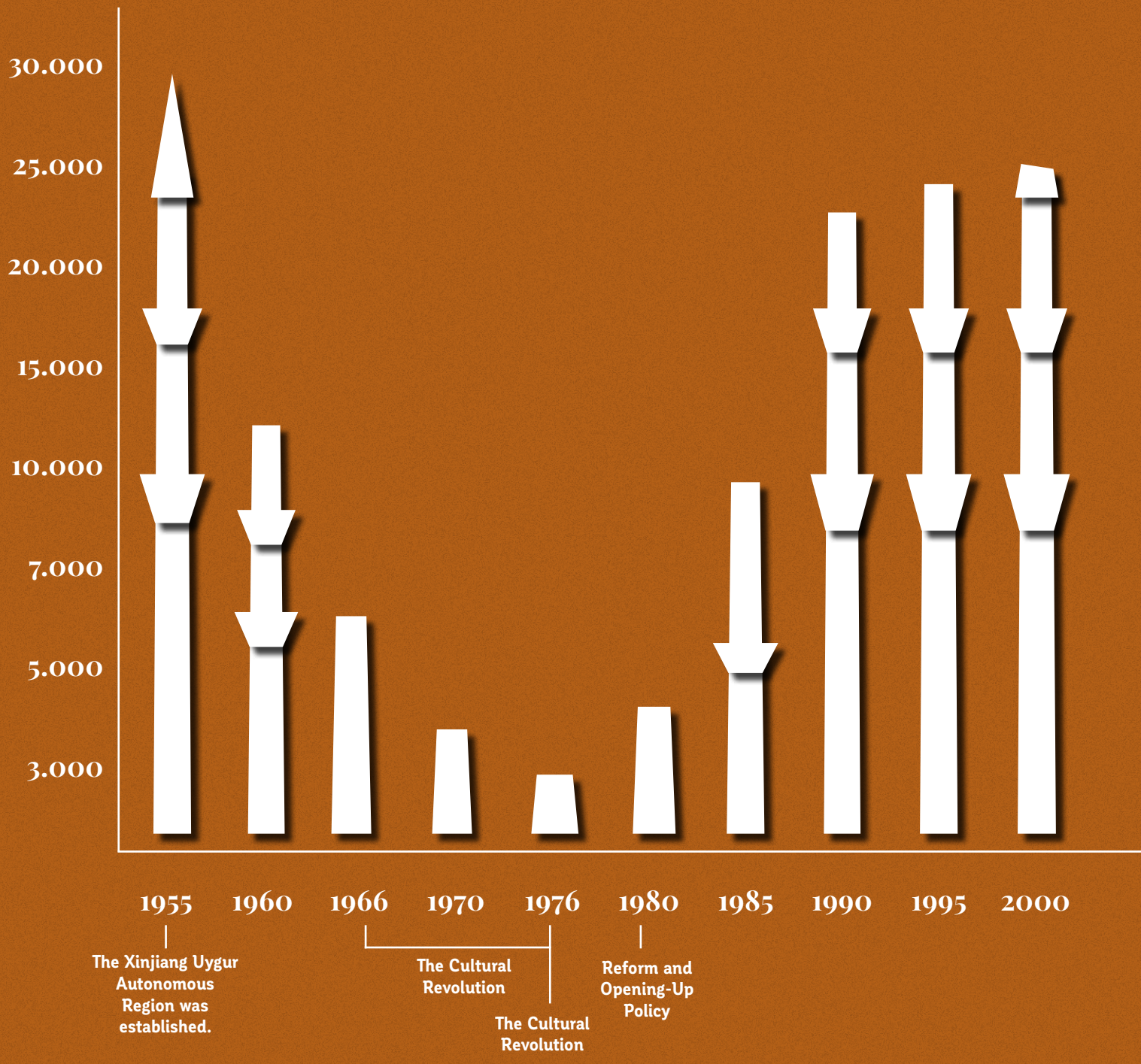
2017

With the revision of the Religious Affairs Regulation and the enactment of the "Regulation on De-extremification," religious oppression and mass detentions intensified. Monitoring activities were maximized with the appointment of one Chinese official to every ten households.

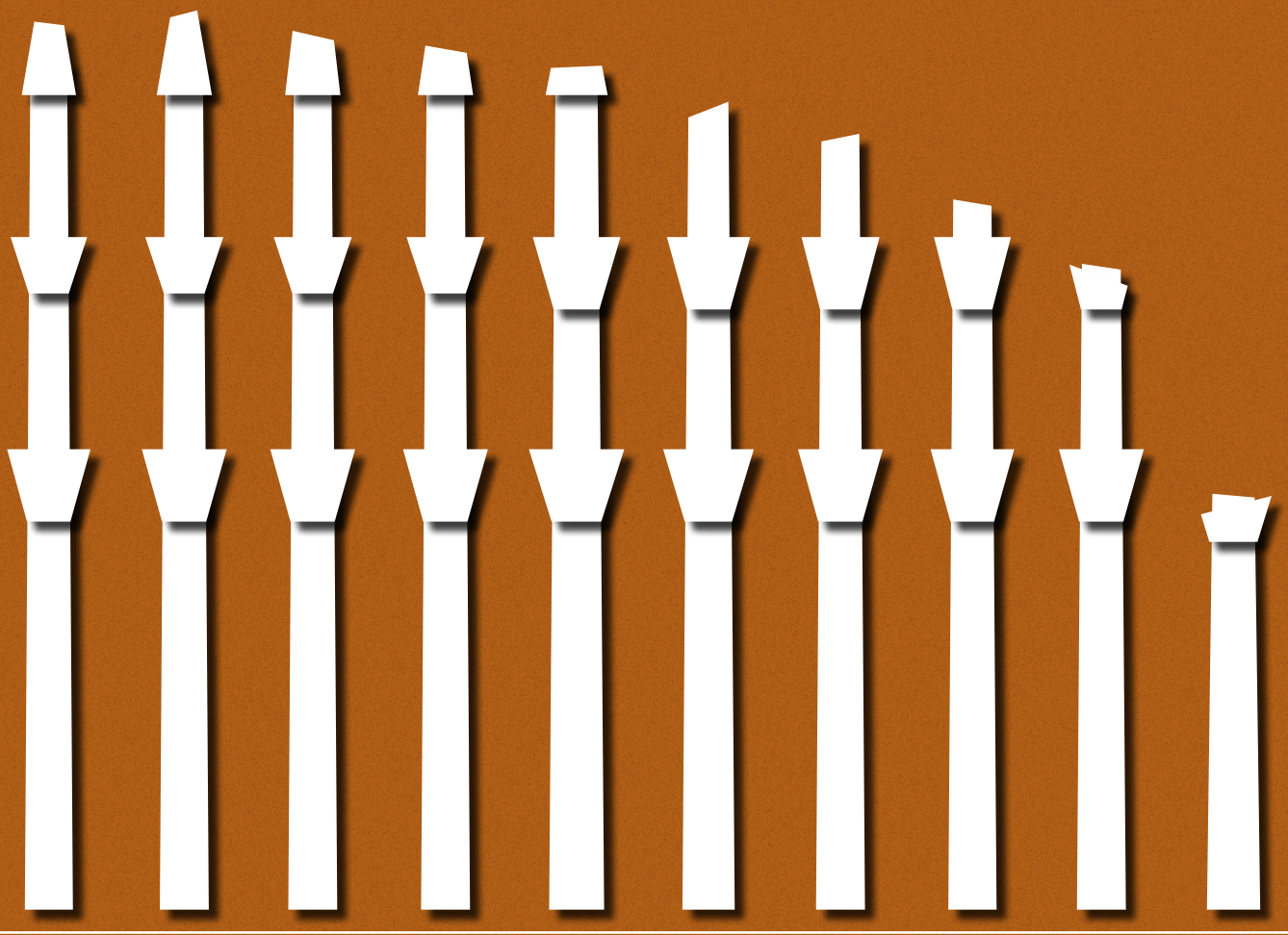
2018

The China Islamic Association published the "Five-Year Plan Outline for the Sinicization of Islam," and measures related to the Anti-Terrorism Law came into effect.

Distribution by Year of the Number of Places of Worship (Mosques and Masjids) and Sacred Places (Shrines, Graves, etc.) in East Turkistan from 1955 to 2020



Kaynak: Li Xiaoxia, Sociology of Ethnicity (2018); Ruser et al., ASPI (2020)



2008 2009 2012 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Urumqi Massacre

Xi Jinping came to power.

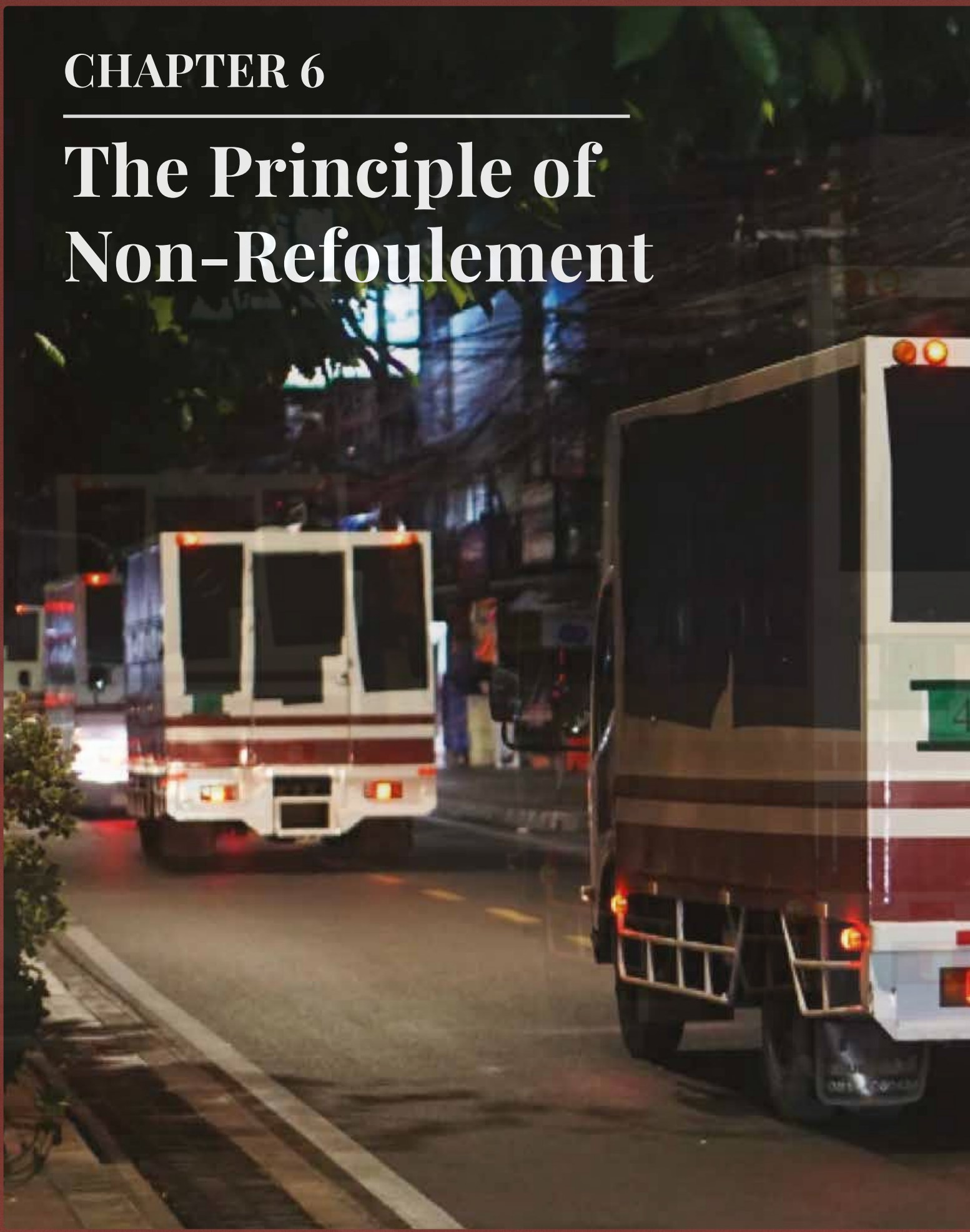
The Strike Hard Campaign Against Terrorism was announced.

The Sinicization policy was implemented.

Indoctrination camps began to be constructed.

CHAPTER 6

The Principle of Non-Refoulement



East Turkistan is the shameful tableau of the 21st century and of humanity itself. While the Uyghur Turks are enduring one of the most systematic genocides in modern history under the silent gaze of the world, East Turkistan's underground and surface resources are being exploited, and millions of Uyghur Turks are condemned to modern slavery in labor camps reminiscent of Nazi camps. This oppression, which penetrates homes under the pretext of "Brother Families," has made rape, violence, and the violation of family privacy and honor part of everyday life. Today, East Turkistan has become a dark prison where human dignity is gasping for life and where oppression knows no bounds. This is not merely the annihilation of a people—it is a test of humanity's conscience. It must be remembered that remaining silent in the face of this genocide is tantamount to complicity.

Assoc. Prof. Uğur Dolgun
Faculty Member, Istanbul University

Resources:

27.02.2025

Thailand deported at least 40 Uyghurs to China despite warnings from human rights organizations regarding the risks of torture, forced disappearance, and long-term imprisonment. It was confirmed that the Uyghurs, who had been held in an immigration detention center in Bangkok for approximately 10 years, were sent to East Turkistan in secrecy during the early hours. The Thai government stated that the decision was made because no third country would accept the Uyghurs in question and that "assurances" regarding the individuals' safety had been provided by Chinese authorities.

16.05.2025

Yerzhanat Abai, a 23-year-old Kazakh youth who fled East Turkistan and took refuge in Kazakhstan, faces the risk of forced deportation to China after being detained by Kazakh police. Abai had entered Kazakhstan one month prior to his detention and, concealing his identity due to security concerns, had sought assistance from Atajurt Volunteers, a local human rights organization. Human rights organizations and international institutions are calling on Kazakhstan to comply with the United Nations conventions on the prevention of torture and refugee status, urging the country not to deport Abai, to provide necessary legal protection, and to carry out asylum procedures.

ANALYSIS

The principle of non-refoulement is a rule with no exceptions in international law that mandates individuals must not be returned under any circumstances to countries where they face the risk of torture, persecution, death, or inhumane treatment (UNHCR, 2025). In this context, inhumane practices implemented against Uyghurs in China—such as isolation, electric shocks, prolonged standing or sleep deprivation, physical violence, and other methods of torture; systematic discrimination based on ethnic origin and religious identity; arbitrary detentions justified by worship, attire, and the use of the mother tongue; the risk of death resulting from torture and severe medical interventions; and the lack of hygiene, malnutrition, and denial of access to medical care observed in indoctrination camps—clearly position China as a country posing a risk within the scope of the principle in question.

Hundreds of Uyghurs who crossed into Thailand from China's interior regions via irregular means during 2013–2014 were arrested by Thai security forces. In 2015, while 172 of them (consisting of women and children) were rescued through Türkiye's initiative and transferred to Türkiye, 109 Uyghurs,

Indoctrination Camp (Kashgar)

10.11.2025

According to reports by Der Spiegel and Deutsche Welle, Reziwanguli Baikeli, an asylum seeker from East Turkistan in Germany, was put on a flight to Beijing by local authorities in Lower Saxony in early November 2025, even though the decision by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees envisioned her being sent to Türkiye. It was reported that Baikeli managed to escape being returned to China at the last minute; after a brief stay at Beijing Airport, she traveled to Istanbul via Dubai with the assistance of her daughter. German officials claimed that the deportation had to be carried out to China after Turkish authorities notified them that Baikeli did not hold Turkish citizenship.

12.11.2025

It is alleged that Uyghurs living in Türkiye face various difficulties regarding their residency rights and international protection statuses after fleeing China. It was argued that some Uyghurs have been classified as a 'threat to public security' through 'restriction codes' applied in police and immigration records. It was reported that these individuals are held under administrative detention from time to time and are directed to sign "voluntary return" forms.

consisting entirely of adult males, were deported to China in the same year. The Uyghurs deported to China were subjected to various forms of torture and interrogation, and most of the Uyghurs remaining in Thailand either lost their lives or escaped during the process. The last 48 Uyghurs remaining in the country were deported to China in 2025 from the Immigration Bureau Center in Soi Suan Phlu in Bangkok's Yannawa district, where they were being held in detention (ETHR, 2025). Regarding this issue, while China is defined as a "high-risk country," it is also stated that the Uyghurs sent from Thailand to China in February were systematically detained and subjected to "re-education" processes on the allegation that they had been 'exposed to radicalization' (Rojanaphruk, 2025).

According to data from Safeguard Defenders and Freedom House, China forcibly returned more than 230.000 people to China between 2014 and 2022 (ARTICLE 19, 2025). The fate of the Uyghurs returned to China mostly ended in physical and psychological violence, or the individuals in question were never heard from again. Indeed, of the 21 Uyghurs returned from Egypt to

20.11.2025

According to two sources speaking to the French news agency AFP, the Syrian government announced that it is preparing to hand over individuals of Uyghur origin to Beijing upon China's request. Allegedly, plans are underway to extradite approximately 400 Uyghurs to China as part of Foreign Minister Asaad al-Sheibani's first visit to the country. On the other hand, Syria's official news agency SANA denied these reports in a statement citing an 'authorized source' within the Foreign Ministry.

Chinese Activist Guan Heng

20.12.2025

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security withdrew its plan to deport Chinese activist Guan Heng, who documented human rights violations against Uyghurs in East Turkistan. According to rights advocates, the decision was made following mounting public and Congressional pressure regarding the risk that Guan could be punished by the Beijing administration if deported to China. Guan, who secretly recorded detention facilities in East Turkistan in 2020, left China in 2021 as he could not publish the footage and entered the U.S. via irregular means; however, he was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in August 2025. While human rights organizations and the U.S. lawmakers called for providing a safe haven for Guan, no official statement was issued by authorities, and it was reported that legal efforts are underway for his release on bail and the continuation of his asylum application.

China in 2017, Abdusalam Mamat and Yasinjan Memtimin died in police custody after returning to China, and no further news was received regarding the rest. Similarly, the family of Ahmet Talip, who returned from the United Arab Emirates to China in 2018, has received no news from him since his return to China (Uyghur Human Rights Project & Oxus Society for Central Asia Affairs, 2021).

In this framework, forced returns to China constitute a clear and grave violation of the principle of non-refoulement and reveal that Uyghurs are exposed to the risk of torture, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, and death. Indeed, this picture demonstrates that, along with China's practices, the states that return Uyghurs to this country also bear responsibility in violation of international human rights law.

Forced returns to China constitute a clear and grave violation of the principle of non-refoulement and demonstrate that Uyghurs are exposed to the risk of torture, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, and death.

Detention and Repatriation Activities Targeting Uyghurs in Thailand (2014-2025)

March 2014

Thai police detained approximately 220 Uyghurs, including men, women, and children, in Songkhla province near the Malaysian border on grounds of illegal border crossing. During the same period, many Uyghurs caught in different regions of Thailand were also transferred to immigration detention centers in Bangkok.

July 2015

Approximately 170 Uyghur women and children detained in Thailand were sent to Türkiye. About a week after this transfer, Thai authorities forcibly handed over more than 100 Uyghur men to Chinese officials and sent them to China.

2014–2024

The remaining 48 Uyghurs were held in conditions of de facto isolation for over ten years in immigration detention centers in Bangkok from 2014 to 2024; throughout this period, their access to lawyers, family members, and representatives of international organizations was denied. During a similar period, at least five Uyghurs, including a newborn baby and a three-year-old child, died in custody.

March 3, 2025

United Nations bodies and human rights organizations strongly condemned Thailand for the forced return carried out via a secret night operation.

January 10, 2025

Attempts were made to make 43 of the 48 detained Uyghurs sign "voluntary return" documents; thereupon, the Uyghurs who refused to sign the documents began a hunger strike.

February 27, 2025

In the early morning hours, multiple trucks with windows covered in black tape left the immigration center in Bangkok where the 48 Uyghurs were held. Shortly after, an unscheduled China Southern Airlines plane took off from Bangkok Don Mueang Airport and landed in the Kashgar prefecture of East Turkistan approximately six hours later. Later in the day, the Thai Minister of Defense confirmed that the deportation process had been carried out.

January 10–27, 2025

The hunger strike continued for approximately 17 days. During this process, the Uyghurs appealed to the international community not to be sent back to China, stating that they would face the risk of imprisonment, torture, or death if returned.

February 26, 2025

At approximately 20:00 local time, a large detention vehicle was seen entering the Suan Phlu detention compound; this activity strengthened suspicions that the Uyghurs would be transferred to the airport.

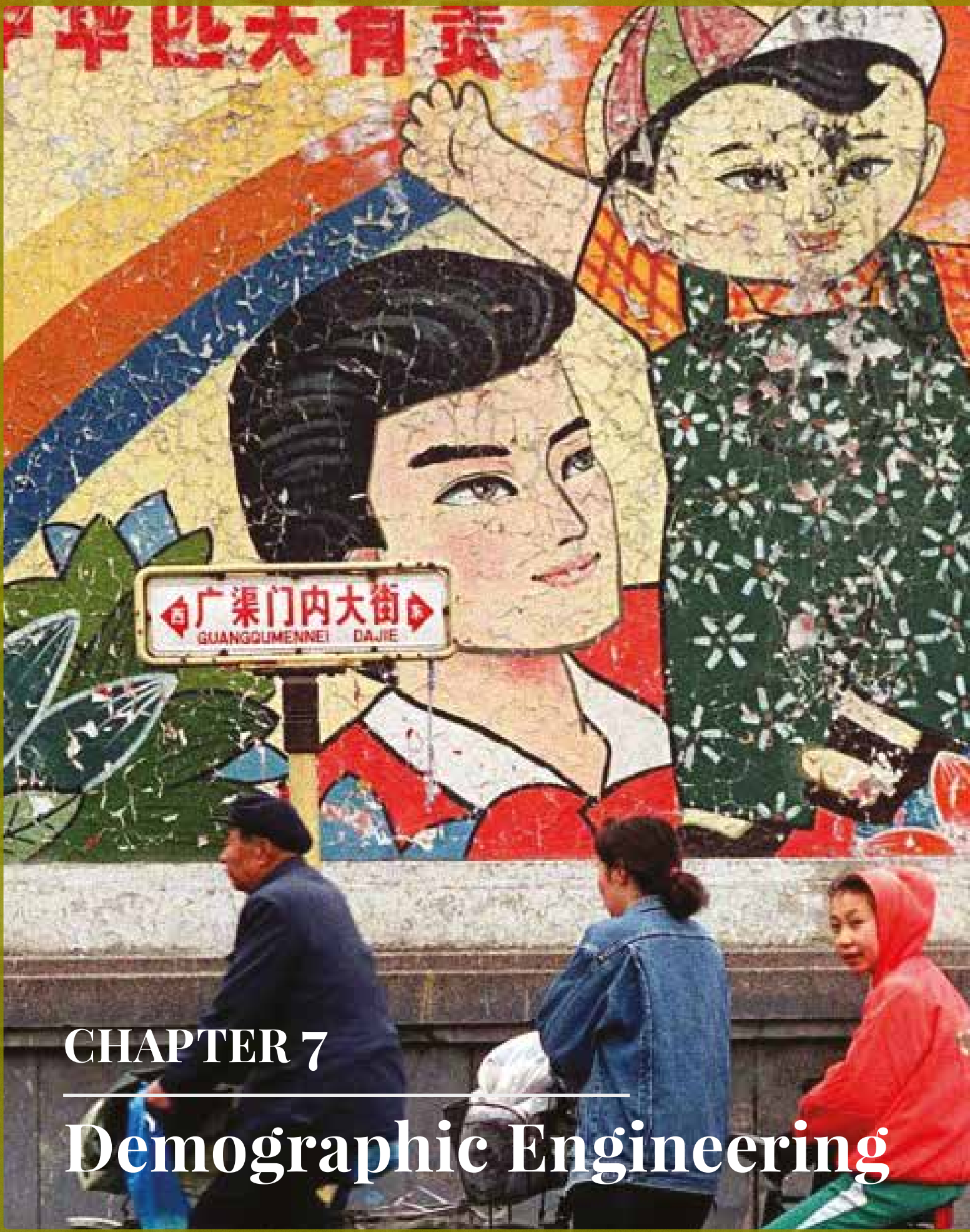
January 21–25, 2025

While United Nations mechanisms called on the Thai government to immediately halt the deportation of the 48 Uyghurs, families and human rights circles raised serious concerns regarding the condition of the detainees due to the hunger strike and deteriorating health conditions during the same days.

February 4, 2025

The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, emphasizing its commitment to the principle of non-refoulement, called on the government to seriously consider the option of resettling the Uyghurs to a third country.

Source: Bitter Winter (2025); OHCHR (2025); Human Rights Watch (2025); Freedom House (2025); Al Jazeera (2025); ISHR (2025); The Guardian (2025); UHRP (2025); Amnesty International (2025)



CHAPTER 7

Demographic Engineering

Doğu Türkistan İnsan Hakları İhlalleri Endeksi 2025, Doğu Türkistan'da yaşanan hak ihlallerini özellikle zorla yerinden edilme, nüfus mühendisliği ve yapısal göç politikaları bağlamında görünür kılan, son derece önemli ve referans niteliğinde bir çalışmadır. Endeks, güvenlik ve kalkınma söylemleri altında yürütülen politikaların; kitlesel gözetim, zorla çalıştırma, kültürel ve dini baskılar yoluyla Uygur halkını yaşadığı topraklardan koparmayı, iç ve dış göçe zorlamayı ve demografik yapıyı kalıcı biçimde dönüştürmeyi hedefleyen sistematik bir devlet pratiği olduğunu açık biçimde ortaya koymaktadır.

Uluslararası Mülteci Hakları Derneği (UMHD) olarak, Endeks'te belgelenen uygulamaların yalnızca bireysel insan hakları ihlalleri olarak değerlendirilemeyeceğini; ülke içinde yerinden edilmeler ve zorla yaratılan göç akışları yoluyla seyahat ve yerleşme özgürlüğü ile aile hayatına saygı ve aile bütünlüğünün korunması gibi uluslararası insan hakları hukukunda güvence altına alınmış temel hakların sistematik biçimde ihlal edildiğini tespit etmekteyiz.

Endeks'in sunduğu veriler, Doğu Türkistan'daki ihlallerin klasik anlamda bir "iç güvenlik" meselesi değil; zorla yerinden edilme yoluyla kimliksizleştirme ve mekânsal kopuş üreten yapısal bir süreç olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda rapor, Birleşmiş Milletler Şartı ile Medeni ve Siyasi Haklar Sözleşmesi'nin ortak 1. maddesinde güvence altına alınan halkların kendi kaderini tayin hakkının, yalnızca siyasal statüyle sınırlı olmayıp; yerleşim, kültürel süreklilik ve toplumsal bağların korunması boyutlarını da kapsadığını güçlü biçimde ortaya koymaktadır.

UMHD, bu çalışmayı aynı zamanda zorla yerinden edilenler, sürgün edilen topluluklar ve diasporada yaşayan Uygurlar açısından önemli bir belgeleme ve hafıza çalışması olarak değerlendirmektedir. Endeks, sahadan beslenen verilerle, göç ve yerinden edilmenin yalnızca bir "sonuç" değil; bizzat uygulanan bir yönetim ve kontrol tekniği olduğunu göstermekte, uluslararası koruma mekanizmalarının bu gerçeklik üzerinden harekete geçirilmesi gerektiğine işaret etmektedir.

Bu çerçevede Doğu Türkistan İnsan Hakları İhlalleri Endeksi 2025'in; Birleşmiş Milletler mülteci ve yerinden edilme mekanizmaları, özel raportörlükler ve sözleşme organları nezdinde yürütülecek inceleme süreçlerine, ayrıca zorla yerinden edilme ve nüfus mühendisliği bağlamında devlet sorumluluğunun tartışılmasına somut katkı sunmasını temenni ediyoruz. Doğu Türkistan'daki zorunlu göç ve yerinden edilme pratiklerinin belgelenmesi, yalnızca bölgesel bir insan hakları meselesi değil; küresel adalet ve insan onurunun korunması açısından hayati önemdedir.

Av. Abdullah Resul Demir
Uluslararası Mülteci Hakları Derneği
Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı

Resources:

çevirisini göremedim

30.01.2025

The Chinese administration announced that "urban transformation" will be implemented in 258 residential areas within cities and towns in East Turkistan throughout 2025. It was stated that 118 of these residential areas are located in Southern East Turkistan and approximately 76.000 people living in the region will be directly affected by this plan. According to experts, the transformation process in question carries the risk of demolishing residences belonging to Uyghur Turks, settling Chinese populations in the new buildings to be constructed in these areas through state hands, and directing the Uyghur people away from city centers toward more rural areas.

02.03.2025

Within the scope of the "Western Region Volunteer Service Plan" for university and graduate students in China for 2025, it is aimed to direct approximately 50.000 young people to the western and border regions of China (including regions where Uyghurs are the majority). Presented as "volunteerism" in the official discourse, this program is implemented as a long-term human resource placement policy effectively planned and encouraged by the state. The service period for the youth varies between one and three years, and they are assigned to different fields in the region with contracts renewed every year. The state provides various support policies in the fields of education, employment, and professional development to encourage the youth, whose service period has ended, to continue working at the local level.

ANALYSIS

The population and settlement policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) toward East Turkistan are shaped as a systematic state strategy aiming to transform the demographic structure and rebuild social order beyond the discourse of "economic development". Migration, employment, and housing policies have become complementary tools within this framework; a permanent demographic transformation has been aimed particularly through directing the Han Chinese population to the region and spatially redistributing the Uyghur population.

In the period between 1950 and 1980, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began settling three million Han Chinese in East Turkistan under various state-supported resettlement programs. Although this demographic engineering was terminated by the state upon Mao's death, millions of voluntary migrants from the interior of China continued to migrate to the region due to job opportunities in the major oil, coal, and natural gas industries in East Turkistan. In addition to this mobility, the CCP began to shift the Uyghur population

28.06.2025

Chinese officials invited thousands of university students, academics, and retired teachers to East Turkistan in June 2025 as part of the program titled “Poplars and Pines Contributing to Xinjiang - The Journey of Ten Thousand People to Build Xinjiang”. Within the scope of the invitation, comprehensive visits were organized to industrial zones, energy facilities, universities, and local settlements to attract qualified human resources to the region and to encourage permanent settlement through long-term employment. The presentation of the region’s economic potential, industrial infrastructure, and “living opportunities” to the participants is being brought to the agenda as part of a more extensive “human settlement and staffing” policy that aims beyond being a temporary and limited observation activity, targeting the permanent settlement of the Han Chinese population in the region and the reshaping of the local demographic structure.

21.12 haberi kısalabili rmi

21.12.2025

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in the region to the east. Over time, the ratio of Han Chinese within the permanent population, which was initially 6%, rose to 42% in less than seventy years (Côté, 2023). This process prepared the ground for the systematic change of the ethnic demographic structure in the region and for Han Chinese to establish economic, social, and cultural superiority.

As an extension of state-supported migration and settlement policies, in 2003, the Standing Committee of the State Council along with the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance launched the “Western Region Volunteer Service Plan for University Students” in line with the spirit of national university graduate employment meetings. Under this plan, a certain number of new university graduates or graduate students are assigned to perform voluntary service for 1 to 3 years in local areas in western China, such as East Turkistan, and volunteers are encouraged to settle in the region and continue

their work and entrepreneurship activities after their service period expires. In 2018, a total of 18.300 people were assigned under this plan, more than 2.100 of whom were graduate students affiliated with the China Youth Volunteers Poverty Alleviation Research Program. In a general framework; since the implementation of the plan began, a total of more than 270 thousand university volunteers have been sent to more than 2.100 districts and settlements affiliated with 22 different provinces, regions, cities, and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (Bingtuan) located in the central and western regions of China (China Youth Network, 2018).

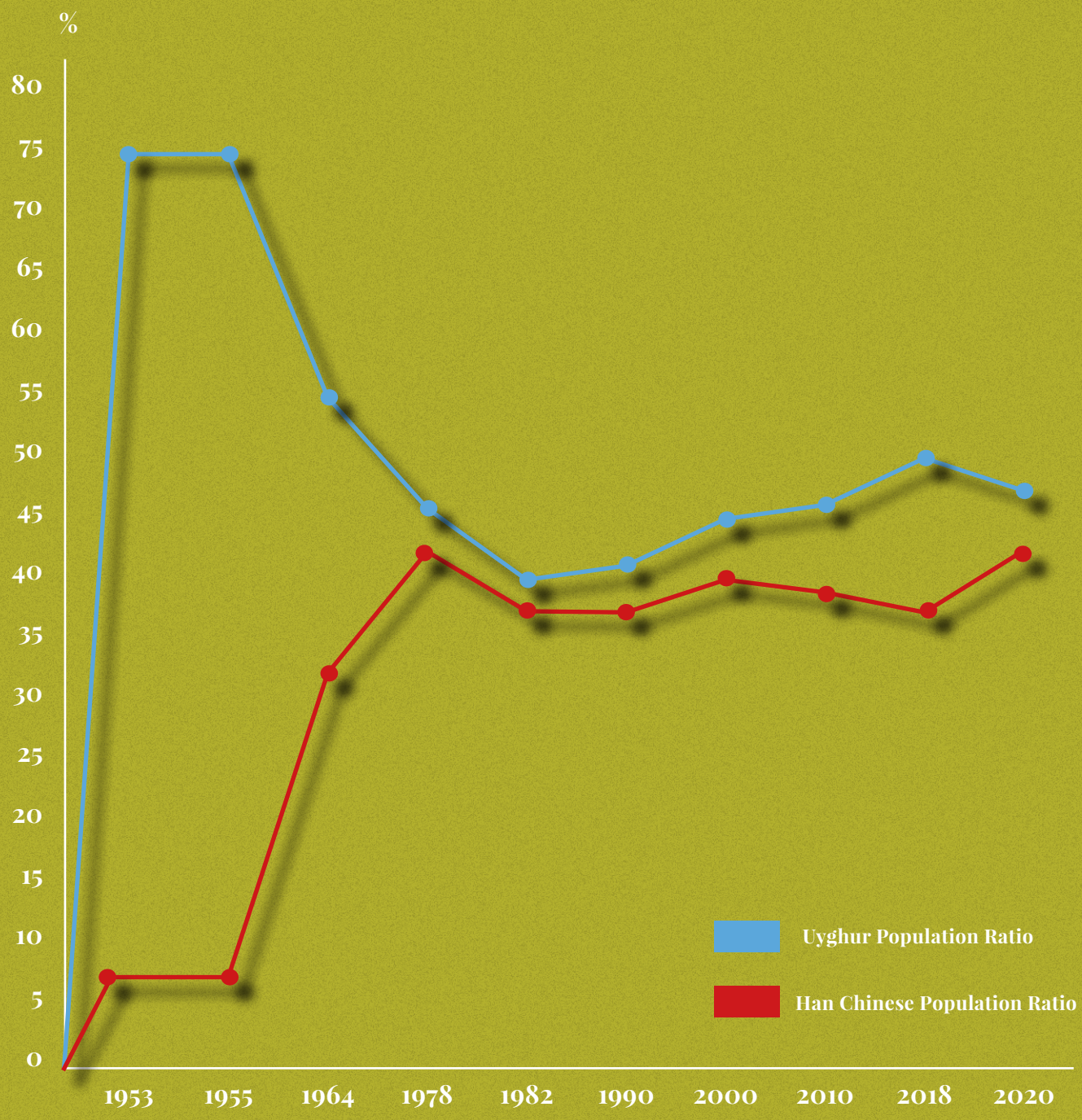
In 2020, a policy was carried out by China's Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps to actively maintain demographic engineering and support it with economic tools. Within this scope, young Han families between the ages of 18–35 who were requested to migrate from other provinces of China to East Turkistan were offered ready-made job positions such as assistant policing and teaching, as well as new housing ranging from 40–80 m^2 according to family size. Additionally, it was aimed to increase the Han Chinese population in the region by providing four years of rent-free stay in these houses, the option to continue renting or purchase after four years, comprehensive health insurance, allocation of 35 decares of agricultural land for each worker, and a monthly living subsidy of up to 1.000 RMB per adult (Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps 3rd Division 50th Regiment, 2020).

In East Turkistan, the proportion of Han Chinese, which was initially 6% of the permanent population, has risen to 42% over a seventy-year period..

Xi Jinping, at the 2024 National Ethnic Unity and Progress Award Conference, emphasized the need to create a "mutually intertwined social structure and social environment" to realize the Chinese Dream goal and to expand the ways of application that will allow all ethnic groups to be more closely connected (Tianshan Net-Xinjiang Daily, 2025); in line with this discourse, policies for the reorganization of ethnic settlements, mixed housing projects, forced labor transfers, and the "integration" of Han–Uyghur populations in the same living and working spaces have gained momentum in East Turkistan.

In this framework, the policies followed in East Turkistan are shaped through the direction of the Han Chinese population to the region with state-supported resettlement programs and the fragmentation of the Uyghur population through forced migration, labor transfers, and spatial redistribution. Housing policies, employment incentives, and urban transformation projects serve as structural tools that make this demographic transformation permanent rather than a temporary intervention. Especially mixed residential areas, Han-centered employment arrangements, and forced labor programs lead to the separation of Uyghurs from the spaces where they historically and culturally concentrate and to the weakening of their social ties. These practices point to a systematic demographic engineering strategy that aims not only to change population ratios but also to eliminate the conditions for the reproduction of ethnic identity by eroding the cultural production areas, spatial continuity, and collective memory of the Uyghur society. In this respect, although the policies in question are carried out under the discourses of "development" and "national unity", they represent a transformation process that in practice deepens ethnic hierarchy and institutionalizes a Han-centered social order.

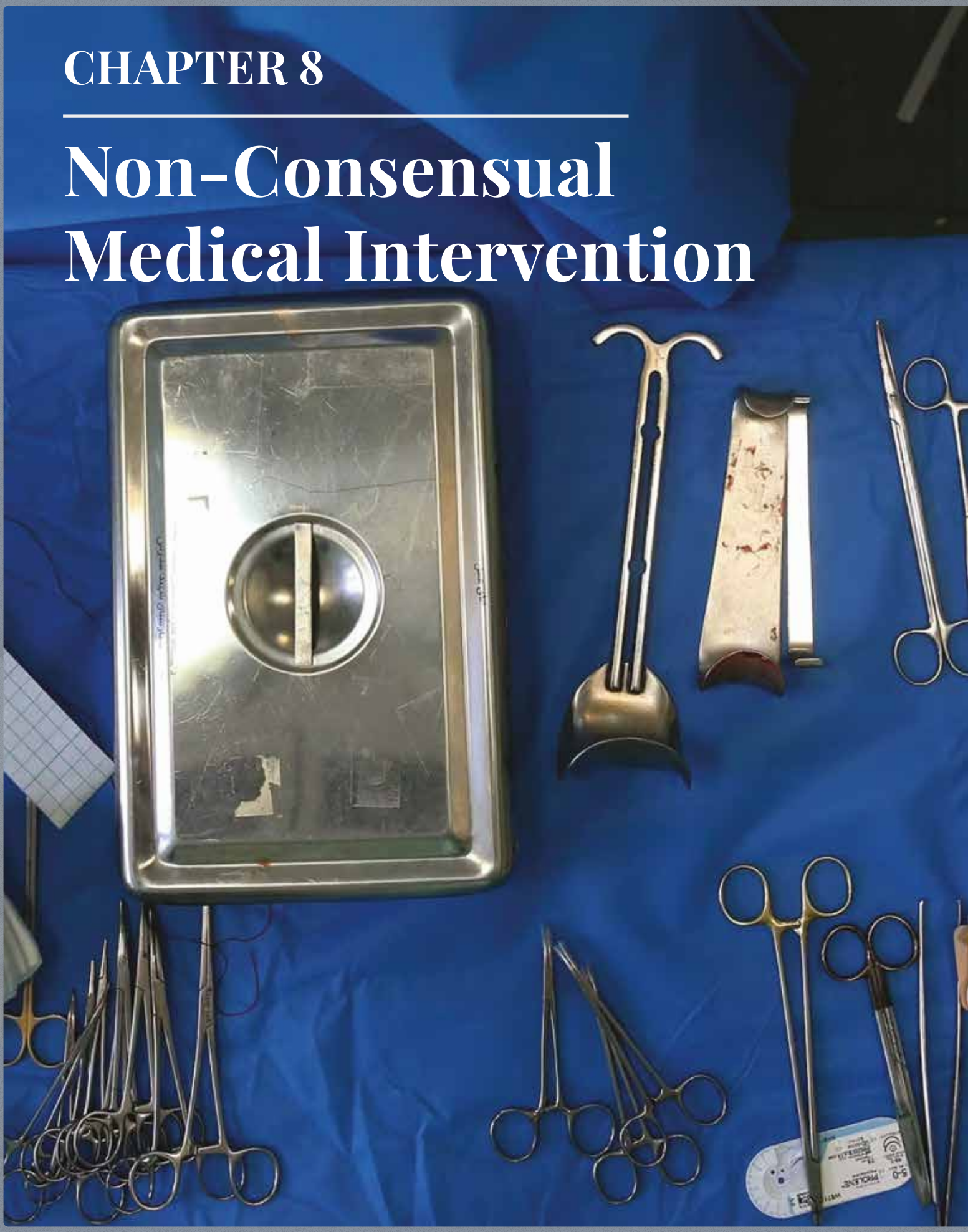
Uyghur and Han Chinese Population Ratios in East Turkistan by Year (1953-2020)



Source: Li & Qiu, 2024; Côté, 2023; Sincan Uygur Özerk Bölgesi Yedinci Ulusal Nüfus Sayımı Yürütme Kurulu Ofisi, 2021; Xiaoxia, 2021; Li, 2021; Akçam, 2017; Toops, 2004

CHAPTER 8

Non-Consensual Medical Intervention



The tensions in our region should not prevent us from witnessing the human rights violations occurring in East Turkistan. As highlighted in the report, the Chinese authorities impose significant censorship to prevent these violations from being seen. It is our duty, however, to be the voice of our people despite all obstacles and disinformation.

Samet Doğan
Journalist

Resources:

04.07.2025

China announced plans to establish six new organ transplant hospitals in East Turkistan by 2030. In contrast, it is reported that the official organ donation rate in the region is only 0,69 per million, significantly below the national average. Human rights observers warn that this expansion could aim to increase forced organ harvesting.

Air Force Hospital (Urumqi)

ANALYSIS

While the average life expectancy of a Chinese citizen was between 60 and 70 years in the second half of the 20th century, Chinese leaders (Deng Xiaoping: 93, Wan Li: 99, Wang Dongxing: 100, Deng Liqun: 100, Zhang Jingfu: 101, Lu Zhengcao: 105, Lei Jieqiong: 106, etc.) reportedly enjoyed longer lives not only due to privileged healthcare provided by the state but also, according to allegations, through organs obtained from young people and prisoners. Indeed, a similar situation was brought to the agenda regarding the wrongful execution of Nie Shubin in 1995 when he was just 20 years old, who was officially recognized as innocent in 2016. Behind Nie's rushed execution lies the allegation that his organs might have been used for the well-known diplomat Zhang Hanzhi, who underwent two kidney transplants during that period (New Tang Dynasty Television, 2025).

In an exclusive interview with Voice of America, German sociologist Matthew Robertson suggested that the organ donation data presented by the Chinese government is "highly unreliable" and that some heart transplant cases could be "extrajudicial executions carried out through medical means." According to the German sociologist, although some signs of reform were observed in China after the voluntary donation policy came into effect in 2015, official data has been seriously manipulated. Furthermore, when Robertson examined three main organ donation datasets shared by Chinese authorities in 2019 using statistical methods, he noticed that these data contained internal contradictions and exhibited a significantly artificial pattern. The emerging picture indicates that the numbers in question consist of pre-fabricated and planned figures, rather than actual donation processes (Voice of America, 2025).

The Australia-based international human rights organization, the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), announced that the Chinese government plans to build 6 more medical centers with organ transplant facilities in East Turkistan by 2030, thereby increasing the total number of centers to 9. It is estimated that with the implementation of the plan, the number of transplant centers will double within 5 years. Although statistics show that only 0,69 people per million are registered for organ donation in East Turkistan, the plan to open 6 new medical centers in

17.07.2025

Oxford University Press (OUP) announced that it will terminate its publishing relationship with the journal Forensic Sciences Research, published by the Ministry of Justice of China and the Institute of Forensic Science of China, effective from 2026. The decision was made due to serious ethical concerns regarding whether blood and DNA samples collected from Uyghur participants in certain research published in the journal were provided voluntarily. OUP had previously issued an "expression of concern" for some controversial articles but had not retracted them.

the region is increasing the international community's attention to this issue.

Furthermore, Wang Zhiyuan, President of the Falun Gong Research Organization, states that China has developed rapid transport networks organized specifically for organ transplantation known as "aviation green passages," and that the geography where such passages are most intensively located is East Turkistan (People's Daily Online, 2025). Another allegation regarding China's organ trade came from Uyghur doctor Enver Tohti, who previously participated in live organ harvesting activities. Tohti stated that the Chinese Communist Party sells the organs of the people of East Turkistan to buyers from Arab countries (People's Daily Online, 2025), adding that these buyers, as "medical tourists," pay high sums to authorities to procure organs from Muslim "donors" who do not consume pork or alcohol.

In this process, it is alleged that "Uyghur donors" selected through DNA matching are declared brain dead and transported from East Turkistan to hospitals in the east. It is stated that a major logistical problem regarding keeping organs alive arose due to the 4.000 km distance between East Turkistan and the relevant hospitals in the east, and that medical personnel began using portable "ECMO machines" to solve this problem. Ethan Gutmann, a researcher at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, stated that with these devices, surgeons can extract even four healthy organs from one person, thereby transforming a single individual into an economic value ranging from $100.000 to $500.000 (Willemyns, 2024).

Another allegation under the heading of non-consensual medical intervention is that the indoctrination camps serve as an 'organ transplant reserve depot' for China. Blood samples are frequently collected from detained Uyghurs and other Turkic origin peoples, their genetic data is recorded, and information regarding blood type and tissue compatibility is systematically classified (New Tang Dynasty Television, 2025). Indeed, Zumret Davut, who was taken to an indoctrination camp in 2018, strengthens the basis of these allegations with her statement: 'Inside, uniformed police were wearing white doctor's coats. All those detained were Uyghur women, aged between 17 and 70. While

Discrepancies in organ donation data in China, new transplant centers, and testimonies regarding indoctrination camps strengthen the allegations that Uyghurs are being targeted for forced organ harvesting.

detained, they were not allowed to bathe, and blood was drawn every 10 days. Every night, some people were taken away.

Also, in addition to the indoctrination camps, it is stated that comprehensive DNA and health databases have been created for Uyghurs. Indeed, Texas physician and representative Tom Oliverson supports this situation by stating that Uyghur and Falun Gong victims are forced by the CCP to undergo tests presented as 'free health screenings'—the results of which are never shared—but that these tests actually aim to determine tissue types and facilitate organ matching. Similarly, researcher Matthew Robertson has suggested that blood samples collected from hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs are subjected to DNA analysis and that this is used to reduce organ rejection (Willemyns, 2024).

In addition to populations settled in the region through state-sponsored policies, demographic engineering policies in East Turkistan have gained momentum through surgical interventions and mandatory medication use targeting women. In this context, with the tweet shared by China's Embassy in Washington on X in December 2020 stating, "...in the process of eradicating extremism, the minds of Uygur women in Xinjiang were emancipated and gender equality and reproductive health were promoted, making them no longer baby-making machines. They are more confident and independent, the Chinese government attempted to legitimize Party policies based on population control targeting Uyghur women in East Turkistan through the discourse of public health" (Anwar, 2025).

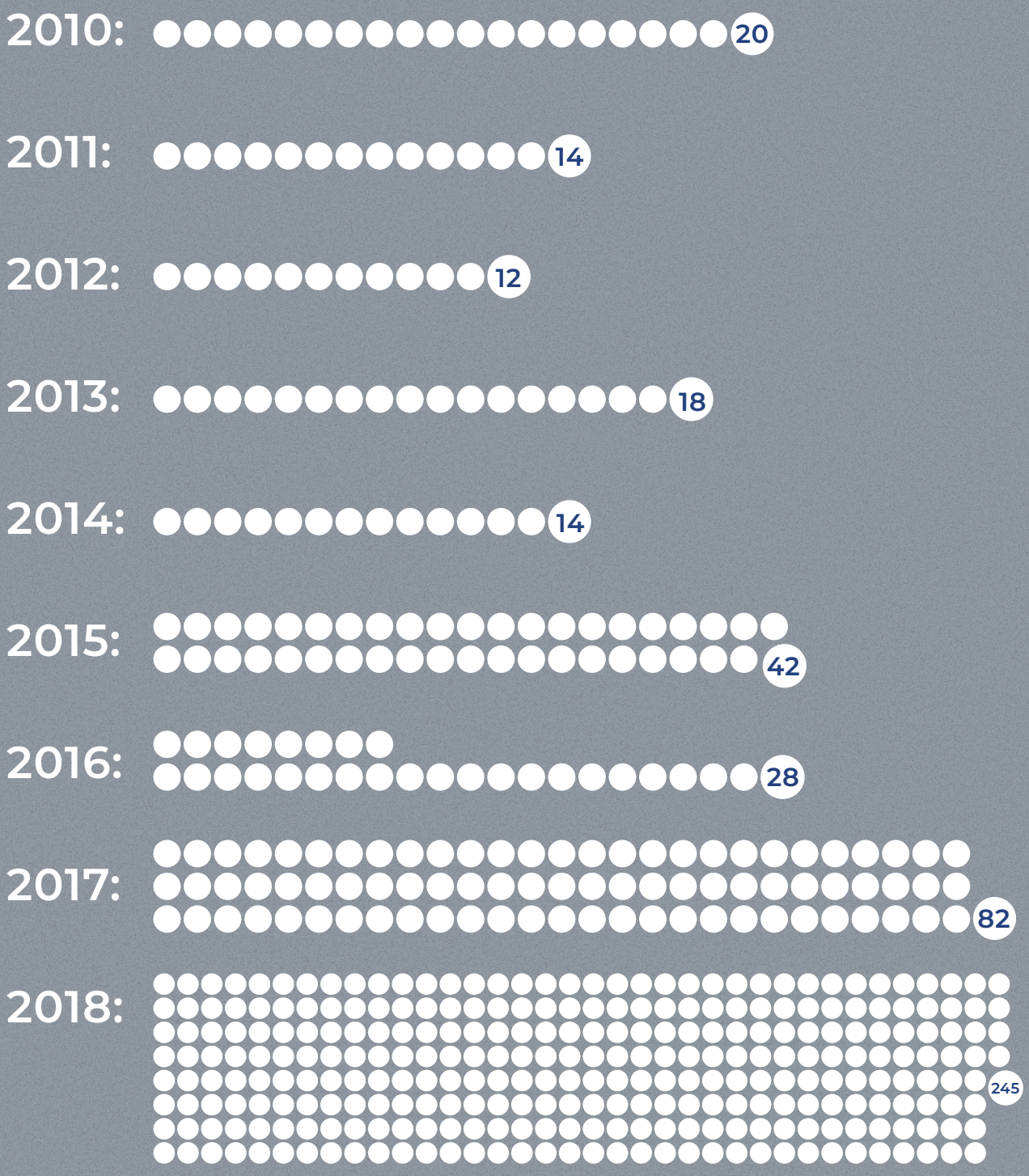
Indeed, the process, which began with an 84% decline in population growth rates in the two largest Uyghur prefectures—Kashgar and Hotan—between 2015 and 2018, became even more pronounced with the intensive implementation of birth control policies on the ground starting from 2017. The fact that the rate of intrauterine device (IUD) usage reached 70.4% in Chorak Tirek Township of Tekes County in 2016, and that IUDs were inserted in 73.5% of married women of childbearing age in the Kok Gumbaz Region of Kuqa County between the spring of 2017 and the autumn of 2018, demonstrates that birth control practices have become a systematic and widespread policy rather than regional exceptions. China's population policy became even stricter in 2018 and 2019, and Nilka County made the insertion of an IUD after the first child official policy in 2019.

Furthermore, other documents from 2019 indicate that mass sterilization campaigns were planned covering 14% to 34% of married Uyghur women of childbearing age living in the south of East Turkistan. It is stated that women with three or more children, as well as some women with two children, were included in this scope, and thus mass sterilization campaigns covered at least 20% of women of childbearing age (Zenz, 2020).

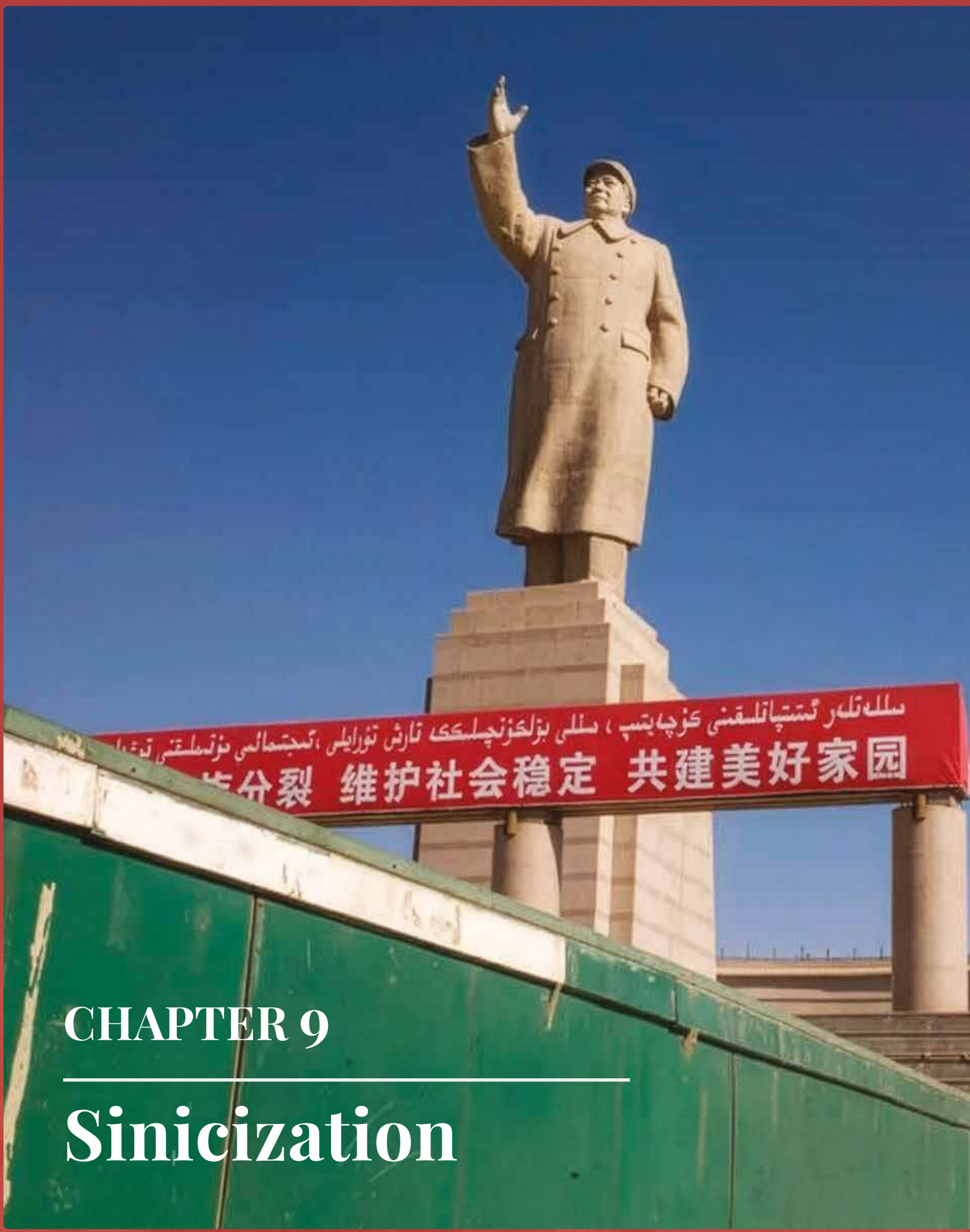
In conclusion, the allegations raised regarding the notable longevity of Chinese leaders and the organ transplant cases of high-profile diplomats—when combined with factors such as the unreliability of the government's official organ donation data and the new transplant centers established in East Turkistan—strengthen international concerns that China is carrying out the practice of forcibly harvesting organs from Uyghurs and providing these organs to privileged segments in a systematic and state-sponsored manner.

Sterilization Data in East Turkistan by Year (2010–2018)

*Sterilization rates per 100,000 people



Source: 2010-2018 Health and Hygiene Statistical Yearbooks, table 8-8-2.



CHAPTER 9

Sinicization

East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 not only documents the ongoing structural human rights violations in East Turkistan but also serves as a critical reference work that can provide a basis for situating these violations within the normative framework of international law. The Index demonstrates that the policies carried out under the rhetoric of security and development constitute a systematic project aimed at transforming the collective existence of a people through cultural and religious assimilation, systematic surveillance, demographic engineering, and forced labor. In this context, the findings of the report indicate that the rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, enshrined in Article 1 of both the United Nations Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, should be addressed not only as a matter of political status but also in terms of cultural continuity, freedom of language and religion, and social autonomy.

The practices documented in the Index can be read as contemporary manifestations of governance and control techniques historically intertwined with colonialism, in the context of international law and human rights. Assimilation policies, the separation of children from their families, the criminalization of religious and cultural practices, and digital surveillance regimes function as instruments that destroy the collective identity of a people and subject them to state-centered homogenization projects. By recording these processes with a focus on the experiences of victims, the Index also epistemically tests the universality claim of international human rights law and opens space for voices that have long been marginalized in knowledge production.

As the Worldwide Lawyers Association (WOLAS), we view this work not only as a monitoring and reporting activity but also as an intervention that reminds the international community of its legal and ethical responsibilities, and we consider it a critical reference in the context of the United Nations human rights architecture. The findings presented in the Index have the potential to make concrete contributions to monitoring and review processes before the UN Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, and special rapporteur mechanisms, as well as to discussions on state responsibility under the Genocide Convention and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. We hope that the findings offered by the Index will contribute to effective investigations, sanction processes, and reparative measures in favor of victims at both international and regional levels. Documenting the violations in East Turkistan is an inseparable part of the global pursuit of justice, and every serious academic and legal effort in this regard is of vital importance.

Enes Kafadar

President of the Executive Board,
Worldwide Lawyers Association

Resources:

19.01.2025

In the "2025 Xinjiang Two Sessions (Lianghui) Government Work Report," an official document in which authorities in East Turkistan summarize the actions implemented in the previous year and set forth the policy priorities for the coming year, it is announced that plans are in place to integrate the region more tightly with the Chinese central administration on the axis of economic growth, security, ideological integration, and strategic resource production. Indeed, the CCP states that in 2025, it will support urbanization and regional development projects in East Turkistan with infrastructure and technology investments and will place emphasis on cultural activities and social cohesion efforts.

02.02.2025

In the report of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), it is emphasized that 2025 is the closing year of the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 70th anniversary of the founding of Xinjiang, and it is stated that maintaining stability, strengthening technology investments, and deepening cultural and social cohesion efforts must be the central goals. The report highlights that economic development continues in East Turkistan in line with the goal of 'Chinese-style modernization,' infrastructure and energy projects are being implemented, and social stability is being strengthened. It is stated that the CPPCC focuses on political loyalty, social cohesion, and consolidating the shared consciousness of the Chinese nation, and carries out work on 'Sinicization' in religious and cultural fields as well as the preservation of cultural heritage.

Chairman of the CPPCC of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Nurlan Abilmejin

ANALYSIS

The cultural assimilation policies that gained momentum with the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976 point to a strategy in which Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples struggling for survival in East Turkistan were forced to melt their own identities within the pot of Chinese culture. In subsequent years, this ideological legacy became more institutionalized and adopted a security-centric framework, laying the groundwork for new regulations in which cultural practices were directly targeted. Indeed, in 1995, the government began to redefine certain cultural traditions as political or religious practices. In this process, traditions unique to East Turkistan were either completely banned, permitted to be observed only on specific days, or reshaped in accordance with Han tradition under the slogan of "taking protective measures against separatist and terrorist threats." For example, the traditional Uyghur gathering Meshrep, recognized as a cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010 (Kashgar, 2025), has been reduced to a symbolic level in daily life and utilized as a propaganda tool for delegations and tourists permitted to enter the region. Likewise, the Sama dance, which

28.02.2025

Efforts regarding the re-translation of the Quran into Chinese within the scope of the 'Sinicization of Islam' policy in China reached a new phase in the 2024–2025 period. The work titled Selected Verses from the Quran and Brief Explanations, published in September 2024, began to be promoted in official circles in the fields of education and religious guidance. While stating that work on the full translation is ongoing, the China Islamic Association argued that the new text being prepared offers a "peaceful and inclusive" interpretation "aligned with the contemporary Chinese context." In some regions, the withdrawal of old editions of the Quran from circulation and the promotion of the new translations sparked debate among the public.

21.03.2025

Xinjiang Party Secretary Ma Xingrui visited the Xinjiang Islamic Institute and the Xinjiang Islamic Association, inspecting religious education and work activities. Ma drew attention to the importance of educating students on the basis of patriotism and a "correct understanding of religion." Conducting inspections at the Islamic Association and the Xinjiang Buddhist Association as well, Ma stated that the management, guidance, and service functions of religious communities must be strengthened and that religious groups must be united around the Party and the government. Furthermore, he expressed that religions must be brought into conformity with state ideology and transmitted in a healthy manner through measures such as the Sinicization of religious affairs, the strengthening of legal regulations, and the training of teachers and religious personnel.

Xinjiang Party Secretary Ma Xingrui

was included as an ethnic tradition in physical education classes in schools in Kashgar until 2014, was removed from the curriculum after being deemed a "religious dance" and was replaced by the "Little Apple" dance belonging to Han culture (Steenberg, 2021).

"The Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century," adopted in 2021, institutionalized Xi Jinping's ideological position as the complement to the legacies of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping and was presented as a third historical turning point in Party history (Wang, 2021). Concurrently with this resolution, policies aimed at suppressing ethnic and cultural affiliations—viewed by the Party as "rival" or "alternative" forms of identity—have intensified significantly in line with the goal of redefining ethnic diversity within the framework of "national unity." The Chinese path strategy emphasized in the document in question bases its ideological foundation on the concept of "fusion" (jiaorong), which came to the fore in official discourse in the early 2010s. This concept denotes an approach based on the dissolution of ethnic groups into a common and centralized

25.09.2025

The State Council Information Office of The People's Republic of China stated in its new White Paper published on September 25, 2025—coinciding with Xi Jinping's visit to East Turkistan in September 2025—that it has moved security rhetoric such as counter-terrorism, which was prominent in previous years, to the background by presenting the region as an example of "modernization," "ethnic unity," and "cultural integration." The report also emphasized that the Sinicization of religion and culture is among the fundamental policies. In the White Paper, Uyghur and Turkic origin peoples were defined within a 'single Chinese nation,' and the popularization of Mandarin Chinese and interethnic marriages were presented as tools of social integration.

Xi Jinping

Maca Art Center

10.11.2025

It is alleged that the "Greetings" exhibition held at the Maca Art Center in Beijing misrepresents East Turkistan culture and leads to cultural appropriation. Yixak, an anonymous collective, claims that the cultures of Uyghur and other East Turkistan ethnic groups were conflated in the exhibition, that traditions were taken out of context, and that items were mislabeled. Yixak emphasizes that contemporary art institutions in China lack knowledge regarding diversity and ethnic identity.

Chinese identity, rather than the preservation of differences among them. However, this assimilation policy conducted under the guise of "fusion" creates a structural contradiction with the "freedom to preserve or reform their own ways and customs" of ethnic groups—explicitly guaranteed in China's 1954 and 1982 Constitutions—and serves, in practice, to limit these constitutional rights (Glasserman, 2022).

Furthermore, the policy in question does not remain merely an area of administrative practice but is also transformed into a propaganda tool that reinforces the state's ideological legitimacy. Indeed, the fact that Pan Yue, Director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, defines Chinese culture as the binding element constructing a "unified Chinese identity" and positions ethnic minorities as "contributors" to this holistic structure is a clear reflection of the effort to legitimize the assimilation process through the discourse of cultural harmony and shared belonging (Mansel, 2024).

Within the scope of assimilation policies, the Chinese administration comprehensively targets the cultural existence of Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples. In this framework, local architec-

13.11.2025

In the first video shared by Zumrat Dawut on Facebook, a group of Uyghurs—predominantly women—assembled in a hospital square in Kashgar are seen taking an oath of allegiance to the state following the singing of the Chinese National Anthem during a flag-raising ceremony held every Monday morning. In the second video, Uyghurs are seen singing a Chinese anthem in front of a neighborhood committee office and subsequently swearing allegiance to China. In the final video, Uyghur workers are being made to sing the Chinese Communist Party anthem in a location presumed to be a factory courtyard.

15.11.2025

China's "Qixin Plan," implemented in Kashgar, aims to culturally and ideologically assimilate Uyghur children through Go (Weiqi) training. Chang Hao, Chairman of the Chinese Weiqi Association, visited Maralbexi and Yarkand primary schools in November, with local officials presenting the program as a model of "cultural integration," "ethnic unity," and "youth ideological education." Launched in 2023 with Shanghai's support, the project has expanded to over 30 schools, portraying Go as a "strategic tool" to promote the message that all ethnic groups must embrace a unified "Chinese national identity."

ture, which is among the significant elements of Uyghur history and identity, is being reshaped by being aligned with Chinese culture. Mosques, shrines, cemeteries, and historical structures are either completely demolished or Sinicized by being transformed in accordance with Chinese architectural aesthetics. City centers are being redesigned based on the lifestyle of Han Chinese, and traditional Uyghur architecture and neighborhood fabric are being systematically eliminated. Similarly, the names of hundreds of villages referring to Uyghur history and tradition are being renamed with terms overlapping with CCP ideology and Chinese identity, such as "happiness" and "harmony" (Mansel, 2024). In the Chinese administration's policy of changing village names, firstly, words carrying Islamic or Sufi connotations such as hoja (religious teacher), khanqah (Sufi lodge), bakhshi (shaman/healer), mazar (grave), and masjid (mosque) that reflect the religious identity in the region are targeted. Secondly, village names are stripped of expressions referring to Uyghur khanates and republics, as well as political and cultural titles such as orda (court/headquarters), sultan,

17.12.2025

The draft "Law on the Promotion of Ethnic Unity and Progress" prepared in China has reinforced concerns that linguistic and cultural assimilation targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic origin peoples in East Turkistan will be intensified. The draft envisions the more widespread use of Mandarin Chinese in education, the increase of ideological education starting from the preschool level, and the consolidation of the "shared consciousness of the Chinese nation."

Interventions ranging from village names to architecture, and from dances to everyday traditions, are all part of a comprehensive Sinicization policy aimed at erasing the historical and spatial traces of Uyghur identity.

and beg (bey) that refer to Uyghur history. Thirdly, words like dutar (a traditional lute), which represent Uyghur cultural practices, are systematically removed from village nomenclature. According to research by Human Rights Watch, the names of approximately 630 villages were changed between 2009 and 2023 on the grounds mentioned above (Human Rights Watch, 2024). These renamings in Chinese act as a policy tool aimed at systematically eliminating the historical and spatial references of Uyghur identity and replacing this identity with a "Sinicized" identity defined by the Chinese Communist Party. This practice aims to weaken local identity elements by reorganizing collective memory through place names in the public sphere and to establish a sense of belonging aligned with the official ideological framework.

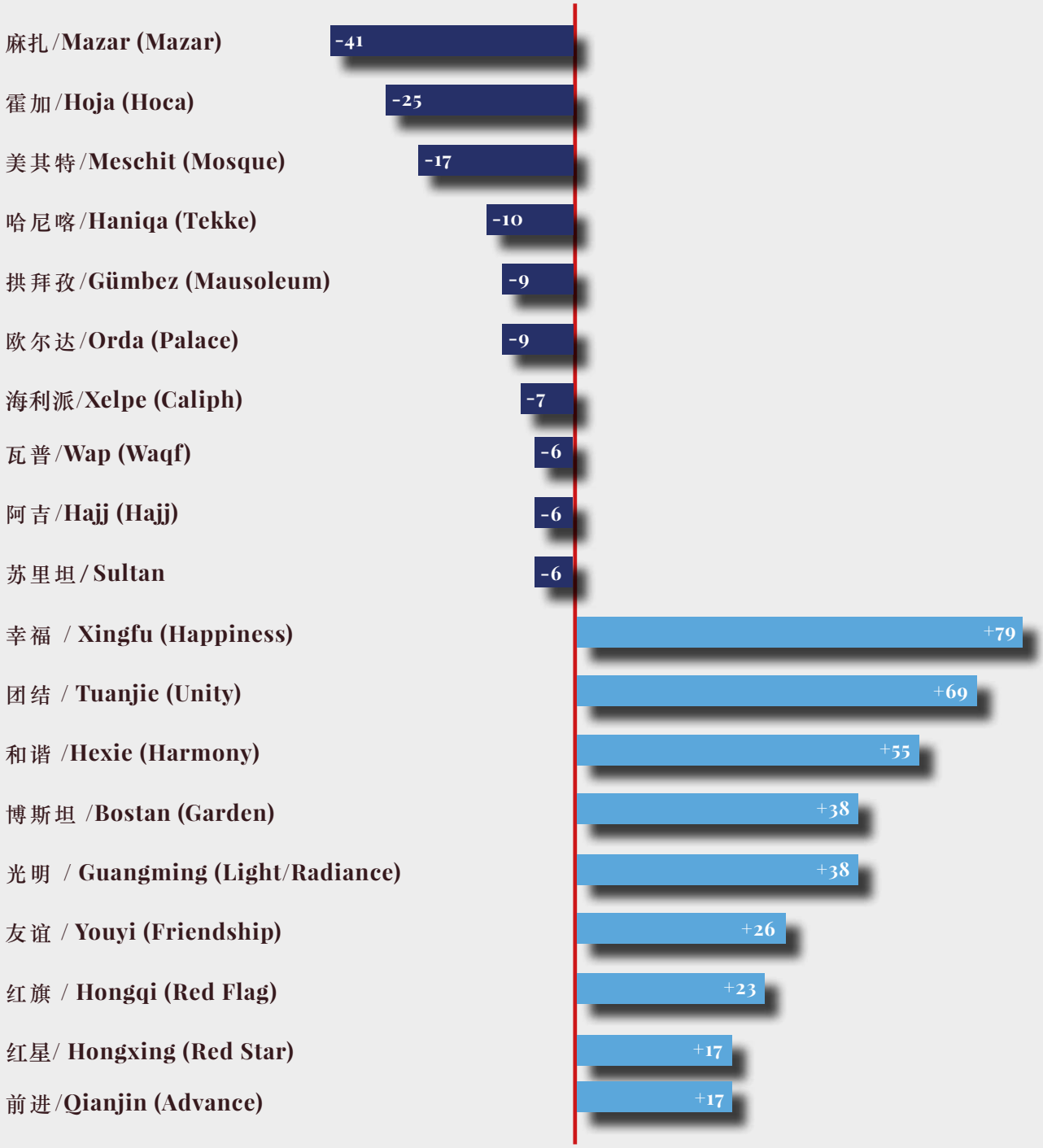
In conclusion, East Turkistan is the first region where the government policy promoting integration among ethnic groups—in line with Chinese President Xi Jinping's goal of creating a "unified national identity"—is implemented. Dictating the concept of zhonghua minzu, which means "Chinese nation," this policy aims to give momentum to the dominant Han Chinese culture in the region (Hoja, 2024). Accordingly, it aims to integrate all ethnic groups under a Han-centric national identity by pushing the history, cultural, and linguistic identity of Uyghurs to the background, thereby preventing ethnic differences from generating political demands. While presenting a discourse of "national unity" on the surface, this political framework points to an assimilation strategy in practice that centralizes Han Chinese norms and marginalizes the identities of other ethnic peoples.

The Linguistic Transformation of Place Names in East Turkistan from Uyghur to Chinese

Uyghur	Chinese
Kumul	Hami
Ghulca	Yining
Yarkent	Shache
Chöchek	Tacheng
Karakaş	Moyu
Qarakhoja Bazari (Turfan)	Gaochang
Tengri Tagh	Tian Shan
Qutpidin Mazar Mehellesi (Kashgar)	Meiguihua Cun *(Rose Flower Village)*
Aq Mescit Mehellesi (Kizilsu)	Tuanjie Cun *(Unity Village)*
Hojaeriq Mehellesi (Aksu)	Liushu Cun *(Willow Village)*
Dutar Mehellesi (Karakash)	Hongqi Cun *(Red Flag Village)*
Xelpe Eriq Mehellesi (Aksu)	Tuanjie Xin Cun *(New Unity Village)*
Mazar Östeng Mehellesi (Hotan)	Guangming Cun *(Nurluk Village)*
Devletbagh Yolu	Painapu Lu *(Century Avenue South Road)*
Üzümlük Yolu	Xihuan Lu *(West Ring Road)*
Lenger Yolu	Tuanjie Lu *(Unity Road)*
Yumulak Şehir	Renmin Xi Lu *(West People's Road)*
Doquztaş Yolu	Guangdong Lu *(a province's name in China)*
Pahtabazar Yolu	Renmin Dong Lu *(East People's Road)*

Source: Isa, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2024; Kashgar Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, n.d.

Specific Words Used in the Renaming of Uyghur-Language Village Names (2009–2023)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

CHAPTER 10

Transnational Repression

Illustration: Uyghur Human Rights Project

The Chinese government continues to commit crimes against humanity against Uyghurs. Hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs remain unjustly imprisoned, state-imposed forced labor affects global supply chains, and the everyday lives of Uyghurs, including their peaceful Islamic way of life, have been criminalized by the Chinese government. There has been no accountability for these atrocities over the past decade, and as Beijing's influence has grown, many governments have sidestepped human rights concerns in their engagement with Xi Jinping's brutal regime. Chinese authorities also target Uyghurs abroad through blatant forms of transnational repression, including forced repatriation, surveillance, familial retaliation, and travel restrictions. More recent trends indicate a shift in the Chinese government's strategy to whitewash its crimes against Uyghurs through propaganda activities and ideological control beyond its borders. Concerned governments should press the Chinese government to end its repression of Uyghurs and respect their fundamental human rights, without which Uyghurs cannot live with dignity and freedom.

Yalkun Uluyol

China Researcher, Human Rights Watch

Resources:

28.01.2025

20 Canadian citizens faced sanctions from China due to their work regarding human rights violations committed by China in East Turkistan and Tibet. In this context, they were banned from traveling to China, and orders were issued to freeze their financial assets. Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, a member of the Advisory Board of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, stated that the sanctions in question demonstrate that the work being conducted has produced concrete and effective results, and that this strengthens the motivation to defend human rights.

12.02.2025

The Swiss Federal Government officially acknowledged on February 12, 2025, that Tibetans and Uyghurs are subject to transnational repression and surveillance by China. This announcement was made through a 36-page report titled "The Situation of Tibetans and Uyghurs in Switzerland," prepared in response to a decision adopted by the Swiss Parliament on March 15, 2021. The report addresses the situation of Tibetan and Uyghur refugees in Switzerland, freedom of expression, surveillance practices, and China's comprehensive surveillance operations targeting the diaspora. Based on research conducted by the University of Basel, the report was also published as an official government document.

xxx meydan

12.03.2025

Chinese game developer miHoYo announced that it replaced Showtaro Morikubo for the Japanese voice acting of the character Ifa in Genshin Impact due to "various reasons." In August 2024, Morikubo participated in a live reading of the book titled Inochigake no Shougen, which covers China's policies targeting Uyghurs in East Turkistan. In the book, the Chinese government's practices were characterized as genocide, and Amnesty International stated that Uyghurs are subjected to mass surveillance, indoctrination camps, and torture. It is alleged that there is a connection between this action of Morikubo and his removal from the role of Ifa.

Showtaro Morikubo

17.03.2025

Two Uyghur activists living in France, Dilnur Reyhan and Gülbahar Jelilova, have filed a new lawsuit before a Paris court due to China's transnational repression policies. Due to the lack of response to their previous complaints, the alleged attacks and surveillance incidents—claimed to have been orchestrated by the Chinese Embassy during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to France in May 2024—were cited as the grounds for the lawsuit. Reyhan states that their case primarily focuses on China's efforts to perpetuate the genocide against Uyghurs through psychological pressure on the diaspora.

Activist Dilnur Reyhan

11.04.2025

The Swedish government detained Dilxat Raxit, a senior spokesman for the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), on charges of spying for China and gathering information about the Uyghur community in Sweden. Raxit, who has served in the Congress since 2004, was suspended from his position following his detention. The Chinese Embassy in Sweden did not comment on the incident, stating that it was outside their jurisdiction. The Congress announced that it had previously issued warnings regarding China's global espionage activities and has now increased its internal security measures.

28.04.2025

Researchers at the Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto allege that actors linked to the Chinese government attempted to install spyware on the devices of activists affiliated with the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress. It is stated that the software was sent to activists via email disguised as a Uyghur typing and word processing tool, with the aim of infiltrating the activists' devices, collecting information, and executing file transfers.

Nuria Zyden

29.04.2025

Rushan Abbas, director of the Campaign for Uyghurs, addresses both her own life and China's oppression of Uyghurs in her memoir titled "Unbroken: One Uyghur's Fight for Freedom", scheduled for release on June 10, 2025. Abbas emphasizes that the book serves as both a personal testimony and a political call to action for governments worldwide and the public. The book draws attention to China's transnational repression and intimidation policies, particularly through the examples of the wrongful detention of her sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, in China in 2018, and her father's removal from office due to his daughter's activism.

29.04.2025

Nuria Zyden stated that Chinese officials threatened her family because she criticized China's repressive policies against Uyghurs. Stating that she received phone calls from the Chinese government and was subjected to various forms of harassment due to her activism, Zyden expressed that her elderly mother was specifically threatened and that she feared potential detention. Zyden emphasized that Chinese officials conveyed the message that "her family would be safe only if she cooperates," highlighting this as a clear threat.

30.04.2025

It is stated that Uyghurs living in Türkiye are significantly affected by China's transnational repression and surveillance activities. According to a joint investigation by DW Turkish and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), China coerces Uyghurs who have fled abroad to spy on each other. For instance, it has been revealed that a Uyghur textile merchant living in Türkiye was coerced by Chinese intelligence officers into collecting information about the Uyghur community in Istanbul through threats against his family. In this context, it is reported that the individual in question was offered money in exchange for monitoring and reporting on Uyghur activists.

10.05.2025

In an Istanbul-based operation, the National Intelligence Organization (Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı-MİT) apprehended 7 foreign national suspects red-handed, who were determined to be engaging in cyber espionage and fraud by establishing fake base stations. In the technical examination initiated following complaints of fake SMS from citizens, it was identified that fake base stations were set up using devices of Chinese origin. It was determined that mobile phones were forced to connect to these fake stations, after which fake messages demanding payment were sent to users by impersonating GSM operators. It was further established that the network operated in Izmir, Bursa, and Yalova in addition to Istanbul, and that the collected communication and user data was transferred to a China-based server to be used in 'spear phishing' attacks.

Rune Steenberg

12.05.2025

Danish anthropologist Rune Steenberg was denied entry to Kazakhstan on April 12, 2025, due to his research on Uyghurs and his criticism of China's oppressive policies in East Turkistan. Steenberg reported that his entry to the country was blocked at passport control while he was attempting to cross to Almaty from the Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan border, and that Kazakh officials provided no justification for this decision. Steenberg, who had traveled to Kazakhstan numerous times previously, conveyed his speculation that this situation could be linked to his studies on China's oppressive policies targeting Uyghur and Kazakh communities in East Turkistan.

27.05.2025

Leaked internal security documents, stated to belong to the Tekes County Public Security Bureau in East Turkistan, reveal that the Chinese government has established a comprehensive surveillance and suppression mechanism aimed at neutralizing US-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) reporter Shohret Hoshur. It is stated in the documents that the names, addresses, professions, and contact information of 42 individuals alleged to be in 'close contact' with Hoshur are listed in detail, and that instructions are given to be 'very careful' regarding the individuals in question.

Shohret Hoshur

28.05.2025

Former indoctrination camp employee Ehmetjan Ehet came to Türkiye in 2023 and passed away in a hospital in Sarajevo on May 31, 2025, while seeking asylum in Europe. It is reported that following his death, his body was held in the morgue for approximately two months; however, according to Uyghur activists and friends of the deceased, the Chinese government delayed the release of the body, and for this reason, Uyghur organizations were not permitted to claim the remains to bury Ehet in a dignified manner in accordance with Islamic rites.

Abdulkasım İsmail

05.08.2025

Uyghur leader Abdulkasim Ismail, living in Kyrgyzstan, states that his security has been compromised due to incorrect information in the new passport issued to him. It is alleged that such faulty passport practices are one of the new methods employed by China to coerce Uyghurs living abroad to return to China. It is claimed that Uyghurs forced to return due to invalid passports face risks of arbitrary detention, forced labor, and even death.

ANALİZ

China employs methods of transnational repression targeting the Uyghur diaspora abroad and attempts to intimidate Uyghurs in the diaspora through various means such as threats via family members left behind, digital surveillance, phone hacking, disinformation, online identity theft, stalking, harassment, and physical threats.

According to Freedom House data, a total of 1.219 cases of transnational repression were documented across 103 countries worldwide during the 2014–2024 period. China alone accounted for approximately 22% of these cases, ranking as the 'state perpetrating the most transnational repression' with 272 cases. China's transnational repression has affected at least 36 countries since 2014, and many Uyghur, Taiwanese, Hong Konger, Tibetan, and Chinese migrants have been targeted by this repression (China Digital Times, 2025). In this context, Uyghur, Hong Kong, Tibetan, and other diasporas are at risk not only regarding freedom of expression

28.08.2025

At an exhibition in Bangkok featuring 'authoritarian regimes,' works by artists from the Tibetan, Hong Kong, and Uyghur diasporas were censored upon China's request. According to Reuters, the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre removed a multimedia work by a Tibetan artist from the exhibition due to pressure from the Chinese Embassy. In certain other works, the terms "Hong Kong," "Tibet," and "Uyghur," as well as artist names, were blacked out. Sai, co-founder of the Myanmar Peace Museum—one of the organizers of the exhibition—stated that among the removed items were Tibetan and Uyghur flags, as well as postcards featuring Chinese President Xi Jinping.

09.09.2025

The report numbered A/HRC/60/62 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addresses China's practices constituting reprisals against individuals and organizations cooperating with UN mechanisms. The report states that arrest warrants were issued for Hong Kong Democracy Council executives Anna Kwok and Carmen Lau, and their passports were cancelled, due to their participation in UN Human Rights Council processes. Furthermore, it is reported that after Uyghur linguist Abduweli Ayup expressed his concerns regarding the status of the Uyghur language in East Turkistan at a UNESCO-affiliated conference held in Paris in February 2025, he was questioned about his views by unidentified individuals and faced questions regarding the fate of his family; subsequently, his poster presentation within the scope of the conference was cancelled, and he was followed and filmed without his consent throughout the conference.

and rights to association but also in terms of fundamental human rights such as housing, travel, and personal security. International human rights mechanisms emphasize that such transnational repression undermines the sovereign rights of host states and contradicts the fundamental principles of international law. This situation presents a long-term structural threat to the integrity of the international human rights regime and the protection of democratic norms (Vaughan, Gorokhovskaia & Schenkkan, 2025).

The narrowing of the operational space for international media organizations, independent research centers, and civil monitoring networks due to increasing political, financial, and administrative pressures in recent years weakens the production of information regarding China's transnational repression practices and the visibility of these practices in the international public sphere. This general erosion in oversight and monitoring capacity leads

23.09.2025

It is alleged that the Chinese government targets human rights defenders in the Uyghur diaspora through AI-powered 'deepfake' content. According to statements, Rushan Abbas, Director of the Campaign for Uyghurs, who criticizes Beijing's policies in East Turkistan, is at the center of the campaign, and it is stated that fake videos, fabricated broadcasts, and online attacks are being conducted against her.

Rushen Abbas

03.11.2025

Sheffield Hallam University announced that it was forced to halt its human rights research as a result of pressure and threats from China. It was stated that the research conducted by Professor Laura Murphy, who works on human rights and modern slavery, regarding the forced labor of Uyghurs in East Turkistan, could not be published due to threats from officials alleged to be from the Chinese National Security Service and the blocking of the university's internet access in China. Ultimately, university officials informed Murphy that "she could not continue the research regarding supply chains in China and the forced labor of Uyghurs."

to Beijing's policies facing less scrutiny. This situation facilitates China's ability to disseminate its own narratives more dominantly through state-controlled media outlets, diplomatic discourse, and online propaganda networks. Under these conditions, while China finds the opportunity to sustain its transnational repression activities with lower costs and risks, the international community's capacity to respond to these violations in a timely and effective manner is also significantly weakened.

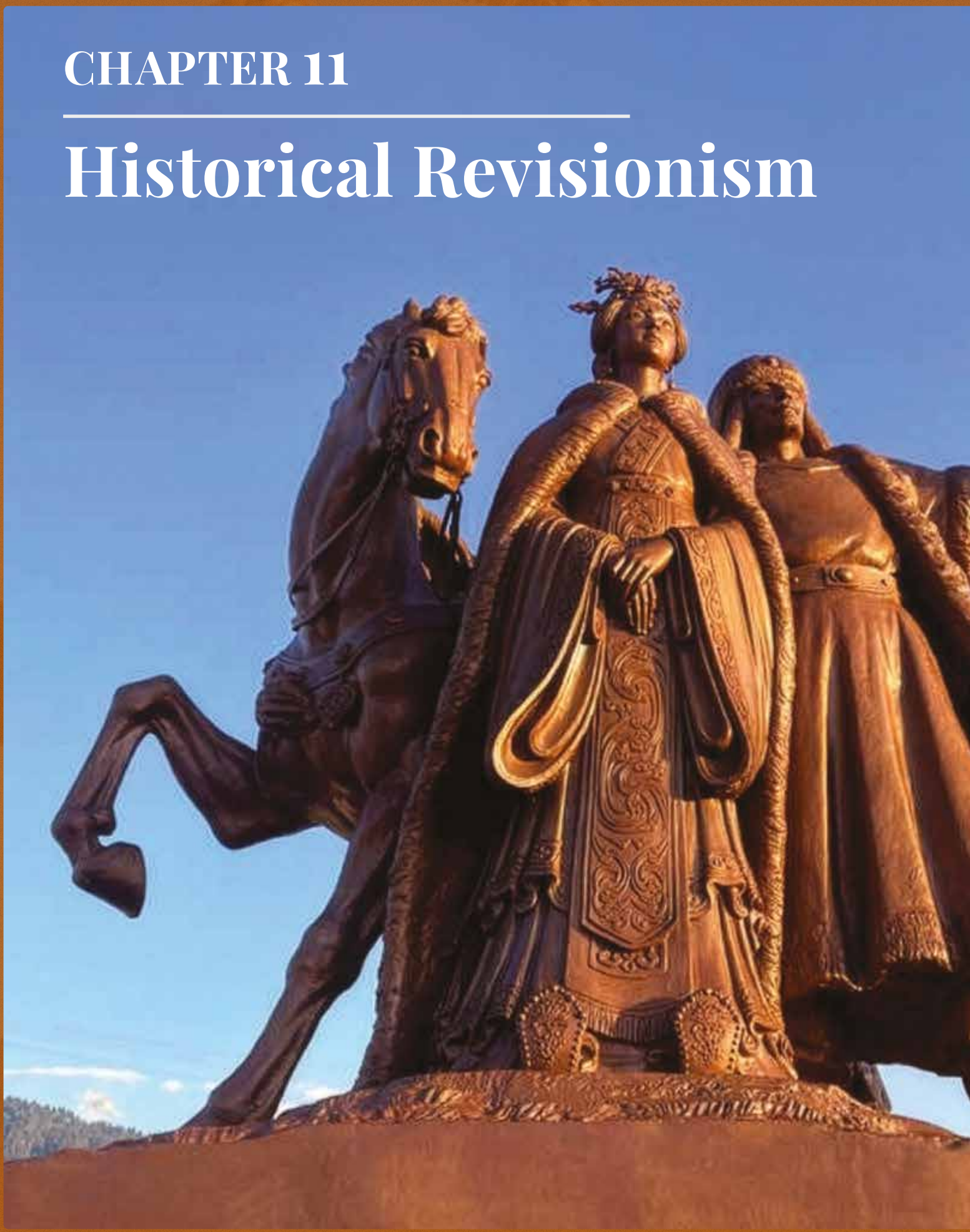
China attempts to suppress anti-China protests organized annually by Uyghur and other diaspora communities in the US, Europe, Australia, and Asian countries by openly violating the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and privacy enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Particularly during official visits by Chinese leaders, pro-CCP groups are mobilized in an organized manner, and local law enforcement forces often fail to intervene effectively (Molina Acosta, 2025).

Consequently, China's transformation of transnational repression into an institutionalized and multi-layered foreign policy tool constitutes a structural threat that erodes not only the fundamental rights and freedoms of the targeted diaspora communities but also the sovereignty of host states, the legitimacy of the international human rights regime, and the sustainability of democratic norms, necessitating an urgent and collective international response.

While 1.219 cases of transnational repression were recorded across 103 countries worldwide between 2014 and 2024, China accounted for approximately 22% of the total with 272 cases, standing out as the state perpetrating the most transnational repression.

CHAPTER 11

Historical Revisionism



As a Crimean Tatar journalist and someone who has personally witnessed human rights violations against my own people, I read the East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 with great care. This study is particularly valuable because it addresses the repression in East Turkistan not merely through isolated cases, but as a continuous, structural state policy across 14 distinct areas—from religious oppression to digital surveillance systems, from forced labor to demographic change. The strongest aspect of the Index is its illustration of the contradiction between official discourse and actual practices on the ground, revealing a pressure mechanism that has become institutionalized and normalized over time. What happened in Crimea has taught us that assimilation, historical revisionism, and arbitrary detentions do not begin overnight; they deepen in silence. For this reason, the evidence-based and comparable analyses presented in the 2025 Index are a crucial warning not only for the Uyghur people but also for the international community. Making the realities in East Turkistan visible is no longer a choice today—it is a shared human responsibility.

Gülsüm Khalilova
Journalist

Resources:

06.07.2025

Between June 30 and July 6, 2025, a program was organized in Urumqi, Changji, and Manas by the student group named "Pomegranate Seeds" affiliated with Xiamen University, with the aim of strengthening the "sense of community for the Chinese nation." Through museum visits and historical artifacts, the program expresses the narrative that East Turkistan has been part of a China-centered historical integrity for thousands of years. While military objects and Silk Road findings dating back to the 7th–9th and 17th–19th centuries are presented selectively within this framework, it is observed that the unique historical, cultural, and political existence of the local peoples is largely marginalized.

07.07.2025

In the July issue of the magazine titled "Today's Xinjiang (Jinri Xinjiang)" it is claimed that East Turkistan historically belongs to China, based on archaeological structures, temple ruins, and various material culture elements identified in Kashgar and its surroundings. It is observed that the magazine constructs a narrative supporting the concept of the "Chinese nation" through writing culture and iconography, utilizing metal ornaments, inscribed document fragments, and figured circular reliefs.

ANALYSIS

In 2017, then-Party Secretary, Chen Quanguo, articulated China's strategy of historical revisionism in East Turkistan with the statement: "Archaeological work is necessary in establishing and advancing socialist values in Xinjiang, in deepening patriotic education, and in the fight against separatist ideas." (Kashgary & Niyaz, 2022). Through this strategy, archaeology and cultural heritage were instrumentalized for political and ideological ambitions, and archaeological excavations in the region were used as a tool for nation-building, cultural engineering, and the reshaping of collective memory rather than as a field of scientific research. In the same year, the Kucha Mosque, which belongs to five centuries of Turkic-Islamic history, was re-associated with the ancient Buddhist Kingdom of Kusen. Through these and similar actions, it is observed that the CCP is attempting to construct a fictional historical narrative based on the region's historical memory through the discourse of "pluralistic cultural integration (duoyuan wenhua ronghe)" (Harris, 2024).

Since 2018, destruction in the region has accelerated under the pretexts of "urban transformation" and "reorganization of public spaces". During this process, the stat-

30.07.2025

Chinese state media is constructing a narrative that presents East Turkistan as a historical natural extension of Chinese civilization, centering on the "golden winged flying horse" artifact from the Han Dynasty era found in the Altay region. In the report, it is claimed through the mentioned artifact that Altay was integrated with Central China from an early period within the context of the Silk Road, largely leaving the historical and cultural continuity of the region's local peoples in the background. Instead of emphasizing the multi-layered cultural origins of the artifact, which contains Central Asian and West Asian mythological elements, this diversity is reduced to a singular historical framework included within the discourse of the "China-centered fusion of civilizations".

23.10.2025

The erection of the statue of the Chinese historical figure Lin Zexu around the Grand Bazaar in Urumqi is evaluated as one of the recent examples of the policy of historical and cultural reconstruction carried out by the Chinese administration in East Turkistan through symbols. Experts state that placing a figure from Chinese history in a location densely populated by Uyghurs with a strong local identity aims to make the claim that the region historically "belongs to China" visible in the public sphere. When considered alongside the destruction of Uyghur cultural heritage and the systematic elimination of Islamic symbols, this step is interpreted as part of a comprehensive historical revisionism and symbolic dominance strategy maintained over identity, memory, and belonging in East Turkistan.

Lin Zexu

ues of figures such as Mahmud al-Kashgari, who made significant contributions to Uyghur and Turkic-Islamic history, the medical scholar Ghazbay, and the poet-physician Husayinkhan Tajalli, along with numerous elements of cultural memory, were systematically removed or destroyed. In the following period, the CCP's policy targeting structures that reflect the ancient history of East Turkistan was not limited to the demolition of regional monuments; elements representing figures from Chinese history were placed in their stead. Indeed, a statue of Lin Zexu, a historical figure of China, was erected around the Urumqi International Grand Bazaar, where Uyghurs live densely; with this step, it was aimed to embody Han nationalism in the public sphere and to reinforce the perception that the history of East Turkistan is an "ancient part of China" (Uyghur Post, 2025).

In order to blur the fact that East Turkistan possesses an autonomous cultural and historical identity, China is attempting to transform and reconstruct spatial memory and to redefine Uyghur identity in accordance with an ideological framework. At this point, Turkic history expert associate professor Erkin Ekrem states that *China is*

trying to erase its unique history by attempting to portray East Turkistan as a "region where races are mixed". Furthermore, he emphasizes that the concept of "genetic ancestry" is being conflated with the concept of "the people," and evaluates this situation as an effort to reshape history from a nationalist perspective (Kashgary & Niyaz, 2022). In this context, while genetic ancestry points to the biological origins and physical heritage of individuals, the concept of the people expresses a social and political identity formed on the basis of a shared history, culture, language, and collective belonging. Equating these two concepts serves the purpose of removing Uyghur identity as a historical subject.

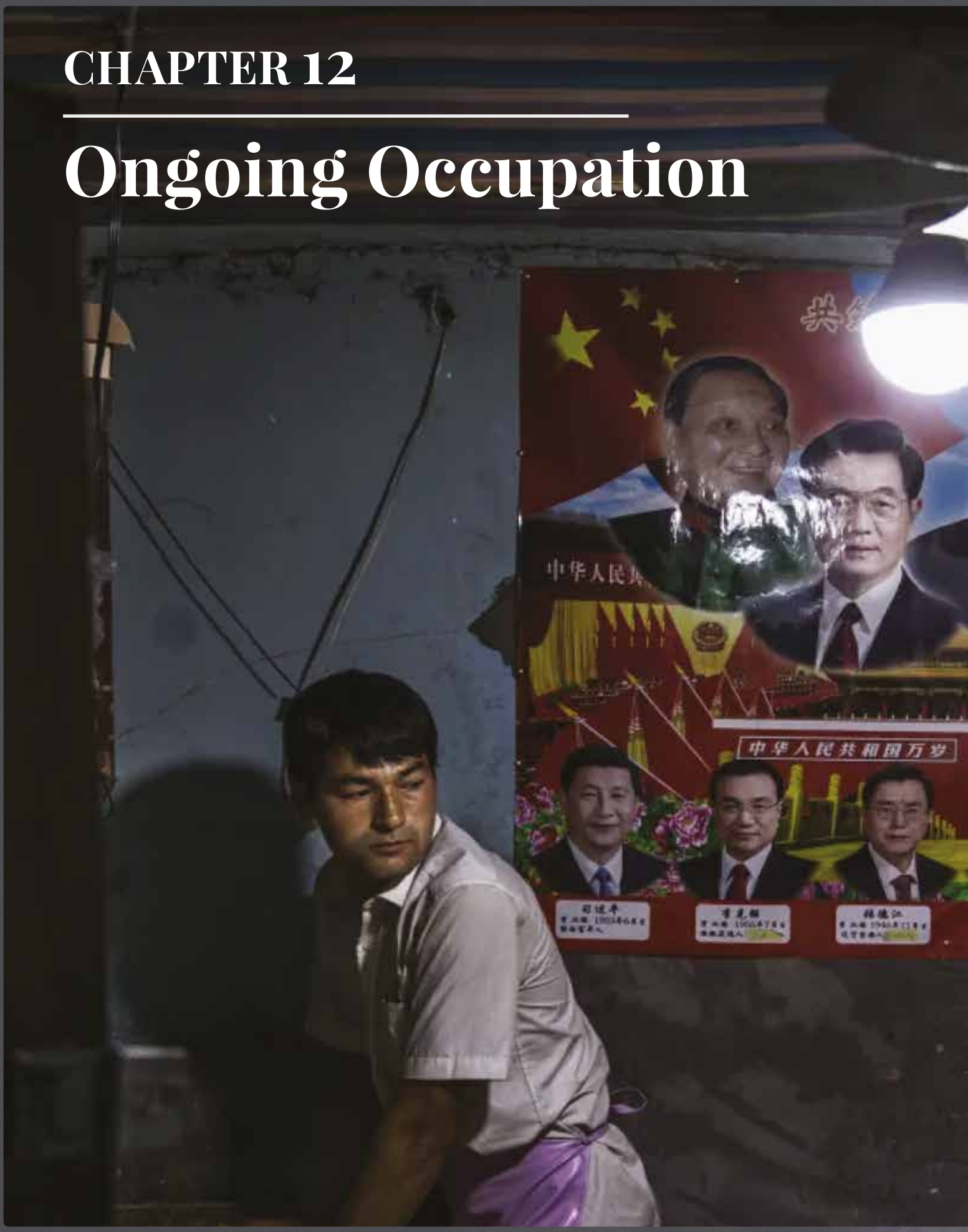
In conclusion, these practices carried out by China in East Turkistan through archaeology, urban transformation, and cultural heritage policies aim to erase the region's unique Turkic-Islamic identity through historical revisionism rather than a scientific and pluralistic understanding of history, and East Turkistan is being made a part of a China-centered national narrative. Thus, history is being reconstructed in a way that makes Uyghur identity invisible.

China aims to transform spatial memory in East Turkistan, seeking to remove Uyghur identity as a historical subject and to append the region to a China-centered national narrative.

Associate professor Erkin Ekrem states that *China is trying to erase its unique history by attempting to portray East Turkistan as a "region where races are mixed".*

CHAPTER 12

Ongoing Occupation



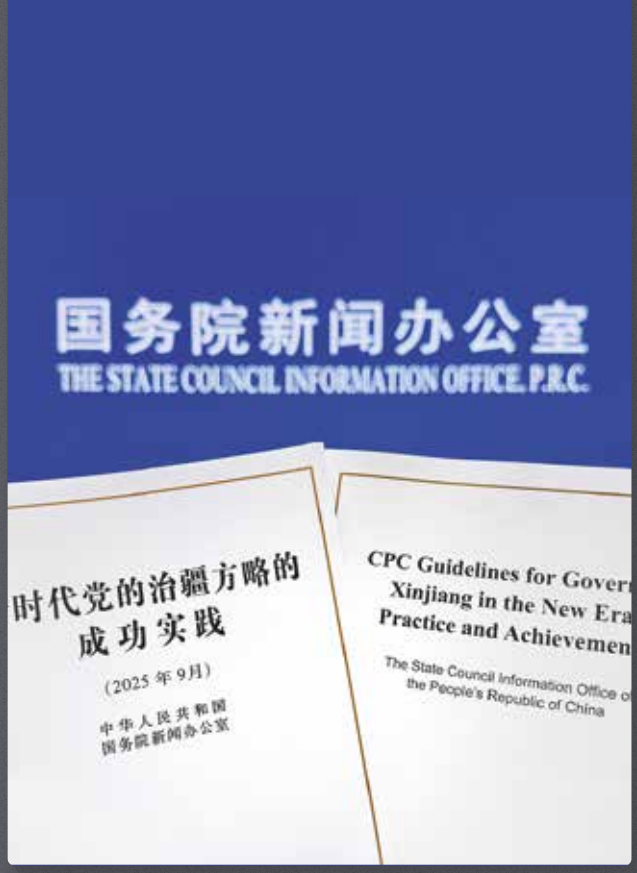
Over the past decade the Chinese state has enacted a campaign to eliminate significant aspects of Uyghur identity in East Turkistan—the ancestral home Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim peoples. By attacking their faith practices, removing hundreds of thousands of children from their homes, assigning millions of Uyghur adults to work in forms of confinement across the region and attempting to erase Uyghur language from the public sphere, the state project to dominate, occupy and dispossess Uyghurs of their way of life has crossed a threshold moment. This moment, an atrocity crime event, is part of a structure of lasting control that the state hopes to normalize. By waiting for the world to forget, by flooding the digital world with disinformation, Chinese state authorities and those that have benefited from Uyghur dispossession hope to evade justice, to get away with their crime. They want the world to abandon the Uyghur community and their struggle to endure. This report from ETHR is a document that refuses to let the world turn away. It demands that people of conscience sit with the pain that Uyghurs are experiencing and take inspiration from their courage. It demands more from organizations and governments of the world who stand for values of human dignity and autonomy.

Assoc. Prof. Darren Byler
Faculty Member, Simon Fraser University

Resources:

08.01.2025

In an article published in the Xinjiang Daily, the importance of maintaining the region's social stability is emphasized within the scope of the "70th anniversary of the founding of East Turkistan". Citing Xi Jinping's statements regarding regional governance, the article asserts that a long-term and holistic approach is necessary. Furthermore, it is reported that following the 18th Party Congress, legal measures, anti-terror efforts, and risk management activities have been prioritized in East Turkistan to ensure a balance between security and development. The article emphasizes the necessity of strengthening national security awareness and aligning cultural and economic development with the security paradigm in line with China's modernization goals.



ANALYSIS

With the Manchu Empire advancing westward via the city of Kumul in East Turkistan in 1876 and the capture of Kashgar in 1877, China completely occupied East Turkistan. In 1882, the Manchu Dynasty designated the region as a province attached to Beijing and, following the occupation, changed the region's name to "Xinjiang," meaning "new territory." With this designation, East Turkistan became the subject of a colonial redefinition process aimed at eroding and transforming the region's historical and cultural identity. This practice aimed to solidify a Sino-centric concept of sovereignty while rejecting the historical belonging of the Uyghurs, the ancient people of the region. At the same time, the concept of "Xinjiang" reinforced the perception of the region as a borderland attached to the center and provided an ideological foundation for the assimilation and demographic engineering policies implemented (Taşağıl, 2012).

Following the collapse of the Manchu Empire, during the power struggle between communists, nationalists, and imperial loyalists, the people of East Turkistan declared their independence by establishing two states named the "East Turkistan Islamic Republic" and the "East Turkistan Republic" in 1933 and 1944, respectively. However, these entities were short-lived due to regional and international power balances. In 1949, the region was brought under the control of the People's Liberation Army and came under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1955, it was incorporated into the administrative structure of the People's Republic of China under the name "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" (Süleyman, 2020).

The policies implemented in East Turkistan along with the occupation process have, over time, transcended security and governance practices and transformed into systematic practices targeting the existence of a people. At this point, the United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as specific acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. In this historical process, the effects of which

24.09.2025

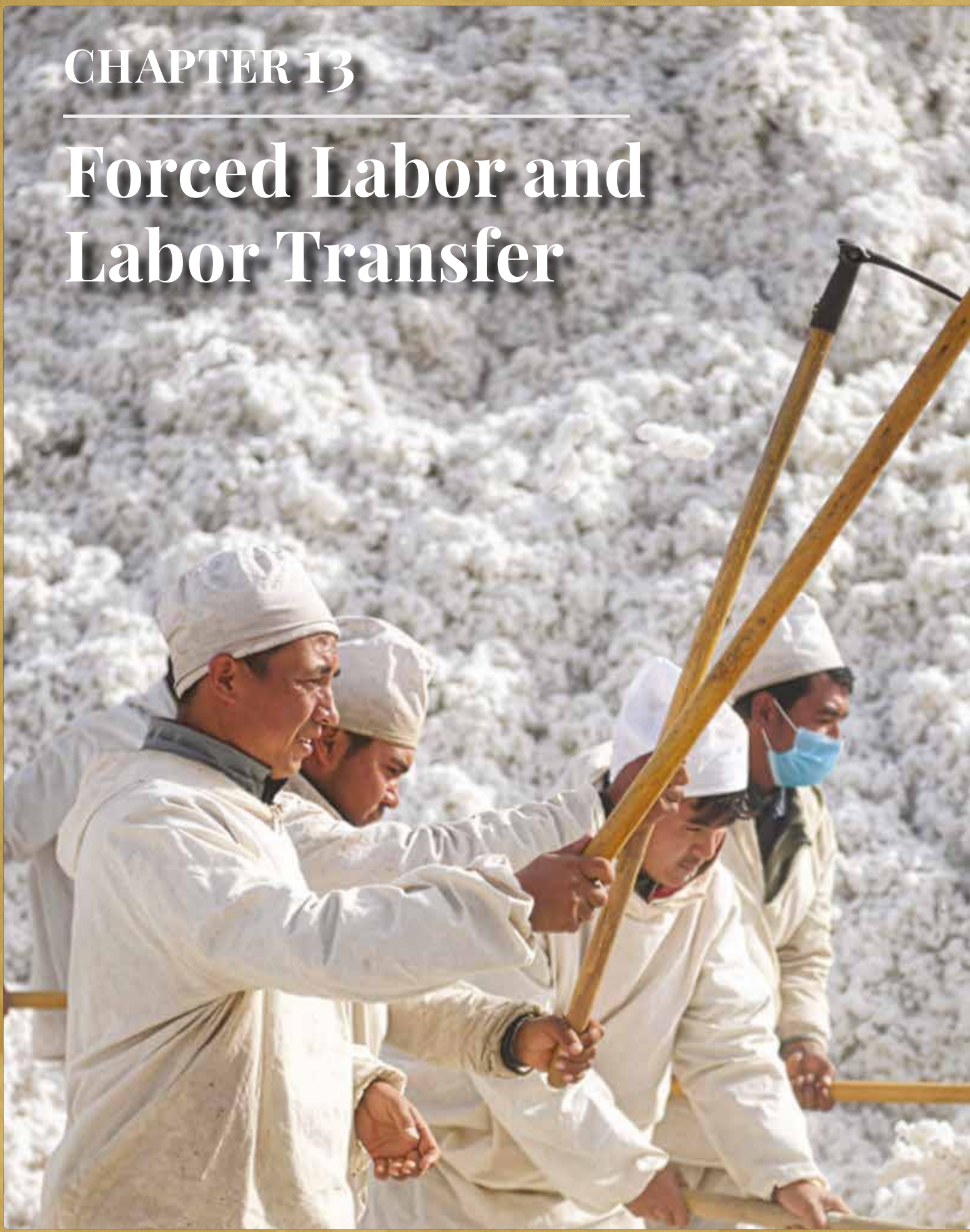
In an article published in Xinjiang Daily, the importance of maintaining social stability in East Turkistan on the occasion of the region's "70th anniversary" is emphasized. The article references statements made by Xi Jinping to the regional administration, suggesting that a long-term and comprehensive approach is necessary. It also notes that, following the 18th Party Congress, legal measures, anti-terrorism initiatives, and risk management efforts are prioritized to ensure a balanced approach to security and development in East Turkistan. The article further stresses the need to strengthen national security awareness and align cultural and economic development with security considerations in line with China's modernization goals.

still continue today, it is observed that the practices carried out in East Turkistan align with all five acts included in the definition in question. Death sentences given to prominent Uyghur leaders and comprehensive reports regarding forced organ harvesting from Uyghur prisoners reveal that China is the perpetrator of the act of killing members of the group. Practices of torture, sexual violence, forced medication, and systematic psychological pressure constitute the crime of causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group. Mass surveillance and mass incarceration practices, forced sterilization, forced labor, the criminalization of daily worship, and the destruction of religious and cultural structures signify deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. The placement of approximately 900.000 Uyghur children in state orphanages and boarding schools as of 2019 due to their parents being held in camps corresponds to the act of forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Additionally, mass sterilizations, forced IUD (intrauterine device) insertions, forced abortions, and birth rate declines reaching up to 84% in some regions indicate that measures intended to prevent births within the group are being systematically imposed. This picture shows that the developments in East Turkistan point to a structural process that must be addressed together with its historical background, rather than as isolated practices (Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy & Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, 2021).

In this context, the situation in East Turkistan demonstrates that the historical occupation is being perpetuated today through institutionalized repression, assimilation, and policies of physical destruction. This process clearly shows that China's presence in the region has transformed into a systematic practice of genocide targeting the national, cultural, and biological continuity of the Uyghur people.

CHAPTER 13

Forced Labor and Labor Transfer



The “East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025” is an exceptionally valuable study in that it documents the systematic human rights violations in the region through a data-driven and analytical framework, free from rhetoric.

This report once again confirms that practices such as religious repression, digital surveillance, and forced labor—which the Chinese state attempts to legitimize under the guise of “security” and “counter-terrorism”—constitute severe crimes against humanity under international human rights standards. In particular, the assimilation policies targeting the identity of the Uyghur people and interventions into family integrity represent clear violations of universal legal principles.

For us, as human rights defenders and legal professionals, reports like this are not only essential for exposing the ongoing tragedy but also serve as crucial evidence to ensure that those responsible are held accountable under international legal mechanisms.

As MAZLUMDER, we hope that such academically rigorous studies, grounded in field realities and centered on human dignity, go beyond raising awareness to lay the groundwork for concrete sanctions and processes in which perpetrators are brought to justice. In a period when the oppression in East Turkistan is being rendered invisible, this Index represents a strategically important step toward the realization of justice.

Kaya Kartal
President, MAZLUMDER

Resources:

07.01.2025

Testifying before the UK Parliament Business and Trade Committee, Yinan Zhu, Shein's General Counsel for European operations, failed to provide clear answers to questions regarding whether cotton linked to the forced labor of Uyghurs in China is used in the company's products. Zhu's statement that he was "not authorized" to speak on the supply chain was characterized by MPs as "willful ignorance." Although Shein argued that its suppliers are audited by independent auditors and that contracts with firms employing forced or child labor are terminated, it failed to confirm whether there is an explicit ban on Uyghur cotton.

14.01.2025

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security added four Chinese solar panel suppliers to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List (UFLPA Entity List)—which covers companies effectively banned from entering the U.S. market unless proven to be free of forced labor—citing their use of polysilicon sourced from East Turkistan. The companies included in the list were identified as Donghai JA Solar, Hongyuan Green Energy and its subsidiary Hongyuan New Materials, Jiangsu Meike, and Shuangliang Silicon. It was announced that ingots and wafers produced by these companies can no longer be imported into the U.S., and that cells and modules produced with these materials will also be unable to enter the U.S.

06.02.2025

It has been alleged that French sports retailer Decathlon may have indirectly benefited from forced labor targeting Uyghur Turks in East Turkistan through its supply chain in China. While the media and television program "Cash Investigation" suggested that the company sourced from Qingdao Jifa Group and that cotton from East Turkistan may have been used in certain products, Decathlon denied all allegations, stating that it strictly condemns forced labor and that its raw materials are procured from sources free of such practices. Complex and opaque supply chains in China complicate the ability of international companies to distance themselves from forced labor risks, underscoring the importance of independent auditing and traceability, particularly in production networks linked to East Turkistan.

14.02.2025

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that China has expanded its state-sponsored forced labor programs in East Turkistan and Tibet. The ILO alleges that the Chinese government has implemented a large-scale employment transformation by transferring 'surplus' rural labor to state-sponsored job programs nationwide, in addition to the forced labor conducted under the guise of "vocational skills education centers." Furthermore, it is purported that while these processes are presented by official propaganda as "liberating rural labor," in reality, tens of thousands of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and individuals belonging to other ethnic groups are subjected to forced labor in sectors such as solar panel and battery manufacturing, seasonal agriculture, and seafood.

22.04.2025

German chemical company BASF announced its decision to divest its shares in two joint ventures operating in the East Turkistan region, conducted with a Chinese partner. This decision followed allegations that its local partner was involved in human rights violations targeting Uyghurs in the region. BASF announced that it sold its shares in Markor Chemical Manufacturing and Markor Meiou Chemical to Singapore-based Verde Chemical. Furthermore, BASF stated that there was no direct evidence that employees of the joint ventures were involved in human rights violations, noting only that the local partner's employees were associated with these activities.

23.04.2025

The UK government plans to amend the bill to prevent the state-backed energy company, Great British (GB) Energy, from using solar panels alleged to be linked to forced labor in China. The new amendment aims to make the use of products free of forced labor in its supply chains a legal requirement for GB Energy, and this amendment requires the approval of both houses of parliament to come into effect. Once the bill is passed, the company will be required to use only solar panels and components with supply chains that are compliant with human rights and free of forced labor.

09.05.2025

The international hotel chain InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is facing criticism for operating in East Turkistan, where mass surveillance, forced labor, and religious repression targeting Uyghurs are ongoing. According to a Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) report, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) currently operates four hotels in East Turkistan and plans to open at least 16 new hotels in the region in the coming years. Human rights defenders warn that expansion on this scale contributes to normalizing and obscuring the ongoing policies of repression in the region through tourism and investments.

03.06.2025

It is stated that China conducts comprehensive labor transfer schemes to employ the Uyghur population in factories and agricultural fields outside East Turkistan, and that within the scope of these projects, tens of thousands of Uyghurs are transferred to production centers in different regions of the country. Under these projects, Uyghurs are transported in groups by trains and planes and are forced to work in jobs such as the production of rubber slippers, automobile wiring harness assembly, and chicken grading. Experts and human rights defenders indicate that although the projects were officially initiated with the aim of "combating poverty and unemployment," in practice, they are of a coercive and controlling nature. It is reported that a reward system is implemented for party officials to reach targeted numbers and that many Uyghurs are compelled to participate in these programs due to the lack of other employment opportunities.

ANALYSIS

In East Turkistan, which is home to 20% of global cotton production, 25% of tomato production, 45% of solar-grade polysilicon, and approximately 9% of aluminum, a significant portion of the production capacity is linked to forced labor. In this context, under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which entered into force in 2021, a legal presumption is applied that all products coming from East Turkistan are linked to forced labor—unless proven otherwise by clear and convincing evidence (ANI News, 2025). As part of this global trend, the "Reciprocal Trade Agreement" signed between the United States and Malaysia in 2025 contains binding provisions preventing the export of goods produced with forced labor, while the European Union banned the entry of all products produced with forced labor into the EU market, regardless of their origin, sector, or position in the supply chain, through the "Regulation on Prohibiting Products Made with Forced Labour on the EU Market" adopted in 2024 (European Parliament and the Council, 2024). In addition, the German Supply Chain Act strengthens the corporate responsibility regime in this

12.06.2025

It is reported that China's critical mineral industries in East Turkistan utilize state-sponsored forced labor programs to meet rising global demand. According to the Hague-based human rights organization Global Rights Compliance, 77 companies operating in East Turkistan and their affiliated manufacturers are at risk of being linked to labor transfer programs conducted in the lithium, titanium, beryllium, and magnesium sectors. The region serves as a significant source for critical minerals such as beryllium, magnesium, and titanium, and is rapidly growing particularly for the production of lithium used in electric vehicle batteries. The report emphasizes that Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples are separated from their families, their lands are confiscated, and they are subjected to mandatory training programs; and that they are systematically exploited through these practices.

31.07.2025

It is alleged that the rapidly increasing cargo flights from East Turkistan to Europe carry the risk of introducing goods produced via Uyghur forced labor into European supply chains. As of June 2024, nine cargo companies are opening new air freight routes from Urumqi to the EU, the UK, and Switzerland, with transported products including e-commerce goods, textiles, footwear, electronics, and agricultural products. These flights also support China's goal of integrating East Turkistan into global markets as part of its "Air Silk Road" strategy.

area by imposing obligations on companies to identify, prevent, and remedy human rights and environmental risks throughout their supply chains (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade, n.d.).

Similarly, in the extraction, processing, and semi-finished production processes of strategic minerals such as polysilicon, aluminum, lithium, beryllium, and rare earth elements, Uyghurs are directed into low-wage, coercive, and strictly supervised jobs under the guise of "vocational training," "labor transfer," and "poverty alleviation" (Global Rights Compliance, 2025). Through this method, the raw material needs of globally strategic sectors—such as solar energy technologies, electric vehicles, the defense industry, and advanced manufacturing—are met, while forced labor becomes a structural element ensuring the sustainability of China's industrial policies based on critical minerals. Furthermore, groups engaged in domestic work and women were also forcibly incorporated into the system under "vocational training" programs, which increased significantly in 2023. These programs affected 2.5 million people, in addition to the forced labor of Uyghur men (Zenz, 2024). This

05.08.2025

Uyghurs in Australia have initiated legal action against retail chain Kmart, demanding the disclosure of documents regarding its supply chains to determine whether the company has links to forced labor practices involving Uyghurs through certain suppliers in East Turkistan. In the application submitted to the Federal Court by the Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association (AUTWA), the disclosure of commercial relations with two factories included in Kmart's 2024 and 2025 supplier lists and stated to be linked to East Turkistan was requested. The application also requests that whether the company's public statements regarding its supply chains were misleading be subjected to judicial scrutiny.

06.08.2025

South Korean solar panel manufacturer Qcells confirmed that a certain amount of photovoltaic components arriving from South Korea were detained by US Customs and Border Protection under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). The company stated that these detained components did not contain any materials sourced from East Turkistan and announced that it is cooperating with the CBP to resolve the issue. Qcells also stated that it has established a vertically integrated crystalline silicon production facility in the state of Georgia to increase its production in the US and aims to strengthen domestic manufacturing.

broad participation demonstrates that forced labor is not limited to factories but extends to all strata of social life.

Under the "Poverty Alleviation Program," which is presented in official statements with the propaganda of "economic development and social welfare," many Uyghurs have lost their homes, lands, and other assets. A large portion of agricultural lands belonging to Uyghurs living in villages has been transferred to state-directed cooperatives, and villagers who lost their lands have been designated as 'surplus labor' and forcibly transferred to the factory or service sectors. Indeed, in some villages, nearly 90% of the land has been transferred, and hundreds of people have been uprooted from their lands and directed to jobs determined by the state. An assessment published by the Jamestown Foundation states that the Chinese government's rising agricultural production policies strengthen state-directed labor programs such as "Poverty Alleviation Through Labor Transfer" in East Turkistan, and that these programs lead to forced labor practices by channeling the local population into non-agricultural jobs (Zenz, 2024). In parallel with

08.09.2025

It is alleged that a significant portion of the workers employed in shoe production centers in Jinjiang, China, belong to Uyghur, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz ethnic groups and that many of them are subjected to forced labor. According to research by TBIJ, there are social media posts indicating that workers are being subjected to forced labor at the Jinjiang Baoshu Shoes and Plastic factory, which manufactures Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, and Skechers. Furthermore, analyses show that factories of the Fulgent Sun Group, located in the supply chains of brands such as Nike, La Sportiva, Jack Wolfskin, Vans, The North Face, and Timberland, are linked to the Uyghur labor transfer program.

11.11.2025

Following a meeting between World Uyghur Congress (WUC) President Turgunjan Alawdun and officials in the Japanese parliament, it was announced that work would be undertaken on a Japanese legislative draft aiming to restrict imports of products sourced from East Turkistan, similar to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in the US. In its written requests submitted to Japan, the Congress called for a ban on products linked to forced labor in East Turkistan, the assurance of the safety of Uyghurs in Japan, and the strengthening of protections for Uyghur refugees.

Turgunjan Alawdun (left)

this, in an article titled "2026 Xinjiang Two Sessions: Excerpts from the Government Work Report," published on its official website in January 2026, the Chinese government stated that under the 14th Five-Year Plan, a total of 16.1 million people were sent to other provinces under the "rural revitalization" policy (Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Government, 2026). Human rights organizations and independent reports emphasize that this process is conducted under the threat of coercion, surveillance, and punishment rather than free employment, and that the program functions as a structural forced labor mechanism that disintegrates Uyghur society, brings it under control, and transforms it into a cheap labor pool, rather than being a tool for economic welfare (Human Rights Foundation, 2025). Therefore, the 'economic development' rhetoric is used as a tool to legitimize social and political control, rather than creating genuine free employment in the region.

While Uyghurs subjected to forced labor are transformed into production units serving China's economic interests through the exploitation of their labor in factories, agricultural fields, and logis-

16.11.2025

Due to pressure from producer associations in Italy, origin labeling scandals, and concerns created by forced labor allegations regarding products sourced from East Turkistan, China's tomato paste exports to Italy fell by 76% in 2025, while the sharp contraction in the European market led to a massive accumulation of stock in China. According to Tomato News data, the tomato paste stock held by China reached 600.000-700.000 tons, rising to a level equivalent to approximately six months of exports. While exports to Western Europe decreased by 67%, total exports also declined by 9% year-on-year in the third quarter.

23.11.2025

While the rapid increase in solar panel usage in Australia is considered important for clean energy goals, it raises human rights concerns regarding the supply chain. While approximately 90% of the solar panels in the country are imported from China, rights organizations report the existence of evidence indicating that Uyghur and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan are subjected to forced labor. Ramila Chanisheff, President of the Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association, characterizes the programs as "state-sponsored forced labor," stating that these activities are not conducted on the basis of consent and that the freedom of movement and choice of the participants are severely restricted.

tics networks, they are simultaneously rendered objects of control, constantly monitored through indoctrination camps, continuous surveillance, and disciplinary mechanisms. This dual structure reduces Uyghurs, from China's perspective, to both a source of low-cost and compliant labor and a strategic tool ensuring the sustainability of social and political repression.

A joint investigation published in May by Der Spiegel, The New York Times, and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) found that the Chinese government has sent large numbers of Uyghurs to factories in China through a "labor transfer program," and that this constitutes forced labor. Examining China's official statistics, international customs data, and tens of thousands of TikTok videos, the investigation team identified at least 75 factories linked to Uyghur forced labor in 11 different Chinese provinces. It was stated that the number of Uyghur workers transferred across provinces rose from 27.000 in 2018 to 38.000 in 2025, an increase of approximately 40%. Uyghurs transferred across provinces are transported to different regions of China against their will, separat-

26.11.2025

It has been identified that cotton and textile materials sourced from East Turkistan are used in the supply chain of Boqi Technology, a Wuhan-based automotive interior supplier. Subsidiaries of Wuhan Yudahua Textile and Garment Group, one of the company's largest shareholders, procure materials from high-risk industrial zones such as the Kunyu Economic and Technological Development Zone in East Turkistan, and these zones are linked to forced labor and state-sponsored 'aid' programs. Meanwhile, US-based Sage Automotive Interiors imports Boqi products to both the US and Mexico, and it appears that some parts come directly from suppliers in Wuhan.

28.11.2025

At the workshop titled "Uyghur Forced Labor: Implications for Global Supply Chains and Potential Risks for Türkiye," organized by ETHR in Ankara, the ethical, commercial, and geopolitical risks of China's systematic forced labor policies in East Turkistan for global supply chains and the Turkish economy were discussed. During the second session, AK Party Istanbul MP Adem Yıldırım emphasized that despite existing challenges in Türkiye–China relations, the East Turkistan issue should not be positioned as an "insurmountable obstacle" to bilateral cooperation, and stated that it could be addressed through a principled and measured diplomatic approach that safeguards Türkiye's human rights and ethical responsibilities as well as its supply chain security and commercial reputation. DEVA Party Deputy Chair İdris Şahin drew attention to data on "product laundering" in the textile sector. Future Party Group Deputy Chair Selçuk Özdağ described China's refusal to grant journalists and independent researchers access to the region as an attempt to conceal violations. In addition, Independent MP Mustafa Yeneroğlu underlined the need to systematically raise the issue before the international community and decision-makers, and called on universities to contribute institutionally through interdisciplinary research and the production of verifiable data.

ed from their families, and forced to work in factories and industrial facilities under strict surveillance. While these assignments are often legitimized through rhetoric of "employment," "vocational training," or "poverty alleviation," in practice, they operate as part of a system where freedom of movement is restricted and return is prevented. Indeed, a Uyghur working at an electronics factory in the city of Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, stated that they work 15–16 hours a day in factories surrounded by high walls and barbed wire, and that they have worked continuously for three years with almost no time off (Central News Agency, 2025).

Forced labor carried out in East Turkistan and in different provinces of China also serves the function of cross-border labor exploitation. Indeed, according to flight data analysis by the Uyghur Human Rights Project, as of May 2025, the number of cargo routes connecting Urumqi and Kashgar international airports to Europe exceeds 40, and electronics, e-commerce goods, and agricultural products transported through these airports carry the risk of Uyghur forced labor. With new air cargo routes, China operates more than 40 cargo flights per week, transporting

09.12.2025

RTÉ Investigates revealed that JA Solar and Jinko Solar panels, widely used across Ireland, are connected to polysilicon supply chains sourced from East Turkistan and linked to forced labor. While a 2022 United Nations report indicates the existence of widespread and systematic human rights violations in the region and states that these violations may constitute crimes against humanity, research shows that polysilicon production is coal-intensive and causes severe environmental degradation. Although public institutions and major projects in Ireland point to compliance with EU legislation and supplier declarations, the insufficiency of traceability and supply chain audits regarding the production process of the panels in question continues to be a subject of criticism. However, China's dominant position in the global energy market and the pressure on Ireland to rapidly achieve its climate goals make the continued use of Chinese-origin panels likely, despite ethical concerns.

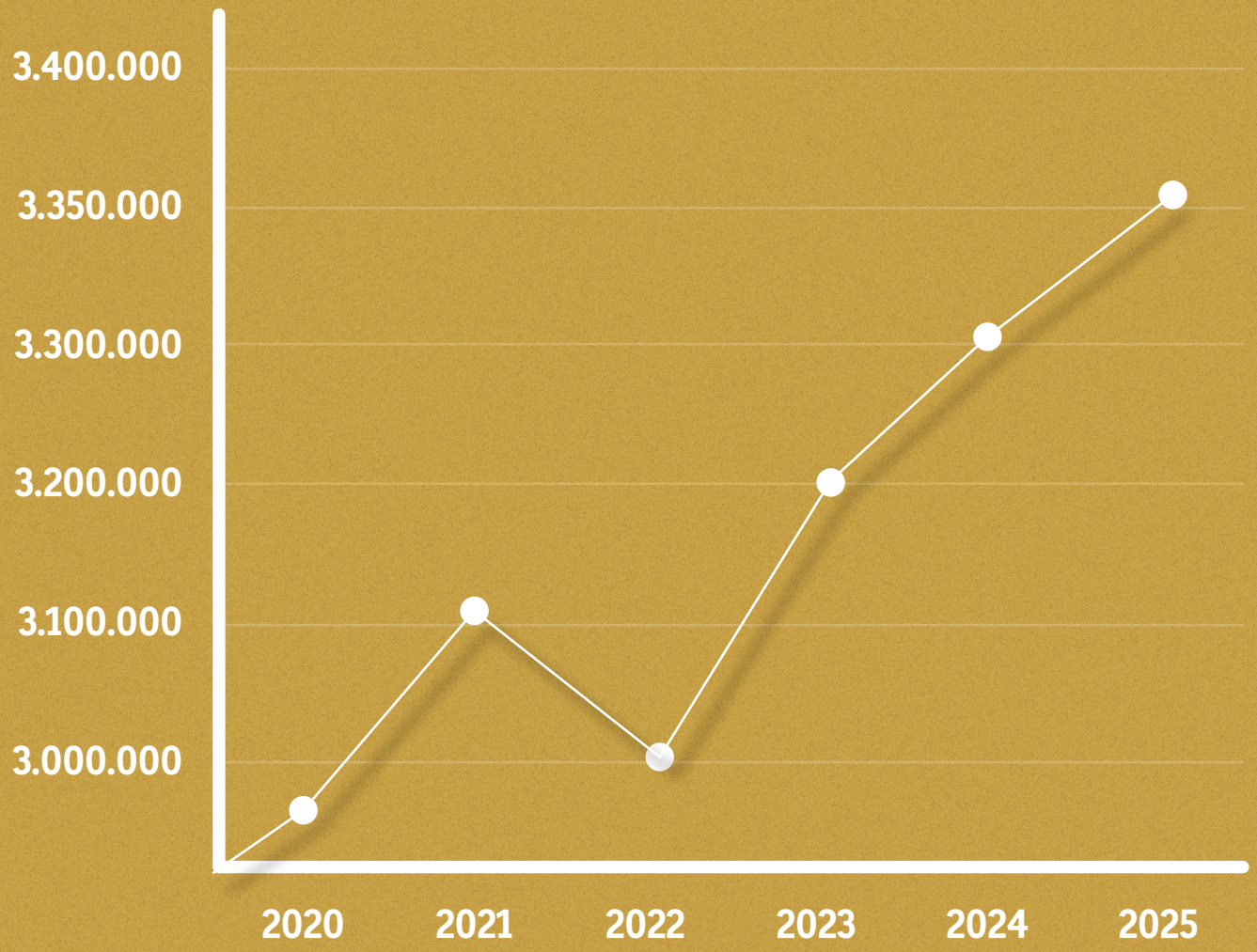
A significant portion of the production in East Turkistan integrated into global supply chains—particularly cotton, tomatoes, polysilicon, and strategic minerals—relies on forced labor practices targeting Uyghurs conducted under the headings of "vocational training," "labor transfer," and "poverty alleviation".

between 24 and 112 tons of cargo on each flight. This logistics infrastructure facilitates the integration of production outputs from forced laborers into the global market. Thus, the aim is to transform Urumqi into an international logistics hub as part of the "Air Silk Road" strategy within the scope of the Belt and Road Initiative. These routes, which include European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Switzerland, Belgium, Ireland, and Spain, open the door to the introduction of forced labor into Europe's supply chain (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2025a).

In conclusion, forced labor in East Turkistan, which hosts the world's largest state-sponsored forced labor system, is integrated with China's industrial, critical mineral, and global supply chain strategies, rather than consisting of isolated violations. Furthermore, it constitutes a structural state policy that is legitimized under the rhetoric of "economic development" and subjects Uyghur society to systematic control, dispersal, and exploitation.

Number of Workers Transferred Out of East Turkistan Under The Scope of "Surplus Labor" (2020-2025)

*In 2025, the number of rural laborers transferred to different regions of East Turkistan under the discourse of "surplus labor" was recorded as 3.358.400, while the total number of rural labor transfers carried out in the region over the past five years (2021–2025) reached 16.100.000.



Source: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Statistics Bureau & National Bureau of Statistics Xinjiang Research Team (2019–2024), Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Government (2026)

CHAPTER 14

Propaganda

Over the past ten years, the Chinese Communist Party has accelerated its efforts—often violently—to erase meaningful markers of Uyghur identity. This strategy begins by physically removing Uyghurs from their homes and communities through mass internment, long-term prison sentences, state-sponsored labor programs—which grant Uyghurs little choice over placement—and state-education reforms that have made boarding schools an increasingly unavoidable option for parents. These state-institutionalized family separations occur alongside increasingly strict policies that limit public expressions of Uyghur identity, particularly religion and language. The closure and destruction of mosques and mazars, the arbitrary application of "extremism" designations to ordinary pious activities, and pervasive high- and low-tech surveillance have severely limited public religious practice. Meanwhile, Mandarin (i.e., the national spoken language of China) has replaced Uyghur as the primary language of classroom instruction; in many instances, it is the only language spoken in schools. These policies—reminiscent of US strategies that targeted Native Americans—amount to a systematic attempt to displace the Uyghurs from their homeland and assimilate them in mainstream "Chinese" culture.

Assoc. Prof. Timothy Grose
Associate Professor of China Studies,
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Resources:

19.02.2025

The first feature film *The Botanist* by Chinese director Jing Yi, who is garnering attention in international film circles, offers an idealized narrative of life with its story set in a rural region of East Turkistan. While centering on a personal journey of discovery through the relationship Arsin, a Kazakh boy, establishes with nature, plants, and traditional folk beliefs, the film depicts multi-ethnic village life within a calm and harmonious framework with the inclusion of a Han Chinese boy named Meiyu in the later stages of the story. With its pastoral imagery and slow-paced narrative, The Botanist aims to present a serene atmosphere to the audience by conveying daily life in the region as stripped of conflicts and political context. While the film stands out on international platforms such as the Berlinale with these qualities, it is assessed by some critics as presenting an idealized and sanitized depiction of rural life that aligns with the CCP's official narratives.

28.02.2025

The Chinese Embassy in Niger hosted the premiere of the documentary titled "Xinjiang is a Good Place", filmed by a local director. The screening was attended by officials from the Nigerien Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as representatives of Islamic associations, media members, and members of diplomatic missions. It was stated that the documentary is based on filming conducted by a Nigerien director in East Turkistan and is planned to be broadcast on various media platforms in Niger in the Hausa and French languages. Speaking at the screening, the Chinese ambassador claimed that Western criticism does not reflect reality, arguing that the documentary reflects East Turkistan's economic development, its multi-ethnic and harmonious social structure, and its stable living conditions.

11.03.2025

It is reported that various practices aimed at strengthening the "intertwined social structure" in multi-ethnic settlements have been implemented within the scope of coexistence and social cohesion policies carried out in different regions of China. It is conveyed that the participation of different ethnic groups in co-living, working, and social life is encouraged in East Turkistan, Guangxi, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet through cultural events, joint meetings, and social support programs organized at the neighborhood level. Authorities state that these efforts aim to increase interaction between ethnic groups, strengthen social cohesion, and create a common sense of belonging.

20.03.2025

Following the forced repatriation of 40 Uyghurs from Thailand to China, a delegation consisting of Thai journalists was invited to East Turkistan to conduct an inspection accompanied by local officials. It was reported that during the visit, photos taken by the journalists were examined by Chinese security personnel, and unapproved images were deleted. It is stated that the visit, which was also accompanied by officials from the Thai Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, aimed to convey the living conditions of the repatriated Uyghurs to the public in line with the official narrative.

24.03.2025

Turkish director Serkan Koç's documentary titled "Pomegranate – 7 Days in Xinjiang", filmed in East Turkistan, brings to the screen the daily life and social order alleged to exist in the region. By showing villages, cooperatives, and model settlements where 'different ethnic groups work together,' Director Koç depicts East Turkistan as a peaceful and harmonious society. Through the pomegranate metaphor—which appears as a single whole from the outside but contains many seeds within—the documentary reinforces the propaganda that the 56 ethnic groups in China live 'in harmony' and presents the viewer with the impression that the region is a developed and peaceful place.

13.04.2025

Voice of America states that foreign bloggers who praise China are rapidly promoted on Chinese social media platforms as part of the Chinese Communist Party's long-standing propaganda strategy. According to the report, foreign influencers collaborate with the government, state media, and third-party networks known as MCNs to produce content that specifically whitewashes human rights violations in East Turkistan. Experts emphasize that by promoting foreign figures, the goal is to present a perception to the domestic audience that life in China is different from, and more positive than, the criticisms raised in the international community.

20.06.2025

The film Fabric of Lives, directed by Chinese director Liu Guoyi, focuses on the daily lives of two cotton farmers—one Uyghur and the other Han Chinese—living in the south of East Turkistan. The film highlights the seasonal cycle of cotton farming, the hardships of labor, family relations, and the transformation created by the use of machinery in agricultural production. Although China's cotton sector frequently comes to the fore internationally with allegations of forced labor, the film aims to highlight the cultural and emotional aspects of cotton production by opting for a narrative that leaves rural life outside of controversial contexts.

21.06.2025

The event titled "Chasing the Chinese Dream: Beautiful Xinjiang", organized by the Chinese Diaspora Federation and the Information Office of the People's Government of Xinjiang, was launched in Urumqi. It is stated that 15 foreign Chinese-language media members from 14 countries will visit regions such as Urumqi, Changji, and Chochek for a week to experience the ethnic solidarity and cultural heritage of East Turkistan. Foreign media representatives participating in the event state that they aim to tell 'accurate, multi-dimensional, and impressive' stories about China and East Turkistan by conveying the region to the world through different formats such as photos, texts, and short videos.

ANALYSIS

China's East Turkistan policy is supported by a multi-layered propaganda and perception management strategy aimed at rendering the severe human rights violations on the ground invisible. This strategy specifically aims to shape international and domestic public opinion through influencer diplomacy, controlled guest delegations, and global media manipulation.

Visits accompanied by Chinese officials are being conducted within the scope of the "influencer diplomacy" and "guest delegation strategy" carried out by the CCP in East Turkistan. Throughout the trip, guests are mostly shown state-approved mosques and specific areas that have renovated infrastructure, are dedicated to tourism and showcase projects, and are kept under security and surveillance. Indeed, these selected venues do not reflect the daily life and general reality of the region, yet the social life displayed is presented as the "norm of the region." In this context, China hosts foreign influencers, journalists, religious scholars, and academics from Muslim countries in East Turkistan and organizes staged tours aligned with party policies. Thus, the Beijing government

21.07.2025

Princeton University Press (PUP) faced strong criticism after joining the "Xinjiang Cultural Tour" organized by the Chinese government. While Chinese state media framed it as cultural exchange, critics called it a Potemkin-style tour promoting the CCP's ethnic harmony propaganda through staged Uyghur performances. During the tour, the PUP team echoed China's official narrative, and Christie Henry's comment, "Different cultures can live together in peace," was reportedly used by state media to promote the message of ethnic harmony in East Turkistan internationally.

10.09.2025

Chinese officials invited a Turkish delegation, including journalists, writers, and politicians, to examine various regions of East Turkistan, particularly Urumqi, Turpan, and Kashgar. The Turkish delegation made statements aligning with CCP policy, claiming—in contradiction with the reports of international human rights organizations—that "the Uyghur language is not banned," "mosques are well-maintained and open for worship," and that young people receive education in three languages: Chinese, Uyghur, and Arabic.

aims to cover up human rights violations such as documented forced labor and mass surveillance by portraying the oppression of Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples as a "misunderstanding." Furthermore, through programs and trips to which journalists and religious scholars from Muslim countries such as Türkiye, Indonesia, and Gulf nations are invited, the message is conveyed that criticisms regarding religious oppression in East Turkistan are merely a "Western smear policy against China," thereby aiming to reduce reactions against China in Muslim public opinion. Kara Němečková, a researcher at the Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS), states regarding China's relevant influencer strategy that "This form of propaganda is less obvious than traditional state messages, but appears more natural because it is presented in the format of a normal vlog or travel video." With this inference, she indicates that China uses content prepared through social media phenomena as soft power instead of delivering direct political messages (Radio Prague International, 2025).

Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made the do-

19.09.2025

The Chinese government released a white paper, "Governance of Xinjiang in the New Era: Practices and Achievements," presenting political, economic, and social developments in East Turkistan from its official perspective. It claimed the region has long been part of Chinese sovereignty and civilization, emphasized no terrorist attacks since 2016, and highlighted education, vocational programs, and employment under "counter-terrorism" efforts. Criticisms of oppression, digital surveillance, and human rights violations were ignored, with CCP policies praised throughout.

28.10.2025

At a Yeni Dünya Araştırmaları Merkezî (YDAM) event on East Turkistan, journalists and academics praised the region's "economic and cultural growth" and "harmonious multi-ethnic structure." Attended by Chinese Ambassador Jiang Xuebin, East Turkistan was called the "golden gateway of Eurasia" and China's strategic western front. YDAM Director Prof. Dr. Hasan Ünal criticized Western negative narratives and suggested mutual understanding through education, while the discussion largely focused on China's development and harmony rhetoric, ignoring critical issues.

ctrine of "party control over the media" a fundamental principle of national security (Antonopoulos, 2025). In this context, China's state media organizations termed the Big Four—Xinhua News Agency, China Global Television Network (CGTN), China Radio International (CRI), and China Daily—serve as the cornerstone of Beijing's external propaganda strategy and aim to shape the international perception regarding human rights violations in East Turkistan in China's favor. These institutions systematically either deny practices such as concentration camps, forced labor, mass surveillance, and cultural assimilation, or justify party policies through narratives of "counter-terrorism," "maintenance of stability," and "economic development." This narrative, produced through foreign media partnerships, multilingual broadcasts, and sponsored content, creates a coordinated propaganda ecosystem aimed at legitimizing policies of oppression in East Turkistan and weakening the impact of independent human rights reports.

Indeed, although access to YouTube, X, and Facebook is banned in China and East Turkistan, China attempts to manipulate global public opinion by deploying

02.11.2025

According to a BBC report, the Chinese administration is promoting East Turkistan as a tourism-oriented attraction center through intense infrastructure investments and promotional campaigns. According to official data, 300 million tourists were hosted in the region in 2024, and a significant increase in tourism revenues was recorded. In contrast, international organizations and human rights groups state that findings persist regarding mass detentions targeting Uyghur Turks, forced assimilation policies, and the systematic dismantling of the religious-cultural structure behind these touristic narratives.

04.11.2025

CNN Türk's visit to Urumqi in October 2025, conducted upon the invitation of Chinese officials, is interpreted as an effort by the Chinese government to present the region as a "touristic and controlled showcase." The team, consisting of a reporter and a cameraman who visited various points from the Tian Shan Mountains to the Hotan market, reports that they were kept under constant surveillance throughout the trip and that clear and direct answers were not given to the questions they directed to officials regarding daily living conditions. It is stated that the number of worshippers in mosques and presentations regarding Islamic education consisted largely of limited displays serving official propaganda rather than reflecting daily practice.

thousands of troll accounts via these very platforms (Kara, 2025). In this way, the Beijing administration aims to overshadow criticisms regarding human rights violations in East Turkistan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Tibet with positive and polished content disseminated through troll networks, and to weaken legitimacy debates in public opinion by discrediting said violations. Furthermore, by circulating the narrative that "China is a rising, peaceful power," it aims both to reduce the level of support for anti-China policies in democratic countries and to ensure that China is perceived in the international arena not as an aggressive actor, but "as a responsible power contributing to global stability." This narrative is employed as part of a broader propaganda strategy aimed at both encouraging international economic collaborations and softening criticisms directed at Beijing's human rights violations, oppressive domestic policies, and regional power projection (Demirel, 2019).

In its report dated September 2023, the U.S. Department of State warned that China's multi-faceted international media manipulation could lead to a dangerous "contraction" in global freedom of expression. The report also stated that

11.11.2025

A delegation of 13 people from the Indonesian Islamic Friendship Association visited East Turkistan at the invitation of Chinese officials. Touring mosques, old city areas, and various businesses in Urumqi and Kashgar, the delegation presented the CCP's practices in the region in a positive light. During the visit, delegation officials expressed the view that the observations and findings of international human rights researchers regarding East Turkistan do not reflect reality.

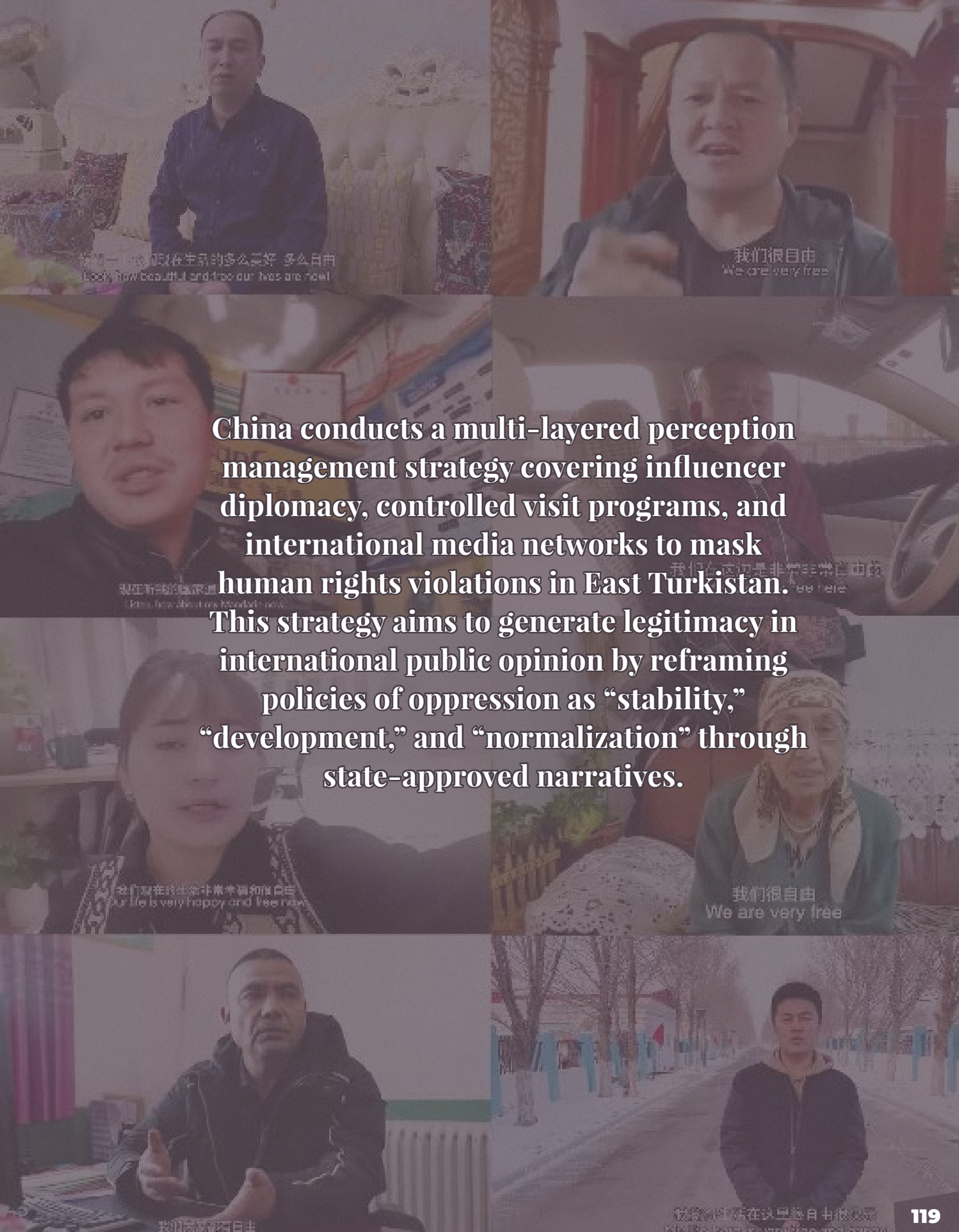
Hasan Piker

13.11.2025

In his interview broadcast on November 13, 2025, on the China Global Television Network (CGTN), a state channel affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party, Hasan Piker characterized China as a "normal country" and argued that there is "misinformation and lies" about China in the West. The interview was published during a period when international criticism persisted that CGTN engages in propaganda to cover up human rights violations against Uyghurs in East Turkistan. Highlighting that Piker has millions of followers, CGTN presented him as an influential figure reaching young Western audiences. Piker is known for producing content that depicts East Turkistan as a "happy and stable" region and rejects allegations of genocide, mass detentions, and assimilation.

Beijing spends billions of dollars annually to influence news coverage through covert partnerships with media organizations, labeled content distribution, in fluencer sponsorships, and even cyberbullying and diplomatic coercion (U.S. Department of State, Global Engagement Center, 2023). To deepen its access network, the CCP has established an international influencer network termed "foreign brain, foreign mouth, and foreign pen." These individuals amplify pro-China messages, normalize propaganda rhetoric, and attempt to counterbalance negative news. For example; the fast-fashion brand Shein, accused of using forced Uyghur labor, invited young American influencers to tour its factories in Guangzhou, and this carefully curated trip aimed to mask allegations of exploitation with images of "happy workers" (Antonopoulos, 2025).

In the final analysis, China conducts comprehensive perception management utilizing controlled narratives, selected testimonies, and digital propaganda tools simultaneously to elevate its policies implemented in East Turkistan to a ground of international legitimacy. This strategy emerges as the product of a deliberate and organized effort aimed at covering up structural oppression and rights violations on the ground.



China conducts a multi-layered perception management strategy covering influencer diplomacy, controlled visit programs, and international media networks to mask human rights violations in East Turkistan. This strategy aims to generate legitimacy in international public opinion by reframing policies of oppression as "stability," "development," and "normalization" through state-approved narratives.

How Did Human Rights Violations in East Turkistan Evolve from 2024 to 2025?

During the period spanning 2024–2025, China maintained its position as a "not free" country according to Freedom House data and deepened its repressive policies in the fields of human rights and freedoms. While the Chinese Communist Party continued to implement strict controls over the media, civil society, the internet, and religious practices, independent voices and human rights defenders were systematically punished. In East Turkistan in particular, arbitrary detentions, mass surveillance, cultural and religious oppression, and forced labor practices against Uyghur and other Turkic origin peoples were observed to persist. In 2025 as well, legal and administrative tools were tightened to prevent critical discourse and suppress human rights defenders, while no significant improvement was observed in fundamental freedoms.

Forced Labor:

Companies operating in East Turkistan, sourcing supplies from this region, or cooperating with companies based there face the risk of complicity in human rights violations committed by the Chinese Communist Party.

According to reports published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in May (26 companies), June (3 companies), August (5 companies), and November (29 companies) of 2024, a total of 63 new companies were added to the UFLPA Entity List (the Entity List under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act) (Department of Homeland Security, 2024; Federal Register, 2024a, 2024b; United States Trade Representative, 2024). For 2024, the sectors identified as priority areas for enforcement included aluminum, PVC, seafood, apparel and textile products, particularly silica-based products such as polysilicon, as well as tomatoes and tomato-derived products.

In addition to these listings, the most recent data publicly released by the Department regarding 2025 reveal that 37 new energy and textile companies were added to the list on 14 January 2025. Furthermore, within the scope of the UFLPA, caustic soda, copper, lithium, red dates, and steel have been designated as new high-priority sectors for inspections and enforcement actions in 2025. With these latest additions, the total number of Chinese companies whose access to the U.S. market is hypothetically restricted under the UFLPA framework has reached 144 (Department of Homeland Security, n.d.).

In the context of sectoral change, the companies added to the list in 2024 were concentrated both in traditional agricultural and textile sectors and in industries associated with specific industrial raw materials. These sectors have drawn particular attention due to their high production volumes and their significant share in U.S. imports. Moreover, the greater availability of documentation and evidence concerning forced labor practices in these sectors has contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of inspections and enforcement measures. In 2025, the inclusion of strategic and industrial raw materials—alongside energy and textile companies—on the list indicates China's growing influence in global energy, technology, and industrial production.

Throughout 2024, air cargo volumes remained at a relatively limited level during the early months of the year but began to display a steady and uninterrupted upward trend from late spring onward. During the summer months, cargo volumes increased markedly, and although a partial slowdown was observed in the final quarter of the year, volumes remained clearly above their levels at the beginning of the year. This pattern suggests not a temporary surge in demand, but rather a deliberate expansion of logistical capacity and the activation of long-term shipment planning. In 2025, the increase became sharper and assumed a more structural character. Although a brief decline was observed at the beginning of the year, a high-volume and sustained surge occurred after the end of the first quarter, with cargo traffic remaining significantly above the previous year's average for most of the year. The levels reached particularly from mid-year onward indicate that air cargo has become a stable primary mode of transport and that shipments have acquired continuity (CEIC Data, n.d.).

The data for 2024 and 2025 also indicate that the number of workers transferred out of East Turkistan

under the category of "surplus labor" has continued its upward trend. In 2024, the number of forced transfers reached 3.335.200, marking a notable increase compared to 2023. In 2025, this figure rose further to 3.358.400, reaching its highest level to date and demonstrating that the practice is not temporary but has become institutionalized and continuous in nature. Although the increase between the two years appears limited, the overall scale suggests that the "labor transfer" mechanism continues to function as a structural tool of demographic and economic reconfiguration (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Government, 2026).

When the two years are considered together, 2024 appears as a year of transition and preparation, while 2025 represents a period of high-volume normalization. The scale and persistence of the increase demonstrate that this trend cannot be explained solely by commercial recovery or cyclical demand growth. Rather, it points to the deeper integration of production networks linked to forced labor allegations into international supply chains and to a sustained rise in human rights–related risks, particularly for European markets.

Tourism Datas:

According to Chinese authorities, East Turkistan hosted a total of 302 million tourists in 2024, representing a 50 percent increase compared to the previous year, while tourism revenues during the same period reached 360 billion yuan (USD 51.7 billion). In the first half of 2025 (January–June), approximately 130 million tourists visited the region, generating around 143 billion yuan in tourism revenue (Amnesty International, 2024). By the end of the year, the total number of tourists had risen to 323 million, with tourism revenues recorded at 370 billion yuan (USD 53.2 billion) (Xinhua, 2026). However, the rising tourism figures in East Turkistan stand out not merely as indicators of economic development, but as part of a deliberate political strategy aimed at reshaping both global and domestic perceptions of the region.

Indeed, a related report published by the BBC in 2025 highlights that through controlled media tours, influencer-generated content, state-sponsored television series, and carefully curated tourism routes, visitors are encouraged to perceive the region's intense security and surveillance environment as "stability." At the same time, contact with the everyday life of the Uyghur community and exposure to ongoing human rights violations are systematically restricted (Ng, 2025). In this process, Uyghur culture is stripped of its religious and social dimensions and transformed into a folklorized spectacle; mosques, neighborhoods, and historical sites are reconstructed as touristic set pieces. Consequently, the presence of millions of visitors and rising revenue figures do not indicate an end to repression and assimilation policies in the region; rather, they point to the normalization and increasing invisibility of these policies through tourism.

Digital Surveillance and Regulation:

the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has continued to implement security practices across multiple domains in order to sustain the system of control and surveillance it has established in East Turkistan. According to the 2025 report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), an online security operation was conducted in the summer of 2024, during which Uyghurs in the prefectures of Kashgar and Hotan were required to immediately report any visitors to their homes to the police. In addition, at the beginning of 2025, ahead of the Spring Festival, a "winter security campaign" was launched, and many Uyghurs who had previously

been detained were taken into custody once again. These practices, as documented in the report, indicate that surveillance and security policies in the region are not temporary measures but have become a permanent mode of governance (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2025).

According to Freedom House (2024), in 2024 the CCP continued to exercise strict control over news reporting and online content, religious activities, and academia, during which 50 journalists were detained. In 2025, these control mechanisms appear to have become even more restrictive. While the number of journalists held in prisons increased, the use of both digital and physical surveillance tools expanded significantly. Moreover, additional restrictions were imposed on religious practices, placing religious sites and groups under tighter state control, and newly enforced legal frameworks—including the Counterespionage Law and the Guarding State Secrets regulations—broadened the scope of surveillance and punitive authority (Freedom House, 2025). This pattern demonstrates that between 2024 and 2025, freedom of expression and freedom of belief have further deteriorated, while censorship, surveillance, and punitive practices have intensified.

Deportation Cases:

In 2024, despite the detention and court proceedings of numerous Uyghurs for the purpose of deportation, no case of actual deportation to China was carried out.

However, in February 2025, forty Uyghur asylum seekers who were being held at the Immigration Detention Center located on Soi Suan Phlu in the Yannawa district of Bangkok, Thailand, were deported to China on the grounds that "no third country was willing to accept them." In addition to the Thailand case, in December 2025, although no official statement was issued by the Syrian government, the deportation of at least 400 Uyghurs living in Syria to China was reportedly placed on the agenda (ETHR, 2025).

Both cases in 2025 indicate that China has increased its capacity to exert pressure on host countries' decision-making processes through bilateral relations, and that the principle of non-refoulement can be effectively eroded despite strong evidence of the risk of torture and international opposition. Furthermore, ongoing detentions, poor detention conditions, and deaths reported since 2013 demonstrate that such practices risk becoming normalized over time rather than remaining exceptional measures.

When developments during the 2024–2025 period are considered collectively, it becomes evident that China has further deepened its policies of repression, surveillance, and forced labor in East Turkistan. These policies are not confined solely to security and control mechanisms; they are also economically reinforced through sectors such as tourism, trade, and logistics. At the same time, China's diplomatic and security-oriented relations with third countries contribute to rendering these violations less visible at the international level. This multilayered structure creates the conditions for both the sustainability of human rights violations and their gradual normalization as an accepted mode of governance.

Glossary

Awareness of the Chinese Nation as a Community of Shared Destiny (中华民族共同体意识 [Zhunghua minzu gongtongti yishi]):

Refers to the concept that all ethnic groups living in China should unite around a shared destiny, identity, and common future. This approach is presented as a fundamental framework guiding public policies across areas including the economy, politics, culture, education, social life, and ecology. It promotes unity, integration, interaction, and common development among ethnic groups under the broader conception of a single Chinese national community.

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (中国人民政治协商会议):

It is an advisory political body in China that operates under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Officially, it aims to present policy recommendations and project an image of "national unity" by bringing together representatives from different political parties, mass organizations, the business community and ethnic groups. However, it lacks legislative authority and its decisions are non-binding; its primary function is to lend a sense of legitimacy and a perception of inclusivity to CCP policies.

Chinese Dream (中国梦 [Zhōngguó mèng]):

A comprehensive political vision introduced by Xi Jinping that aims at the "national rejuvenation" of China. This vision envisions China becoming a global power in terms of economic development, military capacity, technological advancement, and international influence. At the same time, it emphasizes the preservation of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, state sovereignty, and what is defined as the country's "territorial integrity" (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and East Turkistan).

Country of Origin Labeling:

The practice of indicating on a product or its packaging the country in which it was produced, processed, or acquired its origin. This labeling aims to ensure that consumers are accurately informed about the product's provenance and to enhance transparency in trade.

Cultural Revolution:

It was a radical political movement launched by Mao Zedong in China between 1966 and 1976, aimed at ideological "purification" within the Chinese Communist Party and across society at large. Officially known as the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," it sought to eliminate capitalist and "counter-revolutionary" elements and to reinforce the revolutionary socialist line.

Cultural Whitening (文化漂白 [wenhua piaobai]):

Refers to the process by which China incorporates non–Han-centered cultures, such as Uyghur culture in East Turkistan, into the framework of a broader "Chinese national culture" for international presentation, while detaching them from their original context and reinterpreting them in alignment with the state's official historical narrative.

Duoyuan Yiti (多元一体):

One of the official ideological concepts of the Chinese Communist Party, commonly translated into English as "unity in diversity" or "pluralistic unity." The term asserts that all ethnic groups in China, including the Han majority, are historically, culturally, and politically integrated into a single Chinese nation under the framework of Zhonghua Minzu (中华民族).

Eliticide/Elitocide:

Refers to the act of targeting and eliminating or neutralizing a group's leaders, educated segments, and clergy; it is often observed in the early stages of genocidal processes with the aim of breaking potential resistance. In the context of East Turkistan, some researchers and human rights organizations evaluate the detentions and arrests targeting Uyghur intellectuals, academics, and cultural leaders within the scope of eliticide, interpreting this as part of a broader policy targeting the Uyghur identity.

Han Chinese:

It is the ethnic group that constitutes the largest population in China and represents the majority of the country's population.

IJOP (Integrated Joint Operations Platform, 一体化联合作战平台 [Yitihua lianhe zuozhan pingtai]):

A comprehensive digital surveillance system that collects personal data through a mobile application used by police and other authorities, flags "suspicious" behavior, and initiates investigative procedures. Through data obtained from mobile phones, vehicles, and identity cards, it monitors individuals' movements, energy consumption, social connections, and daily activities. At the same time, it oversees law enforcement operations, thereby facilitating pervasive social surveillance and arbitrary detention.

Indoctrination:

The process of instilling a specific thought, belief, or ideology in individuals as the absolute truth, without allowing it to be questioned. In this process, critical thinking is suppressed; the aim is the internalization of desired views through education, propaganda, media, or institutional structures.

Kanshousuo (看守所):

A term related to the criminal justice system in China, meaning "temporary detention center" or "detention house." It is typically the facility where individuals detained by the police on suspicion of a crime are held prior to trial. Individuals wait until the investigation is completed or until their formal court hearing.

Meshrep (Uyghur: مەشرەپ):

The most important traditional event and cultural carrier of Uyghur culture. Prevalent in East Turkistan, Meshrep encompasses a rich collection of traditional arts and culture, including music, dance, theater, folk arts, acrobatics, oral literature, food customs, and games. Uyghur Muqam music is the most comprehensive art form of Meshrep, combining song, dance, and entertainment.

Muqam (Uyghur: مۇقام):

A rich performance art common among Uyghur communities that includes elements of song, dance, folk music, and classical music. It is characterized by a diversity of rhythms, melodies, instruments, and dance figures. It is performed both as solos and in groups, and its lyrics incorporate folk poetry as well as classical Uyghur poetry.

Potemkin (Tour):

Refers to the organization of pre-arranged, staged, and controlled visits by a state or authority for foreign observers, diplomats, journalists, or international delegations, with the aim of concealing the true situation and creating a positive perception.

Principle of Non-refoulement:

A principle based on international human rights law guaranteeing that a person is not returned to a country where they would be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or other irreparable harm. This principle applies to all individuals regardless of migration status and prohibits states from returning persons at risk of serious human rights violations from their own jurisdiction or control.

Sinicization (中国 化 [zhongguohua]):

As a policy specifically targeting Uyghur Muslims in East Turkistan, it is the process of aligning religious, cultural and ethnic identities with Chinese culture and Communist Party ideology. The concept gained official status within the framework of the "sinicization of religions" policy presented at the United Front Work Conference held in 2015.

Sinicization of Religions (坚持我国宗教中国化方向 [Jianchi woguo zongjiao Zhongguohua fangxiang]):

Emerged from the objective of constructing a socialist theory of religion with Chinese characteristics. This policy envisions the reinterpretation of religious beliefs and rules in accordance with China's development and progress priorities. Within this framework, severe restrictions are imposed on Islam and Uyghur culture; Arabic inscriptions are removed from mosques; religious practices and attire are restricted; name changes and practices contrary to religious beliefs are forcibly imposed; and in some instances, religious texts are confiscated and destroyed.

Soul Engineering Project (灵魂工程 [linghun gongcheng]):

A term used to describe the comprehensive security and "stability" policies implemented by the Chinese government in East Turkistan, particularly intensified after 2014 and especially from 2017 onward, under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party and central state institutions. These policies are carried out through administrative and security instruments such as "education and vocational training" centers, labor transfer programs, widespread surveillance, regulations targeting cultural and religious spheres, and population control measures. Some academic and human rights sources characterize this process as a systematic restructuring aimed at transforming the social and cultural fabric of Uyghur society.

The 709 Crackdown (709 案):

This process, initiated by the Chinese Communist Party to neutralize legal redress mechanism, constitutes a coordinated and systematic operation of repression. With this operation, human rights lawyers in China were directly designated as a "threat to state security" for the first time on such a scale.

The Aksu and Karakax Lists:

These are leaked official documents that reveal China's policies of mass detention and surveillance in East Turkistan. While Aksu List, dated late 2018, identifies the grounds for the detention of Uyghurs between 2016 and 2018 and those sent to indoctrination camps; the Karakax List, dated June 2029, reflects administrative evaluations regarding whether individuals should continue to be held in detention. These documents provide a detailed account of why Uyghurs were targeted, who was transferred to the camps, and who was integrated into the forced labor regime. It is clearly evident in the lists that perfectly legal, everyday and religious practices- such as praying, growing a beard, wearing a headscarf, foreign ties and family relations -are documented as indicators of "extremism" or "risk".

Two Upholds (两个维护 [Liang ge weihu]):

A set of principles in the official discourse of the Chinese Communist Party defining internal party unity and the structure of leadership. The concept emphasizes upholding Xi Jinping's core position within the Party Central Committee and safeguarding the authority of the Party Central Committee as well as its centralized and unified leadership.

UFLPA (Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act):

The law enacted in the U.S. in 2022 aimed at excluding forced labor practices linked to East Turkistan from global supply chains.

UFLPA Entity List (Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List):

The official list prepared by the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, containing companies and institutions identified as participating in forced labor, state-sponsored labor programs, or surveillance-assimilation policies linked to East Turkistan.

United Front Work Department of the Central Committee (中央统一战线工作部 [Zhongyang Tongyi Zhanxian Gongzuo Bu]):

A political-ideological strategy and organizational system through which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to influence, guide, and exercise control over individuals, groups, and institutions outside the Party in the People's Republic of China. Its primary objective is to strengthen the CCP's rule by co-opting non-Party elites, ethnic minorities, religious groups, business leaders, intellectuals, and overseas Chinese communities, or by neutralizing potential opposition.

Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (Bingtuan, 兵团):

A unique state structure operating in East Turkistan that combines economic production with paramilitary security functions and operates directly under the authority of the Chinese Communist Party. In addition to carrying out agricultural, industrial, infrastructure, and settlement projects, it plays a key role in integrating the region into central governance structures, implementing population control measures, and enforcing security policies.

Zhonghua Minzu (中华民族):

An ideological and political concept employed by the Chinese Communist Party to frame all ethnic groups in China as part of a single, unified "Chinese nation" identity.

Conclusion

The findings presented in the East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 demonstrate that human rights violations in East Turkistan exhibit a depth, continuity, and multidimensional structure that cannot be reduced to specific periods or isolated policies. The developments monitored throughout the study indicate that these violations have ceased to be exceptional practices and have instead evolved into a normalized mode of governance sustained through administrative regulations, security policies, technological instruments, and discursive frameworks. In this context, Index 2025 seeks to address the situation in East Turkistan not as a series of momentary crises, but as a long-term human rights issue.

The fourteen thematic categories identified for this purpose aim not only to demonstrate the areas in which violations are concentrated, but also to reveal what becomes visible when these areas are examined collectively. When restrictions on freedom of religion and belief, forced labor practices, arbitrary detention, digital surveillance mechanisms, cultural and linguistic assimilation policies, the separation of children from their families, and transnational repression are assessed together, the resulting picture indicates that beyond individual rights violations, a comprehensive strategy is being pursued to systematically transform the social structure. This thematic framework suggests that the primary objective of China's policies in East Turkistan is not merely to ensure security, but to redefine, control, and in the long term transform the religious, cultural, and social existence of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples. Furthermore, while policies in 2024 were largely characterized by overt repression, physical control, and direct interventions, 2025 has witnessed a shift toward more institutionalized, less visible, yet more enduring and deeply embedded forms of control. In particular, the expansion of digital surveillance technologies, the normalization of repression through administrative and legal regulations, and the strengthening of propaganda narratives demonstrate that these violations have evolved from temporary measures into a permanent governance model.

Taken together, the findings across all thematic categories clearly show that the East Turkistan Human Rights Violations Index 2025 identifies the situation in the region as an ongoing, structural crisis with international consequences. This study once again underscores that the matter should not be treated by the international community as a situation to be merely observed, but rather as a long-term and principled human rights issue that demands responsibility and sustained engagement.

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