

**Forum:** Political Committee

**Issue:** Addressing the systematic oppression of the Uyghur and Tibetan peoples under the hand of the Chinese government

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## Introduction

“Break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins. Completely shovel up the roots of “two-faced people,” dig them out, and vow to fight these two-faced people until the end.” These were the exact sentences said by Maisumujiang Maimuer, a religious affairs official, in Xinhua Weibo, a state news media. The words above are just the echoes of a haunting order reverberating from the corridors of the Chinese government. With the root of the problem going to the 1950s and after, the main reflections of the issue, oppression against the minorities, Uyghur, and Tibetan people facing persecution, dates back to the mid-2010s. However, with the reflection as well as the media coverage and the Chinese government denying the statements, the problem at hand has just been on our daily surface, open to the world's access, only for a few years. In fact, the persecution has been going on for more than decades with recently being exposed. The allegations of “political and religious indoctrination, compulsory language education, and industrial training”, made by the international press, are mentioned by Liu A. , a writer for The Nation. The doings of the People's Republic of China are reasoned with them trying to suppress the cultural spread of the said ethnicities. The creation of human camps and putting men and women into jail under the name of terrorism in the 21st century is also another crucial topic to mention that people regard as strange and inhuman.



## Definition of Key Terms

**Assimilation:** "the process through which individuals and groups of differing heritages acquire the basic habits, attitudes, and mode of life of an embracing culture." (Merriam-Webster)

**Discrimination:** "any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status. " (UN)

**Ethnicity:** "based on a shared understanding of history and territorial origins (regional and national) of an ethnic group or community, as well as on particular cultural characteristics such as language and/or religion". (UN)

**Ideology:** " a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy". (Oxford)

**Allegation:** "a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof". (Oxford)

**Residential schools:** "government-sponsored religious schools that were established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture." (Canadian Encyclopedia)

**Human camps:** a camp in which humans are held captive.

**Forced Labor:** "all work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" (International Labor Organization).



## Background Information

China with the thought of having the minorities as a part of the Chinese ideology or forcing them into their culture as some people may like to refer by this saying, is actually a thing that the country has been trying to endorse for several years. Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) which contains Gansu, Sichuan, Qinghai and Yunnan provinces from the Chinese territory and Xinjiang region which is a place for the majority of the Uyghur population, are places that have suffered the most due to the doings of the PRC government.

Xinjiang also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is inhabited by a total of 13 different ethnic groups, which causes some problems within the region among the groups due to being raised by different cultures and ethics and also creates a way for the government to get their hands in the situation and try to control the groups in their own way. After the rate of the Uyghur population in the XUAR region, Han Chinese rate comes in second place. Since these groups are not ethnically connected in a way, a tension is always present between them. The idea or need of the Uyghurs becoming an independent country thus not feeling like they are a part of the place and facing discrimination in most places, seeing what other people from the same ethnicity has gone through escalates the problems. It is simply hard for both of the major groups living there to coexist in one place.

The People's Republic of China acknowledges the Uyghurs and Tibetans as a threat to their pure national identity since nearly 95 percent of the people who live in China are actually descendants of the Han Chinese. Even though they are just a 5 percent of the whole population, because of the differences within those 5 percent and them being compared to the rest of the remaining population in the country, China sees it as their right to control both XUAR and TAR.

Starting from the year 1959 to this day, Tibetan people have been facing the problems caused by the government and trying to obey the rules in order to not



create an unwanted problem for themselves and their families. Tibetan people live in the north of the Himalayan Mountains, China, an area famous for its geographical site that the Chinese government has chosen. China's plans of stimulating their economy with projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -2013- go directly through the areas mentioned and China wants to have full power over those places. Not deal with people trying to have acts such as protests etc. to gain their independence. In the article published by the World Without Genocide site, a documentation done by 60 lawyers and jurists from the International Commission of Jurists (ICC) states that "These practices have included use of forced labor resulting in the deaths of thousands of Tibetans; forced sterilization of women; widespread famine from the destruction of farmland and irrigation systems; destruction of trade and commerce, devastating the livelihoods of thousands of Tibetans; systematic religious persecution and forced indoctrination into Communist ideology; large-scale bombing; confiscation of property from monasteries, private individuals, and former Tibetan officials; imprisonment, deportation, torture, and murder of thousands of people; and the transfer of Han majority people into the region." ( a direct copy from the page)

### Endured Hardships

Old ideas, old habits and old customs were severely attacked due to China trying to impose assimilation policies in the 1960s, a period also known as the Cultural Revolution of Xinjiang. Most of the Uyghur population embraced Islam as their religion, an aspect that China is severely disturbed by. The Uyghurs' religion varying from the Han Chinese population's religion is another way for them to be picked upon. The Uyghurs and their culture were faced with lots of changes and restrictions in the time. Most of the mosques were demolished, Communist Party's buildings were constructed in their places. Religious texts as well as other stuff that were seen as 'religion related' were burned, destroyed. Language books of the Uyghurs were torn into pieces. It can be seen that the culture of the minority in the region had undergone cultural cleansing. When asked questions regarding the



issue, the answers implied that the government sees this as a re-education in their systems and denies the allegations of the term cleansing. After the mentioned hardships were endured, the government then decided to transfer some of their Han population to the region so that the Uyghurs would not be able to stand up against the government, question their doings and cause any kind of a disaster. A way of assimilation. Hans were suggested to do hard labor work. Starting from the year 1950 to this day, Hans have been encouraged to go and continue their lives in the Xinjiang province. Their chances of having, owning a property, etc. have always been higher than Uyghurs. Higher positions are still given to them compared to Uyghurs. These are done in order to have Hans take over the Uyghur population of the region, Uyghurs finally giving up their own culture, habits and lifestyle. So to speak, excluding them from the land they have been occupying for many years, China finally gaining the three of the six resources that they need for the prosperity of the BRI Project (these economic and geographical sources are exactly in the Uyghur region) . In an article published by Anna Hayyes for The Conversation it is stated that most of the islamic practices are banned by the government and Uyghurs are being forced "to eat and drink during the Ramadan fast period. Uyghur Muslims are said to have been detained for public displays of Islam and Uyghur culture such as wearing beards, women wearing face veils". In 2017, under the name of Global War On Terror, Chinese authorities have started to lock up people whom they refer as terrorists in their "re-education" camps. Many Uyghurs are being imprisoned over their actions without explanations or hearings. From the videos, live on both instagram and youtube, people have revealed evidence upon these "re-education" camps. The Chinese government refers to these camps as "re-education" camps because they intend to teach Muslim Uyghurs who they think of as terrorists. They are being forced (beaten up to death if refused) to learn the Chinese language and culture over their own, praising the current president, Xi Jinping. Men are used in labor works for international brands such as Zara and Nike. Women and children were facing rape and used as experiment rats in scientific researches. In case people try to flee, their passports are taken away and either torn into many pieces or burned.



An agreement called the "17 Article Agreement" also known as the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was signed on the 23rd of may, 1951. The agreement was done in order to resolve the problem of Tibet without any wars. For the Chinese government, this is an agreement signed to solidify China's ruling of Tibet and contribute the Tibetans to their population. They believed in the idea of Tibetans letting their ethnicity, culture disappear. However, for the Tibetans, this is an agreement that solidifies the existence of their own autonomous region. After 8 years of its implementation, The Central Tibetan Administration considered the agreement as invalid due to the Chinese government not complying with the articles in the agreement such as article 7: "The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Program of the CPPCC shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected, and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries." , or article 9 : "The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan ethnic group shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet." The disobediment of article 9 still continues in the 21th century. Residential schools for the Tibetan children take the place of human camps, implemented to the Uyghurs. Approximately a million of the Tibetan children are taking their education in the residential schools done by the Chinese government. In these schools children are stripped from their mother tongue, forced to learn chinese. Their ties are trying to be cut and be replaced with a Chinese identity. Not just middle and high schools but also kindergartens are included in the system too. Children starting from the age of 4 are taken into the kindergartens and their culture ought to be assimilated. This system was implemented after Xi came to power, before what children were taught was moderated by what they were learning at their homes. Xi Jinping's intention is to mold the youngest generation of Tibetans, and gain power over them eventually. The United States of America is one of the countries that took action towards the issue, alongside Canada and the United Nations. Some UN experts have stated that



"We are very disturbed that in recent years the residential school system for Tibetan children appears to act as a mandatory large-scale program intended to assimilate Tibetan into majority Han culture, contrary to international human rights standards. Also the United States Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken has declared that people who are in charge of this will have visa sanctions starting from now on (August 2023).

## Genocide

Genocide is a term that is identified as "means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:"

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." by the United Nations.

So, with this meaning, what China does can not be fully taken as a genocide. With the recorded evidence at hand, China is oppressing persecutions, can be said and with the committed crimes against humanity genocide is possible. However, what is happening does not actually fit the whole definition, yet there are some doings that match up to some parts of the definition. The criteria that fits the situation at hand is sub clause d. In a report published by Adrian Zens, between the years 2015 and 2018, the birth rate of the Uyghurs has decreased by 84 percent and it has been continuing in a similar scenario since. Evidence regarding the laws applied in the human camps have shown how mistreated the women and men were. Due to this,



China is playing a big role in the downfall of birth rates and if it goes like that for the upcoming years, the population will slowly but surely disappear, can be said.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### China

The Chinese Government is primarily the most important and responsible country in this situation as they are the main suspect in the allegations. China is trying to gain control over both XUAR and the Tibetan Autonomous Region since both of them play a significant role in China's future economic and geostrategic status. However, when trying to be the main authority, the lives of thousands of people are put in danger. Serious decisions and policies are being introduced every new day and the government manages to continue with their idea of turning Uyghurs and Tibetans to the Chinese ideology. Suppression of religious as well as cultural beliefs and violation of human rights are the main points of the issue.

### United States of America

The said country has been vocal in voicing its judgments and thoughts on China's treatment of Uyghurs and Tibetans. Sanctions such as asset freezes, travel bans, restricting the access of some companies to the technology provided by the U.S., not buying or selling stuff that is thought to be the products of forced labor, and visa restrictions to the responsible people as the State General Secretary mentioned are implemented to the Chinese Government by the United States of America. The country also tries to help the issue through diplomatic channels and reports.

### European Union (EU)

The European Union has gathered as a whole a couple of times to decide what can be done to help and have shown their concerts towards the issue. In a





published resolution by them sanctions are suggested with the exact saying being: "Welcomes the adoption of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime on 7 December 2020; calls on the Member States and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to swiftly evaluate the adoption of sanctions against the Chinese officials and state-led entities, such as Xinjiang Production and Construction Corporation, responsible for devising and implementing the policy of mass detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, for the use of forced labor, and for orchestrating the severe repression of religious freedom, freedom of movement and other basic rights in the region and in other places, such as Tibet;" (Forced labor an

## Canada

Canada, along with The United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States, is imposing sanctions on China due to the human violations occurring toward the Uyghurs and Tibetans. The mentioned sanctions are visa bans and financial assets freezers on the police department of Xinjiang and , proven, responsible authorities.

## Timeline of Events

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1950</b> | <b>China gains control over both Uyghur and Tibetan regions.</b>             |
| <b>1955</b> | <b>XUAR is established.</b>  |
| <b>1959</b> | <b>Protests by the Tibetans are uprising, exile of lots of natives occur</b> |



|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>1965</b>  | <b>Tibet Autonomous Region is established.</b>  |
| <b>1980s</b> | <b>Policies regarding the cultural and economical life of Tibetans are implemented as a way of persecution.</b>   |
| <b>2015</b>  | <b>“Re-education” of the Uygurs occurs within the human camps.</b>  |
| <b>2019</b>  | <b>The Chinese government denies the allegations of human camps and refers to them as “re-education” centers.</b> |

**Relevant UN Resolutions and Other Documents**

- Forced labor and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region , European Union

The resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 17th of December 2020, aims to protect the Uyghurs with emphasis on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The suffering of the Uyghurs, by mentioning “there has been a general strengthening of the Chinese regime and a toughening of the treatment of minorities, in particular of Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongolians, with the aim of assimilating them through the imposition of the Chinese majority lifestyle and communist ideology; whereas predictive policing platforms such as the Integrated Joint Operation Platform have been extensively used by the police to track suspicious individuals based on everyday, lawful and non-violent behaviour;” are called upon (subclause B).



[Texts adopted - Forced labour and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region - Thursday, 17 December 2020](#)

- "17-Article Agreement" on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet

The link below contains the articles of the agreement between the government of China (The Central People's Government) at the time and Tibetan authorities in Beijing, 23 May 1951. However, as it was mentioned before, the agreement was terminated in the year 1959 after Chinese authorities did not comply with the articles.

["17-Article Agreement" on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet](#)

- OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China , United Nations

The 31 August 2022 report contains the necessary information accepted by the United Nations on the violation of human rights; reproduction, privacy, freedom rights and forced labor problems. How China regards Uyghurs under the name of terrorists and the title extremism with touching upon the legal frameworks is the content of the report.

[OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China](#)

## **Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

The report published by the OHCHR -which is mentioned in the previous part-, can be considered as one of the most recent actions - addressing the situation- taken by the United Nations. Countries such as Britain, the US, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, Eswatini, Guatemala, Paraguay, Fiji and Palau agreed upon the words " Members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang



continue to suffer serious violations of their human rights." said by the UN General Assembly's Third Committee by Britain's Deputy Permanent Representative James Kariuki. Countries are being encouraged to take actions towards the problem.

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assesment.pdf>

The "Resolution regarding the serious human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur and other areas" was passed in the Japanese system by the authorities. This has passed after the various meetings with both the United States and G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States). The government of Japan is planning to gather more relevant information to have a better understanding of the issue and then monitor the situation by employing measures to help Uyghurs, with the help of the international community.

[https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_english.nsf/html/statics/english/ketugi\\_e20201-1.html](https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/english/ketugi_e20201-1.html)

## Possible Solutions

Delegates should keep in mind that with China denying all the allegations and having found the ways of escaping the situation a bit, more comprehensive research needs to be done in order to fully grasp the situation and implement new ways of coming over it.

A way for the governments to have an effect on the situation is to implement sanctions. These sanctions could differ from visa bans to product restrictions or prohibitions. Governments should be vocal in voicing their position on the issue, either accept the violation of human rights in the region or side with China. Of course, for some governments it would be beneficial to stay neutral.



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