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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Jubilee Campaign, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 August 2020]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Multi-Faceted Persecution of Uyghurs in China

For years, the endless human rights violations of Uyghurs and Muslim minorities in China have been well-documented by human rights organizations and scholars across the world: arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, physical torture, forced re-indoctrination, sterilization are among the most egregious and reprehensible of such violations.¹ Jubilee Campaign would like to draw to the Council's attention the systematic detention and coerced labor of Uyghurs in China.

Mass Surveillance and Arbitrary Detention

In November 2019, a mass leak of documents from the Integrated Joint Operation Platform, the data collection program responsible for the mass surveillance of Uyghurs in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China (Xinjiang), exhibited how Uyghur households deemed 'suspicious' are routinely monitored and, in the most extreme cases, are sent to detention centers which dually serve as re-education camps:

"From June 19th to June 25th [2017], the 'integrated platform' of the four states of southern Xinjiang notified the county and city (governments) of 24,412 suspicious persons, including 16,354 in Kashgar, 3,282 in Hotan, 2,596 in Kezhou and 2,380 in Aksu. After conducting verification and handling work, 706 were criminally detained, including 542 in Hotan, 85 in Kezhou and 79 in Aksu. 15,683 were sent to education and training...."²

In order to, within the span of just one week, identify nearly 25 thousand individuals as 'suspicious persons,' Xinjiang officials have placed security cameras around every corner, police checkpoints to restrict travel, facial recognition and biographical data collection systems, and installation of spyware applications to track all Uyghur offline and online activity. Should a Uyghur individual download religious content or online religious publications to their devices, such information is recorded by Chinese officials and the individual is flagged as suspicious, thus making them a potential future victim of arbitrary and prolonged detention. Among the criteria that make any Uyghur susceptible to imprisonment include: "‘extremist’ religious practices," "possessing sensitive digital content (especially ‘illegal’ religious content," "travelling or studying abroad," "links to relatives abroad," "voicing open criticism," "use of Western social media apps or websites,"³ as well as not abiding by family planning policies.

Indoctrination and Torture

Employing all possible tools of mass surveillance to flag Uyghurs deemed threats to the Government's superiority due to their religious and political activity, Chinese officials in Xinjiang have detained upwards of one to two million Uyghurs in detention centers falsely labelled as re-education facilities, where these innocent individuals - primarily Uyghur, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz Muslims - endure the most inhumane conditions and abuse⁴:

- "Many former inmates describe camp food as poor quality, saying they were fed steamed buns or thin soup, and rarely given meat, and that food poisoning was common."

¹ BBC News, "UK accuses China of 'gross' human rights abuses against Uighurs," 19 July 2020, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-53463403> ; Amnesty International, *Nowhere Feels Safe*, February 2020, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2020/02/china-uyghurs-abroad-living-in-fear/>.

² Autonomous Regional Party Committee Command for Cracking Down and Assaulting on the Front Lines, "Integrated Joint Operations Platform" Daily Essentials Bulletin, 25 June 2017, available at: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6558506-China-Cables-IJOP-Daily-Bulletin-14-English.html>.

³ Smith, Joanne Finley, 2019, *Securitization, insecurity and conflict in contemporary Xinjiang: has PRC counter-terrorism evolved into state terror?*, *Central Asian Survey*, 38(1), 1-26, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02634937.2019.1586348?needAccess=true>

⁴ *Ibid.*

- “Internees are required to study the Chinese language (including classical Chinese texts), Chinese laws on Islam and politics, the ‘spirit of the CCP 19th Party Congress’, China’s policies on minorities and religion, and the state-sanctioned version of Chinese history.”
- “Former inmates describe being required to criticize their own Islamic beliefs and those of fellow inmates or loved ones.”
- “Former detainees recounted being shackled, deprived of sleep, and beaten and hung from ceilings and walls.”
- “In a recent testimony, one male survivor spoke of being subjected to mass rape by more than 20 camp guards.”
- “They were forced to take pills that made them faint and a white liquid that caused bleeding in some women and loss of menstruation in others.”
- “Those who disobeyed camp rules would be placed in handcuffs and ankle cuffs for up to 12 hours. If the disobedience continued, they might be subjected to waterboarding or strapped to a metal ‘tiger chair’ for 24 hours.”

Other examples of the human rights violations faced by prisoners in Xinjiang overwhelmingly include overcrowding, starvation, intrusive medical tests, and psychological torture and humiliation.⁵

Forcible Transfer and Coerced Labor

In 2020, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) released a groundbreaking report that exposes the harsh reality in which Uyghurs are forcibly transferred out their detention centers to factories throughout Xinjiang and the broader mainland to take part in coercive labor programs, all mandated by “military-style management”. During work hours, Uyghurs engage in textile and electronic manufacturing, and outside of work hours, they are required to attend Chinese language courses - all while being monitored by factory employers and local Chinese Communist Party authorities to ensure that they do not engage in religious worship or activity.⁶

"Uyghur workers' participation in those programs is rarely voluntary. Even in the 2000s, well before the 're-education camp' system was created, working and living conditions for transferred Uyghur workers were often exploitative, if not abusive. Rights groups criticized the programs as coercive, highlighting how they intentionally removed Uyghurs from their homes and traditional way of life, only to force the workers to endure the long working hours, poor conditions, predatory bosses and discriminatory attitudes of their Han co-workers."⁷

Perhaps even more reprehensible is the fact that well-known international companies are profiting from cheap, coercive labor - Qingdao Taekwang Shoes Co Ltd. a corporation whose primary purchaser is Nike, 'hired' upwards of 600 minorities from Xinjiang, including Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz. These Taekwang employees work by the light of day to manufacture shoes and by night attend a Taekwang night school where they learn Mandarin, patriotic slogans, and statements by President Xi. One major Chinese contractor is O-Film Technology Co. Ltd, a business whose Nanchang, Jiangxi province factory has received somewhere between 700 and 1,000 Uyghurs through forcible transfer, and who supplies technological parts to: Apple Inc., Sony Corporation, Samsung, Dell, HP, Amazon, LG, Lenovo, Microsoft, and other international conglomerates. Hubei Yihong Precision Manufacturing Co. Ltd, who received upwards of 100 Uyghur laborers in 2018, is a company low on the supply chain for Toshiba, Cisco, General Electric, Panasonic, Nintendo, and Mitsubishi.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Vicky Xiuzhong Xu with Danielle Cave, Dr. James Leibold, Kelsey Munro, Nathan Ruser, Uyghurs for sale: 'Re-education', forced labour and surveillance beyond Xinjiang, Australian Strategic Policy Institute- International Cyber Policy Centre, 13 August 2020, available at: <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>.

⁷ Ibid.

Uyghurs and other minorities that are compelled into involuntary labor in China are subject to various forced labor indicators outlined by the International Labor Organization, including: “being subjected to intimidation and threats, such as the threat of arbitrary detention, and being monitored by security personnel and digital surveillance tools”; “being placed in a position of dependency and vulnerability, such as by threats to family members back in Xinjiang”; “having freedom of movement restricted, such as by fenced-in factories and high-tech surveillance”; and “isolation, such as living in segregated dormitories and being transported in dedicated trains.”⁸

Recommendations to the Council

- Hold China accountable to its obligations as a state party to the United Nations (UN) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:
 - Article 6: (1) The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.
 - Article 12: (1) The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- Encourage international brands and conglomerates to eliminate all traces of forced transfer and coercive labor in their supply chains, and hold them accountable to the highest human and labor rights standards.
- Support visits by the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in order to assess and report the situation and provide recommendations.

Recommendations to China

- In accordance with the freedoms of religious belief, association, and speech as guaranteed in the Constitution of China, immediately cease the practice of arbitrary and prolonged detention of activists, minorities, lawyers, and scholars for their dissenting political or religious beliefs.
- Meet obligations as a State party to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to prohibit and prevent torture practices against all citizens, and to hold perpetrators (individuals or entities) of abuse and torture accountable.
- Stop permitting and promoting the forcible transfer of Uyghur and other minorities from Xinjiang to factories within and outside the province that engage in forced labor and re-indoctrination.
- Accept visits by UN Special Rapporteurs to assess the situation of arbitrary detention, forced transfer, and coerced labor of Uyghurs and minorities both within and without Xinjiang.

⁸ Ibid.