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YES, IT IS A GENOCIDE. A New Report



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ANNIVERSARY OF THE URUMCHI MASSACRE

Campaign for Uyghurs Press Release

On July 5-7, 2009, the world watched in horror, but with little understanding of what they were viewing, as thousands of lives were destroyed and China played as the victim just as they continue to do at present. Thus, unsurprisingly, it is ludicrous to suggest that anyone can actually believe the

Chinese government reports on what happened in Urumchi. The same government which mowed down student protestors in Tiananmen with guns and tanks does not inspire faith in its narrative regarding how peaceful protests turned violent. In a country that considers any type of free expression

threatening, it is tragic that these massacres have continued to be twisted as propaganda used to control Han Chinese citizens in fearing the Uyghurs and justifying their genocide. Today, Campaign for Uyghurs (CFU) remembers with somber reflection.

The pain and tragedy of the events of July 5th continue to drive home the reality that Uyghurs are strangers in their own homeland, denied the opportunity to express grief or grievance, and the response from both Han and Uyghur leaders in the aftermath of the violence was telling. The Chinese government continued to cover up the number of Uyghurs who had died or were arrested, stoked racial tensions and fears, and used the Chinese military's merciless gun fire against the innocent Uyghurs who were carrying Chinese flags while they were peacefully protesting to stop this free expression. After shutting off the electricity for the entire city after sunset, they moved in the cover of darkness to provoke Han Chinese mobs to attack and kill more Uyghurs on the streets of Urumchi.



Rushan Abbas, executive director of CFU, said, “In the past the Chinese regime’s committed violence against

peaceful protests without consequences. In East Turkistan, in Tibet and in Hong Kong this has been the case, so of course as China remains unchecked and the regime continues to commit this type of violence. The world cannot claim ignorance any longer. They have all turned a blind eye to the pattern of Chinese state intimidation and violence for far too long.”

What the Chinese government is doing in East Turkistan is terrorism by the state: ordinary people living in terror because of suppressive policies, having not rule of law but ruled by law, and deprived of all basic rights. The regime has become a rogue state, terrorizing the people. There is no justice in China. We must recognize the value of every human life, and continue to seek justice for all in staunch opposition to what the Chinese government continues to push across the globe.

Without justice, how can there be peace? The Uyghurs today remain exiles and victims of genocide in their own brutalized homeland. On such a sad day like this, we honor those brave souls who sacrificed their lives for justice on July 5th, 2009. Their spirit gives us courage to continue our rightful advocacy campaign to hold China accountable for their crimes against humanity and fight for freedom of the Uyghur people. We are not alone in this fight, and together we will not stop until justice, equality and freedom are delivered.

AYGUL ELI: HOW CCP IS PUNISHING THE BRIGHTEST UYGHUR STUDENTS

She was an honor student who wrote an innovative MA thesis. She was punished and sentenced to 20 years in jail. Martyna Kokotkiewicz

Aygul Eli is a young woman. An ambitious and successful student. As her research field for her MA thesis, she has chosen an area that lets us consider her a pioneer. Not everyone has a chance to conduct a comparative study of the electronic banking and accounting systems of China and Turkey.

What happens when Chinese state officials discover that one of their citizens has proved herself as a prominent student researcher abroad? Do they award her a scholarship or some other kind of prize? Or do they detain her and make her disappear? Which answer do you think is valid when you are, just like Aygul, a non-Han citizen in today's China? A Uyghur and a Muslim, who

has studied in a country where their fellow Muslims constitute the majority? Ironically, the answer is complicated, as Aygul Eli has not disappeared. Her family has been informed officially that their daughter is in prison. Sentenced for 20 years.

Aygul Eli was born on July 1, 1986, in Suydong village, Ghulja, Xinjiang (that Uyghurs prefer to call East Turkistan). Her academic life started at the



University of Nanjing, from which she graduated in 2009. Since she was a skilled and successful student, in January 2010 she headed for Turkey to continue her studies.

At this point, one extremely important issue needs to be emphasized. When you are a student in China and want to continue your studies abroad, normally you need to apply for a visa. This was definitely the case when Aygul planned to travel to Turkey. She officially applied for all the required documents, and at that stage the government officials did not reject her application. For those who have been

following recent events in Xinjiang/ East Turkistan (for further reference, see for example my article about Heyrigul Niyaz) such a scheme may sound familiar. The authorities do not oppose applications for travel documents by a Chinese citizen, yet after several years even the slightest form of contact with the so-called outside world becomes a crime. As cruel as it may seem, by giving her permission to study abroad, the authorities made her sign her own prison sentence. However, in 2010, no one in her family could have expected such consequences.

Aygul was doing very well in Turkey. At first, she concentrated mostly on language studies. Later, she enrolled at Ankara Gazi University. There, she took the challenge of examining the electronic banking systems of Turkey and China. She was an excellent, award-winning student. After that successful period of studies, she earned

her MA in 2016. The date is worth noting. That was the time when traveling back to the homeland still did not imply the danger of losing one's freedom. Or even life. Moreover, it would seem pretty natural that, after having received education abroad, students travel back to their countries of origin, to apply what they have learned there, and first and foremost, to visit the people and places they have been missing. This is why Aygul Eli decided to go back home.

As we already know, Aygul belongs to one of the most persecuted ethnic groups in China, and the epilogue of her story was easy to predict. She got detained in 2017, and has reportedly been sent to prison. According to what her family has been told, she has been sentenced to 20 years. Here comes the right moment to ask what for. For having been more talented and better educated than many average Han citizens?



Aygul Eli

65402319860701??E?

Age 33	Gender F	Ethnicity Uyghur	Profession student
Likely place of origin Korghas		Likely current location ---	
Status sentenced (20 yrs)		When first detained July 2017 - Sep. 2017	
Detention reason (suspected official) related to going abroad ---			

Lists	Health status ---
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For not being one of them? For wearing a headscarf? Whichever option we choose, it would mean that the reason is much simpler. Aygul went to jail for being who she is.

At this point, it should not sound like exaggeration to state that even breathing may be considered a crime in China. At least for some individuals, it certainly is.

There is a small post scriptum to this story. We have spotted an alarmingly growing number of made-in-China videos, showing fake images of the situation in Xinjiang/East Turkistan. We are being shown happy “Uyghurs” smiling, dancing, some even wearing traditional clothes. In many cases, they are Han Chinese in disguise.

For those ready to believe this pathetic propaganda campaign, I have a question I would like to also submit to the Chinese authorities. Why are not people like Aygul, together with many of her friends who are also detained, allowed to join those smiling dancers, accompanied with live music of artists such as Ablajan Awut Ayup (who disappeared in 2018)? Where have all those people gone, and what is their crime if it is true that, as the propaganda videos proclaim, that there is nothing wrong with traditional Uyghur culture? We recommend that, rather than CCP propaganda, citizens of democratic countries watch testimony videos about Uyghurs detained, disappeared, released but in poor health conditions, and deceased. It is unfortunately too late for those who died, but all the others need our support.



UYGHURS: YES, IT IS A GENOCIDE. A NEW REPORT



Campaign for Uyghurs, chaired by Ms. Rushan Abbas, offers evidence of the criminal policies of the CCP, and calls for an international trial. Marco Respinti

How do you call the planned, intentional campaign to wipe out an entire portion of mankind, singled out for ethnic, religious, or cultural reasons? Since the time of Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959), the Polish lawyer and legal expert who coined the term to indict crimes against the Jews perpetrated by Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s, the word you are looking for is “genocide.”

It is a word with moral, legal, and even philosophical weight. “Genocide” does not imply only the massacre of a large number of people, which is horrible enough and unfortunately happened many times in history. A massacre is called “genocide” if it implies

the intent to erase a whole human community, a goal planned and implement-

ed as systematically and scientifically as possible. As such, it is the product of ideology and thus typical of the modern era, in spite of the fact that we claim to live, since a couple of centuries, in the “era of democracy.”

French historian Reynald Secher is one of the finest experts of the first genocide in history, the systematic extermination of Catholics in Vendée between 1793–1794, at the time of the French Revolution. He elaborated on the notion of “genocide,” forging another neologism, “memorycide.” The latter occurs when even memories of the human groups subject to genocide are being destroyed, to cancel all of their traces and records from history.

Furtherly elaborating on such materials, recent scholars have moved for-

ward to introduce the notion of “cultural genocide,” i.e. the drive toward the annihilation of a population and a culture before and beyond its physical extermination.



This is what is happening in Xinjiang, the region predominantly inhabited by Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities, which they prefer to call East Turkistan. Precisely for this reason, some lawyers think that the Chinese Communist regime can and should be brought as soon as possible before the International Criminal Court, despite the fact that China has not signed the relevant treaty.

There is now a new report on all this, *Genocide in East Turkistan*, published by Campaign for Uyghurs, founded, and chaired now, in Washington, D.C. by Ms. Rushan Abbas.

The report illustrates what Bitter Winter has constantly chronicled in recent months. The CCP’s intention to destroy an entire population was not even stopped by the COVID-19 pan-

demic. Muslims in Xinjiang have been and are harassed in all possible ways. Intimidations, unlawful detentions, religious and cultural discrimination, and even humiliating practices such as compelling them to eat pork and drink alcohol (forbidden in Islam), and to transform their home decor from traditional Uyghur to cheap Westernized style. Those who try to protest are sent to the dreadful transformation through education camps.

In the report, a special emphasis is put on the fate of Uyghur women, a topic that Ms. Abbas holds dear and has also addressed in a recent article for *Bitter Winter*. One million Han Chinese CCP cadres have been sent to live with Uyghur families to control their daily life. This operation is nicknamed by the CCP the “Double Relative Program” (meaning that each Uyghur family has both real blood relatives and false CCP-imposed ones), and may mean that Uyghur girls and women are obliged to share the same bed with





CCP spies, with consequences not difficult to predict. The plague of imposed weddings between Han Chinese chosen by the CCP and Uyghur women is also common, and generates additional pain. As Campaign for Uyghurs denounces, this often amounts to what is nothing less than rape.

Several reports on the persecution of Uyghurs have been published, but the peculiarity of Genocide in East Turkistan is its specific attention to the medium and long-range effects of the CCP policy in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Its most important parts are in fact the introduction, on the legal concept of “genocide,” and the chapters where the CCP genocidal intention is clearly demonstrated. Examples include efforts to disrupt families, deportation and re-education of Uyghur children whose parents and relatives have been sent to the camps, and forced sterilizations and abortions to prevent Uyghur births.

“These crimes, the report concludes, must be brought forward by an International Commission, and their perpetrators must be prosecuted in the International Court of Justice.” Otherwise, as the late Uyghur leader Isa Yusuf Alptekin (1901–1995) once wrote, “my people face a great danger of destruction. If my people cannot escape the danger of destruction, they will perish.”

PART 1: CHINA FORCES BIRTH CONTROL ON UYGUR MINORITY TO CURB MUSLIM POPULATION IN XINJIANG



A mural depicting Uyghur and Han Chinese men and women carrying the national flag of China decorates the wall of a home at the Unity New Village in Hotan, in western China's Xinjiang region.

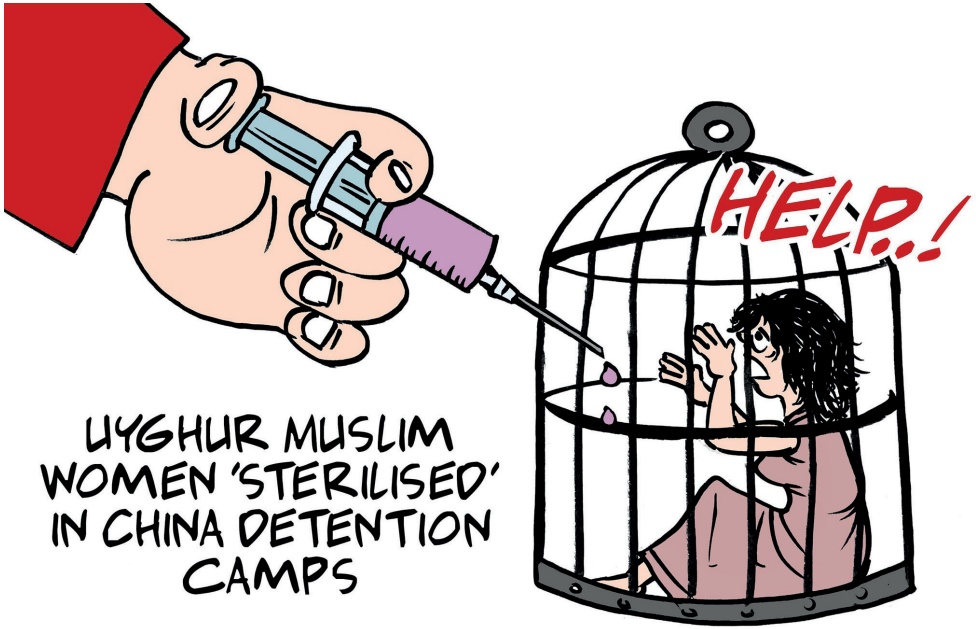
Experts are calling the practice 'demographic genocide' as people with too many children are put into mass detention or sterilised

Birth rates in the mostly Uyghur regions of Hotan and Kashgar plunged by more than 60 per cent from 2015 to 2018

Reports have surfaced that the Chinese government is taking draconian measures to slash birth rates among Uyghurs and other minorities as part of a sweeping campaign to curb its Muslim population, even as it encourages

some of the country's Han majority to have more children after changing its famous and long-standing 'one child' policy.

While individual women have spoken out before about forced birth control, the practice is far more widespread and systematic than previously known, according to an AP investigation based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor. The campaign over the past four years in the far west region of Xinjiang is leading to what some experts are calling a form of "demographic genocide."



The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilisation and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show. Even while the use of IUDs and sterilisation has fallen nationwide, it is rising sharply in Xinjiang.

The population control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and as a punishment for failure to comply. Having too many children is a major reason people are sent to detention camps, the AP found, with the parents of three or more taken away from their families unless they can pay huge fines. Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to get an

IUD, a birth control device inserted into the uterus. Two years later, in January 2018, four officials in military camouflage came knocking at her door anyway. They gave Omirzakh, the penniless wife of a detained vegetable trader, three days to pay a US\$2,685 fine for having more than two children.

If she didn't, they warned, she would join her husband and a million other ethnic minorities locked up in internment camps.

"God bequeaths children on you. To prevent people from having children is wrong," said Omirzakh, who tears up even now thinking back to that day. "They want to destroy us as a people."

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The result of the birth control campaign is a climate of terror around having children, as seen in interview af-

ter interview. Birth rates in the mostly Uygur regions of Hotan and Kashgar plunged by more than 60 per cent from 2015 to 2018, the latest year available in government statistics. Across the Xinjiang region, birth rates continue to plummet, falling nearly 24 per cent last year alone — compared to just 4.2 per cent nationwide, statistics show.

The hundreds of millions of dollars the government pours into birth control has transformed Xinjiang from one of China's fastest-growing regions to among its slowest in just a few years, according to new research obtained by

The Associated Press in advance of publication by China scholar Adrian Zenz.

“This kind of drop is unprecedented ... there's a ruthlessness to it,” said Zenz, a leading expert in the policing of China's minority regions. “This is part of a wider control campaign to subjugate the Uygurs.”

The Chinese Foreign Ministry referred multiple requests for comment to the Xinjiang government, which did not respond. However, Chinese officials have said in the past that the new measures are merely meant to be fair, allowing both Han Chinese and ethnic minorities the same number of children.

For decades, China had one of the most extensive systems of minority entitlements in the world, with Uygurs and others getting more points on college entrance exams, hiring quotas for government posts and more relaxed birth control restrictions. Under China's now-abandoned ‘one child’ policy, the authorities had long encouraged, often forced, contraceptives, sterilisation and abortion on Han Chinese. But minorities were allowed two children — three if they came from the countryside.

Under President Xi Jinping, those benefits are now being



rolled back. In 2014, soon after Xi visited Xinjiang, the region's top official said it was time to implement "equal family planning policies" for all ethnicities and "reduce and stabilise birth rates." In the following years, the government declared that instead of just one child, Han Chinese could now have two, and three in Xinjiang's rural areas, just like minorities.

But while equal on paper, in practice Han Chinese are largely spared the abortions, sterilisations, IUD insertions and detentions for having too many children that are forced on Xinjiang's other ethnicities, interviews and data show. Some rural Muslims, like Omirzakh, are punished even for having the three children allowed by the law.



State-backed scholars have claimed for years that large rural religious families were at the root of bombings, knifings and other attacks the Xinjiang government blamed on Islamic terrorists. The growing Muslim population was a breeding ground for poverty and extremism, "heightening political risk," said a 2017 paper by the head of the

Institute of Sociology at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences. Another cited as a key obstacle the religious belief that "the fetus is a gift from God."

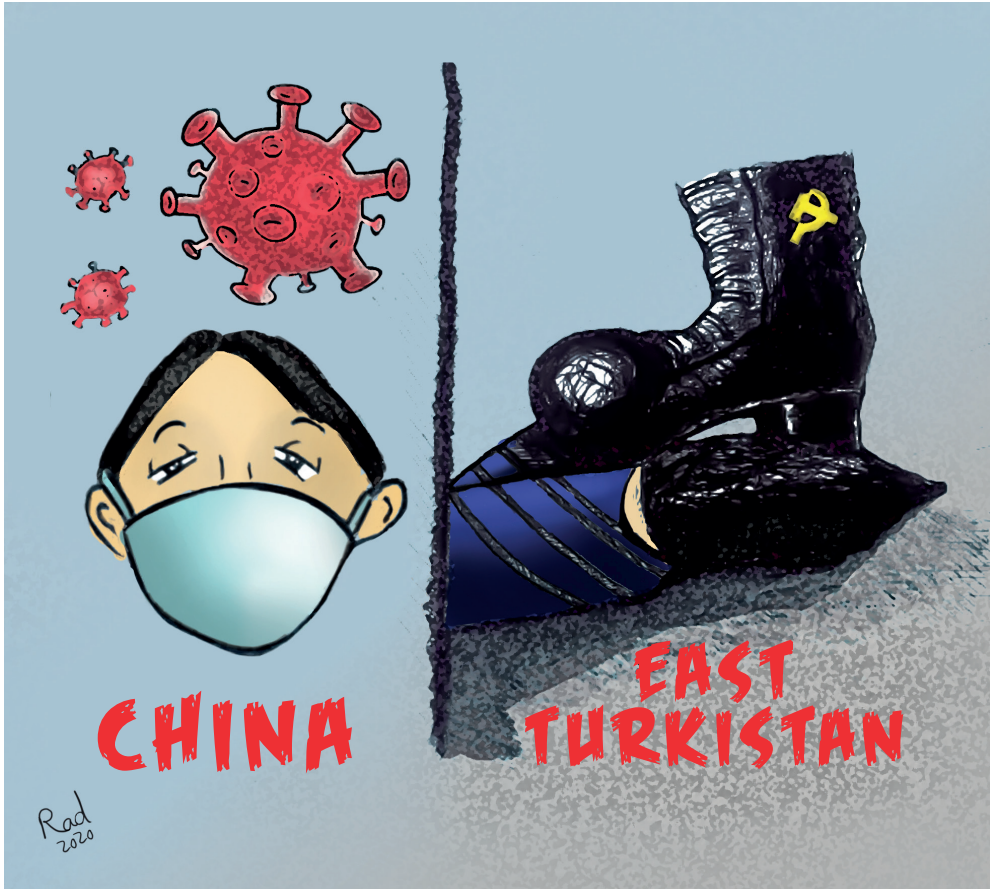
Outside experts say the birth control campaign is part of a state-orchestrated assault on the Uygurs to purge them of their faith and identity and forcibly assimilate them into the dominant Han Chinese culture. They're subjected to political and religious re-education in camps and forced labour in factories, while their children are indoctrinated in orphanages. Uygurs, who are often but not always Muslim, are also tracked by a vast digital surveillance apparatus.

"The intention may not be to fully eliminate the Uygur population, but it will sharply diminish their vitality, making them easier to assimilate," said Darren Byler, an expert on Uygurs at the University of Colorado.

Some go a step further.

"It's genocide, full stop. It's not immediate, shocking, mass-killing on the spot type genocide, but it's slow, painful, creeping genocide," said Joanne Smith Finley, who works at Newcastle University in the UK "These are direct means of genetically reducing the Uygur population."

This is the first piece in a four-part series.



DON'T FORGET YARKENT MASSACRE

Support Uyghur

Today is the 6 years anniversary of Chinese massacre in Elishku and Hangdi villages, Yarkent (shache), on 28th July, 2014. Yarkent (shache) was capital of Sayidi Khakanate (1514-1694) which culture, economy and education were highly developed.



On the eve of holly Ramadan Eid, 28th July, 2014, Chinese armed police broke in a hall where more than 40 women gathered together and practicing Islamic prayer and shot them all dead. So that, the relatives of those women went to police station for an explanation for this barbaric killings where they were arbitrary rejected and subjected shooting by the police force.

This triggered a civilian protest against police force brutality. For preventing this protest spreading to other regions, Chinese government carried out bloody crackdown and massacre in Elishku, Hangdi, Dongbadg and Kosharik villages by using armed police, army, armed vehicles and helicopters. More than 5000 civilians both protest participants and others were killed and thousands more were arrested.

Although, 59 Protestants and 39 civilians were dead and 250 more were arrested on government reports, this is only another lie of China's government to deceive international communities. But witnesses of this massacre claimed that almost all residents within these villages were shot to dead during protest or murdered or imprisoned for life later on. As burying bodies and whole villages emptied as a result of house to house searching and killing, this official report was not validated.



This report was just same as the reports of Wuhan Virus, fake statistics for hiding China's government's hideous crime. Though, during this massacre thousands and thousands innocent Uyghurs were brutally murdered, but, through this massacre, Chinese government portrayed Uyghurs as religious extremists to green lighted their concentration camps and genocide over Uyghurs initiated later that year.

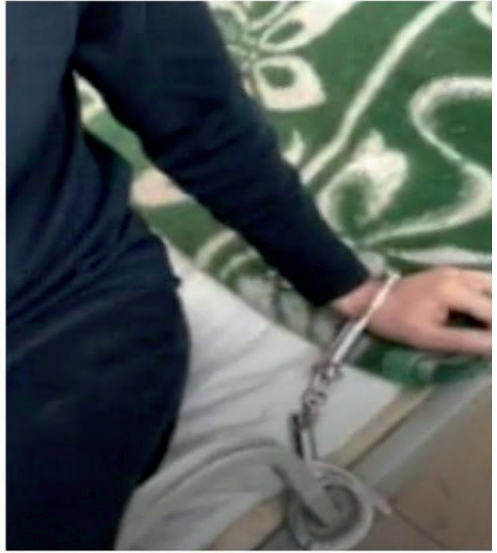
On 28th July , 2016, Germany based Organization of Protection Endangered Nations released an article comparing Tian Anmen Massacre in 1989 and Yaken massacre. In this article, it's claimed that how Han Chinese feel about Tian Anmen massacre is same

how Uyghurs feel about Yaken massacre. Even if whole world chose silence in front of this massacre, Uyghurs never forget thousands and thousands of sisters and brothers killed during this massacre.



Uyghurs believe that China will dearly pay for its crimes, believe that all righteous humans who haven't lost their conscience will support Uyghurs and their great cause, believe that as if collapse of all communistic totalitarian regimes, the evil Chinese regime will collapse and Uyghurs will regain its independence.

All Uyghurs, especially Uyghurs in exile, will never forget this massacre.



CHINA UIGHURS: A MODEL'S VIDEO GIVES A RARE GLIMPSE INSIDE INTERNMENT

*An image sent by Merdan Ghappar appears to show him handcuffed in a cell
John Sudworth BBC News*

Merdan Ghappar was used to posing for the camera.

As a model for the massive Chinese online retailer Taobao, the 31-year-old was well paid to flaunt his good looks in slick promotional videos for clothing brands.

But one video of Mr Ghappar is different. Instead of a glitzy studio or fashionable city street, the backdrop is a bare room with grubby walls and steel mesh on the window. And in place of the posing, Mr Ghappar sits silently with an anxious expression on his face.

Holding the camera with his right hand, he reveals his dirty clothes, his swollen ankles, and a set of handcuffs

fixing his left wrist to the metal frame of the bed - the only piece of furniture in the room.

The video of Mr Ghappar, along with a number of accompanying text messages also passed to the BBC, together provide a chilling and extremely rare first-hand account of China's highly secure and secretive detention system - sent directly from the inside.

The material adds to the body of evidence documenting the impact of China's fight against what it calls the "three evil forces" of separatism, terrorism, and extremism in the country's far western region of Xinjiang.

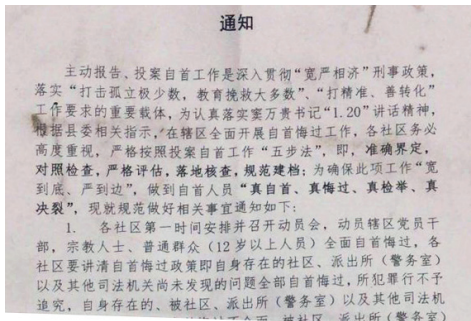
Over the past few years, credible

estimates suggest, more than one million Uighurs and other minorities have been forced into a network of highly secure camps in Xinjiang that China has insisted are voluntary schools for anti-extremism training.

Thousands of children have been separated from their parents and, recent research shows, women have been forcibly subjected to methods of birth control.

In addition to the clear allegations of torture and abuse, Mr Ghappar's account appears to provide evidence that, despite China's insistence that most re-education camps have been closed, Uighurs are still being detained in significant numbers and held without charge.

It also contains new details about the huge psychological pressure placed on Uighur communities, including a document he photographed which calls on children as young as 13 to "repent and surrender".



And with Xinjiang currently experiencing a spike in the number of coronavirus infections, the dirty and crowded conditions he describes highlight the

serious risk of contagion posed by this kind of mass detention during a global pandemic.

The BBC sent detailed requests for comment to the Chinese Foreign Ministry and Xinjiang authorities but neither responded.

Mr Ghappar's family, who have not heard from him since the messages stopped five months ago, are aware that the release of the four minute, thirty-eight second video of him in his cell might increase the pressure and punishment he faces.

But they say it is their last hope, both to highlight his case and the plight of the Uighurs in general.

His uncle, Abdulhakim Ghappar, who now lives in the Netherlands, believes the video could galvanise public opinion in the same way that footage of the police treatment of George Floyd became a powerful symbol of racial discrimination in the US.

“They have both faced brutality for their race,” he says.

“But while in America people are raising their voices, in our case there is silence.”

In 2009, Merdan Ghappar - like many Uighurs at that time - left Xinjiang to seek opportunity in China's wealthier cities in the east.

Having studied dance at Xinjiang Arts University, he found work first as a

dancer and then, a few years later, as a model in the southern Chinese city of Foshan. Friends say Mr Ghappar could earn up to 10,000 Rmb (£1,000) per day.

His story reads like an advert for the country's dynamic, booming economy and President Xi Jinping's "China Dream". But the Uighurs, with their Turkic language, Islamic faith and ethnic ties to the peoples and cultures of central Asia, have long been viewed as an object of suspicion by Chinese rulers and faced discrimination in wider society.

Mr Ghappar's relatives say that Mr Ghappar was told it would be best for his modelling career to downplay his Uighur identity and refer to his facial features as "half-European".



And although he had earned enough money to buy a sizeable apartment, they say he was unable to register it in his own name, instead having to use the name of a Han Chinese friend.

But those injustices now seem mild by comparison with what was to come.

Ever since two brutal attacks targeting pedestrians and commuters in Beijing in 2013 and the city of Kunming in 2014 - blamed by China on Uighur separatists - the state has begun to view Uighur culture as not only suspicious but seditious.

By 2018, when the state had come up with its answer - the sprawling system of camps and jails built rapidly and extensively across Xinjiang - Mr Ghappar was still living in Foshan, where his life was about to take an abrupt turn for the worse.

In August that year, he was arrested and sentenced to 16 months in prison for selling cannabis, a charge his friends insist was trumped up.

Whether truly guilty or not, there was little chance of an acquittal, with statistics showing that more than 99% of defendants brought before Chinese criminal courts are convicted.

But, upon his release in November 2019, any relief he felt at having served his time was short lived. Little more than a month later, police knocked on his door, telling him he needed

to return to Xinjiang to complete a routine registration procedure.

The BBC has seen evidence that appears to show he was not suspected of any further offence, with authorities simply stating that "he may need to do a few days of education at his lo-

cal community” - a euphemism for the camps.

On 15 January this year, his friends and family were allowed to bring warm



clothes and his phone to the airport, before he was put on a flight from Foshan and escorted by two officers back to his home city of Kucha in Xinjiang.

There is evidence of other Uighurs being forced to return home, either from elsewhere in China or from abroad, and Mr Ghappar’s family were convinced that he had disappeared into the re-education camps.

But more than a month later they received some extraordinary news.

Somehow, he had managed to get access to his phone and was using it to communicate with the outside world.

Merdan Ghappar’s text messages, said to have been sent from the same room as his self-shot video, paint an even more terrifying picture of his experience after arriving in Xinjiang.

Written via the Chinese social media app WeChat, he explains that he was first kept in a police jail in Kucha.

“I saw 50 to 60 people detained in a

small room no bigger than 50 square metres, men on the right, women on the left,” he writes.

“Everyone was wearing a so-called ‘four-piece-suit’, a black head sack, handcuffs, leg shackles and an iron chain connecting the cuffs to the shackles.”

China’s use of these combined hand and leg cuffs has been criticised in the past by human rights groups.

Mr Ghappar was made to wear the device and, joining his fellow inmates in a caged-off area covering around two-thirds of the cell, he found there was no room to lie down and sleep.

<p>他们这边人脑子真的有问题 我被带走时穿的优衣库羽绒服质量也真是好 保暖性很好 到了这里派出所 我看到50-60人被关在一间面积不到50平的小房子 吓我一跳 房子三分之一是值班的座位 剩下是男的右边靠的左边分开被关进笼子里 然后从头部到脚带着四件套 所谓四件套是黑色布头套 手铐 脚镣 手铐脚镣之间还有一条铁链 每个人都不能打开头套看对方或者看 不然会被骂的很惨 我被带去第一天就被骂了 晚上睡觉带去的 到了晚上睡觉的时候 由于人太多 地方又小 不是每个人都能躺着睡觉的 有些人要蜷腿坐着 我那天晚上就是坐着睡觉的人之一 其他人是侧躺或趴式的 很累 睡觉 晚上睡前 警官给我们排铺位位置 那晚我手铐铐太紧了 手腕很痛 由于那晚是我被带去的 第一天不知道那里规矩 我把头套掀开问排铺位的 我说手铐太紧了 手腕好痛 麻烦可以</p>	<p>50-60 people were locked in a small room not 50 meters square in area—I was shocked. And from head to toe, they were all wearing...a black cloth bag over the head; handcuffs; shackles; and a steel chain between the handcuffs and the shackles. No one was allowed to open the hood to look at each other or at the police.</p>
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“I lifted the sack on my head and told the police officer that the handcuffs were so tight they hurt my wrists,” he writes in one of the text messages.

“He shouted fiercely at me, saying ‘If you remove your hood again, I will beat you to death’. And after that I dared not to talk,” he adds.

“Dying here is the last thing I want.”

He writes about the constant sound of

screaming, coming from elsewhere in the jail. "Interrogation rooms," he suggested.

And he describes squalid and unsanitary conditions - inmates suffering from lice while sharing just a handful of plastic bowls and spoons between them all.

"Before eating, the police would ask people with infectious diseases to put their hands up and they'd be the last to eat," he writes.

"But if you want to eat earlier, you can remain silent. It's a moral issue, do you understand?"

些警察平时都不在地下室待着他们可能在办公室工作或者提审别人?像老人这样中午想上厕所的人还得求值班员用对讲机叫自己管楼下来带自己上厕所他们下来时间也比较久地下室可能觉得麻烦脾气就会大就会骂这些想上厕所的人老人好像还有高血压痛风等疾病双脚也肿了起来到了晚上又来了4个人最小的16岁最大的20岁案由是疫情期间在外面玩类似棒球的游戏晚上被带到派出所打的哇哇叫屁股开花都不能坐了当天晚上来了一辆救护车里面有一男一女护士带我去医院检查肺部去了检查完后显示肺部无异常然后就把我带来这里来这里把我手铐在床上我全身已经都是虱子了每天都会捉很多虱子真是好痒这里每天也是上厕所早晚两次当然比派出所那么多人环境会好一点这边我一个人住但有两个人看守我

In the evening, another four people came in, the youngest 16 and the oldest 20. The facts of their case were, that during the epidemic period, they were outside playing a kind of game like baseball. In the evening they were brought to the police station and beaten until they screamed like babies. The skin on their buttocks split open, they couldn't sit down.

"During the epidemic period they were found outside playing a kind of game like baseball," he writes.

"They were brought to the police station and beaten until they screamed like babies, the skin on their buttocks split open and they couldn't sit down."

The policemen began making all the prisoners wear masks, although they still had to remain hooded in the stuffy, over-crowded cell.

"A hood and a mask - there was even less air," he writes.

When the officers later came around with thermometers, several inmates including Mr Ghappar, registered higher than the normal body temperature of 37C (98.6F).

Still wearing his "four-piece suit", he was moved upstairs to another room where the guards kept the windows open at night, making the air so cold that he could not sleep.

There, he said, the sounds of torture were much clearer.

"One time I heard a man screaming from morning until evening," he says.

A few days later, the prisoners were loaded onto minibuses and sent away to an unknown location. Mr Ghappar, who was suffering from a cold and with his nose running, was separated from the rest and taken to the facility seen in the video he sent - a place he described as an "epidemic control cen-

Then, on 22 January, with China at the height of its coronavirus crisis, news of a massive, nationwide attempt to control the epidemic reached the prisoners.

Mr Ghappar's account suggests the enforcement of quarantine rules were much stricter in Xinjiang than elsewhere. At one point, four young men, aged between 16 and 20, were brought into the cell.

tre”. Once there, he was handcuffed to the bed.

“My whole body is covered in lice. Every day I catch them and pick them off from my body - it’s so itchy,” he writes.

“Of course, the environment here is better than the police station with all those people. Here I live alone, but there are two people guarding me.”

It was the slightly more relaxed regime that gave him, he says, the opportunity he needed to get word out. His phone appears to have remained unnoticed by the authorities among his personal belongings, some of which he was given access to in his new place of imprisonment.

After 18 days inside the police jail, he was suddenly and secretly in touch with the outside world.

For a few days he described his experiences. Then, suddenly, the messages stopped.

Nothing has been heard from Mr Ghappar since. The authorities have provided no formal notification of his whereabouts, nor any reason for his continued detention.

It is impossible to independently verify the authenticity of the text messages. But experts say that the video footage appears to be genuine, in particular because of the propaganda messages that can be heard in the background.

“Xinjiang has never been an ‘East Turkistan’”, says an announcement in both Uighur and Chinese from a loud-speaker outside his window.

“Separatist forces at home and abroad have politicised this geographical term and called for those who speak Turkic languages and believe in Islam to unite,” the announcement says.

James Millward, a professor of history at Georgetown University and an expert on China’s policies in Xinjiang, translated and analysed Mr Ghappar’s text messages for the BBC.

He says they are consistent with other well documented cases, from his transportation back to Xinjiang and the initial processing in crowded, unsanitary conditions.

“This firsthand description of the police holding cell is very, very vivid,” Professor Millward says.

“He writes in very good Chinese and gives, frankly, a lot of horrific detail about the way these people are treated. So, it’s quite a rare source.”

Dr Adrian Zenz, a senior fellow in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, and another leading Xinjiang scholar, suggests that the video’s real value is what it says about the Chinese government claim that the camp system is being wound down.

“It is extremely significant,” Dr Zenz says. “This testimony shows that the

whole system of detaining people, sorting them and then feeding them into extra judicial internment... that this is very much ongoing.”

China’s ambassador: “There is no such concentration camp in Xinjiang”

Another layer of credibility is provided by a photograph of a document that sources say Mr Ghappar sent after finding it on the floor of one of the epidemic control centre toilets.



The document refers to a speech made by the Communist Party Secretary of Aksu Prefecture, and the date and location suggest it could well have still been circulating in official circles in the city of Kucha around the time of Mr Ghappar’s detention.

The document’s call for children as young as 13 to be encouraged to “repent for their mistakes and voluntarily surrender” appears to be new evidence of the extent of China’s monitoring and control of the thoughts and behaviours of the Uighurs and other minorities.

“I think this is the first time I’ve seen an official notice of minors being held

responsible for their religious activity,” says Dr Darren Byler, an anthropologist at the University of Colorado, Boulder who has researched and written extensively about the Uighurs.

Despite the risk that the publication of Merdan Ghappar’s video and text messages will put him at risk of longer or harsher punishment, those close to him say they no longer have any choice.

“Staying silent will not help him either,” says his uncle, Abdulhakim Ghappar, from his home in Amsterdam.

Demonstrators in Paris hold signs calling for an end to the Uighur “genocide”

Abdulhakim says he kept in regular touch with his nephew before he was taken into

detention, and he believes - as has been well documented in other cases - that this overseas connection is one of the reasons Mr Ghappar was detained.

“Yes, I am 100% sure about it,” he said. “He was detained just because I am abroad and I take part in protests against Chinese human rights abuses.”

Abdulhakim’s activism, which began in 2009 in Xinjiang when he helped hand out flyers ahead of a large-scale protest in the city of Urumqi, was the reason he fled to the Netherlands in the first place.

The protest in Urumqi later spilled into a series of violent riots which, Chinese

authorities say, claimed nearly 200 lives and are seen as another one of the major turning points towards its tightening control over the region.

Told that the Chinese authorities were seeking his arrest, Abdulhakim got himself a passport and left. He has never been back.

He insists that all of his political activities, both inside China and abroad, have been peaceful, and his nephew, he says, has never shown any interest in politics at all.

The list of questions sent by the BBC to the Chinese authorities asked them to confirm whether Merdan Ghappar or his uncle are suspected of any crime in China.

It also asked why Mr Ghappar was shackled to a bed, and for a response from the authorities to his other allegations of mistreatment and torture.

None of the questions was answered.

Wherever Merdan Ghappar is now, one thing is clear.

Whether his earlier conviction for a drugs offence was just or not, his current detention is proof that even well-educated and relatively successful Uighurs can become a target of the internment system.

“This young man, as a fashion model, has a successful career already,” said Professor Millward. “He speaks wonderful Chinese, writes very well and

uses fancy phrases, so clearly this is not someone who needs education for a vocational purpose.”

Dr Adrian Zenz argues that this is the point of the system.

“It doesn’t actually matter so much what the background of the person is,” he says.

“What matters is that their loyalty has been tested by the system. At some point almost everybody is going to experience some form of internment or re-education, everybody is going to be subjected to this system.”

The Chinese government denies that it is persecuting the Uighur population. After heavy criticism over the issue recently from the US, a spokesman for China’s Foreign Ministry, Hua Chunying, invoked the death of George Floyd, saying that Uighurs in Xinjiang were free in comparison to African Americans in the US.

But for Merdan Ghappar’s family, haunted by the image of him chained to a bed in an unknown location, there is a connection between the two cases.

“When I saw the George Floyd video it reminded me of my nephew’s own video,” says Merdan’s uncle Abdulhakim.

“The entire Uighur people are just like George Floyd now,” he says. “We can’t breathe.”

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