



HUAWEI WORKED ON SEVERAL SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS PROMOTED TO IDENTIFY ETHNICITY



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XINJIANG: MORE THAN HALF A MILLION FORCED TO PICK COTTON, REPORT SUGGESTS

Forced labour much more widespread than initially thought in China region that supplies a fifth of the world's cotton

More than half a million people from ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang have been coerced into picking cotton, on a scale far greater than previously thought, new research has suggested.

The Xinjiang region produces more than 20% of the world's cotton and 84% of China's, but according to a new report released on Tuesday by the Center for Global Policy there is significant evidence that it is "tainted" by human rights abuses, including suspected forced labour of Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim minority people.

The revelations came as the international criminal court (ICC) said it did not have the jurisdiction to investigate allegations of crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang.

This year the US imposed sanctions and cotton import restrictions on suppliers controlled by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) – a paramilitary production entity which produces a third of Xinjiang's cotton – over human rights concerns. But according to the report, those concerns extend beyond the XPCC to the whole

region. It recommended the US government expand its import restrictions to cover all Xinjiang cotton, not just that produced by XPCC regions.

The report – written by Adrian Zenz, an independent researcher specialising in Xinjiang and Tibet – analysed government documents and state media reports to determine it was likely authorities were using the allegedly coercive “labour transfer programs” to provide hundreds of thousands of workers to pick cotton.

China’s labour transfer scheme is purported to be part of the government’s massive poverty alleviation campaign, but growing evidence indicates it targets Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang and coerces participation.

While mechanised harvesting in XPCC regions has increased to around 83%, areas in the south of Xinjiang – which produce a far larger share of the cotton – remain heavily reliant on manual picking. And while the number of workers brought in from other provinces for the harvest season had dropped, the report found the proportion of local ethnic minority labourers had increased dramatically.

It estimated 570,000 people came through three minority-heavy prefectures alone – Aksu, Hotan, and Kashgar – and that labor programs in other ethnic minority regions as well as prison labor would probably add hundreds of thousands to the figure.

The labour programs are not secret; they are frequently written about in state media as glowing examples of the government assisting millions of poor people into work, but those articles also contain clues to their coercive nature. Transferred workers are often sent far from their home, made to live on site in factories and subjected to ideological training.

Publications on the labour schemes frequently include references to policies discouraging “illegal religious activities” and changing thoughts and behaviour.

One 2019 state media report on the cotton picking program proclaimed the success of a participant in “gradually overcoming the disadvantages of the lack of land, deep-rooted thoughts of being lazy, insufficient inner moti-



vation, and low awareness of going out to work”.

Another reported on the need to “get rid of the old-fashioned, blocked, and lazy thoughts of peasants and herdsmen”.

In September research by Zenz, which was corroborated by Reuters, found authorities in Tibet were massively expanding the labour transfer program, setting quotas to move hundreds of thousands of people off their land and into military-style work training facilities.

China’s treatment of the minority populations – including the mass internment of people in re-education camps, enforced sterilisation of women, technological and human surveillance – has been labelled cultural genocide by analysts. China denies the accusations, saying the camps are vocational training centres necessary to combat religious

extremism. In September, the government confirmed about 1.29 million people went through the centres every year.

It has led to international condemnation, including sanctions and other diplomatic measures against China, which maintains its denial of any wrongdoing.

In July, exiled Uyghurs delivered a dossier of evidence to the ICC asking it to investigate crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang. On Monday, the office of prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said it was unable to do so because the alleged crimes happened inside China, which was outside the ICC’s jurisdiction.

The ICC also found “no basis to proceed” on separate accusations of enforced deportations, which the Uyghur group had said occurred in Tajikistan and Cambodia – both of which are ICC signatories.

Additional reporting by Pei Lin Wu





LEAKED DOCUMENTS REVEAL CHINA SEVERELY UNDERREPORTED CORONAVIRUS CASES AS THE PANDEMIC SPREAD

Leaked documents reveal that China significantly underreported the number of coronavirus cases in the early stages of the pandemic.

Health data from Chinese health authorities leaked to CNN shows that officials in the Hubei province, where the virus is believed to have originated, failed to report thousands of new daily cases.

On February 10 — when China reported 2,478 new cases — officials privately recorded 5,918 new cases, more than double the published figure.

There is no evidence in the files that provide evidence that Chinese officials

sought deliberately to conceal the true extent of the outbreak.

A tranche of leaked documents has revealed that China's government significantly underreported the number of coronavirus cases in the early stages of the pandemic.

An extensive set of health data from Chinese health authorities leaked to CNN shows that health officials in the Hubei province, where the virus is believed to have originated, failed to report thousands of new daily cases in the early stages of the pandemic.

On February 10 — when China reported 2,478 new cases — officials privately recorded 5,918 new cases, more than double the published figure, per CNN.



The underreporting was exacerbated by a slow-turnaround in identifying cases. One of the leaked documents reveals that in early March the average time between an individual exhibiting symptoms and diagnosis was 23.3 days, CNN reported.

Experts have traced the origins of COVID-19 to China, and believe the virus almost certainly originated in Chinese bats before passing to humans. The virus appears to have been circulating in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December and January before the first large outbreak was reported in a wet market there.

The incomplete data set, leaked to CNN by a whistleblower who said they work inside the Chinese health system, provides a large amount of data for February 10 and March 7, two days early on in the coronavirus outbreak as it began to spread across the world.

By March 7, health officials also appeared to still be underreporting the death toll by a significant margin. Per CNN, the documents show that the total death toll in Hubei was 3,456, while published figures suggested it was 2,986.

The documents also reveal that the early stages of the pandemic coincided with a significant reported influenza outbreak in Hubei with cases 20 times higher than the previous year. The flu outbreak was first identified in Wuhan in December and in particular in the cities of Yichang and Xianning, CNN reported.

There is no evidence in the files that provides evidence that Chinese officials sought deliberately to conceal the true extent of the coronavirus outbreak.

But the leak is nonetheless significant because it fuels allegations made by President Trump and others, that China sought to cover up the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak in its early stages and let it spread across the world.

A May 1 report by the US Department of Homeland Security, obtained by the Associated Press, reportedly said that Chinese leaders “intentionally concealed the severity” of the coronavirus outbreak in January while it hoarded medical equipment.



It said that China failed to inform the World Health Organisation for weeks in January that the new coronavirus was highly infectious while at the same time significantly increasing imports of face masks and surgical gowns that could be used by health officials treating coronavirus patients.

China has consistently denied allegations that it intentionally covered coronavirus data, calling it “a calculated slur,” per Bloomberg.

Whistleblowers in Hubei have also claimed they were prevented from speaking publicly about the coronavirus as it spread in December.

However, US intelligence also reportedly indicates that much of the Chinese government’s slow response to the outbreak in its early stages may also have been the result of poor communication by officials.

Per a New York Times report in August, US intelligence officials believe that local health officials in Wuhan originally underreported the severity of the coronavirus outbreak to officials in Beijing, probably because they feared being punished.

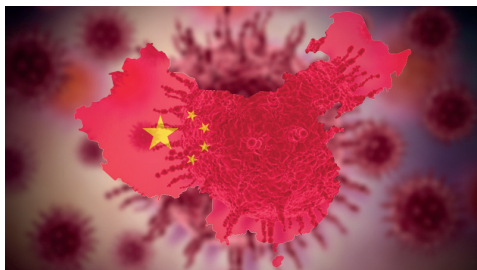
Health experts told CNN that the country had made mistakes in the early stages of the pandemic.



“It was clear they did make mistakes -- and not just mistakes that happen when you’re dealing with a novel virus -- also bureaucratic and politically-motivated errors in how they handled it,” Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations, told CNN.

“These had global consequences. You can never guarantee 100% transparency. It’s not just about any intentional cover-up, you are also constrained with by technology and other issues with a novel virus. But even if they had been 100% transparent, that would not stop the Trump administration downplaying the seriousness of it. It would probably not have stopped this developing into a pandemic.”

by Thomas Colson



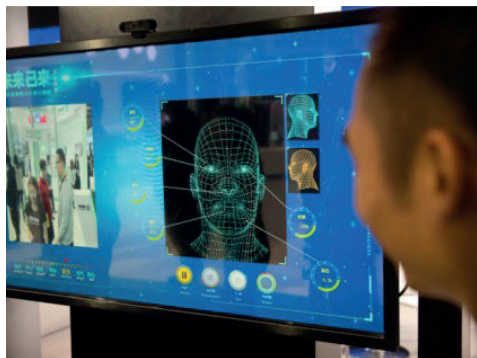


HUAWEI WORKED ON SEVERAL SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS PROMOTED TO IDENTIFY ETHNICITY, DOCUMENTS SHOW

Facing international outcry over its testing of a 'Uyghur alarm' system, Huawei says it is committed to human rights 'at the highest level.' But the tech giant has worked with others to build products touted as capable of identifying ethnicity.

Huawei has worked with dozens of security contractors to develop surveillance products, some of which were touted as being able to identify a person's ethnicity or to help suppress potential protests, according to company marketing documents that shed light on a little-publicized corner of one of China's most valuable tech empires.

The revelation this week of Huawei's role in testing artificial-intelligence surveillance technology — including a face-scanning camera system that could send a "Uyghur alarm" to police if it detected a member of the minority group — has sparked an international backlash against the tech giant, including from a French soccer star who publicly ended his work as a Huawei brand ambassador and urged the company to "condemn this mass repression."



Huawei representatives said the document outlining the “Uyghur alarm” system, discovered on the company’s website by the research organization IPVM and first reported by The Washington Post, used language that is “completely unacceptable.” “It is not compatible with the values of Huawei,” a representative told the BBC. “Our technologies are not designed to identify ethnic groups.”

Yet products made by Huawei with four other partner companies were also advertised to have ethnicity-tracking capabilities, according to Chinese-language marketing materials posted on a public Huawei website where the material could be downloaded by anyone who registered an account. After The Post approached Huawei for comment, the site briefly became inaccessible. When it returned, the number of product collaborations detailed there had dropped from more than 2,000 to 38.

“We take the allegations in the Washington Post’s article very seriously and are investigating the issues raised within,” a Huawei spokesperson said in a statement to The Post.

The statement continues: “We provide general-purpose ICT [information and communications technology] products based on recognized industry standards. We do not develop or sell systems that identify people by their ethnic group, and we do not condone the use of our technologies to discriminate against or oppress members of any community.”

Huawei and its partners have provided some of these surveillance products to authorities in the northwestern Xinjiang region, where the Chinese Communist Party has sought for decades to control and assimilate the Uyghurs, a Turkic ethnic minority, most recently through a massive “reeducation” program. Among them, according to documents from Huawei’s website, was a facial recognition system used by police in the Xinjiang capital, Urumqi, and a highway surveillance camera system for the region.

Several of the companies on Huawei’s partners list were sanctioned last year by the U.S. Commerce Department, because of concerns that they contributed to state surveillance of Uyghurs. Those companies included SenseTime, Megvii, iFlytek and Yitu Technology.

Huawei tested AI software that could recognize Uyghur minorities and alert police, report says

Maya Wang, a senior China researcher at the advocacy group Human Rights Watch, said Huawei has become an important player in surveillance tech-

nology, thanks to its vast assortment of servers, cameras, cloud-computing systems and other back-end technical tools.

“Mass surveillance is a really big business for the ecosystem of companies in this space,” Wang said, and major companies have “benefited tremendously from the security surveillance spending from the Chinese government.”

Huawei’s partnerships reflect the ongoing expansion of surveillance in China, where top officials have called for police to use big data to fight crime, under the slogan, “One Person, One File,” a phrase signifying the use of disparate information streams, from surveillance footage to Internet chat history, to better track individuals. Companies have rushed to stake a claim to this vast, lucrative new market.

In the United States, police have also sought to use some technologies, such as facial recognition, to investigate crimes but have stopped short of publicly adopting technologies to analyze people’s voices and ethnicities. In the wake of nationwide protests over the summer against police abuse, Microsoft, Amazon and IBM banned police from using their facial recognition technology. (Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Post.)

Protests on the scale of Black Lives Matter would be nearly impossible to organize in mainland China — partly because of these very surveillance technologies. One of the products jointly offered by Huawei and Chinese surveillance equipment supplier Viktor can send an alert if a crowd starts to form, according to a marketing presentation. The alert can be set for clusters of three, six, 10, 20 or 50 people.

China is building vast new detention centers for Muslims in Xinjiang



Many of the surveillance solutions co-developed by Huawei have more innocuous purposes, such as ID swipe machines for companies and schools, or safety monitoring systems for industrial production.

But others lay bare the divergent standards between China and Western nations in policing.

Antoine Griezmann, a French soccer player who had promoted Huawei as a brand ambassador since 2017, announced Thursday that he would terminate his partnership with the company following the “Uyghur alarm” reports.

“I take this opportunity to invite Huawei to not just deny these accusations,” Griezmann said in an Instagram post to his more than 30 million followers, “but to take concrete actions as quickly as possible to condemn this mass repression, and to use its influence to contribute to the respect of human and women’s rights in society.”

Griezmann, 29, is one of soccer’s most popular players, scoring four goals in the 2018 World Cup tournament as part of France’s victorious national team. He joined the Barcelona soccer team last year in a deal worth roughly \$145 million, the fourth-most-expensive soccer transfer in history.

Like fellow soccer champion Lionel Messi, whom Huawei brought on as another sponsor earlier this year, Griezmann has starred in glossy com-



mercials promoting Huawei’s smartphones to a European audience.

The financial terms of Griezmann’s Huawei endorsement have not been disclosed. Through a representative, Griezmann declined further comment.

Huawei told The Post this week that the “Uyghur alarm” report was “simply a test” and that the system had not seen real-world application. The 2018 document was signed by representatives from Huawei and the Chinese facial recognition developer Megvii, whose system, officials said, was not designed to target ethnic groups. It was removed from Huawei’s website shortly after IPVM and The Post asked the companies for more details.

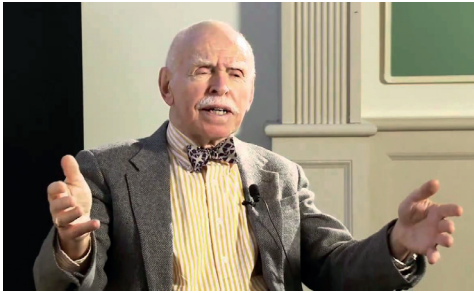
In another statement, the company said it was investigating the test and invited Griezmann to meet personally. Huawei also said the test report had been approved by a Huawei subcontractor, which the company called a “mistake.”

U.S. in talks to resolve criminal fraud charges against Huawei executive

A number of Huawei partners’ systems found on the website mention the ca-

pability to track individuals' ethnicity. One system — developed by Huawei and a Chinese government contractor for aerial photography, Beijing Xintiandi Information Technology — is touted as being able to visualize the identifying details of out-of-town visitors to a city on a 3-D map, including their name, gender, ID number, type of residency permit and ethnicity, according to a marketing presentation from the companies found online.

Marketing materials for products co-developed by Huawei with DeepGlint, Bresee and Maiyuesoft also mention ethnicity identification or search features. The three companies did not respond to requests for comment.



■ **Jerome Cohen, a veteran China human rights legal expert, said racial profiling and discrimination are prevalent in China. The country's government is “engaging in racial profiling on a massive scale,” he said.**

Another presentation for a facial recognition system, co-developed by Huawei and the artificial-intelligence start-up SenseTime, said that it could be used to “suppress illegal petition-

ing.” “Petitioning,” or shangfang in Chinese, is a process by which individuals can seek redress from the central government for wrongs committed by local officials.

Chinese who attempt shangfang are often intercepted and jailed by local officials who don't want complaints going outward, Cohen said.

SenseTime did not respond to a request to explain what counts as illegal petitioning and how its product could help prevent it. The Huawei spokesperson also did not explain this point, but said: “We have not and will never support the use of technology to discriminate against vulnerable or marginalized groups.”

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not respond to requests for comment. A ministry spokesperson told CNBC earlier this week that “legal use of facial recognition in public areas in some parts of China is to improve social management” and prevent criminal acts. The spokesperson called the reports on the “Uyghur alarm” by IPVM and The Post “purely slander.”

“The measures are not targeting any particular ethnic groups,” the ministry official added, saying they can “strengthen social security, thus [earning] support from people of all ethnic groups.”

Attempts to reach China's Public Security Ministry for comment by phone and fax Saturday were unsuccessful.

Leaked documents reveal Huawei's secret operations to build North Korea's wireless network

Another one of the products found in Huawei marketing materials is a "voiceprint" recognition system, created by the Chinese tech company iFlytek, that is advertised as being able to compare a voice recording from a phone or app against a database of "tens of millions" of voices, according to a PowerPoint presentation on the system that carries both iFlytek's and Huawei's logos.

The United States sanctioned iFlytek after allegations it was using this technology to help the Xinjiang government track Uyghurs. Uyghurs have anecdotally reported being pulled aside by authorities at checkpoints and ordered to read a paper aloud to have their voice recorded.

Voiceprint recognition technology is also being developed in the West, primarily for consumer applications such as secure banking, though critics have said its further use could lead to broader privacy and surveillance concerns.

The iFlytek system, as with the other partnerships, is advertised as running on Huawei hardware. The "Uyghur alert" test report said that system used Huawei cameras, servers, cloud-computing infrastructure and other tools.

Surveillance systems like the voice-recognition product advertise often-unproven technical abilities, and it's unclear "how much of it is real and how much of it is boasting," Wang

said. "But the ambition is real," she added, "whether or not the actual practice has reached that point."

Huawei is the world's second-largest maker of smartphones and a crown jewel of China's ambitions in telecommunications and artificial intelligence. The company has worked to capture major deals surrounding international development of the 5G network technology that could reshape the Internet.

But it has also found itself at the center of tensions between China and the U.S. government, which has labeled the company a national security threat. Huawei has disputed U.S. allegations that the company conspired to steal trade secrets.

■ International watchdogs and human rights activists have said such ethnicity-detection systems could be used to track and persecute minorities. China has detained more than a million Uyghurs and members of other mostly Muslim minority groups in reeducation camps in the country's Xinjiang region, according to United Nations estimates.

The Chinese government has denied wrongdoing and said the camps are designed to provide work training and combat extremism, but U.S. national security leaders have cited reports of torture, forced labor and other human rights abuses.

By Eva Dou and Drew Harwell

GRIEZMANN CUTS TIES WITH HUAWEI CITING FEARS OVER TREATMENT OF UYGHURS

- **‘Strong suspicions’ it is contributing to repression, he says**
- **Huawei wants talks with Barcelona forward to reassure him**



The France and Barcelona forward Antoine Griezmann ended his affiliation with Huawei on Thursday, saying there are “strong suspicions” that the Chinese tech giant has contributed to the repression of the mostly Muslim minority Uyghurs.

Griezmann’s announcement followed media reports that Huawei has tested facial recognition software intended to help China’s surveillance of the group.

“Following strong suspicions that the Huawei company has contributed to the development of a ‘Uyghur alert’ thanks to facial recognition software, I am announcing the immediate termination of my partnership with the company,” Griezmann said in an Instagram post.

“I take this opportunity to invite Huawei to not just deny these accusations, but to take concrete actions as quickly as possible to condemn this mass repression, and to use its influence to

contribute to the respect of human and women’s rights in society.”

Griezmann was a global brand ambassador for Huawei and the 29-year-old player has appeared in advertisements promoting the company’s smartphones.

A Huawei spokesperson said: “We would like to extend an invitation to speak to him personally, to explain the work that is currently being done at the highest level, inside the company, to address the issues of human rights, equality, and discrimination at all levels.”

Addressing claims that Huawei tested a facial recognition system to detect Uyghurs and send alerts to authorities, the spokesperson said: “It is not compatible with the values of Huawei. Our technologies are not designed to identify ethnic groups. Non-discrimination is at the heart of our values as a company.”





IPVM weizu: 是否是维族
Is this a Uyghur?

Alibaba
阿里巴巴

UYGHUR RECOGNITION AS A SERVICE

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"gender": "Male",
"glasses": false,
"minority": true,
"asian": false,
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ALIBABA OFFERED CLIENTS FACIAL RECOGNITION TO IDENTIFY UYGHUR PEOPLE, REPORT REVEALS

Software could be used to identify videos filmed and uploaded by Uyghur person, says IPVM

The Chinese tech company Alibaba Group Holding Ltd offered facial recognition software to clients which can identify the face of a Uyghur person, according to a report.

The US-based surveillance industry research firm IPVM said on Thursday it had found the detection technology in Alibaba's Cloud Shield service, which offers content moderation for websites.

The technology could be used to identify videos filmed and uploaded by a Uyghur person, flagging them for authorities to respond to or take down.

According to IPVM's research, Alibaba's Chinese website showed clients –

the websites that might buy Alibaba's software – how they could use the tech feature, built into the cloud service, to identify ethnic minorities. It included a step-by-step guide and was specifically targeted to search for Uyghurs.

IPVM said: "China users can simply send images of people, whether from phones or surveillance video, to the service, and if Alibaba suspects a Uyghur, it will flag the person."

In recent years China has intensified its efforts to control and oppress Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims in the Xinjiang region. Programmes including mass internment in camps, extensive technological and human surveil-



lance, enforced labour programmes, enforced sterilisation of women and ideological “re-education” have been labeled cultural genocide by analysts. China rejects all accusations and says the camps are vocational training centres necessary to combat religious extremism.

Earlier this week the international criminal court asked for more evidence on Uyghur persecution, after having earlier said it could not investigate claims of crimes against humanity and genocide because China – which was not a signatory to the court – was outside its jurisdiction.

Technology has played an increasingly vital role in authorities’ efforts against Uyghurs, and recent leaks have shown how bespoke databases and programs were used to identify people for detention, targeting characteristics including youth, “being generally untrustworthy”, or having siblings overseas.

Alibaba is thought to be the biggest cloud computing vendor in China and the fourth biggest globally. The service was not mentioned on Alibaba Cloud’s websites outside China. Thursday’s revelations are likely to put it under international pressure alongside other major corporations which are increas-

ingly being called to account for their involvement in trade connected to China’s persecution of Uyghurs, particularly technology and textile production.

It’s not the first time the use of AI to monitor China’s ethnic minorities has been revealed. IPVM said identification analytics were also used by more than 12 police departments to track Uyghurs, and they were part of government facial recognition guidelines.

“ The top three surveillance manufacturers have all been found to offer tracking software, including HIK Vision, which promoted a “Uyghur detecting” camera last year, and Huawei was also found to have worked with Megvii to test “Uyghur alarms”.

IPVM said all the firms highlighted had deleted the evidence from the internet once contacted for comment.

The Guardian has contacted Alibaba for comment. The company has told other media that mentions of ethnicity referred to “a feature/function that was used within a testing environment during an exploration of our technical capability” which was never used outside a testing environment. IPVM said there was no mention of tests anywhere in the literature about the feature before it was taken down.

Helen Davidson



ICC REJECTS UYGHUR GENOCIDE COMPLAINT AGAINST CHINA *The Hague (AFP)*

International Criminal Court prosecutors have rejected calls by exiled Uyghurs to investigate China for alleged genocide and crimes against humanity, the chief prosecutor’s office said in a report on Monday.

The Uyghurs handed a huge dossier of evidence to the court in July accusing China of locking more than one million Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in re-education camps and of forcibly sterilising women.

But the office of prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said it was unable to act because the alleged acts happened on the territory of China, which is not a signatory to The Hague-based ICC.

In its annual report Bensouda’s office said “this precondition for the exercise of the court’s territorial jurisdiction did not appear to be met with respect to the majority of the crimes alleged.”

There was also “no basis to proceed at this time” on separate claims of forced

deportations of Uyghurs back to China from Tajikistan and Cambodia, the ICC report said.

The Uyghurs had argued that even though the alleged deportations did not happen on Chinese soil, the ICC could act because they happened on Tajik and Cambodian territory, and both of them are ICC members.

Lawyers for the Uyghurs had now asked the court to reconsider “on the basis of new facts or evidence”, the ICC prosecutor’s report said.

China has called the accusations baseless and says the facilities in the north-western Xinjiang region are job training centres aimed at steering people away from terrorism.

The ICC has no obligation to consider complaints filed to the prosecutor, who can decide independently what cases to submit to judges at the court, set up in 2002 to achieve justice for the world’s worst crimes.



CHINESE CCP MEMBERS WORKING IN GLOBAL CONSULATES & TOP FIRMS? UK REPORT MAKES BIG CLAIM

It has been reported that Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) loyal members have been working in British consulates, universities & some of the leading UK companies

Amid rising concerns over Beijing's clandestine intelligence gathering and surveillance activities around the world, it has been reported that Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) loyal members have been working in British consulates, universities and some of the leading UK companies.

'CCP members have secured jobs in British consulates'

An extraordinary leaked database of 1.95 million registered CCP members reveals how Beijing's "malign influence" now stretches into almost every corner of British life, including defence firms, banks and pharmaceu-

tical giants, Daily Mail reported. The report said, "Most alarmingly, some of its members, who swear a solemn oath to 'guard Party secrets, be loyal to the Party, work hard, fight for communism throughout my life...and never betray the Party', are understood to have secured jobs in British consulates."

Among them is a senior official at the British Consulate in Shanghai. The official describes their role as supporting ministers and officials on visits to East China. The database was originally said to be leaked on Telegram, the encrypted instant messaging app. It was then passed on in September by a Chinese dissident to the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, which

comprises more than 150 legislators around the world who are concerned by the influence and activities of the Chinese government.

The leaked data was then provided to an international consortium of four media organisations: The Australian, The Mail on Sunday in Britain, De Standaard in Belgium and Swedish journalists.

According to a detailed analysis by The Mail on Sunday of the material claims that pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and AstraZeneca - both involved in the development of Coronavirus vaccines - employed a total 123 CCP loyalists. The analysis also claimed that there were over 600 party members across 19 branches working at the British banks HSBC and Standard Chartered in 2016.



‘CCP members have infiltrated Australian consulate’

While there is no evidence that anyone on the party membership list has spied for China - and many sign up simply to boost their career prospects - the report, quoting experts, says it defies credulity that some are not involved in

espionage. Responding to the findings, an alliance of 30 MPs have said they would be tabling an urgent question about the issue in the British Parliament. China has upped its espionage activities over the last few years, the report claims, and highlights that it's even been accused of political interference in Australia.

According to another report, the loyal members of the Chinese Communist Party have infiltrated Australia's Shanghai consulate as well after being hired through a state-owned recruitment agency. A senior executive assistant who worked for Australia's Shanghai mission is listed in the leaked database as a Chinese Communist Party member.

The assistant has even previously helped organise parliamentary delegations. Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been using a Chinese government hiring agency called the Shanghai Foreign Agency Service Department to employ all its local staff in China for at least the past five years, The Australian reported.

Written By Jay Pandya



UYGHURS FORCED TO EAT PORK AS CHINA EXPANDS XINJIANG PIG FARMS

Former detainees claim that the forcible feeding of pork is most rampant in re-education camps and detention centres.

It has been more than two years since Sayragul Sautbay was released from a re-education camp in China's westernmost region of Xinjiang. Yet the mother of two still suffers from nightmares and flashbacks from the "humiliation and violence" she endured while she was detained.

Sautbay, a medical doctor and educator who now lives in Sweden, recently published a book in which she detailed her ordeal, including witnessing beatings, alleged sexual abuse and forced sterilisation.

In a recent interview with Al Jazeera, she shed more light on other indigni-

ties to which the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities were subjected, including the consumption of pork, a meat that is strictly prohibited in Islam.

“Every Friday, we were forced to eat pork meat,” Sautbay said. “They have intentionally chosen a day that is holy for the Muslims. And if you reject it, you would get a harsh punishment.”

She added that the policy was designed to inflict shame and guilt on the Muslim detainees and that it was “difficult to explain in words” the emotions she had every time she ate the meat.

“I was feeling like I was a different person. All around me got dark. It was really difficult to accept,” she said.

Testimonies from Sautbay and others provide an indication of how China has sought to crack down in Xinjiang by taking aim at the cultural and religious beliefs of the mostly Muslim ethnic minority, implementing widespread surveillance and – from about 2017 – opening a network of camps it has justified as necessary to counter “extremism”.

But documents made available to Al Jazeera show that agricultural development has also become part of what German anthropologist and Uyghur scholar, Adrian Zenz, says is a policy of “secularisation”.

According to Zenz, the documents and state-approved news articles support talk within Uyghur communities that there is an “active” effort to promote and expand pig farming in the region.

“ In November 2019, Xinjiang’s top administrator, Shohrat Zakir, that the autonomous region would be turned into a “pig-raising hub”; a move that Uyghurs say is an affront to their way of life.

One news article published in May that Zenz recorded describes a new farm in the southern Kashgar area, which aims to produce 40,000 pigs every year.

The project is expected to occupy a 25,000-square-metre (82-square-foot) area in an industrial park in Kashgar’s Konaxahar county, renamed Shufu, according to the Chinese-language website, Sina.

The deal was formally signed on April 23 this year, the first day of Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month and states that the pig farming is not meant for export purposes, but instead “to ensure the supply of pork” in Kashgar.

The Uyghurs make up 90 percent of the population in the city and the surrounding area.

“This is part of the attempt to completely eradicate the culture and religion of the people in Xinjiang,” Zenz told Al Jazeera.

“It is part of the strategy of secularisation, of turning the Uyghurs secular and indoctrinating them to follow the communist party and become agnostic or atheist,” he added.

‘Three evils’

Beijing has defended its policies in the region, saying the approach is needed to fight the “three evils of extremism, separatism and terrorism”, following deadly riots in the regional capital Urumqi in 2009.

It has denied the existence of the re-education camps in which the United Nations has said more than one million people have been held, instead saying



it operates vocational centres that allow it to “retrain” the Uyghur population and teach them new skills.

Like Sautbay, Uyghur businesswoman Zumret Dawut has first-hand experience of detention. She was picked up in March 2018 in Urumqi, the city where she was born.

For two months, Dawut said authorities demanded explanations about her links to Pakistan, her husband’s homeland. They questioned her as well about how many children she had, and whether or not they had studied religion and read the Quran.

She says she was humiliated repeatedly and on one occasion was slapped in the face with a rolled paper after displeasing her interrogator.

Another time, she had to beg the camp’s male officers to allow her to go to the restroom, only for them to leave her handcuffed and watch her the whole time she was in the toilet.

She too says she was served pork repeatedly.

“When you sit in a concentration camp, you do not decide whether to eat, or not to eat. To be alive, we had to eat the meat served to us,” she told Al Jazeera through an interpreter.

Yet those experiences could not have prepared her for what would happen next.

She and several other female detainees were sterilised to prevent them from having more children. The controversy was reported earlier this year by the Associated Press news agency, drawing widespread condemnation.

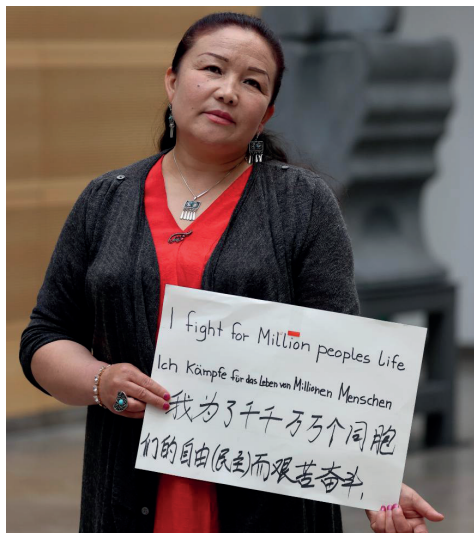
Starting them young

Sautbay, who was from the town of Ili, ended up in another camp after authorities learned that her husband and their two children had left for neighbouring Kazakhstan in early 2016.

She had originally planned to join them but by then authorities had confiscated her passport and that of other civil servants.

Because of her medical background and experience in running preschools, Sautbay was assigned to teach her fellow detainees the Chinese language, allowing her to closely observe what was happening to the Uyghurs.

She says the practice of making Muslims eat pork went beyond the detention camps.



In one school in Altay, a city in northern Xinjiang, students were also forced to eat the meat and when many refused and demonstrated against their school administrators, the government sent in soldiers to intervene, Sautbay said.

The Xinjiang government also started an initiative called “free food” for Muslim children in kindergarten, serving them pork dishes without their knowledge, she added.

The idea was that by starting them young, the Muslim children would acquire a taste for non-halal food.

“China is using and will use different tactics to force Uyghurs and other Muslim population to eat pork,” Sautbay said.

Last year, the Italy-based AsiaNews alleged that during the Chinese Lunar New Year, which happened to be the

“Year of the Pig”, government officials reportedly delivered pork directly to Muslim households in Ili, and insisted that Uyghurs decorate their homes for the festive season.

‘Normalising’ the forbidden

Arslan Hidayat, a Turkey-based Uyghur rights activist and secretary-general of the Uyghur Revival Association, told Al Jazeera that whether it is breeding pigs, or eating pork and drinking alcohol, the Chinese government is attempting to “normalise” prohibited practices for Muslims in Xinjiang.

In 2018, as part of official state policy, the Xinjiang government also announced that all halal restaurants in the region would be required to “operate normally” during Ramadan, in contrast to previous years when those same establishments were closed during the month-long ritual of fasting.

According to the Xinjiang government website, which published the memorandum containing the provision on Muslim food establishments, the directive was meant to ensure “normal life order during Ramadan.”

But Zenz believes the directive meant the government wanted to make sure “Uyghurs eat and don’t fast” during the day.

He also shared two other official doc-

uments, written in the Chinese language, which showed the government in Kashgar allotting money for food for their mostly Muslim Uyghur staff



during Ramadan.

Taken together, this constitutes a pattern of the Chinese government carrying out a “war against halal”, Zenz noted referring to the term used in Islam to describe acceptable food and other daily practices.

In 2018, the Reuters news agency also reported on an “anti-halal campaign” in Urumqi “to stop Islam penetrating secular life and fuelling ‘extremism’”.

‘Radicalised’

Speaking to Al Jazeera about China’s overall policy towards Uyghurs, Einar Tangen, a China affairs expert based in Beijing, said that the Chinese government “feels strongly” that many of Xinjiang’s residents have been “radicalised” in recent years.

In Beijing’s view, the only way to address the situation in Xinjiang is to give residents “the education that they should have gotten when they were younger.” Thus the “training camps”.

“This is what they [government] say, and they are moving people through this education camps. They teach them skills, language, history, and that’s their way of dealing with it.”

But the activist Hidayat notes that even non-observant Uyghurs, many of them government employees who had tried to adopt a lifestyle similar to the Han Chinese, had not escaped punishment. They too were sent to the camps, by virtue of their racial identity alone, he said.

Tangen, however, pointed out that the economic situation in Xinjiang had “improved dramatically over the years” and people there were better off.

“People live longer. They have better opportunities,” Tangen noted.

“So there is always this tension between what the West says is your human rights, to speak freely, do what you want, and the idea that without economic opportunity and food on the table, rights don’t mean a lot.”





With regards to the specific allegations of forcing Muslims to eat pork, Tangen said that he did not know whether the information was “factual”, but if it was taking place it was not the result of “central government policy.”

The documents seen by Al Jazeera are among a cache that also detailed the alleged sterilisation programme reported by AP.

“I am sure that there are things that are happening that should not be happening. But unless I have some of the facts, it is impossible” to determine the veracity of the allegations, Tangen said.

In a huge bureaucracy like that of China, there may be “some people” who might commit abuses, he said.

“The key is to find these people and punish them.”

The Chinese government has had little to say about the issue, although various state-controlled publications questioned the credibility of both Sautbay and Dawut when they made allegations of other abuses in Xinjiang.

Beijing has also accused Zenz, the German anthropologist, of “fabricating facts and falsifying data” and pointed to his links to “right-wing” factions of the US government. China observers also raised questions about his “sudden expertise” on Xinjiang and the Uyghurs.

Al Jazeera has sought an official response from China’s foreign ministry but has yet to receive a reply. It has also requested comment from the Institute for Human Rights at China University of Political Science and Law, but it had yet to respond at the time of publication.

Dawut, the Uyghur businesswoman now living in exile in the US, says she stands by her story of what happened to her inside the camps.

Meanwhile, Sautbay, the Kazakh medical doctor, said that by sharing her ordeal, she hoped to be a voice for those who remain in captivity.

“The days I have spent in the concentration camp will not be erased from my memory, and I have to live with it my entire life,” she said.

By Ted Regencia



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