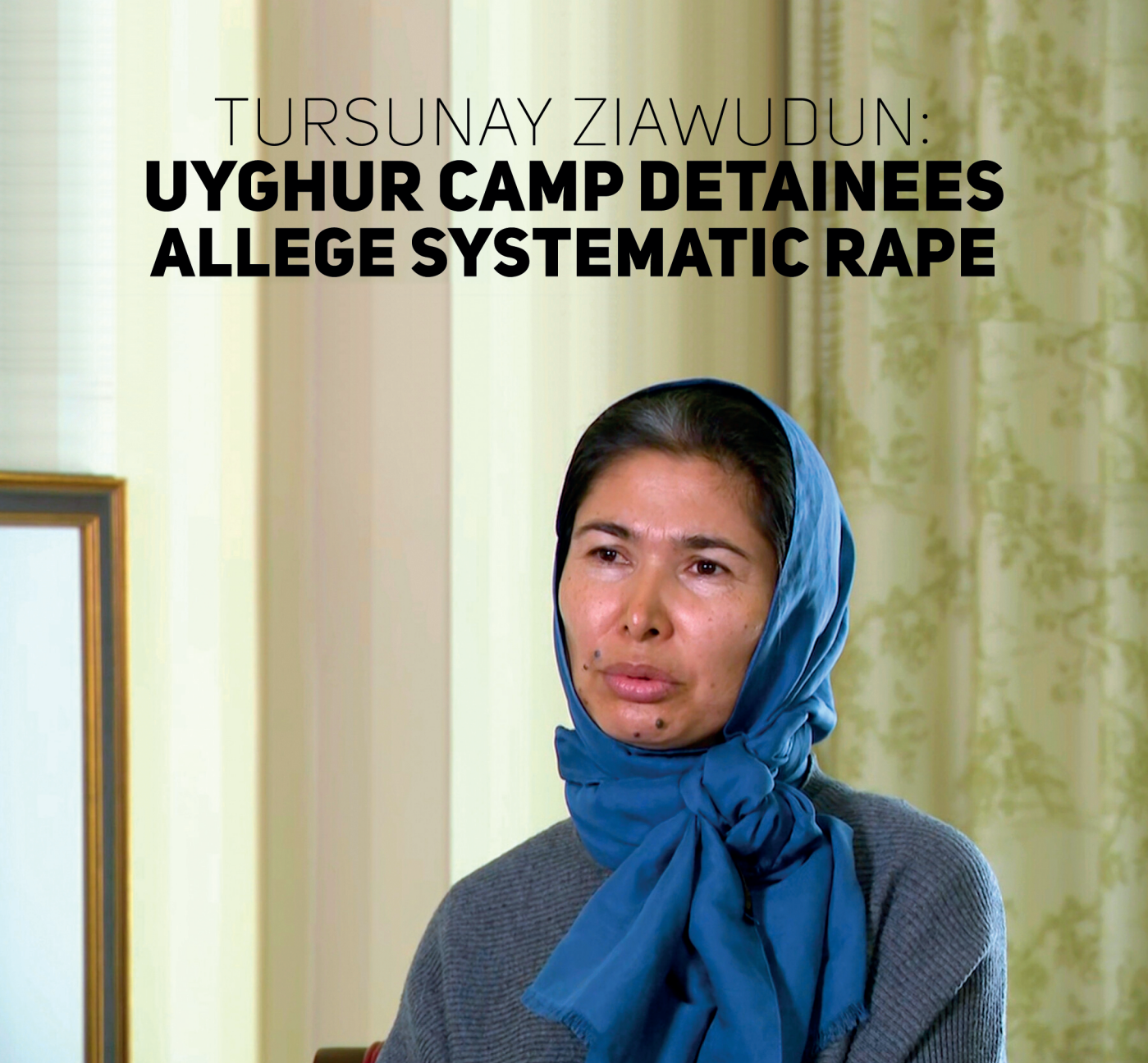


TURSUNAY ZIAWUDUN: **UYGHUR CAMP DETAINEES ALLEGE SYSTEMATIC RAPE**



EAST TURKISTAN PRESS AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION
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‘THEIR GOAL IS TO DESTROY EVERYONE’: UYGHUR CAMP DETAINEES ALLEGE SYSTEMATIC RAPE

Women in China’s “re-education” camps for Uyghurs have been systematically raped, sexually abused, and tortured, according to detailed new accounts obtained by the BBC. You may find some of the details in this story distressing.

The men always wore masks, Tursunay Ziawudun said, even though there was no pandemic then.

They wore suits, she said, not police uniforms.

Sometime after midnight, they came to the cells to select the women they wanted and took them down the corridor to a “black room”, where there were no surveillance cameras.

Several nights, Ziawudun said, they took her.

“Perhaps this is the most unforgettable scar on me forever,” she said.

“I don’t even want these words to spill from my mouth.”

Tursunay Ziawudun spent nine months inside China’s vast and secretive system of internment camps in the Xinjiang region. According to independent estimates, more than a million men and women have been detained in the sprawling network of camps, which China says exist for the “re-education” of the Uyghurs and other minorities.

Human rights groups say the Chinese government has gradually stripped away the religious and other freedoms of the Uyghurs, culminating in an oppressive system of mass surveillance, detention, indoctrination, and even forced sterilisation.

The policy flows from China's President, Xi Jinping, who visited Xinjiang in 2014 in the wake of a terror attack by Uyghur separatists. Shortly after, according to documents leaked to the New York Times, he directed local officials to respond with "absolutely no mercy". The US government said last month that China's actions since amounted to a genocide. China says reports of mass detention and forced sterilisation are "lies and absurd allegations".

First-hand accounts from inside the internment camps are rare, but several former detainees and a guard have told the BBC they experienced or saw evidence of an organised system of mass rape, sexual abuse and torture.

Tursunay Ziawudun, who fled Xinjiang after her release and is now in the US, said women were removed from the cells "every night" and raped by one or more masked Chinese men. She said she was tortured and later gang-raped on three occasions, each time by two or three men.

Ziawudun has spoken to the media before, but only from Kazakhstan, where she "lived in constant fear of being sent back to China", she said. She said she believed that if she revealed the extent of the sexual abuse she had experienced and seen, and was returned to Xinjiang, she would be punished more harshly than before. And she was ashamed, she said.

It is impossible to verify Ziawudun's account completely because of the severe restrictions China places on reporters in the country, but

travel documents and immigration records she provided to the BBC corroborate the timeline of her story. Her descriptions of the camp in Xinyuan county - known in Uyghur as Kunes county - match satellite imagery analysed by the BBC, and her descriptions of daily life inside the camp, as well as the nature and methods of the abuse, correspond with other accounts from former detainees.

Internal documents from the Kunes county justice system from 2017 and 2018, provided to the BBC by Adrian Zenz, a leading expert on China's policies in Xinjiang, detail planning and spending for "transformation through education" of "key groups" - a common euphemism in China for the indoctrination of the Uyghurs. In one Kunes document, the "education" process is described as "washing brains, cleansing hearts, strengthening righteousness and eliminating evil".

The BBC also interviewed a Kazakh woman from Xinjiang who was detained for 18 months in the camp system, who said she was forced to strip Uyghur women naked and handcuff them, before leaving them alone with Chinese men. Afterwards, she cleaned the rooms, she said.

"My job was to remove their clothes above the waist and handcuff them so they cannot move," said Gulzira Auelkhan, crossing her wrists behind her head to demonstrate. "Then I would leave the women in the room and a man would enter - some Chinese man from outside or policeman. I sat silently next to the door, and when the man left the room I took the woman for a shower."



The Chinese men “would pay money to have their pick of the prettiest young inmates”, she said.

Some former detainees of the camps have described being forced to assist guards or face punishment. Auelkhan said she was powerless to resist or intervene.

Asked if there was a system of organised rape, she said: “Yes, rape.”

“They forced me to go into that room,” she said. “They forced me to take off those women’s clothes and to restrain their hands and leave the room.”

Some of the women who were taken away from the cells at night were never returned, Ziawudun said. Those who were brought back were threatened against telling others in the cell what had happened to them.

“You can’t tell anyone what happened, you can only lie down quietly,” she said. “It is designed to destroy everyone’s spirit.”

Mr Zenz told the BBC that the testimony gathered for this story was “some of the most horrendous evidence I have seen since the atrocity began”.

“This confirms the very worst of what we

have heard before,” he said. “It provides authoritative and detailed evidence of sexual abuse and torture at a level clearly greater than what we had assumed.”

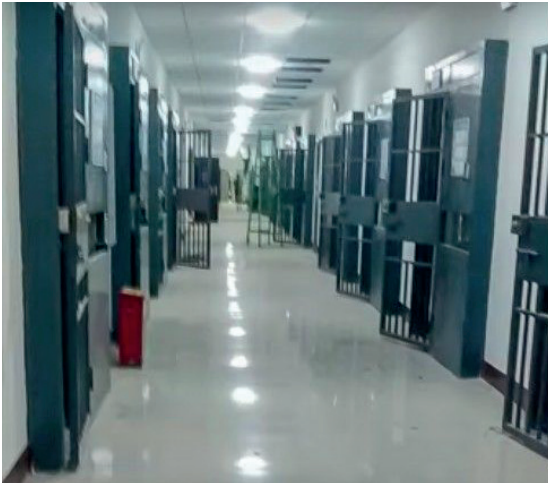
The Uyghurs are a mostly Muslim Turkic minority group that number about 11 million in Xinjiang in north-western China. The region borders Kazakhstan and is also home to ethnic Kazakhs. Ziawudun, who is 42, is Uyghur. Her husband is a Kazakh.

The couple returned to Xinjiang in late 2016 after a five-year stay in Kazakhstan, and were interrogated on arrival and had their passports confiscated, Ziawudun said. A few months later, she was told by police to attend a meeting alongside other Uyghurs and Kazakhs and the group was rounded up and detained.

Her first stint in detention was comparatively easy, she said, with decent food and access to her phone. After a month she developed stomach ulcers and was released. Her husband’s passport was returned and he went back to Kazakhstan to work, but authorities kept Ziawudun’s, trapping her in Xinjiang. Reports suggest China has purposefully kept behind and interned relatives to discourage those who leave from speaking out. On 9 March 2018, with her husband still in Kazakhstan, Ziawudun was instructed to report to a local police station, she said. She was told she needed “more education”.

According to her account, Ziawudun was transported back to the same facility as her previous detention, in Kunes county, but the site had been significantly developed, she said. Buses were lined up outside offloading new detainees “non-stop”.

The women had their jewellery confiscated. Ziawudun’s earrings were yanked out, she said, causing her ears to bleed, and she was herded into a room with a group of women.



Among them was an elderly woman who Ziawudun would later befriend.

The camp guards pulled off the woman's headscarf, Ziawudun said, and shouted at her for wearing a long dress - one of a list of religious expressions that became arrestable offences for Uyghurs that year.

"They stripped everything off the elderly lady, leaving her with just her underwear. She was so embarrassed that she tried to cover herself with her arms," Ziawudun said.

"I cried so much watching the way they treated her. Her tears fell like rain."

The women were told to hand over their shoes and any clothes with elastic or buttons, Ziawudun said, then taken to cellblocks - "similar to a small Chinese neighbourhood where there are rows of buildings".

Nothing much happened for the first month or two. They were forced to watch propaganda programmes in their cells and had their hair forcibly cut short.

Then police began interrogating Ziawudun about her absent husband, she said, knocking her on the floor when she resisted and kicking her in the abdomen.

"Police boots are very hard and heavy, so at first I thought he was beating me with some-

thing," she said. "Then I realised that he was trampling on my belly. I almost passed out - I felt a hot flush go through me."

A camp doctor told her she might have a blood clot. When her cellmates drew attention to the fact that she was bleeding, the guards "replied saying it is normal for women to bleed", she said.

According to Ziawudun, each cell was home to 14 women, with bunk beds, bars on the windows, a basin and a hole-in-the-floor-style toilet. When she first saw women being taken out of the cell at night, she didn't understand why, she said. She thought they were being moved elsewhere.

Then sometime in May 2018 - "I don't remember the exact date, because you don't remember the dates inside there" - Ziawudun and a cellmate, a woman in her twenties, were taken out at night and presented to a Chinese man in a mask, she said. Her cellmate was taken into a separate room.

"As soon as she went inside she started screaming," Ziawudun said. "I don't know how to explain to you, I thought they were torturing her. I never thought about them raping."

The woman who had brought them from the cells told the men about Ziawudun's recent bleeding.

"After the woman spoke about my condition, the Chinese man swore at her. The man with the mask said 'Take her to the dark room'.

“The woman took me to the room next to where the other girl had been taken in. They had an electric stick, I didn’t know what it was, and it was pushed inside my genital tract, torturing me with an electric shock.”

Ziawudun’s torture that first night in the dark room eventually came to an end, she said, when the woman intervened again citing her medical condition, and she was returned to the cell.

About an hour later, her cellmate was brought back.

“The girl became completely different after that, she wouldn’t speak to anyone, she sat quietly staring as if in a trance,” Ziawudun said. “There were many people in those cells who lost their minds.”

Alongside cells, another central feature of the camps is classrooms. Teachers have been drafted in to “re-educate” the detainees - a process activists say is designed to strip the Uyghurs and other minorities of their culture, language and religion, and indoctrinate them into mainstream Chinese culture.

Qelbinur Sedik, an Uzbek woman from Xinjiang, was among the Chinese language teachers brought into the camps and coerced into giving lessons to the detainees. Sedik has since fled China and spoken publicly about her experience.

The women’s camp was “tightly controlled”, Sedik told the BBC. But she heard stories, she said - signs and rumours of rape. One day, Sedik cautiously approached a Chinese

camp policewoman she knew.

“I asked her, ‘I have been hearing some terrible stories about rape, do you know about it?’ She said we should talk in the courtyard during lunch.

“So I went to the courtyard, where there were not many cameras. She said, ‘Yes, the rape has become a culture. It is gang rape and the Chinese police not only rape them but also electrocute them. They are subject to horrific torture.’”

That night Sedik didn’t sleep at all, she said. “I was thinking about my daughter who was studying abroad and I cried all night.”

In separate testimony to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, Sedik said she heard about an electrified stick being inserted into women to torture them - echoing the experience Ziawudun described.

There were “four kinds of electric shock”, Sedik said - “the chair, the glove, the helmet, and anal rape with a stick”.

“The screams echoed throughout the building,” she said. “I could hear them during lunch and sometimes when I was in class.”

Another teacher forced to work in the camps, Sayragul Sauytbay, told the BBC that “rape was common” and the guards “picked the girls and young women they wanted and took them away”.



She described witnessing a harrowing public gang rape of a woman of just 20 or 21, who was brought before about 100 other detainees to make a forced confession.

“After that, in front of everyone, the police took turns to rape her,” Sauytbay said.

“While carrying out this test, they watched people closely and picked out anyone who resisted, clenched their fists, closed their eyes, or looked away, and took them for punishment.”

The young woman cried out for help, Sauytbay said.

“It was absolutely horrendous,” she said. “I felt I had died. I was dead.”

In the camp in Kunes, Ziawudun’s days drifted into weeks and then months. The detainees’ hair was cut, they went to class, they underwent unexplained medical tests, took pills, and were forcibly injected every 15 days with a “vaccine” that brought on nausea and numbness.

Women were forcibly fitted with IUDs or

sterilised, Ziawudun said, including a woman who was just about 20 years old. (“We begged them on her behalf,” she said.) Forced sterilisation of Uyghurs has been widespread in Xinjiang, according to a recent investigation by the Associated Press. The Chinese government told the BBC the allegations were “completely unfounded”.

As well as the medical interventions, detainees in Ziawudun’s camp spent hours singing patriotic Chinese songs and watching patriotic TV programmes about Chinese President Xi Jinping, she said.

“You forget to think about life outside the camp. I don’t know if they brainwashed us or if it was the side effect of the injections and pills, but you can’t think of anything beyond wishing you had a full stomach. The food deprivation is so severe.”

Detainees had food withheld for infractions such as failing to accurately memorise passages from books about Xi Jinping, according to a former camp guard who spoke to the BBC via video link from a country outside China.



“Once we were taking the people arrested into the concentration camp, and I saw everyone being forced to memorise those books. They sit for hours trying to memorise the text, everyone had a book in their hands,” he said.

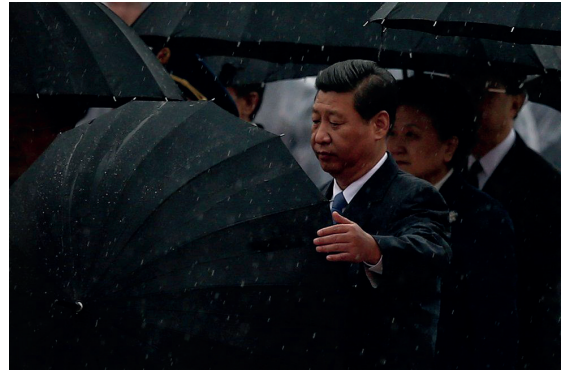
Those who failed tests were forced to wear three different colours of clothing based on whether they had failed one, two, or three times, he said, and subjected to different levels of punishment accordingly, including food deprivation and beatings.

“I entered those camps. I took detainees into those camps,” he said. “I saw those sick, miserable people. They definitely experienced various types of torture. I am sure about that.”

It was not possible to independently verify the guard’s testimony but he provided documents that appeared to corroborate a period of employment at a known camp. He agreed to speak on condition of anonymity.

The guard said he did not know anything about rape in the cell areas. Asked if the camp guards used electrocution, he said: “Yes. They do. They use those electrocutting instruments.” After being tortured, detainees were forced to make confessions to a variety of perceived offences, according to the guard. “I have those confessions in my heart,” he said.

President Xi looms large over the camps. His image and slogans adorn the walls; he is a focus of the programme of “re-education”. Xi is the overall architect of the policy against the Uyghurs, said Charles Parton, a former British diplomat in China and now senior associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute.



“It is very centralised and it goes to the very top,” Parton said. “There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that this is Xi Jinping’s policy.”

It was unlikely that Xi or other top party officials would have directed or authorised rape or torture, Parton said, but they would “certainly be aware of it”.

“I think they prefer at the top just to turn a blind eye. The line has gone out to implement this policy with great sternness, and that is what is happening.” That left “no real constraints”, he said. “I just don’t see what the perpetrators of these acts would have to hold them back.”

According to Ziawudun’s account, the perpetrators did not hold back.

“They don’t only rape but also bite all over your body, you don’t know if they are human or animal,” she said, pressing a tissue to her eyes to stop her tears and pausing for a long time to collect herself.

“They didn’t spare any part of the body, they bit everywhere leaving horrible marks. It was disgusting to look at.

“I’ve experienced that three times. And it is not just one person who torments you, not just one predator. Each time they were two or three men.”

Later, a woman who slept near Ziawudun in the cell, who said she was detained for giving

birth to too many children, disappeared for three days and when she returned her body was covered with the same marks, Ziawudun said.

“She couldn’t say it. She wrapped her arms around my neck and sobbed continuously, but she said nothing.”

The Chinese government did not respond directly to questions from the BBC about allegations of rape and torture. In a statement, a spokeswoman said the camps in Xinjiang were not detention camps but “vocational education and training centres”.

“The Chinese government protects the rights and interests of all ethnic minorities equally,” the spokeswoman said, adding that the government “attaches great importance to protecting women’s rights”.

Ziawudun was released in December 2018 along with others who had spouses or relatives in Kazakhstan - an apparent policy shift she still doesn’t fully understand.

The state returned her passport and she fled to Kazakhstan and then, with the support of the Uyghur Human Rights Project, to the US. She is applying to stay. She lives in a quiet suburb not far from Washington DC with a landlady from the local Uyghur community. The two women cook together and take walks in the streets around the house. It’s a slow, uneventful existence. Ziawudun keeps the lights low when she is in the house, because they shone brightly and constantly in the camp. A week after she arrived in the US, she had surgery to remove her womb - a consequence of being stamped on. “I have lost the chance to become a mother,” she said. She wants her husband to join her in the US. For now, he is in Kazakhstan.

For a while after her release, before she could flee, Ziawudun waited in Xinjiang. She saw

others who had been churned through the system and released. She saw the effect the policy was having on her people. The birth rate in Xinjiang has plummeted in the past few years, according to independent research - an effect analysts have described as “demographic genocide”.

Many in the community had turned to alcohol, Ziawudun said. Several times, she saw her former cellmate collapsed on the street - the young woman who was removed from the cell with her that first night, who she heard screaming in an adjacent room. The woman had been consumed by addiction, Ziawudun said. She was “like someone who simply existed, otherwise she was dead, completely finished by the rapes”.

“They say people are released, but in my opinion everyone who leaves the camps is finished.”

And that, she said, was the plan. The surveillance, the internment, the indoctrination, the dehumanisation, the sterilisation, the torture, the rape.

“Their goal is to destroy everyone,” she said. “And everybody knows it.”

By Matthew Hill, David Campanale and Joel Gunter



CANADA VOTES TO RECOGNIZE CHINA'S TREATMENT OF UYGHUR POPULATION AS GENOCIDE

Parliament's move was not supported by Trudeau and likely to raise diplomatic tensions between the two nations

“Canada has become the second country in the world to describe China's treatment of its Uyghur minority as a genocide, following a contentious parliamentary vote which is likely to further raise diplomatic tensions between the two nations.”

Lawmakers approved the non-binding motion, brought forward by opposition Conservatives, to recognize China's actions in the north-western Xinjiang province as a genocide against Muslim Uyghurs.

Prime minister Justin Trudeau and senior members of cabinet did not attend the vote on Monday. All other Liberal members present voted in favour of the motion, except the foreign affairs minister, Marc Garneau, who abstained on behalf of the government.

By calling the actions in China a genocide, Canada joins the United States, which made the determination shortly before Donald Trump left office. A similar attempt on a vote in the UK failed earlier this month.

But the move by the Canadian parliament is likely to bring a host of new political challenges for the prime minister, who has tried in recent years to strike a balance between pushing back against China's hostilities and maintaining cordial relations with Beijing.



Trudeau, whose Liberal party governs without a parliamentary majority, had previously spoken out against bringing the motion to a vote, telling reporters that genocide was an “extremely loaded” term and that more study of the issue was needed before a determination could be made.

Over the weekend, China’s ambassador to Canada criticized the vote, telling the Canadian Press that officials in Ottawa should stay out of China’s internal politics.

“We firmly oppose that because it runs counter to the facts. And it’s like, you know, interfering in our domestic affairs,” said Cong Peiwu. “There’s nothing like genocide happening in Xinjiang at all.”

More than 1 million Uyghurs have been detained in camps in Xinjiang province, and reports have emerged of systematic rape and sexual violence. China denies such allegations and describes the facilities as vocational and educational training centres, saying it is trying to stamp out extremism.

But last October, a Canadian parliamentary subcommittee determined that China’s treatment of Uyghurs constituted a genocide.

The motion is likely to escalate tensions between the two countries, whose relationship has already undergone significant strain since the arrest on a US warrant of Huawei’s Meng Wanzhou in December 2018. Within days, two Canadian citizens – Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor – were detained in China.

Canada has described the men’s detention as “hostage diplomacy”.

Ahead of the vote, the Conservative leader, Erin O’Toole, had said the motion was necessary to send a “clear and unequivocal signal that we will stand up for human rights and the dignity of human rights, even if it means sacrificing some economic opportunity”.

The Conservatives, New Democrats, Bloc Québécois and Greens have all called for sanctions against Chinese officials and for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games to be moved from Beijing.

By Leyland Cecco





DUTCH PARLIAMENT: CHINA'S TREATMENT OF UYGHURS IS GENOCIDE

The Dutch parliament on Thursday passed a non-binding motion saying the treatment of the Uyghur Muslim minority in China amounts to genocide, the first such move by a European country.

Activists and U.N. rights experts say at least one million Muslims are being detained in camps in the remote western region of Xinjiang. The activists and some Western politicians accuse China of using torture, forced labour and sterilisations.

China denies any human rights abuses in Xinjiang and says its camps provide vocational training and are needed to fight extremism.

“A genocide on the Uyghur minority is occurring in China,” the Dutch motion said, stopping short of directly saying that the Chinese government was responsible.

The Chinese Embassy in The Hague said on Thursday any suggestion of a genocide in

Xinjiang was an “outright lie” and the Dutch parliament had “deliberately smeared China and grossly interfered in China’s internal affairs.”

Canada passed a resolution labelling China’s treatment of the Uyghurs genocide earlier this week.

The Dutch motion said that actions by the Chinese government such as “measures intended to prevent births” and “having punishment camps” fell under United Nations Resolution 260, generally known as the genocide convention.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte’s conservative VVD party voted against the resolution.



“GREAT CONCERN”

Foreign Minister Stef Blok said the government did not want to use the term genocide, as the situation has not been declared as such by the United Nations or by an international court.

“The situation of the Uyghurs is a cause of great concern”, Blok told reporters after the motion was passed, adding that the Netherlands hoped to work with other nations on the matter.

The author of the motion, lawmaker Sjoerd Sjoerdsma of the centre-left D-66 Party, has separately proposed lobbying the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Winter Olympics away from Beijing.

“Recognising the atrocities that are taking place against the Uyghurs in China for what they are, namely genocide, prevents the world from looking the other way and forces us into action,” he told Reuters in an emailed response to questions.

In a statement on its website, the Chinese Embassy in The Hague said the Uyghur population in Xinjiang has been growing in recent years, enjoying a higher standard of living, and a longer life expectancy.

“How can you call this a genocide?” it said. “Xingjiang-related issues are never about human rights, ethnicity or religion, but about combating violent terrorism and succession.”

China’s ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva accused Western powers on Wednesday of using the Uyghur issue to meddle in his country’s internal affairs.

By Reuters Staff



No Rights. No Games.



MPs URGE BRITISH OLYMPIANS TO BOYCOTT 2022 BEIJING WINTER GAMES

Lib Dem leader Ed Davey and Labour MP Chris Bryant urge officials and athletes to protest against oppression of Uyghur communities.

Senior political figures have called for British athletes to boycott next year's Winter Olympics in Beijing in response to widespread human rights abuses in China.

Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, and Labour MP Chris Bryant, a member of the foreign affairs select committee and a former junior foreign minister, said the government and the British Olympic Association should act.

“The evidence that a genocide is now occurring in western China is so clear that the UK and the whole world must now stand up to Beijing and use every available tool to stop it,” Davey said.

The BBC reported last week that ethnic Uyghur women and other Muslims in the western province of Xinjiang were being systematically raped and tortured. The former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo said before

leaving office last month that China was committing ongoing genocide against the Uyghurs, a statement backed by the Biden administration.

The UN Genocide Convention lists removing children, preventing births, killing members of a group, seriously harming them or putting them in conditions calculated to destroy them as evidence of genocide.

Bryant said: “All five categories of genocide behaviour, according to the Genocide Con-



vention, are already in play in Xinjiang province. So I think it's just extraordinary that the British government seems to have no backbone about it.

"I just can't see why anybody would want to go to the Winter Olympics in Beijing. And I think the British Olympic Association should be calling for the Winter Olympics to move, and if it doesn't move, then we should be boycotting it."

Davey said the UK had allowed its sports stars to be used for propaganda in the past, such as when the England football team was instructed to give a Nazi salute in 1935.

"No doubt we will hear teams, sponsors and governing bodies say the Olympics and Paralympics should be separate from politics and that they are just concentrating on sport. But in the face of genocide, that just isn't good enough," Davey said.

"The 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be used as a propaganda tool for a regime committing genocide. Team GB, ParalympicsGB and the government have a moral responsibility to consider if sending a team to these Games is really the right thing to do."

He said that unless the Chinese government ordered the closure of detention camps in

Xinjiang, ended Uyghur forced labour and ethnic cleansing, stopped sterilising Uyghur women and stopped the torture and rape of Uyghurs, then Team GB, ParalympicsGB and ministers should announce a boycott. "Our brightest and best athletes should not be forced to be part of a propaganda exercise for the Chinese Communist party while it tries to wipe the Uyghur people off the face of the planet."

Last week, a group of 180 human rights groups called for a boycott, saying that the International Olympic Committee's hope that awarding China the Games in 2015 would spark progress had been wrong.

China's human rights record worsened after the 2008 Beijing summer Games because the country's leadership became "emboldened", the group said.

Fewer athletes participate in the Winter Olympics than during the summer Games and a greater proportion come from richer countries.

Dominic Raab, the foreign secretary, told the foreign affairs select committee last October that a UK boycott of the Games was possible. The former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith has also called for a boycott.

China has denied there are any abuses in Xinjiang.

Sir Hugh Robertson, the chairman of the British Olympic Committee, said last year that Olympic boycotts did not work and only harmed the athletes who could not take part. British runners Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett won gold medals at the 1980 Moscow Games after defying a government boycott.

By James Tapper





12 JAPAN FIRMS WILL KILL BUSINESS DEALS INVOLVING UYGHUR FORCED LABOR

Twelve major Japanese companies have established a policy of ceasing business deals with Chinese companies found to benefit from the forced labor of the Muslim Uyghur minority in China's far-western Xinjiang region, a Kyodo News investigation showed Sunday.

■ Pressure has been mounting on Japanese firms to take action over such human rights abuses in the supply chain after the United States and Britain imposed import restrictions on cotton and other products originating from the autonomous region.

The Japanese government, which has been criticized for being slow to impose similar sanctions, has been passive in addressing the issue due to fears of provoking China.

In a report last year, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute identified over 80 global companies “directly or indirectly benefiting from the use of Uyghur workers outside Xinjiang through abusive labor transfer programs.” Kyodo News recently asked 14 Japanese companies mentioned by the think tank how they plan to respond.

With the exception of Panasonic Corp., which declined to comment, all companies either denied directly doing business with companies suspected of benefiting from forced labor or said they could not verify the claims against their suppliers.

In terms of future policy, 12 companies responded that they would cease or consider ceasing business with business partners found to be using forced labor.

Toshiba Corp., which has a license contract with a firm suspected of using forced labor, said it could not confirm the claims but has decided to terminate business with them by the end of the year.



TOSHIBA

SONY®

MUJI

HITACHI

The 12 also include Fast Retailing Co., operator of the Uniqlo casual clothing brand, Sony Corp. and Hitachi Ltd.

As many foreign companies rely on self-reporting of the human rights situation by the firms themselves, they are faced with the challenge of grasping the situation beyond direct business partners.

Ryohin Keikaku Co., the Muji-brand goods store chain operator, was among three Japanese companies found to have dealings with Chinese firms, or parent companies of those

firms, currently under embargo by the U.S. government.

“All our cotton and yarn has been internationally certified organic by a third party,” it said.

The retailer had been selling various products with “Xinjiang cotton” as part of the product’s name on its official website, but they were removed following the Kyodo News investigation.





ISTANBUL: UYGHURS DEMAND TO KNOW FAMILIES' WHEREABOUTS

Demonstrators voice anger at China's alleged systematic campaign against Uyghurs, ask for help contacting families

Uyghur Turks living in Istanbul staged a demonstration Thursday near China's Consulate General demanding to know the condition of their family members believed to have been held in Chinese camps.

Dozens of Uyghurs including academics, business people and children complained of not having heard from their family members for years due to Beijing's alleged systematic campaign that reportedly involves confining members of the ethnic minority in concentration and forced labor camps in China.

Addressing the rally, the group's spokesman, Salih Emin, called on the world to raise their voice against what he called crimes against humanity and take action to stop Uyghur persecution.

Uyghur Turks stage protest outside Chinese Consulate in Istanbul

"The Chinese government does not want human rights organizations to investigate [the situation] in the country because they're afraid of [the situation there]. The massacre there is true and they [China] don't want the world to know about it," Emin said.

East Turkistan, also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, is home to around 10 million Uyghurs. The Turkic Muslim group, which makes up around 45% of Xinjiang's population, has long accused China's authorities of cultural, religious and economic discrimination.



Beijing's policy against Uyghurs has drawn widespread criticism from rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which accuse it of ostracizing over 10 million members of the minority group, most of whom are Muslims.

Emin called on the Turkish Foreign Ministry to meet with the Chinese government to help them get in touch with their families, also thanking Turkish people for their support.

During the rally, many carried East Turkistan's flags in Uyghur sky blue and held up banners reading: "Chinese Government Release My Innocent Family Members," "China, Where is My Son?" "Where are My Brothers?" and "Uyghurs Need Your Support."

'Hear our voice!'

"I've been unable to communicate with my family since 2015. ... We've learned that some of my family members were sent to concentration camps," Habibe Omer, one of the protesters, told Anadolu Agency.

"Just hear our voice!" she asked in an emotional tone.

"We demand those who were in the concentration camps to be released immediately," said Abdullah Resul, another protester, who attended the rally in the hopes of getting information about his relatives' whereabouts.

Iparhan Uygur, who came to Turkey eight years ago to study, also denounced Chinese policy in the autonomous region, saying she had heard nothing about her family's condition since 2016.

Burhan Uluyol, an academic at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, was also among the protesters. "Cruel China has arrested my father, mother, brothers, uncles and nephews. They've been under arrest for four years. We're here to be their voice."

Last year, Uyghurs held rallies for 18 days outside the Chinese Consulate General in Istanbul demanding information on their families' well-being after not being able to contact them for years.

A 2018 Human Rights Watch report detailed a Chinese government campaign of "mass arbitrary detention, torture, forced political indoctrination, and mass surveillance of Xinjiang's Muslims."

China, however, has repeatedly denied allegations that it is operating detention camps in its northwestern autonomous region, claiming instead that they are "re-educating" Uyghurs.

By Nilay Kar Onum





THE GHULJA MASSACRE OF 1997 AND THE FACE OF UYGHUR GENOCIDE TODAY

24 years ago, a brutal crack-down on Uyghur protesters changed one family's lives forever. Incredibly, things have only gotten worse for the Uyghurs since then.

Every time I see the deep, round scars on her wrists and arms, I think of the blood flowing out of the holes that made them, dripping onto the floor of that grim torture room in the Ghulja city police station, as she is tortured to confess to crimes that do not exist. She is Saliha, my sister, one of thousands of youths in Ghulja whose lives turned into a nightmare after the Ghulja massacre.

On February 5, 1997, now 24 years ago, Uyghur demonstrators in Ghulja took part in a non-violent protest calling for an end to religious repression and ethnic discrimination in the city. After violently suppressing the demonstration, Chinese authorities arbitrarily detained large numbers of Uyghurs. Human rights organizations documented a pattern of torture in detention and unfair trials of detained Uyghurs. For their alleged role in the events, several Uyghur participants were executed.

Eight months after the massacre, the hunt for Uyghur youths with any connections to the February protest was still in effect. In October 1997, my sister Saliha, only 23 years old at the time, my niece Saide, 20, and a few other girls were coming home from a wedding in nearby Nilka, still resplendent in wedding finery and boisterous with laughter and jokes. The joy was not to last; for my sister, a nightmare spanning decades was about to begin. Five fully armed policemen burst into our home to arrest these girls. My father



asked them to allow Saliha to rest for a moment at least, but to no avail. The policemen shackled her, forced her into a police car, and drove away as if she were wanted for murder. My mother fainted, my father stood motionless, and the rest of the family sunk into a horrified chaos, helpless.

They arrived at the Ghulja city police station, about six kilometers from Kepekyuz, where Saliha resided. She was ripped from the car and pushed into an interrogation room on the second floor of the police station. The questions began politely: Do you know Tursun Seley and his wife? Did you help his wife? Have you hidden her? We knew that you are friends.

Saliha answered firmly: No. I don't know them; I didn't see them; I don't have any connections with them.

Their tone and interrogation methods intensified, and the policemen became impatient. First, they hit Saliha with a large club, starting from her back then all over her body. The most painful hit was to the back of her ears; her earrings broke into pieces, the stones thrown out of their sockets and clicking against cement. She didn't know

for how long the questioning and beatings continued. As time went by with no results, they handcuffed her with shackles that had nails protruding from the inside. When the policemen pressed against the sides of the handcuffs, the nails dug into her skin and blood gushed out of her wrists. Slowly, she started losing feeling. The policemen continued squeezing blood from her, but again with no results. Soon, they brought out heavy leg shackles and bound her legs, then moved her to a corner between the first and second floor stairway. There, they attached her nail-handcuffs to a pipe that ran across the wall. Chinese police personnel who walked by would see her standing there, bleeding. It was evening, but it was impossible to sleep despite the pain and fatigue; she could hear the horrific screams of people coming out from similar "interrogation rooms." To her, the whole building was a dark and deathly torture chamber.

“ She spent one month there, and to this day has not described everything that happened to her. She was released after a Chinese police chief was given a sizable bribe. We signed an agreement that Saliha was to stay within a six-kilometer radius of her house and be mindful that she was under watch 24/7. In effect, she was under house arrest. ”

In July 1998, I went to Ghulja from my new home in Australia. It was three months after my nephew Hemmat Muhammad was killed by Chinese forces and nine months after Saliha's release from detention. The purpose of the trip was to mourn for Hemmat's death,

but what I witnessed and experienced there was much worse. The most devastating experience for me was realizing my sister Saliha had changed drastically. The hilarious, radiant girl who loved to sing and dance and express herself was silent, muted. She had lost all faith in humanity. The same thing happened to my niece Saide. It happened to Patime, who was a friend of Saliha's, my cousin Abdumennan, and so many others in our neighborhood who had been detained. Something inside them had broken after going through those brutal detentions. It seemed clear to everyone: We had to leave this place if possible and help the people here from abroad.

I left Ghulja in August of 1998. I tried my best to bring over any of my relatives. Saliha came to Australia in September 1999. It took her over 20 years to recount some of the horrific experiences inside China's brutal torture chambers. That was one month of torture and questioning. Saliha misses our homeland and her childhood, but recoils at the idea of going back. The dark chamber continues to haunt her.

When Saliha and I heard our other sister Mesture and her family were sent to concentration camps in Ghulja in 2016, we were horrified; Saliha in particular became ill upon hearing the news. The terms "taken away," "arrested," or "detained" all equate to termination for us.

China is doing its best to prevent the world from seeing the Uyghur genocide and claim Uyghurs abroad are "lying." Credible accounts from survivors are "fake news" and even a "Western conspiracy." China claims that America is "jealous" of China's rise as a world leader, so the United States is using the Uyghur genocide card to "wage war" against China. Sure, America may not wish to be replaced in its role on the international

stage, but this argument does nothing to disprove China's brutal genocide of the people it claims to be its own citizens.

We may not be seeing Uyghurs locked into gas chambers and gassed to death, or killed with weapons of mass destruction, but we are witnessing people being tortured, brainwashed, locked up by the millions, held as slaves, or having their organs harvested. Women are being raped and forced into unwanted marriages, or sterilized by force and used for experimentation in Chinese medical laboratories. In this century, these cruelties should not be a precursor to a government becoming more powerful on the world stage, no matter what sort of economic and political "benefits" China offers the world as a result. There is no acceptable condition where world actors can turn a blind eye to genocide.

Twenty-four years after the Ghulja massacre, there has been no accountability for the atrocities committed that day or the months after. In fact, China continues to hunt down every Uyghur who had a connection to that





youth movement from the ‘90s and is punishing them by sending them to concentration camps. The survivors of the Ghulja massacre, the July 5, 2009 Urumqi protest, and the state violence of Alaqagha (May 2014), Hanerik (June 2013), Seriqbuya (April 2013), and Elishku (July 2014) make up a part of the millions of people detained in Chinese concentration camps since 2016. These and countless other unreported instances of oppression serve as testimony to the fact that, step by step, China will systematically erode our people from the earth, mentally, spiritually, culturally, and physically.

I had tears of satisfaction in my eyes when I heard the United States had recognized the genocide of the Uyghurs. It has given some hope to women who have suffered, like Saliha, and a will to keep fighting for the rights that have been taken away from us for so long. If the world ignores what China is doing in East Turkistan, we are giving tacit approval to genocidal governments and may witness the same atrocities elsewhere. It is time to urge other governments to join the U.S. and recognize the genocide of the Uyghurs. In particular, those brave women who sur-

vived China’s atrocities – like Saliha, Mihrigul Tursun, Tursinay Ziyawdun, Gulbahar Jelilova, Gulbahar Hatiwaji, Zumret Dawut, Rukiya Perhat, Sayragul Sautbay, Kalbinur Sidik, and many more unknown Uyghur and Kazakh women – need to be supported and believed. Their stories are weapons in the struggle against state brutality. By listening to them, we have the power to stop the atrocities in East Turkistan and everywhere else in the world.

By Zubayra Shamseden



UPDATING UYGHUR: THE POWER OF ONLINE DISCUSSIONS FOR LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

Can a language survive by taking refuge in uncensored digital space?

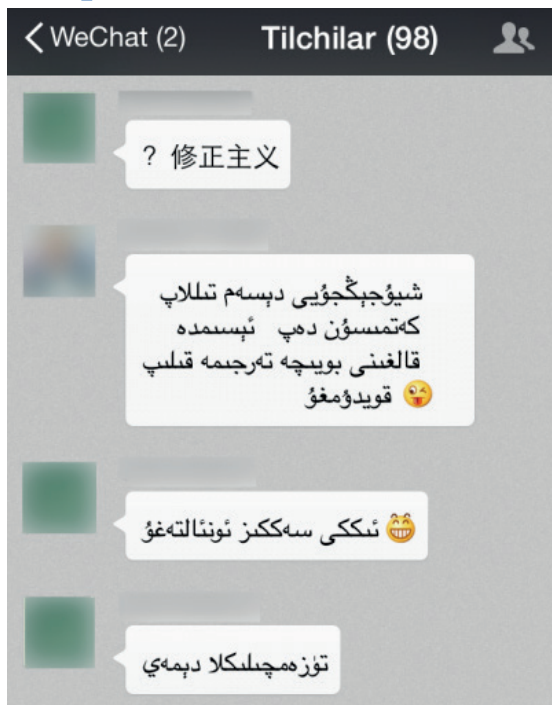
Languages need to adapt to the modern world to catch-up with new technology and concepts if they want to remain competitive, particularly among younger speakers. This is particularly true for Uyghur, a Turkic language spoken in Western China that is under threat due to targeted discrimination conducted by Chinese authorities in the hope that Chinese may appear more attractive and technology-friendly among Uyghur youth.

Uyghur linguists have long been aware of the fact that Uyghur, a Turkic language with



an estimated 10 million speakers, written in the Arabic alphabet in China, and with a rich tradition of intricate poetry, philosophy and songs written in that language, needs to include elements of modern life to serve the needs of the younger generation, as well as of social media where more and more conversations are taking place.

To have a rare insight into those efforts, Global Voices spoke to Elise Anderson, an expert on Uyghur language and music who spent years in Xinjiang, and now works as a Senior Program Officer with the Uyghur Human Rights Project. Anderson, who spent most of her time in Xinjiang from 2012 to 2016, was invited in January 2014 by an Uyghur linguist friend to join their WeChat group called “Tilchilar” (Linguists) as she was herself studying the language in-depth as part of her doctoral research on Uyghur music and songs. Here is how she describes the group hosted on China’s most popular social media platform, WeChat:



The group had around 100 members at any given moment, most of whom were highly educated native speakers, including academics, translators, bureaucrats, and even a few officials from regional-level institutions. We discussed persistent “problems” in the language, including spelling, grammar, translation. Most often, our conversations centered on terminology and whether we could replace Chinese loanwords to preserve the “purity” (sapliq) of Uyghur. A group member might say, “I noticed teenagers are using [Mandarin word]. What could we say instead?” We would then cycle through possibilities: Was there a word to “resurrect” from pre-modern Uyghur? No? What about “borrowing” from other Turkic languages? No? What about “importing” from a more distant language? And so on. In a few cases, we settled on terms, which more influential group members then attempted to lexicalize. But discussions of single words could last days and often went unresolved.

As Anderson explains, the group was also trading examples of bad translations, some

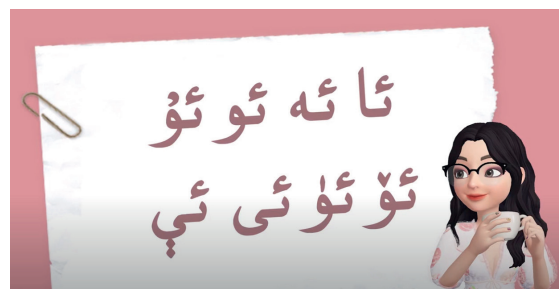
of which were comical, but also raised an uncomfortable questions such as why would there be unedited translations in Uyghur in a territory inhabited by millions of native speakers of the language.

The disproportionate importance of social media

For languages that do not have a dominating position in a country, are have a small number of speakers, their digital footprint is often an indicator of their chances for long-term survival. For Uyghur language, WeChat offered a unique opportunity with its voice messaging feature. As Anderson explains, the platform became so popular it was given an Uyghur name, “Ündidar”, a portmanteau word made of the Turkic word “ün” which means voice, and the Persian term “didar” which refers to encounter. The poetic term was coined by the poet and intellectual Abduqadir Jalaliddin, who disappeared from his Ürümqi home in 2018 and is currently incarcerated.

According to Anderson, allowing texting in Uyghur came much later:

Uyghur was still not a fully phone-compatible language when I lived in the region. The incompatibility stemmed from the 1990s, when the resource-strapped regional government chose to fund cultural projects (music, dance) over computing initiatives. By the time smartphone use really took off, sometime around 2012, no phone had an OS in Uyghur, and Arabic-script keyboards for the language were only available through





third-party apps many people were unaware of. What this meant was that many users, particularly those with low reading facilities in Mandarin, were using phones they barely knew how to operate with no way to type in the language and script they preferred. But the fact that an app like WeChat could make spoken discussion, often in large groups, possible was significant.

“ Today the Uyghur diaspora living outside a Beijing-censored internet is probably the most active user of Uyghur language over social media. Microsoft has offered full operating systems in Uyghur since 2016, and most smartphones allow Uyghur on their keyboard. In February 2020, Google also added Uyghur on its free translation platform, expanding the space for Uyghur online.

In China, the opposite is happening, according to Anderson:

The Uyghur web, most of which was hosted inside the borders of China, used to be a vibrant space, where popular message boards gave users space to discuss everything under the sun (or at least everything under the sun that made it through the censors) and even to publish new literary work. Since 2016, authorities in the Uyghur region have managed to scrub that web nearly completely, such that today there are very few Uyghur-lan-

guage sites left. Henryk Szadziewski and Greg Fay refer to an earlier scrubbing of the Uyghur web, that which occurred in the aftermath of the Ürümqi Uprising in July 2009, as a “digital book burning,” which seems apt when you consider how much has been lost in the destruction.

The situation inside China does not allow for any optimism in the context of the massive internment and imprisonment of at least over a million ethnic Uyghurs. Indeed part of this program of ethnic and cultural genocide, tens if not hundreds of thousands of Uyghur children are forcibly taken away from their parents and extended family and placed in orphanages and boarding schools where the only language allowed and spoken is Mandarin Chinese.

As Anderson concludes:

The way to keep anything alive, including a language, is to create space for it to live and provide material support so it can thrive. The Uyghur language will survive if it is put it on equal footing with other languages, if it “counts” in professional and formal settings, if it has support as a language of literary and scientific production, and so on. Current Chinese government policies allow no such space for the language. Should these policies continue, younger generations of Uyghurs might never know how the world looks and sounds in their mother tongue.

By Filip Noubel



NO RIGHTS. NO GAMES. BOYCOTT CHINA'S GENOCIDE OLYMPICS



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What is happening in East Turkistan?

What is true and what is false?

The “ISTIQLAL” journal uses reliable sources, evidence and witnesses to reveal China’s crimes against humanity and shine a light on the oppression in East Turkistan as well as exposing China’s fake news propaganda.

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Sefaköy K.çekmece İSTANBUL**

info@turkistanmedia.com

www.turkistantimes.com/en

www.istiqlalhaber.com

www.turkistanmedia.com

+90 212 540 31 15

+90 553 895 19 33

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