



## ONE YEAR LATER UYGHURS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEADLY URUMQI FIRE



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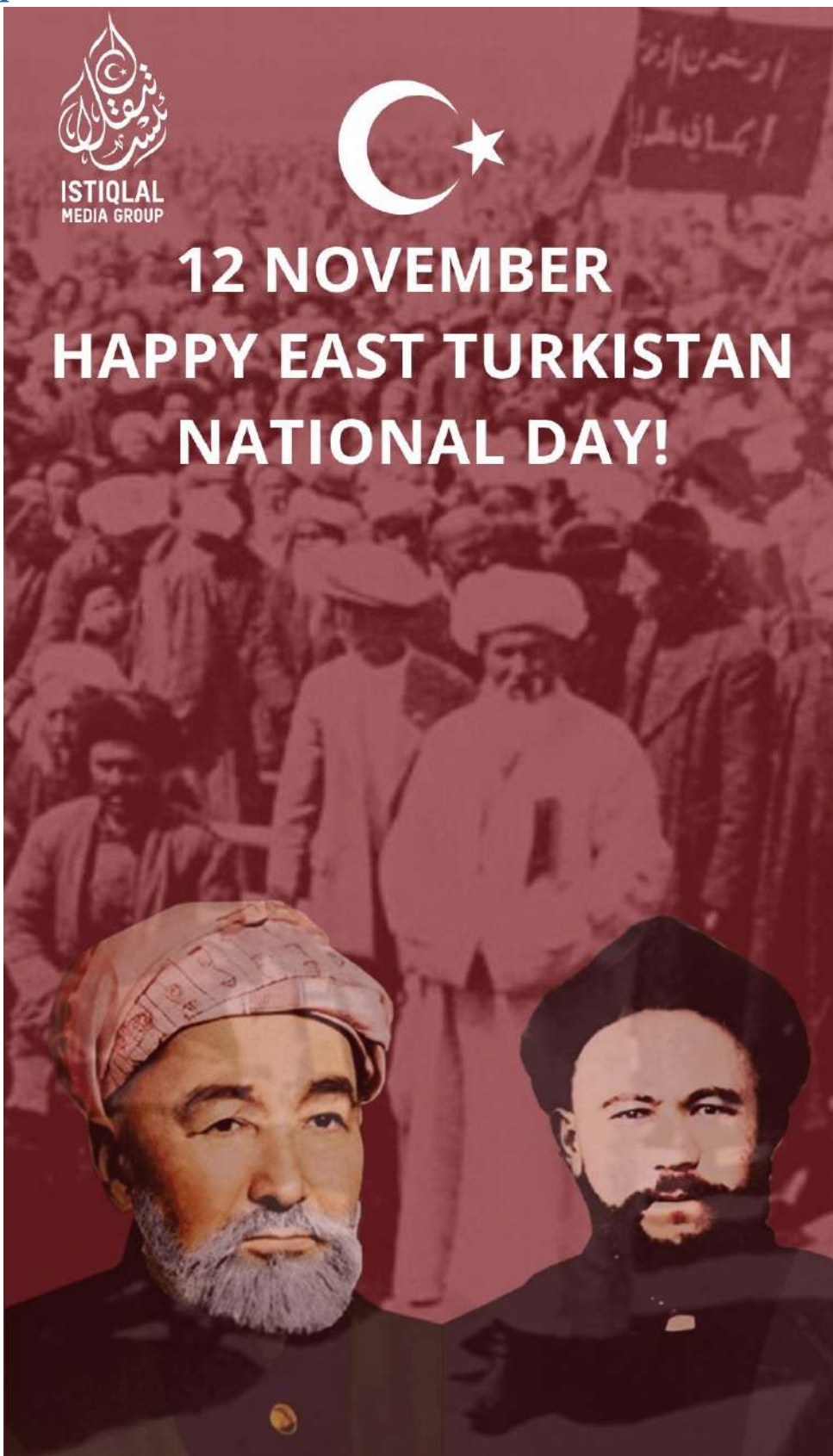
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# ONE YEAR LATER, UYGHURS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEADLY URUMQI FIRE



Firefighters spray water on a fire at a residential building in Urumqi in Xinjiang region, on Nov. 24, 2022.

## Vigils were held in Turkey and the UK for the tragedy that claimed as many as 44 lives.

By Shohret Hoshur for RFA Uyghur  
2023.11.27



Shehide, 13, Nehdiye, 5, their mother Qemernisa Abdurahman, 48, and Abdurahman, 9, are seen in an undated photo. All four – as well as another child of Abdurahman – died in the residential building fire in Xinjiang’s capital Urumqi on Nov. 24, 2022. Credit: Handout

Uyghurs marked the one-year anniversary of a deadly fire in Xinjiang’s capital Urumqi with vigils over the weekend, demanding accountability for the tragedy that they say killed as many as 44 people, four times higher than the official death toll of 10.

The fire broke out at a high-rise residential building in the city’s Tianshan district just before 8 p.m. on Nov. 24, 2022, according to

state media. Among the dead were Qemernisa Abdurahman, 48, and her four youngest children.

The deaths, widely blamed on COVID-19 restrictions, prompted an outpouring of public grief as many Chinese poured in the streets in several cities in what came to be called the “white paper” protests that tapped into pent-up frustrations of millions of Chinese who had endured nearly three

years of repeated lockdowns, travel bans, quarantines and various other restrictions to their lives.

On Friday, a group of around a dozen people held a vigil for the victims of the fire outside of the Chinese Embassy in London, led by World Uyghur Congress, or WUC, U.K. Director Rahima Mahmut. During the event supporters called for an end to Beijing's persecution of the Uyghur people in **Xinjiang**.

A similar gathering was held in Istanbul, Turkey, to mark the anniversary, while rights groups and global leaders slammed China for censoring information about the tragedy and called on the international community to hold Beijing accountable.

“Over 40 Uyghurs were killed in this fire, but the true number was censored by the CCP,” Canadian lawmaker Garnett Genius wrote in a tweet, referring to the Chinese Communist Party. “Today we grieve and remember the innocent lives lost in this tragedy of oppression, and we stand with those who continue to resist [Chinese President] Xi Jinping's communist regime.”

In a statement, the WUC suggested that Chinese authorities were to blame for the deaths, noting that the Uyghur community estimates that “the number of victims is higher” than the official toll.

“The complete disregard for Uyghur lives, which we have seen during the

[Urumqi] fire, is characteristic of the Chinese regime's repressive measures against Uyghurs,” WUC President Dolkun Isa said.

Reports from inside **Xinjiang** indicate that more could have been done to prevent the loss of life during the incident.

Sources in Urumqi have said that firefighters arrived three hours after the fire began, despite their close proximity to the predominantly Uyghur-inhabited building, and that residents were barred from evacuating due to strict COVID-19 lockdown measures.

At the time of the incident, RFA Uyghur spoke with residents who confirmed that assistance was hampered by blocked doors and fire exits, despite claims by authorities that the building was not locked and that victims died because they did not adhere to safety measures during the blaze.

RFA also spoke with a hospital staff member at the time who said that there were “more than 40 people who died in the fire.”

Over the weekend, RFA contacted authorities in Urumqi for further information about the death toll, what happened to the remains of the victims, and whether their relatives were able to attend their funerals.

Several officers with the Urumqi City

Police responded that they had no new information to divulge about the fire, in part because higher-level authorities “did not publish a detailed report” on the tragedy beyond what was stated in an official statement at the time.

However, an officer at the Ghalibiyet Yoli, or Shengli Road, police station told RFA that while he hadn’t seen the number of deaths listed in the official report, “rescue team members told me the number is 44.”

Furthermore, RFA learned that not only did authorities withhold detailed information about the fire from the public, but also from the families of victims.

The son and nephew of victim Qemernisa Abdurahman, who live in Turkey and Belgium, said this weekend that they had yet to receive any official notification about the handling of her remains or those of her four children.

They also expressed anger over the ongoing persecution of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, where the ethnic group’s 12 million members have been subject to harsh government campaigns that China says are necessary to fight extremism and terrorism. Among the campaigns is a mass incarceration program that has affected as many as 1.8 million people, including two of their relatives.

“We don’t have any information about this,” said one of the relatives, who spoke to RFA on condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal. “We don’t know where our family members are, who is alive, who is dead, or any other information on them.”

## ‘White paper’ detentions

In the meantime, Chinese authorities have not only ignored calls from the European Parliament and others to provide a detailed account of the Urumqi fire and hold those responsible for the tragedy to account, but instead have arrested dozens of activists associated with the “white paper” protests that were prompted by the blaze.

In December 2022, authorities in Atush, the capital of Xinjiang’s Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture, detained Kamile Wayit, a 19-year-old preschool education major at a university in China’s Henan province, after she posted a video about the protests.

In addition to frustration over authorities’ handling of the Urumqi fire, the demonstrators also opposed the rolling lockdowns, mass surveillance and compulsory testing under China’s zero-COVID policy, with some holding up blank sheets of printer paper and others calling on President Xi Jinping to step down.

Over the weekend, the Uyghur Human Rights Project, or UHRP, called for accountability “for the deaths of dozens of Uyghurs” and for the release of those detained for participation in the “white paper” protests that followed in a separate statement released on the anniversary of the fire.

“Uyghurs were very moved to see so much sympathy for what happened following the [Urumqi] fire,” said UHRP Executive Director Omer Kanat. “The

Chinese government must release all those detained during the protests and guarantee freedom of assembly.”

UHRP said that the deaths resulting from the fire “are deeply intertwined with broader repression faced by Uyghurs across the region.”

“Strict control over Uyghur movement, especially during Covid-19 lockdowns, exacerbated repressive policies that amount to crimes against humanity and genocide,” the group said.

Translated by RFA Uyghur. Edited by Joshua Lipis and Malcolm Foster.



# URUMQI FIRE 24/ 11/ 2022



## **CHINESE CAMERAS TO MONITOR UYGHURS.. ISRAEL USES THEM TO MONITOR PALESTINIANS**

**It has been revealed that Israel is monitoring Palestinians with cameras from Hiking, which China uses to monitor Uyghurs.**





**IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE CAMERA SYSTEM THAT ISRAEL INSTALLED IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM WAS PRODUCED BY THE CHINESE COMPANY “HIKING”. ACCORDING TO RESIDENTS OF THE SILWAN NEIGHBORHOOD IN JERUSALEM, THE ISRAELI POLICE INSTALLED CAMERAS IN ALL THE STREETS, AND REPORTED THAT THEY COULD SEE INSIDE SOME HOMES, MAKING PEOPLE NOT DARE TO TAKE OFF THEIR CLOTHES IN THEIR HOMES.**

Damascus Gate is considered the main entrance to Jerusalem and the only gathering point for Palestinians, and it is one of the most monitored points in the city, according to Amnesty International’s report “Automated Apartheid.” According to reports, the Israeli police will make a decision to conduct a strict inspection of every Palestinian who passes through the crossing, and the manufacturer of

this monitoring system is the Chinese company Haikang.

Chinese company Hiking, the world’s largest camera systems manufacturer, has been blacklisted by the US and UK for supplying equipment to the Chinese regime for national security purposes and genocide operations against the Uyghurs in East Turkistan.



## THE DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF EAST TURKISTAN ORGANIZATIONS VISITED MALAYSIA

A press release by the East Turkistan Government in Exile informed that a 12-point declaration was also adopted at the assembly.

“The East Turkistan Government in Exile, along with the East Turkistan Parliament in Exile, proudly announces the completion of the 9th East Turkistan General Assembly. This momentous event took place from November 10-12, 2023, in the Washington Capitol Region, United States,” the release stated.

According to the East Turkistan Government in Exile, the assembly coincided with the 90th anniversary of the First East Turkistan Republic (1933-1934) and the 79th anniversary of the Second East Turkistan Republic (1944-1949).

These commemorations represent the “enduring spirit and continuous struggle” of the East Turkistani people for their sovereignty and national

independence, the release stated.

The assembly was preceded by a strategic planning session on November 9, focusing on developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the East Turkistan Government in Exile and secure East Turkistan’s national independence.

This year’s assembly brought together 60 newly elected members of the East Turkistan Parliament in Exile, representing East Turkistani diaspora communities from 13 countries. The Opening Session included keynote addresses by Departing Prime Minister Salih Hidayar and Departing President Ghulam Yaghma.

The release added that over a dozen foreign observers and guest speakers, made up of foreign parliamentarians, government officials, strategists, researchers, and human rights activist participated.



## **UYGHUR FORCED LABOR IS BECOMING MORE WIDESPREAD**

Experts studying the forced labor policies implemented by the Chinese regime in East Turkistan have revealed the secret of the prosperity of foreign trade in East Turkistan.

It was stated that although the international community has made some efforts to reduce the crimes committed by China in East Turkistan, trade and forced labor have spread widely in East Turkistan.

According to the report, measures aimed at preventing millions of people from East Turkistan from forcibly entering Western markets to obtain products manufactured in Chinese factories were ineffective. According to the latest trade

data from East Turkistan, exports of manufactured goods in East Turkistan increased by 49% in the first quarter. By the third quarter of 2023, they had risen by more than 50%.

The data reported by the South China newspaper on October 24 this year and the data published by China News, a Chinese propaganda agency, about Kashgar are surprising. Foreign trade of Kashgar, one of the centers of East Turkistan, increased by an unprecedented 113% compared to the previous year.

The latest research on forced labor conducted by Dr. Adrian Zenz, Director of China Affairs and Senior Researcher

at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, was recently published. He pointed out that the only reason for the rapid growth of exports in East Turkistan is the increase in the amount of forced labor.

Dr. Adrian Zenz has been one of the researchers who has steadily begun investigating problems related to human rights violations in the East Turkistan region since Chen Quanguo

became Minister of East Turkistan in 2015. He argues that although the form of violations committed by China in East Turkistan may change, its nature remains worrying.

In an interview with the “Zemestan Network”, Adrian Zenz said that China has increased its exports in the southern provinces of East Turkistan, which means that forced labor in East Turkistan currently exists on a large scale.





## **UYGHUR EDUCATOR, POET CONFIRMED TO HAVE DIED IN PRISON IN EAST TURKISTAN**

**AUTHORITIES TOLD HIS  
RELATIVES THAT HE WAS  
NOT TORTURED, THOUGH  
THEY TOOK HIS BODY  
DIRECTLY TO A CEMETERY  
FOR BURIAL**

The body of a Uyghur educator, researcher and poet who died in prison in Xinjiang in late August was taken by authorities directly to a cemetery for burial instead of first being returned to his family, a police officer and researcher who has compiled a list of arrested Uyghurs said.

Abdusemet Rozi, 57, hailed from Suntagh village in Atush, also called Artux, capital of the Kizilsu Kyrgyz in Xinjiang. He was jailed for a second time in 2022, is said to have fallen ill while in prison, and died on Aug. 31, according to the sources, although it is unknown why he was imprisoned or to which ailment

he succumbed.

The authorities who took his body to a cemetery summoned seven or eight members of Rozi's family to the Suntagh village party committee and informed them of his death, a village police officer told Radio Free Asia. Also in attendance were the local Chinese Communist Party secretary, village head, officials from the Public Security Bureau, and state security personnel.

The police officer, who did not provide information about the reason for Rozi's arrest and sentencing, said authorities asked his relatives if they had any complaints about the man's death — an apparent intimidation tactic so that Rozi's family would not raise questions about his cause of death or the possibility of torture.

The police officer said Rozi served his more recent sentence at Ulughchat Prison in Atush and died at the prison hospital at the end of August.

"I was there when Abdusemet Rozi's body was transferred from the prison," the police officer said.

At the time, authorities told Rozi's family that he died of an illness and had not been tortured.

"They told them about his health problems and that after a check-up, he had a heart problem," he said. "He was taken to the hospital in the morning because he wasn't feeling well. The hospital treatment didn't work, and he passed away."

Authorities told Rozi's family that if they had any doubts or complaints, an autopsy would be done; but if not, they would only be shown his face, to which they agreed, said the police officer.

## AN INTELLECTUAL

But Abduweli Ayup founder of Norway-based Uyghur Hjelp, or Uyghuryar, which maintains a database of Uyghurs detained in Xinjiang, said Rozi became ill in jail and died because of physical and mental torture.

Rozi was one of the top Uyghur researchers whose name appeared on a list of arrested Uyghur intellectuals compiled by Ayup.

From 2005 to 2010, Rozi researched and wrote a book titled *Izchilar*, or *The Followers*, about students of the famous Uyghur educator Memtili Tewpiq, he said.

"Abdusemet Rozi is one of the intellectuals from Atush who had strong organizational skills," Ayup said. "He gave speeches on new textbook reform to the teachers."

In 2019, authorities sentenced Rozi to 20 years in prison, released him in 2021 for health reasons, and rearrested him in September 2022, Ayup said. He remained in prison until his death, he said.

The reason for Rozi's first arrest is unknown, though it occurred at a time when authorities in Xinjiang were conducting mass arrests of Uyghurs, including educators and intellectuals,

and detaining them in “re-education” camps or prisons.

Authorities may have arrested Rozi because of his research topics and social activities, Ayup said, citing the scholar’s article on teaching in the Uyghur language, which he presented at an educational conference.

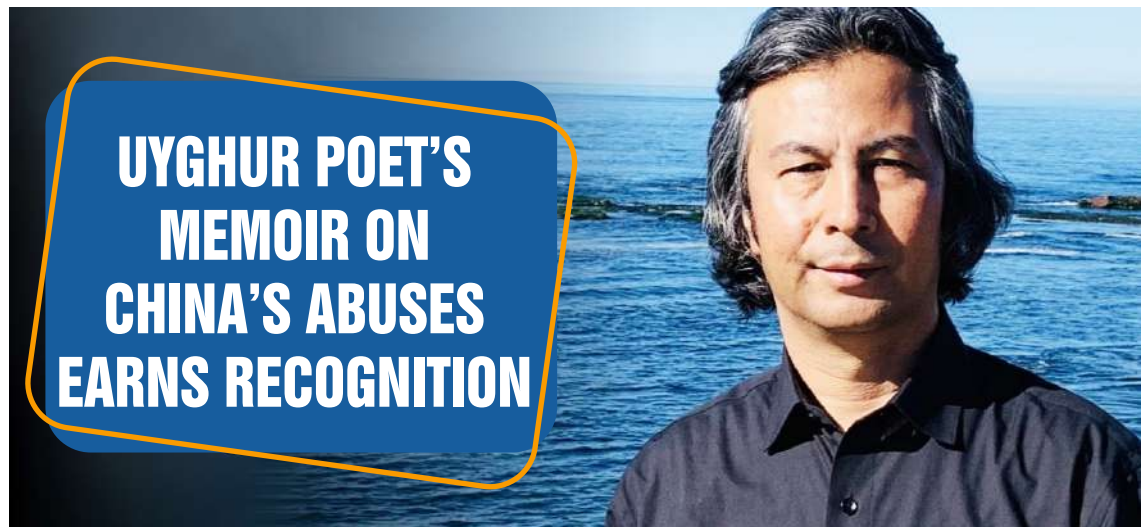
Rozi graduated from Kashgar Pedagogical Institute in 1987 and started working as a teacher at Atush 4th Middle School.

In 1998, he became a researcher and

teacher at the Kizilsu branch of Xinjiang Television and Radio University, where he worked until his first arrest in 2017, Ayup said.

Rozi entered the literary arena in Xinjiang with a poem he published in a Kizilsu newspaper during his college days before he began teaching and working as a researcher, he said.

“He was doing research on teacher and student relations, as well as on the future and the current situation of radio and television education,” Ayup said.



Tahir Hamut Izgil witnessed firsthand, China’s repressive treatment of the Uyghur ethnic minority group and experienced how society changed over time in Xinjiang. His memoir, published this year has gained attention by readers and recognition by two prominent U.S. publications this week, while China describes accusations of repression as a false narrative.

Izgil’s memoir, *Waiting to be Arrested*

at Night: A Uyghur Poet’s Memoir of China’s Genocide, has been listed as one of the “50 notable works of nonfiction,” by The Washington Post and as the “100 Must-Read Books of 2023,” by Time magazine.

Now living in the U.S., Izgil, a Uyghur, was born in Kashgar in 1969 and lived through some of the most drastic changes in Xinjiang in the region’s modern history. While preparing to

leave for Turkey to study in 1996, the Chinese government accused him of “trying to take illegal and confidential materials out of the country” and he was imprisoned for three years. He was able to establish a career in filmmaking after his confinement.

In his book, Izgil wrote about people he knew disappearing and described what he did — fearing he would be next.

“As the situation worsened, like many others, I spent hours ‘cleaning out’ my phone, just as I had cleaned out my computer three years earlier,” Izgil wrote in his book. “I deleted pictures, videos, audio records, and even chat records on QQ and WeChat one after another.” In 2017, as the Chinese government intensified its crackdown on Uyghurs in Xinjiang, Izgil and his family managed to flee the region and seek asylum in the United States.

### CHINA’S RESPONSE

Beijing has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing in Xinjiang and dismissed genocide and crimes against humanity allegations as “lies and fabrications,” asserting that Xinjiang has achieved remarkable economic growth and social development in recent years.

“People of all ethnic backgrounds in Xinjiang are entitled to the rights and interests under China’s Constitution and other laws,” wrote Liu Pengyu the spokesperson from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, in an email response to VOA’s inquiry.

“In recent years, China’s Foreign Ministry and the government of Xinjiang have held multiple press briefings for domestic and international media to learn more about real life in Xinjiang. Regrettably, however, a few people in some Western countries, including in the U.S., would rather buy into false narratives than acknowledge the truth and the real progress in Xinjiang,” wrote Liu.

### CONCERNS OF CHINESE REPRESSION

President Joe Biden “raised concerns regarding PRC (People’s Republic of China) human rights abuses, including in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong,” during his meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in San Francisco this week. The U.S. has accused China of “genocide and human rights abuses” and called on China “to address forced labor in Xinjiang.”

Last year, the U.N. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner released a report which documented credible evidence of torture or other ill-treatment and sexual and gender-based violence against the Uyghurs. The report stated the violations may constitute crimes against humanity.

The European Parliament also adopted a resolution in 2022 condemning “in the strongest possible terms the fact that the Uyghur community in the People’s Republic of China has been



systematically oppressed by brutal measures, including mass deportation, political indoctrination, family separation...”

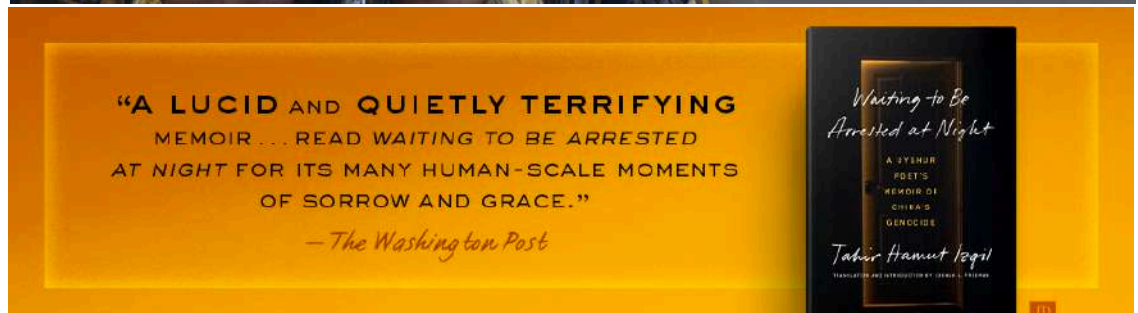
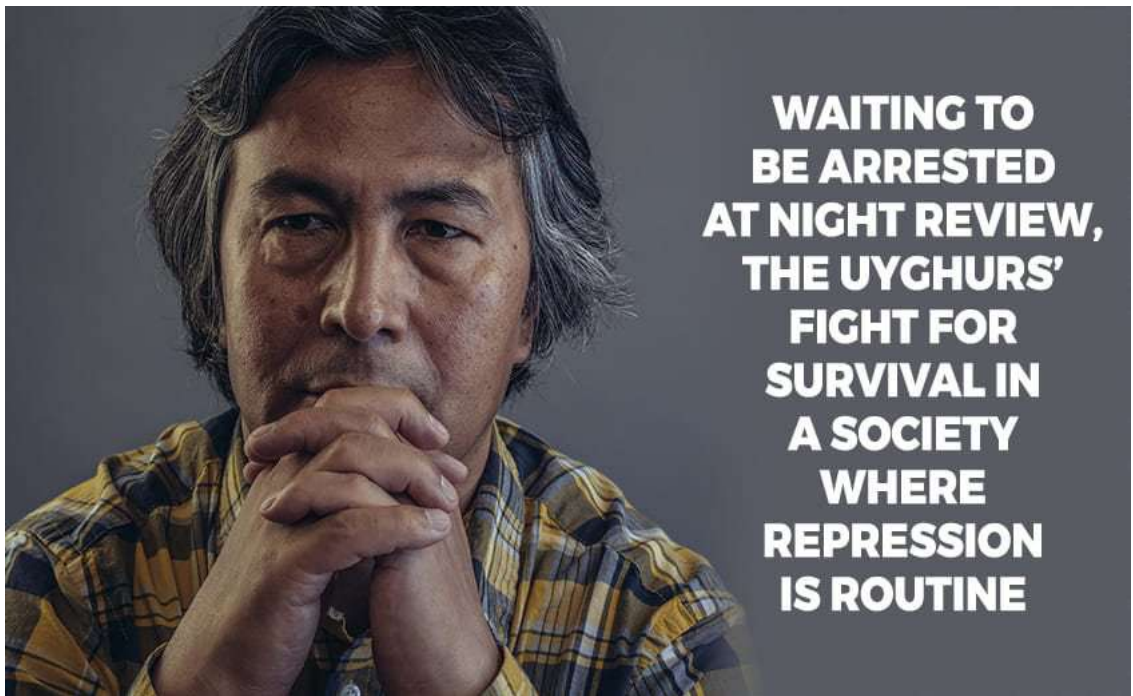
### PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND BEYOND

“As the world takes notice of my storytelling, my memoir stands as a testament to the resilience of the Uyghur people amid the challenges posed by China’s genocide,” Izzil told VOA.

He said he is preparing to write another

book on his firsthand experience in a Chinese prison.

“I am now writing the book because nowadays, when I attend book interviews and other gatherings on my book, a lot of readers mention that my years in a Chinese prison in the second half of the 1990s were largely absent in my book. Now I want to fill that gap and inform the world about Chinese prison life in the 1990s.”





## CHINA IS TRYING TO LOOT VALUABLE HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS FROM THE UYGHURS

China bans and destroys everything related to Uyghur culture and also attempts to destroy valuable historical artifacts.

On November 13, Zumrat Daoud, a Uyghur concentration camp survivor, shared a video on Facebook showing China purchasing historical coins. The announcement stated that 10 coins will be purchased at the highest price, from two million to one million. Among these coins, there are some that are considered historical evidence of the East Turkistan Republic. One of them is a coin issued by the East Turkistan Islamic Republic, which was founded on November 12, 1933. On one side of this coin is written “East

Turkistan Islamic Republic, (1) Minted 1352 Years” (i.e. (East Turkistan Islamic Republic, printing 1352 AD). It is written on the other side of the coin: “Dharb Kashgar” (printed in Kashgar).

For many years, China detained the East Turkistan people in concentration camps and prisons and banned all books related to Islamic beliefs and culture. In the process, it killed and persecuted many scholars, academics and volunteers. China, which is destroying the spiritual wealth of the Uyghur people, is now moving to collect and destroy coins that are considered physical evidence of East Turkistan’s independence.



## CHINA HAS DRILLED A SUPER-DEEP WELL IN EAST TURKISTAN

China has been continuously looting the natural resources of East Turkistan, and recently, it has increased various experiments. This time, China drilled a 9,432-meter-deep oil and gas well in the Tarim Basin.

According to a Chinese propaganda agency in East Turkistan, Tianyatag Network, on November 16, the Yujin 3-3XC well of China Petrochemical Industry Group's "Shendi No. 1" was officially tested by fire, and it is located outside the red line of the Tarim Basin and Wetland Nature Reserve. The Chinese regime boasts that the 9,432-meter-deep oil and natural gas well is the deepest in Asia, breaking two records: horizontal displacement and inclined depth.

It is reported that the well can produce

200 tons of crude oil and 50,000 cubic meters of natural gas per day.

According to Chinese media reports, oil and gas resources are very rich in the unusually deep level of the Tarim Basin, and the oil and gas resources in the depths of 6,000 meters to 10,000 meters, respectively, account for 83.2% and 63.9% of its total volume. In the Yujin 3-3XC well, targeting unusually deep oil and gas resources, drilling began on May 1st this year, and drilling went down to the Ordovician system of 400 million years ago.

China has been looting natural resources since its invasion of East Turkistan and has intensified its looting in recent years. However, the people of East Turkistan, who are the real owners, are living in poverty.



## MATCHMAKING APP OFFERS UYGHUR BRIDES FOR HAN CHINESE MEN

A company backed by local Chinese government bodies in Xinjiang has created a matchmaking app that aims to set up single Uyghur women with Han Chinese men, people with knowledge of the company said.

“Are there any singles who want to cross

the region to marry our brothers from other ethnic groups and start a family?” asks a Uyghur woman in a recent video recorded on Douyin and posted on social media.

“In order to carry out ethnic unity on a large scale, our Xinjiang My Fiancée

““  
**Experts say the government backed project is part of Beijing’s assimilation strategy**  
””

Cultural Dissemination LLC has set up this service specifically for our ladies who want to go to the mainland to be married,” she continues, urging interested women to leave a message or their phone number.

The app and other campaigns for inter-ethnic marriage are raising alarm among experts and activists who see them as deliberate attempts to assimilate the mostly Muslim Uyghurs — who have their own distinct language, culture, customs and food—into the dominant Han Chinese population.

The company was registered in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, in December 2019, although it is unclear when it launched the matchmaking app.

The app recently came to Radio Free Asia’s attention through social media posts and comments by Uyghurs noting an increase in professional services and online platforms encouraging Uyghur women to search for Chinese suitors.

They report seeing Chinese men expressing a desire on social to marry Uyghur women while others showed off the “beautiful Uyghur girls” they married.

## DEARTH OF MEN

There is a dearth of eligible Uyghur men because authorities have detained so many of them in camps or prison for years, creating a need to replace them with Han Chinese, said Adrian Zenz, director of China Studies at the U.S.-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

The app is another example of China’s

attempts to decrease or dilute the Muslim population in Xinjiang, said Zenz, who has spent years documenting China’s human rights abuses against Uyghurs.

“The population optimization measures that I published in 2021 are aimed at diluting the Uyghur ethnic population, optimizing the population structure, reducing the concentration of the Uyghur ethnic population, and ending the dominance of the Uyghur ethnic group,” Zenz told RFA, referring to a previous report he wrote.

When RFA called the hotline number on the Xinjiang My Fiancée ad, an employee who answered the phone said the company launched this service with support from the “security bureau,” a likely reference to the National Security Bureau, and the Urumqi Civil Affairs Bureau.

“Individuals who wish to marry and start a new life in inner Chinese provinces have approached us,” said the employee, who asked not to be identified. “Many Uyghur girls are entering into marriages with Han Chinese individuals.”

For a 15-yuan fee (US\$2), the company will provide customers information about the women, including their name, age, height, weight and a short bio, she said.

“Our primary purpose is to facilitate marriages between Uyghur girls and individuals from the inner provinces of China,” she said. “We understand our mission, and it is unrelated to anything else.”

“You can trust in our reliability, as we receive support from the security bureau

### DENIALS

When RFA contacted the Marriage Management Department at Urumqi’s Civil Affairs Bureau to inquire about the relationship between the company and Chinese state agencies, a Chinese official denied any connection.

and Urumqi Civil Affairs Bureau,” she said.

“The matchmaking company is not under the management of the Civil Affairs Bureau,” the employee said. “They are not within our jurisdiction. They are making false claims.”

When RFA contacted Urumqi’s Market Supervision Bureau to ask how it



ensures the legitimacy and reliability of matchmaking companies, a Chinese official said any such firm can establish a business as long as it holds a business license issued by his bureau.

The official said the bureau’s responsibility

is limited to issuing business licenses and that it does not oversee any company’s operations nor regulate the fees they can charge.

RFA then asked if such companies receive support and encouragement from

government agencies such as the Civil Affairs Bureau, and whether this means they are promoting the government's policies in Xinjiang, where authorities have detained an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities and taken other steps to ban the practice of Islam in an attempt to prevent "religious extremism."

"Yes, that's correct," the official said. "Any company operates in this manner. However, government support does not guarantee that these entities will not break the law."

#### INTERMARRIAGE INCREASING

Uyghur-Han intermarriage has been increasing since 2018 due to state promotion of intermarriage, including

some cases of forced marriage, according to a November 2022 report by the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project.

Beijing is carrying out a campaign of forcefully assimilating Uyghurs into Han Chinese society by means of mixed marriages, says the report, titled "Forced Marriage of Uyghur Women: State Policies for Interethnic Marriages in East Turkistan," which is what Uyghurs call their homeland.

"Government policies incentivizing and coercing intermarriage and other gender based-abuse only further the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity being committed in East Turkistan," the report says.



The Uyghur woman was forced to marry to a Han Chinese thug. On the "wedding" he cries with her son. I bet her husband is in a camp or was executed by the Chinese regime



Xinhua News Agency’s November 16th call (reporter Zhou Siyu Lu Rui): “Xinjiang is a good place. A Cultural Tourism Week event opened in Seoul, South Korea, on the 16th.

Chinese Ambassador to South Korea Xing Heming said in his speech that this Xinjiang Cultural Tourism Week aims to introduce Xinjiang’s scenery, cultural relics, art, and food to the Korean people so that more Korean friends can learn more about Xinjiang, walk into Xinjiang, and perceive Xinjiang. Experience the rich culture and beautiful scenery of Xinjiang close to each other and promote communication between Chinese and Korean people.

Li Xiangxian, chairman of the Korean Congress Committee for Cultural and Sports Tourism and member of Congress, said that he hopes to feel the unique charm of Xinjiang music, dance, and

non-lethal culture in China through this event to enhance mutual understanding and feelings. This exchange is beneficial for all sectors of South Korea to better understand cultural diversity and the importance of mutual tolerance.

Zhang Yongdong, deputy director of the Department of Culture and Tourism of the so-called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, said in his speech and publicity campaign that cities such as Xinjiang, Seoul and Busan in South Korea have maintained cultural exchange cooperation for a long time. I look forward to this event making a positive contribution to enhancing the friendship between the Chinese and Korean peoples. I hope that more Korean friends can come to Xinjiang to interview, travel and feel the magnificent scenery and simple people’s style on the ground. I really feel that Xinjiang is a good place.



The opening ceremony also showed photographs that record Xinjiang natural scenery, humanistic style, interesting folklore, and cultural creation products that present Xinjiang's precious cultural. The guests also watched the folk song and dance art performance brought by the Mukam Art Group of Xinjiang Art

Theatre.

The aim here is to hide the genocide and manipulate the international community to silence the rising voices of criticism and to deceive humanity by creating the perception that everything is rosy in the region with unrealistic fictions.



## **MOSQUES SHUTTERED, RAZED, ALTERED IN MUSLIM AREA**

**CURBING ISLAM VIA  
'CONSOLIDATION'  
POLICY IN NINGXIA,  
GANSU PROVINCES**

The Chinese government is significantly reducing the number of mosques in Ningxia and Gansu provinces under its "mosque consolidation" policy, in violation of the right to freedom of religion, Human Rights Watch said today.



A WeChat post by the state television station in Linxia shows how a mosque was closed and turned into a cloth shoe poverty alleviation workshop in Huangniwan Village in August 2018, Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province, China, May 14, 2020. © 2020 China Linxia News Network

Chinese authorities have decommissioned, closed down, demolished, and converted mosques for secular use as part of the government’s efforts to restrict the practice of Islam. The authorities have removed Islamic architectural features, such as domes and minarets, from many other mosques.

“The Chinese government is not ‘consolidating’ mosques as it claims, but closing many down in violation of religious freedom,” said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. “The Chinese government’s closure, destruction, and repurposing of mosques is part of a systematic effort to curb the practice of Islam in China.”

Chinese law allows people to practice

only in officially approved places of worship of officially approved religions, and authorities retain strict control over houses of worship. Since 2016, when President Xi Jinping called for the “Sinicization” of religions, which aims to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the arbiter of people’s spiritual life, state control over religion has strengthened.

“Mosque consolidation”[1] is referenced in an April 2018 central CCP document that outlines a multi-pronged national strategy to “Sinicize” Islam, or make it more Chinese.[2] It instructs the CCP and state agencies throughout the country to “strengthen the standardized management of the construction, renovation and expansion of Islamic

religious venues.” The document notes that a central principle behind such “management” is that “there should not be newly built Islamic venues,” in order to “compress the overall number [of mosques].” While there can be exceptions, the document states that “there should be more [mosque] demolitions than constructions.”

Ma Ju, a US-based Hui Muslim activist who has been in contact with Hui in China affected by the policy, told Human Rights Watch that it is part of efforts to “transform” devout Muslims in order to redirect their loyalty toward the CCP: “Government officials first approach those Communist Party members who are

also Hui Muslims ... then they move onto ‘persuading’ students and governmental workers, who are threatened with school probation and unemployment if they continue with their faith.”

Available government documents suggest that the Chinese government has been “consolidating” mosques in Ningxia and Gansu provinces, which have the highest Muslim populations in China after Xinjiang.[3] Since 2017, Chinese authorities in Xinjiang have damaged or destroyed two-thirds of the region’s mosques, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). About half have been demolished outright.

In Ningxia, Human Rights Watch



has verified and analyzed videos and pictures posted online by Hui Muslims and used satellite imagery to corroborate them in order to examine the policy's implementation in two villages. Of these villages' seven mosques, four had significant destruction: three main buildings had been razed and the ablution hall of one was damaged inside. The authorities have removed the domes and minarets of all seven mosques.

Human Rights Watch is unable to determine the number of mosques shuttered or repurposed throughout Ningxia and Gansu, as official documents do not give precise details. In a forthcoming research report, two scholars on Hui Muslims, Hannah Theaker and David Stroup, have estimated that one-third of mosques in Ningxia have been closed since 2020. [4] A March 2021 Radio Free Asia report estimated that between 400 and 500 mosques faced closure in Ningxia, which had 4,203 mosques as of 2014.

The Chinese government claims that the mosque consolidation policy aims to "reduce the economic burden" on Muslims, especially those who live in impoverished and rural areas.[5] Actions against mosques often take place as the Chinese government relocates villagers from these areas, consolidating several villages into one. [6] The government also claims that as different Islamic denominations share

the same venues, they learn to become more "unified" and "harmonious."

Some Hui Muslims have publicly opposed the policy, despite government censorship. In January 2021, Ningxia officials indicted five Hui for "creating disturbances" after they led 20 people to oppose the policy at the village Party chief's office. People have also protested mosque closures and demolitions, as well as the removal of domes and minarets in Ningxia, Gansu and other Hui Muslim regions, such as Qinghai and Yunnan.[7]

Ma Ju told Human Rights Watch that mosque consolidation aims to dissuade people from going to pray at mosques: "After removing the minarets and domes, local governments would start removing things that are essential to religious activities such as ablution halls and preacher's podiums."

Ma Ju said the government has sought to discourage religious practice: "When people stop going, they [the authorities] would then use that as an excuse to close the mosques." He said that the authorities install surveillance systems in the remaining "Sinicized" mosques: "After the mosques are converted, the local governments strictly monitor attendance at the remaining mosques," he said. "In the beginning, they would check the attendees' national identification cards. Then they install surveillance cameras ... to flag [those prohibited from mosques, including]

Communist Party members or children.”

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” One has the right to manifest their “religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” The Chinese government should reverse its Sinicization campaign on religions, review and repeal laws and regulations that restrict the right to freedom of religion, and release those detained for peaceful criticism or protest against such restrictive policies.

Foreign governments, particularly member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), should press the Chinese government to cease their mosque consolidation policy and the broader Sinicization campaign.

“The Chinese government’s policies of Sinicization show a blanket disregard for freedom of religion not only of all Muslims in China, but all religious communities in the country,” Wang said. “Governments concerned about religious freedom should raise these issues directly with the Chinese government and at the United Nations and other international forums.”

### MOSQUE CLOSURES

Large-scale mosque closures last took place in China in the 1950s, after the Chinese Communist Party took over the country in 1949. Authorities razed or

consolidated an estimated 90 percent of Ningxia’s mosques prior the Cultural Revolution in 1966. After the end of the Cultural Revolution a decade later, people in China rebuilt their religious lives, constructing many mosques even as the Chinese government maintained strict control over religion. Today, authorities retain control over personnel appointments, publications, finances, and seminary applications for the five officially approved religions.

Since 2016, when President Xi Jinping called for the “Sinicization” of religions, state control over religion has tightened. Going beyond controlling religion by dictating what constitutes “normal,” and therefore legal religious activity, the authorities now seek to comprehensively reshape religions to make them consistent with CCP ideology and to promote allegiance to the party and President Xi.

Under Xi, Chinese officials have undertaken a broad effort to curb the influence of Islam, which the authorities often conflate with terrorism and backwardness. Reducing the number of mosques is a key element of this policy. Numerous policies are placing growing restrictions on the lives of Hui Muslims, who have assimilated with Han, the majority ethnic group in China.

The Chinese government has revised or added new laws to tighten religious control, including the Measures on the Administration of Religious Activity

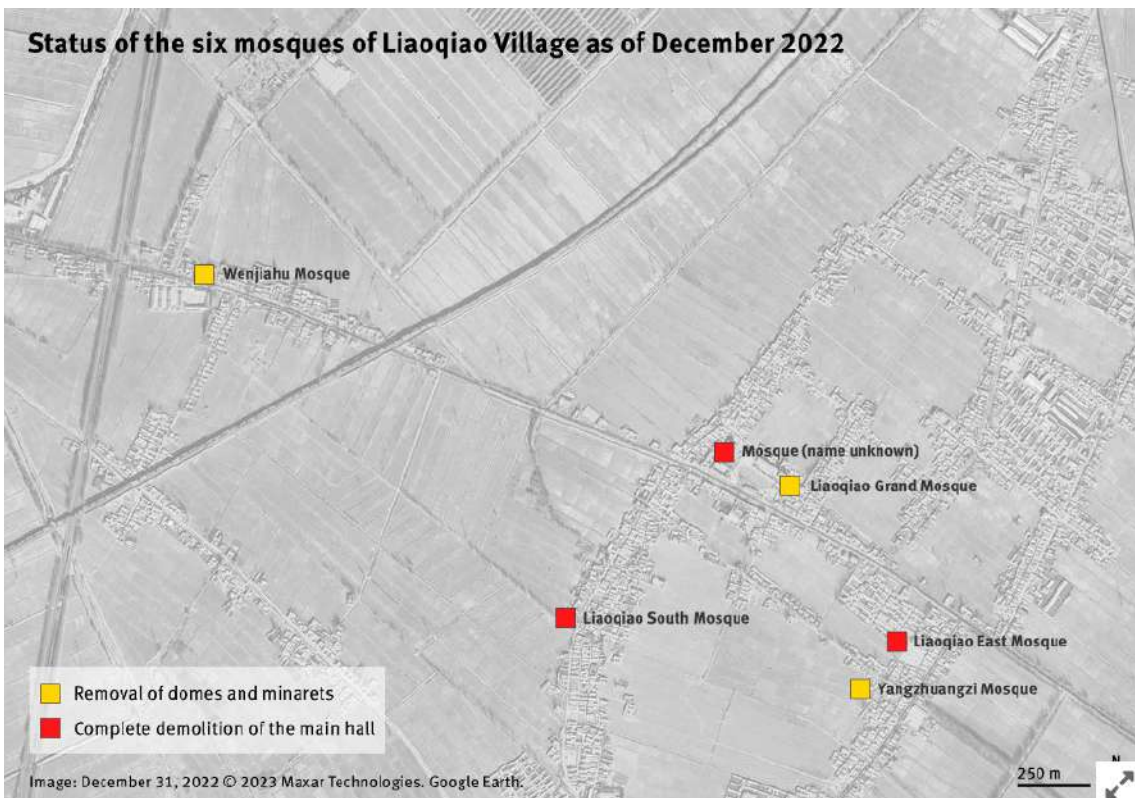
Venues, which came into force in July 2023. The measures require religious venues to indoctrinate followers in CCP ideology, and prohibit them from “creating conflicts ... between sects,” or from receiving funding unless it is approved by the state.

A central part of “Sinicization” of religions is to excise perceived “foreign” influences from religions. Followers of Islam, who also suffer growing Islamophobia among the Chinese public, and Christianity have borne the brunt of these xenophobic policies. In 2015, authorities removed crosses from churches and in some cases demolished entire churches in Zhejiang Province, considered the heartland of Chinese Christianity. The campaign was publicly described as an effort to remove

“illegal structures” that do not comply with zoning requirements, but according to an internal provincial directive, it was designed to reduce the prominence of Christianity in the region.

In Xinjiang, the Chinese government’s aggressive assimilationist policies in ethnic minority regions have led to severe abuses that amount to crimes against humanity, such as cultural persecution. These abuses include the systematic destruction of numerous mosques.

In 2018, the Ningxia Communist Party Committee promulgated an “implementation document”[8] to carry out the national strategy to “Sinicize” Islam. The policy of “consolidating mosques” is also referenced in a March 2018 government document from



Yinchuan City[9], the capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The document states that the government aims to “strictly control the number and scale of religious venues,” and that mosques should adopt “Chinese architecture styles.” It says that the Yinchuan City government should promote the “integration and combination of mosques” to “solve the problem of too many religious venues.”

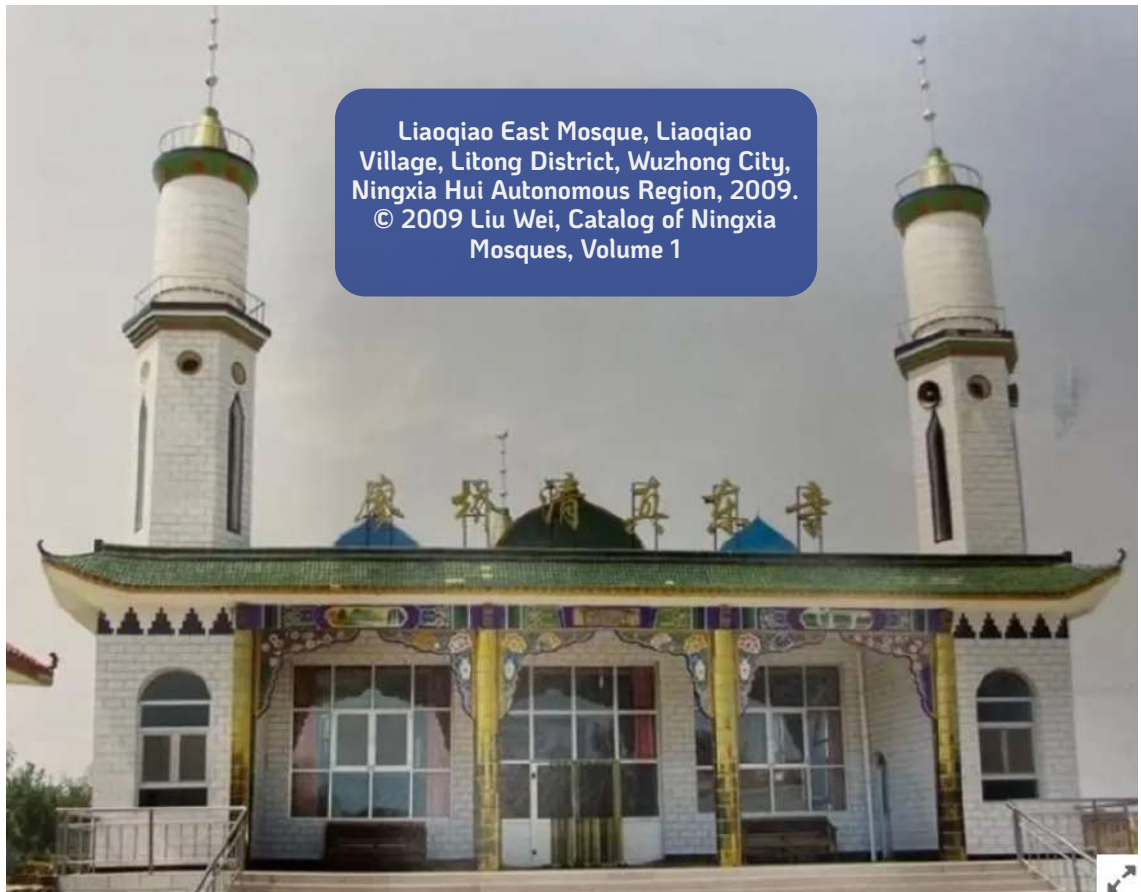
Human Rights Watch has found many documents published by local governments in Ningxia that mention the term “mosque consolidation,” but only a few provide details:[10]

In Zhongwei City, authorities stated in 2019 that they had “completed the

alteration of 214 mosques, consolidated 58 mosques, and banned 37 unregistered religious venues.” Zhongwei City had 852 mosques in 2009, according to an official mosque directory of Ningxia.

The Qingtongxia City government wrote in 2020 that it had “combined six mosques,” and “the scale and frequency of large-scale and cross-regional religious activities dropped by 30.6 percent and 62.5 percent year-on-year respectively.” Qingtongxia had 69 mosques in 2009.

A January 28, 2021, indictment issued by the Zhongning County Procuratorate said that the authorities decided to shut down three out of the five mosques in the area. It stated that the authorities decided



which mosques to close by determining the “distances between mosques, their construction, and the size of their main halls.” Local authorities reported that they closed the three mosques because they had no main halls.

In the town of Jingui, the authorities stated in 2021 that they “thoroughly

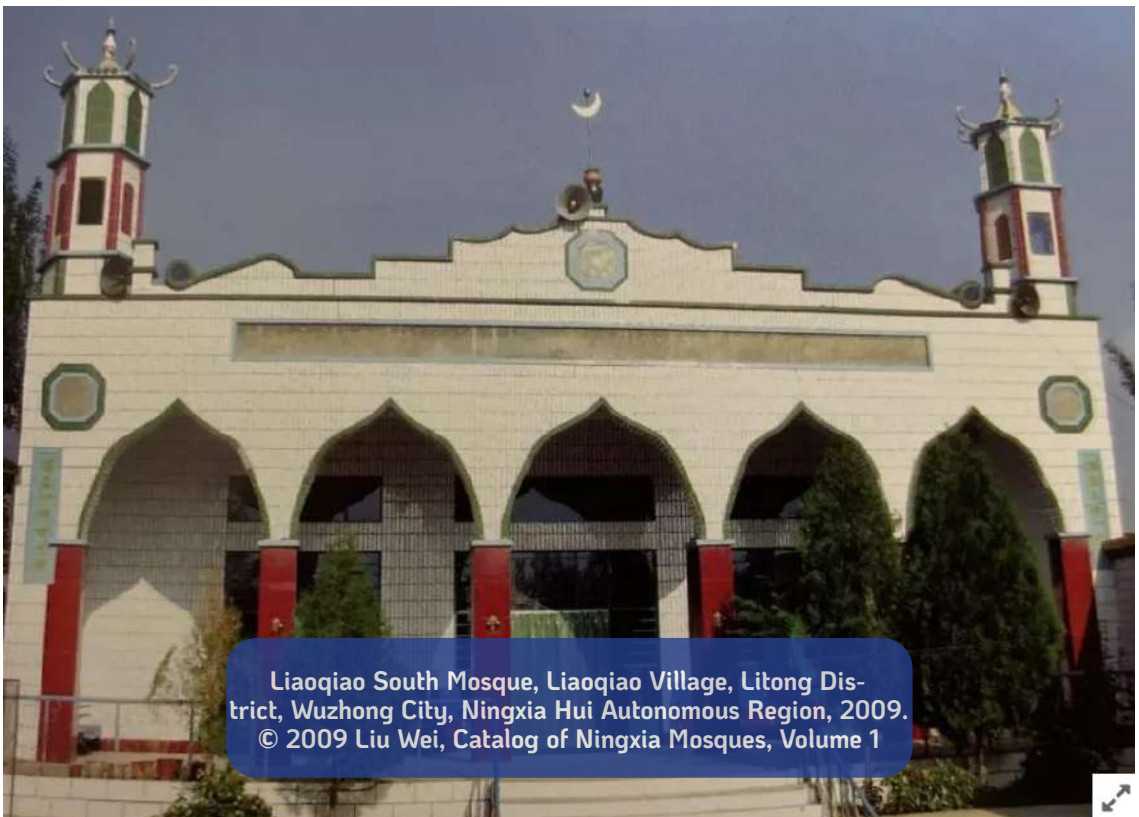
rectified more than 130 locations with Islamic architectural features ... and pursued ‘mosque integration’ in an orderly manner.”

In an annual update, authorities in Baitugang Township, Lingwu City, said they “consolidated five mosques” in 2021.

Human Rights Watch further examined



Liaoqiao East Mosque: The mosque had three minarets (left); they were removed between January and August 2020 (center); the main hall of the mosque was demolished as of January 2021 (right). © Maxar Technologies



Liaoqiao South Mosque, Liaoqiao Village, Litong District, Wuzhong City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, 2009. © 2009 Liu Wei, Catalog of Ningxia Mosques, Volume 1



the impact of the mosque consolidation policy in two Ningxia villages where we obtained additional information.

### CASE 1: LIAOQIAO VILLAGE, WUZHONG CITY

Liaoqiao Village is an administrative entity that incorporates nine settlements about 12 kilometers southeast of Wuzhong City. About 55 percent of the population are Hui Muslims. In 2013, the village had six mosques.[11] Satellite imagery showed that prior to 2020, all of them had Islamic architectural features, including minarets and round domes. These features were removed from three of the mosques between January and August 2020. The most important buildings—the main halls—of the other three were destroyed. It is unlikely that they will continue to function as mosques.

### CASE 2: LIUJIAGOU MOSQUE, CHUANKOU VILLAGE, XIJI COUNTY

Liujiagou Mosque is situated in Chuankou Village, in the mountainous region of Xiji County in southern Ningxia, where about 60 percent of the population is Hui. The mosque was first built in 1988 and then rebuilt in 2016 with a larger main hall featuring two minarets and a dome. According to satellite imagery, these minarets and the dome were removed sometime between 2019 and 2021.

In a series of videos that Human Rights Watch obtained in January 2023 and then verified and geolocated, the interior of the ablution hall, which is essential for daily prayers, is being demolished.

An anonymous source knowledgeable about the demolition said that Liujiagou Mosque had been closed since at least early 2022. The source also said that of the 96 mosques in the town of Xinglong, about 60 had been closed and that “the town authorities want to demolish the ablution halls of those mosques that have been closed.”

### GANSU PROVINCE

The Gansu provincial government issued a document implementing the April 2018 central Chinese Communist Party document to “Sinicize” Islam.[12] There is also evidence to suggest that the mosque consolidation policy is being implemented in Gansu Province.

In Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in 2020, the Hezheng County government “reduced and combined 10 mosques, and completed the alteration of the Islamic architectural features of ... 31 of them.”

Also in Linxia in 2020, the Yongjing County government started “five mosque consolidations, and completed one” in Xiaoling Township.[13]

In Dazhai Township in 2020, Kongtong District, Pingliang City, the government “altered 26 mosques [and] consolidated 2 mosques.”

In Guanghe County, known as “Little Mecca” with the majority of its population being Hui Muslims, authorities in 2020 “cancelled the registration of 12 mosques, closed down 5 mosques, and improved and consolidated another 5.”[14]



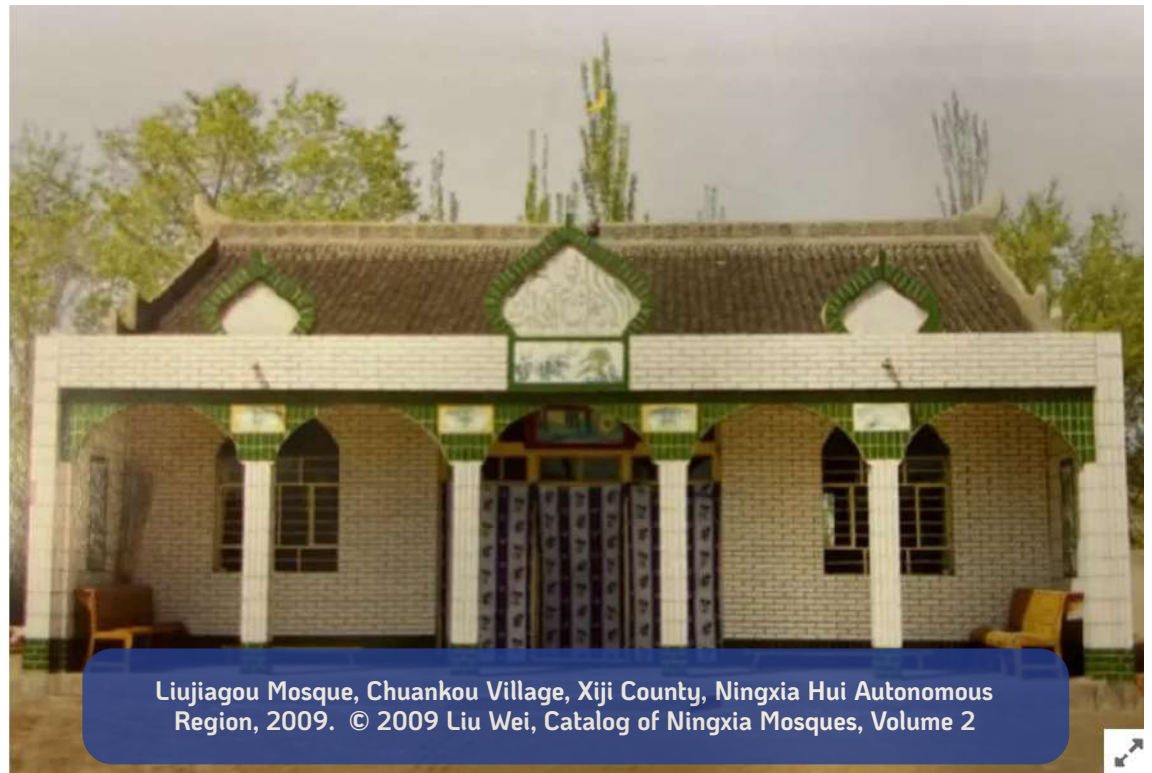
January 29, 2020: © Maxar January 17, 2021: © Maxar  
 Liaoqiao South Mosque's main hall was demolished between January and August 2020.



Mosque (name unknown) at the center of Liaoqiao village: The mosque, constructed in 2013, had visible minarets and Chinese-style roofing after it was constructed in 2013 (left). Picture 2 shows how machines were removing its minarets on August 19, 2020. By August 22, 2020, the main hall had been completely demolished (picture 3). The debris was removed by January 2021 (picture 4). © Maxar Technologies



Yangzhuangzi Mosque at Liaoqiao Group 2 settlement in Liaoqiao, China (left). The round dome was replaced by Chinese style pagoda in 2019 (center). The three minarets were then removed between January and August 2020 (right). © Maxar Technologies



Liujiagou Mosque, Chuankou Village, Xiji County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, 2009. © 2009 Liu Wei, Catalog of Ningxia Mosques, Volume 2



Liujiagou Mosque had its dome and minarets removed sometime between November 2019 (left) and October 2021 (center). Within days, authorities also took down the golden sign with the mosque's name, October 2021 (right). © Private

CASE 3: HUANGNIWAN VILLAGE, LINXIA HUI AUTONOMOUS PREFECTURE, GANSU PROVINCE

In a WeChat public post by Linxia Television Station, the local government said in 2019 that it had closed one mosque out of three in a village with 2,440 people. The village originally had one mosque in the 1990s, but “disagreements” led some

villagers to build two other mosques. In 2019, after “painstaking ideological education and guidance work,” a phrase that usually implies some combination of persuasion and coercion, the local authorities decommissioned one of the mosques and turned it into a “workspace” and “cultural center” as part of their “poverty alleviation” efforts.



马聚

@majuismail1122 · Follow

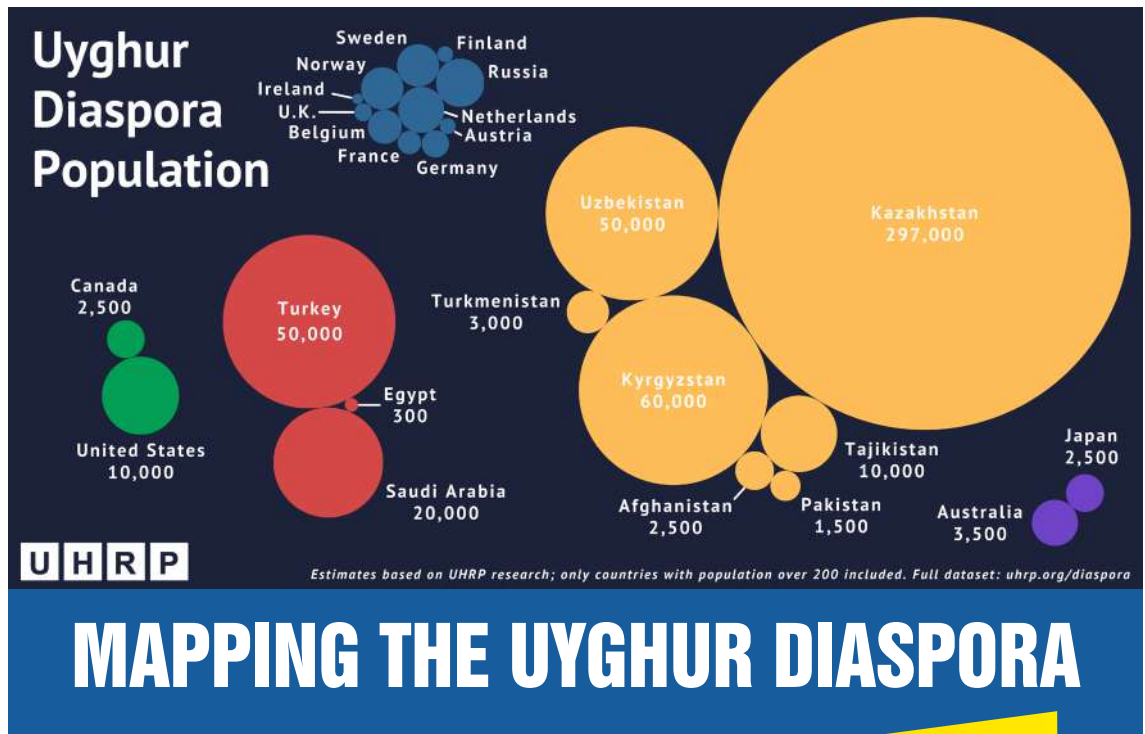


习近平的全面中国化极速进行中，拆除的了建筑，人心里的殿堂永存。

习近平以及中国共产党这群反人类罪犯，你们是逃不掉

In this tweet video that is verified and geolocated by Human Rights Watch, the interior of the ablution hall, which is essential for daily prayers, is being demolished.





### SUMMARY

UYGHURS MAKE UP THE PLURALITY OF EAST TURKISTAN'S INHABITANTS, NUMBERING AROUND 12 MILLION, BUT INCREASINGLY FIND THEMSELVES LIVING DIASPORIC LIVES. SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF UYGHURS HAVE EMIGRATED FROM THEIR HOMELAND OR FLED DURING PERIODS OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT REPRESSION OVER THE LAST CENTURY.

Given significant limitations on access to information in East Turkistan, researchers have increasingly relied on Uyghur networks in the diaspora to better understand dynamics and trends on the ground.

### Table of Contents

Considering the near-total elimination of free expression and cultural practice in the Uyghur homeland, the Uyghur diaspora has worked to foster and strengthen cultural resilience abroad.

These transnational efforts to sustain Uyghur culture and identity in the diaspora are even more necessary today given the bleak conditions on the ground.

In this short briefing, the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) maps the Uyghur diaspora around the world in order to better understand where Uyghurs have settled after fleeing or emigrating from China. Our research aims to aid researchers, journalists, civil society, and governments working in support of Uyghurs.

Uyghur culture and identity is contested, and often contingent upon the local context. This is particularly relevant in diasporic communities where new generations are influenced by local cultures and environments. Moreover, Uyghurs have become clear targets for transnational repression emanating from Beijing.

Relying on estimates from census data, community members, researchers, and other sources, we provide an estimate of the total population of Uyghurs living in various countries abroad; in some cases, we include an estimated population range.

## II. ADDITIONAL NOTES

Several additional factors should also be taken into consideration when considering the data compiled in this briefing:

We have chosen to identify Uyghur communities where possible, but it is almost certain that Uyghur individuals and families live in every corner of the globe. We have tried, therefore, to identify countries that host more than 10 Uyghurs, or where community members are known to the wider Uyghur community abroad.

Ethnic identities are dynamic and contested, so any effort to “count” the number of any group will inevitably be a challenge. This is especially true in Central Asia, where Uyghurs have lived for decades, even centuries, across the present-day border areas between China and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. In these countries in particular, Uyghurs have integrated with local populations for decades, especially considering that they share myriad cultural traits.

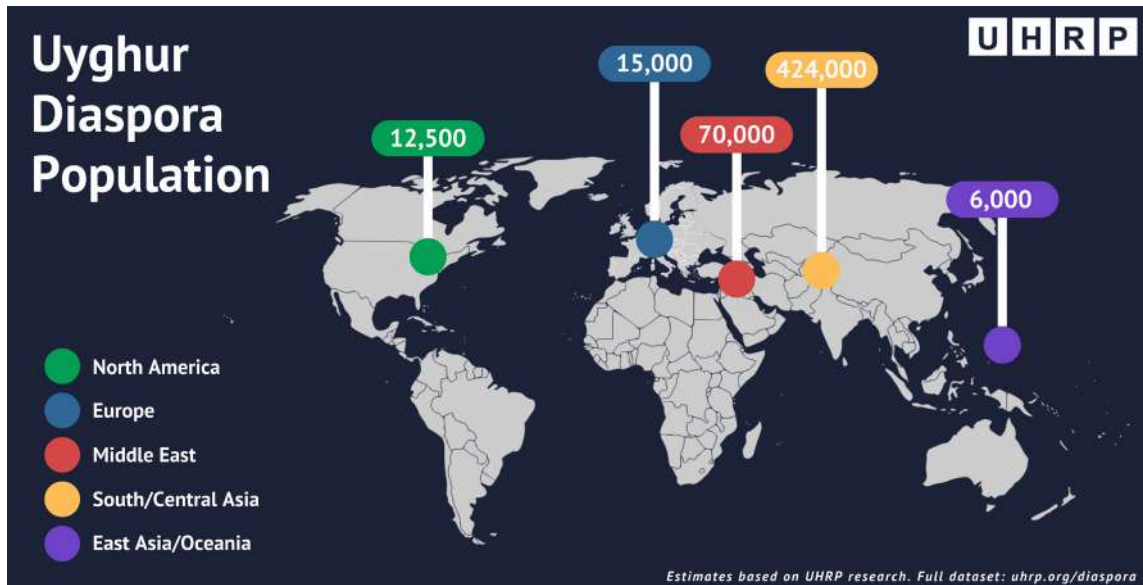
Discrimination against non-nationals has been documented in Central Asia in particular, causing some Uyghurs to identify officially with the dominant ethnic group, especially in their relationship with the government. As a result, it is almost certain that census estimates in Central Asian countries undercount the number of Uyghurs residing there.

Given migration patterns over time, the numbers will understandably shift, and UHRP will periodically reassess our estimates based on new information.

**III. POPULATION STATISTICS**

| Continent         | Country                 | Estimated Population  |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| North America     | Canada CA               | 2,500                 |
|                   | United States US        | 10,000                |
| Europe            | Austria AT              | 400                   |
|                   | Belgium BE              | 2,000                 |
|                   | Czechia CZ              | <50                   |
|                   | Denmark DK              | <50                   |
|                   | Finland FI              | 400                   |
|                   | France FR               | 1,000                 |
|                   | Germany DE              | 1,000–1,500           |
|                   | Ireland IE              | 200                   |
|                   | Italy IT                | <50                   |
|                   | Netherlands NL          | 3,500                 |
|                   | Norway NO               | 3,000                 |
|                   | Russia RU               | 4,000                 |
|                   | Spain ES                | <50                   |
|                   | Sweden SE               | 3,000                 |
|                   | Switzerland CH          | 100–150               |
| United Kingdom GB | 500–600                 |                       |
| Middle East       | Egypt EG                | 300                   |
|                   | Saudi Arabia SA         | 20,000 <sup>[1]</sup> |
|                   | Turkey TR               | 50,000                |
|                   | United Arab Emirates AE | <50                   |
|                   | Afghanistan AF          | 2,000–3,000           |
|                   | India IN                | 100                   |

|                     |                 |                        |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Central/South Asia  | Kazakhstan KZ   | 297,000 <sup>[2]</sup> |
|                     | Kyrgyzstan KG   | 60,000 <sup>[3]</sup>  |
|                     | Pakistan PK     | 1,500                  |
|                     | Tajikistan TJ   | 10,000                 |
|                     | Turkmenistan TM | 3,000                  |
|                     | Uzbekistan UZ   | 50,000 <sup>[4]</sup>  |
| East/Southeast Asia | Indonesia ID    | <50                    |
|                     | Malaysia MY     | <50                    |
|                     | Mongolia MN     | <1,000 <sup>[5]</sup>  |
|                     | South Korea KR  | <50                    |
|                     | Taiwan TW       | <50                    |
| Oceania             | Australia AU    | 3,000–4,000            |
|                     | Japan JP        | 2,000–3,000            |
|                     | New Zealand NZ  | 75–100                 |





# Innocence in Captivity: China's Long Imprisonment Policy

## The Unjust Long Imprisonments in the Uyghur Region

### Why is it unjust?

- > No transparency in the justice system.
- > Criminalization of minor or vague charges.
- > Long imprisonment an instrument of control.
- > No presumption of innocence.
- > Massive in scale, systematic by nature.

### What is the imprisonment rate?

- > Uyghur region has one of the highest imprisonment rate in China.
- > 540,826 people persecuted in the Uyghur region between 2017-2021, where 99.9% of them would have been convicted.
- > For instance, approximately 1/25 of population in Konasheher county is sentenced to prison, which is highest known in the world.

### Why is it concerning?

- Uyghur political prisoners are 93% less likely to be released, compare to Han Chinese.\*
- > Victims have no right to object conviction.
- > Trials are closed to public.
- > Victims are not allowed to communicate with outside world, including family members.

### Google these names



Prof. Dr. Rahile Dawut



Prof. Dr. Ilham Tohti



Dr. Gulshan Abbas



Yalqun Rozi



Ablajan Awut Ayup



Ekpar Asat



Abdulhabir Muhammad

\*Christoph Valentin Steinert, "The duration of political imprisonment: Evidence from China", Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2023, Vol. 40(4) 349-372.

**URM**  
Uyghur Rights Monitor

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The unjust, long imprisonments in the Uyghur region are one of the most critical dimensions of the ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic people of the region.

The trend started in 2016 and is continuing at an unprecedented pace. The lack of transparency in the justice system in the Uyghur region and the criminalization of minor or vague charges as an instrument of control raise serious concerns at the international level. The due process does not presume the innocence of individuals, where most convictions are without a known trial. One of the highest imprisonment rates in the world is recorded in Konasheher County, where approximately one in 25 people are imprisoned for "terrorism" charges. Victims have no right to object to conviction and, most of the time, have no

communication with the outside world, including their family members. According to studies, Uyghur political prisoners are 93% less likely to be released compared to Han prisoners. They are nine times more likely to die in prison compared to other ethnic minorities.

### Escalating Imprisonments in the Uyghur Region

A profoundly concerning element of the ongoing genocide in the Uyghur region is [the imposition of long prison sentences](#), which starkly illustrate the widespread persecution endured by Uyghurs and other people in the region.

This trend began in 2016, peaked in 2017, and subsided but remained notably higher than before in 2018 and 2019.

The lack of transparency surrounding the charges and legal processes has raised serious concerns regarding these imprisonments. Minoritized people of the region, including the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, appear to bear the brunt of this injustice, often facing charges related to terrorism and extremism. These vague charges, coupled with the absence of due process, intensify concerns that these long imprisonments are being wielded as tools to suppress ethno-religious identities and assert control over the affected populations.

The arbitrary nature of these imprisonments is evident in numerous cases where individuals have been sentenced to long prison terms on unclear charges, highlighting the complete

disregard for due process and fairness. Minor or vague offenses such as “inciting ethnic hatred,” engaging with “extremists,” or “endangering state security” content have become pretexts for long-term incarceration. Vague charges undermine due process safeguards, with detainees often lacking proper legal representation and facing trials that do not adhere to international standards of fairness.

This systematic practice of long, unjust imprisonments serves to perpetuate the suffering of the Uyghur population and underscores the Chinese government’s relentless efforts to erase their culture, religion, and identity. It is an integral part of the broader campaign of genocide happening in the Uyghur region, as these harsh sentences effectively silence and eradicate Uyghur voices and presence from society.

The sheer scale of these long imprisonments in the Uyghur region, for instance, in Konasheher County, where approximately one in 25 people are sentenced to prison on terrorism-related charges, is deeply alarming. Such an imprisonment rate, the highest known in the world, is emblematic of the Chinese government’s aggressive crackdown on Uyghurs, illustrated as a case for preventive securitization. These excessive sentences serve as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for action to address the ongoing genocide in the Uyghur region and secure justice for its victims within the broader context of genocidal policy architecture in the region.

## HARSH REALITY OF DETENTION STATISTICS

The available data paint a distressing picture of the extensive and systematic utilization of detention as a mechanism of control within the Uyghur region. One of the most alarming aspects of this situation is the drastic surge in arrests, with statistics revealing a significant increase in individuals detained in the region, particularly since 2017. This escalation suggests a deliberate strategy to apprehend a substantial number of individuals.

Furthermore, the data indicates a troubling focus on detaining members of minoritized groups, notably Uyghurs and Kazakhs. This selective emphasis raises concerns about ethnic bias and unjust profiling. This targeting extends to gender as well, with an imbalance in gender distribution among detainees, with a higher proportion of males subjected to detention, potentially signifying the singling out of distinct demographics within the populace.

The impact of these elevated detention numbers is profound, particularly on the families left behind. It has led to emotional turmoil, financial hardship, and societal upheaval in the Uyghur region. Moreover, this trend cuts across diverse age groups, from youth to the elderly, dispelling the notion that detention policies are exclusively geared toward specific age brackets.

Another concerning aspect is the need

for more clarity regarding charges and legal justification for detentions. Many detainees are held without transparent legal processes, fostering concerns about the basis of their confinement. Some individuals have allegedly been detained for protracted durations without transparent insight into their fate or the reasons for their continued captivity, contravening principles of due process and presumption of innocence.

In a study by Christoph Valentin Steinert from the University of Mannheim, Germany, data derived from the Political Prisoner Database (PPD) maintained by the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China revealed a concerning pattern of discrimination against Uyghur political prisoners. Established in 1981 and continuously updated, the PPD had recorded 10,271 political prisoners as of July 23, 2020. This research revealed a profound ethnic bias against Uyghurs within China's criminal justice system, specifically concerning the duration of their political detentions.

According to the data, the Uyghurs had an extreme unlikelihood of being released. It was 93% percent lower compared to ethnic Han Chinese. The findings of the study also suggest that Uyghurs are nine times more likely to die in prison compared to other ethnic minorities.

This discrimination against Uyghurs extends far beyond official legal channels. Extra-judicial detentions, which forgo standard legal procedures, further

highlighted a marked bias against the Uyghurs. Such discrimination is deeply rooted in the CCP’s perception of Uyghurs as inherent threats. This is primarily attributed to their unique cultural and linguistic identities and historical resistance to Chinese dominion. Moreover, religious discrimination compounds the Uyghurs’ challenges, resulting in extended prison sentences.

### SELECTED CASES

#### RAHILE DAWUT

A member of the Chinese Communist Party and had received accolades from China’s Ministry of Culture, Rahile Dawut is globally recognized for her pioneering work in Uyghur ethnography, traditions, and folklore. Associated with Xinjiang

University’s Minorities Folklore Research Center, she has been at the forefront of documenting the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Uyghur community, notably the Uyghur shrines known as “Mazars.” She disappeared in 2017; it was later confirmed that Chinese authorities had arrested her on the accusation of “political separatism” and “endangering state security” and sentenced her to life imprisonment, which are charges that are ambiguous and unclear. Despite her significant contributions to Uyghur culture and her collaboration with the Chinese government, she was sentenced to life imprisonment. This life sentence was meted out after secretive trials, with the specifics of these charges shrouded in obscurity.



## ILHAM TOHTI

Ilham Tohti is extensively recognized on the international stage for his efforts to foster dialogue and promote equal rights for Uyghurs in China. His advocacy has primarily focused on the peaceful promotion of equal rights and genuine autonomy for the Uyghurs. Multiple prestigious international awards and nominations, including the Martin Ennals Award, the Sakharov Prize, and the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize, have acknowledged Tohti's commitment to human rights and his contributions to interethnic understanding. However, he was arrested on charges of "separatism" and sentenced to life imprisonment despite his commitment to peaceful dialogue. His family has faced restrictions, with reports suggesting that they were not allowed to visit him in prison.

## GULSHAN ABBAS

Gulshan Abbas is a retired physician and

ethnic Uyghur who disappeared from her home in September 2018. In December 2020, her family acquired the information that authorities imprisoned Dr. Abbas and held a secret trial in March 2019, where she was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the unfounded charge of "taking part in organized terrorism, aiding terrorist activities and seriously disrupting social order." It is reported that she suffers from high blood pressure and severe back pain that often leads to immobilization, osteoporosis, and recurring migraines.

Gulshan has no access to her family members, which raises serious concerns for her health and wellbeing.

## YALQUN ROZI

Yalqun Rozi is a distinguished Uyghur literary critic, writer, public speaker, and publisher. He has been an important figure in preserving and proliferating Uyghur culture and literacy tradition. During his career, he compiled over 12 textbooks for



Uyghur schools and published around 20 books that covered subjects in religion, culture, and politics. In 2016, Rozi was detained on vague grounds of “ideological problems.” After enduring a year in an undisclosed location, he was slapped with a conviction in January 2018. He was imprisoned with a 15-year sentence for accusations of inciting separatism and promoting Pan-Turkism, violence, terrorism, and separatism due to Uyghur language textbooks he compiled under the directive and approval of the Chinese government.

#### ABLAJAN AWUT AYUP

Ablajan Awut Ayup is a famous Uyghur pop singer, songwriter, and dancer. He is known for promoting Uyghur culture and identity as well as building a cultural bridge with the Chinese through his bilingual songs. His songs are a fusion of traditional elements and contemporary styles, containing numerous traces of Uyghur folklore and culture. He was taken

into custody by the Chinese authorities in February 2018; the exact reason for his detention has not been officially disclosed. Allegedly, his arrest could be related to the themes of his music, which include promoting Uyghur culture. It might also be due to his philanthropic activities within the Uyghur community and his travel to Malaysia. His current whereabouts have not been disclosed; his friend mentions his being sentenced to over ten years in prison, which could not be confirmed.

#### EKPAR ASAT

Ekpar Asat is a tech entrepreneur and founder of the Uyghur-language website Baghdax. Ekpar was characterized as a “bridge builder” between cultures because of his involvement in media platforms to create a space for the exchange of ideas and debate. Ekpar Asat was included as one of 16 cases in the U.S. Department of State’s #WithoutJustCause Political Prisoners Campaign. He disappeared in



April 2016 and was convicted without a known trial for 15 years imprisonment. The reason for imprisonment is reportedly for “inciting ethnic hatred,” which is followed by his return from the United States after attending a leadership program organized by the U.S. Department of State. The accusation against Ekpar is absurd as state-run news reports that featured his business or his participation in governmentsponsored events.

### Abdulhabir Muhammad

Abduhabar Muhammad is holds MA in Business and Administration from Binghamton University in New York. He is a Uyghur entrepreneur, founder of HOLD Education in Beijing, once heralded in Chinese media as a model of patriotism for Uyghur youth and received various awards in 2018, when the mass detention

of Uyghur was at its peak. However, in 2022, he was sentenced to a 15-year prison with accusations of religious extremism and national separatism. He was surveiled in Beijing by Xinjiang Personnel Service Management Working Group, an entity focused on monitoring Uyghurs in Beijing, and four police officers from the Uyghur region detained him in Beijing. Allegedly, the reasons for his imprisonment could be his statement on “Halal food” or students who went abroad through his higher-education agency. His brothers, who communicate with him, were also arrested, according to the local police. Chinese authorities labeled his case a state secret, withholding details. Even with a confirmed 15-year sentence, the police officer lacks specifics on his precise location.





**FREE  
RAHILE DAWUT**



**Hundreds, thousands of leading Uyghur intellectuals have been jailed by the Chinese genocidal regime, including Professor Rahile Dawut who had been sentenced to life in prison.**





The Chinese regime is putting a lot of effort into its false propaganda to cover up the genocide in East Turkistan.

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# istiqlal

**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 genocide crime and shine a light on the oppression in East Turkistan as well as expose China’s fake news propaganda.**

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