

North Brunswick Township High School Model  
United Nations Conference VII 2026

**Specialized Committee:  
United Nations Human Rights  
Council**



**Chair: Jumana Abbas**

**Co-Chairs: Raeya Amin, Avani Gupta, Hamnah Lodhie, Saanvi  
Murugaraj**



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the seventh annual North Brunswick Township Model United Nations conference! My name is Jumana Abbas, and I will be your Chair for the Specialized Committee, United Nations Human Rights Council. I am a junior at NBTHS and joined MUN in my freshman year. In school, I am a member of DECA and FBLA, and outside of school, I enjoy volunteering at my local mosque, babysitting, and running my jewelry business.

Your first co-chair will be Raeya Amin. Raeya Amin is a junior at NBTHS who joined MUN in her sophomore year. In school, Raeya is the Editor of Key club and a member of Innovasian. She enjoys painting, playing with her puppy, and swimming in her free time.

Your second co-chair will be Avani Gupta. Avani Gupta is a sophomore at NBTHS who joined MUN in her freshman year. In her free time, she enjoys reading and volunteering with special needs individuals. Your fourth co-chair will be Saanvi Murugaraj. Saanvi is a sophomore at NBTHS who joined MUN her freshman year of high school. She is a member of InnovAsian, DECA and FBLA as well as the high school swim team. In her free time she enjoys dancing, watching movies, and hanging out with friends. Your final co-chair will be Hamnah Lodhie. Hamnah is a freshman at NBTHS who joined MUN this year. She is a member of Key Club and North Brunswick Youth Alliance. In her free time, she enjoys playing lacrosse, traveling and making bracelets.

In a Model UN committee simulating the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), delegates will examine the ongoing human rights violations confronting the Uyghur Muslim population in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. This Specialized Committee runs as the **UN Human Rights Council**, deviating from the standard General Assembly structure by incorporating crisis elements and requiring fast-paced debates and negotiations. We invite delegates to explore how the international community should respond to the allegations of forced labor, religious persecution, and ethnic cleansing, in line with this year's conference theme, **"Never Again - Confronting Hate, Protecting Memory, and Preventing Atrocity."** It is expected that delegates will come prepared and motivated to debate the topics discussed in this background guide and any crisis events that arise due to the actions throughout the committee. Delegates are not necessarily expected to reenact actions taken by their assigned country; however, they are expected to represent their country faithfully and are encouraged to be creative to make this committee enjoyable. We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you at our conference in March! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Warmest regards,

Jumana Abbas

[abbas.jumana1025@gmail.com](mailto:abbas.jumana1025@gmail.com)

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### **Structure and Procedure**

The committee will run an extended Moderated Caucus: the default shall be a Moderated Caucus with one-minute speaking times. The chair will recognize delegates wishing to speak, and motions will be entertained after each speech has elapsed. For procedural matters, a majority of 50% + 1 will be required, and each delegate must vote either in favor or against; no abstentions will be entertained. No pre-set time limits on speeches are established; this determination, as well as any other particulars of procedure, is left to the discretion of the committee or the chair, as appropriate. The chair shall have final authority on all procedural questions and occasionally entertain appeals.

### ***The following is a list of standard procedures that all committees must follow:***

**Unmoderated Caucus** | The committee may enter an unmoderated caucus for a certain length, during which delegates may move freely about the room and speak to each other without direction from the Chair. However, the Chair may prohibit unmoderated caucuses at certain times during the committee meeting.

**Point of Order** | A Point of Order may not interrupt a speaker and can be raised when the delegate believes the rules of procedure have been violated. The chair will stop the committee proceedings and ask the delegate to provide warranted arguments as to which rules of procedure have been violated.

**Point of Personal Privilege** | A Point of Personal Privilege may be raised when a delegate's ability to participate in the debate is impaired for any physical or logistical reasons (for instance, if the speaker is not audible). This point may interrupt a speech, and the dais will immediately try to resolve the difficulty.

**Point of Parliamentary Inquiry** | This point may be raised by a delegate who wishes to clarify any rule of procedure with the Chair. It may not interrupt a speaker; a delegate rising to this point may not make substantive statements or arguments.

**Point of Information** | As the name suggests, a delegate may raise this point to bring substantive information to the notice. It may not interrupt a speaker and must contain only a statement of some new fact relevant to the debate. Arguments and analyses may not be made by delegates rising to this point. A point of information may also be used to ask questions of a speaker on the general speakers' list.

**Motions** | Motions control the flow of debate. A delegate may raise a motion when the chair opens the floor for points or motions. A motion requires a vote to pass. Procedural motions, unless mentioned otherwise, need a simple majority to pass.

**Motion for Moderated Caucus** | This motion begins a moderated caucus and must specify the topic, the time per speaker, and the total time for the proposed caucus.

**Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus** | This motion moves the committee into an unmoderated caucus, during which lobbying and drafting of resolutions may occur. It must specify the duration of the caucus.

**Motion to Suspend Debate** | This motion suspends debate for a stipulated time.

**Motion to Adjourn** | This motion brings the committee's deliberation to an end and is only admissible when suggested by the Chair.

**Motion to Introduce Documents** | A successful motion to introduce puts the document on the floor to be debated by the committee. The sponsor of the document will be asked to read the document, and then, if deemed appropriate, the Chair will entertain a moderated caucus on the topic.

**Motion to Divide the Question** | A delegate may move this motion to split a document into component voting clauses. This may be done when a delegate feels significant support for some clauses but not the complete document.

**Motion for a Roll Call Vote** | A delegate may move to have the vote conducted in alphabetical order.

**Motion for Speakers For and Against** | If it would help the proceedings of the committee, a The delegate may request speakers to move forward with and against a document.

**Amendments** | After the first draft of a committee document has been introduced, delegates may move to amend particular clauses. If all the sponsors of the papers support the amendment, it passes as a friendly amendment.

**Committee Documents** | *Committee documents represent the product of the committee's deliberations and collective decisions.*

**Directive** | *Directives are standard orders. This committee requires a directive for all direct actions. Directives pass with a simple majority.*

**Communiqué** | *Communiqués are formal communications (private by default) from the committee to other governments, individuals, or organizations. Committee communiqués pass by simple majority.*

**Press Release** | *Press releases express the committee's sentiments (NOT individuals) on any issue. They require a simple majority to pass.*

**Between Delegates** | *Delegates can pass notes freely to other delegates within the committee or speak to other delegates during an unmoderated caucus. However, talking during another delegate's speech is not permitted.*

**To the Chair/Dias** | *Delegates may also communicate with the Chair through notes. Delegates feel free to write any questions or comments to the Chair that may improve the committee experience.*

*Members of the committee may take any of the following actions through private notes:*

**Between Delegates** | *Delegates should feel free to write personal notes to their fellow committee members. We ask that these notes pertain to the committee's business.*

**To the Chair** | *Delegates may also write to the Chair with questions regarding procedural issues of the committee and a wide range of personal inquiries. Delegates should write to the Chair on any issue that would improve the committee experience. This could range from a clarification of portfolio powers to substantive questions.*

**Topic: Addressing the ongoing human rights violations and alleged genocide of Uyghur Muslims in Xianjing, China**

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## Introduction

In 1955, communist China annexed a northwestern region called Xinjiang and declared it as an “autonomous” zone, where the native Uyghur muslim ethnic group would be given the rights to protect their dignity and preserve their culture. For over two millennia, Uyghurs have called this region home with a sacred connection between their land, language, religion, and values. Once the Chinese entered, however, the connection between Uyghurs and their heritage began to change. China claims to allow Uyghurs to maintain autonomy and practice religion freely, however, many argue that “autonomous” is only in the name. Since 2014, China has been scrutinized by the international community for cultural cleansing—a term UNESCO has defined as a purposeful effort to erase the symbols, traditions, and heritage of a specific culture from a particular area. Uyghurs endured injustices and laws meant to limit their religious practices, restrict their employment and governing capabilities, and overall erase their cultural presence in China. One of the most notable and infamous attempts are detention camps mislabeled by the Chinese government as “re-education centers”, where Uyghurs of all ages are forcibly taken and subjected to political indoctrination and forced assimilation. Over fifty UN member states have issued a joint declaration in 2023 condemning the Chinese government for crimes against humanity, yet the ongoing alleged genocide continues. Beijing responds to these accusations by saying they are only tackling extremism. In this Specialized UN Human Rights Committee, delegates will represent their countries’ views on the devastation of the Uyghur community. Has China violated international law, and if so, how should China be held accountable? In what ways can the global community support the Uyghurs while balancing rising tensions with China? And most importantly, how can the international community ensure the prevention of cultural genocides in line with this year's conference theme, “Never Again”?

## History

### *Integration of the Qing Empire*

The Qing Empire, which ruled China from 1644 to 1912, was one of the largest and most powerful empires in history. It was established by the Manchus, a group from northeastern China that conquered the preceding Ming Dynasty and brought a multitude of ethnic groups under a single rule. The diversity within the empire led to one of the biggest challenges the Qing faced: integrating all the diverse groups, including Han Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans. To maintain control, the Qing rulers used both military force and political strategies, such as promoting Confucian values already important to many Chinese people, such as respect for elders, filial piety, and social harmony. The Qing also formed alliances with some minority groups, gave them titles, and let them maintain their own customs as long as they didn’t rebel. This helped reduce

conflict and increased the empire's stability across its vast territory. The Qing government also established systems that facilitated communication among different regions, including the construction of roads and the promotion of trade. They used a “rule by culture” policy, allowing local customs and religion to continue as long as people remained loyal to the emperor. Mandarin Chinese was promoted as the official language for the government; however, other languages like Mongolian and Tibetan were used in local affairs. This mix of languages, along with the variety of customs and religious traditions across different regions, reflected the vast cultural diversity of the Qing Empire.

Before Qing rule, the region of Xinjiang was not part of modern-day China. It was home to various independent Uyghur city-states and other Central Asian cultures, many of which were Muslim and had long histories of trade with the Islamic world. During the 18th century, the Qing Empire launched a series of military campaigns to conquer the region, mostly to eliminate threats. After defeating both the Dzungars and the local Uyghur rulers, the Qing brought Xinjiang under direct imperial control. Following the conquest, the Qing treated Xinjiang as a frontier region, meaning it was seen as a distant borderland that required both military control and cultural integration. Frontier regions were special because they served as buffer zones protecting the empire from outside threats, but they were also areas where different ethnic groups and religions met. They allowed some local customs to continue, but monitored religious leaders, since they often held significant local influence and could rally followers against imperial authority. Some local Muslim clerics were allowed to continue their roles as long as they remained loyal to the state, while suppressing others viewed as politically or religiously threatening. Xinjiang was not made a formal province until the late 19th century, indicating that even after the conquest, full integration was a lengthy and challenging process.

### *Empire to Republic - The Transition of Uyghurs*

The Uyghurs, a Turkic ethnic group native to the region of Xinjiang, have long lived at the crossroads of Central and East Asia. Their homeland has been influenced by different empires and powers throughout history, making their identity and governance complex. During the late Qing Dynasty, which ruled China from 1644 to 1912, Xinjiang was formally incorporated as a province in 1884. Although this made the region part of the Chinese state, control was often fragile. The Qing dynasty was already struggling with corruption, weak leadership, and a series of devastating rebellions across the empire. Large-scale uprisings such as the Taiping Rebellion and the Dungan Revolt had drained the dynasty’s resources and made it difficult to maintain authority in distant borderlands like Xinjiang.

When the Qing dynasty collapsed in 1911, China entered a period of major political transformation with the creation of the Republic of China. However, this new government was not strong enough to fully unite the country. Instead, the Republic was plagued by warlordism,

foreign interference, and constant internal struggles. In Xinjiang, Uyghurs experienced shifting rulers and inconsistent policies. Different warlords and regional leaders sought to assert dominance, often leaving the Uyghur population caught between competing authorities.

Amid this instability, some Uyghurs sought greater independence. In the 1930s and 1940s, there were short-lived attempts to establish separate Uyghur-led states, most notably the First East Turkestan Republic in 1933 and the Second East Turkestan Republic in 1944. Both efforts reflected a growing desire among many Uyghurs for self-determination, but they were also deeply shaped by outside pressures. The Republic of China government, determined to keep control of Xinjiang, moved to suppress these independence movements. At the same time, the Soviet Union played a complicated role, sometimes supporting Uyghur independence movements and other times cooperating with Chinese authorities to maintain regional stability.

### *Incorporation into the People's Republic of China*

Following the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, in which the Nationalist government was defeated, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) to govern mainland China. The newly formed PRC sought to strengthen territorial control over the vast Xinjiang region in the northwest. During this time, the Xinjiang region was home to Uyghur Muslims with deep cultural and religious ties to Central Asia, and was governed by neither Chinese Nationalists or the CCP, but rather a loose coalition of warlords and ethnic leaders. In the same year the PRC was established, the CCP entered into negotiations with Xinjiang leaders who favored Soviet cooperation, including Saifuddin Azizi and Ehemetjan Qasimi, to create a Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Local Xinjiang leaders viewed this alignment with the CCP as a pragmatic choice, and recognized that resisting integration could lead to harsh consequences or marginalization. In addition, China's promise of an autonomous region meant the preservation of ethnic groups, including the right to language, religion, and local governance under the new 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China. In 1955, the XUAR was officially integrated into China. However, the actual governance of Xinjiang and treatment of the Uyghur population sharply contradicted what was initially promised.

The Uyghur people had to endure the first real systematic attempts at forced assimilation after the XUAR was established. The “Hanification” of Xinjiang included intense state control, cultural suppression, and the erosion of Uyghur identity. While the Constitution allowed for local autonomy, real decision-making power rested in the hands of Han cadres—officials appointed by the CCP to oversee and limit the influence of local Uyghur leadership. To encourage Han migration in this region, the CCP created the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). Operating under the guise of developing the economy and maintaining public safety,

this politically powerful organization swiftly controlled schools and farms (particularly in highly Uyghur populated areas), built and operated detention facilities known as “re-education centers”, and promoted Han Chinese migration by offering jobs on XPCC-run farms and enterprises while underrepresenting Uyghurs in leadership and job opportunities. The strong XPCC campaign grew the population of Han Chinese in the XUAR from 300,000 in 1953 to 5.3 million in 1982, all while undermining Uyghur autonomy and assimilating them into Chinese culture. In 2020, the U.S. government sanctioned the XPCC under the Global Magnitsky Act for human rights abuses against Uyghurs. To this day, the XPCC continues to act as a powerful political, economic, and military entity determined to control and assimilate the Uyghur population in an act of relentless internal colonization.

## **Recent Events**

### *China's Influence by the Global War on Terror*

After the 9/11 attacks, Beijing voiced strong support for the U.S.-led and internationally supported “Global War on Terror”, which redefined China’s narrative of the Uyghur Xinjiang region. Chinese President Jiang Zemin was quick to send condolences to President George W. Bush and offer cooperation against global terrorism. Relationships between the two countries had been strained on other issues, but found common ground on counterterrorism, as China presented itself as a partner in the War on Terror. This alignment served Beijing's interests: improving relations with Washington D.C. and creating an opportunity for China to pursue their own domestic security objectives under the cover of a global campaign. As part of this alignment, China claimed that Uyghur militant groups in Xinjiang were part of the international terrorist network, and that any organizations seeking Uyghur independence were linked to Al-Qaeda, the perpetrators behind September 11, and other jihadist groups.

Uyghur unrest had been escalating throughout the 20th century, however the 9/11 attacks and China’s stance with the Global War on Terror changed the narrative from dissent to “terrorism” in both the eyes of its own populace and the international community. Prior to 2001, Chinese authorities described incidents of violence and dissidence as “ethnic separatists”. Post 9/11, Beijing began to portray Xinjiang as a front line in the fight against terrorism, assuring the international community that Uyghur militant separatists were part of a wider Islamist terror conspiracy. This caused Chinese state media to begin to draw parallels between Uyghur activists and groups like Al-Qaeda. Government reports alleged that Uyghur separatists received funding or training from global terrorist networks. For example, in a 2002 white paper, China blamed past unrest in Xinjiang on foreign-sponsored terrorist organizations, and even claimed Osama Bin Laden had backed Uyghur militants. The government’s predetermined notion that any and all

Uyghur separatists were influenced by these terrorist groups, coupled with the common propaganda vocabulary including ‘terrorism’, ‘extremism’, and ‘radicalization’, caused the Uyghur identity to become heavily scrutinized. Expressions of Uyghur heritage or Islamic faith were increasingly viewed with suspicion under a blanket of “terrorism” or “extremist” behavior.

In 2002, with support from the U.S., the United Nations added the “East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement” (ETIM) to its list of terrorist organizations. Stemming from a strong sense of marginalization after the Chinese Communist Party solidified control of the region in the 1950s, some Uyghurs believed peaceful means of advocacy were ineffective, and took to more extreme approaches. After decades of Chinese suppression of their religious and cultural practices, discrimination in employment and education, and erosion of their identity, the ETIM emerged. From the start, the ETIM had a very clear political goal—to establish an independent Islamic state called “East Turkistan” in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and neighboring countries. Founded by Hasan Mahsum, it started as a small, secretive group in the late 1990s with estimates of no more than 200-300 individuals. The organization consisted primarily of exiled Uyghurs, some of whom were based in Pakistan and Afghanistan and allegedly received training in Taliban or Al-Qaeda-linked camps. With bases outside China to train terrorists, the group has dispatched members to China to execute attacks, including the bombing of the Urumqi Train Station in May, 1998. While China used the momentum of the War on Terror to reframe internal security issues as an international counterterrorism effort, they failed to successfully navigate the lines between targeting terrorists and suppressing an entire ethnic and religious group.

### *Violence and Riots in Urumqi*

In order to analyze the violence that occurred in Urumqi, it is essential to consider the larger context of China’s one-party socialist state in which the riots occurred, where religion is heavily regulated by the government. Although freedom of religion is formally granted through the Chinese constitution, the Communist Party has long viewed benign religious practices—such as wearing the hijab, going to the mosque, or fasting for Ramadan—as extremist practices linked to separatist movements. In response to these restrictions, many Uyghurs join underground Koran groups, many of which advocate for the separation of Xinjiang from China into an independent East Turkestan (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China). These groups have been used as justification by China to crack down on religious practices under the guise of national security and sovereignty. However, past efforts by China to improve policies for ethnic minorities in Xinjiang through the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law in 1984 have been perceived negatively by the Han people, and have failed at reducing tensions between ethnic groups. These policies allowed ethnic minorities to have more than one child, receive

preference in college admissions, and discouraged local police from taking immediate action against suspects of crimes who are minorities, consequently fostering increased crime by ethnic groups. Despite state efforts to promote ethnic autonomy, employment difficulties remain among ethnic university students due to racial discrimination in the hiring process. Furthermore, Han Chinese enterprises and modern industries have weakened traditional handcrafted Uyghur commerce and businesses, taking over the economy in Xinjiang.

These tensions between the two ethnic groups were aggravated in June 2009 when an anonymous internet post that falsely accused six Uyghur men of raping two Chinese girls was released. The post triggered a violent fight between Uyghur and Han Chinese factory workers in Shaoguan, Guangdong, killing two innocent Uyghur men. In response to the perceived injustice against the Uyghur factory workers, what began as a peaceful protest in July 2009 in Guangdong at Urumqi's Grand Bazaar quickly escalated to what Chinese officials called the "Beijing 9/11", the largest outbreak of ethnic violence in Xinjiang in modern times, forcing President Hu Jintao to cancel his G8 summit appearance and return to China to address the unrest. According to official Chinese figures, 184 were killed, over two-thirds of whom were Han Chinese, and thousands more were injured. Graphic videos of stabbing, beating, and clubbing made it clear the violence was orchestrated by the Uyghur people in a deliberate attack against the Han crowds. In response to the riots, Chinese armed forces opened fire on crowds of Uyghurs. Thousands were arrested, and thousands more were either killed or injured from gunshot wounds. While official Chinese death tolls were released, they failed to account for the full extent of violence directed at the Uyghur population in the aftermath of the riots.

In response to the media's role in instigating the riots, the Chinese government suspended Internet and cell phone services in Xinjiang shortly after the unrest was brought under control. Authorities shut down text messaging and overseas phone calls, leaving families cut off from relatives across borders. As a result, civilians who depended on online platforms for their livelihoods, such as internet banking and the online stock exchange, struggled to find an income as well. Internationally, China accused exiled Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer, head of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), for inciting the riots, though no verifiable evidence supports this. Additionally, China targeted the WUC's funding from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy to raise suspicions of foreign influence with an anti-China agenda fueling the unrest, yet, as with China's accusations against the WUC, these suspicions are not backed by tangible evidence. Furthermore, China dismissed concerns from Turkey and Iran regarding the response of the Chinese government to the riots, framing it as part of the global struggle against terrorism, despite growing global awareness of the cultural and religious persecution faced by Uyghurs under China's socialist regime. In 2014, to reinforce its counterterrorism narrative, China launched the "Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism". The purpose of this initiative

was to break the lineage and ethnic roots of Turkic Muslim communities in Xinjiang. As part of the campaign, over a million Turkic Muslims were subjected to mass arbitrary detention in internment camps, where they endured torture, enforced disappearances, and inhumane treatment. These camps, which cover an area of approximately 140 soccer fields, have detained an estimated eight hundred thousand to two million Uyghurs, a wide range due to limited statistics released by China, and other Muslim ethnic groups. Described as “vocational education and training centers”, detainees of these facilities are denied medical treatment and subject to forced labor. Likewise, women both inside and outside of these facilities have reported sexual violence and severe violations of reproductive rights, including forced contraception and sterilization. Beyond the camps, Chinese authorities further destroyed mosques and cemeteries, enforcing policies of “Sinicization” of the Turkic Muslim population, driven by a combination of Islamophobia and nationalism.

History has long shown a pattern of targeting entire ethnic and religious groups under the blanket of national security, blurring the line between national interest and state-sanctioned bigotry. From the concentration camps of the Holocaust to the Japanese internment camps in the U.S., and now to the mass detention of Turkic Muslims and Islamophobic hate rhetoric in China, China’s actions alarmingly echo those of past genocides in history. The United Nations has since recognized China’s treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims as a blatant misuse of nationalist rhetoric to justify religious and ethnic persecution of the Chinese Muslim community.

## **Current Situation**

### *Internment Camps and Detainee Experiences*

The Chinese government has been secretly operating a major system of internment camps and prisons in the Xinjiang region of China, targeting Uyghurs since at least 2017. An estimated one million, and possibly more, Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been wrongfully detained in these camps and prisons, meaning detention often occurred without charges or legal processes. The only factors for detention were religious observance, family background, usage of certain communication apps, or having relatives abroad. These factors would influence how Uyghur people think, deviating from the ideals China wants them to hold, ultimately leading to detention.

While initially denying the camps’ existence, China now claims these facilities are “vocational education and training centers” aimed at targeting and fighting against terrorism and extremism. However, evidence from multiple eyewitness accounts include leaked documents, satellite imagery, and human rights organizations that reveal a far more sinister reality. Detainees

are often subjected to intense political indoctrination, renouncing their own religion and cultural identity, and learning Mandarin Chinese and Chinese Communist propaganda. Uyghur children, ages three to twelve, are often separated from their families and placed in state-run boarding schools and orphanages, where they are taught Han Chinese culture and Mandarin. Ultimately, these policies reveal a systematic assimilation to attempt to erase Uyghur identity into the Han culture that is widely accepted in China.

### *High-Tech Surveillance and Police State Tactics*

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is subjected to one of the most extensive and invasive systems of social monitoring and control on the planet, with the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) at its center. IJOP gathers vast amounts of biometric data and mobile phone usage to electricity consumption, travel records, and parcel delivery and uses them to detect "suspicious" behavior. This IJOP application often includes ordinary activities, like Whatsapp usage, traveling abroad, how someone enters their home, and even how people communicate with the people around them. The individual, once detected, can be questioned and phones examined.

Points are also awarded for ordinary life indicators such as car ownership or access to electricity by the system and keep high numbers of individuals in custody without due process. A central feature of IJOP is their point system. Low point scores can mark people as untrustworthy. High scores reflect good behavior, and better align with state expectations. This system directly correlates into detention rates: the accumulation of low points often justifies being sent to so-called "re-education" or "vocational training" centers. Normally, the scoring system has led to mass incarceration, with an estimated over one million Uyghurs in custody.

To complement machine monitoring, Chinese authorities also have a human intelligence grid system in which citizens are tasked with being "grid watchers" for door-to-door monitoring. There are over 200,000 cadres who have been dispatched to live among or visit Uyghur families since 2014, collecting information that feeds into IJOP. At the same time, Xinjiang residents aged 12 to 65 years old were obligated to provide DNA, voice, iris, and fingerprint data under a "Physicals for All" program. Vehicles must be outfitted with GPS tracking devices, and checkpoints scan digital devices. As many as one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been imprisoned in so-called "re-education" or "vocational training" camps after being selected using algorithmic identification.

The Chinese have been condemned by global authorities and human rights organizations as particularly invasive, discriminatory, and legally suspect. The UN Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights concluded in the August 2022 report that the forced monitoring, assimilation, and detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims "may constitute crimes against humanity." Human Rights Watch and other nongovernmental organizations have watched how private surveillance technology companies such as Hikvision, Dahua, and iFlytek all enabled such abuse, prompting export bans and sanctions by several countries.

### *Forced Population Control*

Following the introduction of internment camps in Xinjiang, China increased efforts to control the rising birth rates of Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic Islamic groups. Much like other instances of civil unrest in history, women in Xinjiang became the primary target of these policies. The HRW's (Human Rights Watch) report documents multiple firsthand accounts of forced abortion, sterilization and contraception (IUD), performed without consent of the Uyghur women. These actions mirror a larger practice in history, where women's bodies are often politicized and controlled during times of conflict. These policies are linked to larger efforts that aim to control the population of Turkic Muslim communities in Xinjiang, such as pushing for three children or less in Uyghur-dominant communities; in some cases, only one or two. Despite removing the one-child policy in 2016 to account for its aging population, Uyghur families remain excluded from the rest of China, who are encouraged to have children.

Due to population control efforts, demographic data reveals appalling drops in birth rates in Uyghur-majority communities, with growth rates falling by almost 80%, much quicker than the rest of China. Specifically, in Uyghur-majority areas of Xinjiang, birth rates plummeted by 50.1% in 2019 compared to 19.7% in majority Han-populated areas. German researcher Adrian Chen predicts as much as 2.6 - 4.5 million fewer births among Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in 20 years, over one-third of the minority population in Xinjiang. Though this data remains, China's Foreign Ministry refutes the claim that Uyghur birth rates are dropping at alarming rates, and rather asserts that the Uyghur birth rate continues to remain higher than the Han Chinese people. In reframing the reproductive violations of the Uyghur women as part of the larger effort to combat terrorism and religious extremism, Chinese officials have managed to commit sexual violence under the heavily scrutinized facade of national security.

### **Past UN and International Actions**

#### *UN Human Rights Council OHCHR*

In May 2022, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, visited China on an invitation by the government to discuss human rights issues and introduce more regular meaningful interactions for future purposes, which included an excursion to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. During the visit, her first in nearly two decades, Bachelet met with government officials, civil society organizations, and religious leaders. The trip was controversial, with many stating it provided a propaganda victory for the Chinese government. While initially met with criticism due to not fully addressing the serious human rights violations the Chinese government has committed against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, Bachelet defended herself by claiming the visit's main purpose was to provide opportunities to hold direct discussion on human rights issues, and concerns on the applications of counterterrorism in Xinjiang.

Recognizing human rights violations in the persecution of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, the UN has implemented multiple initiatives addressing this issue, most notably issuing an assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in August 2022, immediately following Bachelet's visit. The assessment was ordered following years of allegations of missing persons in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, with a dramatic increase in cases following the introduction of "re-education camps" implemented by the Chinese government. After reviewing thousands of cases, Chinese legal texts, official documents, and interviews of survivors and experts, investigators found that China's broad definitions of terrorism and extremism allowed the government to justify the mass arrest of Uyghurs and Muslim-identifying minorities based on religious practices alone, such as praying or abstaining from alcohol. In addition, XUAR was found to have experienced a dramatic increase in the number and lengths of imprisonments, suggesting widespread legal persecution. After finding evidence of arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and forced political indoctrination, the assessment concluded with the idea that the actions of the Chinese government may amount to crimes against humanity, specifically a deprivation of liberty and religious and ethnic persecution. Though stopping short of legally declaring genocide, as the first official human rights assessment explicitly linking Chinese practices in Xinjiang to crimes against humanity, the OHCHR report calls for decisive international intervention and investigations, especially into human rights violations in detention centers. The report also called on China to undertake a full legal review of its national security and counterterrorism policies in XUAR, as a means to repeal any laws that fall short of international standards and to ensure full compliance with human rights laws.

Following the OHCHR assessment, the Chinese government immediately released a report claiming that the accusations of discriminatory policies were groundless and all citizens, regardless of religion or ethnicity, were treated as equals before the law, with their rights and

interests protected. In addition, China asserted that counter-terrorism and de-radicalization efforts in XUAR were not the cause of the suppression of ethnic minorities. The rebuttal referred to the report as a means by the United States and other Western countries to contain China through Xinjiang and suggested that the OHCHR investigate the human rights violations committed by the opposing countries.

### *Western Democracies Condemnations and Sanctions*

Many Western countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany have condemned the actions of the Chinese government, comparing them to severe human rights abuses and calling for the end of Uyghur and other minority persecution. These claims highlight the underlying tension between China and other countries over various human rights issues. Several statements have been drafted and signed, with a 2021 statement calling for the allowance of immediate access for independent observers gaining the support of 43 nations. The statement expressed the concerns of Chinese reports about re-education camps in XUAR and suggested the intervention of the UNHCR, including having the High Commissioner and her office involved, a suggestion that may have prompted Bachelet's 2022 visit to China. Various documentation exposing the crimes of the Chinese government has also been released, the most prominent being the Uyghur Tribunal, a U.K.-based independent tribunal analyzing the allegations made, with the use of evidence provided by Australia. Third party countries have also been condemned for their condoning of the actions of the Chinese government, as in the case of Thailand, where the deportation of over 40 Uyghur refugees resulted in the visa sanctions of involved Thai officials by the U.S., and a rebuke from the U.N. due to the action being considered as a violation of international law. In addition, coordinated sanctions, which have included travel bans and the freezing of assets, have been planned and carried out by the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, targeting numerous officials in Xinjiang accused of human rights violations against Uyghurs. China responded with the notion that western sanctions were based on misinformation concerning Uyghur treatment, and proceeded to sanction 10 individuals and 4 European entities in retaliation, barring them from entering or doing business with China. The Chinese government has also denounced Western documentation concerning human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang, demonstrating an ongoing battle for accountability.

### **Questions To Consider**

1. Should the United Nations formally recognize the situation as “genocide” or limit recognition to “crimes against humanity”? What are the legal, moral, and political implications of each designation?
2. What mechanisms should be used to ensure accountability? Should countries impose sanctions or trade restrictions linked to forced labor?
3. How should survivors, detainees, and diaspora communities be protected? Proposals could include asylum pathways, support for displaced Uyghurs, international monitoring of human rights conditions, and mechanisms for family reunification.
4. What role should corporations and foreign investors play? With growing infrastructure and tourism in Xinjiang, should there be guidelines or restrictions on foreign business involvement (hotels, factories, etc.) to avoid complicity in abuses?
5. What actions can foreign governments impose based on the actions of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) and their human rights abuses towards the Uyghur Muslims?
6. How can the Human Rights Council balance respect for China’s sovereignty with the responsibility to protect cultural and religious rights?
7. How can the international community resolve the issues in Xinjiang with or without violating the sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China?
8. Which international laws and UN charters have China’s actions towards the Uyghurs violated?

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