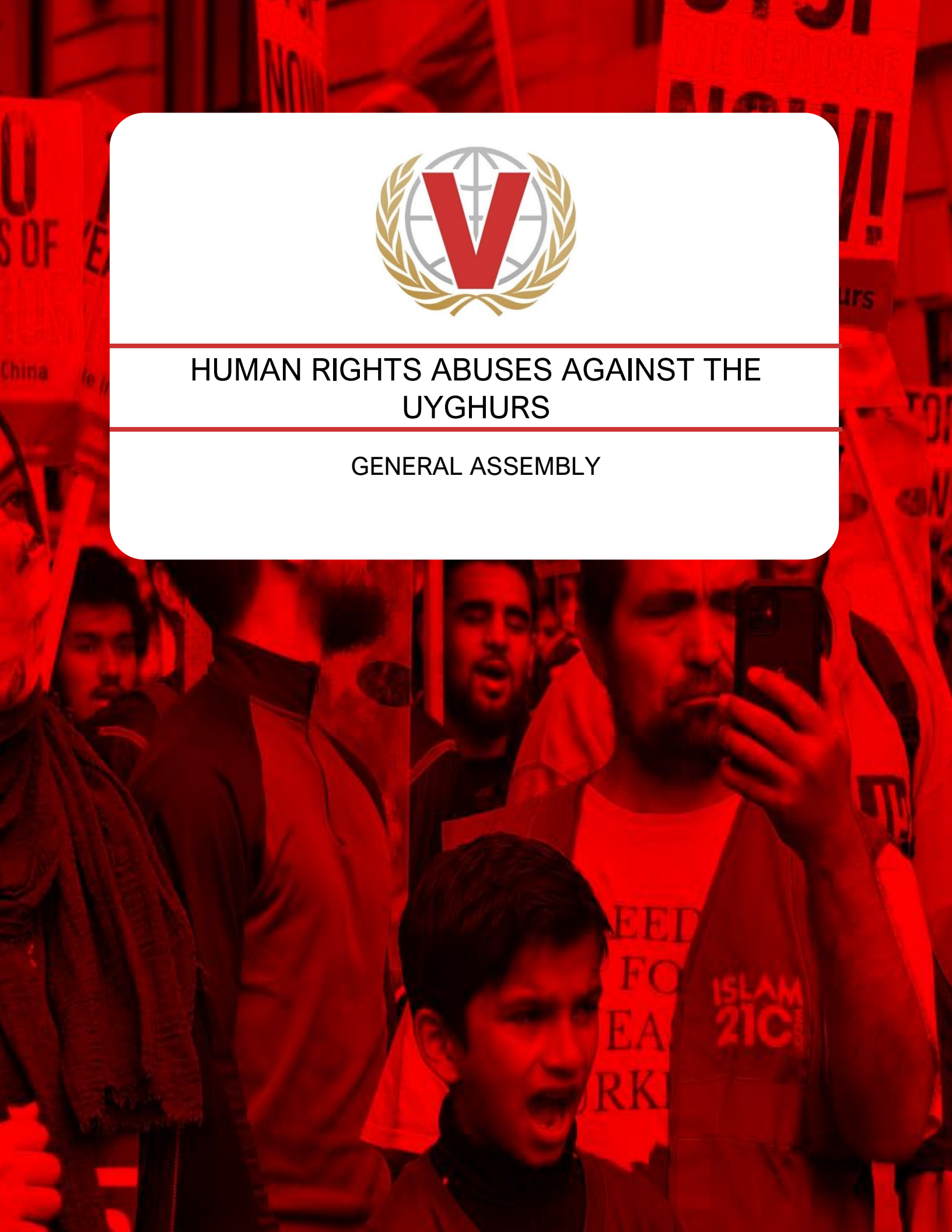




# HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST THE UYGHURS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs



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## Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs

### Letter from Dias:

Hello Delegates,

I am pleased to welcome you to the General Assembly at VMUN 2023! My name is Sabiha, and I am thrilled to be your Chair for this year's GA Committee on the Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs. It is an honor to be chairing for the second time at the general assembly of VMUN, and I am excited to be back to an in-person conference and feel everyone's spirits.

I am in my first year at McGill University, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Economics. I have also studied Social Science at Vanier College and had a wonderful Cegep experience. Beyond academics, I enjoy playing guitar, listening to music, and my new hobby, taekwondo. Throughout my academic journey, I had the opportunity to explore unique world views and legal and political affairs. Thus, the treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities is particularly interesting to me.

On a personal level, as an Uyghur woman who grew up under the states' oppression against minorities and escaped the atrocities that some of my family still face, China's treatment towards Uyghurs should recognize as genocide on an international level. From psychological trauma to transnational repression, the effects of China's treatment of Uyghurs have long reached families and communities abroad. The longer the world stays silent, the more innocent individuals suffer. The United Nations sets charters that uphold human rights for all members of the human family, and these rights are also the foundation of the UN. The Chinese Communist Party's treatment towards the Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang Autonomous Region, also known as East Turkistan, is a crime against humanity that the international world has promised to "never



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again" allow. Thus, the UN must condemn and terminate China's human rights abuses against Uyghurs to uphold its obligations and values and maintain harmony and humanity in the world.

Sincerely,

Saibihai Tuersunmaimaiti

Chair of GA Committee on the Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs.



## Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs

Dear Delegates,

I am delighted to welcome you all to VMUN 2023 as your Chair for the GA Committee on the Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs. My name is Melodie Jade Wendyam Opara, and I am a second-year student at Vanier College, majoring in Sustainability and Women's and Gender Studies. As a member of the Vanier Model UN team, I have honed my public speaking skills and developed a passion for diplomacy and international relations.

I am honored to be chairing this committee for the first time and am excited to work with each and every one of you to address one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. The Uyghur crisis is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires a nuanced approach and careful consideration of all viewpoints. Together, we will explore the various dimensions of the issue and work towards finding sustainable solutions that prioritize human rights.

As your chair, my goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where every delegate feels comfortable expressing their opinions and ideas. I encourage you all to take an active role in the committee and engage in meaningful debate and dialogue. With your dedication and cooperation, I am confident that we can make significant progress toward promoting and protecting human rights for all.

Once again, welcome to VMUN 2023, and I look forward to working with you all.

Sincerely,

**Melodie Jade Wendyam Opara**

Vice-Chair of GA Committee on the Human Rights Abuses against the Uyghurs.



## Land Acknowledgement

Vanier College is located on the unceded land known as Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) of indigenous peoples who considered this place as home for centuries. The steward of the land is Kanien'kéha Nation, a part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who have established strong ties between their lifestyles and the land.

Throughout the conference, the VMUN secretariats encourage all participants to acknowledge this, and appreciate the resources we are given access to.



## Introduction

The Uyghurs are a turkic ethnic group indigenous to the north west region of China, in what is known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, also referred to as East Pakistan or the Uyghur region. They are ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and religiously distinct from the majority Han Chinese population which makes 92% of China's population<sup>1</sup>. While Uyghurs take up nearly half of the region's population, it is also composed of Han and other Turkic minorities such as Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrghiz, Tatar who are predominantly muslim. Throughout history, Uyghurs have established their presence in the region as empires and key players, and was officially occupied by the Chinese Communist Party after their short lived independence as East Turkestan Republic<sup>2</sup>. The Xinjiang region is now China's largest province, containing about six of its total area. It plays a geographically strategic role as it connects China to an important trade network to South Asia, Central Asia, Persia, Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and Southern Europe<sup>3</sup>. The region is also rich in energy and natural resources such as coal, iron, zinc, chrome, nickel and copper and produces one sixth of the world's cotton, all facturing China's strong grasp to the region<sup>4</sup>.

In recent years, the Uyghurs community have faced various challenges due to the Chinese government's policies in the region. The government has implemented strict controls and surveillance measures in Xinjiang, including placing over one million Uyghurs and other ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> Subcommittee on International Human Rights and Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs And International Development, "The Human Rights Situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China"; Song, "The Han Chinese (Hanzu, Han people), China Majority Ethnic Group."

<sup>2</sup> Subcommittee on International Human Rights and Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs And International Development, "The Human Rights Situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Hsieh and Falkenheim, "Xinjiang - Economy."





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minorities in "re-education" camps, which the Chinese government refers to as "vocational training centers<sup>5</sup>." Human rights organizations and governments around the world have criticized these actions as a form of cultural and religious suppression, as well as human rights abuses. The situation in Xinjiang has also had broader implications, with some countries and companies facing scrutiny for their business ties to the region. The issue has become a topic of international concern and debate, with some calling for greater attention and action to address the situation in Xinjiang. This background guide focuses on two critical topics the committee will address: forced labor and women's rights. Forced labor is a significant issue in Xinjiang, with many Uyghur individuals being forced to work under exploitative conditions in factories and other industries. The Uyghurs have been systematically targeted and oppressed, resulting in labor and human rights violations. The committee will need to grapple with the question of how to combat this exploitation and ensure that the rights of Uyghur workers are upheld. In addition to forced labor, the treatment of Uyghur women is also a crucial concern. Women in Xinjiang have been subjected to a range of human rights abuses, including forced marriage, forced sterilization, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence. The committee must prioritize gender equality and consider measures that promote the protection of Uyghur women's rights. The United Nations implores this committee to act swiftly and judiciously in ensuring the protection of the Uyghur community.

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<sup>5</sup> "China: Free Xinjiang 'Political Education' Detainees."



## Topic 1: Forced Labour

The Uyghur camps, officially known as "vocational education and training centers," by the government of China, are detention facilities in China's Xinjiang region. They were established in 2017 under the guise of countering extremism and terrorism<sup>6</sup>. However, the camps are widely criticized by the international community for their inhumane treatment of detainees, including the use of forced labor. The primary purpose of the Uyghur camps is to detain individuals who are perceived to be a threat to Chinese national security. These include Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, including Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks, who are suspected of harboring separatist or extremist views. In the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR), the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated that " the number of people detained range from tens of thousands to over a million," individuals that have been detained in these camps<sup>7</sup>. Conditions in the Uyghur camps are notoriously harsh, with detainees subjected to torture, brainwashing, and forced labor. The use of forced labor has become a significant concern for the international community, with reports suggesting that detainees are being used as a source of cheap or free labor for Chinese industries<sup>8</sup>. Detainees are reportedly forced to work long hours in dangerous conditions, with no freedom of movement or ability to refuse work.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in theXinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China."

<sup>8</sup> Xu et al., "Uyghurs for Sale."



## Multinational corporations

Multinational corporations have been implicated in the perpetuation of forced labor in China, particularly in the Xinjiang region where the Uyghur community is concentrated. They have linked major international brands to factories and suppliers that use forced labor to produce goods, including clothing, electronics, and other consumer products. In 2020, the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) updated the TVPRA List to include five items that were produced by forced labor of Muslim minorities in China. These goods consisted of gloves, hair products, textiles, thread/yarn, and tomato products. ILAB also added Polysilicon, produced by forced labor of Muslim minorities in China, to the list in 2021<sup>9</sup>. According to a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, at least 82 well-known global brands are implicated in the use of Uyghur forced labor in their supply chains, including Apple, Nike, and Gap. The report estimates that more than 80,000 Uyghurs were transferred out of Xinjiang to work in factories across China from 2017 to 2019, where they were subjected to forced labor and other abuses<sup>10</sup>. The role of multinational corporations in perpetuating forced labor in China can be traced to their complex and opaque supply chains, which make it difficult to monitor and ensure that labor practices meet ethical standards. Companies often rely on third-party suppliers to produce their goods, which can obscure the conditions under which products are made. This creates a situation in which companies may inadvertently or knowingly support forced labor practices, as they may not have visibility into the practices of their suppliers and subcontractors. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that multinational corporations are aware of the use of forced labor in their

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<sup>9</sup> Bureau of International Labor Affairs, "Against Their Will: The Situation in Xinjiang."

<sup>10</sup> Vicky Xiuzhong Xu, "Uyghurs for sale."



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supply chains. In some cases, companies have continued to work with suppliers despite reports of labor abuses, indicating a lack of accountability and ethical responsibility. Furthermore, many companies have failed to take adequate steps to address the issue of forced labor, such as conducting thorough audits of their suppliers or working with human rights organizations to develop sustainable and ethical labor practices.

According to the report by the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, many multinational corporations have failed to carry out sufficient due diligence to identify and address forced labor risks in their supply chains<sup>11</sup>. The ethical considerations that multinational corporations must confront in their business operations are complex and far-reaching. On the one hand, companies have a responsibility to their shareholders to maximize profits and operate efficiently. However, they also have a responsibility to ensure that their business practices are ethical and do not contribute to human rights abuses. The use of forced labor in supply chains represents a clear violation of international human rights standards and undermines the social responsibility of corporations.

Multinational corporations that perpetuate forced labor in China risk significant reputational damage and financial losses. Consumers and advocacy groups have become increasingly vocal in their opposition to forced labor, and many are calling for boycotts of products associated with labor abuses. Companies that fail to address the issue of forced labor in their supply chains risk losing customers and damaging their brand image, as well as facing potential legal action and regulatory scrutiny. Overall, the role of multinational corporations in perpetuating forced labor

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<sup>11</sup> Congress.gov, *GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS, FORCED LABOR, AND THE XINJIANG AUTONOMOUS REGION*.



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in China is a complex and pressing issue. Companies must take steps to ensure that their supply chains are free from forced labor, and that they are not inadvertently supporting human rights abuses. This requires greater transparency and accountability in supply chain management and a commitment to ethical business practices prioritizing human rights and social responsibility. Only by working together can we hope to end the scourge of forced labor and ensure that all workers are treated with dignity and respect.

### **Policies**

Effective policies are crucial to addressing the issue of forced labor in the Uyghur camps in China. Governments, international organizations, and companies can implement policies to prevent and eliminate forced labor practices. To this end, comprehensive legislation can be introduced that addresses forced labor practices and human rights abuses, holds companies accountable for their supply chain practices, imposes penalties for those who violate labor laws, and provides protection for workers who speak out against abuses. For example, the U.S. Senate has already passed a bipartisan bill, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which aims to prevent the import of goods produced using forced labor in the Uyghur camps<sup>12</sup>. Mandatory due diligence can be required by governments and international organizations to ensure that companies conduct due diligence to ensure that their supply chains are free from forced labor. Moreover, the European Union is currently developing legislation that would require companies to conduct

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<sup>12</sup> Congress.gov, *H.R.6210 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act*.



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mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence, which could help to prevent forced labor practices<sup>13</sup>.

Lastly, transparency requirements can also be imposed by governments and international organizations to require companies to disclose information about their supply chains, including suppliers and production locations<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> European Coalition for Corporate Justice, "Human rights and environmental due diligence."

<sup>14</sup> International Labour Organization, *Labour standards in Global Supply Chains - How to meet them to become more competitive and sustainable*.



**Questions to consider:**

1. How can governments and multinational corporations work together to > address the issue of forced labor in Uyghur in China?
2. What policies can be implemented to prevent multinational > corporations from benefiting from forced labor in Uyghur in China?
3. How can the international community work together to ensure that > human rights are respected in China, particularly with regard to > forced labor of Uyghurs?
4. What steps can be taken to ensure that Uyghur workers are fairly > compensated for their labor and are not subjected to forced labor > practices?
5. What role can civil society organizations and advocacy groups play > in raising awareness about the issue of forced labor in Uyghur in > China?



## **Topic 2: Gender-based crimes against Women in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR)**

### **Uyghur Women's Rights**

The People's Republic of China's mistreatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities influences everyone, despite age and sex. However, the prosecution and its influence on men, women, and children can look different. Considering that women worldwide have experienced inequality and discrimination embedded in history, it is essential to acknowledge how Uyghur and other Turkic minority women are treated in the oppression that targets the whole ethnic population. An example of the historical inequality of Uyghur and other Turkic minority women who are predominantly Muslim is the right to practice religion. The practice of Islam in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has always been heavily state-controlled and all-pervasive until it was finally disrupted in recent years. The XUAR authorities had forbidden minors from attending religious schools and mosques and the spiritual practices and expressions from public schools, such as prohibiting head coverage (for both men and women), fasting, Etc. However, Muslim women's right to practice religion (a right granted under Chinese law) has been heavily restricted in XUAR, which is unique to the region. They are excluded from collective prayer and education sites such as mosques and religious schools, regardless of age. It forges masculinized religious space, renders inferiority to Uyghur Muslim women, and contributes to the patriarchal leadership of religious practice<sup>[16]</sup>.

In recent years, the Chinese prosecution of ethnic minorities in XUAR and the mistreatment of Uyghur women have especially prevailed. The gender-based violence against Uyghur women is





often part of the human rights violation that targets Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim communities in the region and are committed by the CCP in the context of the government's application of counter-terrorism and counter- "extremism" strategies<sup>15</sup>. The gender-based crimes against Uyghur women have been found in the forms of sexual violence, forced sterilization, forced marriage, political homestays, etc.

### **Sexual Violence**

Since 2017, various civil society, researchers, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations have begun reporting that members of Uyghur and other turkic minority communities were missing or had disappeared in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. The so-called "re-education" centers that claim to "eradicate the spread of terrorism and religious extremism" are estimated to detain over a million people<sup>16</sup>. Numerous reports describe the facilities as the most extensive mass detention of minorities since the Holocaust. As gathered from witnesses, former detainees, and Chinese state documents, these facilities depict arbitrary detention centers resembling concentration camps, conducting torture and ill-treatments such as brain-washing, sexual violence, and forced labor<sup>17</sup>.

Numerous survivors, especially women and witnesses of these facilities have reported the common occurrence of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women<sup>18</sup>. Sayragul Sauytbay, a Kazakh doctor and a director at a school, was forced to teach Chinese at the detention

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<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



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center in Eli prefecture when she witnessed female detainees being gang raped by workers daily. Gulbahar Jelilova, an Uyghur survivor, was arbitrarily detained in Sankan prison. She was sexually harassed by a guard, among other torture methods, such as being deprived of water, forced to eat unknown pills, seated in a chair for 24 hours without food, and beaten and electrocuting<sup>19</sup>. Tursunay Ziyawudun, another Uyghur survivor who has escaped the detention camps, has witnessed and experienced rape, among other torture methods<sup>20</sup>.

### Reproductive Rights

China's one of the many violence against Uyghur and other Turkic minority women is the violation of reproductive rights, which closely aligns with the UN Genocide Convention that indicates that "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the groups"<sup>21</sup>. Despite having official family planning policies that allow minorities to have two to three children depending on where they are located, official population figures showed a sudden and significant decline in the birth rate in 2017. In two years, the birth rate in Xinjiang dropped by approximately 48.7%, while the average for China is 10.48% suggesting the CCP's population control targeting the Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities<sup>22</sup>.

In the XUAR, the policies implemented on Uyghur women and girls in and outside detention centers include forcing sterilization by imposing various birth control methods, including IUDs, birth control pills, and unidentified pills and injections. A camp survivor reported being injected

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> By Matthew Hill and Gunter, "Their goal is to destroy everyone': Uighur camp detainees allege systematic rape."

<sup>21</sup> International Criminal Court, "Genocide Convention."

<sup>22</sup> @ Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China."



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with an unknown substance that caused her to lose her menstrual period<sup>23</sup>. Jelilova also witnessed common occurrences of girls and women ceasing to have a menstrual period after being in the facilities. She had also become infertile due to beatings and unknown pills and injections. Under the context of “de-extensification,” PRC conducted family planning policies and indicated that the frequency of birth is associated with extremism<sup>24</sup>. As shown in the official documents of Xinjiang in 2019, the state hoped to subject 80% of the women in four Uyghur majority prefectures to long-term birth control measures. To meet these goals, monetary incentives were also provided to encourage Uyghur women to get sterilization. Many women also spoke of the risk of the internment by not complying with family planning policies<sup>25</sup>. These population control methods suggest PRC’s goal to eliminate the Uyghur and other Turkic minority populations by imposing invasive measures toward women.

## Forced marriage

Numerous reports show evidence of the People's Republic of China's efforts in coerced interethnic marriages, especially between Han Chinese men, Uyghurs, and other turkic minority women. The evidence demonstrates that the Chinese state has actively encouraged and incentivized interethnic marriage. In 2014, in the Cherchen county of Xinjiang, a policy titled "Regarding Reward Measures for Encouraging Ethnic Minority-Han Interethnic Families" was introduced, which granted **10,000 yuan per year** and future benefits and privileges to couples.

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<sup>23</sup> @ ibid.

<sup>24</sup> @ ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Subcommittee on International Human Rights and Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs And International Development, “The Human Rights Situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China.”



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Similar policies and documents were also found in Kashgar city and Payzawat county<sup>26</sup>. Posts encouraging interethnic marriage began appearing on social media, articles, and blogs in 2018. In 2020, a disturbing video from state-run media showed Uyghur women and Han men thanking the CCP for "the beautiful life," The caption explains an "urgent need" for 100 brides<sup>27</sup>. In many of the videos, Uyghur brides were often seen distressed, suggesting the coercion and unwillingness of the marriage. Party officials and village committees often played a significant role in facilitating interethnic marriage. They would bring gifts and benefits such as offering wedding venues for the mixed couple. Rayhangul Aziz, whose new husband is Han, explains that there were favorable policies such as "land, cash, subsidies for housing, children's education and other things."<sup>28</sup> Accounts from women in the Uyghur diaspora shared stories of Uyghur women being forced to marry Han men and threatened with internment and detention for disobedience<sup>29</sup>. As the region goes under strict restrictions on religious, cultural, and linguistic expression, forced marriages further extend the assimilation of ethnic identity.

Chinese society and media have also been found to target Uyghur and Turkic minority women by eroticizing them. For instance, an article was written by a Han man in the Production and Construction Corps, a semi-military government organization, titled "How to win the heart of an Uyghur girl?". He describes Uyghur women and their exotic beauty and how they are the perfect bride and ideal housewives<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, the government also introduced "Becoming Family" programs in recent years. It claims ethnic unity and "de-extensification." It allows Han cadres to

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<sup>26</sup> Worden et al., "Forced Marriage of Uyghur Women: State Policies for Interethnic Marriages in East Turkistan."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Vo, "The manipulation of Uyghur women in the Han ethnic domination organized by the Chinese government - Institut du Genre en Géopolitique."



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stay in Uyghur homes, often sleeping in the same area or sharing a bed with the families to monitor the behavior of Uyghurs (and other Turkic minorities). The programs often target families with Uyghur women whose husbands have been taken into detention centers, with consequences such as sexual harassment and rape<sup>31</sup>. Zumrat Dawut and Qelbinur Sidiq, Uyghur survivors who were forced to teach at camps, reported that Uyghur women and girls were being sexually assaulted in their homes. Another account by Sholpan Amerkhan reveals that her sister-in-law had experienced sexual violence by state workers during the assessment of the programs<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Worden et al., "Forced Marriage of Uyghur Women: State Policies for Interethnic Marriages in East Turkistan."

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



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### Questions to consider:

1. How can governments and NGOs send international journalists and reporters to conduct free and open investigations to further obtain an in-depth image of the region knowing the PRC's restriction and surveillance over free speech and investigations?
2. What does the gender based crimes against Uyghur women entail for other countries?
3. Considering many countries' close economic alliance with China, how can countries deal with their connection with China while also making efforts to condemn the human rights abuse that is taking place in China?
4. What kind of political and legal measures can nations take on a domestic and international level to pressure China to terminate its abuse of minorities and minority women?
5. What can international communities do to save and help the victims of gender based crimes against Uyghur women to recover?



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