

The University of San Francisco

USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center

Doctoral Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects

2022

Genocide in East Turkestan: Exploring the Perspectives of Uyghurs in the Diaspora and their Resistance to Chinese State Violence

Lina Semyonovna Lenberg
University of San Francisco, llenberg@dons.usfca.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/diss>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lenberg, Lina Semyonovna, "Genocide in East Turkestan: Exploring the Perspectives of Uyghurs in the Diaspora and their Resistance to Chinese State Violence" (2022). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 604.
<https://repository.usfca.edu/diss/604>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects at USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.

The University of San Francisco

GENOCIDE IN EAST TURKESTAN: EXPLORING THE PERSPECTIVES OF
UYGHURS IN THE DIASPORA AND THEIR RESISTANCE TO CHINESE STATE
VIOLENCE

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Lina Semyonovna Lenberg
May 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Genocide in East Turkestan: Exploring the Perspectives of Uyghurs in the Diaspora and Their Resistance to Chinese State Violence

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region—or East Turkestan, as many Uyghurs call their Indigenous homeland in northwestern China, are a Muslim ethnic group whose culture and identity are being systematically destroyed by the Chinese state. Since 2016, Uyghurs have been imprisoned in China’s “re-education camps” on an enormous scale, numbering up to three million. Uyghurs have experienced discrimination and marginalization in China for many years, yet relatively little attention has been given to what has now become a set of gross human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide. The purpose of this study was twofold. First, by working in collaboration with Uyghur diaspora members, this study aims to share and amplify their perspectives on the atrocities in their homeland. Five themes and 16 sub themes emerged from data collected through interviews, observations, field notes, document analysis, and archival research. These include 1) intense repression starting in 2014, 2) numerous illegitimate reasons for imprisonment, 3) severed contact with family members since 2017, and 4) exploitation of Uyghur land, property, and culture. The second purpose of this study is to highlight how Uyghurs in diaspora communities around the world have been speaking out in resistance to Chinese hegemony at great risk to themselves and their family members. I examined the efforts of local and international Uyghur organizations, high profile Uyghur individuals, and San Francisco Bay Area Uyghur activism. In this dissertation, I seek to honor the stories of Uyghur diaspora

members, describe their resistance in the face of tremendous struggle, and present data to raise awareness of the magnitude of this human rights issue in the hope of calling people to action and holding governments and international human rights mechanisms accountable to stop the Uyghur genocide.

SIGNATURE PAGE

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

<u>Lina Lenberg</u>	<u>April 4, 2022</u>
Candidate	Date

Dissertation Committee

<u>Dr. Monisha Bajaj</u>	<u>June 1, 2022</u>
Chairperson	

<u>Dr. Susan Roberta Katz</u>	<u>April 4, 2022</u>
-------------------------------	----------------------

<u>Dr. Stephen Zunes</u>	<u>April 4, 2022</u>
--------------------------	----------------------

DEDICATION

To Uyghurs in the diaspora and in East Turkestan, past, present, and future: may your voices be heard and your relatives liberated so you can openly practice your beautiful traditions, speak freely, live without fear, and reunite and celebrate with loved ones. And to my parents, without whom none of this would have been possible. Papa, all of your hard work and struggle provided me with the foundation to do this work, and I know you would have been proud.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the Uyghurs who openly shared their perspectives with me and welcomed me into their community. I am honored to have your trust, and although this dissertation is finished, the work will continue until the genocide comes to an end.

To my dissertation committee, I am immensely thankful for your ongoing support, encouragement, and feedback throughout this process. Dr. Monisha Bajaj, you have been an influential mentor throughout my time at USF. I have learned so much from you, and you have pushed my work to a higher level. I remain mystified by how you are able to do so much, and I am even more inspired by you now than I was the intimidating day we first met six years ago. Thank you for your unwavering humility and approachability, constructive criticism, and opportunities to become a better educator and scholar. You have shown me what it means to be a genuine role model. Dr. Susan Katz, I admire you greatly, both as a professor and a person. Your care and dedication to your students is palpable, and your vibrant engagement with life is contagious. You have modeled what an ideal human rights educator is, and I am forever grateful for your time, wisdom, and starting me on the path to what has become my dissertation. I feel very fortunate to have gotten to know you before your retirement, and you will always be an inspiration to me. Dr. Stephen Zunes, your expertise has been invaluable during the writing of my dissertation. Thank you for helping me to ensure that my work is credible, and for encouraging me to publish my scholarship. I appreciate your dedication to human rights, despite the potential risks. Your feedback has made me a more critical reader, writer, and thinker, for which I am eternally grateful.

To my friends and family, the endless, multiple forms of support you have given me over the years is immeasurable. The effort that went into this dissertation was sustained because of your unconditional love and encouragement. Mom, from my earliest memories you showed me how to be generous, kind, and considerate. This work is an extension of your life experiences and the care you have always provided, even during difficult times. Your home cooked meals have literally fueled my work, and your love has been a continuous source of motivation. Phillip, I love you with all my heart, and I'm proud of you for being the first in our family to get a doctorate. You have kept me going throughout this process. Our shared understanding provided me with much needed reassurance and a constant reminder of who I am, no matter how difficult things became. I am consistently inspired by you, and I am honored to be your sister. Marcy, my sister from another mister, and Semyon's other dochka, the countless hours you spent listening to me at the end of already exhausting days enabled me to persevere and keep things in perspective. Without your friendship and love, I would not be the person I am today. You have modeled what it means to be a true sister and friend, and I am grateful for you every day. Steve, you have experienced all of the ups and downs with me during the last six years, and I know it hasn't been easy. I have been moved by your genuine encouragement, support, and confidence in me, even when I doubted myself. Thank you for pushing through and believing in me all this time.

ABSTRACT	ii
SIGNATURE PAGE	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Background and Need	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Theoretical Framework	6
<i>Genocide as Social Control</i>	6
<i>Settler Colonialism</i>	8
<i>Terror Capitalism</i>	11
Research Questions	13
Educational Significance	13
CHAPTER II: THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE: UNDERSTANDING ITS HISTORY AND DIMENSIONS	17
Oppression and Vilification of Uyghur People	17
<i>Historical, Social, and Economic Context</i>	17
<i>The Camps</i>	29
<i>Leaked Documents</i>	30
<i>Atrocities in the Camps</i>	33
<i>Women in the Camps</i>	36
<i>Organ Harvesting</i>	38
<i>Suicide</i>	40
<i>Deaths and Crematoria</i>	41
<i>From Camps to Prisons</i>	43
Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity	44
<i>Destruction of Mosques and Cemeteries</i>	45
<i>Children’s Names</i>	47
<i>“Guests” in Homes</i>	48
<i>Forced Family Separations and Boarding Schools</i>	50
<i>Forced Birth Control and Sterilization (Outside of Camps)</i>	53
<i>Constantly Surveilled Forced Labor</i>	56
CHAPTER III: SITUATING THE UYGHUR EXPERIENCE IN CHINA’S DEVELOPMENT PROJECT & THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR	60
Chinese Nationalism	62
Post-September 11th Playbook and Global Islamophobia	64
The Belt and Road Initiative	71
<i>Development in Xinjiang</i>	72

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY	75
Restatement of the Purpose	75
Research Design	76
<i>Method One: Interviews</i>	79
<i>Method Two: Observations and Field Notes</i>	80
<i>Method Three: Document Analysis</i>	82
<i>Method Four: Archival Research</i>	82
Data Analysis	84
Population	85
Limitations	85
Positionality	86
Conclusion	87
CHAPTER V: UYGHUR DIASPORA PERSPECTIVES ON THE GENOCIDE IN EAST TURKESTAN	89
Participants	89
Intense Repression Started in 2014	91
<i>The Situation Became Worse in 2016</i>	92
2017	94
<i>Forced or Coerced Return to China</i>	94
<i>Cut off From Family and Friends</i>	96
People Have Been Detained for Illegitimate Reasons	98
<i>Travel Abroad</i>	99
<i>Contact with Family Members Abroad</i>	100
<i>Allegedly Extremist Religious Activities</i>	101
<i>Other Alleged Violations</i>	103
<i>Accusations of Separatism and Terrorism</i>	104
China’s Goal Is the Extermination of the Uyghur People	106
<i>Cultural Genocide Started Long Ago</i>	107
<i>Uyghur Culture and Identity in Xinjiang Are Performative</i>	109
<i>Repression Is Widespread Outside of the Camps</i>	110
<i>Uyghurs’ Land and Property Sold to Han Chinese</i>	111
“It’s Been Seven Years”	113
<i>The Genocide is Political, not Humanitarian</i>	113
<i>Economic Interests Are More Important than Human Rights</i>	114
<i>False Narratives of Western Smear Campaigns Against China</i>	115
<i>International Human Rights Mechanisms Are not Helpful</i>	116
Conclusion	117
CHAPTER VI: UYGHUR DIASPORA RESISTANCE TO CHINESE STATE VIOLENCE	119
Uyghur Organizations and Related Efforts	119
<i>World Uyghur Congress</i>	121
<i>Uyghur Tribunal</i>	123
<i>Uyghur American Association</i>	125

<i>Uyghur Human Rights Project</i>	126
<i>Campaign for Uyghurs</i>	131
Uyghur Times	133
High Profile Individuals	134
<i>Nury Turkel</i>	134
<i>Jewher Ilham</i>	136
San Francisco Bay Area Resistance and Activism	138
<i>Uyghur Wellness Initiative</i>	139
<i>Uyghur Cultural Advancement Association</i>	141
<i>Uyghur Language and Culture School</i>	144
<i>Muslim Cultural Festival</i>	145
<i>Kashgar Photographs</i>	146
<i>Public Protests</i>	147
Conclusion	149
CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND	
CONCLUSION	152
Summary	152
Discussion	153
<i>Uyghur Diaspora</i>	153
<i>Human Rights Education</i>	155
<i>Testimonio</i>	157
<i>Genocide</i>	157
<i>United Nations Treaty Violations</i>	158
Inefficacy of International Human Rights Mechanisms	163
Recommendations	165
<i>For Policy and Practice</i>	165
<i>For Further Research</i>	167
Conclusion	168
REFERENCES	170

CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

I first learned about Uyghurs in 2015 when I was working at an international high school in San Francisco. Our school had a large Chinese student population, and in the middle of the fall semester, a couple of Uyghur brothers entered our program. I began to read about Uyghurs, and I became interested in their culture. I spoke with my students and their relatives about their families, and it was then that I began to learn about the difficult relationship between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which many Uyghurs refer to as East Turkestan. I began my doctoral studies in 2016, and my first semester projects were focused on Uyghurs. I did an oral history project with a Uyghur community member in which I first learned about the extent of the oppression and conflict in XUAR following the Urumqi riots of 2009. I returned to this subject after being contacted by members of the Uyghur community who wanted people to know their stories, and after learning about the massive scale of Uyghur internment in “re-education camps” in East Turkestan. It is my sincere hope that their voices will be heard and their concerns acknowledged, and that the situation in the Uyghur homeland will be regarded as a gross human rights violation amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide, which deserves attention and action by the international community.

As a Russian Jewish immigrant who left my own homeland as a child with my parents because of religious and cultural persecution, and having heard about Russian pogroms and the Holocaust from my earliest memories, I feel particularly compelled to engage in this issue. Although the refrain “Never Again” has been uttered repeatedly in

relation to other crimes against humanity, little has been done to address the plight of the Uyghurs, primarily because of the international community's unwillingness to challenge and apply pressure to China, a leading economic power (Roberts, 2020).

Most popular media sources which have been reporting on the situation in East Turkestan address the mass internment of Uyghurs in camps, forced labor, and the heavy surveillance in the region. Largely missing from the current literature are empowering narratives of Uyghur resistance, as this dissertation offers. As Uyghurs continue to be disappeared and their family members have no recourse, while the international community stands by or neglects to take action because of economic relations with China and global Islamophobia (Ali, 2016; Chatzky & McBride, 2020; Kuo & Kommenda, 2018; Ma, 2019), Uyghurs' identity and culture are being systematically destroyed in the interests of economic development, much like other Indigenous populations around the world have experienced for centuries.

Over the course of writing my dissertation, the language and narratives used to describe the Uyghur situation in East Turkestan have shifted. Roberts (2018), Rogin (2018), Werleman (2019), and others have addressed this as an issue of ethnic cleansing. An independent German scholar, Adrian Zenz, is largely responsible for the large-scale media attention finally being given to the issue since 2018. Zenz (2019) began using the phrase "cultural genocide" to refer to what was happening to the Uyghurs in XUAR. The current situation amounts to outright genocide, which Abbas (2019), the editorial board of *The Washington Post* (2020), and others, including several world governments and reports, have now just recently declared (Gerin, 2021; Mattis, 2021; Newlines Institute, 2021; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021). I intend to contribute to this discussion

and highlight how Uyghurs themselves continue to be actively engaged in their struggle for survival as an ethnic group.

Statement of the Problem

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region—or East Turkestan, as many Uyghurs call their Indigenous homeland in northwestern China, are a marginalized Muslim ethnic group whose culture and identity are being systematically destroyed. Since 2016, Uyghurs have been imprisoned in China’s “re-education camps” on an enormous scale (Werleman, 2019; Roberts, 2018; Rogin, 2018). Uyghurs have experienced discrimination and marginalization in China for many years, yet relatively little attention has been given to what has now become a gross human rights violation amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide. By varying accounts, it is estimated that anywhere from one to three million Uyghurs have been imprisoned in the camps (Greitens et al., 2020; Zenz, 2018). In recent years, reports have emerged from journalists, scholars, Uyghur relatives of people who have been imprisoned in the camps, and former Uyghur prisoners themselves who have been released. These reports include accounts of sexual violence, torture, organ harvesting, forced and coerced sterilization, imposed medications, forced eating of pork (which practicing Muslims avoid), and forced labor—all within (and beyond) the horrible conditions of the camps (Danilova, 2018; Denyer, 2018; Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Hoja, 2019; Lynch, 2019; Newlines Institute, 2021; Rahim, 2019; Zenz, 2020).

I examined this issue as a case study to investigate how Uyghur people are struggling to survive in the face of Chinese nationalism, counterterrorist rhetoric, and repressive policies. I considered the social, political, and economic mechanisms used by

the Chinese government to perpetuate systemic discrimination with impunity against Uyghurs as an ethnic group. Most significantly, my intention was to highlight how Uyghurs have resisted Chinese state oppression and continue to do so in order to preserve their culture and identity.

Background and Need

Uyghurs are one of China's 56 officially recognized ethnic groups. They reside primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in northwestern China, and it is estimated that their total population is around twelve million. Many Uyghurs refer to their homeland as East Turkestan, as "Xinjiang" is the Chinese-given name and means "new frontier." Uyghurs have lived on this land since the 6th century. Uyghurs are Muslim and speak a Turkic language which uses an Arabic-derived writing system. They are known for their music, dancing, poetry, calligraphy, and unique food. They maintain Islamic traditions, and their appearance is distinctly Central Asian. The majority of people in China are Han Chinese, comprising nearly 92% of the total population. In Xinjiang province, Han make up approximately 40% of the population, yet they hold the majority of jobs in the region. In Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, Uyghurs make up only 13% of the total population of 2.1 million people (Kaltman, 2007). There have been violent clashes between the Uyghurs and Han Chinese on and off since the 1990s (Bhattacharya, 2003; Roberts, 2020). Uyghurs have been subjected to repressive state policies and institutionalized discrimination, and many have disappeared, yet until recently, relatively little attention has been drawn to this issue (Holdstock, 2015).

Since 2016, Uyghurs have been imprisoned in "re-education camps," officially called "Vocational Education and Training Centers," on a massive scale. It is estimated

that anywhere from one to three million Uyghurs now reside in these camps, which are likened to concentration camps (Werleman, 2019; Roberts, 2018; Rogin, 2018). With their parents imprisoned, thousands of Uyghur children have been placed in boarding schools, which also serve as indoctrination centers that seek to strip them of their language and culture. Reports have also emerged which reveal China's attempts to limit the population growth of Uyghurs through coerced or forced sterilization. This dissertation highlights the voices of those in the Uyghur diaspora in what has been happening in their homeland in recent history.

Purpose of the Study

What is happening in East Turkestan to the Uyghurs amounts to crimes against humanity and genocide (Gerin, 2021; Mattis, 2021; Newlines Institute, 2021; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum 2021; Werleman, 2019). I hope that amplifying the voices of Uyghur people and their harrowing recent history through this study will lead to greater interest and awareness of the gross human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (East Turkestan). I hope that this, in turn, will draw more attention to this situation so that it will be regarded as a significant human rights issue which deserves closer examination and action by the international community.

Uyghurs in diaspora communities around the world have been speaking out in resistance to Chinese hegemony at great risk to themselves and their family members. As an ethnic group, they are struggling to retain their identity and keep their culture from being exterminated. Members of the Uyghur diaspora in the Bay Area have been willing to speak about their experiences and those of their family members despite the great risk

to their safety. In this dissertation, I seek to honor their stories, highlight their resistance in the face of tremendous struggle, and raise awareness of the magnitude of this human rights issue.

Theoretical Framework

In addition to examining the human rights violations related to the Uyghur genocide, the dimensions of this crisis can be understood by considering Campbell's (2009) theory of genocide as a form of social control. Furthermore, as an Indigenous group that is being oppressed and dispossessed by a hegemonic power in its own homeland, the dynamics of this situation can be explained through a settler colonial lens. The ongoing genocide has been enabled by technological advances of the 21st century, China's growth as a global economic superpower, and its positioning of Uyghurs as a terrorist threat (Byler, 2019; Chatzky & McBride, 2020; Roberts, 2018). As such, terror capitalism is another aspect of this issue which is also discussed below (Byler, 2019).

Genocide as Social Control

The United Nations' definition of genocide, as outlined in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, is one of many existing definitions (Campbell, 2009). Although the U.N. definition is useful in identifying and punishing genocide as a crime under international law, it does not provide an understanding of the social dimensions or logic of genocide. Campbell (2009) suggests that "genocide is moralistic... and (therefore) can be explained with a theory of social control" (p. 151). He points out that, "while genocide typically is condemned by others, it occurs not when moral evaluations are disregarded by its perpetrators, but when they are present and applied" (Campbell, 2009, p. 151). In the case of the campaign against Uyghurs in

XUAR, the Chinese government has justified its repressive and genocidal actions by claiming they are fighting terrorism, with Uyghurs positioned as a supposed threat to the stability of Chinese society.

The term “terrorism” has not been universally agreed upon, though it “has long been characterized as an illegitimate form of armed struggle” (Roberts, 2020, p. 11). Roberts (2020) suggests that “many international actors seek to maintain a vague definition of the phenomenon because such imprecision allows them more latitude to use the label selectively” (p. 11). Following former U.S. President George W. Bush’s declaration of the Global War on Terror in 2001, the terrorist label was used to dehumanize those who were deemed a threat. China seized upon this by convincing both the U.S. government and the UN Security Council in September 2002 to label the little-known Uyghur group, Eastern Turkistan¹ Islamic Movement (ETIM), a terrorist organization. Following this designation, all Uyghurs were treated with suspicion, despite ETIM presenting “no real threat to China or the world” (Roberts, 2020, p. 99). ETIM was finally removed from the United States’ terrorist organization list in November 2020 (Kashgarian, 2020).

Campbell (2009) says that “genocide is normally a form of social control—a response to behavior defined as deviant” (p. 155). Although China has used the notion of Uyghurs as a terrorist threat to rationalize and justify the government’s actions, the actual targeted deviant behavior is Uyghurs’ practicing of Islam and maintaining their cultural identity. In the logic of genocide, “The perpetrators express moral grievances against the targeted ethnic group” (Campbell, 2009, p. 155). In addition to terrorism, the broad moral

¹ The spelling of East Turkistan/East Turkestan varies. Both versions are correct and correspond to the respective source throughout this dissertation.

grievances expressed by China against the Uyghurs include “separatism,” which can be considered a call for self-determination, and “extremism,” which is “any expression of Islam not approved by the state” (Roberts, 2020, p. 94). By 2014, these grievances had been established as logic in XUAR, and “all of the required procedures were already being put into place for carrying out the systematic destruction of Uyghur identity we are witnessing today” (Roberts, 2020, p. 203). Mass internment and indoctrination in the camps has been one attempt to eradicate Uyghur culture by force. The extension of this project—“the omnipresent implicit threat of internment”—has stoked fear into the Uyghur population, which, in turn, has coerced Uyghurs to comply with state assimilationist programs, as refusal to participate “would raise suspicion from the state of ‘extremist’ inclinations” (Roberts, 2020, p. 222). Thus, the genocide of Uyghurs in XUAR can be understood as a multi-faceted, deliberate, planned, coordinated form of social control on the part of the Chinese government.

Settler Colonialism

Uyghurs consider themselves to be Indigenous to Xinjiang province (East Turkestan). I believe their plight can be partially understood through a settler colonial lens, drawing from Patrick Wolfe’s (2006) seminal piece on “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native.” Wolfe (2006) states that “The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism” (p. 388). Scholars have recently begun to characterize modern China’s historical relationship to Uyghurs and their homeland as a colonial “process of domination that continues and... is intensifying in the present” (Roberts, 2020, p. 23). Wolfe (2006) reminds us that “settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (p. 388). China has never recognized Uyghurs as the

Indigenous population of XUAR (East Turkestan). As such, China has not acknowledged that Uyghurs deserve “either sovereignty over the region or special rights to self-governance within it” (Roberts, 2020, p. 24). Instead, Uyghurs have long suffered under repressive Han Chinese rule.

Wolfe (2006) suggests that there is a relationship between genocide and settler colonialism, which he calls “the logic of elimination” (p. 387). He states that “elimination is an organizing principle of settler-colonial society” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Furthermore, Wolfe (2006) says that the primary motivation driving settlers toward elimination is their desire for territory. Roberts (2020) points out that there have been opportunities in China’s long history “that could have allowed for the peaceful integration of the Uyghur homeland into modern China” (p. 60). This would have required China’s acknowledgement of the region’s history of colonization, as well as Uyghurs’ Indigenous status. Instead, “the People’s Republic of China (PRC) would adopt a strategy that would ultimately marginalize and dehumanize the Uyghur people as a whole” (Roberts, 2020, p. 60). In the decade following the declaration of the Global War on Terror, the atmosphere in XUAR grew increasingly tense. As Roberts (2020) points out, “these tensions had little to do with ‘terrorism’... Rather, (they) had much more to do with development, settler colonialism, and the threat of assimilation” (p. 129).

Wolfe (2006) states that, “settler colonialism destroys to replace” (p. 388). As the review of the literature will show, Uyghur holy sites, including mosques, shrines, and cemeteries, have been desecrated and demolished throughout XUAR as part of a coordinated campaign since the mid-2000s (Hiatt, 2019; Kashgarian, 2019; Kuo, 2019; Rivers, 2020; Sintash, 2019). The few mosques which remain have had their domes,

minarets, and religious symbols and inscriptions removed (Hiatt, 2019; Kashgarian, 2019; Sintash, 2019). In many cases, the religious inscriptions have been replaced with party banners (Hiatt, 2019). Moreover, the city of Kashgar, which is considered a historical and cultural center for Uyghurs, has been modernized to serve as an international commercial hub. The Old City of Kashgar was demolished in the early 2000s, despite containing “most of the best-preserved examples of traditional Central Asian urban residential architecture in the world” (Roberts, 2020, p. 137). Along with the destruction of important cultural and historical sites, the modernization of Kashgar displaced Uyghurs, removing them from their homes by force. It should be noted that Kashgar’s geographic location positions it as a “center of the PRC’s regional trade, production, and commerce” (Roberts, 2020, p. 137).

China’s development of Xinjiang has not been limited to Kashgar. Traditional Uyghur communities have been displaced and symbols of Uyghur culture have been erased throughout the region. In Urumqi in the early 2000s, the primary Uyghur neighborhood (Erdaoqiao) was turned into “a tourist attraction and a center of formal commerce, establishing a new expansive and sanitized bazaar boasting the ‘largest market of ethnic minority goods in Xinjiang’, an ‘ethnic dance ballroom’, and numerous new commercial buildings” (Roberts, 2020, p. 138). Wolfe (2006) says that “renaming is central” to settler colonial projects (p. 388). In Xinjiang, the CCP has been capitalizing on the exploitation of Uyghur culture and identity under the “ethnic” label to serve its own economic aims, while presenting a false sense of ethnic harmony to tourists.

Wolfe (2006) also suggests that “assimilation is one of a range of strategies of elimination” (p. 401). In the early 2000s, the PRC imposed its “bilingual” education

program in Xinjiang, which essentially required everyone to learn Mandarin. In 2002, the state closed Xinjiang University's Uyghur language track. In 2004, the regional government mandated that "all students at all educational levels... receive instruction in Mandarin" (Roberts, 2020, p. 139). These policies were coupled with a reduction of non-Mandarin publications and radio and television programs. In addition to targeting the Uyghur language, the CCP employed an "aggressive strategy of economic and cultural integration", particularly in southern Xinjiang (Roberts, 2020, p. 149). This led to "massive urban development in the Uyghur cities of the south" while also "helping (to) tip the demographic balance in these urban centers increasingly towards the Han" (Roberts, 2020, p. 151). Today's mass internment and indoctrination of Uyghurs in the camps can be viewed as the extrapolation of these earlier assimilationist policies.

Terror Capitalism

Byler (2019) proposes that since the Urumqi riots of 2009, China has engaged in a continuously growing process of Uyghur dispossession, which he calls "terror capitalism" (p. 24). By positioning Uyghurs as a terrorist threat, China has been able to justify the psychological terror imposed upon Uyghurs in their homeland, while simultaneously exploiting their land for profit by developing global cities and infrastructure in XUAR as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, Byler (2019) suggests that the Chinese counter-terrorism project became a Uyghur human engineering project, which has now become a growth industry for the state.

Terror capitalism has been made possible because of the technological advances of the 21st century. The scale of how it is being used to dominate, exploit, and socially eliminate Uyghurs as part of a state-directed human engineering project is unique to

China. The ubiquitous surveillance of Uyghurs in XUAR and throughout China, along with the routinization of confrontations with police has turned “the violence of the human engineering project into a technical operation that masks the shattering of families and lives as a kind of standard operating procedure” (Byler, 2019, p. 329). Byler (2019) also addresses China’s role in globalization and development, which includes “clearing space for new forms of investment and profit” (Byler, 2019, p. 25). The economic partnerships China has forged with other countries explains, in part, why many nations have not held China accountable for its actions in East Turkestan.

Since the publication of Byler’s thesis, an abundance of evidence has emerged which shows that Uyghurs have been forced into low-wage labor under oppressive conditions on a large scale (Buckley & Ramzy, 2020; Fifield, 2020; Xu, 2020; Zenz, 2019). In 2019, Byler suggested that terror capitalism in China was “focused... more on the ways that capital comes to imagine the future in terms of racial-ethnic-national-religious homogeneity” rather than labor exploitation (p. 26). It is now known that terror capitalism in China includes labor exploitation, in addition to Uyghurs being “subjected to experiments in policing, mass internment and indoctrination processes without recourse to legal protections” (Byler, 2019, p. 27).

The combined impacts of settler colonialism and terror capitalism on the Uyghur population in East Turkestan have amounted to genocide and crimes against humanity. Campbell’s understanding of genocide as a form of social control is consistent with Byler’s (2019) description of the Uyghur human engineering project in that “moral evaluations... are present and applied” (Campbell, 2009, p. 151). Byler describes terror capitalism as, ultimately, “a process of social elimination of a people” (Byler, 2019, p.

24). The review of the literature in Chapters II and III show that Uyghurs are suffering both physical and social elimination, and their culture and identity are being systematically destroyed.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of North American Uyghurs of the diaspora on the genocide happening in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (East Turkestan)?
2. How have Uyghurs of the diaspora engaged in acts of resistance against Chinese, state-sanctioned, colonial hegemony?

Educational Significance

Ercilasun and Ercilasun (2018) suggest that diaspora communities have “become prominent non-state actors in today’s increasingly globalized world” (p. 87). As such, they “contribute to our understanding of the complex organization of contemporary transnational politics” (Ercilasun & Ercilasun, 2018, p. 88). Uyghur diaspora communities exist all over the world, and it is estimated that 1-1.6 million Uyghurs reside in these communities outside of China (Amnesty, 2020). The first wave of Uyghur emigration from China started in the 1960s. From the 1960s to the early 1990s, most Uyghurs leaving China settled in Turkey, forming a sizable diaspora community. To date, the largest Uyghur diaspora community lives in Turkey, numbering approximately 60,000 people (Ercilasun & Ercilasun, 2018). Significant numbers of Uyghurs also reside in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan (Amnesty, 2020). In the 1990s, Uyghur diaspora communities began growing in Europe and the United States. Uyghurs moved primarily to Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Belgium. In the U.S., most

Uyghurs settled in Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles (Debata and Tian, 2011).

Through the early 2000s, Uyghurs continued to leave China to settle elsewhere or study abroad. In the 2010s, travel became much more restrictive for Uyghurs, and the Chinese government began pressuring Uyghurs living overseas to return to Xinjiang (De Bourmont, 2018). From 2017 to the present, Uyghurs of the diaspora have been widely targeted and harassed by the Chinese government with the threat of harming their family members who are back in Xinjiang (Amnesty, 2020; De Bourmont, 2018; Haas, 2019). A Uyghur in Germany reported that he was contacted by a Chinese official who ominously said, “You’re living overseas, but you need to think of your family while you’re running around doing your activism work in Germany... You need to think of their safety” (Haas, 2019, p. 2). Similarly, Uyghurs living in diaspora communities in the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and France have “all complained of threats against family members back in Xinjiang, and some were asked to spy for China” (Haas, 2019, p. 2). I have heard similar reports from Uyghurs in the United States.

In 2018 it was reported that China was “creating a global registry of the Uyghur diaspora, even if they are citizens of other countries” (Perper, 2018, p. 1). A Uyghur in Germany reported that “a Chinese agent asked for photos of Eid and other celebrations, and specifically asked for information on Uyghurs who had recently arrived in Europe” (Haas, 2019, p. 3). Uyghur family members in Xinjiang have also been targeted and coerced by Chinese government officials to obtain personal information from relatives living abroad, including license plate numbers, bank account details, home and work addresses, and identification (ID) cards (Perper, 2018).

Reports from 2017 to the present reveal a severing of family ties between Uyghurs of the diaspora and those in Xinjiang, with relatives in Xinjiang telling family members abroad to stop contacting them, or simply cutting off contact. I first learned of this in 2018 when Uyghur college students studying in the United States were suddenly told by their parents that they were on their own and had to fend for themselves. A Uyghur in Scandinavia reported that his relatives were too afraid to speak to him, either hanging up the phone when they heard his voice or not answering at all (De Bourmont, 2018). He also said that he learned about his mother's imprisonment in a camp by exchanging coded messages with a cousin outside of Xinjiang. James Millward, a respected scholar on Xinjiang, stated that "many families have had to delete contacts off their phones", presumably for their own and/or their relatives' safety (De Bourmont, 2018, p. 4). Based on their direct experience and shared history, Uyghurs of the diaspora provide a unique transnational perspective on what has been happening in Xinjiang, which, as described above, has reached beyond the borders of their homeland.

In addition to the value of learning about the Uyghur situation itself, by examining their situation as a case study, I believe parallels can be drawn between oppressive mechanisms in China and other societies, including the United States. By broadening the scope of the findings and implications of this study, the forces of oppression and genocide may be identified and addressed in the hope that they can be resisted and eventually dismantled. I suggest that raising awareness of the situation in East Turkestan and identifying the mechanisms of repression may be a way to work toward justice in multiple contexts. I believe that engaging students, including those from

China, in critical pedagogy in order to consider the issues surrounding this conflict, and conflict in general, may be a way to raise their critical consciousness (Freire, 2000).

Furthermore, learning about the conventions and related documents which uphold human rights globally is an important piece of human rights education. Studying these documents within the context of a real life situation, such as this one, may be useful in understanding their value and applications (Bajaj, 2017; Mihr & Schmitz, 2007).

Analyzing the Uyghur situation as a case study may be used to facilitate a meaningful path to working toward justice, both with respect to the situation in Xinjiang and otherwise.

The following two chapters discuss the history and dimensions of the Uyghur genocide in East Turkestan and situate the Uyghur experience within the context of the Global War on Terror and China's Belt and Road Initiative. The current literature on this subject elucidates many of the repressive mechanisms used against the Uyghur people and shows how these tactics have circumscribed Uyghur life and crushed their identity. The review of the literature discusses how China has implemented the logic of exploitation and profitability to subjugate Uyghurs, quash dissent, and eliminate their culture in their own Indigenous homeland through a colonial relationship of domination.

CHAPTER II: THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE: UNDERSTANDING ITS HISTORY AND DIMENSIONS

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in northwestern China are a marginalized Muslim ethnic minority group who have suffered under China's repressive rule for decades. They are currently being imprisoned in "re-education camps," prisons, and forced labor facilities on an enormous scale, and their culture is being systematically destroyed (Hoshur, 2019; Roberts, 2018; Rogin, 2018; Werleman, 2019; Wright, Watson, & Westcott, 2021; Zenz, 2019). In the review of the literature, I provide some background to show the multiple ways in which Uyghurs are being controlled and oppressed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). I will also discuss the Global War on Terror, post-September 11th tactics, and the rise of global Islamophobia, which have justified and enabled China's actions in East Turkestan. Furthermore, I describe the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which relies upon the capital city of East Turkestan, Urumqi, and the heart of the Uyghur homeland, Kashgar, for its success. The development of the infrastructure for the BRI coincides with the mass internment of Uyghurs in camps.

Oppression and Vilification of Uyghur People

Historical, Social, and Economic Context

A mountain range divides East Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, XUAR, or Xinjiang) into northern and southern regions. Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, is in the northern part of XUAR and is the primary center of manufacturing and business. Han Chinese make up approximately 80 percent of the population here. This is primarily due to migration from inner China since 1949 (Holdstock, 2015). The southern part of Xinjiang is known as the Tarim Basin and is mostly desert (the Taklamakan desert). Most

Uyghurs, about 80%, live in this southern region. It wasn't until 1884 that the region was “unified” into one province by the rulers of the Qing dynasty. “Xinjiang” means “new territory” in Chinese, and this name dates back to this time. Many Uyghurs consider “Xinjiang” to be the oppressor’s name given to the region and prefer to refer to their homeland as “East Turkestan.” Uyghurs consider themselves to be Indigenous to the Tarim Basin, and they are believed to have settled there in the sixth century CE (Kaltman, 2007).

Figure 2.1: Map of China and East Turkestan



In the 1950s, the Communist Party began to take control of Xinjiang. In 1954, the Bingtuan, a government military group which later became known as the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, was formed under the Communist Party leader Mao Zedong's orders (Millward, 2007). The Bingtuan was involved in several incidents of armed conflict. In October of 1955, the province was officially named "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," but it was clear that "autonomous" did not mean "independent" (Millward, 2007). Beginning in 1956, Maoist policies were enacted which created "a climate of communist puritanism, xenophobia and rejection of cultural artifacts and expression" (Millward, 2007, p. 254). One of the effects in Xinjiang was "heightened official intolerance and repression of many aspects of... ethnic cultures" (Millward, 2007, p. 254).

Between 1959 and 1961, over a million Han arrived in Xinjiang, most of whom were migrants looking for work. In the late sixties, there were numerous armed conflicts in Xinjiang as part of the Cultural Revolution, a policy under Mao's government that introduced the "official intolerance of non-Han customs and erosion of minority rights" (Millward, 2007, p. 276). The Cultural Revolution attacked "the three 'olds' (old ideas, old customs, and old habits)" (Roberts, 2020, p. 48). Older Han who maintained traditional Chinese customs and ideas also suffered during this time under the new, youth-propelled regime. For Uyghurs, the Cultural Revolution resulted in the destruction of many cultural and religious institutions, and it "temporarily curtailed the use of the Uyghur language in official documents, broke up communities... and fostered an uneducated generation of Uyghurs who had no sustained access to standard education"

(Roberts, 2020, p. 49). With the death of Mao in 1976, gradual change began to take place.

The 1980s were a relatively peaceful time, and the government invested in developing the region of Xinjiang. During this time, there was a greater tolerance for religious diversity and expression. “Xinjiang’s Islamic Association was allowed to meet for the first time in 17 years; an Arabic alphabet was reinstated; and thousands of mosques were built or reopened” (Holdstock, 2015, p. 55). Though this new tolerance was certainly a change for the better, it was not necessarily motivated by a respect for Muslims or ethnic unity. During this time, China was developing relationships with potential business partners from the Muslim world, and repression of Muslims at home would not have aided in these relationships (Holdstock, 2015). Changes in agricultural policies also took place in this new era. This benefited Uyghurs who had family farms, though the government retained control of much of the arable land. Nonetheless, living standards improved considerably for many people in Xinjiang in the early 1980s (Holdstock, 2015).

East Turkestan contains a wealth of natural resources, including coal, oil, natural gas, minerals and cotton. In the 1990s the Chinese government organized its efforts to develop the region with a focus on its natural resources (Millward, 2007). There were significant changes in urban planning which demolished old housing and built new apartment blocks, created new city centers and shopping centers, and commercialized former public spaces. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991—and the subsequent independence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan—resulted in an intensification of security in XUAR out of fear of Uyghur resistance to Chinese rule. “Between 1990

and 1995, security forces arrested some 1,831 Uyghurs under suspicion of nationalist and religious sentiments” (Roberts, 2020, p. 54). During this time, with promises of economic opportunity, increasing numbers of Han were migrating into Xinjiang to find work. As this continued, “Uyghurs and other minorities were getting relatively poorer while the proceeds from the exploitation of Xinjiang’s natural resources were fueling the development of infrastructure and Han-majority cities in the north” (Holdstock, 2015, p. 92).

Han and Uyghur communities became increasingly segregated, both physically and culturally, and it was in the 1990s that a new desire for independence took hold and separatist groups were formed. In April 1990, Uyghurs protested against forced family planning, nuclear weapons testing in the remote southeastern region of Xinjiang, and oil exploitation throughout the region. This protest began peacefully in a mosque and then turned into a violent riot, now referred to as “the Baren uprising” (Bovington, 2004). Just a few years earlier in 1985, Uyghur students in Beijing had also protested against nuclear testing in Xinjiang. During the Baren uprising, there were calls to overthrow communism and claims that “Islam would conquer Marxism-Leninism” (Bovington, 2004, p. 33). In the history of Xinjiang, there have been two East Turkestan Republics: the first established in 1933 and was dissolved in 1934, and the second formed in 1944 and existing until 1946 (Millward, 2007). Since the 1990s, the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM), which is sometimes also called the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, has advocated for an independent, self-governing Xinjiang named “East Turkestan.” This desire for separatism and independence became and continues to be a

major source of tension between Uyghurs and the Chinese government, as well as among Uyghurs themselves.

On February 4, 1997 in the remote city of Ghulja (Yining) in western Xinjiang, police arrested approximately 200 people at mosques and private study groups. The following morning, February 5th, about 500 young Uyghur men protested peacefully against the arrests. Riot police attacked them with dogs and fired into the crowd, eventually arresting hundreds of people. Later that day, there was another protest by the relatives of the men who had been arrested, including women and children. Riot police used tear gas and water cannons on them, and there were more arrests (Holdstock, 2015). Over the next few days, more people got involved, and the actions turned violent. Property was destroyed and cars were set on fire. It is not known exactly how many people died in this event, but it is referred to by Uyghur activists as “the Ghulja massacre” (interviews). The Chinese government referred to the Uyghurs involved as “rioters,” which later became “separatists,” which has now become synonymous with “religious extremists” and “terrorists.”

The Ghulja incident brought some international attention to the ethnic conflict in Xinjiang, but the situation remained relatively peaceful for several years afterward. It wasn't until 2009 that a greater awareness of the issues came into public view. On July 5, 2009, Uyghur university students in Urumqi protested against the brutal, mob-instigated killing of Uyghur workers at a toy factory in the eastern city of Shaoguan in Guangdong province a couple of weeks before on June 25th. Unsubstantiated rumors on the internet suggested that Uyghur male workers had raped a Han Chinese woman. A violent clash ensued in which “Han workers ambushed sleeping Uyghur workers in their dormitory”

(Roberts, 2020, p. 146). Over the course of the night, two Uyghur men were killed, and 120 workers were injured, most of them Uyghurs (Jacobs, 2009). It was reported that more than 1,000 workers had been involved in the violence. Authorities were not commenting on the incident, and no one was being held responsible for the killings (Holdstock, 2015).

At the time, Uyghurs were getting their news primarily through websites, one of which was run by Ilham Tohti, who was imprisoned for life on charges of “inciting separatism” in 2014. Through text messaging and online message boards, a demonstration was coordinated in Urumqi on July 5th at People’s Square at 5pm. Though the killing of the men at the toy factory was the official reason for the demonstration, the violence “unleashed in Urumqi in July 2009 was a boiling over of the tensions that development, settler colonialism, and Uyghur marginalization in the region had fostered” (Roberts, 2020, p. 147).

It is estimated that about 1,000 Uyghurs gathered in the square for a peaceful protest. Police and soldiers were present and tried to disperse the crowd, though unsuccessfully. The crowd migrated south through the city and picked up more people along the way. Police had set up a roadblock to prevent them from entering Han neighborhoods, and the crowd was met with tear gas and warning shots. “According to many accounts, there were beatings and shootings as well” (Holdstock, 2015, p. 187). Some of the protesters began throwing stones at the soldiers and police. It is thought that this is the point at which the protest turned into a riot, which ended up continuing through the night. The protesters entered different neighborhoods, set cars and buildings on fire, and attacked Han residents. Many people were beaten and killed. The situation was not

brought under control until the next day, July 6th, when an additional 20,000 security forces came into the city (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

On July 7th, groups of Han gathered with sticks, meat cleavers, metal pipes and shovels to retaliate against the Uyghurs. “Uyghur shops were smashed and burnt, stalls were turned over, and there were a number of beatings and murders” (Holdstock, 2015, p. 192). According to a Human Rights Watch report (2009), the total number of people killed in the riots was officially reported as 197, most of whom were Han, and nearly 2,000 people were injured, though the actual numbers are thought to be much higher. The events of the Urumqi riots are considered to be the “worst ethnic violence in (the People’s Republic of China) PRC history,” and they marked a breakdown in relations between Uyghurs and Han (Roberts, 2018, p. 242). The aftermath has continued in East Turkestan to the present day.

In the days following the Urumqi riots, Chinese authorities blocked the internet, international phone lines and text messaging, and security forces detained hundreds of Uyghur men and teenage boys. The Human Rights Watch (2009) report states that,

According to witnesses, the security forces sealed off entire neighborhoods, searching for young Uyghur men. In some cases, they first separated the men from other residents, pushed them to their knees or flat on the ground, and, at least in some cases, beat the men while questioning them about their participation in the protests. Those who had wounds or bruises on their bodies, or had not been at their homes during the protests, were then taken away. (pp. 5-6)

The families of the men and boys who were taken by police were unable to get any information about where they were taken or what was going to happen to them—they had

“disappeared” (Human Rights Watch, 2009). According to interviews, these enforced disappearances continue today on an even larger scale, and many Uyghurs live in fear that their children will be next.

A number of violent incidents involving Uyghurs have taken place since the Urumqi riots in different parts of China. Several of the most noteworthy include the following. In 2013, a Uyghur family drove a car into a crowd in Beijing in Tiananmen Square. The car exploded, and the family and 5 other people were killed, and more than 40 people were injured (Holdstock, 2015). Accounts of this incident vary. In March of 2014 in Kunming, a city in southern China, Uyghurs armed with knives attacked people in a train station, killing 29 and leaving 130 wounded. In response to this incident, China’s president Xi Jinping said the government would “sternly punish the terrorists” (Buckley, 2014, p. 3). This event is commonly referred to as “China’s 9/11.” In May of 2014, there were two major incidents in Urumqi. Early in the month, a bomb went off at a train station, and this was coupled with a knife attack. One person was killed and 79 were wounded. This attack took place just a few hours after President Xi made his first visit to Xinjiang (Buckley, 2018). Later in the month, 31 people were killed and more than 90 injured when cars drove into an open-air market and threw explosives out of their windows. These attacks were blamed on “Islamic militants from Xinjiang,” and Chinese President Xi vowed again to “severely punish terrorists” (Kanat, 2014).

Roberts (2020) states that there is no evidence to suggest these violent acts were “undertaken by a larger organization or that the attackers had the support of groups outside China” (p. 170). Instead, “the attackers appeared to be acting on their own and responding to their particular situation” (Roberts, 2020, p. 171). Nonetheless, following

these attacks, “the Han Islamophobic fear of Uyghurs increased significantly” throughout China, and President Xi promised to “go all out to maintain social stability... and crush the ‘violent terrorists’” (Roberts, 2020, p. 171).

Relations between Uyghurs and Han have become progressively worse in recent years. Both groups hold biases and are prejudiced against the other, though conditions for Uyghurs have steadily deteriorated, while opportunities for Han have continued to increase (Kaltman, 2007). Divisions among Uyghurs themselves also exist. Certainly not all Uyghurs support or are involved in violent activity, yet they are not given opportunities to participate in society because of stereotyping and discrimination. Even before the riots, a Uyghur businessman stated,

It’s difficult for Uyghurs to excel in a Han society that is racist toward its non-Han members. It’s too bad that Han government policies, including hiring practices and education policies hold Uyghurs back. It’s too bad that many Uyghurs lash back by committing crimes, giving Uyghurs an even worse name and causing more Han to view us with disdain, in turn causing the Uyghurs to hate the Han even more. It’s a terrible cycle, and one that will not be broken. Xinjiang will not be freed. (Kaltman, 2007, p. 133)

In numerous interviews conducted with Han and Uyghurs in different parts of China, Kaltman found that both groups presumed that the other disliked them and would easily turn against them (Kaltman, 2007). Most of the Uyghurs Kaltman interviewed believed that their ability to achieve economic and social stability was limited by racism within the Han-dominated society. The Han who he interviewed generally believed that Uyghurs limited themselves by not making more of an effort to integrate into their

society, thereby affirming the Uyghur perspective that the Han feel their culture is dominant (Kaltman, 2007). These interviews took place before the Urumqi riots of 2009. By all accounts, there was a dramatic shift in society after the riots, and the situation became even more difficult for Uyghurs. Society became more segregated, living conditions deteriorated, and jobs became virtually nonexistent, even for educated Uyghurs.

In May 2014, following the aforementioned attacks, the Chinese government launched a new campaign in XUAR called “Strike Hard Against Violent Terrorism,” commonly referred to as the “Strike Hard Campaign” (Human Rights Watch, 2018). “Strike hard” tactics were implemented across China in the 1990s as part of a general crackdown on crime; however, in Xinjiang, the campaign was focused on Uyghurs. Stemming from the 1990s, “the PRC launched a series of security campaigns to combat Uyghur separatism in the XUAR... which increased in their intensity over the course of the decade” (Roberts, 2018, p. 233). Amnesty International (1999) reported that thousands of Uyghurs had been arbitrarily detained, and many of the detainees had been tortured. Furthermore, many prisoners—both men and women—were executed (Amnesty International, 1999).

Close surveillance, interrogation, detainment, and punishment of Uyghurs continued in Xinjiang in the early 2000s, and by 2010, the message was “that all Uyghurs should be considered as potential terrorists or at least as potential sympathizers with terrorism” (Roberts, 2018, p. 243). In 2014, large-scale, government sanctioned raids on Uyghur homes and businesses began to take place at all hours of the day and night under the new “Strike Hard Campaign” (Kashgary, 2014). This iteration of the crackdown

focused on finding religious materials by targeting Uyghur cell phones, computers, printed materials, DVDs, and CDs, often by forcibly entering people's homes. Uyghurs who refused to cooperate were shot by armed police (Kashgary, 2014). Moreover, Uyghurs who worked for the government "were being pressured into signing written pledges to renounce Islam" during this time (Kashgary, 2014, p. 243). By all accounts, these repressive policies surged when Chen Quanguo became the Communist Party Secretary in XUAR in 2016 (Dooley, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2018; Roberts, 2018). James Millward, a respected scholar on Uyghurs and Xinjiang who has been studying the region for three decades, said in an op-ed in the New York Times that "state repression in Xinjiang has never been as severe as it has become since early 2017" (Millward, 2018, p. 1). Other scholars agree that the situation is becoming progressively worse (Roberts, 2018; Rogin, 2018; Zenz, 2019).

In my discussions with Uyghurs of the diaspora in 2016, I learned that police in East Turkestan were at liberty to check identification and search their bags at will, and arrests without any explanation were common. At the time, out of fear of being arrested and subsequently disappearing, Uyghurs did not go out at night, and many tried to send their children abroad to keep them safe. Since then, the situation has become progressively worse with the mass introduction of "re-education" or "vocational training" centers, which have been likened to concentration camps (Abbas, 2019; Iones, 2019; Simmons, 2019, Stewart, 2019). Uyghurs now consider themselves lucky if they know fewer than 10 people who have spent time in the camps.

The Camps

In 2016, Chen Quanguo was appointed the Communist Party Secretary in XUAR after holding this role for five years in Tibet. Chen was also appointed to the exclusive 25-member Politburo in China, which is the elite, Communist Party group responsible for making all significant decisions in China. Chen is a former soldier who became a politician, and he is widely regarded as the architect of the crackdown on Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang, including mass detention in the camps (Buckley, 2018; Wong, 2019).

News of the camps, or “large internment facilities,” began to emerge in English in 2017 (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). Human Rights Watch released a report calling on the Chinese government to “free people held in unlawful ‘political education’ centers in Xinjiang and shut them down” (Human Rights Watch, 2017, p. 1). Radio Free Asia was the first news organization to announce the presence of “re-education camps” in Xinjiang in English (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). In this article, Radio Free Asia claimed that thousands of Uyghurs were locked away in what were then called “Professional Education Schools,” formerly known as “Socialism Training Schools” and “Counter-extremism Training Schools,” for being religious (Muslim) or having relatives abroad (Sulaiman, 2017). Widespread international news and an understanding of the extent of the network of camps and the scale of the numbers of prisoners didn’t start until almost a year later in May 2018 when Shawn Zhang, a Chinese law student in Canada, found evidence of the camps by using satellite imagery and through Chinese government documents. Zhang observed that the “camps really don’t look like vocational skills

training centres like the Chinese government calls it. It looks more like a prison—they're heavily guarded with razor-wire everywhere" (Azizi, 2018, p. 1).

Another independent researcher, Adrian Zenz, brought the full scale of the problem into public view by publishing a paper about the extent of the camps in May 2018. Zenz (2018) used Zhang's work, along with his own extensive research, to uncover a vast network of camps. Zenz (2018) estimated that the number of detainees in the camps ranged from several hundred thousand to over one million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. Zenz also referred to the actions of the Chinese government in Xinjiang as "the country's most intense campaign of coercive social re-engineering since the end of the Cultural Revolution" (Zenz, 2018, p. 124). The contributions of Zenz's work to raising awareness of the situation in Xinjiang cannot be overstated. From 2018 to the present day, he has continued to research and speak out about the gross human rights abuses carried out in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. In 2019, Zenz and other scholars began using the term "cultural genocide" to refer to what was happening to the Muslim minority in Xinjiang.

Leaked Documents

In November 2019, The New York Times published a set of highly classified, leaked Chinese government documents from 2017, which clearly revealed the deliberate plan to detain Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang en masse in indoctrination camps (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). The documents were obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and consisted of over 400 pages. These documents are referred to as "The China Cables" (BBC, 2019; Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). The China Cables include 161 pages of instructions for controlling the Uyghur population

in Xinjiang, along with orders on how to treat detainees in the camps, emphasizing “showing no mercy” (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). These orders demand that no one be allowed to escape and that “behavioral violations” are to be met with discipline and punishment (BBC, 2019; Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). The extreme monitoring and control of every aspect of a detainee’s life in the camps—including sleeping, using the toilet, bathing, eating, and studying—are detailed in the documents. Furthermore, the officials working in the camps are instructed to “promote the repentance and confession of the students for them to understand deeply the illegal, criminal and dangerous nature of their past activity,” even though no crimes have been committed (BBC, 2019, p. 1).

The China Cables also include a meticulous script for officials to use when speaking to young people who return home from studying elsewhere to find their parents, other relatives, and neighbors missing. Local officials were instructed to contact students as soon as they returned, answer their questions using the script, and threaten that “their (the students’) behavior could either shorten or extend the detention of their relatives” (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019, p. 1). In response to questions about the whereabouts of their missing parents and others, students were to be told that their relatives are being provided with “free food and education” and live in “good conditions”, emphasizing that it is every citizen’s “duty”, regardless of their age, to participate in “concentrated education” (New York Times, 2019). Essentially, the China Cables provided proof that the camps are not “re-education” or “vocational” centers as China had claimed, but instead are militarized, punitive, high-security complexes intended to destroy Uyghur (and other Muslim groups’) identity and culture. The China Cables also confirmed that over a million Uyghurs and other Muslims have been detained in the camps. In response to the leaked

documents, Zenz said they reveal that the Chinese government had an intentional plan from the beginning, and the documents “confirm that this is a form of cultural genocide” (Associated Press, 2019, para. 7).

A few months after the China Cables were leaked, another Chinese government document—now known as the Karakax List—was revealed in February 2020. The Karakax List is a 137-page document which looks like a spreadsheet and contains personal details about approximately 2,800 residents in western Xinjiang. It focuses on 311 individuals from Karakax County, Xinjiang who were detained in camps in 2017 and 2018 (BBC, 2020). The rest of the people on the list are connected in some way to these 311 individuals. The disturbing amount of detail about the detainees includes information about what they wear, the number of children they have, how their wives dress, how their family members behave, how often they pray, and whether or not they’ve applied for a passport. The Karakax List confirms that people have been detained for having a Muslim name, growing a long beard, wearing a face veil, visiting a “sensitive” country, applying for a passport, holding a passport without visiting a foreign country, and accidentally clicking a link which landed on a foreign website, among other things (CNN, 2020; BBC, 2020; DW, 2020). The document clearly shows that the reasons for detention are not criminal.

The China Cables and the Karakax List both also reveal the extreme, ubiquitous extent of surveillance used to monitor Uyghurs’ every move in Xinjiang. Many people have described the situation as “Orwellian” (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019; Eady, 2019; Pamuk & Brice, 2019). Though I do not focus on surveillance in this study, it should be understood that widespread, constant surveillance, including the use of facial recognition

software, has enabled the repression and imprisonment of Uyghurs on such a massive scale (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Furthermore, it has been well-documented that biometric data, including DNA and blood samples, along with fingerprints and iris scans, have been collected from Uyghurs since 2017 (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Uyghurs of the diaspora have said that voice samples were also recorded. All of this information is stored in police databases and is linked to each person's identification (ID) number.

Atrocities in the Camps

Harrowing reports detailing Uyghur and other Muslim prisoners' experiences in the camps have emerged in recent years. At the most basic level, in addition to demanding that prisoners sing the praises of Xi and the Communist Party in Mandarin for hours each day (the Uyghur language is strictly forbidden), inmates have been forced to eat pork and drink alcohol, going against their religious and cultural principles (RFA's Uyghur Service, 2019; Samuel, 2018; Shih & Kang, 2019). Reports have indicated that the push for Uyghurs and other Muslims to eat pork and drink alcohol is also widespread in XUAR outside of the camps. As part of the overall effort to *sinicize* (or make more Chinese) Uyghurs and other Muslims, officials in Xinjiang have organized what are called "eating together" events during which pork is served as an "ethnic unity" food (RFA's Uyghur Service, 2019. p. 1). Pork production has also substantially increased in XUAR since 2019. Abstaining from eating pork is considered a sign of "extremism," which then provides a reason for internment in the camps (RFA's Uyghur Service, 2019).

Troubling accounts from survivors of the camps include numerous incidents of physical and psychological torture. Being subjected to 24-hour video surveillance, including in bathrooms and sleeping quarters, is itself oppressive and could be considered

a form of psychological torture, but this is just the surface of the atrocities that have occurred in the camps. Sophie Richardson, the China director at Human Rights Watch, said "I think it's fair to describe everyone being detained as being subject at least to psychological torture, because they literally don't know how long they're going to be there" (BBC, 2019, para. 14).

The living conditions in the camps are horrendous by all accounts. One detainee reported that nearly 20 people lived in a room of about 170 square feet. She described the toilet situation as follows:

Each room had a plastic bucket for a toilet. Every prisoner was given two minutes a day to use the toilet, and the bucket was emptied only once a day. If it filled up, you had to wait until the next day. (Stavrou, 2019, p. 3)

Others have reported staying in rooms under similar conditions with even more prisoners (Schmitz, 2018). The detainee above was also explicitly instructed not to laugh, to cry, or to speak with the other prisoners (Rahim, 2019). Another former inmate revealed that prisoners were given designated times to cry every two weeks. Crying outside of these designated times was met with verbal abuse and threats with an electric baton (Hoshur, 2019).

Reports have revealed that detainees are handcuffed and shackled as punishment for disobeying the rules in the camps, as well as when they are subjected to interrogation, and even while they sleep (Denyer, 2018; Hoja, 2019; Stavrou, 2019). One former detainee described having to stand against a wall for five hours and then being placed in solitary confinement without access to food (Shih & Kang, 2019). Numerous other accounts of being deprived of food as a form of punishment also exist (Rivers & Lee,

2019; Schmitz, 2018; Stavrou, 2019). Another former prisoner said that he was made to wear a metal suit weighing over 50 pounds, which forced his arms and legs into an uncomfortable, outstretched position for 12 hours at a time. The guards called this suit “iron clothes” (Schmitz, 2018). A number of reports of being bound and immobilized in another contraption called the “Tiger Chair” have also surfaced (Denyer, 2018). The use of this torture device in Chinese prisons has been known for years (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Another former detainee described his experience of being thrown into a pit with his hands and feet tied and having water poured onto him during a cold winter (Abdurasulov, 2019). Yet another former prisoner recalled that during an interrogation, he was “thrown into a hole in the ground, doused with cold water and severely beaten” (Campbell, 2019, p. 2). This former detainee said, “Whenever we saw a bird or a dog outside, we felt jealous of their freedom” (Campbell, 2019, p. 2).

Former inmates have described a torture room, which prisoners called the “black room” because they were forbidden to speak about it. In this torture room, prisoners were hung on a wall and beaten with electric batons, they were forced to sit on a chair of sharp nails, and some had their fingernails torn out (Stavrou, 2019). A survivor recalled that she “saw people return from that room covered in blood” (Stavrou, 2019, p. 7). It is important to remember that none of these prisoners had been charged with committing a crime. As the China Cables and Karakax List showed, they were detained for flimsy reasons or simply suspicions related to being Uyghur or Muslim. According to survivors, people were punished in the camps for anything (or nothing) ranging from not learning Mandarin well or fast enough to not singing patriotic songs to not following the rules (Rahim, 2019; Rivers & Lee, 2019; Stavrou, 2019).

Women in the Camps

Although life in the camps is undoubtedly difficult for everyone, women have particular issues to contend with. Women are thought to make up nearly a third of the prisoners in the camps, but the actions against them—which focus on preventing their ability to reproduce—have an enormous impact on the Uyghur population and culture as a whole. Sexual assault, forced abortions, imposed birth control, and sterilization have all been reported by former detainees (Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Hoja, 2019; Lynch, 2019; Maizland, 2020; Stavrou, 2019; UHRP, 2019). Reports of women being forced to take pills and receive injections of unknown substances that disrupted or stopped their menstrual cycles first began to emerge in the fall of 2018 (Danilova, 2018; Lynch, 2019). One former detainee stated, “There were women who were inside for one year and during that entire time they never had their monthly period” (Hoja, 2019, p. 1). Other detainees have corroborated this. Women have also reported having IUDs forcibly implanted while in the camps, despite clearly stating that they didn’t want one (Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Maizland, 2020; Stavrou, 2019). A woman who was detained in 2017 recalled that the doctor who was forcibly inserting her IUD told her that “it’s a must for all women going to the camp” (Ferris-Rotman, 2019, p. 5).

Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur woman who was detained three separate times in the camps, spoke out after learning from American doctors that she had been sterilized, likely from the forced medications (Lynch, 2019). Tursun testified before Congress in November 2018 detailing her torturous experiences, which included being interrogated for days on end without sleep, using the toilet under the constant gaze of security cameras, and having to take turns sleeping because of lack of space in an overcrowded

cell with 60 other women (Danilova, 2018). Tursun further described being electrocuted with a helmet-like apparatus on her head and said that she suffered from seizures and bouts of losing consciousness after being in the camp for three months (Danilova, 2018; Meixler, 2018). One of the things Tursun clearly remembered from her electrocution sessions was being explicitly told that being Uyghur is a crime (Danilova, 2018).

Other women have also recalled a range of violent and dehumanizing experiences in the camps. In addition to constant, inescapable surveillance by both policemen and cameras, survivors described being filmed in the shower as one of their many humiliating experiences. Some also reported being forced to smear their genitalia with chili paste (Ferris-Rotman, 2019). Among the more gruesome accounts from the camps include those describing sexual abuse, which was widespread (Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Hoja, 2019; Iones, 2019; Rivers & Lee, 2019; Stavrou, 2019;). Both men and women were reportedly victims of sexual assault. One Uyghur survivor stated, “Any woman or man under age 35 was raped and sexually abused” (Stavrou, 2019, p. 10). She herself was raped repeatedly and became pregnant twice while imprisoned. She was then forced to have abortions (Stavrou, 2019). Other reports of forced abortions also exist (Ferris-Rotman, 2019). Former female detainees have described policemen taking women out of their rooms in the middle of the night and not returning them until the morning, if ever. Some of these women were never seen again (Hoja, 2019; Rivers & Lee, 2019; Stavrou, 2019). Another similar account describes police entering the rooms at night and putting “bags on the heads of the ones they wanted” (Stavrou, 2019, p. 10).

One of the most distressing accounts from the camps is a case of gang rape in front of the prisoners. This deserves mention because it reveals the abominable methods

used in the camps to physically and psychologically control and subjugate the detainees. A former inmate described the following experience after learning from the police in her camp that “they were going to check to see whether our reeducation was succeeding, whether we were developing properly” (Stavrou, 2019, p. 9). I believe it is best told in her own words.

They took 200 inmates outside, men and women, and told one of the women to confess her sins. She stood before us and declared that she had been a bad person, but now that she had learned Chinese she had become a better person. When she was done speaking, the policemen ordered her to disrobe and simply raped her one after the other, in front of everyone. While they were raping her they checked to see how we were reacting. People who turned their head or closed their eyes, and those who looked angry or shocked, were taken away and we never saw them again. (Stavrou, 2019, p. 9)

Organ Harvesting

China has a well-documented history of using executed prisoners—particularly Falun Gong practitioners—as organ donors (China Tribunal, 2019). It is also known that China executes more people than any other country, though exact numbers are difficult to obtain because of the lack of transparency and veil of secrecy that surrounds China’s official public reporting of information. Claims of forced organ harvesting, sometimes from live patients, began to emerge in 2001 when there was a spike in transplant activity, and Chinese websites were found to be advertising organs for sale (Smith, 2019). The transplant industry is very lucrative. It is estimated that China’s transplant trade (as it is called) is worth nearly one billion U.S. dollars per year (China Tribunal, 2019). In 2012,

a Chinese health official announced that China will phase out the harvesting of organs from prisoners over the coming five years (BBC, 2014). China had already been criticized for taking prisoners' organs without consent, and finally, in January 2015, Chinese officials claimed that they had ended this practice (Merchant, 2016). An official report published in June 2019 by an independent international tribunal based in London, known as the China Tribunal, revealed something else.

The China Tribunal found overwhelming evidence which showed that forced organ harvesting from Chinese prisoners—some of whom were still alive—has been ongoing and continues to the present day on an even larger scale. These prisoners include Falun Gong practitioners and more recently, Uyghurs (China Tribunal, 2019). In interviews with survivors of the camps, the China Tribunal learned that prisoners underwent physical examinations, blood tests, ultrasounds, and X-rays. The tribunal concluded that this sort of medical testing is “highly suggestive of methods used to assess organ function,” and “the use of ultrasound examinations further suggests testing was focused on the condition of internal organs” (China Tribunal, 2019, p. 42). Furthermore, the report specified that only Falun Gong and Uyghurs were tested—other prisoners were not tested in these ways.

In 2017, Human Rights Watch reported that Uyghurs in Xinjiang were required to participate in China's recently developed free healthcare program called “Physicals for All.” Physicals for All included collecting DNA samples and blood type information from all residents aged 12-65 (Human Rights Watch, 2017). In January 2020, Taiwan News reported that Uyghurs are being killed to provide Halal organs for wealthy Saudi nationals, even though this notion is misguided and is not supported by Islam

(Everington, 2020). A witness came forth and described the harvesting of organs from live Uyghur prisoners, stating “they were slaughtered on the basis of demand”

(Everington, 2020, p. 1). She was told by officials that patients from Saudi Arabia insisted on receiving organs from Uyghurs because they wanted Halal organs.

As the China Tribunal report concluded, “very many people have died indescribably hideous deaths” (China Tribunal, 2019, p. 50). With respect to Uyghurs in particular, the report stated,

Acts of torture have been inflicted on Uyghurs and generally reveal an overall consistent attitude and approach of the PRC towards Uyghurs which is systematic in nature and designed to punish, ostracise, humiliate, dehumanise and demean Uyghurs. It is clear that Uyghurs have been routinely forced to undergo regular medical testing. (China Tribunal, 2019, p. 47)

Suicide

Given the extreme mental and physical anguish inmates have to endure, it is perhaps not surprising that many people have committed or attempted suicide in the camps (Campbell, 2019; Denyer, 2018; Hoshur, 2018; Schmitz, 2018). One former inmate recalled that his “torture was so unrelenting” that he eventually tried to kill himself (Campbell, 2019, p. 2). Another former detainee described attempting suicide “by banging his head as hard as he could against a wall” (Schmitz, 2018, p. 5). He awoke in a medical facility and was told that his detention would be lengthened by seven years if he attempted suicide again. Other survivors also describe their own and other former inmates’ attempts (and successes) at suicide when faced with the constant oppression and torment in the camps (Denyer, 2018). Mihrigul Tursun, mentioned above, stated that she

“would rather die than go through this torture and begged them to kill me” (Danilova, 2018, p. 1).

In September of 2018, it was reported that a prominent Uyghur editor-in-chief of a state-run magazine called *Literature Translation* had committed suicide in Xinjiang (Hoshur, 2018). His name was Qeyser Qeyum, and he was 55 years old. Another Uyghur editor-in-chief of a different publication, the *Xinjiang Daily*, whose offices neighbor those of *Literature Translation*, had been arrested in mid-2017. Three Uyghur directors of the *Xinjiang Daily* had also been taken away. In addition, it was known that the Uyghur former vice president of Xinjiang University, Azat Sultan, had also been arrested in July 2017. It is thought that out of fear of being imprisoned in the camps, Mr. Qeyum committed suicide by jumping out of the eighth floor of his office building (Hoshur, 2018). This act indicates that the terror and desperation in Xinjiang extend beyond the camps.

Deaths and Crematoria

In June 2018, *Radio Free Asia* reported that crematoria were rapidly being constructed throughout Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The report stated,

Between March 2017 and February 2018, the XUAR government listed 5-10 million yuan (U.S. \$760,000 to \$1.52 million) tenders for contractors to build nine “burial management centers” that include crematoria in mostly Uyghur-populated areas throughout the region. (Hoja, 2018, para. 2)

These crematoria were also reported to be “staffed by dozens of security personnel” (Hoja, 2018, para. 1). The timing of the building of these crematoria coincides with the

ramping up of the crackdown on Uyghurs, which was also when reports first began to emerge about the camps.

Southern Xinjiang, which includes Luopu County in Hotan prefecture, has suffered disproportionately under Chinese repression because of its relatively large Uyghur population and distance from other cities (Kuo, 2019). Luopu County is rural and has a population of approximately 280,000 people, most of whom are Uyghur. Luopu County is also home to eight internment camps, which reportedly grew significantly between 2016 and 2018 (Kuo, 2019). A Uyghur from Hotan City who now lives abroad said that people in Hotan prefecture have a saying: “If you go into a concentration camp in Luopu, you never come out” (Kuo, 2019, p. 1).

In addition to the disturbing genocidal conclusions that may be drawn from the rapid creation of the crematoria themselves, the presence of security at the crematoria, and the local common knowledge that people don't return from the camps, the mere existence of crematoria should also be recognized as another way in which Uyghur culture is being deliberately and systematically destroyed. Uyghur funerary traditions include sacred burial practices, which they are prevented from engaging in under these circumstances. In my discussions with Uyghurs in the diaspora years ago, prior to having knowledge of the camps, I had already learned that the bodies of Uyghurs who died in prison were not returned to their families for a proper burial. It seems that this has been extrapolated to an even greater extent with no regard for Uyghur cultural and religious practices (or rather, with a deliberate disregard toward these practices). In October 2018, a scholar and historian of East Asia published a piece entitled “China's Final Solution In Xinjiang” (Yu, 2018). This reference echoes the horrors of the Holocaust, and the

international community must also make these linkages given the similarities in repression occurring in Xinjiang.

From Camps to Prisons

Since at least 2018, many Uyghurs in XUAR have been transferred from the camps to prisons, where they are serving multiple-year sentences for spurious charges (Hoshur, 2019; Hoshur, 2022; Mauk, 2021; Wright, Watson, & Westcott, 2021). In 2019, *Radio Free Asia* reported that authorities in Xinjiang were “covertly sending detainees to prisons in Heilongjiang province and other parts of China to address an ‘overflow’ in overcrowded camps” (Hoshur, 2019, para. 2). Officials in other provinces confirmed that detainees from the camps in XUAR had also been sent to prisons in Gansu, Shandong, and Shaanxi (Hoshur, 2019). The Uyghur prisoners are considered to be “high-risk” and are reportedly shackled at all times and kept in solitary confinement with little hope of ever being released (Hoshur, 2019).

A Uyghur living in Australia reported that her husband was detained in camps in XUAR three separate times and was then sentenced to 25 years in prison, despite never having been involved in any illegal activity (Wright, Watson, & Westcott, 2021). A Uyghur woman who lives in Sweden revealed that her cousin was sentenced to six and a half years in prison without having committed any crimes (Wright, Watson, & Westcott, 2021). Five Uyghur women from the same family, the eldest of whom is 78 years old, were also sentenced to between seven and 20 years in prison (Hoshur, 2022). Many such accounts exist, and diaspora members maintain that all charges against their relatives and other Uyghurs are fabricated.

Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity

As horrifying as the camps and prisons are, they are just one piece of China's totalitarian effort to subjugate Uyghurs and exercise social control. On April 1, 2017, China imposed a ban on growing "abnormal" beards and wearing veils, hijabs, and/or burqas² throughout Xinjiang (Gan, 2017; Hunt et al., 2017; Shephard & Blanchard, 2017). Long beards, in particular, were "deemed to promote extremism" (Hunt et al., 2017, p. 2). Similar restrictions had already been imposed in some regions of Xinjiang, including Hotan prefecture and the northern city of Ghulja, but this new legislation standardized and applied these mandates to the entire region of XUAR (Jacobs, 2016; Shephard & Blanchard, 2017). The legislation included a statement about setting up "special task -forces to curb extremism" at multiple levels of society, including regional, prefectural and county governments (Gan, 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, the new law stipulated that public workers at airports and bus and train stations "will be required to 'dissuade' those who fully cover their bodies, including veiling their faces, from entering, and to report them to the police" (Shephard & Blanchard, 2017, p. 2). Reporting people to the police for these reasons is a clear attempt to criminalize cultural and religious practices.

This same aforementioned legislation made it mandatory for the people of XUAR to watch state television and listen to official state radio, as the "rejection" or "refusal" of these media is thought to be related to extremism (Gan, 2017; Hunt et al., 2017; Shephard & Blanchard, 2017). In addition, the new law outlawed "publishing, downloading or

² See this article for the difference between veils, hijabs, and burqas:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/24118241>

reading articles, publications and audio-video material containing extremist content” (Hunt et al., 2017, p. 2). By all accounts, an explanation of what exactly makes something “extremist content” was not provided, and it should be noted that this new legislation was not implemented in other parts of China.

Destruction of Mosques and Cemeteries

In 2016, it was already known that mosques in southern Xinjiang were forbidden to broadcast the call to prayer (Jacobs, 2016). In 2019, reports began to emerge of mosques, shrines, and cemeteries having been desecrated and destroyed throughout XUAR as part of a coordinated campaign since 2016 (Hiatt, 2019; Kashgarian, 2019; Kuo, 2019; Rivers, 2020; Sintash, 2019). It is now known that dozens of cemeteries were destroyed as early as 2014 (Rivers, 2020). Satellite images show that hundreds of traditional Uyghur cemeteries were bulldozed and demolished within a period of just a few years (Rivers, 2020; Sintash, 2019). Many of these cemeteries had existed for centuries or longer. The notable Sultanim Cemetery in Hotan City, which was destroyed in 2019, had a history of over 1,000 years and was regarded as a holy site by millions of Uyghurs who visited every year (Sintash, 2019). Cemeteries are central to Uyghur culture, particularly in villages, where they have served as gathering places for multiple generations to visit their relatives and honor their ancestors (Rivers, 2020). The removal of these cemeteries not only prevents Uyghurs from engaging in their traditional cultural practices, but it also severs their connection to their own history and land.

The widespread destruction and alteration of mosques throughout Xinjiang constitutes another attack on Uyghur culture and Islamic traditions as a whole. The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) published a meticulous report in 2019, which

conservatively estimated that 80% of the mosques throughout the region have been affected. This amounts to a staggering number of 10,000 to 15,000 mosques which have been destroyed partially or completely, or they have been sinicized, as described below (Sintash, 2019). The relatively few mosques which have been allowed to remain—for tourism and propaganda—have had their domes, minarets, and religious symbols and inscriptions removed (Hiatt, 2019; Kashgarian, 2019; Sintash, 2019). In many cases, particularly in big cities, the religious inscriptions have been replaced with party banners (Hiatt, 2019). According to the UHRP report, all mosques which do not serve a purpose for tourism have been demolished (Sintash, 2019). It was recently reported that public restrooms have been built upon the site of one demolished mosque in Kashgar prefecture, even though there is no need for them in this relatively small area (Hoshur, 2020). In the same region, a convenience store which sells alcohol and cigarettes was built upon another former mosque site.

Even non-religious buildings in Xinjiang, such as department stores and bazaar gates, have been altered by flattening domes and removing minarets (Kashgarian, 2019; Sintash, 2019). According to a Uyghur historian, the aforementioned construction of offensive facilities on the ruins of former mosques is considered a way to break the spirit of Uyghurs, as well as an outright “declaration of war on Islam” (Hoshur, 2020, p. 3). These efforts, coupled with the disappearances of Uyghur scholars and historians into the camps, reveal another piece of the systemized, coordinated effort to suppress and dismantle Uyghur culture and identity.

Children's Names

As early as the summer of 2015—a year before Chen Quanguo was assigned as Xinjiang's Communist Party chief—the local government in Hotan prefecture issued a ban on boys' and girls' names that were associated with “extremism.” The list of 22 banned names included common Uyghur and Muslim names such as “Seyfulla” and “Nesrulla” for boys, and “Aishe” and “Fatima” for girls (Sulaiman, 2015). The parents of Uyghur children who already had any of these banned names were forced to change them. A local mother reported that “village police came to our house and told us that we must change our daughter's name as soon as possible” (Sulaiman, 2015, p. 1). This mother was instructed by the police to not “ask any foolish questions” regarding the naming of her own children (Sulaiman, 2015, p. 1). During this period, reports also began to emerge of children being denied access to education unless they had an “acceptable” name (Sulaiman, 2015).

In April 2017, another ban on Uyghur and Muslim names was issued in the CCP's "Naming Rules For Ethnic Minorities," but this time it applied to all of XUAR (Hernandez, 2017; Lin, 2017). This list of banned names included Muslim names “Mohammed,” “Medina,” and “Mecca,” in addition to the previously banned names (Haas, 2017; Hernandez, 2017; Lin, 2017). This new list was released as part of the effort “to curb religious fervor” in Xinjiang (Hernandez, 2017, p. 1).

Throughout mainland China, households are required to register under the national *hukou* system, which essentially determines where they can live and grants them access to government services. The *hukou* system is problematic in itself and has been widely criticized (Afridi et al., 2015; Wang, 2005); however, it is beyond the scope of

this dissertation to go further into here. In terms of Uyghurs in XUAR, and particularly those in rural areas, this new round of naming restrictions was coupled with officially denying children with banned names access to registration within the *hukou* system. This, in turn, meant that those children would not be provided with basic services, such as healthcare, education and, eventually, working rights and retirement, if families did not comply (Haas, 2017; Hernandez, 2017; Lin, 2017). This coercive tactic is one of many that the CCP has used to subjugate Uyghurs.

“Guests” in Homes

In December 2017, China launched a program in Xinjiang called “Relatives’ Week,” which required local government officials to spend a week living with Uyghur families in their own homes (Huang, 2017). This program was an expansion of what had already been happening on a smaller, less intrusive scale since 2014 when government officials regularly visited and surveilled Uyghur households, but did not stay in their homes (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Prior to the establishment of “Relatives’ Week,” China had initiated the “Becoming Family” campaign in 2016, which sent government officials to visit Uyghur homes in southern Xinjiang every two months. It has been estimated that approximately 110,000 officials were dispatched during the “Becoming Family” campaign (Human Rights Watch, 2018). The introduction of the “Relatives’ Week” program, which included a home stay component, revealed a new level of invasive surveillance and social control imposed by the CCP. Over one million government officials were dispatched as part of this program to live with Uyghurs for one week in their homes (Jiang, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018).

In early 2018, authorities in Xinjiang expanded their “home stay” program to require that government officials spend at least five days living in their Uyghur “families” homes every two months (Human Rights Watch, 2018). This new iteration of the campaign is sometimes referred to as the “Pair Up and Become Family Program” (Baynes, 2018; Hoshur, 2018). In some locations, particularly in rural southern Xinjiang, week-long visits were required every month or even more frequently (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Jiang, 2018). By all accounts, these visits were imposed, and families could not refuse them out of fear of being sent to the camps (Huang, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2018; Jiang, 2018; Seytoff, 2018). The purpose of these visits was clear: to search out signs of “extremism” through observation and interrogation, and to impose “ethnic unity” by speaking Mandarin, singing China’s national anthem, and celebrating national holidays together (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Seytoff, 2018).

Government documents reveal that families were required to provide personal details and information about their political and religious views during these visits (Jiang, 2018; Seytoff, 2018). Officials were tasked with reporting any “problems” and were given leeway to “rectify” any issues (Human Rights Watch, 2018, p. 2; Seytoff, 2018, p. 2). This included identifying religious elements or symbols in homes and confiscating them (Jiang, 2018). A prominent member of the Uyghur diaspora stated that this home stay program is “not just a simple invasion of privacy, but the total annihilation of the safety, security and well-being of family members” (Seytoff, 2018, p. 2). He further said that the program has “in effect, turned Uyghurs’ homes into prisons from which there is no escape” (Seytoff, 2018, p. 3). A senior researcher at Human Rights Watch stated that

the home stay program is essentially “a forced political indoctrination and assimilation program” (Jiang, 2018, p. 2).

One of the most unsettling aspects of the home stay program which should be addressed is the impact it has had on women in Uyghur households. Most government officials who stay with families are men. In many cases, the Uyghur men of these households are absent because they have been imprisoned in the camps. Online photos posted by government officials show families and their “guests” engaging in domestic and intimate activities together, such as preparing and sharing meals, doing chores, feeding and tutoring children, and sleeping in the same bed (Baynes, 2018; Hoshur, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018; Jiang, 2018). It does not require much imagination to conceive of the torment these women must endure in having to suppress their identity, beliefs, and traditions, as well as those of their children—all while having to share a bed with a communist party official and not knowing whether their husbands and sons are alive or dead, or whether they will ever see them again.

Forced Family Separations and Boarding Schools

The same legislation that banned long beards and wearing veils and burqas in Xinjiang in April 2017 also outlawed homeschooling and demanded that children receive a national state education (Gan, 2017; Hunt et al., 2017). Toward the end of 2017, reports began to emerge of children being placed in state care after having both of their parents detained in the camps, even if grandparents were available to care for them (Feng, 2018; Zenz, 2019). State-run facilities that house these children include orphanages, children’s shelters, and boarding schools. By all accounts, most of these are large, overcrowded, highly secured compounds with armed police officers, barred windows, and barbed wire

fences (Hoshur, 2018; Wang & Kang, 2018; Zenz, 2019). The facilities include boarding preschools, which admit children as young as a few months old (Zenz, 2019). Reporters who have attempted to visit these children’s facilities have been confronted by police and ordered to delete their photographs (Wang & Kang, 2018; Zenz, 2019).

In order for Xinjiang to accommodate large numbers of “newly orphaned” children as adults were being imprisoned in the camps, the government “began to issue urgent directives on how to deal with” them in 2018 (Zenz, 2019, p. 2). Part of this included “a massive campaign to construct so-called ‘children’s rescue, care and protection centers’” (Zenz, 2019, p. 4). In analyzing official government documents, Zenz found that policies “designed to systematically boost the ability of the state to house children of all ages in increasingly centralized and highly securitized educational boarding facilities” were initiated much earlier, within six months of Chen Quanguo’s appointment to Xinjiang (Zenz, 2019, p. 3). Under Chen’s leadership, the government has invested billions of dollars into building these boarding facilities.

By the end of February 2017, nearly 4,400 “bilingual” preschools were being built in southern Xinjiang, with the intention of accepting 562,900 new students (Zenz, 2019, p. 11). By the end of 2017, the actual number of enrolled students was even higher, totaling 759,900 (Zenz, 2019, p. 12). Prior to 2017, the enrollment ratio of children in Xinjiang’s preschools (per 1,000 students) was far below the national average. Since 2017, Xinjiang has had the highest preschool enrollment ratio in all of China. In Uyghur-majority southern Xinjiang, the enrollment of students in local preschools has quadrupled in recent years, and this has exceeded the national enrollment growth average by more than twelve times (Zenz, 2019).

Throughout 2017 and 2018, the Xinjiang government focused on increasing its ability to house children of all ages in boarding facilities through the construction of student dormitories. In 2018, the focus shifted from preschools to primary and middle schools, often combining them into a single compound (Zenz, 2019). In June 2018, the XUAR government issued a directive which stated that “all urban and rural regions in Xinjiang were to establish boarding facilities, to promote ethnically mixed classes for Han and minorities combined... and to centralize primary and middle school facilities as combined units” (Zenz, 2019, p. 17). In Kashgar, boarding became mandatory for students in fourth grade and higher, and in April 2018, “the county mandated the relocation of 2,000 children from the surrounding rural areas to one single boarding middle school in the county seat” (Zenz, 2019, p. 18). As previously mentioned, these school facilities are highly secured. In a government document entitled “Special Work Plan for Protecting Schools and Securing Campuses,” the instructions are clear: schools must not have any “blind spots,” and “all educational facilities are to be secured through ‘hard isolation closed management measures,’” which include alarm systems, internal and external surveillance, armed guards, and a police alert system (Zenz, 2019, p. 23). These security measures have been implemented at a number of preschools, in addition to primary and middle schools (Hoshur, 2018; Wang & Kang, 2018; Zenz, 2019).

During this period of establishing a wide network of preschools and building boarding facilities for students of all ages, the XUAR government was also heavily promoting Mandarin-only instruction throughout Xinjiang (Zenz, 2019). A document issued by Xinjiang’s Education Department in June 2018 claimed that by the end of the year, the nearly three million students attending school in the region “were expected to

have a fully Chinese-medium language education” (Zenz, 2019, p. 21). Claims of “bilingual” or “mixed-class” education are patently false. A Chinese news article from 2017 makes this clear: “On school campuses (that follow the) mixed-class education model, there is only one kind of sound, that of the national language; only one type of curriculum, which is the national curriculum.... The campus atmosphere is full of unity, harmony...” (Zenz, 2019, p. 21). Reports have emerged of both teachers and students being penalized for speaking Uyghur in these environments (Zenz, 2019; Wang & Kang, 2018).

The Chinese government has chillingly argued that

the children of detained parents derive significant benefits from this separation, that both parents and children need to “study”, (and) that the “left-behind children” of parents who “work” are “happily growing up under the loving care of the Party and the government”. (Zenz, 2019, p. 2)

We need not look far for a historical precedent to this deliberate intergenerational separation, dismantling of culture, and prevention of cultural transmission. The situation in Xinjiang is hauntingly reminiscent of Indigenous children being forced into boarding schools in the United States, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere, as an assimilationist strategy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Brown & Estes, 2018; United Nations, 2009).

Forced Birth Control and Sterilization (Outside of Camps)

China has a history of controlling its population through mandatory measures, such as the One Child Policy, which has included forced abortions, sterilizations, and birth control throughout the country for those who exceeded the allowed child limit

(Taylor, 2015). Even under the One Child Policy; however, ethnic minority groups in both urban and rural areas were allowed more than one child. Urban minorities were allowed two children, while rural minorities, including most Uyghurs, were allowed up to three children. Before 2015, it was common for Uyghurs to exceed the three-child limit. If they were caught, they simply paid a fine (Zenz, 2020). Historically, Uyghur population growth rates have been much higher than those of Han. Between 1978 and 2016, average annual Uyghur population growth rates were 19.2 percent, compared to just 9.75 percent for China as a whole and 12.65 percent for Han in Xinjiang (Zenz, 2020). In 2015 however, the population growth rate in all of Xinjiang's minority counties began to decline. Between 2015 and 2018, growth rates in Xinjiang's two largest Uyghur prefectures dropped by 84 percent and continued to decline further in 2019 (Zenz, 2020).

In 2015, when growth rates in Xinjiang started to decline, Chinese government documents began to reveal a purported connection between population growth and “religious extremism” in Xinjiang. In 2017, a “Special Campaign to Control Birth Control Violations” was enacted. One of the initial impacts of this campaign was to “severely attack behaviors that violate family planning (policies),” including those that had occurred decades before in the 1990s (Zenz, 2020, p, 10). The Karakax List confirmed that birth control violations were a common reason for people to be interned in a camp. A second major impact of the campaign was directly aimed at women and their ability to reproduce. In 2018, a notice was issued which stated, “violations that took place since July 28, 2017, and where women had exceeded the birth quota by two or more children, must ‘both adopt birth control measures with long-term effectiveness and be subjected to vocational skills education and training’” (Zenz, 2020, p. 10). These “birth

control measures with long-term effectiveness” include IUDs and sterilization, and “vocational skills education and training” refers to internment in the camps. Zenz (2020) found that 80 percent of all new IUD insertions in 2018 throughout China happened in Xinjiang, even though it only makes up 1.8 percent of the nation’s population as a whole. Furthermore, in 2019, family planning documents stated that “those who refuse to terminate illegal pregnancies or do not pay related fines are referred to police authorities, which will ‘subject such persons to centralized education’” (Zenz, 2020, p. 11). “Centralized education”, again, means internment in the camps. Several Uyghur-majority regions also “mandated that birth control violations that ‘came about due to the influence of extreme religious thinking’ were to be ‘dealt with severely’” (Zenz, 2020, p. 12).

By 2019, the situation had become even more drastic. Over 80 percent of the women in Xinjiang’s rural southern prefectures were “to be subjected to ‘birth control measures with long-term effectiveness’” (Zenz, 2020, p. 12). This plan included bi-monthly pregnancy checks, monthly family visits to a state doctor, and quarterly IUD checks. For some people, these checks were to be completed even more frequently. Statistics indicate that IUDs were implanted in women who had not exceeded their child quota, and in fact, in Nilka County, “family planning policy in 2019 was to place IUDs on women after their first child” (Zenz, 2020, p. 13). Perhaps even more concerning is the mass sterilization (“free birth control surgery”) campaign launched in Xinjiang in 2019 to “Guide the masses of farmers and herdsmen to spontaneously carry out family planning sterilization surgery, implement the free policy of birth control surgery, effectively promote family planning work, and effectively control excessive population growth” (Zenz, 2020, p. 16). A budget of over sixteen million dollars was allocated for

this project in 2019, and another 19.5 million dollars was invested in 2020. In Hotan City, 14,872 female sterilizations were set as a goal, along with thousands in other Uyghur-majority locations.

To provide some context, between 1998 and 2018, sterilization rates across all of China measured 2,557 people per 100,000 of the total population. In just one year, Hotan City scheduled 7,322 sterilizations per 100,000 people, which is equivalent to 34.3 percent of married women of childbearing age in the region (Zenz, 2020). Guma County, also in Hotan prefecture, scheduled 2,998 sterilizations per 100,000 people, or 14.1 percent of the local married women of childbearing age. In 2019, the Guma Health Commission budget showed that sterilizations were expected to account for 75 percent of the free birth control project money (Zenz, 2020). In 2019, the family planning policy in Nilka County openly stated “that women with three or more children should be sterilized” (Zenz, 2020, p. 18).

Constantly Surveilled Forced Labor

The issue of forced labor in Xinjiang has received quite a lot of press coverage, as links to global supply chains have emerged since early 2020. It is known that Uyghurs have been placed in highly secured factories with boarding facilities since 2017 (Fifield, 2020; Xu, 2020). Many Uyghurs have been transferred directly from the camps to these factories in Xinjiang and other locations in China, including the far east. Government documents openly “boast about the fact that the labor supply from the vast internment camp network has been attracting many Chinese companies to set up production in Xinjiang” (Zenz, 2019, p. 2). The Uyghur-majority city of Kashgar reported “that in 2018 alone it aimed to send 100,000 inmates who had been through the ‘vocational training

centers' to work in factories" (Buckley & Ramzy, 2018, p. 3). Between 2017 and 2019, more than 80,000 Uyghurs were moved from Xinjiang to other locations to work in tightly controlled factories across the country (Xu, 2020). These factory settings are not so different from the camps in that the workers are constantly surveilled, are not allowed to go home, and cannot express or participate in religious observances, including praying. The workers are also required to take part in military-style drills, Mandarin classes, and political indoctrination, including "ideological training", outside of work hours (Buckley & Ramzy, 2020; Fifield, 2020; Xu, 2020; Zenz, 2019).

After the Urumqi riots in 2009, the Chinese government began holding national "Xinjiang Aid" conferences in the interest of "developing" and "maintaining stability" in the region (Xu, 2020). Since then, the comprehensive Xinjiang Aid policy has grown into specialized subcategories, including "medical Xinjiang Aid, technology Xinjiang Aid, educational Xinjiang Aid, and industrial Xinjiang Aid" (Xu, 2020, p. 12). The transfer of workers to factories falls under "industrial Xinjiang Aid", and this is closely tied to the government's alleged claims of alleviating poverty in the region. "Poverty alleviation" has been used to rationalize sending Uyghurs to work in factories, even though many highly educated and formerly financially secure Uyghurs have been included in this scheme.

In analyzing government documents pertaining to poverty alleviation in Xinjiang, Zenz (2019) found vast, detailed spreadsheets which described adults' employment (or internment) status and ability to work. He also discovered detailed personal information about unemployed minors' education and training in the region. Zenz suggests this is consistent with the Xinjiang government's goal of ensuring that "every single person

must be in a state-approved place of education, training, work, or approved non-employment” (Zenz, 2019, p. 4). It is important to emphasize that participation in these state-approved programs is not voluntary. In the cases of detainees being transferred directly from camps to factories, they clearly have no choice. For people not interned in the camps, “those who resist being ‘alleviated’ from their ‘poverty’ are subjected to ideological education so that their thinking aligns with the state’s goals (Zenz, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, those who resist poverty alleviation are accused of resisting modernization, which is considered an indicator of “extremism”, which then becomes a reason for them to be “re-educated” in the camps (Xu, 2020; Zenz, 2019).

In addition to forced labor and compulsory indoctrination, sending Uyghurs away from their homes to work in highly restrictive factories raises other important concerns. By all accounts, Uyghurs are forbidden to engage in any of their religious or cultural practices in the factories. A Uyghur sent to work in Fujian in southeastern China reported that “police regularly search their dormitories and check their phones for any religious content. If a Quran is found, the owner will be sent back to the ‘re-education camp’ for 3–5 years” (Xu, 2020, p. 7). Removing Uyghurs from their families and traditional ways of life is in itself another tactic to destroy their culture and identity. Moreover, the Xinjiang government has made a concerted effort to employ women in factories, both in their local villages and elsewhere. The slogan “from the stove to the machine” refers to getting “minority women who would traditionally be responsible for running their households” into factories (Zenz, 2019, p. 8). This slogan is commonly used by Chinese companies to boast of their achievements in “liberating” women (Zenz, 2019). In most cases, these women have children. In order to accommodate these children while both of

their parents are working full-time, the government has created additional schools and day care facilities, which, as aforementioned, essentially also serve as Mandarin-speaking indoctrination facilities. Thus, Xinjiang's poverty alleviation and modernization strategies are directly linked to family separation and limiting intergenerational transmission of language, religion, and culture among Uyghurs.

This chapter has discussed different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide, including the multiple ways in which Uyghurs have been exploited, abused, and oppressed, both in the camps and in Han Chinese-dominated society as a whole. Uyghur culture and identity have been systematically destroyed by the CCP through direct actions, such as the destruction of mosques and cemeteries, banning of Muslim names and traditional dress, internment and indoctrination in the camps, forced labor, and family separation. In addition to these direct actions, the conditions of living under ever vigilant and ubiquitous surveillance, coupled with a constant threat of being detained, have instilled a sense of fear and coerced compliance among Uyghurs in East Turkestan. The next chapter will examine how the Chinese government has justified these actions and how the Global War on Terror, rise of global Islamophobia, and international development have enabled them.

CHAPTER III: SITUATING THE UYGHUR EXPERIENCE IN CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECT & THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

“Identities shift and histories get rewritten as a result of changing political agendas”
(Mamdani, 2004, p. 35).

While the previous chapter discussed the actions taken by the Chinese government to destroy Uyghur culture and identity within China and the Uyghur homeland, this chapter aims to contextualize China's actions within a broader global context. Roberts (2020) suggests that “the fate of the Uyghurs inside China has been facilitated by the intersection of local and global political processes” (p. xii). Though the vilification of Uyghurs did not begin with the Global War on Terror, the current situation in East Turkestan would not have been possible without the international support that China garnered in labeling Uyghurs as terrorists in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

Following Uyghur student protests in the 1980s and the Baren uprising of 1990, the Chinese government “reversed its previous policy of tolerance” toward religious activity (Bovingdon, 2004, p. 33). “Illegal” religious practices were prosecuted, and mosques were closed, with further construction halted. “In 1990, cadres in Akto County (where Baren is located) closed 50 mosques judged to be ‘superfluous’ and cancelled the construction of 100 more out of fear that religion was getting out of control” (Bovingdon, 2004, p. 34). In the spring of 1997, it was publicly advertised that six Xinjiang University students had been arrested for participating in religious study groups and were serving prison sentences (Bovingdon, 2004). Since the late 1990s, Beijing has published reports emphasizing the conflict in Xinjiang. By the time the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks occurred in the U.S. in 2001, China was poised to crack down even further on religious

freedoms, targeting Muslims and Uyghurs in particular as part of the Global War on Terror.

In November 2001, the PRC submitted a document to the United Nations Security Council entitled *Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by “Eastern Turkistan” Organizations and their Ties with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban* (Roberts, 2012). This document contained the first public mention of the little known Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and claimed that ETIM was “a major component of the terrorist network headed by Osama bin Laden” (Roberts, 2012, p. 2). Just a couple of months later in January 2002, China released a “white paper” which detailed the “terrorist” activities of ETIM and other Uyghur groups. This paper was entitled “*East Turkistan” Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity*. Despite a lack of prior knowledge about this organization and the absence of conclusive evidence linking ETIM to violence in XUAR, in September 2002, both the U.S. and the UN Security Council officially labeled ETIM a terrorist organization.

The designation of ETIM as a terrorist organization made it an enemy in the Global War On Terror launched by the United States in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attack. This made ETIM subject to international sanctions, and, most significantly, its official status as a terrorist organization positioned Uyghurs as an international terrorist threat. Moreover, the labeling of ETIM as a terrorist organization made it unlikely that other nations would intervene in China’s policies against Uyghurs. The recognition of ETIM as a terrorist organization “has been the single most important act lending validity to China’s claims that it faces a substantial Uyghur terrorist threat” (Roberts, 2012, p. 3).

ETIM was removed from the United States' terrorist organization list in November 2020 (Kashgarian, 2020). Nonetheless, since 2002, China has steadily increased its control over Uyghurs' religious and political expression, which has been justified by the "terrorist threat" they pose. Using the rhetoric associated with the Global War On Terror, China has attributed violent acts committed by a few extremist Uyghur individuals to the Uyghur Muslim community as a whole (Mahmut, 2019). The situation has become such that "all Uyghurs have been deemed guilty of terrorist or extremist inclinations and deemed a threat to the social order until proven innocent" (Roberts, 2018, p. 236).

Chinese Nationalism

In the 1990s, Uyghur loyalty to the Chinese state was encouraged primarily by punishing perceived disloyalty. Back then, Uyghurs were expected to integrate into an increasingly Han-dominated society in their own indigenous homeland, and resistance to doing so was penalized under the bogus claim of fostering separatism. During this period, the XUAR government censored "publications, music, and other artistic forms of expression that the state viewed as promoting Uyghur nationalism", arrested hundreds of suspected separatists, and instituted limits on practicing Islam independently (Roberts, 2018, p. 237). In the early 2000s following 9/11, the discourse shifted from accusing Uyghurs of separatism to being a terrorist threat. The U.S. had already linked Islamic extremism with global terrorism as part of the Global War on Terror, and this "allowed the PRC to logically justify suppressing unsanctioned religious activities in the XUAR, which it deemed to be 'extremism', as an aspect of countering terrorism" (Roberts, 2018, p. 238). The Strike Hard Campaigns in the early 2000s shifted from focusing on

“separatists, terrorists, and hard criminals” to the “Three Evil Forces” of “terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism” (Dupont, 2007; Roberts, 2018).

Since 2016, the “counter-terrorism” measures in Xinjiang have included an effort to purge “two-faced” Uyghurs, including state officials and intellectuals. By all accounts, the accusation of being “two-faced” is “a castigatory definition that Chinese politicians are using to highlight the ‘failure’ of Uyghur intellectuals (and others) to manifest their unwavering and unambiguous allegiance to the CCP” (Ala, 2018, p. 1). The notion of Uyghur nationalism is a threat to the absolute loyalty, or Chinese nationalism, demanded by the CCP. The efforts to identify “two-faced” people initially focused on lower-level officials who committed violations such as underreporting the number of people attending local mosques and refusing to smoke around village elders, both of which are considered extremist behaviors (Roberts, 2018). By 2018, this campaign included the targeting of prominent Uyghur businessmen and intellectuals. In January 2018 in Kashgar, four wealthy businessmen were arrested on counts of “religious extremism,” and in February 2018, the president of Xinjiang University in Urumqi was detained (Niyaz, 2018; Roberts, 2018). Professors from universities throughout Xinjiang have also been incarcerated in the camps because of their “politically incorrect” ideas and “(Uyghur) nationalistic tendencies” (Ala, 2018, p. 1). By October 2018, “Almost all prominent Uyghur intellectuals (had) either been incarcerated in the camps without a trial or been charged with ‘separatism’ or links with ‘terrorism’ and given long jail sentences” (Ala, 2018, p. 2).

Mass internment in the camps, or “Counter-Extremism Training Schools,” as they were called in 2017, reflects the culmination of decades of Chinese repressive policies

intended to quell Uyghur nationality and force their assimilation into Han-dominated society. Roberts (2018) suggests that labeling Uyghurs as terrorists “evokes the presence of a biological threat to society, akin to a virus that must be eradicated, quarantined, or cleansed from those it infects” (p. 234). Hence, they are quarantined en masse “so as to not infect the population of the country as a whole” (Roberts, 2018, p. 234). This is consistent with government documents from 2017 which claim that “Transformation through Education Classes Are Like a Free Hospital Treatment for the Masses with Sick Thinking” (Zenz, 2018, p. 122). In this sense, when Uyghurs are forced to speak Mandarin, sing patriotic songs, praise President Xi, confess their “faults,” and denounce Islam while imprisoned in the camps, society as a whole is being “cleansed” and new, compliant comrades are being produced. This logic and related rhetoric have not only been used to rationalize and justify the government’s actions, but have also stoked perpetual fear and suspicion of Uyghurs in the Chinese imagination. This, in turn, has served to further exclude Uyghurs from society. Even outside of the camps, they “remain under scrutiny as potential terrorists unless they literally condemn their own ethnic heritage” (Roberts, 2018, p. 236).

Post-September 11th Playbook and Global Islamophobia

The September 11, 2001 tragic terrorist attacks in the U.S. are often cited as a turning point for the way Muslims are viewed and treated in the U.S. and the West; however, the roots of Islamophobia go much further back. Ali (2016) goes so far as to say that “the figure of the Muslim has served as a primordial enemy upon which otherness has been defined in Western culture,” and “the Muslim has served as as the template of the existential Other from which Europe and the United States have defined themselves”

(Ali, 2016, p. 80). Though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore history prior to the 20th century, one could examine the European Crusades of the 11th-13th centuries or the Spanish Inquisition starting in the 1400s within the context of Islamophobia dating centuries back. In fact, some suggest that the Crusades mark the historical moment during which Muslims became the enemy of the West (Mamdani, 2004).

In 1978, Edward Said published his seminal book on Orientalism in which he questioned the very notions of “the Orient” and “the West.” He suggested that both of these ideological concepts serve to identify and reinforce “the Other” (Said, 1978). Said insightfully pointed out that

these supreme fictions lend themselves easily to manipulation and the organization of collective passion, (and this) has never been more evident than in our time, when the mobilizations of fear, hatred, disgust, and resurgent self-pride and arrogance—much of it having to do with Islam and the Arabs on one side, “we” Westerners on the other—are very large scale enterprises. (p. xvii)

Though these words were written decades ago, they ring even more painfully true today. Given the events in Xinjiang, as well as the ongoing refugee crisis, the Rohingya conflict (UNHCR, 2021), and continued violence and discrimination against Muslims in India (Ochab, 2022; Siyech & Narain, 2018), it is evident that “fear, hatred, and disgust” of Muslims has resulted in their dehumanization beyond “the West” and now also comes from “the Orient” itself, as well.

In 1990, the Atlantic—considered to be a liberal-leaning publication—published an article by what Said would term an “Orientalist” scholar named Bernard Lewis. The

title of his piece, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, is incendiary in itself, and the article follows suit. Lewis (1990) outlined the ways in which “the Muslim” has been “defeated,” including “his loss of domination in the world,” “the undermining of his authority in his own country,” and “the challenge to his mastery in his own house, from emancipated women and rebellious children” (Lewis, 1990, p. 49). According to Lewis, it seems perfectly natural that having suffered such disabling defeats, “the Muslim” has developed a rage that is directed against the West, and against America in particular. Lewis’ piece is full of stereotypes, judgements, assumptions, and insults against Muslims. His article succeeded in not only perpetuating negative stereotypes of Muslims, and Arabs in particular, but it also legitimized the conflation of religion with politics. It is in this article by Lewis that we first encounter the public cultural notion of a “clash of civilizations.”

Samuel Huntington, a Harvard professor, wrote a similarly antagonistic piece in 1993 entitled *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington (1993) suggested that the roots of international conflict can be explained as a “Clash of Civilizations.” He identified religion as the most important difference between civilizations, thereby reinforcing Lewis’ conflation of religion and politics, but also adding culture to the mix. He stated that “conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years” (Huntington, 1993, p. 31). This not only emphasizes the divide between “East (or the Orient)” and “West”, but specifically hones in on the “Islamic world” and pits it against the West. In the final paragraph of his 27-page article, Huntington suggests that an effort should be made “to identify elements of commonality between Western and other civilizations,” but rather than stating this in a spirit of solidarity or compassion, it follows an assertion that the West will have to “maintain the

economic and military power necessary to protect its interests in relation to these (Other) civilizations” (Huntington, 1993, p. 49).

After September 11, 2001, Islamophobia was openly practiced through legislation and policy in the United States, and this continued through the Trump administration with the travel ban from several Muslim-majority countries issued immediately after his election in 2016. The ACLU published a detailed report in 2004 about the racial and ethnic profiling which had been taking place since 9/11. During the days following 9/11, thousands of men were detained and incarcerated, and all immigration hearings of Arabs and Muslims were concealed (ACLU, 2004). The report states that “of the thousands of men who were detained and questioned, not one (was) publicly charged with terrorism” (ACLU, 2004, p. 5). What has been happening in Xinjiang bears a striking resemblance to these tactics. Furthermore, in 2002, the U.S. government established a Special Registration program, which required “all male nationals over the age of 15 from 25 countries... to report to the government to register and be fingerprinted, photographed, and questioned” (ACLU, 2004, p. 6). In just one year, 83,310 foreign nationals registered through this program. 13,740 of them were placed into deportation proceedings, and *none* of them were ever officially charged with terrorism (ACLU, 2004). Though these figures may be staggering, they are small in comparison to what has been happening in Xinjiang. Moreover, Uyghurs are Chinese nationals.

During this post-9/11 period, the FBI arrived unannounced to the homes, workplaces, and mosques of thousands of Arabs and Muslims across the country, separating families and causing fear and confusion among these communities. Police departments were also involved in official Islamophobic practices. After 9/11, the New

York Police Department had a program specifically intended to surveil Muslim communities (Ali, 2016). This program “put American citizens (and others) under surveillance and scrutinized where they ate, prayed, and worked solely because of their ethnicity” (Ali, 2016, p. 78). One of the most insidious elements of this program was to target Muslim students on their college campuses. We have seen these same tactics, as previously mentioned, implemented in Xinjiang. There were also spies planted in various community environments, which served to create a sense of mistrust and self-censorship within and between these communities. Ultimately, this “muted their sense of democratic engagement and attempted to undermine their efforts of political organizing” (Ali, 2016, p. 79). According to interviews with Uyghurs, this has been happening in their communities both in China and abroad for many years.

Ali finds that “although Muslims in the United States may be citizens, they are also citizen-suspects” (Ali, 2016, p. 79). In the post-9/11 political climate, “every Muslim was ‘bad’ until proven otherwise, and even ‘good’ Muslims (were) treated with continual suspicion” (Ali, 2016, p. 80). Similarly, Mamdani (2004) discusses the concept of “good Muslim” versus “bad Muslim.” Mamdani suggests that popular media, including the *New York Times*, portray good Muslims as “modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 24). This suspicion and stereotyping of Muslims, along with the justification thereof, has spread worldwide since the inception of the Global War on Terror. Direct parallels to Muslims in Xinjiang have already been discussed.

The notions of “good Muslim” and “bad Muslim” as created by pervasive governmental policies and reinforced by societal pressures surely have an influence on

how people perceive Muslims, as well as how Muslims perceive themselves. According to Ali (2016), after 9/11, Muslim students in New York City and surrounding areas censored themselves in one-on-one conversations, group meetings, on campuses, and in youth organizations. In short, they did not feel free to be themselves and were “actively responding to how they were, and are, perceived due to the appearance of being Muslim” (Ali, 2016, p. 86). The young people in Ali’s study reported that after 9/11, “they changed the way they associated with friends, as well as newcomers to their communities” (Ali, 2016, p. 88). They were not able to trust people anymore and felt that they were always being watched. Uyghur communities have similarly been fragmented in both China and abroad.

Since 9/11, the perception of “the dangerous, violent, rebellious, and suspect figure of the Muslim continues to haunt the American imagination” (Ali, 2016, p. 93). This perspective has also spread widely across the globe. Mamdani reminds us that “it does not make sense to think of culture in political—and therefore territorial—terms. States are territorial; culture is not” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 27). Rather than continuing to conflate culture, religion, and politics, as well as national origin and Islam, I suggest we carefully consider the underlying reasons for such vilification of Islam and Muslims. If the Middle East was not so rich in oil, I wonder if Islamophobia would be so prevalent in “the West.” The same can be queried of Xinjiang. What has been presented as a “clash of civilizations” could be considered alternatively as a conflict that actually is founded upon the desire to control material and natural resources. Mamdani argues that “one has to distinguish between civilization and power” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 33). Differences do not necessitate conflict. Rather, conflict is fueled by political, social, and economic

positioning. To continue to focus on differences in cultures and civilizations denies this notion (or meticulously obscures it).

The notion of Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* reveals the colonial, mistrustful, judgemental thinking that is still very much alive today, despite what Lewis and others suggest. Ali suggests that "every Muslim was 'bad' until proven otherwise, and even 'good' Muslims are treated with continual suspicion" (Ali, 2016, p. 80). The aforementioned surveillance and justification for dismantling Muslim communities has been enabled by the divisive, fear-based thinking that was promoted by Lewis, Huntington, and many others, including government officials. This thinking is pervasive and has translated into repressive and discriminatory policies aimed at Muslims around the world, including refugees in Europe and the United States, the Rohingya in Myanmar, Muslims in India, and those in East Turkestan (Ochab, 2022; Siyech & Narain, 2018; Sito-Sucic, 2021; UNHCR, 2021).

Given all of the information available about the extent of egregious human rights violations in Xinjiang, the lack of any significant response by the international community is surprising. Since 9/11, "religion has increasingly become a focal point in both public and academic discourses", and "global Muslims have been generalized or homogenized" as having an inherently violent nature (Mahmut, 2019, p. 25). Roberts (2018) reminds us that "hate crimes against Muslims with no affiliation to terrorist organizations are on the rise in both Europe and the United States" (p. 236). Abu-Lughod (2002) suggests asking people to substitute "Christian or Jewish wherever you have Muslim" in a question or statement to see if it would be acceptable or make sense (p. 784). If it were Christians or Jews being dehumanized and persecuted on such a large

scale in Europe, the U.S., Myanmar, India, or China, perhaps there would have already been a response on the part of the international community. Though global Islamophobia may not be the sole explanation for the world's inaction, it is likely a significant contributing factor. Within China, there are also other reasons for the desire to control the Uyghur population and the region which this ethnic population inhabits.

The Belt and Road Initiative

In 2013, Chinese president Xi announced his plans to develop a New 21st century Silk Road stretching from East Asia to Europe, Africa, and Oceania, linking more than 100 countries through infrastructure, transportation, and trade (Chatzky & McBride, 2020; Ma, 2019). This New Silk Road consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt on land and the Maritime Silk Road by sea. These were initially collectively referred to as the “One Belt, One Road Initiative” but are now simply called the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI). As of January 2020, more than sixty countries, which account for two-thirds of the world's population, had signed on to the BRI or had expressed interest in participating (Chatzky & McBride, 2020). The amount of money China has invested in the BRI is enormous. Though specific figures are difficult to confirm, it has been estimated that trillions of dollars have been contributed by China, including loans given to participating countries (Chatzky & McBride, 2020; Kuo & Kommenda, 2018; Ma, 2019).

The BRI has received both criticism and praise. Supporters tout it as “a way for China to invest in emerging markets and strengthen ties,” while critics suggest it allows China to “use money to leverage political gains and increase its global power,” including by engaging in debt-trap diplomacy (Ma, 2019, p. 1). Countries including Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, the Maldives, Mongolia, Montenegro, Pakistan and Tajikistan are at

risk of not being able to repay their loans and “will owe more than half of all their foreign debt to China” (Kuo & Kommenda, 2018, p. 3). People have also voiced environmental concerns related to specific BRI projects, such as constructing a coal plant in Kenya and building a dam in Indonesia (Ma, 2019).

Development in Xinjiang

Significant to this dissertation is the fact that the Belt and Road Initiative cuts through the heart of East Turkestan and relies on Urumqi as a central hub through which to reach countries to the north and west of China. It has already been mentioned that XUAR is rich in natural resources, and Han have been steadily migrating into the region for decades. In fact, Xinjiang contains China’s largest oil and natural gas reserves (Burgés et al., 2019). Fourteen years before plans for the BRI were declared, in June 1999 the Chinese government announced the “Western Big Development Project” in Xinjiang, which included “construction of roads, airports, railroads and a US\$ 14 billion pipeline linking Xinjiang’s natural gas fields to Shanghai” 2,500 miles away (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 369). This is just one example of how the government has siphoned off Xinjiang's resources to benefit Han in other parts of the country. All major industries in Xinjiang are controlled by Han Chinese individuals, including the oil industry. The China National Petroleum Company, for example, “brought most of its workers in Xinjiang from other parts of China” (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 369). These Han-run companies hire Han workers, thereby further marginalizing and isolating Uyghurs from participating in and benefiting from the development of their own land.

Since the official launch of the One Belt, One Road Initiative in 2015, Beijing has overseen “a vast infrastructure transformation in Xinjiang” (Burgés et al., 2019, p. 15).

One of the most significant BRI development measures in Xinjiang has been the construction of a land port in Urumqi. This port is intended “to serve as China’s gateway for materials being transported into Europe and the Middle-East” while offering “a ‘one-stop,’ ‘integrated’ service, combining customs clearance, inspection and quarantine, train transportation and freight logistics” to attract international business to Xinjiang (Burgés et al., 2019, p. 15). This port and railway hub has now “opened 21 rail routes to 26 cities in 19 European and Central Asian countries, with China-Europe freight trains making over 2,200 journeys departing from Urumqi” (Burgés et al., 2019, p. 15).

In 2017, China invested about US\$ 66 million for infrastructure in Xinjiang, including the construction of highways and high-speed railways to connect the region to other parts of China. This was a fifty percent increase over the previous year’s spending (Shan, 2019). 2017 also marks the year the crackdown in Xinjiang, including mass internment in the camps, reached its height. It has been reported that “Beijing hopes that Xinjiang can serve as a transportation hub and commercial, logistics and cultural centre for the region” (Shan, 2019, p. 1). One might inquire which culture President Xi plans to display in this Indigenous Uyghur homeland. Given what has been happening in recent years, it is clear that Uyghurs are not to be included in these modernization and globalization efforts on their land.

What is happening in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is reminiscent of other settler colonial projects, “which sought to break the will and destroy the communities of Indigenous populations, quarantine and decimate large portions of their populations, and marginalize the remainder while subjecting them to forced assimilation” (Roberts, 2020, pp. 4-5). Roberts suggests that the overall goal of China’s current

campaign is the forced assimilation of both “the territory of XUAR and its people into the PRC’s version of a modern China” (p. 4). Despite an abundance of evidence, most of the international community has stood silently by, while some nations—particularly those who stand to benefit from the BRI—have gone so far as to praise China’s supposed counterterrorism measures, thereby allowing the PRC to act with impunity. This study seeks to humanize the crisis in XUAR by highlighting not only the unprecedented repression Uyghurs are experiencing, but also how they continue to resist Chinese brutality and hegemony, even at great risk to themselves and their family members.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

What is happening to the Uyghurs in East Turkestan amounts to genocide, as has been shown in Chapter Two; yet, until recently, relatively little attention has been given to this issue. This dissertation highlights the realities of Uyghur people through the perspectives of those in the diaspora, and the ways in which they continue to struggle to survive, with the hope that it leads to greater awareness of and action in the face of the crimes against humanity taking place in their homeland. I hope that this, in turn, will draw more attention to this situation so that it will be regarded as a significant human rights issue which deserves closer examination and action by the international community.

Uyghurs around the world have been speaking out and organizing in resistance to Chinese hegemony at great risk to themselves and their family members. As an ethnic group, they are struggling to retain their identities and prevent their culture from being exterminated. Members of the Uyghur diaspora have shared their experiences and those of their family members in this study to raise awareness of the magnitude of this egregious human rights issue. I would like to honor their stories and highlight their resistance in the face of tremendous struggle.

To restate, the research questions this study explores are as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of North American Uyghurs of the diaspora on the genocide happening in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region?
2. How have Uyghurs of the diaspora engaged in acts of resistance against Chinese, state-sanctioned, colonial hegemony?

The methodological plan detailed below was followed to answer these questions.

Research Design

This study is a qualitative case study, which positioned the Uyghur people's experiences, perspectives, and resistance—as reflected through the voices of those in the diaspora, as well as a review of archival evidence and available texts produced by Uyghurs—at the center of a human rights crisis amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide. Creswell (2013) suggests that case studies are most useful when the setting is critical to a study. This particular study focuses on a specific geopolitical area in China where human rights violations have been taking place for decades against the Uyghur people. Moreover, according to Creswell (2013), a case study is the most appropriate methodological approach for this research because of the application of diverse sources of data, including interviews, observations, field notes, archival evidence, and document analysis.

The use of *testimonio* as a research method is relevant to this study, as “the collective goal of *testimonio* is to name oppression and to arrest its actions whether as genocide, racism, classism, xenophobia, or any other type of institutionalized marginalization” (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012, p. 527). Furthermore, the use of *testimonio* “is intentional and political,” which allows Uyghurs as narrators “to show an experience that is not only liberating in the process of telling but also political in its production of awareness to listeners and readers alike” (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012, p. 527). Distinct from testimonials, which seek to provide an authoritative and accurate account of a given experience, a central tenet of *testimonio* is understanding that “a narrative ‘I’ is called upon to represent the experiences of the ‘we,’ in which the narrator

speaks as a member of an oppressed community or social group who utilizes the genre to bring attention to a collective social problem” (DeRocher, 2018, p. 4).

Although *testimonio* is typically relayed in block quotes or long passages, I have taken portions of individual quotes from my participants and interspersed them with each other and additional data to protect their possible identification. In utilizing *testimonio* as a method with populations under massive repression who are facing state violence, protecting the identity of participants—and preventing reprisals for their participation—is of the utmost importance.

I am aware that all too often, “The stories that are considered most compelling, considered most authentic in social science research are stories of pain and humiliation” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 812). My goal is not to expose and parade these stories, but rather, to provide a space for Uyghurs to be heard and share what they wish with others, based on an expressed interest in doing so. They have guided the epistemological foundation upon which their stories are presented, and I have learned from their experiences—“often painful, but also wise, [and] full of desire and dissent” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 812). As a researcher and scholar, rather than upholding and reaffirming the historical superiority and legitimacy of hegemonic knowledge, I am “committed to producing research knowledge that documents social injustice, that recovers subjugated knowledges, that helps create spaces for the voices of the silenced to be expressed and ‘listened to’, and that challenges racism, colonialism, and oppression” (Smith, 2012, p. 198).

Tuck and Yang (2014) state that using research methods which “rely upon a researcher’s observations already make a claim about knowledge, how it is acquired, and

who is in the position to acquire it” (p. 815). Hence, “observation itself is making an epistemological claim, rooted in the dynamics of gaze, space, and power” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 815). I am acutely aware of this, and as such, I have made every effort to center, uphold, and honor the experiences of the participants who have been bravely willing to share. I renounce my claim to objectivity, and I refuse to objectify those who have participated in this project. Instead, I observed “the objectifying space and its sexual, racial, and biopolitical architecture” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 816). I have also emphasized policies, institutions of power, and the relationships of Uyghurs to such oppressive forces rather than “studying” them and their problems.

In working with Uyghur people themselves, I used Linda T. Smith’s decolonizing methodologies as a framework for disrupting “relationships between researchers and researched... (and) between a colonizing institution of knowledge and colonized peoples whose own knowledge (has been) subjugated” (Smith, 2012, p. x). I have centered their experiences and stories as those with authority, and I have worked with them as partners rather than research participants.

I conducted individual interviews with ten Uyghurs of the diaspora to complement the reports in my literature review and learn about their resistance efforts related to the genocide. I also had many informal conversations with Uyghurs of the diaspora over the course of a year, both in-person and over Zoom, which I recorded by hand as observations and field notes. We focused on the following topics, though a number of other issues arose during our conversations, which are reported in Chapter Five: repression in XUAR, transnational oppression of Uyghurs, internment in the camps,

fabricated accusations of criminal behavior, destruction of culture, and religious intolerance.

Many Uyghurs directed me to the testimonies collected during the Uyghur Tribunal—an independent investigation of China’s crimes against humanity held in the United Kingdom in June, September, and November 2021, which was during the time of my data collection. Diaspora members also pointed me to the Xinjiang Victims Database, which is an archive containing over 25,000 detailed records of those who have been detained in the camps and prisons. Both of these sources were examined and provided primary source data, which is included in Chapter Five to supplement the accounts contributed by diaspora members.

Method One: Interviews

The interviews held with diaspora members highlighted how Uyghurs have actively struggled to survive and continue to do so through acts of resistance, both in China and abroad. Smith (2012) suggests that “struggle is a tool of both social activism and theory,” and “struggle can be mobilized as resistance and as transformation” (p. 199). I recognize that participation in this study is in itself a form of resistance and puts my participants at risk. As such, I engaged in both purposeful and snowball sampling as I continued to develop trust within the Uyghur community. I included the *testimonios* of Uyghurs collected through interviews and observations in my research findings as approved by the participants.

Interviews were conducted for 45 minutes to one hour, one-on-one, with ten individual Uyghurs with whom I had developed a rapport. These interviews were intended to both “discover [and] understand” the perspectives and experiences of the

participants (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 93). The interviews followed the “general interview guide approach” (Turner III, 2010, p. 755), as well as the “informal open-ended interview” method, combined with natural conversation (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 127). Essential to my project as a whole has been developing trust within the Uyghur community. As such, my interviews were informal to provide the feeling of having a casual, open, and safe conversation. After collectively identifying key areas to discuss, I guided the participants “through insightful probes that create a conversation” while using “broad probing questions... to move the conversation forward” (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 127). This general interview guide approach allowed for flexibility and “a relaxed and informal manner” while maintaining some basic structure (Turner III, 2010, p. 755). This approach also helped “to develop rapport with the participants,” which was critical in creating a safe, encouraging, and supportive environment (Turner III, 2010, p. 755).

Diaspora members shared that the last iteration of their Chinese ID cards included a voice sample. As such, not all participants were comfortable being audio recorded. Four of the interviewees permitted audio recording, while the other six preferred that I take notes. They were very accommodating in repeating their statements and speaking slowly so I could record the details by hand. We then reviewed the material together to ensure its accuracy.

Method Two: Observations and Field Notes

Between January and December 2021, I met Uyghurs of the diaspora in the United States and Canada by participating in various advocacy efforts. During the summer of 2021, I spent nearly every weekend with Uyghurs of the San Francisco Bay Area diaspora community. Over the course of this year (2021), I attended community

gatherings, social events, and was invited to Uyghurs' homes. I engaged in many informal conversations during which I observed and actively listened to their experiences and expressions of both struggle and solidarity as a community. I kept a field journal where I meticulously recorded my observations by taking notes during and after my time spent with diaspora members. I informed everyone I interacted with that I was recording information to possibly include in my dissertation. People were surprisingly forthcoming, particularly after they had met me a few times, though they insisted on strict conditions of anonymity.

Maxwell (2012) suggests that "observation can enable you to draw inferences about someone's perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data" (p. 94). I found this to be true in my study, as people were quite comfortable and communicative having casual conversations in an informal setting, and there was no structure or expectation, which differed from the interviews. I also found that participating in activities and interacting with Uyghurs in a natural setting was very valuable in enhancing my understanding of the issues and dynamics their diaspora community faces.

Deggs and Hernandez (2018) suggest that "with field notes in particular, reflective practices can prove to be useful to help qualitative researchers make meaning out of the data they have collected through empirical processes" (p. 2553). I have made every effort to engage in purposeful reflection throughout my data collection, analysis, and writing of this dissertation. My observations and field notes were used both as a record from the field and as a source for reflexive practice.

Method Three: Document Analysis

I used document analysis in combination with interviews, observations, field notes, and archival research as a means of triangulation. According to Bowen (2009), “as a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies” (p. 29). Several Uyghur organizations have been active since the 1990s and early 2000s in creating websites and publishing reports as a way to mobilize and organize Uyghurs of the diaspora. I examined a number of their publications and websites as primary sources. Specifically, I looked at material produced by the World Uyghur Congress, the Uyghur American Association, the Uyghur Human Rights Project, and Campaign for Uyghurs, respectively.

In addition to triangulating the data, document analysis was helpful in providing additional data “on the context within which research participants operate,” as well as historical insight and background information (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). As such, the documents analyzed serve as sources of supplementary research data. Content from some of the documents also provided leads for asking additional questions during the interviews and casual conversations.

Method Four: Archival Research

The Xinjiang Victims Database³ documents and maintains detailed records of people who have been detained in the camps, prisons, or otherwise disappeared in XUAR. This project is ongoing, and as of March 2022, it contained over 26,000 entries. The goal is to document the details of individual cases “so as to both protect them now

³ <https://shahit.biz/eng/#home>

and hold the Chinese authorities accountable later, by creating the foundations for future legal action and reparations” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). In addition to documenting and maintaining individual records, the Xinjiang Victims Database contains eyewitness accounts from survivors of the camps, letters from detention, official court documents, before-and-after photos of survivors, transcripts of phone calls, and other primary source evidence. As such, it serves as an archive of information pertaining to the atrocities in XUAR.

I read 53 eyewitness accounts and examined 50 records of Uyghurs in the database who have been detained, imprisoned, or whose whereabouts are unknown. Some of this information is included in Chapter Five to supplement data from the interviews, observations, field notes, and testimonies from the Uyghur Tribunal. Subotić (2021) states that “traditionally, ‘legitimate’ archives were official, public places where people of privilege (white, male, wealthy) deposited their documents, or the archives considered only those kinds of people worthy of archival files” (p. 344). She recommends that we “think more creatively about what kind of archival sources we could use in addition to official state archives” (Subotić, 2021, p. 349). The Xinjiang Victims Database provides a set of archival records focused entirely on those who have been victimized by the Chinese state.

Rather than asking victims to recount their traumatic experiences repeatedly, an archive may provide their testimonies and other accounts as primary sources to be considered for research. Heng et al. (2018) propose that “A significant strength of archival research over other methodological designs is the ability to examine socially sensitive phenomena in an ethical,... non-confrontational and indirect manner” (p. 18).

Uyghurs themselves directed me to the Xinjiang Victims Database as a source for painful testimony and details which they have not directly experienced, but are intimately familiar with.

I examined the evidence in the Xinjiang Victims Database after having spent a substantial amount of time with the Uyghur diaspora community and learning a great deal about their history and current struggle. This is consistent with Gaillet's (2012) suggestion that "archival researchers must immerse themselves in the study of the place, time, and culture they are researching." She recommends "talking with members of the community when possible, broadly reading any contemporary materials, addressing pertinent issues of time and place, and triangulating data," as I have done throughout my study (Gaillet, 2012, p. 44). The information from this archive describes the current situation in East Turkestan in the words of those who have experienced it directly, thus maintaining the integrity of the data.

Data Analysis

In my analysis of the data, I identified common primary themes and sub-themes that emerged from my observations and field notes, interview transcriptions, and the documents, tribunal testimonies, and database entries reviewed. I engaged in an inductive approach to coding, initially creating two large categories of data that applied to either of my two research questions. I then examined these large categories line-by-line to create overarching (primary) themes. Further analysis revealed sub-themes within the primary themes. Finally, I identified and assessed the primary and sub-themes' relevance to this study. The themes and sub-themes relevant to each research question are described in Chapters Five and Six, respectively. Some additional questions were generated from the

data, which were clarified by speaking with diaspora members and led “back to the data for further analysis to refine the study findings” (Hennink, 2014, p. 129).

Tuck and Yang (2014) remind us that “researchers make claims for a living,” and “the work of data analysis is the alchemy of becoming-claims” (p. 814). I have not lost sight of the fact that these becoming-claims come from the lived experiences of real people: “their stories, their worries and desires, their sense of the way the world works” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 814). Throughout my research, I have been guided by the question of “who benefits from this work?” I have tried to ensure that the answer is always “Uyghurs.” I have checked my content with diaspora members to ensure that I am not gratuitously sharing their stories.

Population

Ten Uyghur adults of the diaspora community in the San Francisco Bay Area were interviewed for this study. In addition, Uyghur diaspora members in the United States and Canada shared their perspectives and experiences with me informally. No names or other identifying details have been included to protect the safety of those involved and their relatives in East Turkestan. All of my research was conducted with the utmost respect for the privacy, security and well-being of the Uyghur people. I have cleared everything with my participants (in a process of “member-checking” utilized in community-based research), to the extent that they have been interested in participating, before sharing or publishing their stories and research findings.

Limitations

One limitation to this study is that I was not able to go to Xinjiang and collect data and make observations in person, as it would have put Uyghurs at tremendous risk. I

learned from one of my Uyghur contacts in the Bay Area that after a journalist visited East Turkestan to speak with Uyghurs about their experiences, all those who she spoke to were arrested. Also, I do not speak or read the Uyghur language or Mandarin, so I had to rely on one of my Uyghur contacts to translate for those who do not speak English. All interviewees spoke English fluently, so this was not an issue. It was during social gatherings and community events that I occasionally had the help of a translator.

I was initially uncertain of how many members of the Uyghur diaspora would be willing to speak with me as part of this study, which I expected to be a limitation. I found that as I got to know people and built trust within the community, many diaspora members willingly shared their experiences with me. I also expected that continually unfolding events in XUAR and possible threats to family members would limit people's willingness to speak openly and share their experiences. I actually discovered that as the situation grew worse, more people wanted to participate in the hope of drawing more attention to this ongoing crisis.

Positionality

Since my earliest memories, I have been aware of the direct impacts of Soviet Communist oppression and anti-Semitism on my own family members. I have never known my grandparents, though I do know that my maternal grandmother was orphaned as a young child and didn't know her own birthday, and my maternal grandfather was killed because he was Jewish. Growing up with the awareness of religious and political persecution, coupled with constant reminders of the Holocaust, fostered my personal commitment to never allow such atrocities to happen again. As such, I feel a strong sense of responsibility to speak out against the Uyghur genocide. At the same time, I am

acutely aware of my privilege as a White, non-Indigenous person conducting this work as a doctoral student with the support of a progressive department within a social justice-oriented university. I acknowledge the violence that has been committed against Indigenous peoples by the Academy, and I recognize that the consequences of colonialism continue to the present day. In this study, I aim to dismantle the research binary between researcher and subject, and I intend to center Uyghur stories of resistance over pain narratives. Furthermore, Uyghur epistemologies will serve to unsettle the Chinese settler colonial knowledge, which China continues to publicly proclaim.

As aforementioned, I returned to this subject after being contacted by local Uyghur community members and learning about the scale of Uyghur internment in the camps. We organized a public program at USF in November 2018 to raise awareness of what was happening in XUAR following the internment of one of my Uyghur contact's relatives in the camps. This event was co-sponsored by Amnesty International and Human Rights Educators USA. The trust I have established within the local Uyghur community served as the foundation upon which my research was conducted.

Conclusion

The methodology in this qualitative case study was designed to center and honor the knowledge and experiences of Uyghurs of the diaspora in relation to the genocide occurring in their Indigenous homeland. Although Uyghurs inside of China remain largely powerless in the present context, Uyghurs of the diaspora “may be able to complicate PRC designs on the erasure of their culture and identity” (Roberts, 2020, p. 239). Many Uyghur exiles have become politically active since their family members have disappeared into the camps, and Uyghur youth have become involved in

mobilization efforts in the west. Despite attempts by the PRC to silence them, these Uyghurs continue to raise awareness of what is happening to their friends and relatives in East Turkestan. This dissertation presents the perspectives of Uyghurs of the diaspora based on a year of engaging in dialogic spaces together, which I have been privileged to take part in.

CHAPTER V: UYGHUR DIASPORA PERSPECTIVES ON THE GENOCIDE IN EAST TURKESTAN

This chapter presents evidence to contribute to the growing body of testimonios and other accounts confirming the systematic, targeted, unlawful, inhumane treatment of Uyghurs by the Chinese state (Danilova, 2018; Denyer, 2018; Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Maizland, 2020; Newlines Institute, 2021; Uyghur Tribunal, 2021; Zenz, 2019; Zenz, 2020). The information presented here is guided by the following broad research question: What are the perspectives of North American Uyghurs of the diaspora on the genocide happening in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (East Turkestan)? The data in this chapter is based on interviews conducted with ten Uyghur community members in the San Francisco Bay Area over six months between June and December 2021, as well as many informal conversations with Uyghur diaspora members living across North America from January to December 2021.⁴ Although there are different perspectives and experiences within the Uyghur diaspora, every respondent agreed upon the fact that a deliberate, multifaceted genocide is taking place with the aim of destroying Uyghur culture and identity and breaking the spirit of the Uyghur people worldwide.

Participants

Ten Uyghur diaspora members ranging from 30-60 years of age were interviewed for this study. Six men and four women generously and courageously agreed to share their perspectives with me under strict conditions of anonymity. All interviews were held

⁴ All quotes in this chapter, unless specifically cited, are from Uyghur diaspora participants in my study. To protect their identities and given the high-level of surveillance of the Chinese state, I have attributed information and quotes broadly “members of the Uyghur diaspora.”

in person in public parks in the San Francisco Bay Area. Four of these interviews were audio recorded, while the other six were transcribed by hand. Other conversations took place either in person, on the telephone, via email, or on Zoom with Uyghur diaspora members in various locations in the United States and Canada. The table below indicates the interviewees' gender, age range, level of education completed, and language fluency.

Table 5.1: Participants' Data			
Gender	Age Range	Education	Language Fluency
Male	30-45	MS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Female	45-60	MS	Uyghur, Mandarin, Russian, English
Female	45-60	BA	Uyghur, Mandarin, Russian, English
Male	45-60	PhD	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Male	45-60	BS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Female	30-45	BS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English, Turkish
Male	30-45	BS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Female	45-60	MA	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Male	45-60	MS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
Male	30-45	BS	Uyghur, Mandarin, English

Many diaspora members referred me to the testimonies provided during the Uyghur Tribunal⁵ held in June, September, and November 2021 in the United Kingdom. These testimonies were live-streamed and are documented online. Diaspora members also directed me to the Xinjiang Victims Database,⁶ which maintains detailed records of over 25,000 adults and children who have been detained in the camps or other state-run facilities, along with survivor and witness testimony. Some of this information is also included as primary source archival evidence in this chapter. In addition, reports published by the Uyghur Human Rights Project⁷ were used to triangulate and supplement the data from the other aforementioned sources. The following overarching themes and sub-themes emerged through the process of inductive coding and analysis of all of this data.

Intense Repression Started in 2014

Some Uyghurs hold the perspective that “China has been suppressing and brainwashing Uyghurs since 1949 (when the PRC was established)” (interviews). Others say that “the worst nightmare started for Uyghurs after 9/11” (interviews). A number of the diaspora members I have spoken to point to the Urumqi uprising of July 2009 as “the beginning of real trouble for Uyghurs in XUAR.” Although most media sources state that the current genocide began in 2017, Uyghurs suggest that it actually started in 2014 when the concentration camps were first being built. They also believe that the camps have been in active operation since 2016.

⁵ <https://uyghurtribunal.com/>

⁶ <https://shahit.biz/eng/#evidence>

⁷ <https://uhrp.org/>

According to Uyghur community members, China freely issued passports to Uyghurs in XUAR from 2011-2014. Many Uyghurs traveled abroad during this time. Then, in 2014, according to respondents, “the Chinese Communist party started forcefully collecting (their) passports.” Uyghurs of the diaspora began hearing about widespread arrests and prison sentencing for Uyghur intellectuals, scholars, businesspeople, and anyone who had shown signs of patriotism toward East Turkestan. Many people were targeted for having traveled abroad, particularly to Turkey. Some Uyghurs who left China during this period had arrest warrants issued for their return. According to those I interviewed, “the situation was terrifying and very tense for Uyghurs (both in China and in the diaspora) during that time,” and “after May 2014, most of the people in prisons (in XUAR) were Uyghurs.”

The Situation Became Worse in 2016

By 2016, Uyghurs of the diaspora heard stories about widespread, high-tech surveillance taking place throughout XUAR. Police stations were built every few hundred meters in the residential areas of Urumqi, and they were staffed by Han Chinese men who were brought from other provinces to Xinjiang. Armed police and security cameras became ubiquitous, and accounts began to emerge of police entering Uyghur homes and taking family members to camps if they were deemed suspicious. Police were free to check Uyghurs’ computers and cell phones for images and content related to Islam, such as verses from the Quran and pictures of the Turkish flag. Applications, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Skype became forbidden. The presence of these apps, Islamic materials, having traveled abroad, or evidence of communication with relatives outside of

China were all justification for detaining people in camps. There are also accounts of people being detained for “kitchen knives (being) too large” (interview).

Testimony from the Uyghur Tribunal further suggests that Uyghurs were forced to install a special application on their phones during this time to be constantly monitored. A participant in the Tribunal stated that after installing this application on their phone, “each time I said anything related to the Muslim religion, the police would call me immediately after and ask me what I had said” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021).

Furthermore,

The police also installed an unknown device with QR code in my home and every two days, residential committee members would enter my home to scan this device. After that, even within my home, we were afraid to say anything related to the Chinese government or our Muslim religion. Our internet routers in our home were confiscated by the police and we were given new ones issued by the authorities. (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021)

2016 was the last year that Uyghur diaspora members were able to go home to visit their relatives. Those residing in the United States who visited in 2016 had to wait months for a visa, and they reported being interrogated at the Beijing Airport for hours, despite having American passports. In private interrogation rooms they were asked to write in Mandarin and relay details from their early childhood. They were also asked how long they had stayed in the United States and whether they were spies. Once they finally arrived in East Turkestan, they were visited by police regularly at their family homes, and they were followed by government officials throughout their stay. Every Uyghur diaspora member I have spoken to has said that since 2016, they “can’t go back to (their) home

because (they) will not be allowed to come out.” They will not risk being imprisoned and abandoning their family members in the diaspora.

2017

Forced or Coerced Return to China

Uyghur diaspora members were becoming aware of the dangers in their homeland and knew “things were getting very bad in 2016” (interview). In 2017, the repression reached a new level. In early 2017, Uyghurs of the diaspora began hearing about Chinese security officials coming to relatives’ homes in the middle of the night to interrogate them. A Uyghur Tribunal participant stated, “At that time, the Chinese Communist Party was summoning the relatives of Chinese citizens from abroad, then hooding them and taking them to camps as soon as they crossed the border” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021). Diaspora members have reported that China’s transnational repression of Uyghurs has been ongoing since the late 1990s. The latest iteration, which utilizes a vast and sophisticated system of algorithmic surveillance and takes advantage of China’s economic power, “started in 2014 and continues to today” (interviews).

Chinese officials, former colleagues, and family members in East Turkestan contacted Uyghurs of the diaspora in 2017 to tell them to return to XUAR for various supposed business or health-related matters. Many of the people who returned during this time had their passport and documents confiscated upon arrival and ended up in the camps. Others had their documents confiscated and lived under a sort of house arrest, not able to go anywhere while being constantly monitored. Diaspora members have reported that some of their relatives in Xinjiang have been “allowed to make international phone calls,” but it is clear they were being monitored by government officials during the calls

based on “how they were talking and what they were saying” (interview). Also, phone calls were “very short, no more than five minutes,” which is much shorter than their usual calls of “one hour or more” (interviews).

Diaspora members reported receiving calls from their relatives in 2017 asking them to “come home to take care of (their) father or brother, or some other relative” (interviews). Others were asked to return to sign paperwork related to former business or education in China. In some cases, family members in East Turkestan openly stated that they would be taken to a camp unless the diaspora member returned immediately. Uyghurs of the diaspora have been acutely aware of the pressure that has been placed on their family members in XUAR to try to convince them to return home. This remains a great hardship for them, particularly in cases where diaspora members feel responsible for their relatives being taken to camps as a result of their resistance to this Chinese state tactic.

Among the documented cases of Uyghurs who were forced or coerced to return to China, there are many commonalities. Upon their arrival in China, their passport and other official documents were confiscated so they could not leave or move around within China. They were constantly surveilled and had to endure repeated interrogations. In some cases, people were taken to camps as soon as they arrived, while others were placed in camps after being under house arrest for six months or more (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021; Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

Even Uyghurs who lived abroad for years and had not been involved in any political activity inside or outside of XUAR were susceptible to China’s tactics. One Uyghur diaspora member who had lived abroad for nearly ten years and intentionally

avoided political activity had her passport confiscated when she arrived at the Urumqi airport and was taken to a camp soon afterward. Two Uyghur brothers studying abroad returned to XUAR after their father called and told them they had to come home. All three of them were then taken into police custody. Diaspora members have reported that during the summer of 2017, many Uyghur students who were studying abroad returned home for supposed government-mandated registration. They were also detained, and many of them have not been heard from since. The Uyghur Human Rights Project (2021) reported that it has been confirmed that some of these students have died.

China has close economic and political ties to a number of countries which are involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. Many of these countries have voiced their support for China's policies and have detained Uyghurs within their own borders. Diaspora members remain concerned not only about these detained Uyghurs, but also their deportation back to China. The Uyghur Human Rights Project (2021) has established that "since 2017, 682 Uyghurs have been detained in Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, the UAE, and Uzbekistan" (p. 44). They have also corroborated that several of these countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have deported Uyghurs back to China (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021).

Cut off From Family and Friends

In response to the intensifying crackdown, many Uyghurs in East Turkestan severed contact with their relatives in the diaspora in 2017. This is a tremendous source of pain for Uyghur diaspora members, as family is at the root of Uyghur culture. Elders in particular are highly respected, and intergenerational cultural transmission is considered

to be of utmost importance. I have heard many times that “Uyghurs always listen to their grandparents, especially grandmothers” (interviews). It is difficult to comprehend the immense sacrifice Uyghur relatives in East Turkestan have made for the sake of protecting their family members in the diaspora. This should be recognized as a reflection of the severity of the situation they are facing in Xinjiang.

Since 2017, Uyghurs in the diaspora have been told by their relatives in XUAR not to call them anymore, and in some cases have been told to “forget about us,” referring to their family members in XUAR, and “never come home” (interviews). Initially, some diaspora members maintained occasional contact with their mothers who told them that their “father, brothers, and sisters don’t want to talk to you” (interviews). A number of house phones and mobile numbers were disconnected during this time. Some Uyghurs tried to continue to communicate with their family members through trusted intermediaries, but even that became too dangerous. News of their family members has become limited to whatever they can learn from acquaintances, which they can never entirely trust.

Uyghurs of the diaspora learned that Chinese officials were actively harassing and interrogating their family members in XUAR in 2017, and in some cases, officials were living inside of their relatives’ homes. They heard through informants that their parents and in-laws were being constantly monitored and were repeatedly told that “your son (or daughter) is a terrorist,” and officials needed to know the “terrorists’ whereabouts” (interviews). One diaspora member described the last time her husband spoke to his family in Xinjiang:

When my husband called his mother that day, she told him not to call them anymore. My husband knew there were Chinese people living inside of his parents' house at that time, and that is the last communication he ever had with his entire family. When he tried to call again after several weeks, the house phone and their mobile phones were all disconnected. (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021)

In April 2017, Uyghurs of the diaspora learned that “Uyghurs were disappearing in the middle of the night” (interviews). Since the summer of 2017, many Uyghurs of the diaspora have not been able to locate or receive news of their relatives in East Turkestan. People have told me that they “have no idea where” their parents, in-laws, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends are, “whether they are in a camp or free,” or “whether they are alive or dead” (interviews). Many Uyghurs have dozens of family members missing, including young children. By 2018, Uyghurs considered themselves lucky if they knew fewer than ten people in the camps.

People Have Been Detained for Illegitimate Reasons

It is important to acknowledge that the millions of people who have been detained in the camps have not been given any form of due process, and the reasons for their internment focus largely on unsubstantiated claims of terrorist, extremist, or separatist-related activities, which include the practice or observance of Islam. As many Uyghur diaspora members have pointed out, their “friends and relatives in the camps are already very well-educated and have never committed any crimes, so why are they really there?” (interviews). Diaspora members have also stated that “qualifications of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Uyghurs have changed over time,” and “since 2016, it has been the worst (they) can remember” (interviews).

Travel Abroad

Many Uyghurs have been detained in the camps or given prison sentences simply for visiting other countries, despite obtaining all of the required legal permissions to do so. Travel to Turkey in particular has been treated as a grave offense by the Chinese state, likely because of the large Uyghur diaspora community residing there. A diaspora member shared that a friend “was sentenced to three years in prison for going to Turkey. Three years have passed, and he is still not free” (interview). Another diaspora member’s brothers were detained in the camps in 2018 for having visited Turkey in 2014. Yet another person was reportedly sentenced to seven years in prison because she visited Turkey. A witness for the Uyghur Tribunal testified that in 2016, his “brother took (his) mother to Turkey, and then 15 days later he returned home and was arrested and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The accusation was (that) he had been to Turkey” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021).

People have been placed in the camps or given prison sentences for visiting or spending extended time in other countries, as well. “One lady was (reportedly) sentenced to nine years just because she went to Saudi Arabia.” “Another woman ended up in a camp because she (had) lived in Kazakhstan for five years” (interview). Uyghur diaspora members assert that there are many stories like this. A camp survivor described one of his interrogation sessions in which officers “fastened chains on (his) hands and hit (him) with plastic batons” while they “asked (him) why (he) had visited all these countries” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). They also asked him “which Uyghurs (he) had met there, why (he) had applied for a U.S. visa, and which Uyghurs (he) knew in the U.S.” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

Contact with Family Members Abroad

In addition to traveling or living abroad, merely having relatives in another country or being in contact with family members outside of China have also been treated as criminal offenses. Uyghur diaspora members have stated that “everyone who has relatives abroad is known” (interviews). One Uyghur diaspora member said that “many of my relatives were imprisoned. The reason for all these imprisonments is that they had contacts with us” (interview). Reports from camp survivors also include statements about people being detained just for having relatives abroad. A survivor with family members in the diaspora said that one of her cellmates in the camp had a daughter who lives in Europe, and “the women who came (the) next day also had relatives living abroad. So, I understood the logic why we ended up in the detention center again” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

Financial transactions between Uyghurs in China and those in the diaspora have also resulted in people being placed in the camps. Relatives in China have been detained “for sending or receiving money from abroad,” and diaspora members have not been able to support their families in XUAR financially since 2016 (interviews). They see this as a direct mechanism by which China is disempowering and oppressing them as a people. Uyghurs have even been punished retroactively for sending money to relatives abroad. In one case, a woman was sent to a camp in 2016 for “transferring money to her mother in Australia in 2013” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Another woman was sentenced to 10 years in prison because she had sent money to someone in Turkey years before (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021).

Allegedly Extremist Religious Activities

Numerous accounts exist of people being detained in the camps for engaging in purportedly excessive or extremist religious activities. A diaspora member stated, “I can’t call my mom right now, but if I could and called to say ‘*as-salamu-alaykum*’ (peace be upon you), she would be taken to a camp” (interview). Another diaspora member said that he realized things were getting worse when he called his mother in 2016 and said “*as-salamu-alaykum*,” which was his usual greeting, and his mother responded with, “I’m good” (interview). He knew then that she was being monitored and it was no longer safe to call. An examination of records from the Xinjiang Victims Database (2021) reveals that reasons for detainment include wearing a headscarf or long skirt, growing a beard, praying at home, or attending a Muslim wedding.

An account from a witness in XUAR describes women ranging from 30 to 70 years of age being “beaten and dragged into police cars and brought to the camps for... wearing scarves under their chin,” while “some other women were arrested for wearing longer skirts” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). This witness also stated that before arresting them, “the police officers brutally beat the ladies saying ‘Don’t you know that it’s forbidden to wear a long skirt or dress or wearing a scarf?’” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Another witness reported that “police officers arrested so many Uyghurs from the villages, towns, and city centers including the ordinary public, imams, secretaries of mosques, anyone who had religious knowledge even though they did not do anything wrong” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021).

Diaspora members have stated that “no one feels safe praying anywhere in East Turkestan, and we cannot even acknowledge—let alone celebrate—our holidays and

traditions,” as these are seen as extremist or separatist activities and have resulted in detention in the camps (interviews). People have shared that their relatives have been arrested for nothing more than praying at home or speaking to neighbors during holidays, and some have been given long prison sentences for these allegedly extremist activities. A woman reported that her former classmate “has been sentenced to seven years in prison for praying,” and many people have been “given prison sentences for gathering in private homes to pray together” (interview). One account describes seven women who were initially taken to a camp and then sentenced to seven years in prison for praying and organizing a meal during Ramadan (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021). A diaspora member revealed that her “brother-in-law was sentenced to 18 years in jail for fasting during Ramadan and for obeying the traditions of Islam” (interview).

People have also been detained for participating in Muslim social events, including weddings, which typically do not include drinking alcohol. Abstaining from alcohol is seen as a sign of extremism. A witness reported that her friend was arrested for “attending a wedding in 2014 held according to Islamic traditions, so there was no dancing, singing, or drinking alcohol,...(and) all of the four-hundred people who attended that wedding were arrested and taken to camps” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Diaspora members suggest that the possession of allegedly extremist and forbidden items, including photographs of family members wearing a hijab, photographs taken abroad, anything written in Arabic, and copies of the Quran and other Islamic materials, are also reasons for detention in the camps. This has been corroborated by witness statements from the Uyghur Tribunal (2021) and records in the Xinjiang Victims Database (2021).

Other Alleged Violations

According to diaspora members and survivors, in addition to the preceding reasons, Uyghurs have been arrested in XUAR for having an expired ID card, having too many children, and possessing certain applications on their phones. Prior to 2016, Uyghur diaspora members widely used WhatsApp to communicate with their family members in East Turkestan. Since then, it has become too risky, and Uyghurs are afraid to contact their relatives using any sort of communication app, as they know they and their relatives are being monitored. A number of camp survivors have stated that the possession of WhatsApp on their phone was the reason for their detention. One person said, “they told me I was (t)here because they’d found WhatsApp on my phone. ‘You are guilty of using WhatsApp,’ they said. They claimed it contradicted the law” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Another said that “They found a whole bunch of forbidden stuff in my phone, (including) WhatsApp” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

Survivors and witnesses have described the ages of people in the camps ranging from teenagers as young as 15 to people in their eighties. Diaspora members have speculated that their missing nieces and nephews have been arrested for using or possessing communication apps on their phones, which is tied to the alleged violation of having contact with relatives abroad, or generally having contact with the outside world.

Uyghur community members have suggested that apart from the activities of Uyghurs themselves, police quotas have also contributed to the unlawful mass arrests in Xinjiang as “part of the government's way to punish as many Uyghurs as possible” (interview). A witness statement in the Xinjiang Victims Database (2021) corroborates this: “Although at first Uyghurs who traveled abroad and ‘religious’ Uyghurs were being

targeted, in order to meet their quota, police officers started detaining Uyghurs without reason.”

Uyghurs of the diaspora have suggested that there was a brief period in 2019 when some people were released from the camps, possibly after global attention to the issue. However, “in 2020 people started to be taken again, and things are even worse now than before” (interviews). A diaspora member stated that “China has lied about everything from the beginning, and since nothing is happening, they can keep doing the same thing without real consequences from the rest of the world” (interview). To date, China continues to deny the genocide and related atrocities in East Turkestan, and Uyghurs continue to disappear from society.

Accusations of Separatism and Terrorism

The aforementioned alleged offenses are tied to China’s claims of Uyghur separatism, which, in turn, contribute to Communist Party narratives of harming public unity and disturbing social order. A survivor of the camps stated that she was told that her “ideology is wrong” because she had “been to a foreign country” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021). Numerous records contained in the Xinjiang Victims Database list “separatism” as the official reason for detention. For example, a prominent Uyghur poet⁸ and editor was detained for his involvement in writing Uyghur-language textbooks. He was charged with “inciting ethnic hatred” and “separatism,” with the purported goal of “splitting the motherland” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Another editor⁹ of Uyghur textbooks,

⁸ <https://shahit.biz/eng/#2361>

⁹ <https://shahit.biz/eng/#2375>

who was also involved in protecting Uyghur-language education, was detained for “separatism” and has been sentenced to eight years in prison (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). There have been many similar accounts.

Other records in the Xinjiang Victims Database reveal that many people in the camps have been officially charged with terrorism. An examination of records of those detained suggests that no actual terrorist activity has taken place, but merely the suspicion of “*preparing to commit terrorist activities*” has been enough to sentence these people to prison. For example, a 51-year old woman who was a housewife and mother of four children is now serving 13 years in prison for “preparing to commit terrorist activities” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Her 57-year old husband was detained for “disturbing public order” and also “preparing to commit terrorist activities.” He has been sentenced to 17 years in prison (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Yet another woman in her fifties was detained because she was “*suspected of assisting in terrorist activities*” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

Some people have been accused of both separatism and terrorism, or other combinations of offenses. For example, a Uyghur scholar whose current status remains unknown was detained for being an “East Turkistan Separatist” and a “suspected terrorist” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Others have been accused of going abroad, contacting family members outside of China, practicing religion, being in possession of forbidden items, or “past transgressions,”¹⁰ despite not having a previous criminal record (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021; Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). Many people have not been charged with anything at all, yet their whereabouts remain unknown. Uyghur diaspora

¹⁰ <https://shahit.biz/eng/#2488>

members maintain that all of the charges (stated or otherwise) are bogus and are part of China's attempt to remove Uyghurs from society and destroy them as a people.

China's Goal Is the Extermination of the Uyghur People

In my conversations with Uyghurs of the diaspora, many people have stated that "China's (ultimate) goal is to exterminate Uyghurs as an ethnic group" so the government can have full control over their land, including its shared borders and resources. This has been corroborated by survivor and witness testimony given during the Uyghur Tribunal, and it is also documented in statements contained in the Xinjiang Victims Database. Survivors have said that placing people in camps "was not a matter of detaining and interrogating perpetrators who had somehow committed a crime or wrongdoing, but locking up the entire people who had Uyghur identity" (Uyghur Tribunal, 2021). A witness stated that the "camps were meant to detain Uyghurs, and then interrogate and torture them to the point of death" (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021).

In addition to the system of mass internment in the camps and the issues described above, draconian policies have reduced the number of births among Uyghurs, children and families have been separated within XUAR, and Uyghurs are subjected to regular home visits by Han officials, as discussed in the literature review (Hoshur, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018; Seytoff, 2018; Zenz, 2019; Zenz, 2020). Diaspora members have also shared that "many Uyghur ladies have been forced to marry Han Chinese men" as an assimilationist strategy (interviews).

Furthermore, as also discussed in the literature review, important cultural and religious sites have been destroyed, the Uyghur language has been banned, Uyghur neighborhoods have been razed and rebuilt, and Uyghurs have been sent to forced labor

facilities throughout China, sometimes far from their homes and family (Hernandez, 2017; Kashgarian, 2019; Rivers, 2020; Sintash, 2019; Xu, 2020; Zenz, 2019). A few more dimensions to this ongoing crisis are described below.

Cultural Genocide Started Long Ago

During the interviews conducted with Uyghur diaspora members, several participants stated that “a cultural genocide was happening during my time, and I didn’t even realize it.” One diaspora member said that when he began actively practicing Islam as an adult in the 1990s in East Turkestan, some of his friends who were teachers or government employees couldn’t go to the mosque to pray because they were asked to spy on other Uyghurs and report back to government officials. It was easier for them not to participate, though this meant publicly giving up their cultural and religious traditions. “If they didn’t name somebody (after going to the mosque), their job was in jeopardy” (interview). In the Uyghur language, people refer to this as “cooking meat in its own oil,” and it is widely known that “the Chinese government has been actively sending Uyghurs to spy on other Uyghurs,” both in China and abroad (interview).

Another participant recalled that in the nineties, his father said that his “family could not go to the mosque next to our home. We had to go to some village. Somewhere I didn't know and nobody knew” (interview). He acknowledged that “At that time I knew it was not allowed, but practicing, going to prayer on Eid is very important to us” (interview). He described that “all of our brothers had to get a van to go to some village where nobody knew us” so they wouldn’t be reported to government officials by spies who could name them (interview).

A diaspora member shared that her friends and relatives who were teachers in Xinjiang were “pressured to eat during (the fasting times of) Ramadan” (interview). They were provided with “free lunch that they couldn’t refuse” (interview). This was likely experienced by Uyghur government employees, as well. Another community member who worked as a Mandarin teacher at a Uyghur school in XUAR during the 1990s confirmed that she “could not openly acknowledge Uyghur cultural traditions, despite working with Uyghur students and families” (interview). She also recounted the increasing pressure to speak exclusively in Mandarin with her students.

Islamic education was permitted by the Chinese government in the 1980s. According to diaspora members, by the 1990s, Islamic schools “became heavily controlled by the police—it wasn’t an open educational system anymore” (interviews). One person stopped attending these schools because he was told by the people around him, including his father’s friends, that “they wouldn’t be able to protect (him) in the future, as they had access to the new policies that (said) those with a religious background would be targeted for arrest by the authorities” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). We have now seen these discriminatory policies enacted. Diaspora members have also reported that in recent years, discussions of the Quran have been “scripted by the Chinese government” (interview). In addition to surveillance cameras inside of mosques, “only the most basic stuff in the Quran is allowed, and every imam in every mosque has to talk about the same things” (interview).

Diaspora members have also described “China’s assimilation program to move Uyghur children to inner China at a young age,” which started long before the current genocide (interview). Uyghur families were offered reduced tuition rates and were

encouraged to send their children away for middle school for “greater opportunities.” Diaspora members now understand this as part of China’s intention to separate families and indoctrinate children, which continues today on a larger and more severe scale. “Kids are separated from families in state-run schools and are then sent to spy on their families, if they return at all” (interview). Those who do not return “are forced to change their name to a Chinese name and live a Chinese life” (interview). Now, with many of their parents detained in camps, Uyghur children are placed in state-run facilities permanently without access to their language and culture.

China’s assimilationist intentions have backfired in some cases. One person who was sent away from his family and culture stated that, “The constant discrimination and humiliation I experienced as a young Uyghur in a Chinese school in a Chinese city made me realize that I was different from the majority Han population” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). This served to make him “more conscious of (his) ethnic identity,” rather than destroying it (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). He is likely not the only one.

Uyghur Culture and Identity in Xinjiang Are Performative

Uyghurs of the diaspora maintain that authentic Uyghur culture has disappeared from public view in XUAR, and all that remains is intended “to (falsely) show that Uyghur culture is still alive to protect China’s image” (interviews). China has been actively promoting domestic tourism to Xinjiang.¹¹ Photographs online show Uyghur men and women lined up in their traditional clothing, holding textiles and instruments,

¹¹ <http://en.people.cn/n/2015/1009/c98649-8959609.html>,
<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202004/26/WS5ea4dc3ba310a8b2411519b8.html>,
http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2021-04/15/c_1127334387.htm

being photographed by Chinese tourists. A Uyghur diaspora member shared that even in the 1990s, she and her classmates were “forced to dance for Chinese officials” as part of the state’s “propaganda to show ethnic unity” (interview). China is now profiting from the exploitation of superficial, tightly controlled Uyghur culture while Uyghurs are forbidden from practicing their actual traditions in their own homeland.

Under conditions of harsh repression, with their significant cultural, historical, and religious sites destroyed, Uyghurs must share a sanitized version of their cultural heritage and endure happily performing for predominantly Han tourists as though they are not experiencing any hardship. In Urumqi, the capital of XUAR, the Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar, sometimes referred to simply as “the Grand Bazaar” or “the Urumqi Bazaar”, is a major attraction for tourists. It was built in the early 2000s and has been remodeled in recent years to accommodate more goods and experiences for tourists, including attending a Uyghur dinner and dance show with live music. According to Uyghurs, the Grand Bazaar actually has little to do with authentic Uyghur culture.

Repression Is Widespread Outside of the Camps

Uyghurs living in XUAR outside of the camps must contend with heavy surveillance, and they are closely monitored even in their own homes. Diaspora members have experienced this from the outside when trying to communicate with their family members in East Turkestan, as described above. A survivor reported that when she was released from the camps, she discovered the “forced pairing system, which authorized Han Chinese to live with Uyghur families” (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021). She described this experience as follows:

The authorities paired a family of four Han Chinese with my family (myself and my three children). They slept with us. They had to stay for ten days in our home every month. I had to treat this family very well, including shopping for them. I also had to answer the questions they asked me correctly. We had to regularly send the Chinese authorities evidence that they were living with us, by submitting photos of us together. (Xinjiang Victims Database, 2021)

Diaspora members describe this as another way that the Chinese government “deprives Uyghurs of peace and dignity even when they are released from the camps” (interview).

A Uyghur diaspora member insisted that “government officials will use any excuse to punish Uyghurs” (interview). He described an incident in which a Uyghur man ran a red light in Hotan and was shot by police. I had to clarify this to make sure I understood him correctly, and he confirmed that, indeed, this person was shot simply for running a red light. He continued, “Yes, they make it so ugly. That is their strategy. They want Uyghurs gone. It was never their intention (for us) to live together” (interview).

Uyghurs’ Land and Property Sold to Han Chinese

Diaspora members have reported that they have heard many accounts of people being released from the camps to find that their home has been sold and is no longer theirs. People have no choice but to move in with relatives upon their release, if they are fortunate and have relatives outside of the camps to live with. Uyghur community members have also explained that it is difficult for people who have faced detention to be hired because they are stigmatized for having been in the camps. Their opportunities are extremely limited, and they are essentially “paralyzed in society” (interview).

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (2021) has confirmed that since 2017, the Chinese government has seized and sold the property and assets of detained Uyghurs while they have been in the camps or imprisoned. Several documented cases of successful Uyghur businesspeople and real estate developers reveal that hundreds of millions of dollars in assets have been taken by the Chinese government and auctioned and sold online. A Uyghur diaspora member who lives in Turkey reported that his two “brothers’ bank accounts (were) frozen and their properties in Urumqi, Korla, and Hotan (were) seized” (UHRP, 2021, p. 20). The total worth of his brothers’ assets is estimated to be approximately one billion yuan, which is equivalent to about 140 million U.S. dollars. The brothers were detained in 2017 and have since been sentenced to long prison terms of 25 and 15 years, respectively (UHRP, 2021). The diaspora member in Turkey suspects that his brothers’ “imprisonment might be related to their charitable work in supporting Uyghur students and donating money to the construction of mosques,” but ultimately, they have been targeted “for their success and wealth” (UHRP, 2021, p. 22).

Uyghurs of the diaspora also suggest that this is yet another way in which China is stripping Uyghurs of their power and preventing them from participating in society. Even worse, “the Chinese government is (unlawfully) taking Uyghurs’ hard-earned assets and benefitting from them while Uyghurs waste away in prison for no reason” (interview). Furthermore, “any wealth that family members have earned is intended to (be) passed down to children and grandchildren. Now, they too have nothing” (interview).

In another example, 28 Uyghur individuals were given prison sentences for “helping terrorist activities,” and, as in the situation above, their assets were seized and

their bank accounts frozen (UHRP, 2021, p. 29). In yet another instance, 16 Uyghurs were sentenced for “helping terrorist activities,” including two women in their seventies and an 80-year old man (UHRP, 2021, p. 34). A large building and a gas station, both worth millions of dollars (tens of millions of yuan), were among the assets belonging to these people, which were auctioned off by the Chinese state. Uyghurs of the diaspora suggest that these examples highlight the absurdity and injustice of what is happening in XUAR: “How can an 80-year-old man be a terrorist threat?” (interview). The seizure and sale of Uyghur assets is a direct mechanism by which China is dispossessing Uyghurs in their homeland.

“It’s Been Seven Years”

Uyghurs of the diaspora have repeatedly expressed their frustration and disappointment at the lack of action by the international community related to the ongoing genocide. Though a small number of world governments and independent reports have declared genocide in XUAR and sanctions have been imposed on Chinese officials, little direct action has been taken to stop the Chinese government from continuing to persecute the Uyghur people in their homeland and abroad. Uyghurs have tried to understand this refusal to take action in the following ways.

The Genocide is Political, not Humanitarian

Diaspora members have become accustomed to being interrogated when speaking about the genocide, though they find this to be extremely disheartening. A diaspora member stated, “at first I was surprised when I talked to my colleagues about what was happening in East Turkestan, and they did not show sympathy or concern, but (instead) asked me why China was doing this” (interview). Another Uyghur community member

said, “I have now come to expect questions (instead of compassion) when talking to people about the genocide, but it upsets me every time” (interview). Yet another diaspora member shared that “sometimes I just don’t have the strength to explain to people what is happening in our homeland. I wish they would believe me and do their own searching (for information) about it” (interview).

In a discussion with several diaspora members, it became clear that they feel politics prevail over human rights. One community member stated, “it’s hard to (maintain) hope when so much information is now available and people still don’t believe it, or just don’t care” (interview). Another diaspora member added, “everyone is afraid of China, and they should be, but the world must do something before it’s too late for everyone,” referring to China’s growing global economic and military power (interview). He continued, “if people are controlled by fear and can’t even admit (to) a genocide when it’s happening, we are all in trouble” (interview).

Economic Interests Are More Important than Human Rights

A number of Uyghurs believe that, ultimately, “countries do not want to take a stand against China because of (the possibility of) damaging their economic interests” (interview). In other words, “money is more important than people” (interviews). They find this particularly disappointing in the case of Muslim-majority countries. “We have lost hope that our Muslim brothers and sisters (in other countries) will do anything to help us” (interview). In fact, since 2016, China has established itself as one of the biggest investors and trade partners in the Middle East (Khan, 2021). Diaspora members recognize that people in some Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia, have spoken

out against China's treatment of Uyghurs, "but the Indonesian government deported Uyghurs back to China (in 2020) anyway" (interview).

Corporations and businesses are complicit, too. One Uyghur diaspora member said, "Just look at what the NBA (National Basketball Association) is doing. They obviously want to protect their profits and don't care about human rights at all" (interview). The NBA's business in China is worth billions of dollars, and they have not supported their athletes who have spoken out about the ongoing human rights abuses in China (Blank, 2019). Diaspora members feel similarly about the companies which participated in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, such as Coca-Cola and Airbnb. A diaspora member stated, "the fact that Beijing is being allowed to host the Olympics is unacceptable in the first place. The companies that are participating have no morality" (interview).

False Narratives of Western Smear Campaigns Against China

China has repeatedly denied all claims of genocide in XUAR and has suggested that these accusations are intended to slander and spread false information while meddling in China's internal affairs. The Chinese government has gone so far as to say that accusations of human rights violations, which they refer to as lies, "serve as a political tool for some Western countries and anti-China forces" (Richardson, 2021, p. 1). Uyghurs of the diaspora fear that people take these claims seriously and hesitate to take action out of fear of being complicit in unjustifiably targeting China. One diaspora member stated, "apparently people can more easily believe that the U.S. and other Western countries are trying to criticize China for their own interests (rather) than accept that China is committing genocide," despite all of the existing evidence (interview).

Another community member said, “I am worried that (people are) too soft on China and will not take a strong enough position to stop the genocide,” thereby enabling the continued oppression of the Uyghur people (interview).

International Human Rights Mechanisms Are not Helpful

Although a number of Uyghur organizations engage with international governments and human rights mechanisms, including those of the United Nations, many Uyghur diaspora members feel that these efforts are largely ineffective. One diaspora member asked, “how many reports have to be published before people actually do something?” (interview). Another diaspora member said, “while they (officials) are talking, Uyghurs are dying” (interview). Yet another community member emphasized that “there is (already) so much evidence that shows what China is doing” (interview). Many diaspora members have asked, “what else needs to happen before the world tries to stop this?” (interview). In my own research, I have seen that reports about the atrocities in XUAR have been consistently emerging since 2018, and the evidence supporting genocide is overwhelming. Indeed, it seems a greater effort is required to deny these claims than to accept them at this point.

In October 2020, China was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council. This was an affront to Uyghurs around the world. Many diaspora members reported that this caused them to lose hope and trust in the United Nations and the international community, especially since the atrocities committed against Uyghurs were well known by 2020. A diaspora member stated, “the United Nations is supposed to protect human rights around the world” (interview). She continued, “this (China’s election to the HR Council) makes us feel hopeless and alone” (interview). Another diaspora member said,

“the United Nations is a joke. How can China be a member of the Human Rights Council?” (interview). Other diaspora members hold a more moderate view, suggesting that “even though the United Nations isn’t great, it is one of the ways we can (continue to) try to make the world see what’s really happening in East Turkestan” (interview). Uyghurs of the diaspora continue to engage with multiple international human rights mechanisms to raise awareness of the genocide and advocate for their freedom and dignity, as will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion

In addition to directly killing Uyghurs, inflicting serious bodily and mental harm upon them, preventing future births, and transferring their children to state-run institutions, the *testimonios* provided by Uyghur diaspora members, witnesses, and survivors of the camps demonstrate a clear pattern of systematic dispossession of Uyghurs in their homeland. When considered collectively, these actions indicate a deliberate attempt on the part of the Chinese government to inflict “conditions of life calculated to bring about (Uyghurs’) physical destruction in whole or in part” with the intention of destroying them as a distinct religious and ethnic group (Genocide Convention, 1948, art 2). As a Uyghur diaspora member stated, “Uyghurs’ religion, language, wealth, family, and dignity are all being taken away” (interview).

Uyghurs are fully cognizant of China’s intentions to disempower them and eliminate their identity and expression as an ethnic group. Of all of the tactics employed by the Chinese state, Uyghurs consider forced family separation to be the most painful. They are also acutely aware that the fear of harming their family members has limited their public advocacy and activism. The following chapter will discuss ways in which

Uyghurs of the diaspora have courageously engaged in acts of resistance against Chinese-state violence as a matter of survival for their culture and their children, despite the tremendous risks to themselves and their family members.

CHAPTER VI: UYGHUR DIASPORA RESISTANCE TO CHINESE STATE VIOLENCE

Uyghurs have a long history of resistance to Chinese state violence, both inside of China and in the diaspora worldwide. In this chapter, I address the following research question: How have Uyghurs of the diaspora engaged in acts of resistance against Chinese, state-sanctioned, colonial hegemony? I focus on resistance efforts of the Uyghur diaspora from the mid-20th century to the present day through document analysis of Uyghur-created websites and publications as primary sources, as well as conversations and experiences I have had with members of the Uyghur diaspora, primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area. A table with a timeline of major events is provided at the end of this chapter. Despite facing great risks to themselves and their family members in East Turkestan, Uyghurs of the diaspora continue to courageously advocate for their rights and engage in resistance efforts in a number of ways, both publicly and privately.

Uyghur Organizations and Related Efforts

Isa Yusuf Alptekin was one of the first Uyghurs to leave China and begin organizing a resistance movement. He fled China for Turkey shortly after the PRC was established in 1949 (Shichor, 2018). Alptekin, along with Mehmet Emin Bughra, were early diaspora leaders in Turkey. They published books and journals and established the Association of Eastern Turkestan Emigrés in 1960. Bughra died in 1965, but Alptekin continued his efforts. In 1970, he submitted an appeal to Richard Nixon in which he asked for U.S. support and “emphasized the need to denounce ‘China’s atrocities’, to preserve Uyghur national heritage, and, above all, to gain independence.” (Shichor, 2018, p. 125). Alptekin and Bughra focused on Uyghur identity and indigeneity as the

framework for their activism and emphasized the threat of Uyghur assimilation as a direct result of Chinese government policies.

It wasn't until the 1990s that the Uyghur cause became more visible and global. In 1994, the Eastern Turkestan Students Union was formed in Ankara by Uyghur university students who were studying in Turkey (Bonnenfant, 2018). In 1995, Isa Yusuf Alptekin died. The Students Union, along with young Uyghur diaspora members around the world, organized the World Uyghur Youth Congress in Almaty, Kazakhstan that year to renew the momentum of the diaspora movement. The following year, in 1996, the Youth Congress and its main organizers moved to Munich, Germany.

In 1998, more than 40 Uyghur leaders and approximately 300 representatives from 18 different countries created the Eastern Turkestan National Center (ETNC) in Istanbul (Shichor, 2007). Within a year, the ETNC headquarters moved to Munich, and in 1999, the ETNC became the East Turkestan National Congress. During this time, the Eastern Turkestan Union in Europe was also founded in Munich. This period marked a shift in the center of Uyghur diaspora activism from Turkey to Europe. Also, the framework of the movement expanded during this time to include a strong focus on human rights in addition to Uyghur identity and indigeneity. In the mid-1990s, small Uyghur diaspora groups began to settle throughout Western Europe.

By the early 2000s, the number of Uyghur diaspora organizations had grown, and activism efforts were becoming more visible. Erkin Alptekin, the son of Isa Yusuf Alptekin, became involved in coordinating these efforts. Under his leadership, many diaspora organization representatives met in Munich in 2004 and agreed to create an umbrella organization to combine their activities (Bonnenfant, 2018). After several

months, the aforementioned East Turkestan National Congress and the World Uyghur Youth Congress merged to create the World Uyghur Congress. Erkin Alptekin was elected as the first president of the World Uyghur Congress, which he served from 2004 to 2006 (Bonnenfant, 2018; Shichor, 2007).

World Uyghur Congress

The stated objective of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) is “to promote the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine the political future of East Turkistan” (World Uyghur Congress, 2021). Their leadership is elected democratically to serve three-year terms, and the elected leaders¹² represent Uyghur diaspora communities around the world. The organization as a whole raises awareness of the plight of Uyghurs and engages in advocacy campaigns which highlight the human rights violations of Uyghurs in the PRC. They work with the U.S. Congress, European Union member states—including the European Commission and the European Parliament, and the United Nations, particularly engaging with U.N. human rights mechanisms.

The WUC has published a number of statements and reports which have been submitted to U.N. Treaty Bodies, specifically the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee Against Torture (CAT), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The WUC has also worked closely with the U.N. Human Rights

¹² <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/steering-committee/>

Council and related special procedures, including Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Working Groups (World Uyghur Congress, 2021). In addition, they have taken part in the U.N. Forum on Minority Issues and have submitted reports for China's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). These reports are all available on the World Uyghur Congress website.¹³

The WUC's mission statement says that their aim is “to promote democracy, human rights and freedom for the Uyghur people and use peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine their political future” (World Uyghur Congress, 2021). Furthermore,

The WUC declares a nonviolent and peaceful opposition movement against Chinese occupation of East Turkistan and an unconditional adherence to the international accepted human rights standard as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and adherence to the principals of democratic pluralism and rejection of totalitarianism, religious intolerance, and terrorism as an instrument of policy. (World Uyghur Congress, 2021)

In addition to publishing reports, engaging with world governments, and participating in U.N. human rights mechanisms, the World Uyghur Congress works with civil society organizations to arrange conferences and demonstrations to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. They also maintain an active social media presence and post Uyghur-related news¹⁴ on their website. Moreover, their website provides information about Uyghur history and culture.¹⁵

¹³ <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/activities-overview/>

¹⁴ <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/category/news/>

¹⁵ <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/east-turkestan-2/>

Uyghur Tribunal

In June 2020, the President of the World Uyghur Congress, Dolkun Isa, formally requested the creation of “an independent people’s tribunal to investigate ‘ongoing atrocities and possible Genocide’ against the Uyghur, Kazakh and other Turkic Muslim populations” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020). Sir Geoffrey Nice, a British Barrister, former law professor, and human rights advocate who was the lead prosecutor of Slobodan Milošević at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, served as the Chair of the Uyghur Tribunal (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020). The Uyghur Tribunal was launched on September 3, 2020, and hearings were held for several days in June, September, and November 2021.

The objectives of the Uyghur Tribunal centered on “reviewing evidence in order to reach an impartial and considered judgment on whether international crimes are proved to have been committed by the PRC” (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020). The Tribunal was clear about the impossibility of bringing China to any formal international court because, despite China being a signatory to and ratifier of the Genocide Convention, the PRC has refused to join the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has entered a reservation against the U.N. International Court of Justice (ICJ). As such, the main objective of the Tribunal was to provide evidence

for States, international institutions, commercial companies, art, medical and educational establishments and individuals to determine how to apply the Tribunal’s Judgment, whatever it may be, in their dealings with the PRC. This could include, but is not limited to, trade and other sanctions including against

individuals, proscribing the sale of technologies, surveillance and medical equipment and the declaration of ineligibility for visas. (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020)

Furthermore, the evidence submitted to the Tribunal has become a permanent record, which could “serve as a deterrent to impunity” moving forward (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020).

The evidence itself consists of many hours of testimony from scholars, human rights attorneys, and non-governmental organization representatives (“expert witnesses”), as well as Uyghur diaspora members, including survivors from the camps and people who worked there (“fact witnesses”). All of the witness statements and reports¹⁶ are available as primary source documents on the Uyghur Tribunal website. They include accounts of the suffering of relatives in the Uyghur homeland; firsthand narratives of harrowing experiences in the camps; stories of Uyghur diaspora members being harassed and intimidated by the PRC for speaking out; detailed information about the criminalization of Uyghur everyday activities and guilt by association as justification for detention in the camps; the particular struggles of Uyghur women in XUAR; and the ubiquitous surveillance Uyghurs face in their homeland (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020).

A final judgement was declared on December 9, 2021. After reviewing the evidence, specialists in international criminal law determined that China is committing genocide, crimes against humanity, and torture against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020). It is important to acknowledge that

Even though the judgments of independent people’s tribunals have no (official) legal standing, they can provide a mechanism for survivors, victims, and their families to have their cases independently assessed, a determination made in

¹⁶ <https://uyghurtribunal.com/statements/>

respect of allegations of responsibility of possible perpetrators, and a sense of closure or resolution. (Uyghur Tribunal, 2020)

Despite the Tribunal's judgement, as of this writing (May 2022), no official action has been taken in response to their findings.

Uyghur American Association

The Uyghur American Association (UAA), established in 1998, was the first Uyghur organization in the United States, and it remains the largest in terms of membership. Like the World Uyghur Congress, the UAA elects their leadership democratically every three years. The UAA is based in Washington D.C., though its elected leaders and members live throughout the country. It is considered “the primary hub for the Uyghur diaspora community in the United States” (UAA, 2021).

The UAA's mission statement declares that its main goals are “promoting and preserving Uyghur culture, and supporting the right of Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political futures” (UAA, 2021). Their website contains detailed information about Uyghur history, identity, and culture, as well as news and published reports about East Turkestan and the ongoing genocide.

The UAA now emphasizes the struggles of Uyghurs in the 21st century. They issue statements and press releases in response to international news about Uyghurs, and they maintain active social media campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Since 2016, the UAA has focused on “closing the concentration camps and ending the Uyghur genocide” (UAA, 2021). They have made direct connections to the Holocaust and publicly ask the question,¹⁷ “How can the World Watch in Silence as the

¹⁷ <https://www.uyghuraa.org/uyghurgenocide>

Worst Genocide Since the Holocaust Takes Place?” (UAA, 2021). They suggest that “By leveraging our collective voice, and upholding democratic values and human rights to the highest value, we aim to create the political will necessary to improve the lives of Uyghurs in their homeland” (UAA, 2021).

As with other Uyghur organizations, the UAA calls for action and support from individuals, organizations, and institutions outside of the Uyghur community itself as a means to raise awareness and hold China accountable for its crimes against humanity. Recognizing that “education is a powerful tool for facilitating change,” they have created a detailed and substantial educational resource called the “Teach Uyghur Project,”¹⁸ which provides background information, lesson plans, and supplementary resources to inform people about Uyghurs, counter CCP narratives, raise awareness of the genocide, and encourage educators to include this information in their school curricula (UAA, 2021).

Uyghur Human Rights Project

In 2004, the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) was founded as part of the Uyghur American Association to publish reports and provide recommendations “to defend Uyghurs’ civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights according to international human rights standards” (UHRP, 2021). In 2016, the UHRP became an independent nonprofit organization. To date, they have published more than 80 reports and over 400 statements and press releases as part of their research-based advocacy.

18

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fe4d0ff330d7e1e80d7bce8/t/600079fbef036f7dc150d026/1610644188651/Teach+Uyghur+Project_FINAL

Their reports and policy recommendations have been submitted to individual governments, the United Nations, and the European Union, and UHRP staff and board members have testified before a number of international governing bodies. Their reports and statements have also been published in most major Western media sources, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *BBC*, *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, and *Foreign Policy*, among others.

The Uyghur Human Rights Project has been publishing statements since its inception. Their first statement in 2004 addressed already existing concerns about the Chinese government's plans to develop East Turkestan. They called upon investors to "immediately divest all money in these projects for the sake of the occupied people" (UHRP, 2004, para. 6). They further asked that investors "not help the Chinese government repopulate our lands with Chinese people and extract all the resources (for themselves)" (UHRP, 2004, para. 6).

A statement from 2006 detailed the torture of a 31-year old Uyghur man named Tudahun Hoshur who was being held in a center under suspicion of "conspiracy to split the state" (UHRP, 2006, para. 4). Mr. Hoshur was reportedly denied food for three days and was beaten while suspended from a ceiling by his hands. He was punished for not learning "all 45 articles of the detention center's regulations in Chinese by heart" (UHRP, 2006, para. 2). Mr. Hoshur did not speak Mandarin. This statement also suggested that "any form of Uyghur political opposition to Chinese rule" in East Turkestan is considered to be "splittist" and is punished accordingly (UHRP, 2006, para. 5). It included the example of a writer from Kashgar named Nurmuhemet Yasin who was "sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2005 (for) having written a short story comparing the plight of Uyghurs

in East Turkistan to that of caged birds” (UHRP, 2006, para. 5). These cases, among many others, demonstrate that China was using unlawful and discriminatory tactics against Uyghurs well before the genocide began.

On September 11, 2006, a UHRP statement addressed the changes that had taken place in East Turkestan since September 11, 2001. Though the statement served as a declaration of solidarity, support, and condolences “to all people affected by terrorism,” it emphasized that “9/11 marked the beginning of a new wave of oppression and injustice at the hands of the Chinese regime,” enabling “the Chinese government to attempt to portray the Uyghur people’s struggle for the recognition and protection of their fundamental human rights as being motivated by violent and ‘terrorist’ intent” (UHRP, 2006, para. 5).

In 2007, the UHRP published its first official report entitled “Political Persecution of Uyghurs in the Era of the ‘War on Terror’” (UHRP, 2007). This report detailed how the PRC used the concept of “terrorism” to justify the repression of Uyghurs in East Turkestan, including arrests, torture, and executions. The report stated that “in 2005 alone, 18,227 individuals were arrested in East Turkestan for ‘endangering state security’, a jump of 25 percent from the previous year” (UHRP, 2007, p. 4). The report also described accounts of intimidation of Uyghurs overseas. Even then (in 2007), it was clear that “human rights abuses as the result of ‘security’ campaigns in East Turkestan will continue” (UHRP, 2007, p. 5).

In 2008, the UHRP issued a statement of concern about escalating government restrictions that prevented Uyghurs from practicing their Islamic faith freely. In addition to having to meet with government officials every month, Uyghur Imams were required

to take political education classes (UHRP, 2008). The length and content of their sermons were restricted, and only official, approved versions of the Quran were permitted. Furthermore, Uyghur government employees were forbidden from practicing Islam altogether and were not permitted to attend mosques or fast during Ramadan. Minors and students were also “forbidden from entering a mosque or engaging in religious study,” and restaurants were required to remain open during fasting hours (UHRP, 2008, para. 7). This statement also mentioned the confiscation of Uyghur passports so that Uyghurs could not travel to Mecca for their Hajj pilgrimage, except “with an expensive official tour, in which applicants (were) carefully vetted for their ‘obedience to the law’” (UHRP, 2008, para. 8).

In 2013 (five years after the aforementioned statement), the UHRP published a nearly 100-page report detailing the extent of religious repression, criminalization, and persecution among Uyghurs in China since 2005. Many accounts of Uyghurs being harassed and detained for allegedly illegal religious activities were described in the report. Their offenses included teaching about the Quran at friend’s homes, participating in religious study groups and gatherings, and generally “studying and teaching religious activities without government approval” (UHRP, 2013, p. 43). Men, women, and children were all detained or jailed for their involvement in religious activities. In one case, a 56-year old religion teacher named Aminan Momixi was arrested on August 1, 2005 along with 37 of her students.

Momixi was teaching the Koran to students between the ages of 7 and 20 in her home in Tuoyipu when police rushed in. They accused Momixi of “illegally possessing religious materials and subversive historical information” and

reportedly denied her access to a lawyer. Some children were freed after paying fines ranging from USD 800 to 1,200. Momixi's whereabouts and sentence remain unknown. (UHRP, 2013, p. 44)

Another case described a teacher who was arrested for teaching the Quran and Islamic doctrine to youth and was beaten to death while in detention (UHRP, 2013). China "has justified many of its (religious) restrictions through claims that it faces an organized threat to security in the form of the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism," despite a lack of credible evidence to support these claims (UHRP, 2013, p. 12). This rhetoric is still being used today to validate the crackdown on all aspects of Uyghur religious, cultural, and social life.

The UHRP continues to regularly publish statements and reports, as well as op-eds, to raise awareness of the plight of Uyghurs in East Turkestan and call for international condemnation of China's actions. Since 2018, they have focused on the mass internment of Uyghurs in concentration camps, including all prominent Uyghur intellectuals; the eradication of Uyghur culture and assault on the Uyghur language; the ongoing religious repression Uyghurs face; and the harassment, intimidation, and coercion of Uyghur diaspora members by the PRC (UHRP, 2021). In addition, their website includes a "take action" page,¹⁹ which provides links to petitions and information about existing bills and resolutions being considered by Congress. They also hold online programs to inform people about various aspects of the genocide.

¹⁹ <https://uhrp.org/take-action/>

Campaign for Uyghurs

Campaign for Uyghurs was founded in 2017 in Washington, D.C. by Rushan Abbas, who has been advocating for Uyghur rights since before she arrived in the United States in 1989. Abbas created Campaign for Uyghurs “to advocate and promote human rights and democratic freedoms for Uyghurs, and mobilize the international community to act to stop the human rights atrocities in East Turkistan” (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2021). In her role as Executive Director, Abbas writes, speaks, and travels widely to urge governing bodies, organizations, and individuals to stop the Uyghur genocide. She has testified before Congress, met with a number of U.S. lawmakers and other government officials, and spoken on numerous panels. Abbas also provided a witness statement²⁰ for the Uyghur Tribunal, in which she described the forced disappearances of a number of her family members, including her sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas. Part of her advocacy efforts include a special focus on empowering Uyghur women and youth.

In 2018, Abbas led a global effort to raise awareness of the plight of Uyghurs by working with a network of Uyghur women of the diaspora in the United States and Europe. They organized demonstrations in 14 countries and 18 cities around the world and coordinated this “One Voice, One Step Initiative” as an “action to mobilise and unite the Uyghur women in the diaspora community to work together to improve the situation for the Uyghur people through concrete actions” (World Uyghur Congress, 2018). Demonstrations took place on March 15th, 2018 and included activists in the United States, Germany, Belgium, France, Finland, Turkey, Japan, and Australia, among others.

²⁰ <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/06-1455-JUN-21-UTFW-064-Rushan-Abbas-English.pdf>

This effort was supported by the World Uyghur Congress (World Uyghur Congress, 2018).

In October 2021, Campaign for Uyghurs held an advocacy workshop²¹ for young Uyghurs of the diaspora in Berlin where “attendees were given the opportunity to participate in seminars and activities aimed at improving their advocacy skills, and preparing them to become empowered leaders and spokespersons for the Uyghur cause” (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2021). Uyghur youth are regarded as the next generation of activists for Uyghur rights, and Campaign for Uyghurs is committed “to walk alongside these young activists on their journey, and to provide them further opportunities to grow and share challenges” (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2021).

In July 2020, Campaign for Uyghurs published a report detailing the ways in which China is committing genocide against Uyghurs in East Turkestan by meeting all of the criteria in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2020). The report includes accounts of torture, sexual violence, Chinese officials living in Uyghur homes, Uyghur girls being forced to marry Han Chinese men, abortions and sterilizations without consent, and the separation of children from their families. There are also a number of photographs in the report. These images show the public burning of Islamic religious materials, Uyghur women forcibly marrying Han Chinese men in group ceremonies, and Chinese government officials spending time in Uyghur homes. The report concludes with specific policy recommendations for democratic governments, the United Nations, the European

²¹ <https://campaignforuyghurs.org/cfu-berlin-workshops-2021/>

Parliament, educational institutions, NGOs, corporations, and individuals (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2020).

Campaign for Uyghurs is very active on social media, and they post current Uyghur news and press releases on their website. They also connect camp survivors with ally organizations to raise awareness of the genocide. One such example was a program hosted by the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County in New York in June 2021. I was honored to speak during this event and bear witness to testimony given by Tursunay Ziyawudun, a survivor who shared her moving and harrowing experiences through an interpreter (another Uyghur woman). Prior to the 2022 Beijing Olympics, Campaign for Uyghurs was focused on calling “for a relocation and boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics,” which many Uyghurs referred to as the “genocide Olympics” (Campaign for Uyghurs, 2021).

Uyghur Times

In May 2018, a Uyghur diaspora member named Tahir Imin Uyghurian founded an online news site called *Uyghur Times* as “a media for Uyghurs, for justice, and for rightness” (Uyghur Times, 2021). *Uyghur Times* is based in Washington, D.C., and their goal is “to reveal the censored news and true stories of Uyghurs under the Communist Chinese regime” (Uyghur Times, 2021). Uyghurian is from Kashgar and has direct experience with the Chinese prison system as a former political prisoner. He worked as a religion teacher in Kashgar and was placed in detention for seven months in 2000 “just for studying and teaching Islamic knowledge” (Uyghur Times, 2021). He was arrested again in 2005 and served a two-year prison sentence “for his activism for the Uyghur culture” after having written an article entitled *Uyghur Culture in Danger* (Uyghur

Times, 2021). He describes his time in prison as being “full of hunger, pain, torture and terror” (Uyghur Times, 2021). This was long before the mass detention centers of recent years, which by all accounts are even more horrific now.

Uyghurian left his homeland in February 2017 “due to the increasingly oppressive political environment” (Uyghur Times, 2021). His wife and daughter had to stay behind because they could not secure passports. In July 2017, Chinese authorities asked him to return, but he refused and settled in the United States. He hasn’t been in contact with his family since early 2018 when they told him to stop contacting them, and as of March 2021, at least 28 of his relatives had been sent to the camps or imprisoned (Lapin, 2021). This has not stopped Imin from speaking out widely, including writing an op-ed (Uyghurian, 2019) for *The Guardian* about how China has destroyed Uyghur families, and continuing to maintain the *Uyghur Times*.

Uyghur Times posts news from around the world related to Uyghurs. This includes current events, statements from government and organizational leaders, news from diaspora communities, updates on Uyghur advocacy efforts, and Uyghur perspectives on Chinese colonialism and the genocide (Uyghur Times, 2021). Their motto is “humanity dies in silence,” and they remain the “true voice of Uyghur people under genocide” (Uyghur Times, 2021).

High Profile Individuals

Nury Turkel

In addition to Rushan Abbas, whose activism efforts were described above in the section on Campaign for Uyghurs, there are several Uyghur diaspora members who are publicly involved in advocacy work in various capacities. One of the most influential and

visible has been Nury Turkel, who has served as the Vice Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom since June 2021. Turkel is also a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute where he focuses on human rights, foreign policy, religious freedom in China, digital authoritarianism, and forced labor and supply chains (Hudson Institute, 2021). In addition, Turkel is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is highlighted as a prominent activist and attorney by the Human Rights Foundation.²²

Turkel was born in a re-education camp in Kashgar during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as his mother was detained when she was six months pregnant. In 1995, he came to the United States for graduate school and never returned to China. He has been dedicated to promoting Uyghur human rights throughout his career by engaging with democratic policies and practices in the United States, Europe, Australia, and Turkey (USCRIF, 2021). He served as the former president of the Uyghur American Association, and he co-founded the Uyghur Human Rights Project. Turkel was instrumental in enacting the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act in 2020, which is now a federal law²³ that “imposes sanctions on foreign individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region and requires various reports on the topic” (Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, 2020). Turkel also represents Uyghur political refugees seeking asylum in the United States.

Turkel has received widespread public acclaim for his work. He was included in *Time* magazine’s list of the “100 Most Influential People in the World” in 2020, and he was listed as one of the “World's 50 Greatest Leaders” in *Fortune* in May 2021

²² <https://hrf.org/speakers/nury-turkel/>

²³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3744>

(USCRIF, 2021). The University of Notre Dame Law School also awarded him their first ever Notre Dame Prize for Religious Liberty²⁴ in June 2021 (University of Notre Dame, 2021). In response to this award, Turkel said that he “cannot fully rejoice in recognition while such brutal violations of religious freedom and human dignity persist. This genocide and its implications, the culmination of decades of oppression, looms dark and threatening in our world” (University of Notre Dame, 2021). Turkel continues to use his platform widely to advocate for Uyghur rights by working on policy and legislation, testifying before government bodies, publishing articles and op-eds, and speaking on panels and major world news outlets (USCRIF, 2021).

Jewher Ilham

Jewher Ilham is the daughter of the highly respected Uyghur economist and scholar, Ilham Tohti. In 2013, when Jewher was 18 years old, she and her father were traveling to Indiana University together for her father’s fellowship. Her father was detained at the Beijing Airport, and with his encouragement, Jewher went ahead without him. She has remained in the United States and has not seen her father since then (Ilham, 2015). Ilham Tohti was sentenced to life in prison in September 2014 on bogus charges of separatism. Professor Tohti is well known for his writings and efforts to promote mutual understanding, dialogue, and peace between Uyghurs and Han Chinese people in China.

Jewher has become an active public figure and advocate for the Uyghur cause. In 2015, she published a book entitled *Jewher Ilham: A Uyghur’s Fight to Free Her Father*,

²⁴ <https://law.nd.edu/news-events/news/2021-notre-dame-prize-for-religious-liberty-nury-turkel/>

in which she described her journey to becoming a spokesperson for her father and the Uyghur people. She has testified before the U.N. General Assembly, the U.S. Congressional Executive Committee on China, and she has met with politicians in both the United States and the European Union to discuss her father's arrest and China's repression of Uyghurs in her homeland. Jewher publishes and speaks widely about her father and the numerous issues Uyghurs face.

Ilham Tohti has been awarded a number of prestigious prizes since his arrest in 2014, which Jewher has accepted on his behalf. These include the PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award in 2014, the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2016, the Liberal International Prize for Freedom in 2017, and the Freedom House Freedom Award in 2019 (Abdilim, 2020). In receiving the PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award, Jewher said, "My father spoke up... for those who have been wrongly imprisoned, who have been beaten, who have been discriminated against because of their religion, language, and culture, and who have been disappeared" (Ilham, 2015, p. 118). In 2019, Ilham Tohti was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which Jewher also accepted on his behalf. In her acceptance speech, she said

Today, there is no freedom for Uyghurs in China... Not at school, not in public, not even in private homes. My father, like most Uyghurs, has been labeled a violent extremist, with a disease that needs to be cured and a mind that needs to be washed. It is under this false label of extremism that the government has put one million people – probably more – into 'concentration camps' where Uyghurs are forced to give up their religion, language and culture, where people are tortured and some have died. (EU Affairs, 2019)

Ilham Tohti was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, to which Jewher responded, “The entire Uyghur community needs this. We need this award to regain our hope again and to help us believe things can get better” (Abdilim, 2020). Though Tohti was not selected to receive the Prize, his nomination helped to raise global awareness of the Uyghur issue.

San Francisco Bay Area Resistance and Activism

I have been getting to know the Uyghur diaspora community of the Northern California Bay Area since 2016. We have had numerous conversations, and I have participated in many collaborative advocacy efforts, including speaking on panels and participating in protests. I have also attended social events and have been graciously welcomed into their homes where I have spent time with their children. Over the past five years, I have heard many statements²⁵ about the widespread mistrust within the Uyghur diaspora community. People have told me that they “don’t talk to each other about the situation (in East Turkestan)” because “many Uyghur spies have been sent abroad to monitor Uyghur diaspora activity” (interviews). Diaspora members have openly acknowledged that “there is suspicion among Uyghurs,” and several people have stated that “the only person I really trust is my (spouse)” (interviews). While this mistrust could serve to limit the organized efforts of the Uyghur diaspora, which is likely the intended outcome of the Chinese government, Uyghurs instead continue to gather publicly and

²⁵ All quotes in this section, unless specifically cited, are from Uyghur diaspora participants in my study. To protect their identities and given the high-level of surveillance of the Chinese state, I have attributed information and quotes broadly to “members of the Uyghur diaspora.”

engage in resistance in multiple ways, which they see as a matter of survival for their people.

During the summer of 2021, I had the privilege of spending nearly every weekend from June through August with the local Uyghur community, and it was during this time that I came to fully appreciate the extent of their resistance efforts and the great risks they are willing to take to preserve their culture and speak out against the genocide. Their intentional survival as an ethnic group is itself a form resistance in the face of the ongoing genocide. Even at great risk to themselves and their family members back home, while also facing the danger of being spied upon, they organize programs and events to actively keep their culture alive and pass it down to their children. In the following pages, I seek to highlight their resistance and honor their strength and courage in engaging in these efforts.

Uyghur Wellness Initiative

I learned about the Uyghur Wellness Initiative (UWI) from a Uyghur community member in the Bay Area who helped to create the organization's website after many of his friends and colleagues in the diaspora had experienced long bouts of depression and severe anxiety over the situation in East Turkestan. The Uyghur Wellness Initiative, which is called the Spiritual Wellness Initiative in the Uyghur language, "is a collaborative effort led by Uyghurs, for Uyghurs" (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021). Their mission is "to create a safe, dedicated space for Uyghurs to come together in this time of crisis for our holistic wellbeing - as individuals, families and a community" (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021). They are supported by the Uyghur Human Rights

Project, the Uyghur American Association, and Campaign for Uyghurs, as well as Peace Catalyst International.

Coping with the ongoing genocide in East Turkestan has taken “an immense emotional, social, mental, spiritual and physical toll on the Uyghur diaspora community” (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021). Uyghurs of the diaspora continue to experience “grief and trauma due to the disappearance, imprisonment, and death of loved ones” (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021). This has been compounded by their inability to communicate with loved ones in East Turkestan since 2017, as many diaspora members do not know where their relatives are, or whether they are alive or dead. I have heard many painful statements along the lines of “I can’t sleep because I imagine what my relatives are going through,” and “my hope is just that they survive” (interviews). One Uyghur community member stated, “On the outside, I look alive for the sake of my children, but on the inside, I am dead” (interview).

The Uyghur Wellness Initiative was launched “to support the holistic wellbeing of diaspora Uyghurs through public events, shared resources for coping with grief and trauma, and pro bono wellness professional referrals” (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021). The UWI acknowledges the pain, trauma, and survivor's guilt many Uyghurs of the diaspora contend with and offers mental health services, as well as a shared community understanding of their collective experience. They state,

Uyghurs' souls are broken by what we are suffering, which can never be forgotten and will cause terrible pain forever. But we do not need to suffer alone. We have the right to help and support. We can call on helping hands and community

support to cherish our hearts and help us to not give up on life, despite our pain.
(Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021)

The UWI connects diaspora members with mental health professionals who specialize in trauma for individual and family therapy. The UWI also encourages hope for a better future through new generations of Uyghur children who will “find the gifts of hope and love, pride in who they are, and healthy lives, despite the overwhelming trauma and grief of the Uyghur people” (Uyghur Wellness Initiative, 2021).

Uyghur Cultural Advancement Association

The Uyghur Cultural Advancement Association (UCAA) is a Bay Area organization which aims to preserve and celebrate Uyghur culture and identity. It was founded in 2020 after it became abundantly clear that the situation in East Turkestan was only getting worse, and there was no indication of China stopping its repression and control of the Uyghur people. The UCAA supports the local diaspora community by organizing activities and events for Uyghur families to speak their native language, celebrate Muslim holidays, wear traditional clothing, and eat homemade Uyghur food. I have been fortunate to attend a number of these events where I have witnessed moving moments of joy and relief when diaspora members connect with each other and practice their traditions freely.

One of the regularly scheduled activities organized by the UCAA is a weekly soccer practice for both adults and children. Soccer is a very popular sport in East Turkestan. This soccer practice takes place on weekends in a public park where adult Uyghur men gather early in the morning to play on a team which was established in 2014

and is now part of the Uyghur American Cup.²⁶ According to Uyghur community members, playing soccer provides an opportunity for them to come together and share enjoyable experiences without politics. This builds connections and helps them to feel united as a community around something positive, which provides a reprieve from the ever-present weight of the genocide.

Entire families come to these soccer practices, which serve as social spaces as much as actual practice time. Boys and girls aged five to twelve play on a kids team, which is coached by a former professional Uyghur soccer player who donates his time for his community. Younger children run around the park and entertain themselves, never too far from their parents. Teenagers gather together to socialize on the fringes of the park, and they sometimes play volleyball. While their kids play, adults spend time catching up. Uyghur women stroll around in small groups, talking and hugging each other, and men who are not playing soccer engage in quiet conversation.

A Uyghur community member told me that she looks forward to weekends because she can be with her people, regardless of what they are doing, and she is grateful that her children can have a safe and healthy childhood with other Uyghur kids. Another community member, a young Uyghur woman, said that she only recently started attending these gatherings after much discussion with her family, who felt it was too dangerous to participate in anything that had Uyghurs together in one place. Although she now participates regularly to be connected to other young Uyghurs, her parents do not. They fear being targeted by an extension of the Chinese government, as well as reprisals against their relatives back home in East Turkestan.

²⁶ The Uyghur American Cup is an annual soccer tournament which brings Uyghurs across North America together.

In addition to weekly soccer practices, the UCAA organizes events every few months to celebrate Uyghur holidays and bring the diaspora community together. These are most often potluck picnics held in a public park. Uyghurs from all over Northern California come to these gatherings, sometimes driving hours to get there. People bring overflowing containers of homemade, traditional Uyghur dishes to feed the crowd. The first time I attended one of these picnics, I had never seen so many Uyghurs together in one place, and I was incredibly moved by the generosity and seeming normalcy of it all, except for the noticeable absence of grandparents and elders. These gatherings provide a space for Uyghurs to be themselves. Many community members have told me that these are the only spaces where they don't have to explain who they are or what they are experiencing as a people. The collective understanding of their trauma allows them to celebrate their culture and identity freely and cultivate a sense of Uyghur pride in their children.

During the height of the Covid pandemic, the UCAA held online meetings and programs to keep the diaspora community connected. The programs included practical workshops, such as learning how to file taxes, and cultural information sessions. They met to discuss the meaning of Ramadan and how to celebrate, as many diaspora members were prohibited from learning this in China. They also held Uyghur dance classes online during Covid, which were attended by diaspora members across the country. A UCAA board member said that they were grateful to be able to continue to gather and share their culture during the pandemic, and the participation was even greater than they expected, indicating a need for such spaces.

Uyghur Language and Culture School

Uyghurs of the Bay Area are actively engaging in efforts to preserve their culture and identity in a number of ways as a means of deliberate resistance to Chinese cultural erasure. One of their most significant achievements is the creation of a school for their children to learn the Uyghur language and cultural traditions. One of the diaspora mothers initially wanted to create a preschool for young Uyghur children, but there has been so much interest that the program has grown from just one class with a few participants to multiple classes on the weekend for children ranging from 2-18 years old. The motivation for the weekend school was born out of the realization that Uyghur diaspora children may never be able to go to East Turkestan or talk to their family members, including their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Thus, the responsibility of cultural transmission lies with their parents and the local community.

The school meets weekly, and their stated purpose is “to learn about Uyghur language, culture, and religion, and to be proud of their Uyghur identity” (interview). All of the students learn about Uyghur cultural and religious traditions, and they celebrate together as a community. Younger students learn to read and write in the Uyghur language, while older students learn literature. This is significant because, according to a Uyghur community member, Uyghur literature and poetry have disappeared from bookstores in China, so it is up to diaspora members to carry on this cultural knowledge.

During the summer of 2021, classes were held in a public park, and they added a special summer intensive program, which met daily for two weeks. This included reading the Quran and learning Uyghur songs and dances. The students shared what they learned during a talent show on the last day of the program. Some of them recited passages from

the Quran, while others sang traditional songs and danced. All of their parents were there, proudly cheering their kids on. As with other Uyghur events, there was a noticeable absence of photography. Many diaspora members have shared that they do not feel comfortable having their pictures taken for fear that they will be posted online, which may cause them to be targeted.

Muslim Cultural Festival

Bay Area Uyghurs have also participated in local events hosted by Muslim Community Centers as a way to raise awareness of their culture, as well as the genocide. I attended a Muslim Cultural Festival where they were one of many groups showcasing their rich cultural heritage. The Uyghur booth had examples of Uyghur paintings, textiles, crafts, instruments, and traditional hats (*doppas*), along with a poster of dozens of Uyghurs who have disappeared in China. As people stopped by their booth, Uyghur community members explained over and over again what was happening to their relatives in East Turkestan. Many visitors had not heard about Uyghurs before, let alone the genocide, and they reacted with surprise, which was followed by questions. I realized that this is yet another part of Uyghurs' daily struggle. Not only do they have to painfully endure what is happening in East Turkestan and live with the constant uncertainty of the whereabouts and safety of their relatives, but they also have to constantly explain who they are and what is happening to their people. This speaks to their determination and strength, and they continue to patiently raise awareness of their plight with tremendous grace and dignity.

Kashgar Photographs

In July 2021, I attended a Uyghur cultural event to view photographs of Kashgar from the early 1980s. The city of Kashgar, which is considered a historical and cultural center for Uyghurs, has been modernized to serve as an international commercial hub as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).²⁷ The BRI is an enormous development project spanning from East Asia to Europe, which began in 2013. The Old City of Kashgar was demolished in the early 2000s, despite containing “most of the best-preserved examples of traditional Central Asian urban residential architecture in the world” (Roberts, 2020, p. 137).

The photographs showed largely undeveloped land with groups of veiled women, bearded men wearing traditional hats, and smiling children going about their daily lives. There were scenes of crowded streets, musicians, markets, children playing in alleys, and traditional Uyghur food. Each time a photo appeared with a group of Uyghurs gathered together, a collective sigh of regret spread throughout the room, and the sorrow was palpable. These sorts of gatherings simply do not take place anymore under Chinese rule. A Uyghur community member told me that “anytime three (or more) Uyghurs are together, police come and ask what they are doing. They cannot even speak to each other” (field notes). There were also photographs of young children listening carefully to elders, particularly grandmothers. Elders are highly respected in Uyghur culture, and this disconnection is a source of deep sadness and loss for Uyghur diaspora members.

²⁷ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

The old photographs of Kashgar also included many beautiful, intricate, colorful, tiled mosques and Uyghur cemeteries. The response was similar. As people viewed the photographs, they looked at each other and shook their heads mournfully. Some people blotted their eyes, as most of these places no longer exist. One Uyghur community member said that the last time he was in Kashgar ten years ago, he couldn't even recognize the building where he grew up. He stated, "It was like a foreign place to me. Every Uyghur's childhood memory of home is now only a memory" (field notes).

Public Protests

Although most Uyghur activities and events are held privately or by invitation only, Uyghurs of the diaspora also engage in public resistance and activism, including participating in marches and protests. Every year, the Uyghur diaspora community of the Bay Area organizes a Uyghur Freedom March on July 5 to commemorate the Urumqi massacre²⁸ of July 5, 2009 in which Uyghurs were brutalized and arrested en masse following what began as a peaceful protest. Many Uyghurs see this event as the turning point in the deterioration of Uyghur-Han relations in China.

About 50 people attended the Uyghur Freedom March in the summer of 2021, which began and ended in front of the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco. Uyghur community members, along with some allies, marched to the lawn behind City Hall carrying East Turkestan flags and signs, chanting, "Stop the Uyghur Genocide," "Close the Concentration Camps," and Terrorist, Xi Jinping." Some Uyghurs appeared publicly for the first time during this event and were concealed under masks, sunglasses, and hats.

²⁸ <https://bitterwinter.org/urumqi-uyghurs-massacre-of-july-2009/>

They conveyed that they felt they had to do something, even though they were afraid to show their faces. During the march, people gave impassioned speeches about standing up for Uyghurs and holding China accountable. A Uyghur youth also expressed that she dreams of a day when her teachers and non-Uyghur friends will know who Uyghurs are and what they have endured in recent history.

October 1st marks the day that the People's Republic of China was formally established in 1949. This is also referred to as China's birthday, or Chinese National Day, and it is celebrated as a holiday in the PRC. In 2021, a joint protest was held on October 1st in front of the Chinese Embassy in San Francisco with members of the Uyghur diaspora, Tibetans, Vietnamese activists, and Hong Kongers. They gathered collectively to protest the Uyghur genocide, the oppression of Tibetans, the Chinese presence in the South China Sea, and the crackdown on freedoms in Hong Kong. Representatives from each group gave a speech, and the crowd chanted, "Down, Down, CCP," "Terrorist, Xi Jinping," and "Stop the Genocide Olympics." Uyghurs carried a banner that said "Uyghur Lives Matter," the Tibetan group sang a somber traditional song, and a Vietnamese activist spoke about China as a hegemonic, greedy, world-dominating superpower. The Hong Kongers brought out posters of Xi Jinping, which people stomped on and set on fire. Though their participation in this kind of protest was risky, the Uyghur diaspora members who were there did not shy away from being actively involved. One of the diaspora members gave a speech in which he implored people to "see the truth of what's happening in China" (field notes).

Conclusion

An examination of Uyghur-created websites, documents, and individual and community actions clearly demonstrates that Uyghurs are engaging in nonviolent resistance in a number of ways against ongoing Chinese genocidal policies. Though China continues to deny the atrocities in East Turkestan and portrays Uyghurs as terrorists, there is no evidence in the diaspora efforts to suggest that Uyghurs are using violence to bring attention to their cause. In fact, most Uyghurs engage in peaceful protest and seek democratic means to advocate for themselves. They also work with government bodies and international human rights mechanisms, including those to which China is a signatory.

Uyghur-published reports and documents show a history of unlawful arrests and torture of Uyghurs long before the widespread, intense crackdown started in earnest in 2016. These were precedents for the horrors now occurring, and Uyghurs have been well aware of what could happen in their homeland long before it was public knowledge. The PRC was able to commit these crimes with impunity then, and it continues to violate Uyghur human rights to the present day without being held accountable by the international community, with few exceptions. Despite Uyghurs' reports on the abuses in their homeland for many years, very little concrete action has been taken to stop these atrocities.

In the face of the ongoing genocide and China's threats to Uyghurs of the diaspora, telling one's story is itself a courageous act of resistance. Despite the psychological toll Uyghurs experience from telling, retelling, and listening to testimony, they continue to do so as a matter of survival for their people and future generations.

Their intergenerational approach to resistance, by training youth and passing cultural knowledge to their children, provides some hope that future generations of Uyghurs will know who they are and will embrace their culture and identity proudly.

Given the horrors and trauma that Uyghurs are contending with, it is incredibly moving and inspiring to see them engage in acts of resistance against Chinese state violence. They feel that this is their moral obligation, as they recognize all too well that silence is not a neutral act.

The table below provides a timeline of Uyghur diaspora resistance from the mid-twentieth century to the present day. Despite all of their efforts, little has been done to hold China accountable for the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in East Turkestan. The following chapter will discuss recommendations for action based on international laws to which China is a signatory.

Figure 6.1: Timeline of Uyghur Diaspora Resistance	
Year	Events
1949	Establishment of PRC
	Isa Yusuf Alptekin leaves China, begins resistance abroad
1960	Alptekin and Mehmet Emin Bughra establish the Association of Eastern Turkestan Emigrés in Turkey
1965	Mehmet Emin Bughra (-1965)
1970	Alptekin asks U.S. President Richard Nixon for support to gain independence
1994	Uyghur university students form Eastern Turkestan Students Union in Ankara, Turkey
1995	Isa Yusuf Alptekin (-1995)
	World Uyghur Youth Congress organized in Almaty, Kazakhstan
mid-1990s	Small Uyghur diaspora groups begin to settle throughout Western Europe

1996	Youth Congress and organizers move to Munich, Germany
1998	Eastern Turkestan National Center (ETNC) created in Istanbul, Turkey
	Uyghur American Association (UAA) established in Washington D.C.
1999	ETNC becomes East Turkistan National Congress, moves headquarters to Munich, Germany
	Eastern Turkestan Union in Europe also founded in Munich, Germany
2004	Disapora groups meet in Munich, Germany; East Turkestan National Congress and World Uyghur Youth Congress merge to create the World Uyghur Congress
	Erkin Alptekin elected first president of the World Uyghur Congress (2004-2006)
	Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) founded as part of UAA
2016	UHRP becomes independent nonprofit organization
2017	Campaign for Uyghurs founded by Rushan Abbas
2018	Rushan Abbas and women of the Uyghur diaspora organize global One Voice, One Step Initiative on March 15
2018	<i>Uyghur Times</i> founded online by Tahir Imin
2020	Dolkun Isa, President of World Uyghur Congress, formally requests creation of Uyghur Tribunal to investigate genocide and crimes against humanity by PRC
2020-2021	Uyghur Tribunal held in London
2020	Uyghur Wellness Initiative launched
2020	Uyghur Cultural Advancement Association founded

CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Summary

When I started writing this dissertation, I expected to examine the ethnic cleansing of Uyghurs in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which I now refer to as East Turkestan out of respect for the Uyghur community. Since 2018, a growing abundance of evidence coupled with testimonios given by Uyghurs of the diaspora, witnesses, and survivors of the camps have revealed that the situation is much worse than I initially understood. It has become clear that Uyghurs have been targeted by Chinese government policies in their homeland to such an extent that they are undergoing a multifaceted genocide and are experiencing crimes against humanity, as this dissertation demonstrates. The research questions guiding this study enabled me to gather and compile information that establishes multiple dimensions of the oppression and subjugation of Uyghur people in their Indigenous homeland and abroad. Over the course of writing this dissertation, I have gotten to know a number of Uyghurs of the diaspora who I now consider to be friends, and I have seen how resilient they are. I have tried to highlight Uyghurs' tremendous strength and courage as a people so they will be perceived not simply as victims to be pitied, but rather as members of a rich and fascinating culture who continue to persevere despite all of the hardship they have endured.

At the time of this writing (May 2022), the United States and the parliaments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and France have all declared genocide in XUAR (Gerin, 2021; Rivet & De Clerq, 2021).

Reports, including one written by the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, have also declared genocide in Xinjiang (Newlines Institute, 2021; U.K. House of Commons, 2021; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021). In June 2020, a group of U.N. independent experts wrote a letter expressing their concerns about human rights in China and requested “the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to act with a sense of urgency to take all appropriate measures to monitor Chinese human rights practices” (OHCHR, 2020, para. 11). In September 2020, nearly 400 organizations wrote an open letter to the United Nations calling “for an international mechanism to address the Chinese government’s human rights violations,” and urged the U.N. Secretary General, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and member states “to take decisive action to achieve this goal” (Human Rights Watch, 2020, para. 1). Furthermore, as Beijing was selected to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Kosovo, and Denmark announced a diplomatic boycott of the games, citing China’s human rights abuses and specifically naming Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Hamilton, 2021; Kim, 2022). Nonetheless, very little direct action has been taken to stop the ongoing atrocities in East Turkestan.

Discussion

Uyghur Diaspora

This dissertation highlights how Uyghurs of the diaspora engage in nonviolent resistance to Chinese state violence as a matter of survival for their people at great risk to themselves and their family members. The work of Uyghur NGOs, high-profile individuals, and grassroots community activism, as described in Chapter Six, has resulted

in global awareness of the genocide in East Turkestan, as well as recognition of the Uyghur people. A Uyghur community member stated that “ten years ago when (he) talked to people and said (he) was Uyghur, nobody knew what that meant. Now, eight out of ten people know who Uyghurs are” (interview). The actions undertaken by Uyghur advocates, activists, and allies in different sectors of society have led to sanctions being imposed on Chinese businesses and government officials by Canada, the United States, the European Union, and Britain (Cook, 2021). New laws protecting Uyghurs have also been created in the United States.²⁹

In addition to these concrete actions, the number of people and organizations speaking out about the Uyghur crisis has grown significantly in recent years, with human rights-focused NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch closely following and reporting on the situation since 2019 (Amnesty International, 2019, 2020, 2021; Human Rights Watch 2019, 2020; Richardson, 2021). Several Jewish organizations, including Jewish World Watch³⁰ and the Jewish Movement for Uyghur Freedom³¹ have also engaged in advocacy work as allies alongside Uyghurs in the spirit of never again allowing mass atrocities to occur.

Grassroots activism by local Uyghur organizations and diaspora communities has focused on raising awareness of the gross human rights violations occurring in East Turkestan, as well as supporting Uyghur community members, including children. Intentionally practicing and promoting Uyghur culture has been an important part of

²⁹ Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-15722/pdf/COMPS-15722.pdf>

Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/65/text>
³⁰ <https://www.jww.org/>

³¹ <https://jewishmovementforuyghurfreedom.org/>

resisting Chinese state violence, as described in Chapter Six. By deliberately exercising their right to self-determination within the larger context of the genocide through actively practicing their religion, speaking their language, and educating their children, Uyghurs of the diaspora are affirming their humanity and transmitting their culture to future generations as a matter of ethnic survival.

Human Rights Education

As discussed in Chapter Six of this dissertation, Uyghurs of the diaspora have been engaging in transnational activism to raise awareness of the genocide in East Turkestan and call people to action. Uyghur NGOs have written statements and reports which have been submitted to U.N. bodies, world governments, and news outlets. In addition, Uyghur NGOs, individuals, and community-based organizations have published educational materials, organized conferences and workshops, participated in panel discussions, and conducted demonstrations to educate people about the human rights violations occurring in East Turkestan.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training states that “Human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms” (U.N. General Assembly, 2011, art. 2, para. 1). Mihr and Schmitz (2007) furthermore suggest that HRE “focuses primarily on ending current abuses and preventing future ones” (p. 993). Tibbits (2017) also reminds us that the central goals of HRE are preventing and eliminating human rights violations.

The ways in which Uyghur diaspora members and organizations have engaged in advocacy and activism are consistent with the features of Tibbits' (2017) Activism-Transformation Model of HRE. Uyghur diaspora efforts have largely been sponsored by civil society organizations, participation is voluntary, and their education has been "carried out in the nonformal education sector, including through trainings, popular education, youth and community development" (Tibbits, 2017, p. 17). Furthermore, Uyghurs of the diaspora have clearly articulated a critical stance toward both China's actions and the lack of response by the international community, as well as the human rights system itself. Their work has been oriented directly toward transformation, including building the self-confidence and pride of Uyghurs themselves and developing their capacity to take action and participate in human rights activism for long-term and permanent social change. For Uyghurs of the diaspora, strategies "for reducing human rights violations (are) immediate and personal as well as long-term, public and collective" (Tibbits, 2017, p. 18).

Tibbits (2017) suggests that HRE may provide healing for those who have personally experienced human rights violations, systematic discrimination, and oppression. Although Uyghurs of the diaspora will not be able to fully heal until they know their relatives are safe and China is held accountable, their activism gives them hope that change is possible and justice may eventually be achieved. As Bajaj (2011) says, "HRE can no longer be characterized as a singularly understood practice" (p. 489). By highlighting how Uyghur organizations, high profile individuals, and the Bay Area diaspora community have utilized different approaches to raise awareness of the genocide, build solidarity, and advocate for their rights, this case study illustrates "the

richness and possibility of HRE” as a means to enact positive social change (Bajaj, 2011, p. 508).

Testimonio

The use of *testimonio* as a method has been critical to this study in centering and honoring the voices of Uyghur diaspora members. The relatively small number of participants in this study were acutely aware of their positionality in representing Uyghurs as an entire ethnic group facing extreme oppression in China. They were also painfully aware of the dangers they could face by participating in this study. Their knowledge, perspectives, and experiences drove the findings reported in this dissertation, both through the process of data collection and in prioritizing the themes and subthemes that emerged during coding. Local Uyghur diaspora members and I worked collaboratively to determine how their knowledge and lived experiences would be represented and shared, with the goal of raising awareness of the genocide and urging people to take action. *Testimonio* has served as a powerful tool in this dissertation, and it can similarly be used to honor the voices of communities and democratize and equalize hierarchies in other human rights-related research.

Genocide

This dissertation contributes to the growing body of evidence which demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs in East Turkestan. China is not a party to the Rome Statute, which would enable the investigation and possible persecution of these crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC). In fact, the ICC refused to investigate the atrocities in Xinjiang after Uyghurs of the diaspora provided evidence and called for a formal inquiry

in 2020 (VOA, 2020). China is also a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which grants them veto power when considering resolutions. Moreover, China has failed to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which apply directly to the situation Uyghurs are facing in XUAR. As such, the response to the Uyghur genocide using international human rights mechanisms has some significant limitations. China has, however, ratified the U.N. treaties listed in the table and described below, all of which can be applied to the situation in East Turkestan under international human rights law. As a signatory to the Genocide Convention, China has an obligation to prevent genocide and punish genocide as a crime under international law (U.N. Genocide Convention art. 1).

United Nations Treaty Violations

Figure 7.1: PRC Violations of U.N. Treaties	
U.N. Treaties	Articles
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention)	Article 2: a, b, c, d, e
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Articles 1, 2, 4, 9
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Articles 9, 11, 12, 15, 16
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	Articles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	Articles 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Articles 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 29, 30, 37

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide states that,

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (U.N. Genocide Convention art. 2)

As noted in the Convention, genocide refers to *any* of the acts listed above. Currently, the ongoing atrocities occurring in XUAR meet *all* of these criteria, as has been described in detail in this dissertation and other reports (Human Rights Watch, 2020; Newlines Institute 2021; Uyghur Tribunal, 2021; Wong & Buckley, 2021; Zenz, 2019; Zenz, 2020).

The extreme physical and emotional abuse endured by Uyghurs in XUAR has been widely reported, including in Chapters Two and Five of this dissertation. China has used the false narrative of terrorism to rationalize and justify its campaign of repression and torture against Uyghurs, as discussed in Chapter Three. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) makes clear that even under purportedly “exceptional circumstances,” torture is unjustifiable (U.N. CAT art. 2). We have seen that China has not only failed to acknowledge the many

torturous acts against Uyghurs as criminal offenses, but the Chinese government itself has encouraged this inhumane treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic groups (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019; BBC, 2019; Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2019; Ramzy & Buckley, 2019; Zenz, 2022).

Women have had to contend with a host of issues, both inside and outside of the camps in XUAR, as discussed in Chapter Two. Former detainees have reported numerous experiences of sexual assault, forced abortions, imposed birth control, and sterilization, including being forced to take pills and receive injections of unknown substances that disrupted or stopped their menstrual cycles (Danilova, 2018; Ferris-Rotman, 2019; Hoja, 2019; Lynch, 2019; Maizland, 2020; Stavrou, 2019). Furthermore, Uyghur women outside of the camps have had to endure mandatory Han Chinese “guests” in their homes and in their beds for days at a time, making them vulnerable to sexual assault while their husbands are in the camps or prisons (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Jiang, 2018). Uyghur women have also been forced or coerced into marrying Han Chinese men, sometimes in mass ceremonies (Kashgarian, 2020; interviews). Uyghurs of the diaspora refer to these practices as “government-sponsored mass rape” (field notes). All of the aforementioned actions are in violation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

It is abundantly clear that Uyghurs have been targeted as a distinct ethnic group in China and are continuing to suffer under institutionalized discriminatory policies, as described in Chapters Two and Five of this dissertation. Chapter Three describes how China’s narratives of national unity and related assimilationist strategies serve to privilege Han citizens and eliminate Uyghur culture and identity, which are in sharp

contrast to the rights granted by the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Moreover, the Chinese state itself is responsible for creating propaganda which otherizes, dehumanizes, and positions Uyghurs as criminals, and Chinese leaders are the architects of the systems of mass internment and cultural destruction in East Turkestan, which have effectively removed Uyghurs from society (Zenz, 2022).

The multidimensional ways in which the Chinese government has impeded Uyghurs' right to political, economic, social, and cultural self-determination in their homeland have been described throughout this dissertation. Not only are Uyghurs unable to freely take part in their cultural practices, but the Chinese government has virtually erased most significant and authentic elements of their culture. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) ensures that all people "have the right of self-determination," which allows them to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (U.N. ICESCR art. 1). As discussed in Chapters Two and Five, Uyghur mosques and cemeteries have been demolished, expressions of Islam are tightly controlled, and restrictions have been placed on Uyghurs' physical appearance and children's names (Hiatt, 2019; Hunt et al., 2017; Kashgarian, 2019; Kuo, 2019; Rivers, 2020; Sintash, 2019; Sulaiman, 2015). At the same time, China has been profiting from performative expressions of Uyghur culture by promoting tourism to Xinjiang, as Chapter Five of this dissertation describes. In addition, the organized forced labor program reported in Chapter Two is in clear violation of the rights granted by ICESCR.

Children and Families

One of the most tragic elements of the genocide is the forcible separation of Uyghur children and families. As discussed in Chapters Two and Five, since at least 2017, Uyghur children of all ages have been separated from their families and placed in state-run facilities, including orphanages, shelters, and boarding schools, even if their grandparents were available to care for them (Feng, 2018; Zenz, 2019). The Chinese government has referred to some of these children as “newly orphaned,” despite their parents being alive in the camps (Zenz, 2019, p. 2). It is clear that China is not providing protection and assistance to families as granted by article ten of ICESCR, and instead has engaged in an organized campaign to assimilate Uyghur children while intentionally keeping them separated from their families, as described in Chapter Two.

Separating children from their families and preventing them from developing their cultural identity is in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which clearly says that states are obligated to “respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations” (U.N. CRC art. 8). The CRC also explicitly states that “a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will,” and that a child who is separated from their parents has the right “to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis” (U.N. CRC art. 9). Furthermore, if the State is responsible for the separation, “that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family” (U.N. CRC art. 9). China has repeatedly ignored and denied

requests for family reunification after forcibly separating children from their families without consent or legal justification (Amnesty, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2019).

The CRC includes special protections for children who are members of an ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority, all of which apply to Uyghur children in China. Article 30 states that

a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language. (U.N. CRC art. 30)

The violations of this article have already been described above and in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Inefficacy of International Human Rights Mechanisms

Despite all of the documented violations of international human rights treaties, including those described above, China continues to commit atrocities in East Turkestan with impunity. Moreover, the PRC has consistently denied all allegations of human rights violations against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples and continues to be supported by other countries in the United Nations. In 2019, 22 countries signed a letter to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights voicing their concerns about China's policies in Xinjiang. This letter was countered with another letter from China, which was endorsed by 37 U.N. member states who supported Beijing's alleged counterterrorism efforts and commended "China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights" (Human Rights Council, 2019, para. 2). This letter stated that because of China's "counterterrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang... safety and security has returned to

Xinjiang and the fundamental human rights of people of all ethnic groups there are safeguarded (Human Rights Council, 2019, para. 3). The letter also voiced appreciation for “China’s commitment to openness and transparency,” despite China’s refusal to allow unfettered access to Xinjiang (Human Rights Council, 2019, para. 4).

In 2020, 39 countries endorsed a statement presented to the U.N. General Assembly calling again for China to “respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet” (Putz, 2020, para. 2). In response, 45 member states supported a statement which defended and praised China’s policies while opposing the “politicization of human rights issues” (Putz, 2020, para. 4). Many of these countries are involved in China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

The United Nations was created in response to the atrocities of World War II “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small” (U.N. Charter preamble). One of the primary purposes of the U.N. is “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained” (U.N. Charter preamble). These conditions are not being met, as evidenced by the ongoing genocide itself, as well as member states’ support for China’s repressive policies. Furthermore, the lack of action on the part of the international community, along with barriers to taking action, such as the ICC’s refusal to investigate these crimes against humanity, indicate major flaws in the existing system.

Even without an official international genocide determination, there is enough evidence and documentation of human rights violations that should call for a serious need

to take action. After the horrors of the Holocaust, people were able to say that they didn't know what was happening or they would have tried to intervene sooner. This time, the world is fully informed, and yet very little is being done to take direct action to stop the Uyghur genocide. The following section presents recommendations to address the genocide and provides suggestions for repairing some of the damage that has been done to Uyghur culture and identity.

Recommendations

For Policy and Practice

Crises of this scale require an international approach with the participation of multiple governments and organizations across sectors. In addition to enforcing existing international human rights laws or creating new legislation, governments should prioritize their own investigations of allegations of genocide and crimes against humanity in XUAR. Human rights organizations, other NGOs, researchers, scholars, and affected individuals should be encouraged to act as partners in these efforts, and governments should allocate resources for the work of researching and documenting these atrocities. Significantly, the perspectives and recommendations of those who are directly affected by the genocide and other crimes against humanity should be prioritized and centered, especially in countries such as China, where a history of suppressing information is well documented.

In addition to utilizing U.N. conventions and other human rights standards to hold countries who are directly responsible for these atrocities accountable, these laws may also be applied to other states who are complicit. In the case of the Uyghur genocide, countries that have deported people back to China to face persecution can be held

accountable under article 3 of the U.N. Convention against Torture (CAT), which says that “No State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture” (U.N. CAT art. 3).

Given the abundance of evidence that now exists, countries and U.N. bodies should name the atrocities in East Turkestan as genocide and call for an immediate disbandment of the internment camps in Xinjiang and forced labor facilities throughout China. They should also ask for proof showing that they have been closed. States and officials should also insist on having unfettered access to Xinjiang to verify the situation for themselves. Furthermore, countries and human rights groups should demand that the Chinese government immediately cease the mass sterilization campaign against Uyghur women. There should also be a concerted effort to stop family separation and reunite children with their relatives.

There is likely not much that countries can do to protect Uyghurs in China without a coordinated global response. U.N. member states, possibly through the Human Rights Council, could establish a Commission of Inquiry or organize a fact-finding mission or other formal investigation, as has been done in relation to other grave violations of humanitarian law, such as in Palestine, Libya, and Myanmar (U.N. Human Rights Council, 2021). Uyghurs of the diaspora, however, can be supported by offering them refuge through a streamlined process of immigration or citizenship, and providing them with protection and resources in their host countries.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promotes “cultural heritage and the equal dignity of all cultures” (UNESCO, 2021, para.

2). UNESCO was created after World War II to help combat anti-Semitism and violence. Now, “cultural diversity is under attack and new forms of intolerance, rejection of scientific facts and threats to freedom of expression challenge peace and human rights” (UNESCO, 2021, para. 3). It seems appropriate that UNESCO should be involved in preserving Uyghur culture, which, as previously discussed, has been largely destroyed as a means of assimilating and stamping out Uyghurs’ freedom of cultural and religious expression.

For Further Research

The impacts of the Uyghur genocide are not yet fully known or understood. As the situation continues to evolve, research should be conducted to understand the scale and extent of the erasure of Uyghur culture and identity, as well as the physical, psychological, and economic toll the genocide has taken on Uyghurs and their family members. This includes assessing the impacts of family separation and incarceration on Uyghur children. Further study could also investigate the extent of property and assets seized by the Chinese government as a means of Uyghur dispossession.

It may also be useful to conduct a retrospective study to identify the early warning signs and mechanisms of the genocide, alongside the responses of world governments and the United Nations. This could be compared to similar data collected on other genocides as a means to understand and assess how the international community and existing human rights mechanisms recognize, acknowledge, and respond to crimes against humanity.

Continued research with diaspora members will also help to better understand the many dimensions of this situation and its impacts on all those affected. Further research

could explore additional means of resistance and how diaspora members have coped with this immense tragedy while continuing to persevere. As diaspora children get older, their perspectives may also be valuable as witnesses to their relatives' struggles and as proud Uyghurs who carry on their language and culture without restraint. Critically, whatever research questions are pursued should be examined in consultation or partnership with Uyghur community members, as I have done in this dissertation.

Conclusion

Uyghurs of the diaspora have suggested that what has been happening in East Turkestan should be a warning to the rest of the world. We have seen that the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations have been largely ineffective, and the responses of the international community have been slow and dishearteningly limited, despite an abundance of evidence which clearly demonstrates that China is committing crimes against humanity in XUAR. Moreover, there is growing international support for China, likely because of its increasing influence over developing states as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Given China's transnational economic and political influence, it is unlikely that many countries will stand up against the repressive policies in XUAR or other places where China is setting up infrastructure and sending their military.

The PRC continues to deny the atrocities in East Turkestan, and I believe they have been emboldened by the lack of a strong international response to the genocide. It appears that the majority of the world has accepted these crimes against humanity, as there have been few repercussions and no real accountability. The international community should consider what kind of message this sends not only to China, but also to other authoritarian regimes around the world. When it becomes acceptable for

governments to blatantly prioritize their economic interests over human rights, it is implied that human rights are not a priority. This is a dangerous path. A witness to the atrocities stated that

what we're seeing is not the problem of the ethnic minorities who are there, but a problem concerning the whole world. We need to be vigilant. If we want to live in a democracy, we need to act together. Otherwise, it will be too late for all of us.

(Xinjiang Victims Database, 2022)

There is still opportunity to act. Inaction or silence reinforce the message that committing genocide is not a major offense.

Until people are freed from the camps, prisons, and forced labor facilities; children are reunited with their families; Uyghurs are allowed to freely practice their religion and culture; and China discontinues its repressive policies, we must continue to speak out and act. A Uyghur diaspora member said, “we are screaming as loud as we can, but not everyone is listening” (interview). I hope after reading this dissertation that they have been heard. Calls of never again must be heeded now.

References

- Abbas, R. (2019, May 9). I've fought China's slow-motion genocide of Uyghur Muslims; Now, my family are victims. *USA Today*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/05/09/Uyghur-chinese-human-rights-violations-concentration-camps-column/1143252001/>
- Abdurasulov, A. (2019, February 12). Uyghur crackdown: 'I spent seven days of hell in Chinese camps'. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-4715711>
- Abu-Lughod, L. (2002). Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *American Anthropologist*, (3), 783-790.
- ACLU. (2004). *Sanctioned bias: Racial profiling since 9/11*.
<https://www.aclu.org/report/racial-profiling-911-report>
- Afridi, F., Li, S. X., & Ren, Y. (2015). Social identity and inequality: The impact of China's hukou system. *Journal of Public Economics*, 123, 17–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.12.011>
- Ala, M. (2018, October 12). Turn in the two-faced: The plight of Uyghur intellectuals. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/turn-in-the-two-faced-the-plight-of-uyghur-intellectuals/>
- Allen-Ebrahimian, B. (2019, November 24). *Exposed: China's operating manuals for mass internment and arrest by algorithm*. International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. <https://www.icij.org/investigations/china->

[cables/exposed-chinas-operating-manuals-for-mass-internment-and-arrest-by-algorithm/](#)

Allen-Ebrahimian, B. (2019, December 12). *How the world learned of China's mass internment camps*. International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

<https://www.icij.org/investigations/china-cables/how-the-world-learned-of-chinas-mass-internment-camps/?fbclid=IwAR1eR8J7AlfOFwXbwhDds5sWVp-H9Vucx23YAv88qaJX9XwX8whggPPZjNU>

Ali, A. I. (2016). Citizens under suspicion: Responsive research with community under surveillance. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 47(1), 78-95.

<https://doi:10.1111/aeq.12136>

Ali, A. (2017). The impossibility of Muslim citizenship. *Diaspora, Indigenous, And Minority Education*, 11(3), 110-116. <https://doi:10.1080/15595692.2017.1325355>

Amnesty International. (1999, April). *Gross violations of human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/144000/asa170181999en.pdf>

Amnesty International. (2016, January 14). *Hundreds of academics urge China's President to free Professor Ilham Tohti*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/01/hundreds-of-academics-urge-chinas-president-to-free-professor-ilham-tohti/>

Amnesty International. (2019). *Hearts and lives broken: The nightmare of Uyghur families separated by repression*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2021/03/the-nightmare-of-uyghur-families-separated-by-repression/>

- Amnesty International. (2020, February 21). *China: Uyghurs living abroad tell of campaign of intimidation*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/china-uyghurs-living-abroad-tell-of-campaign-of-intimidation/>
- Amnesty International. (2021, June). *“Like we were enemies in a war:” China’s mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang*. https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASA_17_4137-2021_Full_report_ENG.pdf
- Asat, R. & Diamond, Y. (2020, July 15). The world’s most technologically sophisticated genocide Is happening in Xinjiang. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/15/Uyghur-genocide-xinjiang-china-surveillance-sterilization/>
- Associated Press. (2019, November 25). *Secret documents reveal how China mass detention camps work*. <https://apnews.com/4ab0b341a4ec4e648423f2ec47ea5c47>
- Azizi, J. (2018, July 19). Law student locates suspected Uyghurs re-education camps in China with satellite imagery. *The Ubyyssey*. <https://www.ubyssey.ca/news/law-student-locate-xinjiang-re-education-camps-via-satellite-imagery/>
- Bajaj, M. (2011). Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 33(2), 481–508. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2011.0019>
- Bajaj, M. (2017). *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc.
- Bajaj, M. & Hantzopoulos, M. (2016). *Peace Education: International Perspectives*. Bloomsbury.

- Baynes, C. (2019, November 5). Muslim women 'forced to share beds' with male Chinese officials after husbands detained in internment camps. *The Independent*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/muslim-china-Uyghur-forced-share-beds-male-officials-detention-camps-a9185861.html>
- BBC News. (2014, December 4). China to stop harvesting executed prisoners' organs. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-30324440>
- BBC News. (2019, November 24). Data leak reveals how China 'brainwashes' Uyghurs in prison camps. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-50511063>
- BBC News. (2020, February 17). China Uyghurs: Detained for beards, veils and internet browsing. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51520622>
- Bhattacharya, A. (2003). Conceptualising Uyghur Separatism in Chinese Nationalism. *Strategic Analysis*. 27(3), 357-381. http://mps100428.nevagroup.com/system/files/strategicanalysis_abhattacharya_0903.pdf
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. Routledge.
- Blackmer Reyes, K. & Curry Rodríguez, J. E. (2012) Testimonio: Origins, terms, and resources. *Equity & Excellence in Education*. (45)3, 525-538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698571>
- Blank, J. (2019, October 10). China bends another American institution to its will. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/10/nba-victim-china-economic-might/599773/>

- Bovingdon, G. (2002). The not-so-silent majority: Uyghur resistance to Han rule in Xinjiang. *Modern China*, 28(1), 39-78.
- Bovingdon, G. (2004). Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han nationalist imperatives and Uyghur discontent. *Policy Studies*, 11. East-West Center Washington.
<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/PS011.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=32020>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*. 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi:10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Brown, A. & Estes, N. (2018, September 25). An untold number of Indigenous children disappeared at U.S. boarding schools. Tribal nations are raising the stakes in search of answers. *The Intercept*. <https://theintercept.com/2018/09/25/carlisle-indian-industrial-school-indigenous-children-disappeared/>
- Buckley, C. (2014, March 1). Attackers with knives kill 29 at Chinese rail station. *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/02/world/asia/china.html>.
- Buckley, C. (2018, October 13). The leaders who unleashed China's mass detention of Muslims. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/13/world/asia/china-muslim-detainment-xinjiang-camps.html>
- Buckley, C. & Ramzy, A. (2018, December 16). China's detention camps for Muslims turn to forced labor. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/16/world/asia/xinjiang-china-forced-labor-camps-Uyghurs.html?auth=login-email&login=email>
- Buckley, C. & Ramzy, A. (2020, July 1). Inside China's push to turn Muslim minorities

into an army of workers. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/world/asia/china-xinjiang-muslims-labor.html>

Bunin, G. (2018, August 7). 'We're a people destroyed': Why Uyghur Muslims across China are living in fear. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/07/why-Uyghur-muslims-across-china-are-living-in-fear>

Burgés, F., Simm, A., & Cooper, I. (2019 December). *A Tale of three ports: The impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on unrepresented peoples in Pakistan and China*. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

<https://unpo.org/downloads/2590.pdf>

Byler, D. (2018). *Spirit breaking: Uyghur dispossession, culture work and terror capitalism in a Chinese global city*. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington]. ResearchWorks Archive.

Campbell, B. (2009). Genocide as social control. *Sociological Theory*, 27(2), 150.

Campbell, C. (2019, November 25). Leaked documents claim to reveal internal protocols for China's Muslim detention camps. *Time*.

<https://time.com/5738401/xinjiang-Uyghur-muslim-camps-china-cables/>

Campaign for Uyghurs. (2020). *Genocide in East Turkistan*.

https://campaignforuyghurs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Genocide_Report_-_English.pdf

Chatsky, A. & McBride, J. (2020, January 28). China's massive Belt and Road Initiative.

Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

China Tribunal. (2019, June). *Independent Tribunal into forced organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience in China: Final judgement & summary report - 2019*.
https://chinatribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/China-Tribunal-SUMMARY-JUDGMENT_FINAL.pdf

Chinese Human Rights Defenders. (2018, July 16). *Joint civil society report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/INT_CE_RD_NGO_CHN_31915_E.pdf

Cook, L. (2021, March 22). EU, US, UK, Canada target China officials over Uyghur abuses. *Associated Press*. <https://apnews.com/article/eu-sanctions-4-china-officials-uyghur-abuses-bf221f9c5d495f82c384a34a713b2d26>

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Danilova, M. (2018, November 26). Woman describes torture, beatings in Chinese detention camp. *Associated Press*.
<https://apnews.com/61cdf7f5dfc34575aa643523b3c6b3fe>

Debata, M.J. & Tian, R. G. (2011). A cultural rights approach vs. nationalist mobilization: An applied anthropological case study of the Uyghur diaspora community. *Practicing Anthropology*, 33(4), 35.

De Bourmont, M. (2018, April 3). China's campaign against Uyghur diaspora ramps

up. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/03/chinas-campaign-against-Uyghur-diaspora-ramps-up/>

Deggs, D. M., & Hernandez, F. (2018). Enhancing the value of qualitative field notes through purposeful reflection. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(10), 2552.

Denyer, S. (2014, September 20). China's war on terror becomes all-out attack on Islam in Xinjiang. *The Washington Post*.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinas-war-on-terror-becomes-all-out-attack-on-islam-in-xinjiang/2014/09/19/5c5840a4-1aa7-4bb6-bc63-69f6bfba07e9_story.html

Denyer, S. (2018, May 17). Former inmates of China's Muslim 'reeducation' camps tell of brainwashing, torture. *The Washington Post*.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/former-inmates-of-chinas-muslim-re-education-camps-tell-of-brainwashing-torture/2018/05/16/32b330e8-5850-11e8-8b92-45fdd7aaef3c_story.html

DeRocher, P. (2018). *Transnational testimonios : The politics of collective knowledge production*. University of Washington Press.

Dooley, C. (2019). Silencing Xinjiang: The Chinese government's campaign against the Uyghurs. *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 48(233), 233-272.

<https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2472&context=gjicl>

Dupont, S. (2007, July 25). China's war on the "Three Evil Forces". *Foreign Policy*.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2007/07/25/chinas-war-on-the-three-evil-forces/>

- Eady, D. (2019, July 19). An 'Orwellian nightmare' in Xinjiang – How China concocted an Islamic terror threat of its own. *South China Morning Post*.
<https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/article/3019012/orwellian-nightmare-xinjiang-how-china-concocted-islamic>
- Ercilasun, G. K. & Ercilasun, K. (2018). *The Uyghur Community: Diaspora, Identity, and Geopolitics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Everington, K. (2020, January 22). Saudis allegedly buy 'Halal organs' from 'slaughtered' Xinjiang Muslims. *Taiwan News*.
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3862578>
- Fairclough, N., & Ietcu-Fairclough, I. (2012). *Political discourse analysis : A method for advanced students*. Taylor & Francis.
- Feng, E. (2018, July 9). Uyghur children fall victim to China anti-terror drive. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/f0d3223a-7f4d-11e8-bc55-50daf11b720d>
- Ferris-Rotman, A. (2019, October 5). Abortions, IUDs and sexual humiliation: Muslim women who fled China for Kazakhstan recount ordeals. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/abortions-iuds-and-sexual-humiliation-muslim-women-who-fled-china-for-kazakhstan-recount-ordeals/2019/10/04/551c2658-cfd2-11e9-a620-0a91656d7db6_story.html
- Fifield, A. (2020, February 19). China compels Uyghurs to work in shoe factory that supplies Nike. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/china-compels-Uyghurs-to-

[work-in-shoe-factory-that-supplies-nike/2020/02/28/ebddf5f4-57b2-11ea-8efd-0f904bdd8057_story.html](https://www.reuters.com/article/work-in-shoe-factory-that-supplies-nike/2020/02/28/ebddf5f4-57b2-11ea-8efd-0f904bdd8057_story.html)

- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Thirtieth anniversary edition). Continuum.
- Gaillet, L. L. (2012). (Per)Forming archival research methodologies. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 35–58.
- Gan, N. (2017, March 30). Ban on beards and veils – China’s Xinjiang passes law to curb ‘religious extremism’. *South China Morning Post*.
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2083479/ban-beards-and-veils-chinas-xinjiang-passes-regulation>
- Gerin, R. (2021, June 15). Belgium, Czech Republic legislatures pass Uyghur genocide declarations. *Radio Free Asia*.
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/genocide-declarations-06152021171101.html>
- Greitens, S., Lee, M., & Yazici, E. (2020). Counterterrorism and preventive repression: China’s changing strategy in Xinjiang. *International Security*, 44(3), 9-47.
https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/isec_a_00368
- Haas, B. (2017, April 24). China bans religious names for Muslim babies in Xinjiang. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/25/china-bans-religious-names-for-muslims-babies-in-xinjiang>
- Haas, B. (2019, October 16). 'Think of your family': China threatens European citizens

over Xinjiang protests. *The Guardian*.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/17/think-of-your-family-china-threatens-european-citizens-over-xinjiang-protests?CMP=share_btn_link

Hamilton, T. (2021, December 10). What, exactly, is a ‘diplomatic boycott’ of the Beijing

Olympics? *ESPN*. https://www.espn.com/olympics/story/_/id/32831100/what-exactly-diplomatic-boycott-beijing-olympics

Han, E. (2010). Boundaries, discrimination, and interethnic conflict in Xinjiang, China. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 4(2), 244-256.

Harris, R. (2019, April 7). Bulldozing mosques: The latest tactic in China’s war against Uyghur culture. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/07/bulldozing-mosques-china-war-Uyghur-culture-xinjiang>

Hasan, M. (2018, August 13). One million Muslim Uyghurs have been detained by China, the U.N. says. Where’s the global outrage? *The Intercept*.

<https://theintercept.com/2018/08/13/china-muslims-Uyghur-detention/>

Heng, Y. T., Wagner, D. T., Barnes, C. M., & Guarana, C. L. (2018). Archival research: Expanding the methodological toolkit in social psychology. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 78, 14–22.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2018.04.012>

Hennink, M. M. (2014). *Focus group discussions*. Oxford University Press.

Hernandez, J. (2017, April 25). China bans ‘Muhammad’ and ‘Jihad’ as baby names in

heavily Muslim region. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/25/world/asia/china-xinjiang-ban-muslim-names-muhammad-jihad.html>

Hiatt, F. (2019, November 3). In China, every day is Kristallnacht. *The Washington Post*.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/11/03/china-every-day-is-kristallnacht/?arc404=true>

Hoja, G. (2018, June 26). Xinjiang rapidly building crematoria to extinguish Uyghur funeral traditions. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/crematoriums-06262018151126.html>

Hoja, G. (2019, October 30). Female detainees at Xinjiang internment camps face sterilization, sexual abuse: Camp survivor. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/abuse-10302019142433.html>

Holdstock, N. (2015). *China's forgotten people: Xinjiang, terror and the Chinese state*.

I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd.

Hoshur, S. (2018, September 13). Uyghur children separated from parents, held in 'Little Angels Schools' in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/separated-09132018132251.html>

Hoshur, S. (2018, September 28). Uyghur editor of state-run magazine commits suicide 'out of fear' of detention. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/suicide-09282018171559.html>

Hoshur, S. (2019, October 31). Male Chinese 'relatives' assigned to Uyghur homes co-sleep with female 'hosts'. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/cosleeping-10312019160528.html>

- Hoshur, S. (2019, May 20). Xinjiang re-education camp detainees appointed 'crying time' every two weeks. *Radio Free Asia*.
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/crying-05202019171525.html>
- Hoshur, S. (2019, July 26). Uyghur detainees secretly transferred to prisons in Henan Province. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/transfers-07262019172400.html>
- Hoshur, S. (2020, August 13). Public toilet erected on former site of razed Xinjiang village mosque. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/toilet-08132020142800.html>
- Hoshur, S. (2022, January 21). Five women from Uyghur family sentenced to long prison terms in China's Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*.
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/five-women-01212022165157.html>
- Huang, J. (2017, December 26). Stepped-up surveillance of Uyghurs sends 'relatives' into homes. *Voice of America*. <https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/stepped-surveillance-Uyghurs-sends-relatives-homes>
- Human Rights Watch. (2005, April). *Devastating blows: Religious repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang*.
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/china0405/china0405.pdf>.
- Human Rights Watch. (2009, October). *We are afraid to even look for them: Enforced disappearances in the wake of Xinjiang's protests*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/10/20/we-are-afraid-even-look-them/enforced-disappearances-wake-xinjiangs-protests>
- Human Rights Watch. (2015, May 13). *Tiger chairs and cell bosses: Police torture of*

criminal suspects in China.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/05/13/tiger-chairs-and-cell-bosses/police-torture-criminal-suspects-china>

Human Rights Watch. (2017, December 13). *China: Minority region collects DNA from millions.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/13/china-minority-region-collects-dna-millions>

Human Rights Watch. (2018, May 13). *China: Visiting officials occupy homes in Muslim region.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/13/china-visiting-officials-occupy-homes-muslim-region#>

Human Rights Watch. (2018, September 9). “*Eradicating ideological viruses*” *China’s campaign of repression against Xinjiang’s Muslims.* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs#>

Human Rights Watch. (2019, May 1). *China’s algorithms of repression.* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/05/02/chinas-algorithms-repression/reverse-engineering-xinjiang-police-mass>

Human Rights Watch. (2019, September 15). *China: Xinjiang children separated from families.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/15/china-xinjiang-children-separated-families>

Human Rights Watch. (2020, February). *More evidence of China’s horrific abuses in Xinjiang; But little action holding Beijing accountable.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/20/more-evidence-chinas-horrific-abuses-xinjiang>

- Human Rights Watch. (2020, September 9). *Global call for international human rights monitoring mechanisms on China*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/09/global-call-international-human-rights-monitoring-mechanisms-china>
- Human Rights Watch. (2021, April 19). “*Break their lineage, break their roots*” China’s crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting#2908>
- Hunt, K., Luu, C., & Jiang, S. (2017, March 31). Why China is banning beards and veils in Xinjiang. *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/31/asia/china-xinjiang-new-rules/index.html>
- Huntington, S. (1993). The clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3). 22-49.
- International Criminal Court. (2011). *The Rome statute of the International Criminal Court*. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>
- International Labour Office. *ILO Indicators of Forced Labour*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_203832.pdf
- Iones, E. (2019, October 22). Rape, medical experiments, and forced abortions: One woman describes horrors of Xinjiang concentration camps. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/muslim-woman-describes-horrors-of-chinese-concentration-camp-2019-10>
- Irwin, P. (2017, April 29). Why is China banning baby names and beards in Xinjiang? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/why-is-china-banning-baby-names-and-beards-in-xinjiang/>

- Jacobs, A. (2009, July 15). At a factory, the spark for China's violence. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/16/world/asia/16china.html>
- Jacobs, A. (2014, March 2). China blames Xinjiang separatists for stabbing rampage at train station. *The New York Times*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/03/world/asia/china.html>.
- Jacobs, A. (2016, January 2). Xinjiang seethes under Chinese crackdown. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/world/asia/xinjiang-seethes-under-chinese-crackdown.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article®ion=Footer>
- Jiang, S. (2018, May 14). Chinese Uyghurs forced to welcome Communist Party into their homes. *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/14/asia/china-xinjiang-home-stays-intl/index.html>
- Kaltman, B. (2007). *Under the heel of the dragon: Islam, racism, crime, and the Uyghur in China*. Ohio University press.
- Kanat, K. (2014). Repression in China and its consequences in Xinjiang.
<https://www.hudson.org/research/10480-repression-in-china-and-its-consequences-in-xinjiang>
- Kashgari, J. (2014, January 9). China steps up 'strike hard' campaign in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/strike-hard-01092014172927.html>
- Kashgarian, A. (2019, December 1). US: China targets Uyghur mosques to eradicate

minority's faith. *Voice of America*. <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/us-china-targets-Uyghur-mosques-eradicate-minoritys-faith>

Kashgarian, A. (2020, August 21). China video ad calls for 100 Uyghur women to 'urgently' marry Han men. *Voice of America*. https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_voa-news-china_china-video-ad-calls-100-Uyghur-women-urgently-marry-han-men/6194806.html

Kashgarian, A. (2020, December 25). Uyghur diaspora hails removal of ETIM from US terror list. *Voice of America*. https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_Uyghur-diaspora-hails-removal-etim-us-terror-list/6200004.html

Khan, S. H. (2021, September 20). China's Increasing Influence in the Middle East. *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/pdf/93989>

Kilgour, D., Gutmann, E., & Matas, D. (2017, April). *Bloody harvest/The slaughter: An update*. International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China. https://endtransplantabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Bloody_Harvest-The_Slaughter-2016-Update-V3-and-Addendum-20170430.pdf

Kim, L. (2022, January 14). Denmark latest country to join U.S.-led diplomatic boycott of

Beijing Olympics. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lisakim/2022/01/14/denmark-latest-country-to-join-us-led-diplomatic-boycott-of-beijing-olympics/?sh=3b226e26619d>

Kuo, L. & Kommenda, N. (2018, July 30). What is China's *Belt and Road* Initiative? *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer>

Kuo, L. (2019, May 6). Revealed: new evidence of China's mission to raze the mosques of Xinjiang. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/07/revealed-new-evidence-of-chinas-mission-to-raze-the-mosques-of-xinjiang>

Kuo, L. (2019, January 11). 'If you enter a camp, you never come out': inside China's war on Islam. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/11/if-you-enter-a-camp-you-never-come-out-inside-chinas-war-on-islam>

Lewis, B. (1990). The roots of Muslim rage: why so many Muslims deeply resent the West, and why their bitterness will not easily be mollified. *The Atlantic*, (3). 47.

Lin, X. (2017, April 20). China bans 'extreme' Islamic baby names among Xinjiang's Uyghurs. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/names-04202017093324.html>

Locke, T. (2004). *Critical discourse analysis*. Continuum.

Lynch, E. (2019, October 21). China's attacks on Uyghur women are crimes against humanity. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/10/21/chinas-attacks-Uyghur-women-are-crimes-against-humanity/>

Ma, A. (2019, November 11). The US is scrambling to invest more in Asia to counter China's 'Belt and Road' mega-project. Here's what China's plan to connect the world through infrastructure is like. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-belt-and-road-china-infrastructure-project-2018-1>

Mahmut, D. (2019). Controlling religious knowledge and education for countering

religious extremism: Case study of the Uyghur Muslims in China. *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education*. 5(1), 22-43.

<https://doi.org/10.32865/fire201951142>

Maizland, L. (2020, June 30). China's repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-repression-Uyghurs-xinjiang>

Mamdani, M. (2004). *Good Muslim, bad Muslim : America, the Cold War, and the roots of terror*. Pantheon Books.

Mattis, p. (2021, April 15). Yes, the atrocities in Xinjiang constitute genocide. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/15/xinjiang-uyghurs-intentional-genocide-china/>

Mauk, B. (2021, February 26). Inside Xinjiang's prison state. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/a-reporter-at-large/china-xinjiang-prison-state-Uyghur-detention-camps-prisoner-testimony>

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage.

Meixler, E. (2018, November 29). 'I begged them to kill me.' Uyghur woman tells Congress of torture in Chinese internment camps. *Time*. <https://time.com/5467628/china-Uyghur-congress-torture/>

Merchant, N. (2016, August 26). Does China still harvest organs of executed? Doctors divided. *Associated Press*. <https://apnews.com/52c840af614b48d988244a316ff0d660/does-china-still-harvest-organs-executed-doctors-divided>

- Mihr, A., & Schmitz, H. P. (2007). Human rights education (HRE) and transnational activism. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 29(4), 973–993.
- Millward, J. A. (2007). *Eurasian crossroads: A history of Xinjiang*. Columbia University Press.
- Millward, J. A. (2018, February 3). What it's like to live in a surveillance state. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/03/opinion/sunday/china-surveillance-state-ughurs.html>
- Newlines Institute. (2021, March). *The Uyghur genocide: An examination of China's breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Chinas-Breaches-of-the-GC3-1.pdf>
- New York Times. (2019, November 16). Document: What Chinese officials told children whose families were put in camps. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-detention-directive.html>
- Niyaz, K. (2018, February 20). Xinjiang University President purged under 'two-faced' officials campaign. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/university-president-02202018173959.html>
- Ochab, E. U. (2022, February 5). Calls for atrocity crimes against Muslims in India. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2022/02/05/calls-for-atrocity-crimes-against-muslims-in-india/?sh=2716a619555b>
- Pamuk & Brice. (2019, October 11). Pompeo says Orwell's '1984' coming to life in China's Xinjiang region. *Reuters*.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-muslims-pompeo/pompeo-says-orwells-1984-coming-to-life-in-chinas-xinjiang-region-idUSKBN1WQ27U>

Perper, R. (2018, August 15). China appears to be compiling a massive database of its Muslim citizens abroad to keep close tabs on them. *Business Insider*.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/china-compiling-Uyghur-muslim-global-database-reports-2018-8>

Putz, C. (2020, October 9). 2020 Edition: Which countries are for or against China's Xinjiang policies? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/2020-edition-which-countries-are-for-or-against-chinas-xinjiang-policies/>

Rahim, Z. (2019, October 22). Prisoners in China's Xinjiang concentration camps subjected to gang rape and medical experiments, former detainee says.

Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-xinjiang-Uyghur-muslim-detention-camps-xi-jinping-persecution-a9165896.html>

Ramzy, A. & Buckley, C. (2019, November 16). 'Absolutely no mercy': Leaked files expose how China organized mass detentions of Muslims. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>

Ramzy, A. (2019, November 16). 5 takeaways from the leaked files on China's mass detention of Muslims. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-muslims-detention.html?module=inline>

Reyes, K. B., & Curry Rodríguez, J. E. (2012). Testimonio: Origins, terms, and

resources. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 45(3), 525–538.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698571>

RFA Uyghur Service. (2019, November 22). Xinjiang authorities undermine Muslim abstention from pork in bid to assimilate Uyghurs. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/pork-11222019161208.html>

Richardson, S. (2021, December 14). *UN to release much-anticipated rights report on China*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/14/un-release-much-anticipated-rights-report-china>

Rivers, M. & Lee, L. (2019, May 9). Former Xinjiang teacher claims brainwashing and abuse inside mass detention centers. *CNN*.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/09/asia/xinjiang-china-kazakhstan-detention-intl/index.html>

Rivers, M. (2020, January 2). More than 100 Uyghur graveyards demolished by Chinese authorities, satellite images show. *CNN*.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/02/asia/xinjiang-uyghur-graveyards-china-intl-hnk/index.html>

Rivet, M. & De Clercq, G.V., (2022, January 20). French parliament passes motion condemning China ‘genocide’ against Uyghurs. *Reuters*.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-parliament-passes-motion-condemning-china-genocide-against-uyghurs-2022-01-20/>

Roberts, S. (2012). Imaginary terrorism? *The Global War on Terror and the narrative of the Uyghur terrorist threat*. PONARS Eurasia.

<http://www.ponarseurasia.org/node/6189>

- Roberts, S. (2018, December 17). Fear and loathing in Xinjiang: Ethnic cleansing in the 21st century. *Fair Observer*.
https://www.fairobserver.com/region/asia_pacific/xinjiang-Uyghur-muslims-internment-camps-china-human-rights-news-54321/
- Roberts, S. (2018). The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50(2), 232-258.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2018.1454111>
- Roberts, S. (2020). *The War on the Uyghurs*. Princeton University Press.
- Rogin, J. (2018, August 2). Ethnic cleansing makes a comeback—In China. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/ethnic-cleansing-makes-a-comeback--in-china/2018/08/02/55f73fa2-9691-11e8-810c-5fa705927d54_story.html?utm_term=.c568260f2313
- Ryan, F. Cave, D. & Ruser, N. (2018, November 1). *Mapping Xinjiang's 're-education' camps*. Australian Strategic Policy Institute.
<https://www.aspi.org.au/report/mapping-xinjiangs-re-education-camps>
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Samuel, S. (2018, August August 28). China is treating Islam like a mental illness. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/08/china-pathologizing-Uyghur-muslims-mental-illness/568525/>
- Schmitz, R. (2018, November 13). Ex-detainee describes torture in China's Xinjiang re-education camp. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2018/11/13/666287509/ex-detainee-describes-torture-in-chinas-xinjiang-re-education-camp>
- Seytoff, A. (2018, May 14). Xinjiang authorities regularly impose 'home stays' on

Muslim Uyghur families: Rights group. *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/homestays-05142018153305.html>

Sheng, L. (2005). *Xinjiang of China: Its past and present*. Xinjiang

People's Publishing House.

Shepherd, S. & Blanchard, B. (2017, March 30). China sets rules on beards, veils to

combat extremism in Xinjiang. *Reuters*. [https://www.reuters.com/article/china-](https://www.reuters.com/article/china-xinjiang-int/china-sets-rules-on-beards-veils-to-combat-extremism-in-xinjiang-idUSKBN1710DD)

[xinjiang-int/china-sets-rules-on-beards-veils-to-combat-extremism-in-xinjiang-](https://www.reuters.com/article/china-xinjiang-int/china-sets-rules-on-beards-veils-to-combat-extremism-in-xinjiang-idUSKBN1710DD)

[idUSKBN1710DD](https://www.reuters.com/article/china-xinjiang-int/china-sets-rules-on-beards-veils-to-combat-extremism-in-xinjiang-idUSKBN1710DD)

Shih, G. & Kang, D. (2019,). Muslims forced to drink alcohol and eat pork

in China's 're-education' camps, former inmate claims. *Independent*.

[https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-re-education-muslims-](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-re-education-muslims-ramadan-xinjiang-eat-pork-alcohol-communist-xi-jinping-a8357966.html)

[ramadan-xinjiang-eat-pork-alcohol-communist-xi-jinping-a8357966.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-re-education-muslims-ramadan-xinjiang-eat-pork-alcohol-communist-xi-jinping-a8357966.html)

Simmons, K. (2019, October 4). Inside Chinese camps thought to be detaining a million

Muslim Uyghurs. *NBC News*. [https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/inside-](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/inside-chinese-camps-thought-detain-million-muslim-Uyghurs-n1062321)

[chinese-camps-thought-detain-million-muslim-Uyghurs-n1062321](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/inside-chinese-camps-thought-detain-million-muslim-Uyghurs-n1062321)

Sintash, B. (2019, October). Demolishing faith: The destruction and desecration of

Uyghur mosques and shrines. *Uyghur Human Rights Project*.

https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/UHRP_report_Demolishing_Faith.pdf

Sito-Sucic, D. (2021, November 18). 'No more refugees welcome': Slovenian minister

says EU must seal borders. *Reuters*. [https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-more-refugees-welcome-slovenian-minister-says-eu-must-seal-borders-2021-11-18/)

[more-refugees-welcome-slovenian-minister-says-eu-must-seal-borders-2021-11-](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-more-refugees-welcome-slovenian-minister-says-eu-must-seal-borders-2021-11-18/)

[18/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-more-refugees-welcome-slovenian-minister-says-eu-must-seal-borders-2021-11-18/)

Siyech, M. S., & Narain, A. (2018). Beef-related violence in India: An expression of

Islamophobia. *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 4(2), 182.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*, Second Edition. Zed Books.

Smith, S. (2019, June 18). China forcefully harvests organs from detainees, tribunal concludes. *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-forcefully-harvests-organs-detainees-tribunal-concludes-n1018646>

Stavrou, D. (2019, December 10). A million people are jailed at China's gulags. I managed to escape. Here's what really goes on inside. *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-a-million-people-are-jailed-at-china-s-gulags-i-escaped-here-s-what-goes-on-inside-1.7994216>

Stewart, P. (2019, May 3). China putting minority Muslims in 'concentration camps,' U.S. says. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-concentrationcamps/china-putting-minority-muslims-in-concentration-camps-us-says-idUSKCN1S925K>

Subotić, J. (2021). Ethics of archival research on political violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(3), 342–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319898735>

Sudworth, J. (2018, October 24). China's hidden camps: What's happened to the vanished Uyghurs of Xinjiang?. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps

Sulaiman, E. (2015, September 24). Chinese authorities ban Muslim names among Uyghurs in Hotan. *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/chinese-authorities-ban-muslim-names-among-uyghurs-in-hotan-09242015120656.html>

- Sulaiman, E. (2017, September 11). China runs region-wide re-education camps in Xinjiang for Uyghurs and other Muslims. *Radio Free Asia*.
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/training-camps-09112017154343.html>
- Taylor, A. (2015, October 29). The human suffering caused by China's one-child policy. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/10/29/the-human-suffering-caused-by-chinas-one-child-policy/>
- Tibbitts, F. L. (2017) . Revisiting 'emerging models of human rights education.' *International Journal of Human Rights Education*, 1(1).
<http://repository.usfca.edu/ijhre/vol1/iss1/2>
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2014). Unbecoming claims: Pedagogies of refusal in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 811–818.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530265>
- Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760.
<http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19>
- Tyler, C. (2004). *Wild west China: The taming of Xinjiang*. Rutgers University Press.
- UNESCO. (2021). *UNESCO in brief*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/introducing-unesco>
- United Kingdom House of Commons. (2021, July 8). *Never again: the UK's responsibility to act on atrocities in Xinjiang and beyond*.
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6624/documents/71430/default/>
- United Nations. (1945, June 26). *United Nations Charter*.
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

United Nations. (1948, December 10). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>

United Nations. (1969, January 4). *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

United Nations. (1976, January 3). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

United Nations. (1979, December 18). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#intro>

United Nations. (1987, June 26). *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>

United Nations. (1990, September 2). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

United Nations, General Assembly. (2011). *United Nations Declaration on*

Human Rights Education and Training. GA 66/127, Art. 2, para. 1.

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UnitedNationsDeclarationonHumanRightsEducationandTraining\(2011\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UnitedNationsDeclarationonHumanRightsEducationandTraining(2011).aspx)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021, August 25). *Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained*. <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/>

United Nations Human Rights Council. (2019, July 12). *Letter to President of Human Rights Council.*

https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/c_gov/A_HRC_41_G_17.DOCX

United Nations Human Rights Council. (2021). *International commissions of inquiry, commissions on human rights, fact-finding missions and other Investigations.*

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/COIs.aspx>

United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2020, June 26). *UN experts call for decisive measures to protect fundamental freedoms in China.*

<https://ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26006&LanguageID=E>

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (2009, January 26).

Indigenous peoples and boarding schools: A comparative study.

https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E_C_19_2009_crp1.pdf

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (2021, November). *“To make us slowly disappear:” The Chinese government’s assault on the Uyghurs.*

https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/November_2021_Uyghur_Report.pdf

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2004). *UAA statement of the Chinese government*

plans for Western development. <https://uhrp.org/statement/uaa-statement-of-the-chinese-government-plans-for-western-development/>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2006, June 5). *Details emerge of Uyghur political*

detainee suffering torture, abuse. <https://uhrp.org/statement/details-emerge-of-uyghur-political-detainee-suffering-torture-abuse/>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2006, September 11). *The Uyghur people mourn 9/11.*

<https://uhrp.org/statement/the-uyghur-people-mourn-9-11/>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2008, November 21). *Karamay city government mandates tighter Party oversight of mosques and practitioners.*

<https://uhrp.org/statement/karamay-city-government-mandates-tighter-party-oversight-of-mosques-and-practitioners/>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013). *Sacred right defiled: China's iron-fisted repression of Uyghur religious freedom.* <https://docs.uhrp.org/Sacred-Right-Defiled-Chinas-Iron-Fisted-Repression-of-Uyghur-Religious-Freedom.pdf>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2019, November 24). *International day for the elimination of violence against women: Victims of sexual and gendered violence in China's concentration camps must be heard.* <https://uhrp.org/press-release/international-day-elimination-violence-against-women-victims-sexual-and-gendered-0>

Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2021, September 24). *Under the gavel: Evidence of Uyghur-owned property seized and sold online.* https://uhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Property-Confiscations-Report-Updated_2021-12-22.pdf

Uighurian, T. I., (2019, September 24). China has destroyed Uighur families, including mine. Guterres must act. *The Guardian.* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2019/sep/25/china-has-destroyed-uighur-families-including-mine-guterres-must-act>

Voice of America. (2020, December 14). *ICC rejects Uyghur plea for investigation of China.*

https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_voa-news-china_icc-rejects-Uyghur-plea-investigation-china/6199574.html

Wang, F.-L. (2005). *Organizing through division and exclusion : China's Hukou system*. Stanford University Press.

Wang, Y. & Kang, D. (2018, September 21). China treats Uyghur kids as 'orphans' after parents seized. *Associated Press*.

<https://apnews.com/903a97b7c62a47b98553b6f422827dd7>

Watson & Westcott. (2020, February). Watched, judged, detained. *CNN*.

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/02/asia/xinjiang-china-karakax-document-intl-hnk/>

Weerasekara, P. (2019, December 4). Xinjiang boss known as a hard case. *Asia*

Times. <https://asiatimes.com/2019/12/xinjiang-boss-known-as-a-hard-case/>

Werleman, C.J. (2019, February 26). Why does no one care that China is ethnically cleansing Uyghur Muslims? *Forward*.

<https://forward.com/opinion/419901/so-much-for-never-again-why-the-world-ignores-the-potential-genocide-of/>

Wong, C. (2019, April 7). China's hard edge: The leader of Beijing's Muslim crackdown gains influence. *The Wall Street Journal*.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-hard-edge-the-leader-of-beijings-muslim-crackdown-gains-influence-11554655886>

Wright, R., Watson, I., & Westcott, B. (2021, August 1). Uyghurs in Xinjiang are being given long prison sentences. Their families say they have done nothing wrong. *CNN*.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/24/china/xinjiang-prisons-china-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

Xie, Q. (2018). Critical discourse analysis of news discourse. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, (4), 399.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.537983017&site=eds-live&scope=site>

Xu, V. (2020, February). *Uyghurs for sale: 'Re-education', forced labour and surveillance beyond Xinjiang*. Australian Strategic Policy Institute. https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-03/Uyghurs%20for%20sale_Final.pdf

Yu, M. (2018, October 9). *China's Final Solution in Xinjiang*. Hoover Institution.

<https://www.hoover.org/research/chinas-final-solution-xinjiang>

Zeballos-Roig, J. (2019, February 8). The United States' role in China's persecution of the Uyghurs. *The New Republic*. <https://newrepublic.com/article/153089/united-states-role-chinas-persecution-Uyghurs>

Zenz, A. (2019). Break their roots: Evidence for China's parent-child separation campaign in Xinjiang. *The Journal of Political Risk*. 7 (7): 1-36.

<http://www.jpolorisk.com/break-their-roots-evidence-for-chinas-parent-child-separation-campaign-in-xinjiang>

Zenz, A. (2019). "Thoroughly reforming them towards a healthy heart attitude": China's political re-education campaign in Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey*, 38(1), 102–128.

Zenz, A. (2019, July 12). *Beyond the camps: Beijing's grand scheme of forced labor*,

poverty alleviation and social control in Xinjiang.

<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/8tsk2>

Zenz, A. (2019, July 16). You can't force people to assimilate. So why is China at it again? *New York Times*.

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A593412257/OVIC?u=usfca_gleeson&sid=OVIC&xid=5fba8555

Zenz, A. (2019, November 26). China didn't want us to know. Now its own files are doing the talking. *The New York Times - International Edition*.

<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XKF-K471-DYR7-C1MP-00000-00&context=1516831>.

Zenz, A. (2020, June). *Sterilizations, IUDs, and mandatory birth control: The CCP's campaign to suppress Uyghur birthrates in Xinjiang*. The Jamestown Foundation.

<https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Zenz-Sterilizations-IUDs-and-Mandatory-Birth-Control-FINAL-27June.pdf?x76002>

Zenz, A. (2022, February 10). *The Xinjiang papers: An introduction*. Report for Uyghur Tribunal. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Xinjiang-Papers-An-Introduction-1.pdf>