

THE PLIGHT OF UYGHURS IN CHINA

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MIHRIGUL TURSUN, refugee

Photo credit: Radio Free Asia

Allow me to introduce Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur woman who grew up in Xinjiang, who moved overseas for employment opportunities.

In 2015, she gave birth in Egypt to triplets. Two months later, she flew with them to Xinjiang to visit her parents. Upon arrival at the airport in Urumqi, she was interrogated by Chinese authorities. They then separated her from her triplets and detained her in a “vocational training centre.” When released three months later, she was told that one of her sons had inexplicably died after an operation in hospital.

Her passport was confiscated and she was forced to remain in China. Two years later, while staying in her parents’ home

1,184 km from Urumqi, she was taken from her two toddlers and again placed in detention - this time in an overcrowded cell with more than 50 other women. The cell was so crowded that they had to take turns sleeping in shifts and standing. Over time, nine of the detainees died from the conditions.

In 2018, diplomats from the Egyptian Embassy in Beijing intervened to help her leave prison and reunite with her two children and they finally left for Cairo. One year ago, they moved to the state of Virginia and began working through the U.S. asylum process. It hasn't been easy - her son is asthmatic, but she's unable to take him to a pediatrician because she lacks health insurance. Her parents' phone has gone silent, so she's unable to stay in touch with them.

source: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/18/asia/uyghur-china-detention-center-intl/index.html>

The inhuman experiences of Ms. Tursun explain well the situation today of many Uyghur and other Muslims in this western region of China. She has testified publicly in the US media and at a Congressional committee.

When Mao Zedong invaded East Turkestan in 1949, renaming it Xinjiang, Han Chinese comprised only seven percent of its population, but now constitute the majority of the current 23-million residents.

Xinjiang has served as Beijing's illicit laboratory, including the testing of an estimated 46 nuclear devices at the LopNur site in the mid-sixties, resulting in major radiation-caused cancer increases. More recently was the creation in the Tarim Desert of probably the world's largest labour camp, estimated

to hold 50,000 Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners and hardcore criminals. Beijing denies the existence of this camp.

Understandably, Uyghurs became frustrated by systemic employment and other discrimination from the party-state in the 1990s as central Asian republics gained independence from the former Soviet Union. At first, Beijing termed all Uyghur nationalists, non-violent and violent alike, ‘CIA proxies’, but after 9/11 quickly asserted that it always been at war with Uyghur terrorists.

Academic Adrian Zenz of Germany estimates that without any due process there are now more than a million Uyghurs of Xinjiang aged 20 – 79 incarcerated in myriad facilities. He notes that inmates are exposed to endless hours of “re-education”. The intent of the brainwashing is to “kill the memory of who they are, wipe out their separate identity, language and history...even the slightest perceived infraction, such as having a copy of the Koran on a phone or making a contact abroad, can result in incarceration.”

A major leak last autumn from a courageous whistle-blower inside China’s CCP has proved especially important: a 403-page set of internal papers provided to the *New York Times* with the expressed hope that it would make it more difficult for Xi Jinping and other leaders to avoid culpability for the mass detention of Muslims. Then came six internal documents obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, one of which gave detailed orders on how the rapidly growing indoctrination camps should be managed.

In 2017, Xi Jinping began erecting a “re-education” gulag for Muslim communities similar to the forced labour camps established across China after mid- 1999 for Falun Gong. Both networks receive inmates arrested by police without any pretence of a hearing, trial or appeal in a practice invented in the Soviet Union and adopted in the Third Reich.

American author Robert D. Kaplan observes: “The repression of the Turkic Uyghur Muslim community in western China...is a key part of Beijing’s new imperial policy.” He concludes that China’s massive Belt and Road Initiative “requires the complete subjugation of the Uyghur population”.

In 2018, 646 international scholars from 40 nations signed a statement condemning the internment of minorities in Xinjiang, stressing that mass internment of citizens on the basis of religious identity is unprecedented in the twenty-first century and should not be accepted by the international community. The academics called on governments, multi-lateral organizations, businesses, and academic institutions to apply pressure on Beijing to cease its campaign of unprecedented inhumanity and repression.

In late 2018, the human rights subcommittee of Canada’s House of Commons studied the Uyghur situation. Witnesses called for Canada to demand that China allow independent human rights investigators into Xinjiang. Some urged Canada to condemn publicly the regime for its actions.

The brutality has caused Uyghurs to flee to central and southeast Asia. They share ethnic, linguistic, and religious ties with Central Asian populations— Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which border Xinjiang and have yielded to Beijing pressure on Uyghurs. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has institutionalized the central Asian countries' security cooperation, directly targeting Uyghurs.

Organ Pillaging

Organ harvesting from Uyghur prisoners preceded that from Falun Gong (which began in 2001). In his 2014 book *The Slaughter*, Ethan Gutmann explains how he arrived at his “best estimate” that organs of 65,000 Falun Gong and “two to four thousand” Uyghurs, Tibetans and Christians were “harvested” from 2000 - 2008.

Gutmann notes that by 2017, every Uyghur man, women and child in Xinjiang-about 15 million persons- had been blood- and DNA-tested. His findings are supported by Dr. Maya Mitalipova, a director at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, MIT. She states, “We know now from credible sources that (the) entire population of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims in (the) Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, (has) been forcefully health checked and (that)... blood samples (have been) withdrawn ... (from) 2016 to date. These procedures were not performed on (the) Han Chinese population of Xinjiang, but only (on the) Muslim population. The entire Muslim’s population blood was used for DNA sequencing.”

Enver Tohti, a Uyghur, relates in detail how in 1995 as a general surgeon in a Urumqi hospital, he went to an execution ground and there removed the kidneys and liver from a wounded man who was still alive.

In January of this year, a Chinese woman, identified as Ms. Aili, stated that she had personally witnessed the harvesting of live organs from unwilling Xinjiang Muslim donors who were killed on the basis of demand from Saudi buyers wanting “Halal organs,” even though the illegal practice is completely forbidden in Islam. She said that in 2006 at the Department of Liver Transplantation of Tianjin Taida Hospital, in northeastern China, 37 Saudi nationals received organ transplants -primarily from ethnic Uyghur donors. Aili was told that the waiting times ranged from one to six months.

source: “Saudis allegedly buy ‘Halal organs’ from ‘slaughtered’ Xinjiang Muslims” by Keoni Everington, Taiwan News 2020/01/22

Dr. Faisal Shaheen of the Saudi Centre for Organ Transplants says that 7,000 Saudi citizens are in need of kidney transplants. He and his colleagues have discovered that Saudi citizens bought organs from the black market and illegally got them transplanted in China and later informed the Centre. Kidneys and livers are harvested from detained Uyghur Muslims and sold for \$160,00-\$165,000.

source: <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/410-saudis-said-buy-organs-on-black-market-547480.html>

In an interview last March, Enver Tohti showed a photograph of the Human Organ Transportation Green-Path (HOTGP) at Urumqi International Airport, which allegedly provides a channel for large numbers of human organs to be shipped out of China to recipients around the world - a claim supported by a photo that went viral on social media showing a priority lane

sign marked “Special Passengers, Human Organ Exportation Lane.”

China Southern Airline has reported more than 500 organ transportations since Tohti gave his interview. The Chinese government-owned China Daily announced that the airline had launched a “green passage” to transport “donated” organs.

source: <https://extranewsfeed.com/new-horrors-china-harvesting-muslim-organs-in-concentration-camps-9a252d3c373e>

The UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination has termed Xinjiang a “no rights zone” with its mass detention of ethnic and religious minorities. Beijing still claims weakly they are mostly “vocational training centres”, but, encircled by barbed wire, surveillance cameras, and armed guards, many are labour camps where Uyghur, Kazakh, and other minorities are forced to work for little or no pay.

Adrian Zenz recently told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the CCP began to gradually shift from “vocational training” into “involuntary or coercive forms of labor” in the second half of 2018. Zenz notes that 84 percent of China’s cotton is produced in Xinjiang, meaning that between the textile industry and other forms of work—including components that are sent to eastern China and incorporated into finished products—it is extremely difficult for customs officials anywhere to determine whether imported goods are linked to forced labor in the region.

Conclusion-No More Business as Usual

It's long overdue for responsible governments worldwide to join the U.S. and Australia in starting to boycott anyone doing business in Xinjiang. Forced labour in China's internment camps poisons the supply chain of many well-known companies doing business there.

The time has come to impose a global blacklist on the import of all goods produced or manufactured in Xinjiang. This must include import restrictions, forbidding companies from doing business in Xinjiang, and banning Xinjiang-based entities from accessing their markets.

The global Magnitsky Act in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and a few other countries makes it easier to impose targeted financial and visa sanctions

Much to its credit, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the 'Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act 2019' in early December. The purpose of the revised bill is "to address gross violations of universally recognized human rights, including the mass internment of over 1,000,000 Uyghurs." When this bill becomes law, it will mark the most significant international attempt to pressure China over its mass detention of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

Thank you.