

# Mounting Evidence that China is Perpetrating Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide Against the Uighurs

There is growing evidence that the government of the People's Republic of China is committing crimes against humanity and genocide in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Under the guise of combatting religious extremism and terrorism, in recent years China has intensified its persecution of the ethnic Uighur community. These crimes, which are now widely documented, are in violation of customary international law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, of which China is a signatory.

Approximately 1 million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities – including Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Hui – are currently being detained in so-called “re-education” or “de-extremification” facilities, without formal charges, due process, or an ability to communicate with the outside world. Detainees have reportedly been subjected to abuse and possibly torture. At least 80,000 detainees have also been subjected to conditions that strongly suggest forced or coerced labor.

Under customary international law and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the widespread or systematic persecution of the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities on religious, cultural, ethnic and gender grounds; the large-scale detention program; abuse of detainees; and denial of information regarding the fate of persons in state custody in XUAR, could constitute crimes against humanity.

Recent reports have also documented a government campaign to drastically reduce birth rates among Uighurs in XUAR. The practice of forced birth control has been systematic in Xinjiang over the past four years and has included involuntary abortions and sterilizations. The government has also reportedly separated nearly half a million Uighur children from their families, often denying access to information on their location.

Such measures, if proven to be true, could violate Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention, which prohibits “imposing measures intended to prevent births” amongst a targeted ethnic or religious group. The Chinese government also appears to be perpetrating three other acts prohibited under Article II of the Genocide Convention: “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;” “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;” and “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

Chinese authorities have also engaged in the systematic destruction of Uighur cultural sites, including partially demolishing or completely destroying more than 100 historic Uighur cemeteries, shrines and mosques across XUAR. The destruction of places of cultural significance may also represent intent to destroy the Uighur presence in China.

Genocide is a process that includes more than its popular conception of mass graves and gas chambers, but is aimed at the intentional destruction of a targeted group, as a group. China's policies towards the Uighurs appears to constitute a *prima facie* case of genocide. These acts and other widespread and systematic violations and abuses of their human rights may also amount to crimes against humanity.

Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, said, “What is happening in Xinjiang to the Uighurs is not ‘cultural genocide’ or ‘demographic genocide,’ it is genocide. It is not too late for Beijing to change course, but it needs to close the concentration camps and immediately end its persecution of the Uighurs.”

Ms. Nadira Kourt, Program Manager at the Global Centre, said that, “China is a superpower with the second largest economy in the world and veto power at the UN Security Council. It has already used its considerable resources to

intimidate those who have exposed its policies against the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities. But the world cannot remain silent. These crimes against humanity and genocide must end.”

The UN Human Rights Council should establish an independent mechanism to monitor and report on the treatment of the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in China. All UN member states and regional organizations should immediately impose targeted sanctions against senior Chinese officials directly implicated in the possible commission of genocide and crimes against humanity.