



# International Monterrey Model United Nations Simulation

American School Foundation of Monterrey



## General Assembly

**Topic:** Addressing the persecution of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, China.

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### I. Committee Background

The General Assembly, along with the creation of the United Nations (UN), was established after the atrocities that resulted from World War II. The first meeting was held in London in 1946, right after the conclusion of the war. The General Assembly is one of the UN's principal organs; it serves as a forum where all UN members assemble to discuss conflicting issues, mainly those regarding international peace and security. It can be said that the UN was created to serve as a background for the General Assembly. It also oversees the UN's budget, the overall functioning of the organization, the admission of new member states, and amendments to the UN's Charter (Bloom, Vriens, & Park, 2011).

Currently, there are 193 member states in the General Assembly and each has a single, equally important vote. The sessions are held from September through December, but "special sessions" can be summoned if an emergency arises. In the regular sessions, member states strive to formulate resolutions that they then vote for. The important questions require a 2/3 majority for the resolution to pass, while the rest only require a simple majority. Unlike the Security Council, the General Assembly's resolutions are not binding; they only serve as recommendations. The resolutions do not need approval from any other organ; however, the General Assembly does receive resolutions from subsidiary organs for them to take into consideration. This year they will meet for the 70th session ("General Assembly of the United Nations", n.d.).

### II. Introduction

#### Description and Definition of the Topic

According to the Oxford Dictionary, an Uyghur is "a member of a Turkic people of north-western China, particularly the Xinjiang region, and adjoining areas" (Oxford). For the last decade, the Uyghur ethnic group, along with other Muslim minorities, have been victims of persecution in the Chinese autonomous region of Xinjiang. Over a million Muslims have been detained and placed in "re-education" camps simply for practicing Islam.

There are over one hundred camps in the Xinjiang region. Although very limited information on the "re-education" camps is known, detainees who have managed to flee China describe prison-like conditions. Torture, sleep deprivation, sexual abuse, loyalty pledges to the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and renouncing to Islam, are what victims claim to experience in these camps. Chinese officials believe that Uyghurs hold extremist and separatist ideas, and they justify their use of "re-education" camps as a way of eliminating these threats.

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Consequently, between eight hundred thousand to two million Uyghurs have been affected since April 2017; most of which have never been charged of any criminal activity—including ethnic Kazakhs and Uzbeks. To make matters worse, Uyghur prosecution goes beyond the camps. Xinjiang has become a surveillance state that utilizes advanced technology to monitor millions of people, especially Uyghurs.

The Chinese government's mystery around “re-education” camps make numbers hard to evaluate, yet some sources gauge that hundreds have died while detained. Different types of oppression in the district have likewise been announced, for example, prohibitions on strict ceremonies, limitations on opportunity of development, and the condemned use of minority languages. This situation has pushed numerous youthful Uyghurs to leave China for Europe and the Middle East.

## The Problem

Since August 2017, the Chinese autonomous region of Xinjiang has detained and mistreated millions of Muslims, both through the use of “re-education camps” and harassment in the streets (Maizland). Countries around the globe have barely addressed this issue, leading to the suffering of Uyghurs. The violation of human rights happening in China towards Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, and Uzbeks needs to be addressed. The committee must come together to address the violence, torture, separation of families, rape, and murder of these innocent civilians who are being prohibited to practice their beliefs.

The unsubstantiated amounts of lives lost due to this unfair treatment display the importance of the topic. Despite a mass number of Uyghurs being held in “education camps,” most of these people have no criminal record and no legal avenues to question their detainment. This means that most of the prisoners have no legal help to fight for their rights and freedom. Moreover, the family of those detained “lack information about their whereabouts, their well-being, and for how long they will be held” (Busby). Uyghurs are forced to reject their religion and are shamed and tortured for practicing Islam. Though Uyghurs are citizens of China, they are being “oppressed by their own government” (The Economist).

Alarming, Chinese officials initially dismissed the existence of “re-education” camps. However, China has recently stopped pretending that they are not real. Instead, they have resorted to the justification of their actions by labeling them as crucial methods to counter religious radicalization and extremism. China's government has disguised the camps by depicting them as “educational,” disregarding any evidence that proves otherwise. China's UK ambassador, Liu Xiaoming, even went as far as saying that reports of concentration camps were “fake” (Kirby). Because of this, it is difficult to understand their true objective.

To add on, China makes independent newsgathering in Xinjiang practically impossible; every international journalist interested in reporting the story has to consider the risk of being threatened by local authorities. Nevertheless, an analysis of satellite imagery proved that “authorities have demolished 10,000 to 15,000 religious sites in Xinjiang in recent years” (Tharoor).

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Authoritarian measures directed towards the ethnic minority have progressively worsened: “The Chinese government has corralled more than 1 million [Uyghurs] into internment camps, where they have been subjected to political indoctrination, forced sterilization, and torture” (Serhan). China’s “re-education” camps involve not only Chinese authorities, but the rest of the world in a joint battle of ethnic replacement that may well amount to genocide according to reports. Unfortunately, genocides are often hard to prove, which explains why China’s atrocities have not been classified as genocide. Yet, despite not being labeled as one, China’s measures “meet the threshold of acts constitutive of genocide” under the Genocide Convention (Anadolu).

### III. History of the Topic

#### Chronological History of the Topic

The Uyghur minority has been present in China since pre-imperial times. The first knowledge of the Uyghurs came to light in the year 600 A.D. when the Sui dynasty allied with the Uyghur tribe to fight the Göktürk Empire (BBC China). Through the years, they extended their empire and had many battles.

It was not until 1864 that the Uyghurs were successful in expelling the Qing Dynasty officials from East Turkestan, and founded an independent kingdom called Yettishar. Because of their religious differences, Uyghur Muslims were discontent with Chinese Muslims and resorted to fighting in order to establish a governing body (Gunn J., 2003).

The modern Uyghur history starts in 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party established the People’s Republic of China and promoted a more nationalistic rhetoric. In order to ensure a tighter grip over the Xinjiang region, the Chinese government designated it as an autonomous region and began implementing policies to keep the Uyghurs in line. Soon after, the government encouraged a mass migration of Han people—the largest ethnic group in China—who quickly became the main political players in the region. As time went by, more measures were put in place to marginalize the Uyghurs, yet it was not until 2001 that their alienation became known to outsiders (Tharoor, I., 2009).

During the American invasion of Afghanistan, dozens of Uyghurs were found living with Islamic guerrilla members, raising concern for the Chinese. From then on, the Chinese government has severely limited the religious and cultural rights of the Uyghur people: they have become subjected to national and international travel restrictions, Uyghur public servants have been banned from practicing Rammadam, and their language has been removed from the higher education system. Moreover, the government’s actions have fomented a negative sentiment against Uyghurs—who have been labeled as radical separatists—among the general population, making the Uyghurs feel marginalized from society (Tharoor, I., 2009).

Another important development in the Uyghur crisis came after 9/11, when the United States listed the East Turkestan Islamic Movement as a terrorist organization due to Chinese recommendation. Violence between the Uyghur and Han groups grew exponentially after the announcement, and the government implicated Uyghur extremists in many terrorist attacks. In

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2008, an Uyghur group referring to itself as the Turkistan Islamic Party threatened to attack the Beijing Summer Olympics, prompting Xianjing officials to deploy the military and additional policemen to control the Uyghurs. A year later, two Uyghurs were killed in Shaoguan by a group of Han factory workers, leading to the Ürümqi riots, in which Uyghurs clashed with policemen and Han people. Many consider that these protests—in which approximately 125 Hans were killed—served as the catalyst for China’s re-education campaign, which started in 2014 (Zambelis, C., 2010). Chaos ensued thereafter in the Xinjiang region but it was not until 2018 that the issue came under international scrutiny as a result of a BBC investigation.

## Historical Case Studies

### Ghulja Massacre (1997)

On February 5, 1997, “fifteen to twenty thousand Uyghur” Muslims, including men, woman, and children, made their way onto the streets of Ghulja, Xinjiang to peacefully voice their concerns about their lack of freedom of speech, equal treatment, and cultural and religious freedom (World Uyghur Congress). The purpose of the event was to end the racial discrimination they faced on a daily basis, which led “to the cultural and economic marginalization of the Uyghur community” (Pluimert). Instead of listening to these claims, the Chinese officials began ordering the use brute force towards these citizens. This led to thousands of Uyghurs being detained for their peaceful demonstration and about 200 Uyghurs being sentenced to death. These prisoners were detained, put into back of trucks, and taken to detention centers around the city. Though the death toll remains unknown, “witnesses report that as many as 30 Uyghurs were killed on the spot, and more than [a] hundred were wounded” (Pluimert). To this day, there has been no responsibility taken for this massacre and the majority of the prisoners have not been heard of for 23 years. The Chinese authorities have tried to cover up the true extent of this massacre by any means necessary. For example, they have reportedly “deployed more than 40,000 security forces to cut off Ghulja from the outside world in order to prevent leaks of information” (World Uyghur Congress). Though the main reason for these protests were to end racial discrimination and to fight for the rights of Uyghurs, the event backfired, leading to the detention of Uyghurs at a larger scale in the Xinjiang region.

### Urumqi Riots (2009)

In late 2009, male Uyghur factory employees in Guangdong were accused of sexually assaulting female coworkers from China’s major ethnic group: the Han. In response, Han workers beat Uyghur factory workers leaving 2 dead and 118 injured (Amnesty International). The increased tensions because of the situation caused clashes between the two ethnic groups. Videos and images of the brawl immediately circulated in Xinjiang. These included gruesome scenes of a Han Chinese man dragging a lifeless Uyghur by the hair. On July 5th, urging for justice, Uyghurs in Urumqi, Xianjang’s capital, began protesting for an investigation into the Guangdong incident. The protests, which involved around 1,000 Uyghurs, started peacefully, but later turned into violent disputes between Uyghur and Han residents of the city. The rioters

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“threw stones at the police and set vehicles on fire.” In response, police officers used excessive force and opened fire against Uyghurs (Wong). Abudushalamu Kamilane, a resident of Urumqi, vividly recalls “crowds of Uyghurs stabbing Han Chinese in front of a middle school” and seeing “the bodies of half a dozen people lay scattered on the streets” (Kang). The protest lasted for various days before police officers locked down the Uyghur region of the city. According to official figures, “197 died in the ensuing violence [both Han and Uyghurs], with 1,721 others injured” (Dillon). The following weeks, Chinese officials fired tear gas, and arrested hundreds of Uyghurs, with searches resulting in the arbitrary detention of thousands of Uyghurs and numerous reports of enforced disappearances. After July 5, ethnic divisions increased; experts describe that day as a “turning point” in China. To this day, the Chinese government has yet to release any information about those detained. Families soliciting information about missing relatives have been threatened, arrested, and tormented by the authorities to stop them from petitioning and searching for loved ones. According to Catherine Baber, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Director, eleven years have passed after the deadly riots, and “the government is still silencing people who speak out about July 2009” (Amnesty International).

## Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism

In May 2014, China launched the “Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism.” This campaign was created as a means of dealing with the Uyghurs regarding the Xinjiang conflict. Taking advantage of existing Islamic fear, China introduced the campaign as a way to reduce radicalization. A remarkable component of the mission is the detainment of almost 1,000,000 Uyghurs in Xinjiang’s re-education camps, whose alleged goal is to maintain public security. In April 2010, after the July 2009 Ürümqi riots, Zhang Chunxian replaced the previous Communist Party Chief, Wang Lequan, who had been behind strict arrangements in Xinjiang for a long time. Zhang Chunxian continued with Wang’s arrangement and even strengthened them. In 2014, China launched the “Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism” which allowed the government to monitor much of the Uyghurs’ personal life and movements. Access to cellphones, iris scans, voice scans and strategically placed cameras kept Uyghurs under surveillance at all times.

China has gotten a lot of criticism for its mass detainment of individuals from several different nations. James A. Millward, a researcher who has explored Xinjiang for thirty years, announced that the “state suppression in Xinjiang has never been as serious as it has become since mid 2017.” The US State Department has said it is profoundly worried over China’s “compounding crackdown” on minority Muslims in Xinjiang. Tamara Mawhinney, Canada’s deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, has also expressed concern stating that China should “end prosecution and persecution on the basis of religion or belief,” (CBC).

## Japanese Internment Camps

After Japan bombed Hawaii’s Pearl Harbor in 1941, a strong anti-Japanese sentiment spread through America. This sentiment, coupled with the deep rooted discrimination against

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Asian immigrants, prompted a strong response from the government. American government officials believed that Japanese Americans could be plotting further attacks against the United States. By February of 1942, the Department of War had drafted a plan to relocate Japanese Americans into special camps. Soon after, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, allowing military authorities to take citizens of Japanese descent into custody until the end of the war (Kuiper, K., 2014). For this purpose, 12 facilities called ‘internment camps’ were built near the West Coast to house over 112,000 detainees. Since most citizens of Japanese descent were forced to evacuate their homes within days after receiving notice, many left their homes and businesses unsupervised and lost everything after their release (National Archives, 2020).

Living conditions within the camps were far from perfect. Army-style barracks were shared by four or five families, and since they were poorly insulated, detainees in desert facilities had to endure extreme hot and cold temperatures. Furthermore, the Japanese Americans were treated like real prisoners, as they were surrounded by armed guards and the facilities were covered in barbed wire. As the tide shifted in the European and Pacific theaters of WW2, the government began releasing Japanese Americans, and by March of 1946, the last internment camp was shut down (National Archives, 2020). Many victims of this outrageous policy lost everything when they went to the camps. Congress only approved compensation—which amounted to 20,000 USD per person—in 1988, 42 years after the camps were shut down (Kuiper, K., 2014).

While this incident did not involve the Uyghurs, extensive parallels may be drawn between the two situations. As observed in the United States, there is a lack of governmental accountability when it comes to crimes against minorities, especially those who are viewed as security threats and disliked by the general public. However, the United States released all detainees within three years of the program’s start and provided compensation eventually. The question is, how far will the Chinese government go to isolate the Uyghurs? Considering China is a one-party state, it is highly unlikely that the authorities will revert their party’s decisions and provide support to the Uyghurs.

## Past UN Actions

The United Nations has been involved in the Uyghur conflict since 2018. In August of the same year, the UN released a statement expressing concern over reports of Uyghur detentions in China. Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) stated that credible reports suggested that Beijing “turned the Uyghur autonomous region into something that resembles a massive interment camp”. The committee called on Beijing to end detention without lawful charge, release individuals detained, provide the number of people being held, and conduct “impartial investigations into all allegations of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious profiling”. Yu Jiangua, China’s ambassador at the United Nations in Geneva, claimed that the country was working towards equality amongst all ethnic groups. No action was taken by the UN at the time.

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In 2019, 23 countries raised concerns over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang. A representative for the UK issued a statement with regard to this problem (Westcott B., Roth R.). Subsequently in 2020, German Ambassador to the UN Christoph Heusgen, called out China on behalf of 39 countries at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR): "We call on China to respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet" (Besheer, M.). This led to the UN demanding 'unfettered access' for visits to China's Uyghur region. The UNHCR in Geneva promised to seek and analyze in-depth the human rights situation in China, including the situation of members of the Uyghur minority (Aljazeera). China admitted UN officials to Xinjiang on the condition they stay out of its internal affairs, and are looking forward to the visit of Michelle Bachele, the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Besheer, M.). More recently, the U.N. Director Louis Charbonneau stated the following: "Their growing outrage signals the urgent need for the U.N leadership to create an international mechanism to monitor and report on the increasingly dire rights situation across China" (Charbonneau 2020).

## IV. Key Players and Points of View

### Germany

Germany has briefly shown its disagreement of the handling of Uyghur Muslims in China. Christoph Heusgen, the U.N. Ambassador of Germany, has recently spoken up about this issue stating that "[they] are gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong" (Heusgen). China, unfortunately, has taken offense to these statements and regarded them as "groundless" (Daily Sabah).

Though the U.N. Ambassador and German reports include evidence that Germany understands the severity of the issue, government leaders have stayed mostly quiet in terms of clear and direct public statements. Last year, "Chancellor Angela Merkel told the German Parliament that Germany must 'of course criticize' when hearing reports of Uyghur internment camps" (Conrad). Regardless, the only action Germany has publicly taken to address the issue is stopping the deportations of Uyghurs. In the past, Germany had been noted to deport illegal immigrants, including Uyghurs, to their home country. However, because the government of Germany has noted the horrid treatment and discriminations against Uyghurs, they have halted this deportation until further notice (DW).

Moreover, although Germany has joined the United Nations (UN) in signing "an official statement condemning the Xinjiang Uyghur internment camps", Chancellor Merkel and Germany have been criticized for not taking a strong stance (Rahn). This includes human rights activists who claim what Germany can do so much more for the minorities in China. The human rights scholar, Kinzelbach, claims that the European Union (EU), including Germany, should stop exporting tear gas and ammunition to China, since it is commonly used on protestors and minorities to control them. Furthermore, the activists stated that "Germany could be a driving force within the EU on taking steps in [the right] direction, but [that] hasn't happened yet"

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(Kinzelbach). While Germany has briefly and vaguely spoken and addressed this vital issue, the country has failed to support the suffering prisoners.

## United States

The US has clarified its stance on the mistreatment of Uyghurs since the late months of 2019. In October 2019, the country imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials involved in the oppression of Muslims. These officials ranged from 28 Chinese organizations linked to the abuse taking place in Xinjiang. The US Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo, released a statement on October 8th, 2019, accusing the Chinese government of “mass detentions in internment camps” abusing Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minority groups.

The House of Representatives approved a bill allowing the Trump administration to impose sanctions on senior Chinese officials. The Uyghur bill condemned the abuse against Muslims and called for the closure of the detention camps. Moreover, in June 2020, President Trump signed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act into law. This Act punishes China for their human rights abuses against Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang region while requiring U.S. businesses operating in Xinjiang to ensure that their activities do not involve or contribute to human rights violations. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, stated the following: “Today, in this House of Representatives, in a very strong, bipartisan way, we are sending a message to the persecuted that they are not forgotten” (Pelosi 2020). Chen Quanguo, Xinjiang’s Communist Party secretary, has been sanctioned by this legislation for direct involvement in the repression of Uyghurs.

More recently, US senators have declared that China’s actions are considered a genocide. A resolution was proposed by the US Senate in which Senator John Cornyn commented: “This resolution recognizes these crimes for what they are and is the first step toward holding China accountable for their Monstruos actions” (Cornyn 2020). Newly elected president, Joe Biden, has called out China for their actions and has expressed concern over the genocide taking place, vowing to take on a tougher response.

## China

China has continued to ignore backlash, and has manipulated countries into staying silent when it comes to concerns about Uyghurs' mistreatment. Even though diplomats have witnessed the problems firsthand and privately condemned them, they have been reluctant to go public because they are unwilling to risk financial ties with China. Hence, China has effectively succeeded in revoking criticism, even gone as far as preparing a "counter-roster of 37 nations praising its contribution to the international human rights cause” (Cumming-Bruce). China has also invited select visitors over the past months in an attempt to gain positive publicity. Beijing has reached out to more than 30 journalists from Islamic countries to refute western headlines claiming human rights abuses (Reuters). China is taking advantage of press trips, successfully manipulating the stories of many reporters. However, Olsi Jazexhi, a journalist who visited Xinjiang, was not won over by the authorities writing that “[China] is producing fake stories in

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the service of their imperialism” (Wong & Bogi).

Although their tactics have not proven to be completely successful, China has encountered negative criticism from countries like the United States and European Union members. Non-governmental organizations have also gotten involved in the crisis, with over 160 of them sending a joint letter to the chief of the International Olympic Committee requesting the reconsideration of their decision to award China the 2022 Winter Games. Yet, Chinese officials continue to actively dispute countries who call them out on their mistreatment of its Muslim minorities. Most significantly, they announced retaliatory sanctions against top U.S officials and entities. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hua Chunying, even went as far as saying that "The U.S. has no right or qualification to intervene arbitrarily" (Givetash & Baculinao). After such remarks, China's ambassador was confronted with drone footage of blindfolded Uyghurs being led to a camp, to which he responded that "Uyghurs live harmoniously with other ethnic groups" (Murray).

At the United Nations, China has diligently worked many angles to shape the global view of the issue at hand. They even waged an aggressive campaign to prevent discussion of Xinjiang at the UN. China's purpose has become clear: they are trying to distract the United Nations to avoid any exchange that would delve into the discussion Uyghur discrimination. Hence, despite several reports and concerns of human rights abuses, China's response to the crisis remains unchanged. They continue to deny that mistreatment is occurring in what they euphemistically call "re-education" camps.

## **Turkey**

While many countries have imposed sanctions on China due to their abuse of Uyghurs, Turkey has yet to express major concerns over the human rights violations in Xinjiang. However, recently, China has been buying Turkey's silence. Even though Turks share the same religious and ethnic affinity with 12 million Uyghurs, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been quiet regarding the topic (trtworld).

In July 2019, fourteen of Turkey's NATO allies filed a petition to the United Nations Human Rights Council regarding China's "mass arbitrary detentions and related violations." Instead of helping out, Turkey looked the other way. Additionally, after Turkish opposition party issued an ad hoc committee with regards to "the problems of Uyghur Turks exposed to China's oppressive practices," the AKP (Justice and Development Party) and MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) joined votes in order to kill the initiative. With a furious opposition, the Turkish government has been accused of abandoning the Uyghurs. According to an opposition lawmaker "the AKP and the MHP have sold out [the Uyghurs] for \$50 billion" (Erdemir).

Even though political parties in Turkey have been split, they have shared their concerns with the United Nations. During the General Assembly they encouraged that Uyghur Turks be respected and shared concerns regarding their safety. Subsequently, Turkish diplomat Hami Aksoy stated: "always follow the developments regarding our Uyghur brothers closely and with



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great sensitivity." Askoy's last petition was for China to respect "the freedom of religion and belief" (Aydogan).

## **Han Ethnic Group**

Historically, Xinjiang has been mostly inhabited by Uyghurs and other Turkic ethnic groups; however, the Chinese government has strongly encouraged Han migration to the region over the past half century. As of 2010, the Han ethnic group comprised 40.48% of Xinjiang's population, representing the majority groups in Xianjiang's urban and wealthy areas (Toops, S., 2016). Since the Han ethnic group is the Chinese Communist Party's main supporter, they have followed suit and marginalized the Uyghurs.

Discrimination against the Uyghur population is prominent in the Xinjiang region. According to former resident Cha Naiyu, fellow Hans often called Uyghurs "noisy, smelly and dirty" and denied them high-quality working opportunities (Naiyu, C., 2020). Government and Han-owned enterprises also place restrictions on the hiring of ethnic minorities, with most technical jobs being reserved for Han candidates only. Even when Uyghurs do qualify for good jobs, many companies discourage them from manifesting their cultural identity, and some even forbid Uyghur workers from fasting during Ramadan (Rubio, M. & McGovern, J., 2011). Furthermore, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, a government-sponsored Han enterprise, has invaded predominantly Uyghur industries and established monopolies over them, leaving Uyghur workers and farmers with no steady sources of income (The Economist, 2020).

This widespread discrimination has enraged the Uyghurs, who resent the much wealthier and influential Hans. Members of these ethnic groups have clashed on numerous occasions, leaving many Hans injured or even dead. After the Ürümqi riots of 2009, Xinjiang's Han population pressured the government to increase security in the region and control the violent Uyghurs. Soon after, the government instituted extreme security measures: police checkpoints, security cameras with facial recognition, metal detectors at most buildings, etc. The consensus among Xinjiang's Hans is that these measures, along with re-education camps, are necessary to ensure peace and prosperity in the region, so they support the government's crackdown on Uyghurs (The Economist, 2020).

## **Afghanistan**

China's Uyghurs are joining jihadists in Afghanistan. In the previous years, the Chinese government has acted carefully against the separatists in Xinjiang. This has pushed numerous Uyghurs towards radicalization and aggressiveness. "The situation is also becoming aggravated due to the fact that Uyghur separatism is not only an ethnic movement but also has a religious dimension to it" (Shamil Shams).

The Uyghur issue is, for the most part, seen as an inward Chinese security issue; however, a few specialists believe that it ought to be taken at par with regards to the rising worldwide jihad and Islamic fundamentalists. The significant point the investigators state is that

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the Uyghur case is getting progressively commandeered by the jihadist developments, especially in Afghanistan, where various Uyghurs are allegedly battling alongside the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The Uyghurs are running away from Xinjiang to China and are joining the jihadists' ranks. This is because the Uyghurs recognize themselves as the first occupants of Xinjiang, which they portray as "East Turkistan." Many of the Turkic-speaking Uyghurs feel closer to Central Asian states and are isolating from China or accepting more noteworthy independence. Consequently, it is not unexpected that Chinese security authorities are managing them carefully and need to have Xinjiang under their tight control for both monetary and geographical reasons. Beijing has upheld harsher guidelines against the Uyghurs and raised the security spending plan for Xinjiang. Therefore, pressures between the Uyghurs and the Han Chinese individuals have dramatically increased. Conflicts and rough mobs broke out between the two groups in July 2009, which caused 197 fatalities. This has driven numerous Uyghurs to escape China—both legitimately and unlawfully—to different nations (Shamil Shams).

## V. Possible Solutions

Police brutality and discrimination is an issue that must be addressed from within the system, meaning it would be ideal to address this topic from within the country. However, because China seems to shut down every possible mention of concentration camps and racist actions within the nation, a more effective approach could be a peaceful intervention. The Security Council of the United Nations (UN) has the power to place sanctions on countries who seriously violate the freedom and human rights of civilians. These sanctions “under Article 41, encompass a broad range of enforcement options that do not involve the use of armed force” (UN). Another valid solution would be to place an arms embargo. This means that China would be restricted to use weapons from their country, which would limit the brutality against the Uyghur Muslims to some extent. This is a viable solution since it is a ban that affects China while the UN does not get physically involved. To add on, these sanctions could potentially not only be for weaponry, but if the Security Council sees fit, financial sanctions or asset freezes could be set in place. The committee should decide and analyze what sanctions would be best for this situation and what actions can successfully help the Uyghurs escape the oppression.

Another way to address the issue is to openly endorse sanctions against Chinese officials and organizations that are involved with the anti-Uyghur campaign. Sanctioning companies who supply construction equipment for building camps, or prohibiting Amazon and eBay from selling and distributing China's products in domestic market forums, might be an appropriate start to economic distress. In the end, it is of utmost importance to counter China at the UN as “it is the responsibility of the United Nations” to handle the Uyghur issue by imposing multilateral sanctions and other measures” (Ward). However, this is easier said than done since China is one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council, meaning that it has veto power over any proposition brought to the body.

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Adding on, countries could use the 2022 Beijing Olympics as “a key pressure point” (Ward). This event is run with the help of sponsors who pay for parts of the event in return for publicity. Bearing this in mind, those who want China to stop persecuting Uyghurs and other minorities should make campaigns displaying that companies who back the 2022 Olympics are backing China’s behavior towards Uyghurs. Correct marketing against the Olympics might lead some big companies to back off just like in 1936, when the Olympics were held by Nazi Germany and many sponsors backed off. Consequently, a large public outcry might make the Olympic Committee think twice about keeping the event in China and picking a new country to host the games.

## VI. Current Status

When the COVID-19 pandemic started in China, Uyghur advocates were concerned that safety guidelines would be neglected in re-education camps. Even though the government has repeatedly claimed that there have been no infections within the re-education camps, the surge in COVID-19 cases that Xinjiang saw in July 2020 led many to wonder what the situation was actually like within the camps, especially considering their reputation for being overcrowded and unsanitary. As of today, the press gets little to no access to the Xinjiang region due to the regional government’s harsh measures, it is hard to get reliable information regarding the conditions within these camps (Davidson, H., 2020).

Uyghur activists are also concerned about kill-on-demand policies within the re-education camps, as NGO China Tribunal—which is composed of prominent British lawyers and doctors—claimed that Uyghur prisoners are being used to harvest organs for COVID-19 patients. In China, only around 1 out of every 2 million citizens are registered as organ donors; strangely enough, patients infected with coronavirus are receiving new lungs within days or weeks, while recipients in other nations have to wait years to match with a donor (Werleman, C., 2020). Allegations of government-operated organ harvesting schemes have consistently surfaced across the Chinese media for decades, but with the sudden increase in patients requiring organ transplants, experts fear these schemes will continue growing (Doffman, Z., 2019).

Another concerning development in the Uyghur case is the implementation of forced-labor policies against the Uyghurs during 2020, seeing as many Han factory workers across the nation were unable to fulfill their duties (Kelly, J., 2020). Even though thousands of Uyghurs are currently working against their will across China, the transnational corporations that use these factories claim they have no control over the situation, and that it is the United Nations’ responsibility to regulate China’s activities. Thus, a group of nations—which includes most of the EU members, Japan, and the United States—are pressuring the UNHRC and the ILO (International Labour Organization) to stop these human rights violations. The UNHRC motions have been denied by a bloc of nations led by China, but experts claim that the ILO can take further action without requiring China’s express consent (Samet, A., 2020).

The Chinese government has launched a global propaganda blitz to fight back against media reports exposing the mass detention and persecution of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region. A study made by the Uyghur Human Rights Project tracks how Beijing responded to social media and state controlled outlets as increasing reports of detention camps moved from denying the camps to defending them. The propaganda campaign escalated

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after the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists released its investigation into China Cables in November 2019. Xinjiang's coverage is brought to the public through Western media outlets including the New York Times, BBC, and CNN to fight narratives of systematic Uyghur persecution. Combined with the testimonials, China Global Television Network (CGTN) also broadcasted documentaries on the war against terrorism in Xinjiang, which has been China's excuse for "vocational centers" and "boarding schools," rather than camps. Analysts claim that the propaganda is backfiring, demonstrating how worried the Chinese Communist Party is about Xinjiang's foreign condemnation. With the Chinese media so closely linked to the administration, scholars believe their stories lack credibility.

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