

1. Darren Byler [Negative Eugenics, Sexual Violence and Involuntary Surveillance: A report prepared for the Uyghur Tribunal]

In this report, researcher Darren Byler considers the effects of intergenerational family planning policies, gendered violence and involuntary surveillance on Uyghur family structure and religious practice. To do this, he analyses Chinese state documents and interviews with Chinese citizens. Drawing on these, he assesses claims related to family planning policies, coercive marriages between Han men and Uyghur women, and sexual violence toward Muslim women both inside and outside the camps.

First, Byler assesses the implementation of targeted negative eugenics program. He demonstrates the involuntary nature of the reproduction monitoring program. Several distinct elements point to this conclusion, including the recent establishment of a system of rewards for reporting illegal childbirth behaviours, and violations of laws and regulations in family planning work. The researcher also mentions the monitoring of women of child-bearing age, notably through frequent birth control measures assessments; unplanned, surprise inspections which women are not permitted to refuse; or the existence of incentives to receive IUDs or undergo sterilisation procedures. The author estimates that tens of thousands of people may have been detained due to violating birth policies. He also notes that certain measures have rendered adoption in families that have met their quota illegal, which prevents relatives from caring for children of detainees. He concludes that the establishment of these programs which target Uyghur and Kazakh women in particular, while similar measures have been rolled back among Han women, constitute a type of negative eugenics.

Secondly, the researcher estimated from his survey of witness testimonies and examination of state documents that between two-thirds and three-quarters of Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have been detained were men between the ages of 18 and 55. This results in the “absence” of a significant percentage of the adult male population, i.e. the primary farming and wage earner populations. This, coupled with the stigma that lies on the wives or female relatives of the male detainees, increases the vulnerability of these women to the pressure of marrying Han male “relatives.” Here, the word “relative” is to be understood under the light of the “Becoming Family” program, which is a state policy that mandated tens of thousands of state workers to come to Xinjiang and stay in Muslim homes to both monitor families and influence them towards renouncing certain aspects of their way of life. This is part of a broader state policy aiming to increase marriage of Uyghur women to non-Muslim Han men, through both incentives and political atmosphere and pressure. The forced “coexistence” between Han men and Uyghur women, along with, among other things, the state’s support to inter-ethnic marriages, have resulted in a type of “institutionalisation” of the pressures that Uyghur and Kazakh women face to marry Han men. All these elements produce a fertile ground for sexualised violence in the region, such that, be it inside or outside of the camps, Uyghur and Kazakh women are unable to provide freely given consent to Han men.

Then, the author reviews the interlinked systems of surveillance that cover Xinjiang. In addition to the development of sophisticated technology that allows a “digital enclosure” to envelop the 24 million people who live in the region, the state has deployed hundreds of thousands of workers to conduct assessments of the population, to determine who is “trustworthy,” “normal,” or “untrustworthy,” with those deemed

“untrustworthy” being sent to “re-education” camps. This was notably the mission of those Han “relatives” sent as part of the “Becoming Family” program, as they were tasked with looking for any sign of resentment or any lack of enthusiasm in Chinese patriotic activities.

Finally, Darren Byler analyses the deployment of tens of thousands of new police officers, the majority of which were low-level contracted employees called “assistant police,” assigned after minimal training and provided with increasing tools and authority to conduct their mission, i.e. to surveil and control the region’s Muslim populations. The author argues that not only do these measures violate Uyghurs and Kazakhs’ basic freedoms as humans, but their very efficiency is dubious, as, for example, these low-level officers are given quotas to collect intelligence about Muslims in their locality, which naturally provides an incentive to profile and manufacture intelligence about Muslims.

Overall, the report provides an overview of extra-legal systems of control and violation to which Muslim minorities in Xinjiang are subjected, and to which they have not agreed voluntarily.