



Submission to the Uyghur Tribunal

(Updated September 2021)

Beijing's Public Campaign to Silence and Intimidate Witnesses

Key Findings

The Uyghur Tribunal has repeatedly invited the People's Republic of China (PRC) to partake in its proceedings. While this request has been firmly rebuked by the PRC, direct and indirect insight can be gained from the tools employed by the PRC to deny and/or reframe the narrative surrounding consistent and documented allegations of genocide in Xinjiang.

- While continuing to refuse an independent international investigation on the ground, the PRC's narrative in response to mounting allegations over genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang has gradually switched from outright denial to pressing attempts to re-frame discourse;
- These attempts include far-reaching and relentless campaigns to silence, intimidate, harass and slander witness testimonies, either directly (long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices) or through threats to family and loved ones in China;
- Often responding to the growing series of reports or testimonies abroad - such as the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal - the toolbox employed includes the use of a variation on traditional televised confessions during governmental press conferences as well as traditional forced televised confessions, a practice amounting to severe human rights violations in and of itself, and provoking additional long-term trauma for victims;
- They are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as "enemies," and to create an atmosphere of fear by "teaching" others a "lesson" as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism;
- The number and nature of organs involved in these efforts further highlight the centralized Government and CCP role in their orchestration.

About Safeguard Defenders

[Safeguard Defenders](https://safeguarddefenders.com) (SD) is a human rights NGO founded in 2016. It undertakes and supports local field activities that contribute to the protection of basic rights, promote the rule of law and enhance the ability of local civil society and human rights defenders in some of the most hostile environments in Asia. Safeguard Defenders also works to counter attempts by China to undermine international rule of law and the law-based order. It is a continuation of the prior Beijing-based *China Action* which operated from 2009 to 2016.

Contact: Laura Harth, Campaign Director

safeguard DEFENDERS

Introduction

“Terezín’s deception went beyond tricking prisoners—the ghetto was also used to fool the outside world into thinking concentration camps were comfortable and humane settlements, rather than overcrowded cesspools of imprisonment, forced labor, starvation, disease, and mass genocide. In June 1944, the International Red Cross, concerned about the treatment of Jews in Nazi concentration camps, decided to inspect the living conditions of Terezín. A mass beautification effort (Operation Embellishment) ensued, with the Nazis fixing up the ghetto into a model town. Fake coffee shops were erected on the street corners; houses were repainted in cheerful pastel colors with picturesque flower beds planted out front, and false shops were designed with fresh produce in the windows, baked bread being delivered through the side doors, and (confiscated) Jewish items on sale. Prior to the visit, the Nazis selected the healthiest-looking children to play games in the street; prisoners that were aged, sick, or malnourished were either shipped off in a mass deportation to the East (approximately 7,500 Jews were sent to their deaths prior to the Red Cross visit) or shoved out-of-sight in the barrack attics. The Red Cross walked away from the camp singing words of praise for how well Jewish peoples seemed to be treated under German rule.

So effective was the deceit of Terezín [...].”¹

Since the reported expansion of the mass surveillance and detention campaign in Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) beginning 2017, the People’s Republic of China has spared no effort in suppressing information and witness testimonies abroad, effectively delaying awareness of the ongoing genocide in the region. Methods include intimidation of foreign governments and entities, harassment of Uyghur and other activists abroad – either directly or through threats to family and loved ones -, and disinformation campaigns.

Noted examples of eluding foreign public and policy-makers’ opinion include the detainment and denied access on the basis of an Interpol Red Notice upon Chinese request of World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa in Rome, Italy, in July 2017, where he was due to testify on the mass detention campaign underway in Xinjiang during a press conference at the Italian Senate².

The international suppression campaign was long successful, with little international attention paid to the ongoing tragedy adding additional psychological trauma and stress to victims and activists seeking international recognition and assistance. Things started to change in August 2018 – over 1,5 years after the start of the campaign – with the comprehensive review of China issued by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on August 31, 2018³.

Key areas of concern highlighted by the UN experts included reports on the detention of large numbers of ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities held incommunicado and often for long periods, without being charged or tried, under the pretext of countering terrorism and religious extremism, with estimates ranging from tens of thousands to upwards of a million; mass surveillance disproportionately targeting ethnic Uyghurs, including the mandatory collection of extensive biometric data in Xinjiang; and the involuntary return of many Uyghurs abroad who had left China.

¹ Czech Center Museum Houston, *The history of the Terezin Concentration Camp*, available at: <https://www.czechcenter.org/the-history-of-terezin>.

² Reuters, *Exiled Uighur group condemns Italy’s detention of its general secretary*, 28 July 2017, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-italy-xinjiang-idUSKBN1AD16Z>.

³ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding observations on the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)*, CERD/C/CHN/CO/14-17, 30 August 2018, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/CERD_C_CHN_CO_14-17_32237_E.pdf.

safeguard DEFENDERS

Yet the PRC consistently continued to accuse those coming forward of “terrorism” and “separatism” without providing any substantial evidence to support such claims and answering to the UN CERD experts on 13 August 2018, the Chinese delegation categorically denied the claims over mass internment of Uyghurs. Such denial was lastly repeated by Chinese delegates on UN premises during a parallel event to the 39th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on September 18, 2018⁴, despite repeated threats made by PRC representatives over the years to NGOs over revocation of ECOSOC Consultative Status in case of continuing to provide a platform to so-called “separatists”.

In an apparent response to mounting international attention, on October 16, 2018, CCTV releases a segment showing a “vocational education center”, normalising the camps as places for “free vocational training”. As noted at the time in *The Guardian*: *““The Chinese Communist party is losing precious control of the narrative,” said Timothy Grose, who focuses on ethnic policy in China at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology. “In a few weeks’ time high-ranking officials have gone on record to angrily deny the existence of a network of re-education centres while accusing the ‘west’ of inciting unrest ... to proudly showcasing them as an example of the party’s altruism.””*⁵

In March 2019, China releases a white paper entitled “The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protections in Xinjiang”, citing “education and training centers” being established for de-radicalization and rehabilitation in accordance with the law.⁶ In August 2019, Beijing releases a second white paper entitled “Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang”, stating that “vocational education and training centers” have been established to end extremism and terrorism in Xinjiang. The paper notes that the centers focus on job skills, law education, and deradicalization, and commit to ensuring “trainees” basic rights.⁷

However, during a press conference on 9 December 2019, XUAR Governor Shokrat Zakir declares all “trainees” have graduated the “vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang” in October 2019. This statement remains a fixture in the PRC’s official narrative, as testified by its frequent repetition in dedicated “press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues” to counter continuous international reports of expanding detention centers as seen on satellite images, which are routinely dismissed by officials as “local administrative buildings, nursing homes, logistics parks and local high school buildings”⁸.

Yet, as the change in narrative - from denial to reframing to renewed denial – has failed to assuage international concern and reporting, the PRC is increasingly making use of a propaganda toolbox, employed through a variety of tools including the capture and use of foreign elites, disinformation campaigns including anonymous expert ‘counter-reports’, the staging of a “happy and prosperous Xinjiang” for domestic and foreign audiences, witness intimidation and slandering, and coerced statements.

⁴ Uyghur Human Rights in China. Evidence for the Use of Political Indoctrination Camps, 18 September 2018, available at: <https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/552153/uyghur-human-rights-in-china-evidence-for-the-use-of-political-indoctrination-camps>.

⁵ The Guardian, *From denial to pride: how China changed its language on Xinjiang's camps*, 22 October 2018, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/22/from-denial-to-pride-how-china-changed-its-language-on-xinjiangs-camps?CMP=share_btn_tw&fbclid=IwAR0kekPU3hjMQ6KXHDQmd96JrCyYBD7xhvWHZGDqVWMt1HBxdLYxLcJnGlo.

⁶ *The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang*, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20201005142756/http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_8011005.htm.

⁷ *Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang (August 2019)*, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20201005142739/http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_8013702.htm.

⁸ See for example: The 4th Press conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, 10 February 2021, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/02/11/036577614.shtml>.

safeguard DEFENDERS

While all key tools in Beijing's efforts, this submission further focusses on the public use of the latter instruments through media and press conferences as they constitute repeated human rights violations in and of themselves and are available for independent verification by all. The evidence provided in this submission is based on publicly available documentation in combination with inference from SD's extensive direct experience, reporting and interaction with international bodies on similar cases.

A. Press Conferences

The Uyghur Tribunal has experienced first-hand the use of press conferences in an attempt to slander and intimidate witness testimonies, often provoking additional agony for those brave enough to come forward as their family or loved ones are coerced to act as a weapon against them. Two press conferences – May 25th and June 18th, 2021 - held in Beijing and two held in Urumqi – June 9th (with participation from Beijing MOFA) and June 12th, 2021 - directly attacked the Tribunal and persons participating in its proceedings.

Highlights from the preemptive May 25th press conference include the description of the Tribunal as [original English spelling maintained]: *“The ‘Uygur Tribunal’ was established to slander Xinjiang so as to interfere with China’s domestic affairs. The ‘president’ of the ‘Uygur Tribunal’ Jeffery Niss has been emphasizing that ‘we must exert pressure if we want to draw attention’, which has exposed the his evil intention of spreading rumors to cause troubles. [...] ‘Uygur Tribunal’ goes so far as to discredit Xinjiang and interfere with China’s domestic affairs. [...] All the so-called ‘Uygur Tribunal’ has done is conducting ‘presumption of guilty’ and then fake the evidences. What they really care about is to find means to slander and split Xinjiang regardless the truth or people in Xinjiang. The so-called ‘witnesses’ in their mouth are no more than those ‘actors’ that have appeared many times. We have exposed and criticized the ‘actors’ for times. Now, let us review their ugly intentions and clumsy performance again.”*

It then goes on to directly slander and discredit many of those that will testify at the Tribunal in the following days⁹, a feat repeated in the 11th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing and the 40th press conference on Xinjiang related issues held in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. An effort described by Elijan Anayat, spokesman of People's Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region during the 41st dedicated conference: *“Recently, some foreign hostile and anti-China forces have set up the so-called ‘Uygur Tribunal’ in the U.K., shameless ‘hearing’ of the ‘genocide’ in Xinjiang, which is absolutely ridiculous. In response to this question, the 9th and 40th Xinjiang Related Press Conference held by the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in Beijing have already pointed out the truth.”*¹⁰

The “truth” cited by Anayat, based on live or video “testimonies” by family members and friends of those who testified before the Uyghur Tribunal routinely include allegations of fraud and other economic crimes, adultery, venereal diseases and family abandonment. The cited 40th press conference of June 9th, expressly aimed at *“exposing the ugly faces of the ‘actors and actresses’ and disclose the evil acts of the so-called ‘Uygur Tribunal’”*, provoked some international outcry, with

⁹ The 9th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/05/26/036637314.shtml>.

¹⁰ The 41st Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/06/13/036645465.shtml>.

safeguard DEFENDERS

the Uyghur Tribunal issuing a press statement citing its primary concern with the “impact on the wellbeing of the witnesses who gave evidence at the recent Tribunal Hearings in London and to the relatives and a neighbor of those witnesses who appeared at the PRC conference.”¹¹

Yet witnesses were promptly put through the exact same ordeal, including the parading of family “testimonies” during the 11th press conference in Beijing on June 18: *“At the so-called ‘hearing’, more than 20 so-called ‘witnesses’ gave their ‘testimonies’, which went beyond common sense and conventional imagination. Their ability to cheat, lie and cheat is at the pinnacle of perfection. Today, we are holding another Xinjiang-related press conference on this topic to further debunk the evil intention of this pseudo court, further expose the poor performance of these so-called ‘witnesses’, and let the international community have a better understanding of their illegality, hypocrisy and absurdity.”*¹²

While the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal and the ensuing slandering and intimidation attempts of its witnesses through the use of family members and neighbors rightly drew attention, these practices are far from new and are an integral part of the propaganda toolbox employed by both the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Central Government.

Safeguard Defenders has attentively examined all press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues, leading to the following overview. For respect of the victims involved, we chose to name only government officials and not expressly report any statements that may have been provided under duress. The full overview of press conferences is available at: <http://english.ts.cn/news/xj/pcoxrl/index.shtml>.

- The first press conference organized by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is held on January 3rd, 2020, under the title “Chinese officials rebut foreign media reports on Xinjiang”, immediately exposing the aim of the series of press conferences which, though held at regular intervals, **almost all explicitly reference and seek to offer a counter-narrative to ‘outside events’ in the form of specific reports** (e.g. by Adrian Zenz, ASPI, ...), **international media coverage** (e.g. family separation, destruction of mosques, forced sterilization), **foreign government statements** (e.g. genocide determination) and the **imposition of sanctions**.
- Between January 3rd, 2020, and August 30th, 2021, **a total of 39 press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues have been held by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Xinjiang**, with 9 additional dedicated press conferences showcasing issues such as “ethnic unity”.

¹¹ Uyghur Tribunal, *Press Release 9 June 2021*, available at: <https://uyghurtribunal.com/press-release-9-june-2021/>.

¹² The 11th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/06/19/036648534.shtml>.

safeguard DEFENDERS

- During the 18th such press conference, three **foreign media outlets** take part for the first time through video-conference, followed by the participation of four foreign outlets through video-conference in both the 19th and 20th press conference. It appears as if this participation sparks the decision to host the 21st press conference by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region at the press release room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing on December 21st, 2020, later dubbed as the 1st Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing.
- Following this “joint press conference” a dual approach ensues, with regular conferences continuing in Xinjiang without foreign media and Beijing-held press conferences numbered separately with the participation of foreign media. Between December 21, 2020, and August 30, 2021, **a total of 14 Beijing conferences** have been held.
- The aim of said conferences is eloquently described by Xu Guixiang, Deputy Director General of the CPC Publicity Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on December 21, 2020, and demonstrates the **intent of reaching global audiences**: *“To rebuke some media’s disgusting acts, we have taken a series of measures. First, hold press conference on Xinjiang related issues. We have held 20 of such events so far this year, citing numerous facts, data, cases and videos to expose the US and other Western anti-China forces’ lies and falsehoods on Xinjiang, such as the region “establishing camps to intern and persecute a million ethnic minorities,” “demolishing mosques,” “instituting massive forced labor,” “forced sterilization” and “performing genocide.” The press conferences are reported through radio, TV, foreign language websites and news apps in 15 languages, including English, Japanese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Turkish and Arabic, with overall viewership hitting 200 million so far.”*¹³
- In the same statement, Xu Guixiang asks journalists to “please turn a willing ear to” the stories of local testimonies. In fact, **at least 49¹⁴ of the listed press conferences use either live or video “testimonies” from “graduate trainees”, “migrant workers”, religious figures, entrepreneurs, relatives or purported acquaintances**, with one press conference (4th Beijing conference, February 10, 2021) hosting up to 15 “graduate trainees”.
- As stated, the choice of “testimony” appears expressly linked to the current international news cycle on Xinjiang and aims at rebuking allegations through **carefully crafted statements. Of particular notice are the testimonies by “graduate trainees”**, which throughout the press conferences all follow the script outlined in Xu Guixiang’s statement on February 10, 2021: *“Today, we dedicated this press conference to the work of the vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang, and invited 15 graduates of the centers to share their own experiences with us. They are the real people with real stories. You can never fake happiness. They were deceived, manipulated, controlled by the extremists, living under their shadow; some of them drifted apart from their families, ignoring laws, engaging in terrorist activities, and even becoming frontline warriors of terrorist, extremist forces.*

¹³ 21st Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2020/12/24/036541754.shtml>.

¹⁴ Xinjiang-held conferences: 2, 3, 4, 5, (8), 10, (11), (13), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, (32), 34, (36), 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50.
Beijing-held conferences: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Other (theme-centered): 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

safeguard DEFENDERS

Extremist ideologies have converted normal people into “devils” of ruthless killers. They all have got rid of radicalism and extremists ideologies, returned to the normal life. Their thinking and mentality have changed totally. They know and abide by laws, excel at skills, have stable jobs and salary. They live a decent life with dignity and value. They are out of the woods of “devils” to become normal people.”

- The eerie overlap between “testimonies” presented, in particular of “graduate trainees” indicates an **extremely high likelihood if not certitude of their being scripted statements**, in line with the PRC’s documented practices of forced televised confessions as documented by Safeguard Defenders in its 2018 report *Scripted and Staged: Behind the Scenes of China’s Forced TV Confessions*¹⁵ [See further below].
- Though less frequent, a second fixture of the press conferences are the **direct slandering and intimidation of witnesses abroad**. Whereas foreign think tanks and researchers are frequent targets, particularly striking are the attacks against victims abroad. Detailed slanderous allegations of fraud and other economic crimes, rape, drug-related crimes, adultery, venereal diseases and family abandonment against people expressly named – many of which are among the Uyghur Tribunal witnesses – have been made in **at least 19**¹⁶ **press conferences**. It must be stressed once again that these allegations – on occasion accompanied by “corroborating testimonies” from family and acquaintances – always follow an ‘outside event’ in which those attacked had a prominent outspoken role.
- At least 4 out of these 19 include direct “testimonies” – in presence or through video production – of family members or acquaintances of the witnesses abroad.
- Particular mention must be made of the profoundly sexist allegations made towards female witnesses and activists abroad, expressly used as a means to discredit their statements.

¹⁵ Safeguard Defenders, *Scripted and Staged*, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/scripted-and-staged>.

¹⁶ Xinjiang-held conferences: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 40.

Beijing-held conferences: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11.

safeguard DEFENDERS

Sample Press Conference “Testimony Script”

In the past, I had a low level of education and no vocational skills even though I wanted to go out to work, so I was addicted to watching violent terrorist video clips all day and fooling around with some “friends”. Seeing me like that, my mom was very sad and persuaded me to go to the vocational education and training center. There, I not

In the past, I had a poor level of Chinese and did not have any skills. When I did odd jobs, I made friends with some bad guys and did a lot of wrong things. Thanks to my elder brother’s repeated exhortation, I voluntarily signed up for the vocational education and training program. Through the training at the center, I got to realize the mistakes that I made before, and learned a lot about policies and management. What made me proud was that my Chinese proficiency and computer operation skills were the best in my class.

Previously, I met some “friends” with extremism thoughts. They induced me into participating in illegal gatherings that preach extremism many times. They preached that “pagans” were inferior and they would be in Jahannam after death. Gradually, I regarded “pagans” as enemies of Muslims. I repel non-muslims and other ethnic groups around me and preached extremism to my family. I told them that things donated by government are not “Halal”. I prevented my family from participating in health insurance, and moving into the newly-built government-subsidized house. They realized my weirdness and persuaded me to go to the education and training center. Later on, I voluntarily signed up for the training.

At the center, we had six classes per day from Monday to Friday with courses on the country’s common language, laws, vocational skills and deradicalization. We could contact with our families and enjoy weekends as well as national legal holidays. When we went home at weekend, we were free to attend lawful religious activities. Our after-class life was also very rich and colorful. We had library, recreational room and interest-oriented classes, in which we were taught to dance and sing. We often organized sport and cultural activities like basketball, volleyball games and artistic performances. There was a clinic at the center with doctors on duty 24 hours a day, so whenever we had a headache, cold or any other ailment, we could go to see a doctor. We took regular health checks at the center. Our customs and habits were fully respected there, and the school canteen provided us with various and nutritious halal food for free every day. There had never been any maltreatment or physical punishment at the center, let alone brutal torture. The teachers cared for us like our own families, and took very good care of us when we were ill. They also prepared delicious cakes and sent us best wishes on our birthdays.

At the center, from Monday to Friday, we had 6 classes every day. We learned courses on the standard spoken and written Chinese language, legal knowledge, vocational skills, and deradicalization. We could contact with our family members and friends at any time we like. We took days off at weekends, on holidays and festivals. Every week, when I came back home, I could take part in normal religious activities at the mosque. Our life at school was very colorful. We had reading rooms, recreation rooms and interest groups. Teachers taught us how to dance and sing. We had many cultural and sports activities, such as basketball matches, volleyball matches and art performance. There was also a school clinic, where offered 24-hour medical service. If we got a headache, felt uncomfortable, or caught a cold, doctors at the clinic could make a diagnosis and give us treatment at any time. We also had regular physical examinations. Our customs and habits were respected at the school. We had various nutritious halal food at the canteen free of charge. There was no physical punishment at all, let alone any torture. teachers at the school treated us as their family members. When we got sick, the teachers took very good care of us. They also prepared cakes for and sent best wishes to us on our birthdays.

safeguard DEFENDERS

Our religious beliefs are well protected in accordance with the law during the study. Teachers told us that vocational education and training centers are schools, thus religious activities are not permitted. While we are back home during the holidays, it is determined by ourselves whether to pray at home or to go to the mosque for the Koran interpretation by imam. We have never been interfered by anyone. I want to take this opportunity to clarify that America's allegations that our rights to religion, culture and language are deprived are total nonsense! Instead of being deceived by the rumors again, I sincerely invite friends around the world to travel around Xinjiang and communicate with us, thus to know about the truth.

Our freedom of religious belief was fully protected according to the law at the center. Our teacher told us that, the center was a school, so religious activities were not allowed there. But at weekends and during holidays, we could decide on our own whether to pray or listen to Imam explaining Koran at the mosque. No one had ever interfered in this. I want to take this opportunity to tell everyone that, those who said that our rights to religion, culture and using our own languages were deprived are telling a bare faced lie. I sincerely invite friends from all around the world to visit Xinjiang, talk to us and get to know the real situation.

Speaking from the bottom of my heart, I think the vocational education and training center is the best school I've ever been to. I learned a lot of knowledge there and got teachers' care and love. I felt extremely moved and grateful. If I haven't been to the center, I don't know what kind of person I would become. It was the education and training center that pulled me back from the edge of the cliff, educated, and saved me and my family. I want to ask the US to stop fabricating lies.

safeguard DEFENDERS

Sample Press Conference Statements on Female Witness and Activists Abroad

In fact, [REDACTED] is a separatist and terrorist. Her self-proclaimed “undergoing” is a pure lie. She is infamous for her inferior moral, indolence and debauchery among her acquaintances. She was found and accused of adultery when she stayed in China. Can you believe such an incorrigible liar? Next, we will reveal her lies:

worked in vocational education and training center, and everything she says about the vocational education and training center is totally a lie. [REDACTED] has been living a decadent life with terrible moral principles. It is learned that her husband has been suffering enough from the marriage life long ago, trying to get divorced with [REDACTED]. It is just because [REDACTED] staying abroad that they cannot go through the divorce proceedings for now.

In the meantime, the friends and colleagues of her all know about her poor morality, habitual lies and her turbulent personal life. When she lived in domestic, she fornicated with other people and was exposed by her neighbor. After her going abroad this time, in order to gain favour from the anti-China forces, she colluded with “the World Uyghur Congress” and made up all those lies, which once again exposed her immorality and that she is a person without any sense of integrity and shame.

would fall through, so she escaped on the way to hospital. Finally, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got divorced in [REDACTED]. Fourth, [REDACTED] is naturally lascivious, keeping amour with someone else besides her husband. She got married with her current husband [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. However, after the husband left China on [REDACTED], [REDACTED] began the amour with [REDACTED], keeping multiple cohabitation records.

[REDACTED] was taken into custody by the public security bureau of [REDACTED] on suspicion of inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination. She was later found to have infectious diseases, including syphilis. The public security bureau of [REDACTED] terminated the compulsory measures against her, [REDACTED] out of humanitarian considerations.

associated with [REDACTED]. Fifth, [REDACTED] has abandoned herself to vice. [REDACTED], lover of [REDACTED], said “She told me that she had a bad relationship with her husband, that she liked me and wanted to marry me after divorce. It never occurred to me that she lied to me and fled abroad. I was heart-broken. But soon I heard that she kept romantic relationship with many men. Now I hate her, she has betrayed my country, she has hurt me and everyone.”

safeguard DEFENDERS

B. Forced confessions: lessons from CCTV - CGTN

As stated by Xu Guixiang at the cited 21st press conference on Xinjiang-related issues, expressly accompanying the efforts made with the press conferences and government white papers on Xinjiang-related issues, are a series of documentaries and ad hoc news items produced by Chinese Communist Party-controlled networks CCTV and CGTN featuring scripted forced televised confessions with detained purported “terrorists”, “vocational center trainees”, “locals” and family members of Uyghur activists abroad.

Illustrative of the content of such “documentaries” is the example of the first in the series: “Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang”¹⁷. The first **45 minutes** of the ‘documentary’ focus on portraying violent incidents perpetrated by ethnic Uighurs as the work of terrorists, more specifically the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM). As part of CGTN’s “evidence,” 15 Uighur detainees or prisoners are paraded 17 separate clips in front of the camera to confess to violent acts and provide ‘evidence’ that terrorism or ETIM were behind the attacks. All have their eyes blurred and are dressed in prison clothing. The men have their heads shaved; several have microphones clipped to their clothing; one is lying in a hospital bed obviously badly injured; two have head bandages; and one appears to be wearing a leather restraining collar.

- As documented prior by Safeguard Defenders, since 2018 China Global Television Network (CGTN), international Chinese language broadcaster CCTV-4, and their parent company CCTV are directly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)¹⁸. This documented and unrefuted assessment has been shared by UK audio-visual media regulator Ofcom, leading to the stripping of CGTN’s broadcasting license in the UK in early 2021¹⁹.
- Moreover, Ofcom has repeatedly sanctioned CGTN²⁰ over its documented production and broadcasting of forced televised confessions, scripted and staged under duress, solitary confinement, threats to family and loved ones, and torture.
- Forced confessions extracted through mistreatment of criminal suspects remain rampant in China, and are of great concern to the international community. In its Concluding Observations for the 2015 review of China’s implementation of its commitments related to the Convention against Torture²¹, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) expressed concern over reports “indicating that the practice of torture and ill-treatment is still deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system, which overly relies on confessions as the basis for convictions.

¹⁷ China Global Television Network, CGTN ‘documentary’: Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang, 5 December 2019, available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-12-05/Fighting-terrorism-in-Xinjiang-MaNLDDtnfq/index.html>.

¹⁸ Safeguard Defenders, *Ownership and control of Chinese media*, 14 June 2021, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/blog/ownership-and-control-chinese-media>.

¹⁹ Ofcom, Ofcom revokes CGTN’s licence to broadcast in the UK, 4 February 2021, available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2021/ofcom-revokes-cgtn-licence-to-broadcast-in-uk>.

²⁰ Ofcom has found CGTN guilty of producing and airing forced televised confessions five times. See for example: Ofcom, *Decision – Star China Media Limited (fairness and privacy)*, 8 March 2021, available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/content-sanctions-adjudications/decision-star-china-media-limited>.

²¹ UN Committee Against Torture, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, 3 February 2016, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCHN%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en.

safeguard DEFENDERS

- In addition, airing “confessions” on state television has become a common occurrence since President Xi Jinping came to power in March 2013. During Xi’s reign, a growing number of both Chinese citizens and foreign nationals have had their taped “confessions” appear on television in seeming acts of government retaliation. Similar to the tactics used in the above reported press conferences, televised “confessions” are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as “enemies,” and to create an atmosphere of fear by “teaching” others a “lesson” as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism.²²
- Safeguard Defenders report *Scripted and Staged*²³ from 2018 exposed the reality behind this practice, revealing how these confessions were extracted by police through torture, threats to loved ones and promises of lenient treatment. With no lawyer access, many even in incommunicado detention and well before they had been tried in a court of law, these violate the fundamental right to a fair trial and the right to remain silent. Chinese Communist Party-controlled media were complicit in both helping to make some of these confessions and in packaging them as “news”.
- Recent news items produced and aired by CGTN around the world in response to international media reports on family separation have included statements against their parents by minors, under duress and without their parents’ consent. One of these video “testimonies” was also used during the above-cited press conferences. Safeguard Defenders has obtained direct evidence provided by one of these families documenting the pressure exerted on the minors to provide the recorded statement. A complaint is pending before the French audio-visual media regulator Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel regarding this broadcast.
- The use of CCTV or CGTN-aired “testimonies and similar-style video “testimonies” and productions in a series of the press conferences, may point to a role of CCP-controlled media in their production.

²² Chinese Human Rights Defenders, *China: Forced TV Confessions Violate Principle of Presumed Innocence Before Trial, Constitute Cruel & Degrading Punishment*, 12 March 2016, available at: <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/03/china-forced-tv-confessions-violate-principle-of-presumed-innocence-before-trial-constitute-cruel-degrading-punishment/>.

²³ Safeguard Defenders, *Scripted and Staged*, 2018, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/publications>.

safeguard DEFENDERS

C. Conclusion

Based on the evidence provided above, it is Safeguard Defender's opinion that:

- The PRC's attempts to deny and/or re-frame discourse on mounting human rights abuse allegations include far-reaching and relentless campaigns to silence, intimidate, harass and slander witness testimonies, either directly (long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices) or through threats to family and loved ones in China;
- Often responding to the growing series of reports or testimonies abroad - such as the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal - the toolbox employed includes the use of a variation on traditional televised confessions during governmental press conferences as well as traditional forced televised confessions, a practice amounting to severe human rights violations in and of itself, and provoking additional long-term trauma for victims;
- Safeguard Defenders has studied China's forced televised confessions extensively and continues to collect data and lobby on behalf of its victims. They constitute a gross violation of basic human rights. "Confessors" will not have been given access to a lawyer; they may not even have been charged or been tried in a court of law. "Confessors" must speak the lines that are scripted to them by the authorities. Filmed confessions of detainees and prisoners deny the "confessor" human dignity, the right to remain silent and the right to due process and a fair trial. "Confessors" are routinely mentally and physically tortured and their family threatened unless they speak to the camera. We believe similar tactics have been used on at least part of the press conference "testimonies";
- They are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as "enemies," and to create an atmosphere of fear by "teaching" others a "lesson" as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism;
- The number and nature of organs involved in these efforts further highlight the centralized Government and CCP role in their orchestration.