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*Please note that all recordings of the Uyghur Tribunal hearings can be found on You Tube: Uyghur Tribunal - YouTube
State violence towards Turkic Muslim peoples in Xinjiang is of significant humanitarian, economic, and security interest for policymakers, businesses, and the public across the world. This report shows how China’s party-state organises and co-ordinates systematic and interconnected practices of ethnically targeted violence in Xinjiang, which prevent intergenerational transmission of cultural, linguistic, and religious practices, the foundations of the targeted groups.

Key findings:
• State violence towards Xinjiang’s peoples has rapidly intensified since 2014.
• The officially stated intent of policy in Xinjiang is to “break their roots”.
• Mass detainment, forced labour, child separation, repression of religion and language, and sexual violence and torture are systematic, interconnected practices.
• Widespread and systematic forced labour for ethnic minorities includes coercion, forcible transfers of population, and child-separation (chapter 1).
• Transfers of Uyghur children from their families to state care have grown rapidly since 2017 (chapter 2).
• Coercive “birth control policies” and internment for women with “too many children” has significantly contributed to declining Uyghur birth rates (chapter 2).
• Widespread and systematic practices of rape and sexual violence are routine methods of torture and punishment within the camps (chapter 3).
• Religious practice as a criterion for extra-legal detention is part of broader campaigns to “Sinicise” religion (chapter 4).
• “De-extremification” campaigns include coerced intermarriages, arbitrary detention of cultural figureheads, and forcible mass “re-education” (chapter 5).
After I was released, I felt that the detention centre was safer than outside. No one would check my ID or stop me in the centre, no one would tell me into another room to ask those questions. I felt safer inside the centre as I won't feel like I may be arrested every day. Everywhere there is camera and few hundred metres there is a police checkpoint. I visited various places because I wanted to know—in the city it is very restrictive, I felt in the countryside it was better as not as populated. And I felt in every village there is a school in three floors and in the yard there is a tank and all young Uyghur guys were enlisted as paramilitary and they had to prep Chinese practice to walk and stroll on the streets and get them to behave as soldiers. I was thinking they already have a tank, why do you need extra Uyghur guys asking them to call in Chinese. In the city people are under surveillance. In the countryside people, females are forced to dance in the school. How can people even dance in front of a tank.

5 June 2021 (00:04:40 – 00:24:19)

David Tobin

DT – So the report we have produced for today is by five UK-based scholars. We’ve pooled our resources deliberately because we’re very different specialisms. As you were hearing yesterday, this topic covers many issues. It requires different disciplinary knowledge—we’ve pooled those skills. We have significant regional knowledge and experience in the region. But we focused on providing information and analysis that is relevant for those who are legally qualified. We are not lawyers, we do not make pronouncements about international law, but we provided information that we believe would be relevant for those qualified.

The plain title we have gone with is ‘State Violence’ rather than ‘conceptualising the violence’... When I interviewed Nyrola Elima, who will be speaking, she told me “while the world debates a word, we are dying”. So, we had decided at this point we are not going to focus on conceptualizing these actions—we are going to focus on the information that we think is relevant and people will need to hear. So, the report and research were structured by focusing on key issues of concern raised...by diaspora interviewees. These
were forced labour, sexual violence in the camp system, child separation and coercive
birth controls, and repression of religious and cultural practices.

We link broad statistical evidence to real life impact. We present a comprehensive
assessment of evidence drawn from official primary sources. These include Chinese
government documents, procurement contracts, statistics, internal statements, and white
papers. And we triangulate that data with interviews with families affected and testimonies
presented by witnesses to the US Congress, international media, and NGOs. The report
shows that the Chinese party-state organizes and coordinates systematic and
interconnected practices of ethnically targeted violence in Xinjiang which prevent
intergenerational transmission of cultural, linguistic, and religious practices, the
foundations of the targeted groups. The official and explicit intent of these practices is to
‘break their roots’. The interviews we conducted for the report – we really link policy
analysis to impact on people’s lives. I conducted the interviews for the report. I interviewed
12 Uyghur diaspora families who all requested full anonymity, so we have not included
those interviews in great detail. Most of these focused on issues of trauma and the
description of family separation as torture. But these families were too uncomfortable and
frightened of being included, so we focused in the interview section on two high profile
interviewees – Nyrola Elima in Sweden and Jevlan Shirmemet in Turkey…cases that we
could verify.

Those two interviewees – Jewlan Shirmemet and Nyrola Elima – they have publicly
available case details. These are all listed on the Xinjiang Victims Database, they were
already verified. I was able to see the documents that were relevant to Nyrola’s cases,
including bank transfers and title deeds for a family home. When doing these interviews,
the methods of the interview – we ask detailed, specific questions focused on these case
details, focused on verifying their interviews that they have already conducted – but I
always combine this with broad open questions: how has your life changed? How has
your family been affected? This a standard practice we use to enable the interviewee to
talk on their own terms and to raise the issues they believe are important to this case. It
also reduces researcher bias, so that I am not deciding the issues that they believe are
most relevant. So, the report shows how state violence targets families, severs contact – and this prevents intergenerational transmission of cultural and religious practices.

In the introduction, I use my fieldwork in the region from 2007 to 2010 to address the question – what does counter-terrorism actually mean? The question, as we were discussing yesterday with Sean Roberts, this is a long-term issue. This is about history – before 1949, Uyghurs were simply described, generally, as barbarians. Chinese narratives described *hua*（华）the Chinese civilisation, and the outside world as barbarians. It was only after 1949, when Mao Zedong comes to power, that Uyghurs are reframed as internal ethnic minorities ‘shaoshu minzu’（少数民族），and the construction of the regional autonomy system – if we look at the regional autonomy law – is explicit that the autonomy system is to hold China together and to modernize Xinjiang. And the phrase ‘*minzu wenti*’（民族问题）frames this discussion – ‘ethnic problem’. So, Uyghurs in the region are being described as an ethnic problem since 1949. Fast forward to 2017, in the spirit of the nineteenth Congress…the term ‘shaoshu minzu’（少数民族）disappears. It’s used twice in Xi Jinping’s speech, only to refer to minority cadre recruitment. And now we have an official policy called ‘fusion’ – that all former 56 minzu（民族）ethnic groups should be fused into one ‘zhonghua minzu’（中华民族）.

So, when I look at this term ‘counter-terrorism’, I first of all read the official explanations that are given to the local population – not in English, not to the outside world. I read universal ‘ethnic unity education’ textbooks that were used in universities and in work units. So almost everyone I interviewed when I was in Xinjiang were aware of specific texts, including ‘*the 50 Whys*’ – this is just an example of one. This text is used in classrooms and universities. You chant the text, you memorize it, and you answer exam questions in order to proceed your education. It explains policy in the region and adherence to the party-state’s narrative history as counter-terrorism.

So, the July 2009 violence – violence by Uyghurs – was simply called a ‘life or death struggle’ versus terrorists, and people were prosecuted as terrorists under anti-
separatism law. Han violence at the same time in [inaudible] was called an ordinary criminal incident, and they were punished according to criminal law. In this text, they’re very explicit about identity: “Uyghurs are not an Islamic group. Uyghurs are not a Turkic group. Only the three evils would say this” – the three evils being separatism, terrorism, and extremism. Uyghur identity, its roots, are being framed as a form of terrorism. It’s not about organizations – it’s about ideas and identities. For example, the term East Turkestan – ‘dongtu’ (东突) in Chinese – this phrase is used to mean ETIM East Turkestan Islamic movement. You cannot say ‘dongtu’ (东突) without implying terrorism in Chinese.

Similarly, the 1759 arrival of troops by the Manchu – this is called a reincorporation of Xinjiang into China. Calling it an invasion is an act of terrorism under the three evils. So what we’ve seen under Xi Jinping, then, is an intensification of these narratives, and an intensification of state violence. First of all, he called it the ‘great wall of iron’…in 2012…and then in 2014, we have the ‘People’s War on Terror’. But the logics are consistent.

We were aware of many of the issues we’ve been discussing for a long time. Many of my interviewees in Xinjiang endured issues of forced abortion…particularly one lady who only had one child but endured a forced abortion, under pressure from her manager, and then the party-state. She was also sacked from her job because she could not prove that she was not involved in the violence – she was guilty until proven innocent. You had to get a piece of paper proving that you were not involved in the violence from your local police station, but she happened to be in another [inaudible]. And she was sacked.

In 2018, we have [a] XUAR government work report that describes camps and boarding facilities as “defeating the foundations of separatism forever”. And this is the three evils, but remember – the three evils means Turkic and Islamic identities. So, this regional government directive, “break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections”, has sparked…family breakups and widespread trauma for those inside and outside the region. The camp system and related practices target and break up families with “relatives in detention” – a key indicator determining internment. Families are usually given no
official verdicts unless they pressure authorities – and many do with public campaigns to give explanations.

The reasons given are [inaudible]...religious and cultural practices... of course cadres work with [quotas?]. And we know from history that any attempt to round up people is not orderly – it becomes arbitrary. You can’t round everyone up at once. So, it’s targeting identities, but the practice has become arbitrary.

The reasons that I draw from Xinjiang Victim Database exemplary entries – so these are ones that have eye witness testimony, document verification, and interviews – these include interaction with the outside world: applying for a foreign visa, wanting to travel abroad, being exposed to foreign thought, staying too long in Kazakhstan, [and] obtaining second citizenship. Also, banal everyday behaviours: not watching state television, not greeting officials appropriately, not smoking, being born in the 1980s-1990s, contractual requirements to maintain employment, and, importantly, disturbing public order by writing letters to gain information on family whereabouts and health.

Interviewees describe how not knowing their family whereabouts, while knowing anything could happen, as torture...constant struggle as trauma. Most discussed deteriorating mental health, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and recurring nightmares. The interviewees were keen to say, “this is only one story, we are not suffering as much as many, many other people”. But this tip of the iceberg, as they also say, provides enough substantial evidence and testimony to conclude that state violence targets Uyghur and other indigenous families, preventing transmission of cultural and religious practices.

Nyrola and Jevlan’s cases are representative examples of detainment, without explanation, of highly educated, apolitical, Mandarin-speaking professionals and civil servants who receive no vocational training, suffer deteriorating ill health, and appear to be targeted because their family members are abroad. With the time I have left, I will introduce you to these two interviewees. Nyrola Elima campaigned from Sweden for the release of her aging aunt, Mahire Yaqup. Mahire worked as a Mandarin language teacher, civil servant, and insurance sales person...raising children alone. In 2018, Mahire was detained in a vocational training centre without explanation. But when pressured, officials referred to her family’s 2013 bank transfer to pay for relatives’ new home in Australia.
Following her release in December 2018, Mahire spoke with Nyrola before being detained by Ghulja Public Security Bureau in 2019. She looked extremely pale and weak, having lost 13kg in weight during detention, suffering liver damage without access to healthcare, and receiving no vocational training. Nyrola’s contact with her retired parents, 62-year-old mother Gulbekrim Memtimin, and 65-year-old father Qasim Tohti, was severed in 2017, and they’re held under arbitrary house arrest. Nyrola explained she wants no involvement in politics, but must speak for her family.

The targeting and breakup of Jevlan Shirmemet’s elderly family members followed similar patterns. Jevlan’s mother, Suriye Tursun, was a party cadre and civil servant on the verge of retirement. She was sentenced to five years in a camp with no written verdict in 2019. Jevlan has had no contact since January 2018, at which time she was in poor health. Jevlan continues to press Chinese embassy and consulate staff in Turkey to be permitted to speak to his family. The embassy instead asked him to provide information on all his contacts and activities in Xinjiang and Turkey. Jevlan’s family, like Nyrola’s, have no prior criminal records, until moving abroad. Jevlan moved to Turkey to study law, and his mother visited him for 15 days with an official Chinese tour group in 2013. The only attempted explanation from embassy staff was “maybe terrorist activities”.

Jevlan concludes that his family members are being targeted and their connections broken because he is a Uyghur who chose to study abroad. “They are trying to break my family”, he said. His aging father, Shirmemet Hudayar, was detained and brother, Irfan Shirmemet, held under arbitrary house arrest. Both were subsequently sacked from civil servant positions. No official explanations have been given. Jevlan wants no involvement in politics, and he says he is targeted because, in the party-state’s eyes, as long as you are Uyghur, you are political. When I ask him what that means – I ask[ed] him the types of questions that we had to engage with yesterday about intent and reasons – he just says “I don’t know. I just want to speak to my mother”.

The treatment of these two families is the tip of the iceberg. Their experiences illustrate how the party-state’s coordinated, systematic practices of ethnically targeted state violence arbitrarily target and break up Uyghur family units. Family breakups deprive Uyghur and other indigenous groups of community, and they prevent intergenerational
Laura Murphy

LM – In the spring of 2018, significant evidence began to emerge that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) government understood its system of detention centres and internment camps as merely one part of a massive transformation of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR or Uyghur Region) into a docile and lucrative economic hub. While continuing to hold indigenous citizens of the region in internment camps without trial, regional and local governments shifted their focus to the creation of an enormous forced labour regime. This system had the explicit goal of employing practically every adult citizen and was accompanied by the justification that the programme would increase both the economic productivity and the “stability” of the region.

In that same year, a paper was published by the Nankai University Institute of Wealth and Economics that explicitly stated the intention of the labor programs was to reduce the Uyghur population density and to assimilate them into Han society and culture.

We were easily able to identify that these labor programs were discernably not the same as others across China. US Customs records, for instance, listed companies that were exporting abroad were located in the same exact address as the Lop County #4 internment camp, which had already become famous because of the photo posted to Weixin [WeChat] by the Xinjiang Department of Justice. In 2018, many companies were still listing their official addresses as being in “vocational and educational training centers.” They have since changed their addresses to indicate that they are inside “industrial parks.”

We needed to look no further than the PRC’s own media to understand that there was forced labor happening within the internment camps. Chinese state television celebrated the fact that people detained in the vocational training centers were being put to work to contribute to the economy. Some of those media programmes even revealed that the
people were making goods bound for international markets. These camp/factory co-
locations are not unusual. This week alone, I have identified two companies that are
exporting into international markets that are located within the walls of internment camps.
My research regularly identifies these camps.factory co-locations. Satellite imagery
reveals hundreds more. It is clear that if a person is in an internment camp, they have no
alternative but to perform the work that is assigned them. Experts agree that this meets
all international definitions of forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery. But
internment camp forced labour is merely the tip of the iceberg.

There are several other mechanisms by which the Xinjiang regional and local
governments compel minoritized citizens in the Uyghur Region to work. Abduweli Arish
was a computer programmer and GPS specialist before he was sent to camps in 2017.
He was only released under the supervision of his brother who owned a grocery and
promised that he would employ his college educated, highly skilled brother, where he
could be monitored. He was not allowed to return to his chosen profession or choose his
line of work. He was not in need of poverty alleviation, but the government still compelled
him to work and determined where he would have to work.

Even those who have never been in the camps are subject to forced labor transfers. In
many countries in the southern part of the Uyghur Region, government agencies go door
to door to identify people they can send for labor transfers to meet the quotas set out by
county governments. In some places, people are rated on a point system that determines
whether they have to receive additional ideological training to convince them to go out to
work or whether they are safe to go out to work but need to be fairly close to home or
whether they can be sent to the rest of China to work in factories.

The Emedin family was sent 50 kilometers away from home to work at Hoshine Silicon
company. But only after they were subjected to repeated coercive strategies. They were
told they had to take Chinese language classes to increase their capacity to work in
Chinese factories. They submitted, but they were determined to need more ideological
training. A cadre came to their house regularly to train them to accept poverty alleviation.
They were then sent to do welding training to occupy them in the off season. They were
then told they needed to be transferred for labor. They balked because they had elderly

*Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal*
family members who needed care. The government agency provided medicines for the grandparents to alleviate their concerns. As Dr. Thum discussed, there is a disproportionate number of elder care facilities and orphanages being built in the Uyghur region to “alleviate the concerns” of people being sent away for labor. But the Emedins also had land to tend... seven acres of grape farms. The government alleviated that concern by taking it into the care of the state. According to the state media report in which their story was told, they also had a beautiful home in their village, but the government put them in a dormitory with other workers. They were transferred to Hoshine to work, having had all of their home, family, land, and community taken away from them.

Others are sent much further from home. Buzaynap was compelled to go to work for Huafu Textile company over 5000 kilometers away from home. When the labor agency came to her village, no one volunteered to go. Agents went to her home over and over again to coerce her family into letting her go. They tried to shame them by saying that they were holding her back. She herself explicitly said that she did not want to go. And yet they kept at the family and others join her village until several women relented. The Nankai report tells us that there are many more people in the Uyghur Region who are unwilling to engage in these labor transfer programmes.

In addition to a legitimate desire to take care of family, be with one’s children, take care of and maintain the right to one’s land, the investment in community and one’s own right to free choice, even there are good reasons not to want to go to the factories. Government directives tell us that inside the factories, people are controlled through “militarized management” that typically involves armed guards or special security officers. They are compelled to have “iron discipline.” All of this is premised on the racist beliefs that Uyghur and other minoritized citizens of the Uyghur Region are inherently laze, slow, idle, and have a dangerous penchant for personal freedoms.

And yet, according to government documents, upwards of two million labour transfers happen each year. This is because, as government directives explicitly tell us, labor transfer programs are based in a logic that suggests that people who don’t take steps recommended by the state are infected by terrorism and separatism. It is clear to everyone in the region that the punishment for being associated with the “three evils” of...
terrorism, separatism, and extremism is being sent for re-education. In addition, a forthcoming human rights report reveals interviews with both victims of the camps and security within the camps that indicated that people outside the prisons were coerced into working in factories through a point system that promised better outcomes for loved ones in camps if the ostensibly free people accepted labor transfers. As a result, we must understand all state-sponsored labor programs in the region to be tantamount to forced labor. While there are certainly people who might choose to work in factories, what we know is that people are not allowed to choose not to be transferred to factory labour.

These programs, as they are practiced in the Uyghur Region, are clearly in violation of the ILO convention on forced labor, which characterizes forced or compulsory labour as...

In my review of state directives, first-person narratives, and interviews with social auditors who have been on the ground in factories in the last several years, the transfer of Uyghur labour meets at least ten of the 11 indicators of forced labor as identified by the ILO (and I am not ruling out the physical or sexual violence piece -- I just haven't seen evidence of it as yet). Indeed, while I admit to not being a legal scholar, it is my opinion that these practices meet the threshold for all sociological and legal definitions of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour that I have studied.

_Counsel – You state that a third of minority population of XUAR may be held in this intertwined system of internment and forced labour. Is there a breakdown of that internment by gender or other protected characteristics?_

LM – Not that I know of.

_Counsel – Is there a statistical breakdown by profession and/or education?_

LM – Not that I know of.

_Counsel – You state on page 145 of your report that “many of the people who work in the camps are trained professionals and business people” – on what basis can that assertion be proved?_

LM – The examples that I use are from reported accounts of family members, taken from the Xinjiang victims database. Family members have reported their loved ones have been
moved into work. There are also accounts by people who have left the Uyghur region, e.g. in Kazakhstan who were forced into labour. There is not broader statistical analysis yet as people working in these systems are not those getting out. Since the labour system began, fewer and fewer people are leaving the region. We do not have a lot of first-person account so it is a challenge to our research. We have to do it from this distanced perspective. But we use the government’s own state media, company’s annual reports to confirm what they themselves are doing.

Counsel – You state processions are used to do menial work?

LM – Drivers, chefs, artisans, computer programmers, who are highly trained Mandarin speaking often education in other parts of the country were successful before they were put in camps or made to do menial tasks like sewing, or agriculture.

Counsel – Can you explain what the forced labour programme is intended to achieve on the part of the CCP?

LM – If we look specifically at Chinese state documents, some of what they say are directives as to how to operate the system – to improve Uyghur discipline, less likely to make them lazy. Also points to depleting the population, studies saying there should be more Han people and more dispersed Uyghur people. Moving them around China is one way of operating this dispersal. It will move the thinking towards more industrialised thinking ‘hanified’ way of thinking. All along on side of programs they are building orphanages and elder care facilities for those left behind and for a Han based education for the children.

Panel – What proportion of people are transferred outside of XUAR and why are they transferred?

LM – 100,000s at least sent away, documents straight from local governments – sometimes as many of 50,000 sent away. Not all sent far from their mother region, have seen photos of people put on buses, stories of people sent on trains. Right now, we don’t have kinds of numbers we need to do accurate assessment.

Counsel – Is there a rational for movement?
There is a sense of the level of dangerousness or insecurity. Claims people are matched with certain skills, and also programs matching cities with specific Uyghur region towns e.g., Hotan sent to Dongguan.

Panel – You’ve stated that children are forcibly transferred – how long are children separated from their parents from and do they get reunited?

LM – We have not seen evidence of any systematic child labour yet. One photo captioned ‘children working in a factory’. They are away from their parents as long as they are out on transfers. The program is fairly new so we do not have statistical sense of how long sent out.

Panel – How long on average do people sent away?

LM – We do not have many stories, when the Chinese government gives reports, they talk about people units and moving back and forth – ostensibly, six month, one year, I have seen a three year contract some point. I couldn’t make a generalisation.

5 June 2021 (00:51:00 – 01:12:00)

Rian Thum

RT – I wanted to give a review of both the phenomenon of the separation of children, removal of children to Han dominated state care, and limits on births. Partly as an independent review of scholarship and media reports that have already come out, and partly as an update as the Chinese government has released quite a few documents and statistics on these phenomena. I wanted to tell story from a different angle, based on types of sources and where the information comes from. There are three types of sources.

Firstly, reports from the Xinjiang Bureau of Education. In particular a 2018 report on the year 2017 first reported by the New York Times. It gives very specific numbers on percentage of children placed in residential schools for whole region of Xinjiang (XUAR). Can compare report with 2019 report from the same bureau to see change over time. The increase in number of students has been reported elsewhere but I will give some context.
to it that I don’t think is available elsewhere. Remarkable increase – it’s almost 400,000 placed in boarding schools within two years of children into schools – compulsory education. The second reason this 2017 report is interesting – it is very explicit about the goals of increased in boarding education. Xinjiang has been extraordinary for not having very many boarding schools which has changed overnight. The report has taken the boarding schools are the number one planning item for the Xinjiang Bureau of Education in 2017-18. The main reason is the overall stability of Xinjiang security. It goes on to explain why a boarding school increases stability – “creates a stable and peaceful environment for students blocking the influence of the family’s religious atmosphere on the children to the greatest extent and reducing the occurrences of teaching science in school, listening to the scriptures at home, with thinking and ideas suffering the shocks of moving back and forth”. Explicit statement that the goal is to interrupt the knowledge and customs going from the parents to the children.

Interesting about the report is published in a larger report, over 200 pages which includes report from every level education bureau in China – shows distinctiveness of education policy in China. There are other boarding schools elsewhere but different reasons which is extending reach of education. In Xinjiang it is linked to economic purpose. Don’t really focus on boarding all that much for the schools in other regions and there are no stats as it is not a priority. Focus on this as much of international media discourse on separation of children from parents has focused on orphanages. But here the boarding schools are equally or greater mechanism for the separation. I forgot to mention this has resulted for middle school students in 49.5% by 2019 of students are in boarding schools. 77% compulsory age students are from minority groups in Xinjiang. I recommend looking at the full 2017 report, it has a lot of information on intent, such as getting more Han teachers, teaching Chinese, having it as a language of operation in the school not just language of education, involving the method of home visits to push these families into sending their children to these boarding schools.

My report does focus more on intent involving language, home visits as way to push parents to send children to these schools. Second document I looked at was related to the orphanages. We do not have the same kind of government stats in Xinjiang - I haven't
located a document which gives raw numbers. What I did was to follow in the footsteps of the report by Associated Press which looked through construction tenders and government bids to build new orphanages and repeated research that AP did to provide the raw docs in the appendix. I located 44 construction calls for orphanages – smaller than AP as some have been deleted presumably since then. I also compared this to other regions specifically to Gansu which is neighbour province, similar population, similar economic profile, only 16% as many calls. Construction boom happening whilst rest of China there has been 40% decrease in number of orphans. One main difference is mass internment program. Show Chinese state bureaus at local level dealing with children of people put in internment camps.

Last kind of document: a local government economic and social development report about birth rates and natural increase rates. Very extensive reports by Adrian Zenz which brings data to 2018. Documents starting to arise for 2019 so I was able to double check the Zenz numbers and extend to the more recent past. This work has been superseded by the report by Nathan Ruser and James Leibold. They have done for more units and spent more time. So, no need to talk more on that. Look at things from another direction. I had a look through the most plausible, or least implausible to the Chinese government response to birth rates – study from Urumqi academic who wrote almost journal link article to attempting to pick apart the Zenz report - operates by omitting any response to major claims, manipulating data, making invalid comparison e.g., Zenz claims that growth rate is higher in Xinjiang but there are more Uyghurs in the region.

On their face high boarding rates and birth limits exists in mainland China and Xinjiang – but the way they operate and goals are quite different. In Han regions boarding schools are not fully compulsive theoretically. In Uyghur they are. More important, for Han students these residential schools are teaching with own mother language whereas Uyghur is language of dominant group. For compulsory birth limits – telling Han people to have more, Uyghur people to have less. Maximum penalty for Han is lack social security, for Uyghur is arbitrary internment.

Counsel – We heard from you how Xinjiang moved from being a region of relatively low percentage of students in boarding schools, to expansion by end of 2017, also heard
government stated reasons to expand boarding school are notable both for divergence from polices in rest of PRC and for explicit assimilationist intent. Could you say more about government reasons for expanding residential schools in Xinjiang and the assimilatory intent and diverge and differ from what they are doing in other parts of China?

RT – Boarding schools are not expanding as quickly in rest of China. In the documents where they talk about them the reasons are to improve quality of education, to improve the reach of education compulsory. Accessibility is not mentioned in the report for Xinjiang. Quality is mentioned, they do use some of the same language, for example poverty alleviation is mentioned (almost in any policy for Xinjiang). Assimilation is the primary reason. This fits into larger ideological principles the state has promoted e.g., Official assimilation described as melting pot approach which is a stark divergence to ethnicities policies before say 2010 there was careful curation of ethnic difference – there has been turn at top level towards assimilation.

Counsel – Relating to birth rates – trying to understand what is happening in Xinjiang is different and why to rest of China. Trying to understand how it is different. Report states draconian Xinjiang polices have no parallel elsewhere in China, why is that so? Why are birth rates in Xinjiang different and having different polices than rest of PRC?

RT – Numerous reasons – some cultural, frame have too many children as road to extremism and terrorism. Personally, I suspect this is more a concern with population managing the ethnic proportions in Xinjiang. Seen from the Nankai report that there is an interest in diluting the Uyghur population. Has to be seen alongside program of migration by Han people to Xinjiang. Policies such as ‘move to the south’ which is catch all term for Uyghur dominated areas of Xinjiang. New interest in moving Han people to the south at same time as we see the birth rate change. To put that in historical perspective in 1940s less than five percent of Xinjiang were Han, in 1980, 40%, then stops moving here all way through 2015-2017 – we don’t know where it is right now. I suspect it is changing. This required balancing at that point as Uyghurs were having more children – so how to balance that was to encourage migration of Han people to Xinjiang. We are seeing cutting of birth rate of Uyghur and increase of Han.

Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal
Counsel – Why is the policy to dilute the Xinjiang population, the Uyghur and indigenous population? What is the final purpose of diluting it?

RT – We do have some historical evidence of the central government considering the settlement of the region to be crucial to the security of the region e.g., we see echoes of that in documents. I would want to reread those before giving firmer answer but I am happy to submit to the tribunal later.

5 June 2021 (1:12:22 – 1:35:00)

Rachel Harris

RH – You read my report which is a survey of available testimonies and you will be listening to some more over the next few days so I will limit my remarks to a few reflections of the readings of the testimonies. Women have been detained in numbers which are certainly in the hundred thousand. The women range from farmers to academics, my own colleague and her postgraduate students are amongst those detained. From these large number of women detained we have just a handful of testimonies and they come from a handful of Kazakh and Uzbek women detainees. Of course, this speaks to the uneven possibility of escaping the country. Each of these revelations comes at serious cost and I must say that I seriously admit their courage. They have to overcome shame within their community, they have been targets for Chinese agents who accused them of lying, of corruption or being paid US agents. Male detainees also experience sexual violence in the camps, we know this from testimonies and males are detained in larger number than women. We focus on women’s experience. There are particular aspects of violence against women, gendered violence and what I read is systematic sexual violence against women, which are relevant to the discussions that are on-going in this tribunal.

Just a quick word on background, for years academics have been writing on the position of minority women generally in China and the practices of objectifications and sexualisations against them. Ubiquitous images of smiling, always welcoming. Women in Xinjiang used in the same way as “window-dressing” for the current Chinese policies in
that region. We can see that from camp inspection visits and of course, very prominently we see the use of these young women dancers as entertainment for the planned, over 200,000 mainly Chinese tourists who are expected to visit the region in the coming year under the new tourist drive. Just to state that given the violence these images are highly problematic. I would like to trace a line then from that to the processes of de-humanisation in the camps and this is a theme that is shared across the testimonies that we have seen.

Just to mention a few names here, Gulbahar Haitiwaji, now resident in France, spend two years in a camp near Karamay, describes her experience in terms of de-humanisation, as brainwashing, having to memorise long tracks of political literature, enforced sterilisation and public self-criticism. The language of de-humanisation is also used in interviews given by Gulbahar Jelilova, she talks about experience of crowded cells, hygiene, constant surveillance and drugs, again using the language of de-humanisation. Across these reports, there is a high level of consistency, for example in Gulbahar Jelilova’s report paired with testimony given by Mihrigul Tursun; she has spoken prominently in the US, has detailed her experience of torture and spoken of deaths of fellow inmates. If we speak specifically about sexual violence, the reports have been slow to emerge. I think that this is consistent of what we experience with reporting on sexual violence within a conflict in other contexts around the world. From the Xinjiang context, we have important testimony from Tursunay Ziyawudun; an ethnic Uyghur, now in the US and she is recounting her personal experiences of gang rape and sexual torture, including many disturbing details, like Sayragul [Sawutbay] who we heard from yesterday. She notes that women were removed regularly from the cells every night and raped. This testimony is also supported by testimony from Gulzira Aulhan, a Kazakh detainee. She spoke how she was forced to strip women before being left alone with guards and camp officials. Her account struck me because it shows how inmates within the camp system are made complicit with the system. They also share the guilt. Gulzira also details a financial incentive to the abuse. Something we hear from testimonies is guards or officials paying or bribing for access. We also heard from Qelbinur Sidik, shocking details – two aspects, the details on methods of torture all kinds of electric shock. This again echoed by accounts from Tursunay [Ziyawudun]. I also note Qelbinur’s comment on her own interlocutors who notes that rape has become a culture within the camps.
There is an interviewee, a young woman called Rukiye, who is based in Germany who has given a harrowing account of her own experience of rape and torture. She speaks of being held for long periods of time in an underground room filled almost to the roof with water. We heard examples of that from Omer Bekali. Again, Rukiye talks of bribery, she was only released because her family paid a large amount to get her released. And again, this question of the difficulty of speaking out so Rukiye has claimed that 99% of women have experiences rape but they wouldn’t speak about it because they would feel too ashamed. These descriptions range from daily life inside the camps, the nature and method of abuse.

I find them to be broadly consistent across different accounts. These are provided by women who have spent time in different camps and who were speaking from different countries. I consider these accounts to be broadly credible and sadly I think that they are representative of the experiences of large number of women detained in the camps. In our joint report, we suggested that China organises and coordinates systematic and interconnected practices of ethnic targeted violence. I want to make explicit what the direct links of these various forms of gender-based violence to my colleagues’ statements are: the culture of rape inside the camps, the sterilisation of women inside and outside the camps, and also, we can make a link with the report on coerced marriage with Han Chinese man.

I also suggest sexual violence is an integral part of the planned transformation of the Xinjiang region into a hub of the Belt and Road initiative and part of that drive for development. I believe that sexual violence plays a major role in the climate of terror and that underpins the production of a large and passive labour force which is being used to populate the new factories which have sprung up alongside the camps, filled with so called graduate of the camps as well as transfers from rural areas. As we have seen in other contexts that have been designated as genocide sexual violence is an attack against the individual woman and an attack against the ethnic group. In Yugoslavia and Rwanda, in the case of the Yazidis and Rohingya, sexual violence against women has been used to humiliate, subordinate, and emotionally destroy entire communities.
Violations against women and their bodies and reproductive capabilities are dubbed a “weapon of war” against that whole ethnic group. I would link that comment to the testimony of women who have come out of the Xinjiang camps. They talk about the experience suffered by many former inmates and detainees, of extreme trauma after release, feeling dead inside, only a shell, insomnia, suicidal thoughts. There are also report of those released into the community in Xinjiang turning to alcohol or other forms of addiction. To quote Tursunay Ziyawudun “it is designed to destroy everyone’s spirit”.

My final point, we had a few questions about the question of intent on the level of which these policies are sanctioned or deliberate. I suggest that this wide spread practice of gender-based violence must be at least condoned at very high level.

We know that the use of torture in detention centres right across China is well documented. Common methods employed Omer Bekali’s account that you heard and we also have reports of rape in detention employed specifically against other groups of women, so Tibetan, nuns and Falun Gong followers. In relation to the Xinjiang camps, the leaked internal documents shared with the New York Times in 2019, for example, do demonstrate the direct leadership of Xi Jinping in the crack-down, that goes back to the series of speeches that he made in 2014. This explicit call for a people’s war on terror and the specific call for the education remoulding and transformation of criminals. Sean Roberts told you about the direct role of Chen Quanguo and how he is the direct architect of many aspects of the system in Xinjiang, the great social management system. I will leave it there.

Counsel – In your report, you surveyed a number of secondary reports and testimonies, mainly from 2017 onwards. You have also conducted field work in the region for 20 years and you said that, over this period, you witnessed incremental levels of repression of the indigenous people, can you elaborate on this?

RH – Already in the 1990’s, I was observing a series of crackdowns against religious practice for example, with high levels of censorship. Around the 2000’s things started to get more difficult. I think a real turning point in terms of my personal experience of the region and the increasing securitisation would be 2009: I was in Urumqi during the 2009 demonstrations and the subsequent crackdown and inter-ethnic violence that occurred in
the city. I saw high level of securitisation across rural Xinjiang, with mobilisation of local police, checkpoints and a lot of arrests. As I began to work with rural women, I conducted a lot of interviews with religious practitioners, who already were speaking of being arrested for these normal, everyday practices, like teaching children to read Arabic or recite the Qur’an, etc. Also, in general, the question of reproductive rights was very prominent, so, many of the women would talk about their experience of coerced abortions going back to the 1990s.

Counsel – In your opinion, would the stigma inhibit the re-integration of the victims of sexual violence into the Uyghur community, and/or would inhibit their desire or ability to reproduce?

RH – Undoubtedly there would be difficulties in re-integrating for women who dare to speak out about this. The shame is a problem for the family, the wider family. I believe that would be a powerful restraint on women’s willingness to speak out about these things.

Counsel – As mentioned, the report is primarily based on secondary reports and testimonies, and you stated that, based on your experience, these reports are credible, can you explain?

RH – We have seen Chinese official sources attempting to discredit these witnesses on the basis of the lack of reliability of the women, and I think there is a widespread tendency to regard minority, and particularly Muslim women as unreliable, uneducated “baby-making” machines, to quote one recent comment from a Chinese official. But I’d like to give credit to them as witnesses who have an equal validity to any other person who could sit up on a panel like this.

5 June 2021 (01:36:00 – 02:20:50)

Joanne Smith-Finley

JSF – Thank you for reading my report. I’m going to just summarize, hopefully fairly quickly, the main ideas. As you know, the report focuses quite significantly on my own
ethnographic field work, so particularly my two most recent field trips to the Uyghur region in 2016 and 2018. I’m going to bring some more photographs – I couldn’t put all the photographs in the report, so I’m going to bring some more photographs today to show you. But the bulk of my evidence from there is from snatched conversations – the only way to have interviews at that time – photographic evidence, and video evidence. We don’t have time to watch any of the video evidence, but I can provide that at a later date if necessary.

The most recent intensification of religious repression begins from 2017, seven months after Chen Quanguo came to power as the regional Party Secretary. So we have the Regulations on ‘de-extremification’, which ostensibly aim to halt the penetration of extremism. So we see things like ‘making religion more Chinese’, the Sinicization of religion, establishing ‘correct beliefs’, ‘correctly handling the relationship between law and religion’, and this refers to a longstanding division in China between official and unofficial religion, legal and illegal religion…

As my colleague Ondřej Klimeš has written in 2018, what the party seems to be doing here in fact is seeking to “solve the problem of to whom to listen, whom to trust, and whom to follow”. So, here, the party is wanting the Uyghurs not to be following an alternative authority in the form of Islam, but to be following the CCP and CCP ideology. So, in practice what’s happened is that Islam has been targeted as a virus, as an addiction. We’ve had imams referred to as parasites in state discourses, and piety referred to as parasitic, in the sense that individuals, Uyghur individuals, who are spending time praying five times a day cannot possibly be useful economic producers for the Chinese nation.

We’ve seen these medical analogies used – virus, addiction, malignant tumours…poisons – to justify mass internment using population targets and arrest quotas. And actually, if you look closely at the regulations themselves, you can see straight away, in Article 5, a direct reference to an annual target responsibility evaluation system, which refers directly to the targets and quotas that have been used to intern individuals. And in Article 14, a direct reference to educational transformation, which is of course a reference to transformation through education or political re-education, which consists of combining ideological education, psychological counselling, as a euphemism, and behavioural
‘corrections’. You’ll notice that the word ‘correction’ appears a lot in state discourses in the last few years with regard to the Uyghurs.

So, what the state purports to be as a targeting of extremism is in practice what Darren Byler has referred to as a ‘carpet-bombing’ approach – it has been completely arbitrary.

This internment campaign has targeted anyone, really, who displayed a high level of piety or a high adherence to daily religious practices – everyday ordinary peaceful religious practices. The state itself has referred to it as an indiscriminate use of ‘weed-killer’. So the state itself uses the term ‘weed-killer’. ‘You can’t just pull out the weed, you have to spray the entire field’ – I think is the rough translation of what the state has said.

During my last trip to Xinjiang, to the Uyghur region, conversations with both Han Chinese residents and Uyghur residents brought the same notions out. “So these detained people”, said one Han taxi driver, “they’re just there to have their thinking changed, and then they will come out of the camps again”. Although everyone I spoke to during that trip told me that very few people were coming out of the camps. A Uyghur businessman said to me, “some people were given medicine to change their thinking in the camps, medicine for their minds, and this made them ill. And when they became ill, only then were they allowed out”. I’ve seen other reports from human rights defenders, Chinese human rights defenders, working on the ground in China, that have referred to these people [as having] been actually transferred to mental health facilities from the internment camps.

What are the eligibility criteria for internment then? Not terrorist acts as you and I know them, but in fact everyday religious practices. Growing a beard, regular prayer, inviting too many people to one’s wedding, giving your children names of Islamic origin, looking too religious, reciting an Islamic verse at someone’s funeral, washing bodies according to Islamic custom, holding strong religious views, allowing other people to preach religion, teaching the Qur’an to your children, asking an imam to name your children, attending the mosque regularly, studying or teaching ‘unauthorized’ forms of Islam, praying at a mosque other than on the traditional prayer day of Friday, attending Friday prayers outside of your village, making a pilgrimage Mecca, or possessing illegal religious content on a mobile phone or computer – and this can simply be a woman wearing a niqab or hijab. So what does this look like? What does this religious repression campaign look like
inside the camps? It has been a campaign of coercive secularization. Internees have
been forced to renounce Islam, to disavow their Islamic beliefs, to make self-criticisms.
The most religious internees, the ones who perhaps were Islamic scholars or much more
pious than others, have been forced, singled out, and forced to eat pork as punishment,
or to drink alcohol. Internees have not been allowed to wash their hands and feet – this
sort of regular washing of hands and feet was...labelled as extreme.

They were lectured about the dangers of Islam, and in some cases they were tortured.
And as reported in the Guardian in 2018, from one camp survivor, “they would say to us:
there is no religion. The government and the Party will take care of you”. The government
and the Party is benefactor, wanting to switch off the internees’ authority from Islam, from
God, to the CCP. So it’s just one slide about my trip in 2016 – there’s a lot more data if
you want to know anything...I can tell you that at a later date. This is just to say that
trouble was already brewing very significantly in 2016. So, just a couple of quick
snapshots there – restaurant staff who had [fled] from Kashgar and Aksu to Urumqi
saying, “we’ve come to Urumqi because there’s no freedom in the south anymore. A man
can’t even grow a short beard or a moustache. Only older men can grow a longer beard.
Women are not allowed anymore to wear the niqab or burka”. And a migrant taxi driver
who had also fled from Hotan to Urumqi, “a lot of people have been put in prison down
south for very, very small things, like wearing a veil or growing a beard”.

So to my 2018 trip, lots of photos from here on in. I did a lot of walking during this trip – I
walked around the city for hours, hours, and hours, and observed everything, and
photographed everything, as well as I could, [and] had a lot of snatched
conversations...around mosques and in different places, and took video footage. All of
the mosques without exception were completely deserted. I never saw anybody go in at
any time of day on any day of the week whilst I was walking around – this was a three
week visit, during which I was mostly unmolested by the state. I have a couple of two
arrests which I could tell you about later if you’re interested – brief arrests, two hour
arrests. We have the PRC flag in four courts of the mosques, barbed wire, razor wire,
coiled all over the perimeter fences, digital running slogans against religious extremism,
and so on. But nobody praying.
So in my conversations, I found that people were saying that only between ten to twenty elderly men [go] to the mosque at prayer times, although I never saw one single person go in myself. Most other retired men, they explained, were too afraid to go in because the state would stop their retirement benefit if they did. People who were still employed in state work units said they could not go in because if they went in, they would lose their jobs. If you work for a state enterprise or a state organ, you’re not allowed to be religious. And everyone else, they said, even the independent businessmen who used to go in in droves prior to 2016, and even still in 2016 actually, are now too scared to go in. No one is going in. Why? Because of these security checkpoints set up at all the mosque entrances with iris scanners. People said, “we want to go in the mosques, but if we go in the mosques they will take us to prison. They look at our identity cards and they will mark us for internment”.

Moving to Kashgar in the south – this is probably the most important mosque, one of the most important mosques in the Uyghur region. This mosque was turned into a museum when I visited in 2018. You see a Uyghur ticket seller sitting at the counter there on the right. Just to her right, there is a riot policeman asleep on the desk with two riot shields in front of him. And I was allowed to go in as a tourist only. So this is what happened when I went inside (refers to quote on slide) – I’ll just let you read this by yourself – gives you a sense of at the atmosphere. Moving to the Kashgar old town, we have a similar situation. All of the small neighbourhood mosques are padlocked without exception – razor wire, barbed wire, framed posters of the ‘de-extremification’ regulations on the outside walls, CCTV, and in some cases the mosques have been desecrated, not in this case on the left there, but in many cases, crescents removed from the domes – a desanctification.

Again, through conversations, I asked people, “where has the crescent gone? Did someone take it away?” Sometimes people were too scared to say, to speak out loud, because the CCTV camera was right above their head. They would nod and say “yes, they took the crescent away”, but they would not answer verbally because they were afraid of being recorded. Others were less fearful and said, “yes, they took it away. They took the crescent away”. What was really noticeable, if you look at that slogan across the door here – this slogan says: ‘Love the Party, Love the Country’. This has replaced an
earlier slogan that said: ‘Love the Country, Love Religion’. It used to be okay to love
religion as long as you loved the country a little bit more, but now it’s no longer okay to
love religion. You can only love the party and love the country. These are the only options.
And some mosques unbelievably – I couldn’t quite believe my eyes when I walked into
this place – have been turned into café bars and are now being frequented by Han
Chinese tourists who are drinking beer inside.

So here’s another little story, little snapshot – I spoke to a Hui man and his Uyghur wife
who said that the school, the Islamic school on right hand side there, had been closed for
many years already. Closed down lots of years ago, whereas the mosque on the left had
been closed down almost exactly around the time of the publication of the ‘de-
extremification’ regulations. And they said, “oh, some foreign Muslims came the other day
and they wanted to go in the mosque and we had to redirect them to the Heytgah
mosque”. I just looked at them and said, “I’m so sorry, the Heytgah mosque isn’t open
either”. And I explained what had happened, and they looked absolutely dismayed and
shocked.

His wife asked me, “what do you do?”

I said I am a university teacher.

She looked at me for a moment and said, “so you know then. You know all about it”.

I said, “yeah, I do”.

And she burst into tears.

She squeezed my hand, I tried to comfort her, and I said, “look, everything changes,
everything changes”.

And she says, “when? When will it change? When will it get better?”

That’s just one example, but there were lots of examples like that.

And then the defacement and removal of halal signage – this was all over Urumqi – it was
already complete for the Uyghurs by the time I got there in 2018. All of the Uyghur
restaurants already had no halal signage when I got there. But it was still in process for
the Hui. It had spread to the Hui communities and the Hui restaurants as well, and it was still in process. You can see the mosque, picture of the mosque insignia and the halal signage has been removed from the top left corner there... I have hundreds of photos like this showing various stages of defacement.

And onto other reports – these are not my reports – these are reports from other scholars, from my colleagues Dr. Harris, Dr. Thum, and also from the ASPI.

And so we began to hear then, in around the time [of] April 2019, of the systematic destruction of religious built heritage. This included mosques and shrines. So first of all, we heard from Shawn Zhang, who is a Chinese PhD student at UBC, about the north gatehouse of the Keriye mosque in Hotan having been demolished. And the satellite imagery came out to show how this had still been visible in November 2017 on satellite, but by April 2018 it had vanished. This gatehouse had vanished.

And this is an example, as Dr. Harris has written, of what UNESCO calls “strategic cultural cleansing: the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups on the basis of their cultural, ethnic, or religious affiliation, combined with intentional and systematic destruction of cultural heritage”.

Also, while I was in Kashgar, I visited the Buwi Maryam Khenim Mazari, Bashkirem, on the instruction of Dr. Thum, who said that I must go and see what was the current situation with this shrine. When I got there, it was still intact, but it was deserted. It was padlocked – all of the...offerings had been removed from the garden. And there was a massive convenience police station built right next door to it. Huge police station, about probably ten times the size of the shrine. I couldn’t photograph that, I hope for obvious reasons. I still got arrested. This was a two hour arrest with three levels of interrogation from three levels of police in three different languages. So I won’t go into the details, but I can tell you about it later if you are interested to hear more.

The Guardian [and] Bellingcat also came out with a satellite-based survey, satellite imagery analysis, which documented in May 2019 more than two dozen Islamic religious sites partly or completely demolished. One of them was the Imam Asim shrine, which showed that the shrine was empty, the mosque and the khaniqah and other buildings had
been torn down, and only the tomb remained. As with the shrine I visited myself, pilgrims’ offerings, flags...had all disappeared.

And this is what the shrine would have, should have, looked like at a pilgrimage, on a pilgrimage day.

So just to sum up on the shrines again, I quote my colleague Dr. Thum: “Nothing could say more clearly to the Uyghurs that the Chinese state wants to uproot their culture and break their connection to the land than the desecration of their ancestors graves, the sacred shrines that are the landmarks of Uyghur history”.

And to quote our colleague, and especially Dr. Harris’ close colleague, Rahile Dawut, who was disappeared in 2017: “If one were to remove these shrines, the Uyghur people would lose contact with earth. They would no longer have a personal, cultural, and spiritual history. After a few years, we would have no memory of why we live here or where we belong”.

Moving on to culture... of course culture and Islam are entwined in the Uyghur society to a large degree. But when I was walking around in Kashgar old town, there were a lot of padlocked homes.

The parent generation was conspicuous in its absence. There were a lot of children around, there were a lot of grandparents around, very few people in between – which suggested immediately to me that those parents had been interned. And what we saw were signs that these families had desperately tried to prove allegiance to the state. They had desperately tried to prove a patriotic allegiance to the Party before being taken away, in the form of New Year couplets pasted on either side of their door, Chinese New Year lanterns hanging on either side of their doors.

And the propaganda tells the same story too. The posters all over Urumqi in 2018, like this one, it says – [speaks in Chinese] – ‘respect traditional Han festivals, hand down beautiful Chinese virtues’. Where we talk about Chinese virtues and traditional festivals here, we are talking very much about Han traditional festivals and Han traditional virtues. And we can see this in the picture, which shows very clearly Han traditional architecture and traditional living setup.
A Uyghur female bookseller in Xinhua bookstore at this time said to me, “we don’t have any festivals now, we Uyghurs. No one dares even to say assalam alaikum – peace be with you – anymore either. It’s just too religious”.

So onto language – very quickly – coercive Chinese-medium education is happening inside the camps and outside the camps.

Outside the camps – as my PhD student is documenting now meticulously – we are seeing a “slow linguicide”, which has been taking place since 2002. In 2018, this was becoming very, very clear. You could see it everywhere, most particularly in this picture I took of a poster outside the number one Urumqi primary school in which – this is a textile poster – you can see it hanging down the wall there – and the Arabic script has been literally cut out and then blacked over in that rectangle you see there. This should have been the Arabic script for […] the greeting ‘hello’. Almost like a cancer being cut out, I would suggest.

And then children of ‘doubly-detained’ parents have been placed in securitized national education boarding schools, as we’ve heard from my colleague Dr. Thum, and, we hear, psychologically tortured. So in one report from ethnic Han Chinese human rights defenders working undercover – these are religious Christian human rights defenders who are working undercover for Bitter Winter magazine in China – they wrote about how children in classrooms were showing extreme caution when trying to speak and write in Chinese, almost “as if they were skating on very thin ice”. In my most recent research together with Dilmurat Mahmut at McGill University in Canada – who is a Uyghur scholar, Uyghur folklorist – we have been analysing closely, very closely analysing, a set of textbooks that were revised and re-published in 2018. And in these textbooks, all Uyghur cultural and social characteristics have been erased, completely erased.

The word ‘Islam’ does not appear once in 6 books. The ethnonym ‘Uyghur’ only appears once or twice, and then only as a part of the name of the region – XUAR. All of the pictures of human characters are showing Han facial features, not Uyghur. All the names are typical Chinese names, no Uyghur personal names.
Han Chinese and western literatures are highlighted, but no Islamic literature, no Turkish or Middle Eastern literatures, and definitely no Uyghur literatures. The same is true for poetry.

Mahmut and I argued that this is a deliberate intention to ‘invisibilize’ and eventually to eradicate the Uyghur people as a separate ethnic group or nation.

I’ve put these two pictures up here because this was a quite stunning thing we discovered, which didn’t fit the pattern I’ve just described. We found one picture – just one picture, the lower picture – which clearly shows Uyghur children. We think this was left in the set of textbooks by mistake. If you look at the top picture – this is the same picture doctored to make the children look Han, ethnically Han, in appearance. So in the bottom picture, we have shadowed eye sockets to show the deep-set eyes. We have Uyghur braids on the girl in the pink dress. In the top one, all of the children have magically become Chinese – Han Chinese. And we have regular pigtails instead of the Uyghur braids.

So these changes are causing significant mental harm, I would argue. The controls on religious dress and facial hair…a colleague of mine was in Ghulja, in the northern oasis of Ghulja, in 2018, and interviewed a Uyghur taxi driver. He got out a picture of him[self] when he used to have a moustache and began to cry, and said to her, “today, it’s not possible to grow a moustache. It’s not officially forbidden, but everybody knows the consequences of doing so”.

I spent two hours talking to this young man in Kashgar. He sang the national Chinese anthem to me in perfect Chinese. He also sang me a song in perfect Chinese that helped him to learn the Chinese tones, the four tones, the pitch in Chinese – in mandarin Chinese. And then, all of a sudden, he got some white sticky labels and began to recreate a beard on his face. He’s not aware of what’s happening to him yet at age 6. There is a significant psychological trauma, I think, in this community resulting from these restrictions.

There was also the campaign to cut women’s tunics and dresses, which was going on when I was in the Uyghur region in 2018. I didn’t see any of it personally, but it was being reported at the time by Radio Free Asia and some Taiwanese news outlets, where women
were having their long tunics and skirts cut in the street – cut short in the street – because wearing a long tunic and hiding your behind was supposedly a sign of religious extremism. And of course, this has been described as an attack on Uyghur women’s dignity.

Also, Dr. Harris made reference to coerced intermarriages. The PRC has been aggressively incentivizing intermarriage since 2014, by offering couples money and material goods to encourage them and persuade Uyghur women to marry Han Chinese men. And, indeed, we’ve had a recent report last year, June 2020, from the Associated Press, where a mixed couple report receiving such incentivized goods. However, our colleague Darren Byler has published analysis of PRC state narratives which suggest significant level of coercion. So we have Han male migrants and security workers choosing a Uyghur woman in the region and then working with various arms of the local authorities to convince the families to agree. And when this is happening in a context where refusal will be labelled as extremism and will result in you or your parents being interned in a camp, it is very difficult to refuse such an intermarriage.

We’ve also seen the detention, the targeting of famous cultural figures – or ‘killing the chicken to show the monkey’ – to use a Chinese phrase. So this is the deliberate targeting of celebrity and cultural figureheads. Again, it’s a way of inducing terror in the community, inducing fear. It promotes the state project to eradicate local languages and cultures, but it also warns everyone – all of the broader masses – that nobody is safe, not even the Uyghur elites. This practice has reached beyond the realm of high culture – for example, we see a celebrity footballer interned, we see a philanthropist businessman sentenced to life imprisonment, and so on.

The pictures you see here are of very highly respected musician – Abdurehim Heyit – a long-term friend of mine and Dr. Harris’. And these are pictures of him before and after detention. He is now out of the internment camp but, we believe, under house arrest in Urumqi.

Just very quickly, just to say that, everything I was describing from what I saw with my own eyes in 2018 is still happening know. We know this from a recent Reuters report, among others, in which Reuters investigative reporters visited around 24 mosques across
seven counties during Ramadan and found that most of them were either partially or completely demolished.

You see a picture here of part of a minaret broken off from the Xinqu mosque in Changji, and you see here the same mosque with the minarets removed.

In this picture, you see a mosque that has apparently been destroyed altogether and reporters were prevented from entering the site. And a Han Chinese resident told reporters, “there are no Muslims like that here anymore”, meaning there are no Muslims who pray publicly in a public place in a public mosque here anymore.

I’ll stop there.

Counsel – You mentioned that the Chinese Communist Party sees Uyghur Islam as a virus and you also referred to the party using this medical analogy to describe with reference to cleansing treatment and so forth. Is this a reference to cleansing the people of their religion or is it something more than that?

JSM – I think it is something more. I think it is a hollowing out of their entire identity and religion is targeted amongst other things because it is the central component of their identity but it is not the only component of their identity. I think it is a hollowing out; an emptying of the Uyghur identity so that in the end the Uyghur group as we know it will not exist anymore. In the same way that the Manchu group have already inter-married to such a level and being sinicised to such a level that really the Manchu group doesn’t really exist anymore in China and Uyghurs often refer to the Manchu group when they are voicing their fears about eradication and disappearance.

Counsel – You stated that in fractions in the community leads to detention and you discussed in your report that within the detention facilities there is forced secularisation and de-extremification. What are the consequences for those who refuse secularisation in the camps?

JSM – We don’t have much information about this. There is a report called “From camps to prisons” by Gene Bunin, an independent researcher. He is also the curator of the Xinjiang Victims Database In which he has described how the most un reformable in
Chinese official’s eyes internees have been transferred from internment camps into formal prison situations and in these situations there have sometimes been kangaroo court held within the internment camps and those internees that were sort of perceived to be unrefirmable or unrepentant have been handed a very arbitrary summary, a sentence of ten, 15 or 20 years and there are some statistics in that report that show the kind of proportions and backgrounds but it is usually young men, young very pious men who refuse to renounce Islam in the camps who end up being treated in that way. Apart from that report I am not aware of other information.

Counsel – You stated that when severe restrictions on religious practice were put in place in South Xinjiang, that people where then going from the South to the North. Can you tell us how common that was, and whether that could be construed as a forced displacement or not?

JSM – To a certain degree, it was a forced displacement because there people were migrating to Urumqi in the North because they were no longer able to practice their religious beliefs and were molested in the South and if they continued practicing everyday religious activities in the South, they risked being interned and imprisoned. Those people were moving to Urumqi because there were much greater freedoms there. This has been happening for quite some time already. I have been going to the region over a period of thirty years. If I think back of the first time, I was there in 1995/96, at that time all the people would be going into a mosque on a Friday in Urumqi where elderly man; local Urumqi residents and very few of them actually. Not very many. A handful of elderly man going into the mosque around Friday lunchtime. By 2002-2004, as the local Islamic revival was picking up in pace, it was very different. In Urumqi, the mosques had been rebuilt. They were four/five times the size, two or three story, huge forecourts, and thousands of men of all ages going in and out. A lot of those people at that time had already started coming up from the South, I think. This intensified very much after 2009, after the demonstrations in Urumqi. By 2016, when I was there, we were already seeing restrictions in Urumqi whereby the women wearing niqab and hijab and so on. In 2004 or in the 2000s when I was there were no longer wearing those. They were replaced by a halfway hijab, like a permissible hijab that the authorities would allow and we also turban,
saw these fashionable turbans, especially the young women, which seemed to be allowed by that time. But by 2018 all of that had completely vanished. In Kashgar in 2018, I saw one lady with a very regular sort of chiffon lightweight headscarf during the whole time that I was there and even she was asked to take that off as she passed through a security checkpoint and no other woman was wearing any other head covering at all.

*Counsel – the severe restrictions you refer to have extended as you stated in your report to Urumqi and the rest of Xinjiang. Has that led to a consequent pattern of displacement of movement of people in Xinjiang to elsewhere or within Xinjiang?*

JSN – I interviewed some Uyghurs who had to move to Inner China from the Uyghur region ironically because it was easier to practice in Inner China than it was in the Uyghur region. However, by 2019 even the migrants in Inner China had come under significant scrutiny. So, for example, in Shanghai when I was interviewing Uyghurs in restaurants in 2019, they had removed all of the Arabic calligraphy and all the sort of Islamic pictures from the walls inside the restaurant. They explained how they were no longer able to go into the mosque. The mosque was just across the street and the Hui Muslims were happily going in and out of the mosque without any problem at all but the Uyghurs said “we cannot go in the mosque, as soon as we go in the mosque, we will be rounded up and send back to Xinjiang to be locked up”. And they said they had Han Chinese political cadres coming into the restaurant and checking up on them, coming to eat in the restaurant but clearly coming for surveillance purposes.

*Counsel – you stated in the report that Uyghur cultural leaders have been detained and at page 189 of your report you refer to artists, writers, poets, academics, singers and athletes. It might be that there aren’t any details about this but how widespread is the detention of Uyghur cultural leaders?*

JSN – It is hard to gage that as with everything, we know about what we know. Often it may just be the tip of the iceberg. In the case of celebrity figures, the most recent report I have seen numbers about 435 known celebrity figures to have been disappeared, imprisoned or detained. But how representative that is across the whole it is hard to say.
Counsel – Does the detention of these figures; is it accompanied by publicity in state media about the fact that they have been detained or not?

JSM – No. Everybody knows the person has disappeared. Everyone in the community knows so the fear is instilled but it is not loaded publicly in the press. Not that I have seen.

Counsel – My final question which in one form or another has been asked of your colleagues. What would you say is the logical conclusion, if any, that could be reached in respect of the policies you have mentioned relating to cultural destruction?

JSM – What we are seeing is an identity castration. That is a term I used recently and that I think that really resonates. It is like an identity castration or it is like an absolute emptying of the Uyghur religious, linguistic and cultural identity. It is leaving the physical shell. Yes, we are not seeing mass killings. No, but we are seeing the mass killing in the sense that we are seeing the mass killing of an identity and we are seeing a physical shell of people left without the cultural substance left anymore, in any recognisable form and we are seeing that people are being deprived of the ability to transmit that life force that cultural life force from one generation to the next. Deliberately, intentionally deprived of the opportunity to do that by the state.

5 June 2021 (02:45:40 – 04:09:20)

Questions to the Expert Panel

Panel – in your statement you start by saying voluntary, what do you think the Chinese use of the word “voluntary”. What do you the authorities mean by that?

LM – In many documents I have seen in the last year the Chinese government /local authorities use it in a defensive posture against claims against forced labour and that they are using forced labour in these programmes. When we see publicity about the labour transfer programs the celebration is the ideological readjustments of those subject to these labour force programs. Though the stories are about those explicitly unwillingly –
the success story is via consorted efforts of cadres and agencies and private labour agencies as well, which are subsidised by the government, that people who were previously unwillingly to go to work/accept government’s “largess” that they have been transformed and now voluntary join work. These efforts are clearly coercive and consistently and going back to people’s houses and telling them that they need to be re-educated if they don’t go. The threat to resist the programmes are tantamount to being affiliated terrorist mean what the Chinese government calling voluntary and celebrating voluntariness is in fact a systematic program of coercion.

Panel – The words “work enforcement” and “enslavement” – what are the pointers to slavery?

LM – When we talk about slavery as sociological or legal – sociological definition e.g., Kevin Bales at Nottingham who has defined it as person experience being compelled to work against their will under threat of violence without ability to walk away. All these factors are there in this case – that the people who are being subjected to these programmes are going unwillingly, they are being subjected to forced work and under threat of violence (camps) and unable to walk away – some are literally behind fences and walls. Others are extraordinarily isolated, that there would be no way to get out of it unless someone where to transport you. These programmes meet the sociological definition that is about the experience of the enslaved person. At the same time, we have definitions in UK modern slavery law, or the Palermo Protocol on trafficking or the ILO Convention on forced labour. Some of those focus on, not the ILO Convention, but the others focus on the criminal act, the programme the state or the person who enacts inflicts slavery on someone. Typically, these definitions hang on three categories or three characteristics of slavery: forced, fraud or coercion. In the UK it is often called deception instead of fraud. But in this case all three of these characteristics are met – there are many cases in which people are being forced by being held within the fences of the internment camps, or within the fences of the factory, fraud they are being promised of paid or promised that they can go back. In some cases, people are being paid but in other cases people are not. And then coercion, being coerced through this system of agencies.
that go out and after them, time and time again. All of these possible definitions of
trafficking and slavery and forced labour seem to be met in my opinion.

Panel – In terms of that internment site and the Palermo Protocol – how do they explain
what they are doing?

LM – I can’t possibly tell how they would do that.

Panel – When you talk about forced labour do you mean slave labour as well as low-paid
labour?

LM – Yes, most definitions of slavery... there is a lot of debate about what constitutes
slavery. Some people would suggest that the definition of slavery hangs on whether or
not a person is paid. There are testimonies to the effect that there are people who are in
the system of labour transfer that are in fact not paid or paid little. Some testimonies show
debt bondage, that is that they are being told that they own money for transportation, for
housing at the place of work and therefore never make the money promised. Most
definitions of slavery do not hang on this question of payment, but hang on the question
of voluntariness of labour and the ILO definition of forced labour is like this; that is an
unwilling coercion to work and so compulsion/compulsory work. Question of pay is not as
relevant, even if person is paid, they don’t have right to spend as they like, they don’t
have the right to come and go as they please, they don’t have the right to choose their
work which is a right given to humans by UDHR.

Panel – Does money ever reach their families, who presumably wouldn’t have any money
to survive on, if they were detained?

LM – Chinese government reports people do send money back home and that is a method
of poverty alleviation. We don’t have any first-person testimonies suggesting this
happens. We have very little ability to know anything about what is happening to workers
there because no auditors or researchers or journalist can go to factories allowed to get
close. We cannot independently verify if people are being paid or sending money back
home to their families. We can’t know.
Panel – Going back you just said that you can’t go back in. How do you corroborate the evidence you have given us? A lot is secondary, from articles, how do we know this is true?

LM – A lot of what I use to describe the systematic nature of the programs is drawn directly from government directives and documents – typically local level documents instructing labour agencies on how to operate labour transfers and that instruct them to systematically employ everyone who can be employed. I work with a team of incredible researchers from the region who do not currently live there who speak Uyghur and Chinese and Kazakh. I also work with a supply chain analyst – we are a team. We do a lot of work to verify this. When we locate a media article about these directives, those directives are typically celebrated or promoted through many different media sources, and we track down the original government directive that comes from the regional government. This is the public regional directive, there might be other ones that we don’t know about. These are the claims they want the public to know, the operational systems that they expect people to understand and implement on the ground, and ostensibly they have no concerns about hiding because they are open sourced online. The main contours of this system is drawn directly from government evidence.

Panel – Have any of you actually been to a camp? Seen what goes on within the camp?

LM – No.

Panel – Nobody within the team has been there. This is all secondary. Let’s talk about having being arrested, is there a problem about seeing anything, presumably this is 2018? Has anyone been allowed and look?

LM – I know of a financial auditor before 2016 or 2017. She says before the wall came down, was allowed to inspect a factory in Xinjiang, since then they had no access to that region.

Panel – You mentioned quantitative point system, could you explain this to us?

LM – Over course of last four years I have seen number of different quantitative point systems, early on there was a form found online showed different practices that would
I specifically talk of one assigning people to different forms of labour transfers or education if they deemed dangerous. There are a number of different ways those points are masked and working in labour transfer is a way to gain points, which is a form of coercion (losing could mean detention or worse treatment for your family members). Those points are accrued or lost through these incredibly invasive visits of Han people which are often implemented by companies themselves. We have investigated several companies that have programmes in their companies where they move Han workers out to Xinjiang region to do more technical parts of the jobs, the educations they have and then those people are required to go into Uyghur people’s homes to educate them on Chinese thinking and ideology and gear them up towards working in factories and to monitor them and to assign these points.

Panel – The Xinjiang Construction Corps operation, is that a government or a commercial organisation?

LM – It is a paramilitary corporate organisation which owns cities, 14 publicly held cooperations and has 4,400 entities under its investment portfolio – it is, what you may call an “archipelago government” – runs satellite cities across the vast region of Xinjiang but it's also the local government in those places while making tons of money from labour transfers and the people they govern.

Panel – Can you explain difference between orphanages and boarding schools, in policy documents and in practice?

RT – That’s a difficult question. Orphanages for those who cannot return home. We do not have lots of information about how boarding schools are operating over the last two or three or four years. In previous situations and in other parts of China, some boarding schools would allow children to return home at weekends, others will allow them to return home only during holidays. Whereas orphanages is conceptionalised as something being permanently raised there. The orphanages are also considered as being a part of social services, so they are often paired with elder care institutions and in a large number of the construction bid documents that I submitted they are soliciting bids simultaneous construction of an orphanage and an elderly care facility which hints at the possibility that
the internments and the forced labour; the forcible transfer of the labour programme are not just leaving children without family support but the elderly without family support and these are seen as linked issues by the state.

Panel – Is there a link to the 2017 policy document from the Xinjiang Education Department, the one that set out to isolate children from their families and any documents you are aware of from the Ministry of Education in Beijing?

RT – Yes, that report is actually published by the elementary level education division of the Education Bureau in Beijing. It is a collection of reports from the provincial level education bureaus published by the Beijing Department of Education.

Panel – Do you know the extent of children’s placement in residential care when only one parent is interned?

RT – That is a difficult question to answer as we don’t have systematic data for and will probably best be asked to Dr Zenz. He has done quiet extensive research on the question.

Panel – Language of correction of the derogatory relating to infection, is that found in policy document relating to children?

RT – I have not seen that language in those documents.

Panel – What is the nature of parental consent? What does your data suggest that the transfer of children is taking place without parental consent or indeed children’s own consent?

RT – First of all, this is compulsory education, when the state changes what type of school you are compelled to go to. Of course, compulsory education is common around the world. Families are compelled to send their children to school. What we are seeing here is that the nature of the schools is being changed. Once the schooling is changed to boarding, the families are still compelled to send children there. We have a handful of first-person testimonies, actually they are family testimonies from people who have escaped the region. Those are found in the Xinjiang Victim Database but not particularly numerous. Here we face the usual barrier of access to data.
Panel – Given that Chinese is not just media but also communication, any evidence from parents or children of communication between the generations?

RT – Yes, absolutely. Last time I was in the region was December 2017, the goal of changing the medium of education and administration in schools to Chinese was 100% has been around for quite a long time before 2008 and was slowly moving at first. You can already see the effects. When I was there doing field work, people would complain having trouble talking to their children as they didn’t know their mother language well and I believe you can find some quotes on media reports on people talking about this as well.

Panel – Given children are separated from their parents, that they are using a different language of communication to one they are familiar with and experiencing the curriculum as your colleagues have explained that is not reflecting their own culture and experience, do you know of any evidence on children’s mental health or psychological wellbeing?

RT – Talk of concern about mental wellbeing of children in state documents, particularly when they talk about the so called “hardship students”. Can refer to a range of hardships, often specified as a product when parents are in indoctrination camps. Mental health is a focus of some state documents for such “hardship” students. But this is a very recent policy and we do not have access to information about what has happened to children in the last two years who have been raised and educated in these schools.

Panel – If you had to respond to the argument that the increase in boarding provision, let’s leave aside orphanages in the region, constitutes a kind of levelling up of provision in line with other areas of China?

RT – I would argue that there was no need for boarding up to give educational access. In Xinjiang and especially in the South where the Uyghurs are in majority has not seen proletarianization that the rest of China has seen with the concurring hollowing-out of rural areas. The population until then, it is hard to tell what is happening the last two/three years but until then the overwhelming majority of Uyghurs were small independent farm operators so there was no problem that needed to move or concentrate educational resources in light of closing schools in the countryside into the towns. There is no evidence of any need, in fact it is counterintuitive and a major expensive, unnecessary
use of resources. It doesn't fit the needs of resource provision that are talked about for the interior of China.

Panel – Turning to coercive birth control, you referred Uyghur women allowed fewer children than the official entitlement, we heard that form witnesses. Are there any statistics on this phenomenon?

RT – No comprehensive statistics, not something the government would measure, we are reliant on government statistic for these comprehensive numerical measures. It is something that happens in drive to meet quotas rather than a drive to meet regulations. There are parent quotas for birth rates in various local regions and those put pressure on people on the ground to sort of bend the rules against national policy. Those quotas seem to emanate from either the region or Beijing. This means they are not keeping track of things that go against official policy.

Panel – Was there a 2020 census?

RT – There was a 2020 census. Data is not out yet. There might be a preview.

Panel – Was a Uyghur category in that?

RT – I do not know, more relevant would be the 2020 Xinjiang statistical yearbook which provides more fine-grained data for Xinjiang and in that they have eliminated ethnic categories in much of the data. When we used to get very clearly, for example birth-rates and natural increase rates at the county level. They have eliminated the birth rates on the country level and they have also eliminated ethnic categorisation on some of the data sets.

(3:12:35) Panel – How many female camps do you think there are in Xinjiang?

RH – I do not have those kinds of statistics available right now.

(3:14:20) Panel – How many camps do we have reports of torture rooms being present within them?

RH – We have a quite limited number of accounts altogether, which is due to the extreme level of secrecy.
Panel – This is just to determine if this is a general thing, which would mean it is a central directive. Do you think it is reasonable to generalise from a very small number of cases?

RH – That kind of evidence is very hard to determine, Adrian Zenz would probably be more able to answer that.

Panel – With regards to the rape culture you referred to within the female camps, do we know whether a similar rape culture exists in the prison services in Mainland China?

RH – I have only come across suggestions of systematic rape of female detainees on Tibetan nuns and Falun Gong practitioners, and these are special groups, so I would not say a widespread practice across the mainstream population, no.

Panel – Do we have any idea what the drugs forcibly given to detainees are?

RH – We believe they are designed to halt menstruations.

Panel – Why do you believe that?

RH – This is what has come from testimonies. Women coming out of camps have on several occasions independently stated that they believed these drugs were given in order to stop their ability to have children, to sterilise them.

Panel – I don’t doubt that that’s what they believe. Stress and weight loss are two major causes of cessation of menstruation. I wonder how you get beyond that. Is there any procurement data because these are massive amounts of these drugs that are being administered? Is there any procurement data on drugs from pharmaceutical companies within China?

RT – I haven’t seen any data like this and I know that there is a lot of interest in it and there have been efforts to find it. To date we don’t have any knowledge on precisely what these medicines are. We rely entirely on the testimony of survivors for any picture of what is happening.

Panel – We also heard that drugs have been forcibly administered to men in the camps. Do we know if they are the same of different drugs?
JSF – We don’t know exactly which drug it is. We have some reports from doctors from the Xinjiang Victims Database where former internees had medical checks after coming out of the camps and have been found to be sterile. There are a limited number of such reports. After medical examination in Kazakhstan.

Panel – I am not sure what medical checks would tell you that someone was sterile beyond the fact that they weren’t menstruating but we will leave it there.

RH – This was regarding man was it not?

DT– Uyghur men were interviewed claiming to be impotent after taking medicine but there is no medical examination.

Panel – With that rape culture in place, one could anticipate an increase in the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, have we observed any evidence of a rise in sexually transmitted diseases?

RH – No, that is not information that I have.

LM – We might also expect there to be massive outbreaks of pregnancies and we do not see that either.

Panel – Do you think the placement of Han relatives in Uyghur home are the main source of sexual harassment?

RH – Yes, I think there are a lot of accounts now, it seems intuitive for me that it is going to be a very problematic practice. We heard one from Qalbinur [Sidik].

Panel – Is there any evidence of religion, given that it can’t be practiced openly, has been driven underground?

JSF – Originally yes as it became harder to practice in public spaces for pious Uyghurs. It retreated into the family space. For example, in the 2000s, I was interviewing a lot of Uyghurs that had taken up Islam in a very pious way for the first time, teaching themselves how to pray at home, using pamphlets at home they had bought at the market. Uyghurs who were very pious practising religion praying 5x day at home even though they were state employees and not allowed to do so. So that was happening in the 2000s. Since
becoming family campaign and cadres visiting and then home-staying, it has become almost impossible. The cadres are sent into the homes with the manual, an instruction manual on which Darren Byler has written extensively about and they are told to look out for Qu’rans to Arabic calligraphy on the walls, any indication the household is following religion in a pious way. Going into the house with pork dumplings and if refusing pork dumplings interpreting that as a sign of religious extremism. In that context it has become very hard to practice religion in the domestic space compared to before.

Panel – Not expecting to give an empirical response, is your sense of the repression of the religious activity is more aggressive than towards other groups, for example House Christians?

JSF – We have to recognise that the CCP has a problem with religion in general. This has been on-going for decades. It sees religion and God as a rival authority, and has done so for years. We are seeing Christians and Falun Gong persecuted as well as Buddhists to a greater degree in the last few years, but nothing on scale of what done to Uyghur Muslims. The Hui, yes, we are beginning to see effects on the Hui - I have anonymous Han contact in Wuhan who is sending me picture. The same on halal signage defacement happening in Wuhan on Hui Muslim, the islamophobia is spreading across the country. Not seeing Hui interned in re-education camps on a massive scale as Uyghurs. Not in comparison with numbers of Uyghurs. It’s much bigger with the Uyghurs that just religion, it is about their whole identity. The difference between the Uyghur and the Hui is that Uyghurs always concentrated in the northwest border region and had history of recent independent republics in the 1930s and 1940s. The state is trying to dilute the population density by transfer of Han in and Uyghur out into forced labour situations elsewhere. This is a concerted effort to try and reorganise the population composition in that region. Don’t see that with Hui as they have always been widely distributed around China. They have had a different population distribution and the Hui are much less suspected than the Uyghurs because they have intermarried extensively over the centuries and adopted the Chinese language. They are sinicised in a way the Uyghurs have not been until forced.
Panel – Shed light on the number of ways there are to destroy a society by internal fragmentation by creating fear and division, children reporting on their parents and so on... any evidence on that?

JSF – We have reports from AP investigative journalists about how children in boarding schools and schools have been asked about parents' religious practices. Han Chinese teachers in those schools asking if parents been on pilgrimage, or relatives, if parents praying at home. It is another way to observe religious activities at home. In one case reported by AP, an innocent child informed on uncle had mentioned had been on pilgrimage unofficially who was then arrested and taken away to an internment camp. This is just one example.

Panel – Do you think the characterisation of recalcitrant people, as the state sees it, in this group as viruses, illnesses and so forth... Is that commensurate descriptions used of other cases such as Rwanda e.g., cockroaches, rats and so on.

JSF – Since the answer to the ‘people’s war on terror’ in 2014, we have seen ‘extremists’ but extremists here just means pious Uyghurs describes as rats since 2014. We have seen a progressing dehumanisation of the Uyghur group whereby they are now being described as ideological illness, mental illnesses, and people who have viruses in official state media, a long piece that I analysed for an essay I wrote a couple of years ago. We see a horrific discourse describing imams, so called ‘wild imams’ (not trained by state) referred to as parasites. We see pious Uyghurs referred to as parasitic as they are not active economically productive citizens as they cannot be as they spend too much time praying. We see discourses on the infiltration of Islam and contagion of Islam. It is all in this discourse of ‘halalification’ so within the de-extremification, we see a lot of talk about ‘halalifications’ - the state seems to be very concerned about ‘halalification’, beyond simply abstention from pork and then infecting the rest of society. I think this dehumanisation has been discussed in detail by Dr Roberts.

Panel – If you destroy the religion, language and cultural base as a group such as this, identity castration, can that group survive as a recognisable group?
JSF – It is very difficult to eliminate a group permanently and for good. As we have seen
groups can recover e.g., certain native American groups, First Nation groups in Canada.
New policies allowing the indigenisation of education in universities in Canada. We see
groups in Australia regaining new rights to a certain degree. Not to a great degree.
Chinese state appears to be going about that goal in an orchestrated, systematic and
concerted manner.

Panel – Dr Tobin thank you for a presentation, remarkable in clarity and power to
illuminate. Is there anything you would like to add, correct, interpret, particularly on
matters of intent?

DT – When I engage with that in my work, I do not when I discuss intent, I discuss,
continuity of intent. That is not to say that policies have not changed. They have changed
frequently throughout Chinese history. What I try to do is show the underlying narratives
of dehumanisation that are present in each era. We see in 1949, the establishment of the
regional autonomous system, that is framed as holding China together and modernising
the region. Of course, this is after promises of independence. Mao Zedong and most
Chinese academic work during that period call it historical materialist in the sense that
drawing, the idea that cultures and identities are strictly related to economic development.
The idea was that modernisation means those cultures disappear naturally. In practice
that is not a natural process but the narrative was that disappearance was natural. In
2012, for the first time, there was a formal debate about ethnic policy, it was called the
‘intergenerational debate’ where the historical materialist saying we need to preserve the
regional autonomy system to hold China together and that people will naturally assimilate.
But then you had the second generation consisting of people like Ma Rong (马戎),
historian and anthropologist, Zhu Weiquin (朱维群) who worked for the united front work
department and Hu Angang (胡鞍钢), a political economist. They drove what they called
second generation of ethnic policies, essentially responding to 2009 violence saying
these policies do not work. China’s great revival as they call it meant securing the region.
Securing the region meant shifting policies we are discussing today. This was taken up
in formal policy, diffusion policy, where, when I started working on this, every document
was structured around the notion of 56 *minzu* (民族). You have the Han and you have the non-Han, the civilisation and barbarian binary call it that. Now this is formal policy to shift towards one *minzu* (民族), *zhonghua minzu* (中华民族) - the Chinese nation. Ma Rong who was a historian and anthropologist now writes articles celebrating this policy. This is a very different tone, this is more classics looking to the leader, thanking him for his contributions and thanking him for revolutionising this policy. When we read regional government documents, their tone speak to the party; the party state. Most regional governments just run through these policies and explain how they have achieved them. The regional government documents celebrate Xi Jinping as resolving tensions between how to include Uyghurs. Inclusion was always violence as leads to ethnic disappearance, we now see much more physical violence that is there to police Uyghur identities. When you look at any situation which is comparison there is decision-makers that matter, that we can talk about. A long-term political process and a multi layered social process which involves society and the state.

*Panel –* Anything you would like to put right or correct on what has been said?

DT – If I may add something on the camps question and the structure of the camp, numbers of camps, types of camps. Darren Byler’s work, the three layers of camps that are often within one facility – the most dangerous areas e.g., black rooms where intellectuals and public figures disappear that we have no contact with. Most of the testimonies that we have don’t come from those layers but come from the safer layers of the camps. That is my point to the description on regional government about the three types of people, would all be called terrorists that those three layers are there.

*Panel –* I would like to examine the president’s declaration of people’s war on terror, which Professor Harris raised and its link to state social management and policies, that were mobilised to go with that. Would I be correct in assuming in the Mandarin, ‘people’s war’ could be interpreted as state violence?

RH – Revolution is not a tea party. There is a long history of an embrace of “necessary violence” in the social change necessary to bring about socialism, this is the socialist tradition of propaganda. It is an interesting question: it raises the question of the
relationship between the people of the state. The party assumes leadership over the people. So yes, I think you could very easily make that link.

Panel – You have an organigram in front of you now, with the state, the government, and the party. Can we say that this tri-partite area is the state in terms of People’s war?

RH – I am not an expert on the structures of Chinese governance. I would refer you to a colleague such as David Tobin.

DT – When we use the phrase “party state” - we use it because there isn’t much separation between party and state. We study these types of diagrams when we do level one Chinese politics and when we show how the party state presents itself. It is actually important. In my teaching I take diagrams from Xinhua news, the ones are used in China and we discuss these institutional frameworks and usually I would involve Chinese students in conversations to ask them what do you think? Does it work like this? The answer is no, of course not. The answer is guanxi (关系) relationships, this is just formal and you use your guanxi (关系) to work through the system, people would say there is not really a distinction between the party and the state like I said the regional government, the autonomous regional government responds directly to the state counsel. It does not have as much autonomy as the provinces. The provinces have some economic autonomy but the autonomous regional governments do not. When we go back to Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) era which was ten years ago, when we taught these diagrams, usually then you would talk about formal decision-making power which I think would matter here. You would point to the Public Bureau Standing Committee and that would be it. Now under Xi not so much, it is really Xi Jinping who has power to such great extend and the Public Bureau Standing Committee is obviously very influential but you centralise power and you increase this term limits that no longer performs that same function.

Panel – Dr Smith-Finley – you refer often to normal and every day Islamic practices, I take those to mean practices that would be regarded as normal and every day in all Muslim countries, Muslim majority countries and also Muslim minority countries and also practiced by the Chinese Hui Muslims. Are you aware of anywhere else that would regard

Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal
them as systematically, those practices, as signs of extremism or radicalisation? Can you also tell us about the tradition of Islam amongst the Uyghurs?

RT – It is diverse within the Uyghur community. There are a lot of shared elements with nearby Muslim communities in Central Asia and India. Usually people when I answer this question will first go to say that it is from the Hanafi legal school of the Sunnis which is overemphasis on law because there are not really a lot of decision being taken by most Uyghurs on narrow questions of legalistic Islamic law until this recent turn in after which there is not much public practice. Islam is seen by a lot of Uyghurs as something integrated into daily life, not a separate religious vocation, but normal pattern of life and correct knowledge. It involves for example visiting your parents grave on Thursday, making proper gestures before you eat, people might say grace in many Western countries, greetings like people say in English “bless you” after you sneeze. All these things are part of Uyghur Islams but it is also important to note distinctive elements that you find amongst Uyghur Muslims. One I have done research on is shrine pilgrimage. The landscape is dotted with places that are seen as extremely sacred as point as connection and communication with god or mediation of saints who are buried there and there are a lot of particular traditions associated with that. Often, they are called Sufi although they have a local flavour. There are also a lot of Sufi also meditative practice that until recently was common.

JSF – We see differing degrees of potential criminalisation of Islamic every day practice elsewhere, but nothing on scale as Xinjiang at the moment. If you speak to British Muslims, they will make comparison with the prevent programme. On that, I would say yes, we certainly see under the prevent programme in the UK, we see heightened surveillance on Muslim communities, which has been very unwelcome for many of those living in Muslim communities for sure. Key difference between prevent and internment and re-education that we see in Xinjiang is that with prevent in UK, the UK authorities are asking communities to flag up those who are potentially being radicalised, then these people are monitored by social workers and asked to voluntarily submit to deradicalization programme and they are given the choice, whether they join that programme or not. Major difference in the two. In the Uyghur region you are not given a choice. If you are identified
by the system as suspicious or problematic in some way, you will be taken into internment involuntarily. This is one very big difference between the two.

Another example of where we see partially comparable restriction is France – restriction on religious symbols as part of the secular band of that nation and we have seen increasing restrictions on different aspects of veiling. I cannot think of any other example in the world where peaceful religious everyday practices are criminalised in same way as in Uyghur region right now.

**Panel – did the interrogators at the various arrests at different levels you experienced have a common line in what they said to you? Did what they say to you indicate a common approach to their effective condemnation of you being there?**

**JSF – Yes, but very basic. At the *Azkhadem* shrine in Kashgar prefecture – first I was arrested by a local Uyghur policeman who came out of convenience police station who came out of the police station located next to the shrine. He asked me who I was, what my profession was, what country did I come from, was I travelling with anyone. Very basic questions. What was I doing there. My purpose in being there. Then he held onto me – he tried to wipe all my photos from phone, put them in recycle bin from where I was later able to reinstate them. Then he hold on to me and took me to a restaurant invited to have a cup of tea. This is what normally happens in Han China when you are in trouble with the authorities. They invite you to have a cup of tea. I was held in a restaurant until a district Han policeman came and asked same questions in Chinese He was still nervous about letting me go, he phoned the undercover Uyghur policeman back in Kashgar where I had come from, ironically. Out into the countryside. He called them out, they drove all the way out in the car. They were Uyghur, plain clothes, English speaking with American accents asked same question again, took away passport and took it into the local police station. Photocopied it, still didn’t realise who I was although my profile is all over the internet. They ought to just do a quick google search but still didn’t know who I was and believed the story I sold them and let me go two hours later.**

**Panel – So no policy statement by any of the interrogators?**

**JSF – No.**

*Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal*
RH – The story is indicative of how power works in that region – the extreme nervousness of people at low level to act with any autonomy. This successive, you know, referring the problem up. That says a lot.

Panel – Say more about your understanding of “Uyghur Islams” - Uyghur Islams jurisprudence – is there a notion of ‘Taqiya’, that is valid to conceal your religious practices for a time when being persecuted? In the expectation that in some later time, it may re-emerge? I understand that it is a notion common amongst Shia Muslims. Is there any such notion that might inform people about how it is acceptable to stand back from your religious practice for a while until it is appropriate to practice it again because this goes to the question of whether or not there is a sense amongst people of whether they think their religion is being destroyed.

RT – There is not a lot of education in the Islamic legal sciences that has been available to the people over the last seventy years. There is not much discussion. Over the last twenty years discussion is more accessible to the outside world. One does not encounter these types of attempts to make legal decisions based on Hanafi or based on compilations of previous decisions by Islamic judges. There is not much in way of informal Islamic opinions. This is not really part of the discourse. I have not met many Uyghurs who have been concerned by the 'is it permissible'. I would be surprised with the idea of 'Taqiya' - I would be surprised to meet someone who would be familiar with that term. You frequently encounter people who have own informal understanding and rationalisation - “I will say this out loud, but in my head, I will say the opposite” or something like this.

There is a foundational sacred history of the Uyghur Muslim king who was commanded by his farther to build a Buddhist temple and then in his head he said silently to himself with each brick “I am building a mosque”. There are models for this. That's a fairly widely known story but it is not framed in terms of Islamic law.

Panel – And it is not within people as an understanding? I understand that the notion of ‘Taqiya’ is not taught to the people because there aren’t schools of jurisprudence. It is not in any way indigenous to the people’s way of understanding themselves? Not necessarily through jurisprudence but perhaps through folklore?

Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal
RT – That’s what I meant to get out through the story. Folklore like you may call it. Histories it is something people could derive that from.

Panel – I have a question on the census - you say the datasets have eliminated the ethnic categorisation, why is this?

DT – I link that straight away to diffusion policy. When I first arrived in Urumqi, I was using these statistical yearbooks. I was shocked that I could essentially walk into the shop that is for cadres and wonder about and see what cadres where reading. And they told me you need to read this and so forth which speaks to policies being very ad hoc and have been centralised recently. At the same time you have diffusion policy where the concept of ethnic minority is disappearing out of official narratives and official speeches. Then we have the census data that suddenly changed and this is shocking for someone all their knowledge was structured around these categories when we studied these subjects because everything is divided by ethnicity and now it is not. It comes from above in terms of narrative and just to mention the question on the ‘people’s war on terror’ you know these are grand narratives, this is what the leader pronounces and that is what is used to explain these policies.

Panel – I am trying to square in my mind the fact that the categories have been eliminated and the data collection but on the other hand, we hear the policy in the language. We hear ‘break their lineage’, ‘break their roots’, ‘break their connections’. There is always ‘their’ ...

DT – It is the Uyghur people. When the phrase ‘people’s war on terror’ is used a Uyghur knows that refers to Islamic and Turkic identities and of course party state leaders must know this. I know this, why would they not. There has been an ambivalence. One reason the case confused the world is because of the notion of including minorities and the types of images we see where people are dressed up in artificial nylon and clothing and so forth. That exists alongside the violence we are discussing.

Panel – Reflective of Professor Harris’ commentary – what is the inability of subordinates to make decisions and the fear around that. This is a question to all of you. In your view is it possible for the policy or dehumanisation by destruction of religious base, of language
through detention system and torture, and other elements you have talked about in that regard. Could that happen without the implicit consent or direction of the most senior people within both the state and or the party.

DT – No.

JSF – It would be almost impossible for low level official to operate on that basis without explicit approval of central authorities. That is how the vertical structures work as seen in your diagram here. As Professor Harris just highlighted with my story on the arrests. Low levels officials were terrified in considering what to do with me and how to deal with me and had to refer it all the way up to the sort of highest level in that part of Xinjiang before they would even consider letting me go.

Sir Geoffrey, I remember something important in regard to that story. You asked me if there was anything indicative of policy? Yes, there was actually. The plainclothes policeman who came from Kashgar city repeatedly said that this area this shrine is not open for foreign visitation? That is very important. Why? The district policeman said this as well. Not open to foreign visitation. This phrase has been around for a long time. You used to have hotels where foreigners could stay and others where you could. Decades ago, it is the same phrase. It indicated the idea those rural areas and those religious sites that not been flagged up for touristic visitation purposes were out of bounds for foreign researchers.

Panel – You said all detainees had medical checks. Is there any data, documentation of long-term medical problems apart from mental side?

RH – Not long-term phenomenon yet, the testimonies are from people coming out from detention from 2015. Questions on medical side are very useful and there is a need for research to be done.

Panel – I wish you would do some. We know that men are sterile, are they sterile because they have no spermia or are they impotent because of depression? Clearly depression is going to be one of the major causes of what happens. It has to be.
RH – Again you have to understand the extreme difficulty of conducting any kind of research that would have significant validity through your understanding of methodology because of the problem of access.

Panel – *I am sure but in terms of disabilities, fractures or have they mutilated or amputated...have they done other things?*

RH – We have a limited number of people that we are able to engage with outside of China and the extreme difficulty of asking those questions through official channels within China. We can go somewhere perhaps to running a project that looks into procurement orders. That very careful combing of government data that is freely available on the web.

Panel – *Do we know what is the reaction worldwide in the Islamic community?*

RH – It is a frequent question. I am not sure about the idea of “the worldwide Islamic community.” We should distinguish Muslim-majority countries and their governments, and then communities, groups, and people. Obviously, there is a problem with the response of governments of Muslim-majority countries, many are themselves abusive regimes with their own kind of human rights issues to mask. And many of them have had direct relationships with China, in particular since the Belt and Road initiative. In terms of communities, well just speaking of the Muslim communities here in this country, they have shown fantastic support.

Panel – *The Muslims in Xinjiang, are they Sunni?*

RH – Sunni, yes.

Panel – *Thinking about the personal testimonies we heard yesterday or ones we will hear, ones that come to mind which talk about the forced labour aspect, have any of you come across personal testimony about the forced regimes?*

DT – One reason we do not have so many, is that forced labour section are those are in the safest category, they have not escaped. Usually, the accounts I have on forced labour are from people discussing their family members.

LM – There are several, maybe ten or 12 that have been collected across various different journalists and databases of direct first-person testimony of people working in factories.

*Hearing Transcript: 04.06.21- 07.06.21 – Uyghur Tribunal*
through these forced labour programmes, but not enough for us to make broad generalisations. We should be very aware of in process of asking questions about first person testimony and its availability, we have to interrogate the question of why we don’t have access to more people, why we don’t have access to data, why we do not know the medical outcomes of people who are there. Why is the Uyghur ethnicity being erased? The more important question is why can’t anyone see what is happening there. We have seen a number of people who have been extraordinarily brave and shared their experiences knowing that they are being erased by the minute. What we can do is rely on these as best as we can and to understand what is happening. These few people who have spoken about their experiences on work suggest that they were unpaid, unwilling and that they were only able to leave because of some special dispensation and that people remained in those factories. We need to take the first-hand testimony very seriously.
State Violence in Xinjiang: A Comprehensive Assessment

Dr David Tobin
Hallsworth Research Fellow in the Political Economy of China
State Violence in Xinjiang: A Comprehensive Assessment

Chapter 1. Forced Labour (Laura T. Murphy)

Chapter 2. Child Separation and Coercive Birth Controls (Rian Thum)

Chapter 3. Torture and Sexual Violence in the Camps (Rachel Harris)

Chapter 4. Destruction of Religious Practice and Heritage (Jo Smith Finley)

Chapter 5. Cultural Destruction (Jo Smith Finley)
Nyrola Elim

“While the world debates a word, we are dying”
Jewlan Shirmemmet

“I want to speak to my mother”
In 2018, the Xinjiang government began rolling out a program of mass employment:

- **Spring 2018:** Regional governments directives layout “surplus labour” strategies to ensure that “all those who should be employed are employed.”
- **April 2018:** Kashgar government declares they will place 100,000 people from “vocational training” in jobs.
- **June 2018:** XUAR government releases plan for “poverty alleviation” training that includes 100,000 job placements and intent to place at least one person from every household into a job.
- **October 2018:** Chairman of XUAR announces that “trainees” from the VTICs would find a “seamless link from learning in school to employment in society.”
“Labour transfer not only reduces Uyghur population density in Xinjiang, but it is also an important method to influence, meld, and assimilate Uyghur minorities.”

source: Nankai University Institute of Wealth and Economics
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source: Xinjiang Department of Justice via Weixin
和田市泰达服装公司尕宗村卫星工厂
Labour is made compulsory through several mechanisms:

- as a requirement of internment
- as a condition of “release” or “graduation”
- in a state-subsidized “satellite factories” that are “on your doorstep”
- through a state-sponsored “transfer” to a factory or farm within the Uyghur Region
- through a state-sponsored “transfer” to a factory outside the Uyghur Region
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source: Xinjiang Victims Database
About doing a good job in serving the urban and rural surplus labor force in Qapqal County

Transfer employment work implementation plan

“All surplus labor force in the jurisdiction shall be managed by points and quantification, so as to ensure that all the surplus labors in the jurisdiction shall be trained and employed. . . . if there are people who have the qualifications to participate in the training but are unwilling to participate in the training, who can go out for employment but are not actively employed, but have outdated concepts or stubborn thinking, the corresponding points will be deducted.”

Points determine placement in three categories:

- **Management & Control**: sent to training
- **General**: assigned nearest local transfer
- **Secure**: issued “Urban and Rural Surplus Labor Transfer Employment Personnel Certificate” and transferred to the interior
Buzaynap

I'm not going.
“fettered by traditional concepts, there are still some labourers who are unwilling to move far away from home and have serious homesickness,” despite “the government’s serious guiding efforts over the past several years.”

source: China Institute of Wealth and Economics, “新疆和田地区维族劳动力转移就业扶贫工作报告”[Report on poverty alleviation work for Xinjiang Hotan Region Uyghur labour force transfer and employment], Nankai University, December 23, 2019
Labour agencies must “have organizational discipline in place and implement militarized management to allow people with employment difficulties to get rid of selfishness and distractions, change their long-cultivated lazy, idle, slow, and inconstant behaviours of personal freedom, to abide by corporate rules and regulations and work discipline, and to devote themselves to daily production. In daily life; they should have iron discipline...”

“Good work should be praised and rewarded, and bad work should be criticized and educated or even punished.”

Employ one person, Alleviate poverty for a household; Labour is great; Getting rich is glorious; Let’s unite as one and run toward a well-off life together.
Employment and Labor Rights in Xinjiang

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

September 2020

“terrorists, separatists and religious extremists have long preached that ‘the afterlife is fated’ and that ’religious teachings are superior to state laws,’ inciting the public to resist learning the standard spoken and written Chinese language, reject modern science, and refuse to improve their vocational skills, economic conditions, and the ability to better their own lives. As a result, some local people have outdated ideas; suffer from poor education and employability, low employment rates and incomes, they and have fallen into long-term poverty.”
“I learned that if one family [member] was in a camp you have to work so father or husband can get out quickly.”

source: forthcoming human rights report 79
Labour transfers operate within an environment of unprecedented coercion, undergirded by the constant threat of internment.
According to the ILO Forced Labour Convention of 1930, **forced or compulsory labour** is: "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily."

Indicators include:
- abuse of vulnerability
- deception
- restriction of movement
- isolation
- physical or sexual violence
- retention of ID
- withholding of wages
- debt bondage
- abusive working conditions
- excessive overtime
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

- Denial of free choice of employment
- Forcible transfer of people
- Forcible separation of families
- Denial of land rights
- Denial of religious rights
- Denial of cultural rights

Credit: CCTV, October 2018
FORCED LABOUR IN THE UYGHUR REGION

Laura T. Murphy
Professor of Human Rights and Contemporary Slavery
Students in boarding schools, grades 1-9, 2017 to 2019

- 2017: 500,000 students
- 2018: 700,000 students
- 2019: 900,000 students
“1: Based on the overall stability of Xinjiang, manage boarding schools well.”

“to create a stable and peaceful learning environment for students, blocking the influence of the family’s religious atmosphere on the children to the greatest extent and reducing the occurrence of ‘teaching science in school, listening to the scriptures at home, with thinking and ideas suffering the shocks of moving back and forth’”

- Elementary Education Department, “Exchange materials for the reform and development on-site meeting to promote the national overall planning of the integration of urban and rural compulsory education,” Qingdao, December 2017.
“Thanks to preferential measures such as ... relocation expenses, rushing to the rest of the country to recruit talent ... the number of teachers recruited, especially the number and proportion of ethnic Han teachers, is unprecedented.”

“[in recruitment] regard political quality and the ability to teach in the national common language as the primary criteria, in accordance with the principle of ‘tilting toward southern Xinjiang, focusing on rural areas, giving priority to early grades and key subjects’”

“Give full play to the role of the Autonomous Region’s “Home visitation [访惠聚]" work teams in the villages to implement door-to-door visits and urge guardians to send school-age children and adolescents to school and complete compulsory education”

- Elementary Education Department, “Exchange materials for the reform and development on-site meeting to promote the national overall planning of the integration of urban and rural compulsory education at the county level,” Qingdao, December 2017.
### Compulsory education boarding schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Han</th>
<th>Uyghur</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of compulsion</strong></td>
<td>Theoretical private option</td>
<td>Compulsory, no private option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Mother language</td>
<td>Dominant group language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching staff ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Same ethnicity</td>
<td>Majority same, substantial &amp; growing proportion from dominant group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary stated purposes</strong></td>
<td>Access/quality, poverty alleviation</td>
<td>Security, “blocking influence of family…”, Mandarin</td>
</tr>
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### Compulsory birth limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Han</th>
<th>Uyghur</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State messaging</strong></td>
<td>Have more children</td>
<td>Have fewer children</td>
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<td><strong>Maximum Penalty</strong></td>
<td>Fines, lack of social services</td>
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<td><strong>Deviation in practice</strong></td>
<td>Allowing more than regulations</td>
<td>Allowing fewer than regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Off your hijab, let me see your eyes.

#Xinjiang dance.

掀起你的盖头来，让我看看你的眼......
Destruction of Religious / Cultural Practice and Heritage

Joanne Smith Finley, Reader in Chinese Studies, Newcastle University
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j.smithfinley@ncl.ac.uk
CCP Regional Party Secretary Chen Quanguo: XUAR Regulations on De-Extremification (2017)

Expressed state goal of halting the ‘penetration’ of extremism:

• ‘Making religion more Chinese’ (Article 4)
• Prohibiting ‘the rejection or refusal of public goods’
  – e.g. alcohol, cigarettes (Article 9)
• Prohibiting ‘generalization of the concept of halal into areas beyond halal foods’ (Article 9)
• Leading believers to ‘establish correct beliefs’ (Article 13); and
• Guiding believers to ‘correctly handle the relationship between law and religion’ whilst confirming ‘correct faith’ (Article 35)
• The Party sought to 'solve the problem of to whom to listen, whom to trust, and whom to follow' via an education in ideas and beliefs. Uyghurs were to be trained to follow not God but the CCP (O Klimeš, 2018)
Islam as virus / addiction

• Official CCP audio recording, transmitted in 2017 via WeChat (Radio Free Asia):

  Members of the public who have been chosen for re-education have been infected by an ideological illness. They have been infected with religious extremism and violent terrorist ideology, and therefore they must seek treatment from a hospital as an inpatient. ... The religious extremist ideology is a type of poisonous medicine, which confuses the mind of the people. ... If we do not eradicate religious extremism at its roots, the violent terrorist incidents will grow and spread all over like an incurable malignant tumor.

• Medical analogies used to justify internment using population targets and arrest quotas (T Grose, 2019)

• XUAR Regulations on De-Extremification (2017)

  Article 5: ‘De-extremification efforts are to employ [...] an annual target responsibility evaluation system’

  Article 14: De-extremification shall complete work on educational transformation [...] combining ideological education, psychological counseling, behavioral corrections
The ‘People’s War on Terror

- A carpet-bombing approach (D Byler, 2017)
- Described by the state in terms of an indiscriminate use of 'weed-killer' (M Clarke, 2018)
- Han taxi driver (Ürümchi, 2018): 'The detained are just there to have their thinking changed; then they will come out again'
- Uyghur businessman (Ürümchi, 2018): 'Some people were given medicine to change their thinking, medicine for their minds, and this made them ill. Only then were they released'
Eligibility criteria for extra-legal internment

“Extremist religious practices” figure large:

• growing a beard (especially a long one);
• praying regularly;
• inviting too many people to one’s wedding;
• giving children names of Islamic origin;
• appearing too religious (e.g., wearing veils, headscarves, or long clothes in Muslim style);
• reciting an Islamic verse at a funeral;
• washing bodies according to Islamic custom;
• holding strong religious views;
• allowing others to preach religion;
Eligibility criteria for extra-legal internment

- teaching the Qur’ân to one’s children;
- asking an imam to name one’s children;
- attending the mosque regularly;
- studying or teaching “unauthorised” forms of Islam;
- praying at a mosque other than on a Friday (the traditional day of prayer in the Central Asia region);
- attending Friday prayers outside of one’s own village;
- making the pilgrimage to Mecca;
- possessing illegal religious content on a mobile phone or computer (including text messages containing religious language, Qur’anic verses or graphics, simple explanations of the Qur’ân, or pictures of women wearing the niqab).
Inside the internment camps, coercive secularisation

**Internees are:**

- Forced to renounce Islam, disavow Islamic beliefs;
- Make self-criticisms of their religious history;
- Forced to eat pork as punishment; drink alcohol;
- Rarely allowed to wash hands and feet (equated with Islamic ablutions);
- Lectured about dangers of Islam / drilled with quizzes;
- Instructed that fundamentalist Islam is repressive while the CCP is progressive;
- “They would say, there is no religion. The government and the party will take care of you” (L Kuo, Guardian, 2018)
Restrictions on religious practice—outside the internment camps

• Tighter religious restrictions forcefully imposed on Uyghur society for 4-5 years prior to onset of mass internment in 2017, worsened thereafter

• Initially imposed most heavily in south Xinjiang - the Uyghurs’ religious heartland

• 18 September 2016 (Restaurant staff, who had moved up north from Kashgar and Aqsu):
  “It’s better to be in Ürümchi now, as there’s no freedom in the south. There, young men can’t even grow a short beard or moustache – all facial hair is forbidden now. Only older men are allowed to grow a longer beard. Women are forbidden to wear the niqab or burqa.”

• 21 September 2016 (Migrant taxi driver, who had come to Ürümchi from Khotän: “A lot of people have been put in prison down south for very small things, like wearing veils and growing beards.”
Securitised mosque spaces

The deserted Yan’an Road mosque, with PRC flag, razor wire, and running digital slogans.
Photos: J Smith Finley, Ürümchi, 29 June 2018
Securitised mosque spaces
Conversations outside Ürümchi mosques

• Only 10 - 20 elderly (retired) men entered at prayer times
• Most other retired men feared having their retirement benefits stopped if they entered
• People working in state work units could not enter, because they would lose their jobs
• Everyone else, even the independent businessmen, too scared to go in:
  “We want to go in the mosque... but if we do, they will take us to prison ... they check our identity cards.”

Security checkpoint with iris-scanner, entrance to the Aq Mosque, Ürümchi.
Photo: J Smith Finley, 29 June 2018
Touristification / museumification of mosque spaces

Heytgah Mosque, Kashgar. Photo: J Smith Finley, 9 July 2018

“Love the Party, Love the Country” banner, ticket seller, policeman and riot shields. Photo: J Smith Finley, Kashgar, 9 July 2018
Touristification / museumification of mosque spaces

A ticket seller (45 yuan entry) and two riot police with riot shields sit inside the entrance. I express surprise that tourists are allowed in and ask when the people are allowed in to pray? The police immediately become threatening, demanding to know my business. Inside is a ghostly museum, a historical site. There is no one praying. Across the front wall of the far prayer hall are banners reading: 'Ethnic unity is happiness (fu 福); Splittism and riot are calamity (祸).' Young Uyghur men in traditional embroidered shirts (but no hats - uncovered heads in the mosque) usher Han and foreign tourists into the rear prayer hall at the back. I ask one what he thinks of tourists entering the prayer hall? He briefly shakes his head, and says 'This is just my job (mening khizmitim)... I wouldn’t know about that (Uy. män ukhmidum)'. As I walk away, he gets out his phone, and I suspect informs the police on the door of what I said. When I approach an older guy watering plants, he moves away metre by metre, then shakes his head when I say hello. Seconds later, a police officer appears at about 8 metres and hangs around until I move away.'

(Field notes: Heytgah mosque, Kashgar, 2018)
Padlocked neighbourhood mosques, with PRC flag and “De-extremification” regulations. Photos: J Smith Finley, Kashgar Old Town, 10 July 2018
Padlocked neighbourhood mosques

• Neighbourhood mosques padlocked, razor-wired, some crescents removed
• Outside walls adorned with propaganda: 'de-extremification', 'ethnic unity work', 'illegal religious activities',
• ‘Love the Party, Love the Country’ 爱党爱国 banners had replaced earlier ‘Love the Country, Love Religion’ 爱国爱教 ones
• 'Where has the crescent gone, was it taken away?' - Male resident nods, does not voice answer – mindful of audio surveillance; then denies he used to go in to pray
• Female resident: 'They took it away!' (Uy: Äkätti!)
Mosques converted to café-bars

‘The Dream of Kashgar,’
Photos: J Smith Finley,
Kashgar Old Town, 10 July 2018
An older [Hui] man in a white skull cap and his Uyghur wife say the mosque was closed for some time, and the religious school for much longer. They are clearly upset. He says the other day some foreign Muslims wanted to go in the mosque to pray. 'We had to tell them to go to the Heytgah mosque, didn’t we?' I say the Heytgah mosque isn’t open for prayer either, and they look dismayed, glancing at one other in shock. His wife asks what I do, and I say I’m a university teacher. Then it dawns on her and she says, 'You know about the situation then?' And promptly bursts into quiet tears. I try to comfort her, squeezing her arm, and saying everything changes, things will get better. She asks me then, ‘When will they get better?’

(J Smith Finley, field notes, 2018)
Defacement and removal of halal signage from Muslim eateries

• Uyghur self-censorship:

‘We did not put it [halal signage] in the plan but everyone knows the restaurant is a *milliy* (ethnic) restaurant' [and therefore halal]
Defacement and removal of halal signage from Muslim eateries

Hui female restaurateur:
'Our halal sign will not be replaced when the shop gets its new façade; but even if it doesn’t appear up there, I will still have it in my heart'

Hui restaurant with Qingzhen (halal) characters and mosque insignia removed (top left). Photo: J Smith Finley, Ürümchi, 5 July 2018.
Systematic destruction of religious built heritage

- North Gatehouse of Keriya Etika Mosque in Khotan demolished (April 2019, satellite image evidence, Shawn Zhang, Chinese PhD student at UBC)
- Towering architectural monument dated to 1237, extensively renovated in 1980s and 1990s
- Photographed on Islamic festival day, 2016 with thousands of worshippers spilling out
- 14 November 2017: still visible on satellite images; 11 April 2018: a smooth patch of earth

Example of what UNESCO calls ‘strategic cultural cleansing: the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups on the basis of their cultural, ethnic, or religious affiliation, combined with the intentional and systematic destruction of cultural heritage’ (R Harris, 2020: ‘Uyghur Heritage and the Charge of Cultural Genocide in Xinjiang’)
Deserted, padlocked Büwi Müryäm Khenim Mazari, Bäshkirem

Photo: J Smith Finley, Kashgar, 13 July 2018
Systematic destruction of religious built heritage

- Guardian / Bellingcat analysis, May 2019: Documented more than two dozen Islamic religious sites partly or completely demolished since 2016
- 2019: Imam Asim shrine empty; mosque, *khaniqah* (place for Sufi rituals) and other buildings torn down, leaving only the tomb; pilgrims’ offerings, flags and pilgrims disappeared

R Harris, 2019: ‘Bulldozing mosques: the latest tactic in China’s war against Uighur culture’;

ASPI report, Ruser, Leibold, Munro and Hoja, 2020: ‘Cultural Erasure: Tracing the Destruction of Uyghur and Islamic Spaces in Xinjiang’;

R Thum, 2020: ‘The Spatial Cleansing of Xinjiang: Mazar Desecration in Context’
Jafari Sadiq shrine

'Nothing could say more clearly to the Uyghurs that the Chinese state wants to uproot their culture and break their connection to the land than the desecration of their ancestors’ graves, the sacred shrines that are the landmarks of Uyghur history’ – R Thum

'Revealed: new evidence of China's mission to raze the mosques of Xinjiang' - (L Kuo, 2019)
Islamic traditions supplanted by Han traditions

Deserted home with Chinese lanterns and new year couplets
Photos: J Smith Finley, Kashgar Old Town, 2018
Islamic culture supplanted by Han tradition

'We don’t have any festivals now... no one dares to say ‘Ăssalam Ăllāykum’ (Peace be with you) any more either! It’s too religious’ - Uyghur female bookseller, Xinhua bookstore

'Respect traditional [Han] festivals; hand down beautiful Chinese virtues’,
Photo: J Smith Finley, Ürümchi 2018
Coercive Chinese-medium education

- Inside ‘re-education’ camps, Uyghurs undergo coercive Sinicization of language, religion, culture and regional history
- Outside the camps: ‘Slow linguicide’ taking place since 2002 (H Burdorf 2021)
- Uyghur modified Arabic script *cut out* from this textile poster (like a cancer)
- Children of ‘doubly-detained’ parents placed in securitised “national education” boarding schools, psychologically “tortured”
- Show extreme caution when trying to speak and write in Chinese ‘as if they were skating on thin ice’ (Bitter Winter magazine, 2019)
Uyghur Islam and culture ‘invisibilised’ in school textbooks

• Han Chinese cultural and social life (Confucian, secular) highlighted; Uyghur cultural and social life (Turkic, Islamic) almost absent (‘Islam’ does not appear, the ethnonym ‘Uyghur’ only once or twice)

• Pictures of human characters show only Han facial features and cultural dress; Uyghur features and cultural dress are absent

• Human characters are Han Chinese, with typical Chinese personal names; Uyghur personal names are largely absent
Uyghur Islam and culture ‘invisibilised’ in school textbooks

• Han Chinese and Western literatures are highlighted (but not Turkish or Middle Eastern – i.e., Islamic – literatures), while Uyghur literature and folklore are largely absent;

• Folk stories are mostly selected from Han Chinese sources; Uyghur folk stories are absent; poems are by Han Chinese authors; works by Uyghur poets missing

• A deliberate intention to ‘invisibilise’ – and eventually eradicate – the Uyghur people as a separate ethnic group or nation (D Mahmut and J Smith Finley, 2022)
Religious/cultural destruction and mental harm

- Controls on religious dress and facial hair
- Psychological impact on cultural and gender identity (masculinity)
- Ghulja 2018, Uyghur taxi driver started to cry:
  'Today it is not possible to grow [a moustache]; it is not officially forbidden, but everyone knows the consequences of doing so'
- Kashgar 2018: After singing China’s national anthem in perfect Chinese, a Uyghur boy, age 6, recreated on his face a vanished Uyghur cultural norm—the beard—using white sticky labels

Photo: J Smith Finley, Kashgar Old Town, 11 July 2018
Religious/cultural destruction and mental harm

- Campaign to cut women’s tunics / dresses
- ‘This campaign has nothing to do with religious extremism [...] This is an attack on Uyghur women, Uyghur people’s dignity and way of life [...]’”

Dilxat Raxit, World Uyghur Congress

‘Uyghurs Deplore China’s Unkind Cuts to Local Women’s Skirts’ (Radio Free Asia, July 2018)
Coerced, state-sponsored intermarriage as means of Sinicisation

- PRC state aggressively incentivised and promoted Han-Uyghur intermarriage since 2014, accelerating the campaign since 2017
- One mixed couple reported how they were given money for housing, washing machine, refrigerator, and TV (Associated Press, June 2020)
- Analysis of PRC state narratives suggests coercion, with Han male migrants or security workers choosing a Uyghur woman, then working with local authorities to convince the families to agree (D Byler 2019)
- Forced marriages occurring in a climate of terror - a person’s refusal could lead to detention in a camp
- “If Uyghur women refuse an offer of marriage, what is to stop officials from branding these women, or their families, as ‘suspicious,’ to be taken away without charge or trial, never to be seen again? Under these circumstances, how could a woman dare to refuse an unwanted marriage?” – Z Shamseden, 2019

Detention of Famous Cultural Figures (‘Killing the Chicken to Show the Monkey’)

• Xinjiang authorities targeted celebrity and cultural figureheads - a deliberate policy of inducing fear
• Artists, writers, poets, academics, publishers, singers, comedians and athletes
• Promotes state project to ‘eradicate local languages and cultures’
• And warns broader masses that no-one is safe – not even elites
• Reaches beyond the realm of high culture, e.g. Erfan Hezim, the footballer; philanthropist businessman Nurtay Hajim,

Pictures of Abdurehim Heyit before/after detention. Source: Xinjiang Victims Database
Reuters on-the-ground investigation, 2021

- Reuters visited ~24 mosques across 7 counties during Ramadan. Most partially or completely demolished
- Part of a minaret broken off from former Xinqu Mosque, Changji, outside Ürümchi

‘Mosques disappear as China strives to “build a beautiful Xinjiang”’ – C Cadell, 14 May 2021

Picture taken May 6, 2021. REUTERS/Thomas Peter
Reuters on-the-ground investigation, 2021

• The former Xinqu Mosque with its minarets removed, in Changji outside Ürümchi

Pictures taken May 6, 2021. REUTERS/Thomas Peter
Reuters on-the-ground investigation, 2021

• ‘There's no mosque here ... there has never been a mosque at this site’

• Han woman who moved to Khotân six years ago from central China: "There are no Muslims like that here anymore“ [ones who pray at the mosque]

Jiaman Mosque in Qira county, Khotân. Picture taken April 28, 2021. REUTERS/Thomas Peter