

SUBMISSION BY THE WORLD UYGHUR CONGRESS TO THE FOURTH CYCLE OF CHINA'S UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

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Contact: Zumretay Arkin

zumretay@uyghurcongress.org

The World Uyghur Congress is an international organization that represents the collective interest of the Uyghur people. The WUC promotes democracy, human rights and freedom for the Uyghur people through peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine their future. The WUC was founded in 2004 and advocates for the civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights of the Uyghur people within international institutions, such as the EU and UN. The WUC regularly engages with UN mechanisms, including with treaty body reviews, and has taken part in the previous cycles of the Universal Periodic Review on China. We also submit policy recommendations to national governments. WUC supports Uyghur refugees and asylum seekers and offers capacity building trainings to Uyghur youth in the diaspora.

Contents:

Summary	3
Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism	3
Women's Rights	6
Children's rights	9

Summary

1. The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) submits this report for the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of China regarding the human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (hereinafter Uyghur Region). This submission highlights WUC's concerns regarding China's use of counter-terrorism legislation and its failure to comply with its international obligations since the last UPR in 2018. Since then, the human rights situation has significantly deteriorated in the Uyghur Region. The government has put in place a legislative framework that allow mass arbitrary detention and forced labour, coercive mass birth control, discriminatory mass surveillance and invasion of privacy targeting the Uyghur and other Turkic peoples, in violation of international law and Chinese domestic law.
2. In this submission, we examine the Government of China's compliance with its international obligations as well as domestic laws and regulations regarding the use of counter-terrorism laws, women's rights, arbitrary detention, and children's rights and assess its implementation of related recommendations received during the third UPR cycle.

Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism

3. In the 3rd UPR cycle of 2018, China demonstrated its commitment to upholding fundamental human rights by endorsing 15 recommendations¹ pertaining to the right to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and the protection of minority rights from discrimination. However, none of the recommendations have been implemented since.
4. In response to the list of issues to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 2022 regarding China's discriminatory treatment of ethnic groups, China asserted that its citizens enjoy equal rights in accordance with the law, including domestic laws, the Constitution and Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, prohibiting discrimination.² In its State Party report, China further stated that the General Provisions of the Civil Law, formulated in 2017, ensure equal legal status for all civil subjects in their activities.³ China highlighted that both its Constitution and the international human rights conventions it has ratified explicitly prohibit discrimination. In its 2023 Concluding Observations, the CESCR members

¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review: China, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/40/6, at 5-23 (26 Dec. 2018) [hereinafter "3rd UPR Report on China"]. 28.338 Guarantee the full exercise of the freedoms of association and expression of human rights defenders and minorities, in accordance with international human rights law (Costa Rica); 28.327 Prevent and combat all forms of discrimination and violence, especially against ethnic and religious minorities (Italy); 28.326 Further strengthen the protection of the rights of ethnic minority groups, in accordance with China's Constitution and international human rights commitments (Greece); 28.322 Fully respect the rights of ethnic minorities, freedom of religion and expressions of cultural identity (Croatia); 28.195 Respect the rights to freedom of religion or belief, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and culture, including for Tibetans, Uighurs and other minorities (Germany); 28.194 Guarantee freedom of religion or belief, including in Tibet and in Xinjiang (France); 28.183 Respect, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in accordance with general comment 22 of the Human Rights Committee (New Zealand);

² Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *List of Issues, China*, 29 March, 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2FRO%2F3&Lang=en.

³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *State Party Report*, 19 December, 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2F3&Lang=en.

reiterated their concerns regarding the systematic discrimination that Uyghurs and Turkic peoples faced in the exercise of their economic, social and cultural rights.⁴

5. Since 2014, the Chinese government has adopted a series of repressive policies and legislation in the name of national security and counter-terrorism, which effectively criminalised any normal expression of cultural and religious identity. The government's 'Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism' targeted religious practices by associating them with extremism and separatism. Simple everyday behaviours such as having a long beard or abstaining from using a television can be unjustly labelled as 'extremist' under these laws, which are arbitrarily and inconsistently enforced to target Uyghur and Turkic peoples. In November 2019, a group of UN experts have expressed their deep concern over the broad and vague definition of 'terrorism' under this law which "leaves ethnic minorities vulnerable to racial profiling and discrimination".⁵ Again in June 2022, 42 UN Special Procedures experts have reiterated the "need for a complete assessment of the human rights situation in the country, and especially in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region", and underscored that they have repeatedly raised concerns about widespread violations of the rights of Uyghurs and other Muslims "on the basis of religion or belief and under the pretext of national security and preventing extremism".⁶
6. The most blatant discriminatory practice is the internment of an estimated 1-3 million Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in political indoctrination camps (also called 're-education' centres).⁷ Credible reports provide evidence of individuals in the camps detained indefinitely without charge, forced to undergo indoctrination classes, and tortured.⁸ Arbitrary detentions and harsh conditions in the camps are part of a systematic policy targeting the Uyghur and Turkic peoples in the region.⁹
7. Uyghur, Kyrgyz and Kazakh intellectuals and cultural elites were among the first groups of targeted individuals. One analysis estimated that at least 312 have been detained or imprisoned since then.¹⁰ 'Elites' or 'intellectuals' in this context include those who hold prominent or influential positions in various fields, including university lecturers and scholars, medical researchers and doctors, journalists, editors, publishers, writers, and artists. Several cases of targeted Uyghur intellectual and cultural figures have been covered in the international media and documented by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. These include those of folklore expert Dr. Rahile

⁴Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Concluding Observations*, 22 March, 2023,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=en.

⁵OHCHR, *OL CHN18/2019*, 1 November, 2019,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24845>.

⁶OHCHR, 'China must address grave human rights concerns and enable credible international investigation: UN experts', 10 June, 2022,

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/china-must-address-grave-human-rights-concerns-and-enable-credible>.

⁷ A. Zenz, *The Karakax List: Dissecting the Anatomy of Beijing's Internment Drive in Xinjiang*, 8 J. POL. RISK, Feb. 2020, at 2 [hereinafter Zenz, *The Karakax List*]; Uyghur Tribunal, *Uyghur Tribunal Judgment*, Dec. 9, 2021, <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Uyghur-Tribunal-Judgment-9th-Dec-21.pdf>.

⁸OHCHR, *Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China*, at 50, 31 August, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assessment.pdf> [hereinafter *OHCHR Report*].;

Uyghur Tribunal Judgment, supra note 3, at 10; See A. Zenz, *Thoroughly Reforming them Toward a Healthy Heart Attitude: China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang*, 38 CENTRAL ASIAN SURVEY, 15 May, 2018; see also, C. Maza, *China's Muslim Minority Sent to Political Education Camps Amid Allegations of Gross Human Rights Violations*, NEWSWEEK, 5 February, 2018; "According to the 'Xinjiang Police Files', internal spreadsheets from Konasheher show the personal information of approx. 286,000 individuals (almost the entire county population in 2018), indicating that approx. 12.3 to 12.7 per cent of the county's ethnic adults were allegedly in some form of detention in 2018." *OHCHR Report*, supra note 4 at 18.

⁹ UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, *U.N Doc A/HRC/WGAD/2022/6*, 23 May, 2022 at 28-29

¹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project, *The Disappearance of Uyghur Intellectual and Cultural Elites: A New Form of Eliticide*, 8 December 2021, <https://uhrp.org/report/the-disappearance-of-uyghur-intellectual-and-cultural-elites-a-new-form-of-eliticide/>.

Dawut,¹¹ Xinjiang University President and professor Tashpolat Teyip,¹² economist, university professor and Václav Havel and Sakharov Prize winner Ilham Tohti,¹³ scholar and poet Dr. Abduqadir Jalaledin,¹⁴ former Xinjiang Medical University president and media scholar Halmurat Ghopur,¹⁵ and singer Ablajan Ayup.¹⁶ A dataset compiled by the Uyghur Human Rights Project also includes 45 cases of Uyghur and Kazakh staff members for several prominent publishing houses, primarily from Xinjiang Education Press and Kashgar Uyghur Press, who have been detained, imprisoned, or disappeared.¹⁷ Religious figures are also subjected to enforced disappearance, detention, and imprisonment. The Uyghur Human Rights Project documented that at least 1,046 Turkic religious figures have been detained in camps or sentenced to prison terms, since 2014.¹⁸ The dataset suggests that the most frequently cited reason for detention or imprisonment is for their current or past role as imams. The second most cited reason is for “teaching religion to children”, which illustrates the government’s attempt to break the inter-generational transmission of religious knowledge. The most common reason for prison sentences relates to “illegal teaching”, “illegal preaching”, or “teaching religion to children”.¹⁹

8. As part of China’s counter-terrorism framework, extensive mass surveillance systems were implemented in the Uyghur Region. Advanced surveillance technologies, such as the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP), are employed to gather vast amounts of personal physical and biological data, without the free and informed consent of individuals.²⁰ Procurement notices indicate that the IJOP collects information from various sources which include facial recognition and other CCTV cameras, home visits, and security checkpoints.²¹ These surveillance methods were supplemented with biometric data, including DNA and blood types collected during the “Physicals for All” campaign, with the aim of building a broad base of data for the implementation of new laws, regulations and social control policies.²²
9. In November 2022, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), through its early warning and urgent action procedure, recommended the government of China “undertake a full review of its legal framework governing national security, counterterrorism and minority rights in the XUAR to ensure their full compliance under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of

¹¹ New York Times, ‘Star Scholar Disappears as Crackdown Engulfs Western China’, 10 August 2018,

¹² OHCHR, ‘China urged to disclose location of Uyghur academic Tashpolat Tiyip’, 26 December 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/12/china-urged-disclose-location-uyghur-academic-tashpolat-tiyip>.

¹³ OHCHR, AL CHN 4/2020, 28 April 2021, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26337>.

¹⁴ Radio Free Asia, ‘Prominent Uyghur Scholar Detained in Xinjiang Capital Urumqi: Official’, 25 April 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/scholar-04252018140407.html#:~:text=Authorities%20in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang,according%20to%20a%20local%20official>.

¹⁵ Radio Free Asia, ‘Prominent Uyghur Intellectual Given Two-Year Suspended Death Sentence For ‘Separatism’’, 28 September 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/sentence-09282018145150.html#:~:text=Halmurat%20Ghopur%20is%20shown%20in,19%2C%202016.&text=Authorities%20in%20northwest%20China's%20Xinjiang,according%20to%20an%20official%20source>.

¹⁶ Fitz Gibbon, Kate. ‘A Culture Destroyed: China Expunges Uyghur Identity,’ in *Cultural Property News*, 27 August 2018, <https://culturalpropertynews.org/a-culture-destroyed-china-expunges-uyghur-identity/>.

¹⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project, supra note 6.

¹⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project, ‘Islam Dispossessed: China’s Persecution of Uyghur Imams and Religious Figures’, 13 May 2021, <https://uhrp.org/report/islam-dispossessed-chinas-persecution-of-uyghur-imams-and-religious-figures/>.

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots*, 19 April, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting> [hereinafter “Break Their Lineage”];

²¹ Id.

²² Id.

Discrimination’’.²³ In December 2022, 15 UN experts reiterated their concerns regarding China’s counter-terrorism framework and set seven benchmarks that address the broad range of discriminatory practices targeting the Uyghur and Turkic peoples.²⁴

Recommendations

- **Repeal the XUAR De-extremification Regulation and the XUAR Counter-Terrorism law.**
- **Provide information on suspects arrested in the Uyghur Region on charges of “separatism” or “endangering state security”. Provide disaggregated statistics on who is sentenced on these charges.**
- **Immediately and unconditionally release all Uyghur and Turkic peoples arrested and detained in ‘vocational training centers’.**
- **Limit surveillance programmes against specific groups, such as the Uyghur and Turkic peoples.**
- **Allow unfettered access to UN experts to visit the Uyghur Region and report on the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism law and regulations.**

Women’s Rights

10. Despite China accepting 25 recommendations²⁵ during the 3rd cycle of UPR to take adequate measures to prevent all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women, the government has implemented drastic measures preventing births in the Uyghur Region, and enabling an oppressive environment in which Uyghur and Turkic women face gender-based violence.²⁶
11. Within the internment camp facilities, Uyghur and Turkic women are particularly vulnerable, enduring physical torture and sexual abuse at the hands of officers. During the Uyghur Tribunal held in 2021, witnesses provided compelling testimony regarding the shocking practices within the detention centers. One revealed that wardens of these facilities would accept bribes from individuals, allowing them to enter the center and commit acts of sexual violence against the detainees.²⁷ In May 2023, in its Concluding Observations on China, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) noted with concern ‘‘the high number of women in detention, including in extra-legal detention facilities [...] where they are at risk of gender-based violence, torture and abuse.’’²⁸
12. Many formerly detained people, particularly women have reported experiencing physical abuse from officers at detention centres.²⁹ Allegations of maltreatment

²³Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Decision 1 (108)*, 23 November, 2022,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FEWU%2FCHN%2F9624&Lang=en.

²⁴ OHCHR, *AL CHN12/2022*, 19 December 2022,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27725>

²⁵ Human Rights Council, *3rd UPR Report on China*, supra note 1. 28.286 Take adequate measures to prevent all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women (Liechtenstein); 28.289 Strengthen measures to combat violence against women and domestic violence including through enhancing existing legislation to better ensure accountability for victims (Rwanda); 28.287 Continue efforts to curtail gender discrimination (Malaysia).

²⁶ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review, China*, 15 February 2019, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/041/01/PDF/G1904101.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁷ Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, supra note 3, at 3-4.

²⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations*, 31 March 2023, at 57,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FCHN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en.

²⁹ OHCHR Report, supra note 4, at 69-77; Uyghur Tribunal Judgment, supra note 3.

include the use of a ‘tiger chair’ to restrain and torture detainees, beatings for helping one another or for practising Islam, and physical methods of humiliation such as urinating on detainees.³⁰ Around 40 women ranging from 14 to 80 years old would be crammed into a small room with no windows. Inmates would not be allowed to use water often unless it was for medication, otherwise, they would be reprimanded for performing ablution. The sanitation and hygiene were very poor: inmates were not given any shampoo to wash their hair. As a result, many women developed head lice infections, and would then have their heads shaved. No adequate sanitary products were provided to the women.³¹ On February 10, 2021, a group of UN Special Rapporteurs issued a communication on the conditions of detention and the gender-based violence against Ms. Gulbakhar Jalilova detailing the violence she and other women inmates have faced in detention.³²

13. In addition, Uyghur and other Turkic detainees are not provided adequate food, a vital component of the right to health.³³ Former detainees report being served inadequate and mouldy food and faced food withholding as punishment.³⁴ Testimony explained that detainees had to beg and sing a Chinese propaganda song on their knees for food.³⁵
14. Chinese authorities have implemented a systematic mass birth prevention strategy specifically targeting Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim peoples in the Uyghur Region. The objective was to subject a significant majority of women of childbearing age in the southern part of the Uyghur Region to birth prevention surgeries, with a goal of at least 80% by 2019. This discriminatory approach becomes even more alarming when considering that, despite comprising only 1.8% of China's population, the Uyghur Region accounted for 80% of all new IUD placements in 2018³⁶. While China's 2019 state report to the CESCR claimed opposition to coercion³⁷, the reality on the ground demonstrates a failure to prevent the use of coercive measures, particularly forced sterilization and population control tactics directed towards Uyghur and Turkic women in the region.
15. By implementing these mass birth prevention strategies, China is extending its counter-terrorism efforts, employing coercive methods such as forced sterilization, coerced intrauterine device placements, and forced abortions. Government statistics indicate a decline in population growth within the Uyghur Region, coinciding with the government's labelling of population growth as an indicator of ‘religious extremism’

³⁰ Aqulqanqizi was tied to a tiger chair during multiple interrogations as well as once for 24 hours after helping an older detainee up after she was kicked down by officers. Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Aqulqanqizi*, 18. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211206-Gulzire-Aulhan.pdf>; Mezensof on behalf of her husband, Haitiwaji, and Dawut shared experiences being restrained on the tiger chair during detention. Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Mezensof*, 5, 7. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211122-Mehray-Mezensof.pdf>; Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Haitiwaji*, 13. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211116-Gulbahar-Haitiwaji.pdf>.

³¹ World Uyghur Congress, *Interview with Gulbakhar Jalilova*, June 2020.

³² OHCHR, *AL CHN 21/2020*, 10 February, 2021, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25780>.

³³ OHCHR Report, supra note 2, at 76; *Uyghur Tribunal Judgment*, supra note 1.

³⁴ Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Ziyawudun*, 8-9, <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211111-Tursunay-Ziyawudun.pdf>; Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Dawut*, 4-5, <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211111-Zumret-Dawut.pdf>.

³⁵ Uyghur Tribunal Witness Statement, *Mezensof*, 8, 24-25, <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211122-Mehray-Mezensof.pdf>.

³⁶ Zenz, A. ‘Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP’s Control to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang’. *Jamestown*, 29 June, 2020, <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Zenz-Sterilizations-IUDs-and-Mandatory-Birth-Control-FINAL-27June.pdf?x35627>.

³⁷ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Third periodic report submitted by China under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2019*, 19 December 2019, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2F3&Lang=en

starting in 2015³⁸. This trend continued in 2018, with the Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim populations experiencing a sustained decline, while the Han population in the region increased. The year 2019 witnessed a significant decrease in birth rates, reaching alarming levels of up to 56% in areas where Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim communities form the majority. Government documents explicitly establish a direct connection between high birth rates in the region and extremism, providing a purported rationale for the extrajudicial internment of individuals in ‘training camps.’³⁹ These findings corroborate the evidence presented in the leaked ‘Karakax List’⁴⁰ and underscore the systematic discrimination and human rights violations perpetrated against the Uyghur population under the guise of counter-terrorism measures.

16. China has placed Han officials in Uyghur and Turkic households through the ‘Becoming Family’ campaign, promoting ‘ethnic unity’.⁴¹ In its August 2022 assessment, OHCHR found that these homestays are ‘involuntary in nature’, and women have reported incidents of sexual harassment by Han men posted with their families, creating a coercive environment that enables sexual violence against women.⁴²
17. There have been increased efforts by the authorities in the Uyghur Region to coerce marriages between Han men and Uyghur and Turkic women.⁴³ The Uyghur-Han Marriage Strategy offers 10,000 yuan per year for up to 5 years for inter-ethnic couples to marry, provided the marriage ‘remains harmonious’.⁴⁴ That amount is about ‘2,600 yuan more than the average annual income of rural residents’ in the Uyghur Region - an amount so significant it cannot be considered a choice for economically deprived individuals.⁴⁵ Other policies ‘help with housing, medical care, government jobs, and tuition waivers and subsidies.’⁴⁶ In addition to ‘incentives’ for inter-ethnic couples and their children, the State also detains family members of individuals who refuse an inter-ethnic marriage.⁴⁷
18. In its 2023 Concluding Observations, CEDAW members have urged the government of China to immediately put an ‘end, prevent and criminalize’ forced birth control policies and forms of gender-based violence faced by Uyghur and Turkic women in the Uyghur Region.⁴⁸

Recommendations

- **Release disaggregated statistics on birth rates among Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities.**

³⁸ Zenz, A. ‘Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP’s Control to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang’, *supra* note 29.

³⁹ *Id.* at 9.

⁴⁰ Zenz, *The Karakax List*, *supra* note 3.

⁴¹ OHCHR Report, *supra* note 4, at 100-101.

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Break Their Lineage*, *supra* note 15; D. Byler, *Uyghur love in a time of interethnic marriage*, THE CHINA PROJECT, 17 August, 2019, <https://thechinaproject.com/2019/08/07/uyghur-love-in-a-time-of-interethnic-marriage>; Newlines Institute for Strategy & Policy with Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights, *The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China’s Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, March 2021, at 26-27, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Chinas-Breaches-of-the-GC3-2.pdf> [hereinafter “*The Uyghur Genocide*”].

⁴⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project, *Forced Marriage of the Uyghur Women: State Policies for Interethnic Marriages in East Turkistan*, 16 November, 2022), <https://uhrp.org/report/forced-marriage-of-uyghur-women/> [hereinafter “*Forced Marriage*”].

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Break Their Lineage*, *supra* note 4; R. *The Uyghur Genocide*, *supra* note 36, at 18-20; *Forced Marriage*, *supra* note 37.

⁴⁸ *Concluding observations*, *supra* note 22.

- **End the practice of giving financial incentives for interethnic marriages between Uyghur women and Han men.**
- **Repeal forced sterilisation policies in the Uyghur Region and release all individuals interned for violating birth control violations under the legal framework of combating extremism.**

Children's rights

19. In 2018, China accepted 13 recommendations to further develop public policies aimed at protecting the rights of children⁴⁹, enhancing children's rights, and promoting their physical and mental health.
20. The impact of China's mass internment system is not limited to the Uyghurs who are detained in it; it also results in family separation, which affects thousands of children.
21. According to NGO and media reports, when Uyghur parents are sent to the camps, their children are often taken away and placed in state-run orphanages,⁵⁰ even when grandparents and other family members pleaded to be able to take care of them. Furthermore, there is no clear identification of whose consent is required, which government entities hold the authority to make decisions regarding the removal of children to state institutions, or whether any protocols exist for determining consent or avenues for challenging such determinations.⁵¹
22. Uyghurs residing abroad encounter significant obstacles in reuniting with their children.⁵² Uyghurs abroad are denied reunification with their children and face refusal from Chinese embassies and consulates in disclosing their whereabouts coercively urging the parents to return to the Uyghur Region, where they are highly likely to face detention or torture. The Chinese government's policy of recall and confiscation of passports often leads to permanent family separations.⁵³
23. Daily activities in so-called boarding schools are centered around indoctrination and strict control over Uyghur children's language, religion, and cultural expressions.⁵⁴ Children are forbidden from speaking their mother tongue and are discouraged from displaying any aspects of their religious or cultural heritage.⁵⁵ This systematic approach serves a larger objective of cultural assimilation and the deliberate erasure of Uyghur and Turkic Muslim identities.
24. Despite China's claims that state-run boarding schools provide an environment where students with schooling difficulties can exercise their right to education and that parents can regularly visit and take their children home, the reality suggests a different

⁴⁹Report of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review, supra note 1, 28.264

⁵⁰Amnesty International, 'China: Hearts and Lives Broken – The nightmare of Uyghur families separated by repression', 19 March, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3798/2021/en/>.

⁵¹Human Rights Watch, *China: Xinjiang Children Separated from Families*, 15 September, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/15/china-xinjiang-children-separated-families>

⁵²S.Samuel, *China's Jaw-Dropping Family Separation Policy*, 4 September 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/china-internment-camps-uyghur-muslim-children/569062/>

⁵³Human Rights Watch, 'Eradicating Ideological Viruses: China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang's Muslims', 9 September 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/10/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs>.

⁵⁴Radio Free Asia, *China Bans Uyghur Language in Schools in Key Xinjiang Prefecture*, 27 July, 2017, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/language-07282017143037.html>.

⁵⁵A. Zenz, 'Parent Children Separation in Yarkand County, Kashgar', 15 October, 2020, https://adrianzenz.medium.com/story-45d07b25bcad#_ftn1.

narrative. There are concerns regarding the conditions, including severe overcrowding and deplorable living conditions⁵⁶, and practices within these boarding schools that raise questions about the actual fulfilment of children's rights by the Chinese government.

25. In practice, ‘bilingual education’ in the Uyghur Region stands as a policy of transitioning Uyghur students at all levels of education to speak and learn only in Chinese.⁵⁷ In June 2017, the Education Department of Hotan prefecture outlawed the use of the Uyghur language for students at all education levels from primary to secondary school.⁵⁸ It also instructed authorities in Hotan Prefecture to “prohibit the use of Uyghur language, writing, signs and pictures in the educational system and on campuses.” In January 2018, UN independent experts issued a communication expressing their concern over the directive on bilingual education issued by Hotan’s Education Department.⁵⁹ More recently, reports have confirmed the removal of the Uyghur language from the curriculum in a school in Kashgar,⁶⁰ and Kelpin County in Aksu.⁶¹ In its 2023 Concluding Observations, CESCR members reiterated their concerns on ethnic groups who ‘continue to face severe restrictions in the realization of their right to take part in cultural life, including the right to use and teach minority languages, history and culture’⁶², and reports of limitations on receiving education in their mother tongue.

Recommendations

- **Abolish boarding schools are imposed on Uyghur and Turkic children whose parents are detained.**
- **Re-establish communication between Uyghurs in the diaspora and their relatives in the Uyghur Region, with no reprisals.**
- **Revise the “bilingual education” policy that replaced Uyghur with Chinese as the medium of instruction and meaningfully allow Uyghurs and Turkic peoples to use their native language in school and in their daily life.**

⁵⁶Radio Free Asia, *Dozens of Uyghur Children of Xinjiang Village Camp Detainees Sent to Live in Orphanages*, 2 February, 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/orphanages-07022018143057.html>

⁵⁷Radio Free Asia, *supra* note 47.

⁵⁸Uyghur Human Rights Project, *Uyghur Voices on Education: China’s Assimilative ‘Bilingual Education’ Policy in East Turkestan*, p. 3, 20 May, 2015, <https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/Uyghur-Voices-on-Education.pdf>.

⁵⁹OHCHR, *OL CHNI/2018*, 12 January, 2018, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=23557>.

⁶⁰ Radio Free Asia, Abdilim, M., *Xinjiang Authorities Institute Mandarin-Only Instruction at Prominent High School*, 12 June, 2020, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/school-06122020180620.html>.

⁶¹Radio Free Asia, *Uyghur Language Instruction Absent from Schools in Xinjiang’s Kelpin County*, 29 January, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/language-01292021173514.html>.

⁶²Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *supra* note 4, at 88.