



Committee: United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Issue: The Question of Xinjiang

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Introduction to the Issue

Xinjiang is a province in China which harbors numerous ethnic groups, the Han majority population and the Uighur minority. Another key minority in the area are the Huis, who are ethnically Chinese Muslim minorities.

As the region in China continues to dominate headlines about possible human rights infringements in “re-education camps” in the wake of China’s push to consolidate its authority over its territorial span, not only limited to Hong Kong but extending to Hong Kong and the South China Sea, the international community is expressing alarm in China’s approach to deal with the ethnic conflict.

With the Chinese policy over the last century since the start of the People’s Republic of China’s reign involving moving in ethnic Hans en-masse, who are the majority population of China, rendering Uighurs in Xinjiang, or as its referred to among Uighurs Kashgar, a region in Southern Xinjiang.

The Chinese government, having observed the 2009 riots in Xinjiang, a boiling point of the ethnic tensions in the region, at the capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi. Mass arrests and casualties were the results of conflicts, which undoubtedly set the groundwork for stringent police control over Xinjiang, its effects tangible today.

Involved Countries & Organizations

China:

China’s policy regarding Xinjiang has been both historically and politically consistent. Xinjiang is not the only front in which the government has locked horns with a local population, where the examples such as Tibet and Hong Kong are prominent. The Beijing government has been pushing for increased control over its continental territories and outside, consolidating its position as a uniform country that



wishes to cement its power in Asia and towards continents farther away. In response to international outcry over genocide claims, China's response has been a very vehement denial of any wrongdoing, despite its secretive handling of most judiciary documents. China recently gave a nod to allow UNHCR's inspectors to look for evidence of ethnic cleansing/genocide in the region, palpably confident that the investigations will only work to affirm their position.

United States of America:

The United States, perhaps the leading critic of Beijing's practices, has cited the government with committing crimes against humanity and genocide. Before the end of their term, the Trump administration's Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo was quoted saying: "I believe this genocide is ongoing, and that we are witnessing the systematic attempt to destroy Uighurs by the Chinese party-state," ("Who are the Uighurs and why is the US accusing China of genocide?").

Mr. Joe Biden's administration and their even stricter approach to dealing with America's adversaries, their foreign policy is likely to mount even more pressure on China, given that even though China recently gave a go ahead for an investigation, with their prior record of controlling reporting such as that of the BBC's visit to Xinjiang, the investigation's result will be dissatisfactory even if it acquits China of any wrongdoing.

America has already been taking steps in returning China with economic penalties, such as banning outright any product of Xinjiang origin unless there is evidence that they are not the product of forced labor.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom shares the United States' sentiment that what China describes as "vocational training centers" hide a much more sinister reality and they cite almost daily reports of human rights abuses in the region. Prior to the People's Republic giving a green light to inspections, Britain had been a key nation to call for these investigations.

Considering Britain's already eroding relations with China over the Hong Kong crisis where the nation began offering citizenships to grant refuge to Hong Kongers who were facing similar



governmental pressure with non-aligning agendas, the UK has no reason to believe in China's good faith in Xinjiang.

Detailed Analysis of the Issue

Historic Origins I: The Qing Dynasty and Preliminary Riots

Before the People's Republic of China rose to power after the 2nd World War and by effect expelling the Republic of China and its government to the Taiwanese Islands, creating today's Taiwan, the Qing Dynasty ruled the Chinese geography until its collapse in 1911. The name, Xinjiang originates from this time, where "xin jiang" meant "new frontier". They began ruling the region through proxy local leaders in a common empire management strategy. This strategy however, did not yield perfect results, in fact it was so far from it that between 1867 and 1878, there was a breakaway through a rebellious movement which declared Kashgar as independent from the Qing Dynasty. After the 11 year breakaway was ended through force by the Qing Dynasty and its military command who had also been simultaneously shutting down ethnic tensions posed by the Hui's, the Chinese-Muslims that pose the secondary ethnic minority in Xinjiang today.

Following the Dynasty's dissolution, the Republic of China was unable to secure the same level of authority and control posed by the Dynasty, rendering the region as a de-facto independent state, and breakaway attempts became more common attempting to employ pan-Islamist ideologies to win support within Kashgar – or Xinjiang.

The People's Republic of China employed an alternate strategy in consolidating the unrest in Xinjiang, where they made a compromise in declaring the region as a semi-autonomous region.

Historic Origins II: Post-Soviet Dissolution

Even though Xinjiang is not directly, or more accurately, was not directly part of the Soviet Union at any point in time, the dissolution of a key ally and multinational union proved to have adverse effects on the People's Republic of China, another communist country managing multiple ethnic groups. Numerous nations previously under Soviet management suddenly started gaining their independence, and this reflected poorly on a peaceful outlook in Xinjiang.

Having witnessed numerous Soviet satellite states become independent such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, all predominantly Muslim countries, the dissolution set the precedent for the minorities in Asia to demand their independences.



Figure 1: Post-Soviet Outlook of Asia

Just four years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, major demonstrations took place in Yining, Xinjiang. Another demonstration was to follow two years later. Chinese apparatchiks took note of these demonstrations and identified them as the number one problem that China faced internally at the time. Response was swift and forceful, and both demonstrations were suppressed.



Figure 2: Map of Xinjiang and Yining

Current Situational Outlook and Recent History

In 1994, Wang Lequan, an appointee of the Communist Party of China to the Autonomous Xinjiang Region, became the Secretary for the Communist Party in China. During his one and a half decades long office, Xinjiang was rocked by both sporadic clashes but also more organized, greater scale demonstrations. With the local population and the local authorities not getting along and the authorities' policy of responding to these clashes, especially those posed by armed military bands, created the scene for endless exchanges of force.

The year 2009 brought mass protests in the capital of the region, Urumqi, where 3 ethnically Han Chinese people lost their lives. The Han ethnicity, being the majority ethnicity in all of China, were represented by the police force present in the riots, who were opposed by minority groups, which as noted, were spearheaded by the Uighurs in the area.

The protests brought along acts of vandalism that complete the requisites for them to be classified as riots, as they are such by the Communist Party. The reported response was mass detention of the rioters,



alongside the imposition of a curfew which would forcibly shut down to protests/riots, or render those participating in violation of the curfew which was a criminal act.

Following a similar riot in 2014 where over 150 people were stabbed, the government's response began to tighten and world actors began questioning the methods followed by Chinese officials to restore order to the region. The "Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism" followed by officials convicted over quarter of a million people in 2016. The Human Rights Watch, a non-UN human rights observation organization spoke out against these convictions. It was the HRW's opinion that among those convicted, there were who lacked any serious offenses, posing the question if the authorities were using the situation to their advantage to convict a certain segment of the population.

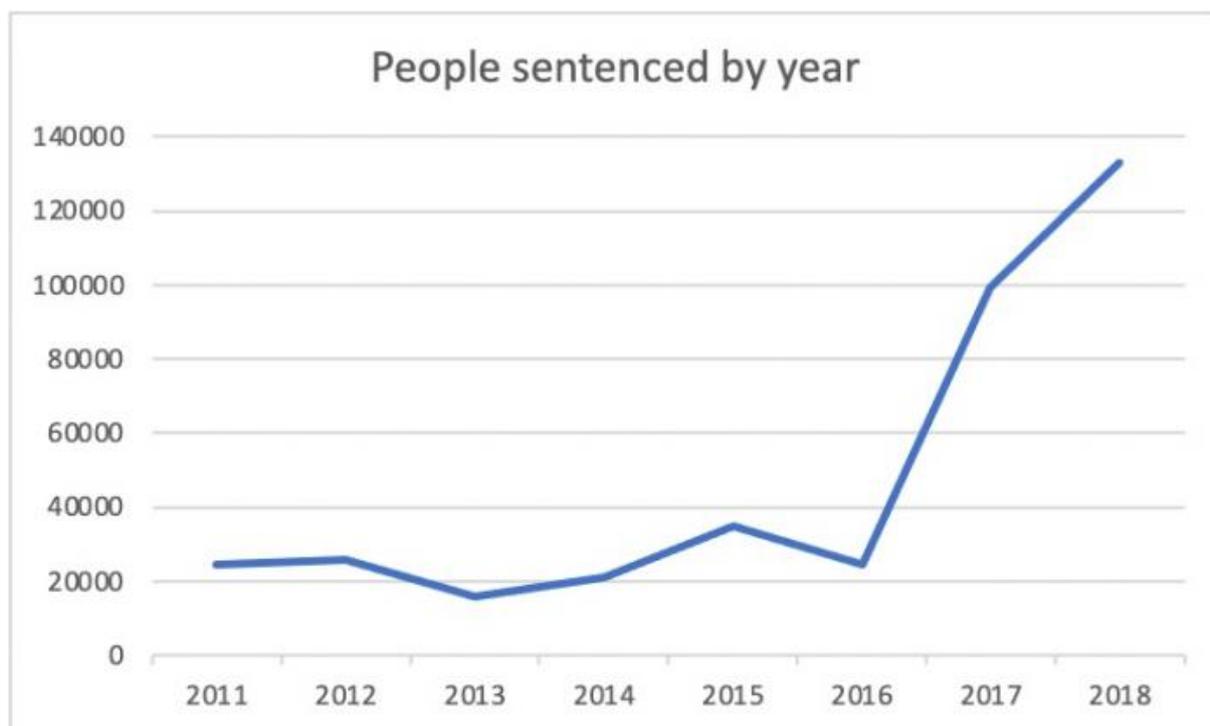


Figure 3: Convictions in Xinjiang by year

As proposed by the graph above, the campaign that's being enforced is yielding a very high prosecution tally, an alarming number for a region with a population of 25 million. It is also noteworthy that the authorities are keeping a very strict control over judicial documents and figures, such as priorly not releasing the 2019 conviction figures for Xinjiang.



A non-transparent department of justice, high prosecutions and a legitimate concern that courts are becoming a silencing tool for local authorities, the international community had began expressing increasing alarm over the situation.

These concerns were not allayed upon the discovery of “reeducation camps” in Xinjiang, where several accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide were made by external parties. Observing the previous track record of the Beijing and Xinjiang government in reshaping the region by pushing a policy that shifted the demographic of the region from an Uighur majority to a Han majority, the concerns of the international community don’t stand without merit.

List of Important Events

Date	Event
1867-78	Xinjiang breaks away from the Qing Dynasty before its reclamation by force
1911	The Qing Dynasty dissolves, instating a republic (The Republic of China) in its place in a matter of weeks.
1 October 1949	Mao Zedong declares the creation of the People’s Republic of China.
26 December 1991	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics disbands, creating many ethnically diverse nations in the process.
5 July 2009	Xinjiang is rocked by massive protests and riots, claiming lives of multiple Chinese authorities in the process.
30 April 2014	A terrorist event as categorized by the People’s Republic of China in a train station ends with over o hundred counts of stabbings.



Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

Xinjiang, being sovereign territory of China under international standards, poses an additional layer of complexity in attempting to reach a solution. Practically every solution requires an approval from the central government posing a question to the fairness of any outcome that's allowed to take place.

China's sovereign exercise of power and attempts to regulate the unrest in Xinjiang have evidently done little to end the ethnic problem in Xinjiang, but it has restored a degree of order to the streets. That however, comes at the cost of the international dissatisfaction with the believed-to-be draconian measure of perceived labor camps that target the Uighur minority.

Related Documents

[Document No.7 of the Communist Party of China, plain text, 1996.](#)

The document presented above is a translated plain text version of the Document No.7, an internal report for the communist party of China. In this very document, within the context of having seen the demonstrations of '95 in the city of Yining, the party outlines its plans for Xinjiang, having identified it as the first problem of the nation.

The provisions outlined in the document include achieving "ethnic unity", increasing control over local ethnic groups and religions through correct policy, the dissemination of propaganda both through and outside of schools to achieve stability. Delegates are highly encouraged to read this document in full.

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/G/17>

The following document, a letter sent by numerous nations, a list of which can be found in the original document, to the Human Rights Council of the UN, defending the view of the People's Republic



of China and their efforts in combatting domestic acts of terrorism (identified as such in the document) and commending the nation in its openness regarding the situation and its contribution to human rights.

[Tactics from Turpan City for answering questions asked by the children of concentrated education and training school students](#)

Training school students' (a reference to those in the reeducation camps in Xinjiang) sudden absence from daily life would raise alarm between their relatives. In the document above, which is an internal document from Chinese officials, answers to likely questions are given as an answering guideline for local authorities. Delegates are encouraged to read this in full.

Possible Solutions

With the People's Republic of China newly beginning to allow inspectors in China, it should be a high priority to any delegates to make sure such activities are done with mutual satisfaction to the accuracy of the findings.

While keeping the prospect of an investigation in mind, the parameters caused by this agenda item such as the sanctions placed on products of Xinjiang origin, but also that Xinjiang is still a part of the People's Republic of China, thus any action is both due for Beijing's approval and in accordance with that, must be within certain boundaries of being non-invasive.



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