



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **China: Muslims (including Uyghurs in Xinjiang)**

**Version 2.0**

**July 2022**

# Preface

## Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

## Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

## Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

### **Feedback**

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

### **Independent Advisory Group on Country Information**

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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# Assessment

Updated: 5 July 2022

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by the state because the person is or is believed to be a Muslim.

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## 2. Consideration of issues

### 2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

2.3.1 Religion, race, and/or perceived political opinion.

2.3.2 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. Religion in China

2.4.1 The Chinese constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion and guarantees freedom of religion for ‘normal religious activities’, a term which is undefined (see [Constitution](#)). It should be noted that the constitution does not protect people’s rights in the same way it does in Western constitutional democracies. Generally, the authorities react aggressively towards those that try to use the Constitution to defend their rights.

2.4.2 The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is officially atheist and demands that any of its 90 million members who are found to hold religious beliefs are expelled (see [Religion in China](#)).

2.4.3 The government recognises 5 official religions, including Islam and members must register with the government’s Patriotic Religious Associations, which seek to regulate and monitor the activities of registered religious groups. Only registered religious groups are legally allowed to hold worship services. Unregistered religious groups are illegal and risk having their activities restricted and their places of worship closed down (see [Religion in China](#) and [Legal framework](#)).

2.4.4 Islamic groups must register with the Islamic Association of China (IAC). Registered religious groups must adhere to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) which require them to ‘integrate religious doctrines into Chinese culture’ and to adapt to ‘Chinese Cultural Traditions’, a process which is often referred to as ‘sinicization’ (see [Legal framework](#)).

2.4.5 There are approximately 22 million Muslims in China, of whom the 2 main groups are the Hui (also sometimes referred to as Chinese Muslims), who are largely based in China’s north west regions; and the Uyghurs, largely based in the north western region of Xinjiang. Each number amounts to approximately 11 million. Other small Muslims groups include Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Tajiks who are scattered throughout various regions but are mainly found in the Xinjiang region (see [Religion in China](#)).

2.4.6 For information on and analysis of Christians and other non-Christian religious groups see the specific [Country Policy and Information Note](#).

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b. Muslims in Xinjiang

- 2.4.7 Muslims living in the Xinjiang region, particularly Uyghurs, are unable to practise their faith openly as it will likely be perceived as a support for independence. They face a real risk of ill-treatment which amounts to persecution. Each case must, however, be considered on its facts.
- 2.4.8 In May 2014, China launched its ‘Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism’ (Strike Hard campaign) in the Xinjiang region. This campaign targets anyone who the state believes challenges state security, ethnic unity and social stability. This is particularly seen by the state as the Uyghur Muslims, but other Muslims living in the area may also be vulnerable to the campaign (see [Restrictions on Muslims](#)).
- 2.4.9 Whilst Islam is one of the 5 officially recognised religions in China, the government has increasingly cited concerns over the ‘three evils’ of ‘separatism, extremism, and terrorism’ as grounds to enact and enforce restrictions on the religious and cultural practices of Uyghur Muslims (see [Restrictions on Muslims](#)).
- 2.4.10 Authorities view a wide range of behaviours in the region as being linked to ‘extremist’ activity including expressions of Muslim identity, including culture and language (see [Restrictions on Muslims](#)).
- 2.4.11 Xinjiang has its own set of regulations - the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulations on De-esterification, brought in in 2017 and amended in 2018. These legal restrictions have been introduced to curtail Islamic identity including bans on: wearing veils, growing irregular beards, the use of Muslim religious names and religious matrimonial ceremonies. This has made it extremely difficult for Muslims in Xinjiang to freely practise their religion (see [Regulations](#) and [Restrictions on Muslims](#)).
- 2.4.12 Natural population growth has declined in Xinjiang, with reports of a campaign of mass sterilization in rural Uyghur regions. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s (ASPI), an independent think tank, indicates a drop in birth-rates of nearly 50 percent in Xinjiang between 2017 and 2019. Women of childbearing age, including those detained, are forced to undergo sterilisations, and birth control measures, such as Intrauterine Devices (IUD’s) and in some cases abortions. According to one academic source, 80 percent of all new IUD placements in China were performed in Xinjiang in 2018 (a region that only makes up 1.8 percent of the nation’s population). Uyghur women can be detained for having too many children and are subsequently at risk of sexual violence and torture (see [Birth control and forced sterilisation](#) and the ASPI report for detailed information on the methodology used to compile its statistics and [Torture and ill treatment in detention](#)).
- 2.4.13 There are widespread reports that authorities are highly suspicious of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang who have family overseas or who have travelled overseas. All residents are reported to have to surrender their passports and face restrictions on overseas and internal travel (see [Families of those detained or abroad](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.4.14 The authorities use sophisticated technology to track people, including CCTV surveillance, facial recognition cameras, telephone monitoring, home

visits and checkpoints for Muslims throughout the region. They have also compulsorily collected biometric data (including DNA, fingerprints, iris scans and blood groups) of all residents aged 12–65. The authorities collate information from surveillance and policing to flag individuals identified for detention as ‘potential security threats’. Government workers, usually Han Chinese, are also sent to live with Uyghur families to conduct surveillance and compile information, in an initiative that is referred to as the ‘Pair Up and Become a Family’ system (see [Surveillance](#)).

- 2.4.15 Since April 2017, and more recently through leaked police data files in May 2022, credible reporting acknowledged by the UK Government and United Nations, indicates the authorities in Xinjiang have detained (extra judicially) upwards of 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslims and forced them to undergo ‘patriotic education’ in re-education camps. Chinese authorities have claimed that some ‘trainees’ at the re-education centres have ‘graduated’ but 4 sources suggest that Uyghurs are now being transferred to factories, some of which are reported to be co-located with detention centres, to work in conditions of forced labour. Family members have reported deaths of relatives whilst in detention camps or from illness related to the conditions of detention shortly after release (see [Detention and ‘re-education centres’](#) and [Forced labour](#)).
- 2.4.16 Detention facilities within the Xinjiang province continue to be built and are across every populated area of the region. Amnesty International, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) and BuzzFeed’s news investigation into internment camps noted that visiting foreign websites, maintaining ties with family abroad, applying for a passport, downloading WhatsApp or engaging in prayer are all offences which Muslims in the region have been detained for (see [Detention and ‘re-education centres’](#))
- 2.4.17 Detainees have reportedly been subjected to physical and psychological torture, sexual and gender-based violence, solitary confinement, forced labour, forced birth control, and overcrowded conditions. Some Uyghur children – especially those whose families are detained – were sometimes moved to orphanages or forced to attend state run boarding schools (see [Birth control and forced sterilisation](#), [Detention and ‘re-education centres’](#), [Forced labour](#) and [Families of those detained or abroad](#)).
- 2.4.18 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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### c. Muslims outside of Xinjiang

- 2.4.19 The state appears to see Hui Muslims as less of a threat and therefore, in general, they are less likely to face the same level of persecution as Muslims in Xinjiang. However, they may still be subject to state attention and restrictions. Each case should be judged on its individual circumstances.
- 2.4.20 Risk of persecution may increase where a person attends an unregistered (illegal) Islamic religious group. If the religious group follows the state sanctioned version of their religion, then religious practise may be possible. The onus will be on the person to show that how they observe and express their faith will bring them to the attention of the authorities and result in them

facing treatment that amounts to persecution. Each case must, however, be considered on its facts.

- 2.4.21 Hui Muslims are scattered across China but reside primarily in the north west regions of Ningxia, Gansu, Yunnan and Qinghai, although approx. a million live in Xinjiang (see [Religion in China](#) and [State treatment of Muslims outside of Xinjiang](#)).
- 2.4.22 Whilst the State has particularly targeted Muslims in Xinjiang ([see section b](#)), in recent years Hui Muslims also face increasing restrictions, surveillance and pressure to 'sinicize'. This has resulted in the closure of registered mosques and the restyling of others to fit sinicization; some restrictions on religious expression, such as observing Ramadan; and increasing restrictions on their ability to practice their faith freely (see [State treatment of Muslims outside of Xinjiang](#)).
- 2.4.23 Outside Xinjiang, Hui individuals have been imprisoned for sharing religious materials online, protesting about the destruction of a mosque or taking part in the Hajj pilgrimage. Chinese legislation makes it illegal for under 18's to engage with certain religious activities in Xinjiang. This has had a knock on effect on neighbouring provinces, such as those with Hui populations (see [State treatment of Muslims outside of Xinjiang](#), [Forced labour](#) and [State treatment of Muslims in the Xinjiang province](#)).
- 2.4.24 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, they will not, in general, be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state and there is no safe part of the country where they would not be at risk from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.6.3 For further information on internal relocation see country policy and information note on [China: Background including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).
- 2.6.4 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.7 Certification

2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

Section 3 updated: 5 July 2022

## 3. Religion in China

### 3.1 Religious demography

- 3.1.1 The Central Intelligence Agency's world factbook stated that China had an estimated population of over 1.4 billion<sup>1</sup>. Chinese government statistics record approximately 200 million registered religious believers<sup>2</sup> however Freedom House notes, in a special report, that 'China is home to over 350 million religious believers and hundreds of millions more who follow folk traditions. According to them government statistics exclude those who worship at unregistered temples or churches and believers under the age of 18, and many Chinese engage in a mixture of religious and folk practices. Official figures for Muslims [...] are based on ethnicity, embedding the assumption that all members of an ethnic group adhere to a particular religion.'<sup>3</sup>
- 3.1.2 Freedom House noted, in a special report, the Battle for China's Spirit, published February 2017, that there are 185-250 million Chinese Buddhists, 60-80 million Protestants, 21-23 million Muslims, 7-20 million Falun Gong practitioners, 12 million Catholics, 6-8 million Tibetan Buddhists, and hundreds of millions who follow various folk traditions. There were no figures for the amount of Taoists in China<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.1.3 The US State Department, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom Report (USIRF) for China, published 2 June 2022: 'The government recognizes five official religions – Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism...'<sup>5</sup>
- 3.1.4 The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), an independent nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher's Backgrounder on Religion in China, last updated on 25 September 2020, stated:
- 'The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is officially atheist. The party prohibits its nearly ninety million party members from holding religious beliefs, and it has demanded the expulsion of party members who belong to religious organizations. Officials have said that party membership and religious beliefs are incompatible, and they discourage families of CCP members from publicly participating in religious ceremonies. Although these regulations are not always strictly enforced, the party periodically takes steps to draw a clearer line on religion. In 2017, the party's official newspaper warned CCP members from putting faith in religion, calling it "spiritual anesthesia."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CIA, '[World fact book, China- people and society](#)', updated 13 May 2022

<sup>2</sup> CFR, '[Religion in China](#)', last updated 25 September 2020

<sup>3</sup> Freedom House, '[Special report- The Battle for China's Spirit](#)', February 2017

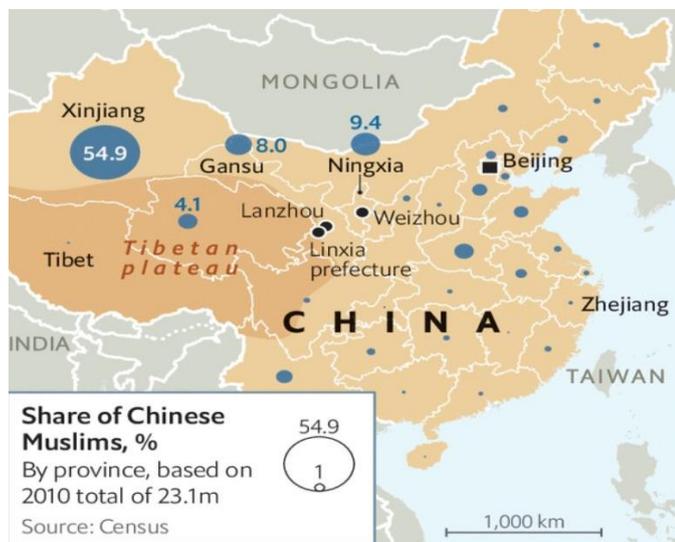
<sup>4</sup> Freedom House, '[Special report- The Battle for China's Spirit](#)', February 2017

<sup>5</sup> USSD, '[2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: China- Xinjiang](#)', 2 June 2022

<sup>6</sup> CFR, '[Religion in China](#)', last updated 25 September 2020

## 3.2 Muslims

- 3.2.1 The Economist produced a map in September 2019 which shows the distribution of Muslims throughout China<sup>7</sup>



- 3.2.2 The Foreign Policy Centre, an international affairs think tank based in the UK, stated in March 2019 that:

‘Unlike the Uighurs, who speak their own Turkic language, the Huis’ native language is Mandarin Chinese (with the occasional Persian or Arabic word thrown in). Nevertheless, while Huis are far more integrated into the dominant Han Chinese culture than Uighurs, centres of Hui culture can be found in China’s northwest regions, including in Xinjiang, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Province, the city of Xi’an in Shaanxi Province and Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province.’<sup>8</sup>

- 3.2.3 New Europe noted in an February 2020 article that: ‘Often referred to as the “Chinese Muslims,” the Hui are an ethnic group made up from more than 1,000 years of mixed marriages between Han Chinese and the Turkic tribes of western China and Mongolia as well as Persians.’<sup>9</sup>

- 3.2.4 The CFR backgrounder, last updated in September 2020, stated:

‘Muslims make up about 1.8 percent of China’s population, accounting for around twenty-two million people. China has ten predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, the largest of which is the Hui, an ethnic group closely related to the majority Han population and largely based in western China’s Ningxia Autonomous Region and the Gansu, Qinghai, and Yunnan provinces. The Uighurs, a Turkic people who live primarily in the autonomous region of Xinjiang in northwest China, are also predominantly Muslim. There about eleven million Uighurs in this region, making up approximately half of its population. Officials in Xinjiang tightly control religious activity, while Muslims in the rest of the country enjoy greater religious freedom, In recent years, however, Hui Muslims in north western China have experienced an uptick in

<sup>7</sup> The Economist, [‘China’s repression of Islam is spreading beyond Xinjiang’](#), 28 September 2019

<sup>8</sup> FPC, [‘Hui Muslims in China’s “Little Mecca”: Fusing Islamic and Han Practices’](#), 14 March 2019

<sup>9</sup> New Europe, [‘Xinjiang’s Hui minority have also been forced into...’](#), last updated 28 July 2020

repression, including the imprisonment of religious leaders and forced closure of mosques.<sup>10</sup>

3.2.5 Bitter Winter, an online magazine on religious liberty and human rights in China published by the Center for Studies on New Religions, headquartered in Italy, noted in their undated glossary entry on Hui Muslims that:

‘Recognized by the CCP and the government as an “ethnic” minority, they are in fact a religious group, which includes those Muslims who are ethnically Han Chinese and speak various forms of the Chinese language, unlike the Uyghurs and the Ethnic Kazakhs, who are also Muslim Chinese citizens but are not ethnically Chinese and speak languages other than Chinese. There are between eight and ten million Hui, distributed all over China, although prevalently in the north western part of the country. Hailed for decades by the CCP as the “good” Chinese Muslims, opposed to the “bad” Uyghurs, they have also been victims of the recent crackdown on religion and started organizing manifestations of protest.’<sup>11</sup>

3.2.6 The Diplomat, a current affairs magazine covering the Asia-Pacific region, noted in an article from 2021 that: ‘Numbering around 10.5 million in the 2010 census, the Hui are a group of mostly Muslim people that live primarily in the provinces of Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. They are regarded as culturally similar to the Han, China’s ethnic majority, due to their appearance, diet, and use of Mandarin as a mother tongue.’<sup>12</sup>

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### 3.3 Xinjiang

3.3.1 The BBC Xinjiang territory profile from 2018 stated that:

‘Xinjiang, the largest region of China, is bordered by eight countries including the former Soviet Central Asian republics, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. It experienced a brief period of independence in the 1940s, but China regained control after the Communists took power in 1949. Its full name is the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It is home to the Turkic-speaking Muslim Uighur minority, who make up about eight million of its 19 million people. Rich in natural resources, its economic development has been accompanied by large-scale immigration of Han Chinese.’<sup>13</sup>

3.3.2 Xinjiang is inhabited by more than 40 different ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Uyghurs and the Han (Chinese)<sup>14</sup>. Human Rights Watch noted that the 2 biggest Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang are the Uyghurs (11 million) and the Kazakhs (1.6 million)<sup>15</sup>. In addition to Hui (Chinese Muslims), other groups include Mongolians, Khalkha, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tungusic-speaking Manchu and Sibos, Tajiks, Tatars, Russians, and Tahurs<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> CFR, ‘[Religion in China](#)’, last updated 25 September 2020

<sup>11</sup> Bitter Winter, ‘[Glossary- Hui](#)’, undated

<sup>12</sup> The Diplomat, ‘[China’s Repression of the Hui: A Slow Boil](#)’, 15 June 2021

<sup>13</sup> BBC News, ‘[Xinjiang territory profile](#)’, 12 October 2018

<sup>14</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Xinjiang- autonomous region, China](#)’, undated

<sup>15</sup> HRW, ‘[“Eradicating Ideological Viruses”-China’s Campaign of Repression...](#)’, 9 September 2018

<sup>16</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Xinjiang- autonomous region, China](#)’, undated

- 3.3.3 History Today, a monthly history magazine based in London, noted in January 2020 that:

‘Xinjiang, in the far north-west of China, is almost three times the size of France: officially it is not a province but an “autonomous region” in deference to its non-Chinese population, the Uighurs – although the level of autonomy is minimal. Uighurs are not ethnically or culturally Chinese, but a Turkic people whose language is close to the Uzbek of nearby Uzbekistan and distantly related to the Turkish of Turkey. Often described as a minority, until recently they constituted the majority population of Xinjiang, which they regard as their homeland and refer to as Eastern Turkestan (Sharqi Turkestan). The approximately 11 million Uighurs in Xinjiang – just under half the total population – are historically and culturally Muslim, as are most other smaller ethnic groups of that region, the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and the Chinese-speaking Hui: that is immediately obvious from their dress, their food and their built environment.’<sup>17</sup>

- 3.3.4 New Europe, an EU affairs newspaper with headquarters in Belgium, noted in February 2020 that: ‘While largely based in inner China... the Hui are also significant minority in Xinjiang, where over a million of them live alongside their fellow co-religionists, the Uyghurs.’<sup>18</sup>

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Section 4 updated: 5 July 2022

## 4. Legal framework

### 4.1 International conventions

- 4.1.1 The government has signed, but not ratified, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>19</sup>, which provides all individuals the right to “adopt a religion or belief” of their choice<sup>20</sup>.

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### 4.2 Constitution

- 4.2.1 Article 36 of the Constitution of China, states:

‘Citizens of the People’s Republic of China shall enjoy freedom of religious belief.

‘No state organ, social organization or individual shall coerce citizens to believe in or not to believe in any religion, nor shall they discriminate against citizens who believe in or do not believe in any religion.

‘The state shall protect normal religious activities. No one shall use religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the state’s education system.

‘Religious groups and religious affairs shall not be subject to control by foreign forces.’<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> History Today, [‘A Uighurs’ History of China’](#), 1 January 2020

<sup>18</sup> New Europe, [‘Xinjiang’s Hui minority have also been forced into camps...’](#), 13 February 2020

<sup>19</sup> OCHCR, [‘Ratification Status for China’](#) (5 October 1998)

<sup>20</sup> OCHCR, [‘International standards on freedom of religion or belief’](#), 2020

<sup>21</sup> The State Council, [‘Constitution of the People’s Republic of China’](#), 20 November 2019

#### 4.2.2 The 2021 USIRF report for China stated:

‘The constitution, states citizens “enjoy freedom of religious belief,” but it limits protections for religious practice to “normal religious activities,” without defining normal. It states religion may not be used to disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens, or interfere with the educational system. The constitution provides for the right to hold or not to hold a religious belief. It says state organs, public organizations, and individuals may not discriminate against citizens “who believe in or do not believe in any religion.” The constitution states, “Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.”’<sup>22</sup>

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### 4.3 Regulation on Religious Affairs (RRA)

4.3.1 On 7 September 2017, China’s State Council released a revised version of the [Regulations for Religious Affairs](#) (Regulations), which took effect on 1 February 2018. The Standing Committee of the State Council adopted the Regulations on 14 June 2017<sup>23</sup>.

4.3.2 On 1 February 2020 the [2019 Administrative Measures for Religious Groups](#) came into effect<sup>24</sup>.

4.3.3 The Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade December 2021 country report (‘DFAT Country Information Report’), based on a range of sources, stated:

‘New religious regulations and implementation organisations aim to enhance government control over the appointment of religious leadership, increase transparency over sources of funding, limit religious practice to venues authorised by the government, reduce links with foreign religious organisations, and give the Party greater say over religious doctrine taught in China. Religious groups that refuse to bring themselves under the authority of state-sanctioned religious organisations face being shut down. Some religious leaders have faced charges like subversion of state power. The 2018 Regulations on Religious Affairs contain broadly worded prohibitions against the use of religion to ‘split the country’, ‘undermine ethnic unity’ or ‘engage in terrorist activities’. Although centrally organised, the situation for religions varies from place to place and is influenced by the actions and motivations of local authorities.’<sup>25</sup>

4.3.4 The US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), Annual Report, 2021, covering the events of 2021, published on 21 March 2022, stated:

‘Building upon the Regulations on Religious Affairs (2018) and the Measures on the Administration of Religious Groups (2020), the National Religious Affairs Administration implemented new Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel, effective May 1, 2021. The new measures call for the

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<sup>22</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: China’](#) (Section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>23</sup> LoC, [‘China: Revised Regulations on Religious Affairs’](#), 9 November 2017

<sup>24</sup> Bitter Winter, [‘English Translation of the 2019 Administrative Measures for...’](#), 15 January 2020

<sup>25</sup> DFAT, [‘Country information report’](#) (para 3.24), 22 December 2021

National Religious Affairs Administration to establish a database of clergy that records their basic information, rewards and punishments, travel for religious work, and religious activities. They further require clergy to promote the “sinicization of religion” and “adhere to the principle of independence and self-management of religion,” meaning religious personnel in China must resist “domination” or “infiltration” by “foreign forces,” reject unauthorized appointments to leadership positions made by foreign religious groups or institutions, and reject domestic or overseas donations that violate national regulations.<sup>26</sup>

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#### 4.4 Registered religious groups

4.4.1 According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Country of origin information report China’ published in July 2020:

‘... China’s religious landscape is categorised into three markets, namely a “red”, a “black” and a “grey” market. The “red” market refers to religious communities recognised by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and under party control. In this context, the colour “red” refers to the colour of the CCP’s communist ideology...

‘...The Chinese authorities recognise five religions in total: Buddhism, Catholicism, Taoism, Islam, and Protestantism. Each of these religions has its own Patriotic Religious Association (PRA). A PRA is a state-led coordinating entity responsible for monitoring the selection, education, further training and actions of members of the clergy of the religion concerned ... Muslims [come] under the Islamic Association of China (IAC). ...The religious communities represented by a PRA belong to the “red” market of China’s religious landscape.’<sup>27</sup>

4.4.2 Freedom House in their annual report ‘Freedom in the World 2022’ published in February 2022 noted that: ‘Even recognized groups and their places of worship are being forced to visibly conform to the CCP’s interpretation of “Chinese culture” as part of the regime’s broader effort under Xi Jinping to assimilate minority groups.’<sup>28</sup>

4.4.3 The 2021 USIRF report for China noted that: ‘Only religious groups belonging to one of the five state-sanctioned religious associations are permitted to register, and only these organizations may legally hold worship services.’<sup>29</sup>

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#### 4.5 Unregistered religious groups

4.5.1 The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Country of origin information report China’ published in July 2020 noted that:

‘The China’s religious landscape is categorised into three markets, namely a “red”, a “black” and a “grey” market. ...Most faith communities in China belong to the “grey” market. These communities are not under the

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<sup>26</sup> CECC, ‘[Annual Report 2021](#)’ (pg 97), 31 March 2022

<sup>27</sup> Netherlands MFA, ‘[Country of origin information report China](#)’ (para 6.1) 1 July 2020

<sup>28</sup> Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022](#)’, 28 February 2022

<sup>29</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: China](#)’ (Section II), 2 June 2022

supervision of state religious bodies, as in the case of “red” religious communities, and according to the letter of the law, they are illegal. However, they are not viewed as Xie Jiao [evil cult], and as such, they are not persecuted like the movements in the “black” market.’<sup>30</sup>

4.5.2 The 2021 DFAT Country Information Report stated:

‘Professor Fenggang Yang of Purdue University describes religious groups as operating in a ‘red’, ‘grey’ or ‘black’ market. The red market groups are the officially sanctioned churches, such as the ‘patriotic associations’... Grey markets include unofficial but tolerated (to a degree) religious gatherings. Black markets include underground movements and xie jiao. Some home congregations were originally in the black market but moved to the grey market with increased tolerance over decades. But the recent crackdown to ‘sinicise’ religions is reversing this trend. Those groups that are allowed to exist are subject to close monitoring. CCTV cameras may be installed in religious buildings to monitor congregations and virtual platforms used by religious groups to meet may be monitored or censored.’<sup>31</sup>

4.5.3 Freedom House in their annual report noted that: ‘... all religious groups must go through a rigorous process of certification to be officially recognized by the authorities, with those that refuse to do so being labeled illegal and persecuted...’<sup>32</sup> The source did not provide specific examples or numbers of those religious groups who had refused to be legally recognised, the subsequent treatment encountered or frequency of such treatment.

4.5.4 The 2021 USIRF report for China stated that:

‘Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs in 2018 increased restrictions on unregistered religious groups. Individuals who participate in unsanctioned religious activities are subject to criminal and administrative penalties.

‘...The government continued to close down or hinder the activities of religious groups not affiliated with the state-sanctioned religious associations, including unregistered Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, and other groups. At times, authorities said they shuttered a group because the group or its activities were unregistered; at other times, because the place of worship lacked necessary permits. ...Authorities allowed some unregistered groups to operate but did not recognize them legally. In some cases, authorities required unregistered religious groups to disband, leaving congregants from these groups with the sole option of attending services under a state-sanctioned religious leader.’<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Netherlands MFA, [‘Country of origin information report China’](#) (para 6.1) 1 July 2020

<sup>31</sup> DFAT, [‘Country information report’](#) (para 3.25), 22 December 2021

<sup>32</sup> Freedom House, [‘Freedom in the World 2022’](#), 28 February 2022

<sup>33</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: China’](#) (Section II), 2 June 2022

## 5. State treatment of Muslims in the Xinjiang province

### 5.1 Regulations

5.1.1 An unofficial translation of the Xinjiang Regulations Against Extremism can be found on the [China law translate](#) website.

5.1.2 The Human Rights Watch report 'Eradicating ideological viruses - China's campaign of repression against Xinjiang's Muslims' published in September 2018 noted that:

'Since May 2014, the Chinese government has waged what it calls the "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" in Xinjiang...

'...The Xinjiang authorities have made foreign ties a punishable offense, targeting people with connections to an official list of "26 sensitive countries," including Kazakhstan, Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia [the other countries included are Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen]. People who have been to these countries, have families, or otherwise communicate with people there, have been interrogated, detained, and even tried and imprisoned.'<sup>34</sup>

5.1.3 The Australian Strategic Policy Institute's (ASPI), an independent, non-partisan think tank, report 'Cultural erasure- tracing the destruction of Uyghur and Islamic spaces in Xinjiang', published on 24 September 2020 noted that: '... In 2017, the XUAR passed a comprehensive set of regulations to guide "deradicalisation" work across Xinjiang—a set of rules that was revised in October 2018 to retrospectively authorise the mass detention of Uyghurs in "re-education" camps.'<sup>35</sup>

5.1.4 The Human Rights Foundation report '100 years of suppression: the CCP's strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region and Hong Kong' published in August 2021 explained that the 'Strike Hard Campaign' from the late 1990s aimed to eradicate terrorism, separatism and religious extremism with the goal to "arrest quicker, sentence faster and punish harder." It was coupled with the 'Go West' strategy which sought to 'modernise' Uyghur people. The source noted:

...These measures came to the hilt in 2014 when Xi, once more, escalated repressive tactics to an unprecedented degree.

...the government has used its fear of separatism, one of the "three evils," to justify exerting tight control over the region. Any form of legitimate political dissent is widely regarded as support for a "separatist" agenda and is harshly stifled. As a result, few Uyghur leaders have even attempted to participate in the political system.

...In 2015... the local government passed the Xinjiang Religious Affairs Regulations which confine religious activity to sanctioned realms and only permit religious expression in private spaces, effectively erasing religious practices from public life. The regulations stipulate that the possession of

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<sup>34</sup> HRW, "[Eradicating Ideological Viruses](#)"-China's Campaign of Repression...', 9 September 2018

<sup>35</sup> Australian Strategic Policy Institute, '[Cultural Erasure](#)', 24 September 2020

“undesirable items” such as prayer rugs and the Quran can constitute “extremist behavior.”<sup>36</sup>

- 5.1.5 War on the rocks, a US based publication concentrating on analysis and debate on strategy, defence, and foreign affairs, reported in November 2021 that:

‘Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government announced in March 2017 its so-called “de-extremification” regulations that revealed the state’s objective to categorize and punish those it defines as “deviant” and “abnormal.” These regulations not only define “extremification” as “speech and actions under the influence of extremism, that imbue radical religious ideology, and reject and interfere with normal production and livelihood” but also explicitly identify fifteen “primary expressions” of “extremist thinking.” These include “wearing, or compelling others to wear, gowns with face coverings, or to bear symbols of extremification,” “spreading religious fanaticism through irregular beards or name selection,” and “failing to perform the legal formalities in marrying or divorcing by religious methods.” The regional government subsequently expanded the list in 2017 to include another 60 signs of “extremism” including “suddenly quitting smoking or drinking, abnormal communication with neighbors, and men having long beards or wearing short-legged pants.”<sup>37</sup>

- 5.1.6 The US State Department, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom Report (USIRF) for Xinjiang, stated:

‘Xinjiang has its own counterterrorism and “de-extremification” laws that went into effect in 2016 and 2017, respectively, containing similar provisions to the national law regarding “religious extremism.” These laws ban wearing long beards, full-face coverings, and religious dress; expanding halal practice beyond food and daily prayer; and “interfering” with family planning, weddings, funerals, or inheritance, among other provisions. The law limits the information that may be released to the public following an incident the government defines as a terror attack.

‘Regional regulations passed in 2018 to implement the national counterterrorism law permit the establishment of “vocational skills education training centers” (which the government also calls “education centers” and “education and transformation establishments”) to “carry out antiextremist ideological education.” The regulations stipulate that “institutions such as vocational skill education training centers should carry out training sessions on the common national language, laws and regulations, and vocational skills, and carry out antiextremist ideological education, and psychological and behavioral correction to promote thought transformation of trainees and help them return to the society and family.”

‘...Regulations in Xinjiang’s capital, Urumqi, prohibit veils that cover the face, homeschooling children, and “abnormal beards.” A separate regulation bans the practice of religion in government buildings and the wearing of clothes associated with “religious extremism.” Neither “abnormal” nor “religious

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<sup>36</sup> HRF, [‘100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...’](#), August 2021

<sup>37</sup> War on the rocks, [‘Turning Ghosts into Humans: Surveillance as an...’](#), 2 November 2021

extremism” are defined in law. Similar regulations are in effect in other parts of Xinjiang.

‘...Xinjiang officials require minors to complete nine years of compulsory public education before they may receive religious education outside of school. Xinjiang regulations also forbid minors from participating in religious activities and impose penalties on organizations and individuals who “organize, entice, or force” minors to participate in religious activities. A regulation in effect since 2016 further bans any form of religious activity in Xinjiang schools and stipulates parents or guardians who “organize, lure, or force minors into religious activities” may be stopped by anyone and reported to police. Xinjiang’s regional version of the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency Law states children affected by ethnic separatism, extremism, and terrorism, and/or committing offenses that seriously endanger society but do not warrant a criminal punishment may be sent to “specialized schools for correction” at the request of their parents, guardians, or the school.’<sup>38</sup>

- 5.1.7 More information on the background of the restrictions can be found in the reports referenced in this section.

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## 5.2 Restrictions on Muslims

- 5.2.1 According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Country of origin information report China’ published in July 2020:

‘It is virtually impossible for Muslims in Xinjiang to freely practise their religion. Religious expressions such as the call to prayer or wearing a veil have been banned in public.

‘...Xinjiang’s counter-terrorism law has banned long beards, halal practices pertaining to matters other than food, Islamic aspects of family planning, weddings, funerals and inheritance. Minors are also not permitted to participate in religious activities and children may not be given Islamic names. The Arabic salutation of assalamu alaykum (‘peace be upon you’) has likewise been banned. There have been instances of government officials forcing Muslims to eat pork, drink alcohol and break their Ramadan fast.’<sup>39</sup>

- 5.2.2 An August 2020 BuzzFeed News investigation into the internment camps in the Xinjiang stated that:

‘The [Strike Hard...] campaign [against Muslim minorities] has done deep damage to many Muslim minority groups — but especially Uighurs, who are by far the most populous ethnic minority group in Xinjiang and do not have ties to any other country. The Chinese government has heavily penalized expressions of Turkic minority culture, from Kazakh- and Uighur-language education to the practice of Islam outside of state-controlled mosques. This,

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<sup>38</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang’](#) (Section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>39</sup> Netherlands MFA, [‘Country of origin information report China’](#) (para 9.5) 1 July 2020

combined with forced sterilizations, has led some critics to say that the campaign qualifies as genocide under international law.<sup>40</sup>

5.2.3 The ASPI report published on 24 September 2020 noted that:

‘Alongside other coercive efforts to re-engineer Uyghur social and cultural life by transforming or eliminating Uyghurs’ language, music, homes and even diets, the Chinese Government’s policies are actively erasing and altering key elements of their tangible cultural heritage.

‘...In Xinjiang, officials have cracked down on “illegal” or “abnormal” religious practice among the Uyghurs and other Muslims since 2009, outlawing “illegal religious activities” as they tightened controls over Islamic education, worship, fasting and veiling. Islamic-sounding names were banned, and “extremist” religious materials (Qurans, prayer mats, CDs etc.) were confiscated and, in one case, appear to have been burned in public.

‘...Xinjiang officials now warn against the “Halal-isation” (清真泛化), “Muslim-isation” (穆斯林化), and “Arab-isation” (阿拉伯化) of religious practices in Xinjiang and seek to actively “rectify” any practices, products, symbols and architectural styles deemed out of keeping with “Chinese tradition”.<sup>41</sup>

5.2.4 The Human Rights Watch report ‘Break their Lineage, Break their roots’ published in April 2021 stated:

‘Outside of the camps, a fundamental aspect of the government’s current treatment of Turkic Muslims is their forced assimilation into mainstream Han Chinese culture, and the government’s repeated attempts to hollow out Turkic Muslim culture. Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang are required to attend weekly, or even daily, Chinese flag-raising ceremonies, political indoctrination meetings and, at times, Chinese language classes. The authorities have imposed punishments for refusal to watch state-run television programs or listen to state-run radio programs. Speaking or writing the Uyghur language is discouraged. Chinese authorities have banned the use of Uyghur and Kazakh language teaching materials, and state employees who use these languages are deemed “unpatriotic” and could be labeled a “two-faced person”—a charge that has resulted in the detention of hundreds of Turkic Muslim public figures, maybe more.<sup>42</sup>

5.2.5 The Human Rights Foundations report of August 2021 noted that:

‘The Chinese government also attempts to control the religion by presiding over the recruitment, training, and appointment of important religious leaders. ...in the Uyghur Region, imams are policed by security personnel and undercover informants, and constantly risk dismissal, fines, and imprisonment if suspected of violating a myriad of regulations and directives.

‘...physical appearance is also systematically controlled through the regulation of communal institutions and the implementation of economic incentives. Public places, such as hospitals, libraries, and banks can explicitly deny service to Uyghur women who wear veils or men who grow long beards because they are considered by the state to have connotations

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<sup>40</sup> BuzzFeed News, [‘Part 1- China Secretly Built A Vast New Infrastructure To...’](#), 27 August 2020

<sup>41</sup> Australian Strategic Policy Institute, [‘Cultural Erasure’](#), 24 September 2020

<sup>42</sup> Human Rights Watch, [‘Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots’](#), 19 April 2021

that “incite religious extremism.” Some social welfare payments have even stipulated that recipients must sign pledges not to wear veils prior to receiving money.

‘...During the holy month of Ramadan, which entails fasting from sunrise to sunset, there are accounts of students being forced to eat in front of their teachers and blocked from attending prayers. Civil servants and teachers have reportedly been forced to sign pledges ensuring that they have not been fasting.’<sup>43</sup>

5.2.6 The 2021 DFAT report noted that:

‘Expression of Islamic or Uyghur identity in Xinjiang is subject to control, with restrictions on cultural dress, beards, language and dietary habits. Muslim holy books such as the Quran are rarely available, and religious practices such as attending worship at mosques or fasting are actively discouraged or banned by government in some parts of Xinjiang, and access to sites of religious significance is restricted. ... According to media reports, Uyghurs have been forced to consume haram foods like pork and alcohol.’<sup>44</sup>

5.2.7 Freedom House in their annual report stated that: ‘In Xinjiang, children under 18 cannot enter mosques or receive religious instruction. Peaceful religious practices are routinely punished under charges of “religious extremism,” resulting in detention, prison sentences, and indoctrination for many Uyghur, Kazakh, and Hui Muslims.’<sup>45</sup>

5.2.8 The CECC Annual report 2021 noted that:

‘XUAR government and Party officials curtailed Muslim residents’ freedom to practice their religious beliefs, including by implementing restrictions on prayer, defacing and destroying mosques and cemeteries, and detaining individuals for practicing or possessing materials about Islam. As in previous reporting years, XUAR officials reportedly imposed controls on Muslims’ observance of Ramadan. On Eid al Fitr, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan, authorities forced some Turkic Muslim residents in the XUAR to sing propaganda songs, and to dance in front of the Id Kah mosque in Kashgar prefecture.’<sup>46</sup>

5.2.9 The US State Department, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom Report (USIRF) for Xinjiang, stated:

‘According to media and NGO reports, the central government and XUAR authorities continued to cite what they called the “three evils” of “ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism” as justification to enact and enforce restrictions on religious practices of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Hui, and members of other Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups. Police raids and the government’s restrictions on Islamic practices continued throughout the year.’<sup>47</sup>

5.2.10 See also [Regulations](#)

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<sup>43</sup> HRF, ‘[100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)’, August 2021

<sup>44</sup> DFAT, ‘[Country information report](#)’ (para 3.5), 22 December 2021

<sup>45</sup> Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022](#)’, 28 February 2022

<sup>46</sup> CECC, ‘[Annual Report 2021](#)’ (pg 283), 31 March 2022

<sup>47</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang](#)’ (Section II), 2 June 2022

### 5.3 Mosques and Islamic spaces

#### 5.3.1 The ASPI report published on 24 September 2020 noted that:

‘Using satellite imagery, we estimate that approximately 16,000 mosques in Xinjiang (65% of the total) have been destroyed or damaged as a result of government policies, mostly since 2017. An estimated 8,500 have been demolished outright, and, for the most part, the land on which those razed mosques once sat remains vacant. A further 30% of important Islamic sacred sites (shrines, cemeteries and pilgrimage routes, including many protected under Chinese law) have been demolished across Xinjiang, mostly since 2017, and an additional 28% have been damaged or altered in some way.

‘...Our study of mosques in northern Xinjiang revealed a wave of renovations and reconstructions between 2012 and 2016, followed by a wave of demolitions from 2016 onwards. This sudden reversal coincided with significant national-level changes to religious policy and a crackdown on expressions of faith, suggesting a centrally driven policy directive rather than decisions by local officials.

‘...Tighter control over mosques and religious personnel is central to the plan to sinicise Islam in Xinjiang, as is the “rectifying” of places of religious worship. Wang Jingfu, head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee in Kashgar city, told Radio Free Asia in 2016: “We launched the rectification campaign with the purpose of protecting the safety of the worshippers because all the mosques were too old. We demolished nearly 70% of mosques in the city because there were more than enough mosques, and some were unnecessary.”

‘Under the UFWD’s “four entrances campaign” (“四进”清真寺活动), mosques across Xinjiang are required to hang the national flag; post copies of the Chinese Constitution, laws and regulations; uphold core socialist values; and reflect “excellent traditional Chinese culture”. Architecturally, this involves the removal of Arabic calligraphy, minarets, domes and star-and-crescent and other symbols deemed “foreign” and their replacement with traditional Chinese architectural elements.’<sup>48</sup>

#### 5.3.2 The Human Rights Watch report ‘Break their Lineage, Break their roots’ published in April 2021 stated:

‘Authorities have [...] destroyed numerous burial grounds where generations of Turkic Muslim families have been buried, which many view as an attempt to disconnect Turkic Muslims from their history and ancestry.

‘...As noted, authorities have also targeted mosques for demolition. According to one estimate, some 16,000 mosques in Xinjiang have been damaged or destroyed since 2017, and about half of those have been demolished. Many of the remaining mosques have been desecrated in other ways, such as through the removal of crescents from atop the mosques or

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<sup>48</sup> Australian Strategic Policy Institute, [‘Cultural Erasure’](#), 24 September 2020

by installing framed copies of state policies on “de-extremification” or “ethnic unity” on their walls.’<sup>49</sup>

5.3.3 The Intercept, a news organisation, published a report in January 2021 following a leak of police files. In their report they note that:

‘More recent reports indicate that authorities set a goal of lowering mosque attendance and met it. Many police documents mention that mosque attendance is lower, and some explicitly describe this as indicating success. One report indicated that at one mosque, total visits in a four-month period declined by 80,000, compared to the same period in the prior year: more than a 96 percent decrease. This appears to be partly due to the departure of an imam and temporary closure of the mosque, but the report states that “there has been a drastic lowering of religious practitioners” over two years. It adds that this is partly because visitors left the city, were sent to camps, or were afraid to practice Islam.’<sup>50</sup>

5.3.4 The Human Rights Foundations (HRF) report of August 2021 and the CECC Annual Report for 2021 noted the destruction or demolition of historic shrines, mosques, cemeteries, pilgrimage routes and sites sacred to Muslim minorities. The sources noted these actions were taken against cultural or religious practices which were considered ‘Un-Chinese’ or against the state’s vision of an ideal Chinese society. Other examples given by the HRF were the deliberate flying of the Chinese flag towards Mecca, the removal or domes and minarets from mosques and the redevelopment of religious buildings to bars or shopping centres. The sources noted that, according to satellite imagery, since 2017 approximately 16,000 mosques (65% of the Xinjiang’s total) have been destroyed or damaged<sup>51 52</sup>.

5.3.5 The HRF report noted:

‘...in an increasing effort to prevent Uyghur people from accessing their religious sites, many Han tourism companies — in particular, ones that manage visits to local shrines and religious sites — began instituting an entrance fee which the majority of local citizens [including Uyghurs] cannot afford.’<sup>53</sup>

5.3.6 The 2021 USIRF Xinjiang Report noted: ‘The government continued to control the administration of mosques and to restrict access to houses of worship, requiring worshipers to apply for mosque entry permits.’<sup>54</sup>

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## 5.4 Surveillance

5.4.1 The Intercept, published a report in January 2021 following a leak of police files. In their report they note that the:

‘The Ürümqi Police Database Reveals:

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<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘[Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots](#)’, 19 April 2021

<sup>50</sup> The Intercept, ‘[Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database, Millions of leaked...](#)’ 19 January 2021

<sup>51</sup> HRF, ‘[100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)’, August 2021

<sup>52</sup> HRF, ‘[100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)’, August 2021

<sup>53</sup> HRF, ‘[100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)’, August 2021

<sup>54</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang](#)’ (Section II), 2 June 2022

- How Chinese authorities collect millions of text messages, phone contacts, and call records, as well as e-commerce and banking records, from Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.
- Invasive surveillance techniques watch for signs of religious enthusiasm, which are generally equated with extremism.
- Evidence that biometric data collected under the “Physicals for All” health program feeds into the police surveillance system.
- Police use community informants to collect massive amounts of information on Uyghurs in Ürümqi.
- Applying for asylum abroad can result in being classified as a terrorist, as part of an initiative to prevent the “backflow” of foreign ideas.’<sup>55</sup>

#### 5.4.2 The same report went on to note that:

‘Although China has insisted its policing in Xinjiang is directed at stopping terrorism and extremism rather than persecuting the practice of any religion, the database confirms and details how surveillance homes in on many common expressions of Islamic faith, and even on curiosity about the religion, leading in many cases to investigations. The government considers it a potential sign of religious extremism to grow a beard, have a prayer rug, own Uyghur books, or even quit smoking or drinking.

‘Surveillance directed at Islamic practice in the region also involves watching mosques. Authorities surveil mosque attendance, tally which worshippers are migrants and which are residents, and monitor whether prayers are conducted in an orderly way, according to police reports in the database.

‘... Some residents are discussed as being monitored or controlled by the community; that means a neighborhood watch unit is assigned to monitor them. This can include visits as often as every day, or once or twice a week, from one or more cadre members living in close proximity.’<sup>56</sup>

#### 5.4.3 The CFR backgrounder on ‘China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang’ last updated in March 2021 noted that:

‘The Experts say Xinjiang has been turned into a surveillance state that relies on cutting-edge technology to monitor millions of people. Under Xinjiang’s Communist Party leader, Chen, Xinjiang was placed under a grid-management system, as described in media reports, in which cities and villages were split into squares of about five hundred people. Each square has a police station that closely monitors inhabitants by regularly scanning their identification cards, taking their photographs and fingerprints, and searching their cell phones. In some cities, such as western Xinjiang’s Kashgar, police checkpoints are found every one hundred yards or so, and facial-recognition cameras are everywhere. The government also collects and stores citizens’ biometric data through a required program advertised as Physicals for All.’<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The Intercept, [‘Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database, Millions of leaked...’](#) 19 January 2021

<sup>56</sup> The Intercept, [‘Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database, Millions of leaked...’](#) 19 January 2021

<sup>57</sup> CFR, [‘China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang’](#), last updated 1 March 2021

#### 5.4.4 Human Rights Watch's April 2021 report also documented:

'...the extensive and compulsory collection of their biometric data. Chinese authorities collect DNA samples, fingerprints, iris scans, and blood types from all Xinjiang residents between the ages of 12 and 65, in part through a medical examination program, "Physicals for All." Turkic Muslims' biometrics are collected without choice or informed consent. The biometric data of "focus personnel"—that is, those considered threatening to regime stability—and their family members are taken regardless of age. In addition, Chinese authorities have also collected voice samples from Turkic Muslims during passport application processes and at police checkpoints. [...] All of this data can be linked in police databases to the person's identification number, which in turn is linked to any of their additional biometric and personal information on file.

'The Xinjiang authorities have also put in place networks of automated sensory systems throughout the region, which include CCTV cameras with facial recognition, automated license plate recognition, and infrared capabilities; WiFi sniffers that collect identifying addresses of networked devices; and security checkpoints and visitors' management systems that gather identifying information. Kitchen knives in Xinjiang are tracked by QR codes that include the owner's ID number, photo, ethnicity, and address, and vehicles are subject to mandatory location trackers.'

#### 5.4.5 The same report stated:

'...Former detainees are released to even harsher conditions of mass surveillance. In addition to the modes of surveillance detailed above, former detainees and their relatives are frequently monitored by local officials who regularly assess and record their moods and behavior along metrics such as whether their thoughts are "stable"; whether they can "recognize their mistakes"; and whether they have a "sincere attitude of regret." Some receive daily visits from local cadres and are obligated to sign in every morning and attend roll-call in the evenings.'<sup>58</sup>

#### 5.4.6 The HRF and USSD noted the local government monitoring measures in place in the Uyghur Region including the use of informants (with monetary awards available) and mobile 'Nanny apps'<sup>59 60</sup>. Residents were forced to download the app onto phones, and failure to do so could lead to up to 10 days detention. The app observes activity and allows state actors and hackers to access the person's home network and data<sup>61</sup>. The HRF and the CECC noted the forcible handing over of phones to the authorities to extract data<sup>62 63</sup>.

#### 5.4.7 The CECC and the USSD noted the use of 'homestay' programs ('jiedui renqin') where government workers or volunteers forcibly lived in Uyghurs'

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<sup>58</sup> Human Rights Watch, '[Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots](#)', 19 April 2021

<sup>59</sup> HRF, '[100 years of suppression: the CCP's strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)', August 2021

<sup>60</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China](#)' (section I), 12 April 2022

<sup>61</sup> HRF, '[100 years of suppression: the CCP's strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)', August 2021

<sup>62</sup> HRF, '[100 years of suppression: the CCP's strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)', August 2021

<sup>63</sup> CECC, '[Annual Report 2021](#)' (pg 279-282), 31 March 2022

homes and monitored families' activities and observance of religion for signs of 'extremism'<sup>64 65</sup>.

5.4.8 The HRF further noted:

'...The government capitalizes on its surveillance infrastructure in order to arrest more "suspicious" persons who will then be funnelled into internment camps. The ultimate goal of these comprehensive surveillance measures is to be able to "predict ... individuals posing heightened risks" to public "safety." The government hopes that they will be able to rely on an algorithm to determine future "security threats" and preemptively eliminate them. In the Uyghur Region, the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) is the regional data system used to determine individuals who are considered security threats by the state. If an individual is flagged as a potential terrorist in IJOP, they are automatically barred from entering public institutions such as hospitals, banks, parks, or shopping centers without the police being alerted. Other programs perform automatic searches of Uyghur internet activity and compare the activity to the database to look for predictors of "abnormal" behavior.'<sup>66</sup>

5.4.9 The CECC Annual Report for 2021 noted that:

'Reports published this past year documented the ways in which authorities in the XUAR have used surveillance technology to maintain control over Turkic and Muslim residents. American scholar Darren Byler referred to the surveillance infrastructure in the XUAR as a "digital enclosure system" that, together with the fear of arbitrary detention, "holds Uyghurs and Kazakhs in place and creates endemic conditions of unfreedom." Ethnic minority residents of the XUAR have been subjected ...involuntary face scans at public places that authorities matched to individual identification documents and the biometric data linked to these documents. Officials sometimes installed cameras in or near peoples' homes to surveil them more closely. Security officials also flagged individuals for additional scrutiny if they did not have a mobile phone in their possession, had switched off their phone, or had not been active on social media.

'Officials integrated data gathered from surveillance technology and other forms of policing into a system called the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP), which automatically identified people for detention.'<sup>67</sup>

5.4.10 The BBC report 'The faces from China's Uyghur detention camps', published in May 2022 following the release of a huge cache of Xinjiang police files (see the section on [Detention and 're-education centres'](#) for further information on this) noted that:

'Even for those not in a camp or prison, the Xinjiang Police Files reveal the gruelling impact of such high levels of scrutiny and surveillance. The images show that Uyghurs still living in their homes were summoned in large numbers to be photographed, with the associated image timestamps showing whole communities - from the very elderly to families with young

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<sup>64</sup> CECC, '[Annual Report 2021](#)' (pg 279-282), 31 March 2022

<sup>65</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China](#)' (section 1 & 2), 12 April 2022

<sup>66</sup> HRF, '[100 years of suppression: the CCP's strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)', August 2021

<sup>67</sup> CECC, '[Annual Report 2021](#)' (pg 279-282), 31 March 2022

children - called into police stations at all hours, including in the middle of the night.’<sup>68</sup>

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## 5.5 Birth control and forced sterilisation

5.5.1 Dr Adrian Zenz, a German scholar’s, report ‘Sterilizations, IUDs, And Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP’s Campaign To Suppress Uyghur Birth-rates In Xinjiang’, published by the Jamestown Foundation in June 2020 noted that:

‘Natural population growth in Xinjiang has declined dramatically; growth rates fell by 84 percent in the two largest Uyghur prefectures between 2015 and 2018 and declined further in 2019. For 2020, one Uyghur region set an unprecedented near-zero population growth target: a mere 1.05 per mille, compared to an already low 11.45 per mille in 2018. This was intended to be achieved through “family planning work.”

‘Government documents bluntly mandate that birth control violations are punishable by extrajudicial internment in “training” camps. This confirms evidence from the leaked “Karakax List” document, wherein such violations were the most common reason for internment ([Journal of Political Risk, February 2020](#)).

‘Documents from 2019 reveal plans for a campaign of mass female sterilization in rural Uyghur regions... This campaign likely aims to sterilize rural minority women with three or more children, as well as some with two children—equivalent to at least 20 percent of all childbearing-age women. Budget figures indicate that this project had sufficient funding for performing hundreds of thousands of tubal ligation sterilization procedures in 2019 and 2020, with least one region receiving additional central government funding. In 2018, a Uyghur prefecture openly set a goal of leading its rural populations to accept widespread sterilization surgery.

‘By 2019, Xinjiang planned to subject at least 80 percent of women of childbearing age in the rural southern four minority prefectures to intrusive birth prevention surgeries (IUDs or sterilizations), with actual shares likely being much higher. In 2018, 80 percent of all new IUD placements in China were performed in Xinjiang, despite the fact that the region only makes up 1.8 percent of the nation’s population.’<sup>69</sup>

5.5.2 Associated Press news reported in June 2020 that:

‘While individual women have spoken out before about forced birth control, the practice is far more widespread and systematic than previously known, according to an AP investigation based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor. The campaign over the past four years in the far west region of Xinjiang is leading to what some experts are calling a form of “demographic genocide.”

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<sup>68</sup> BBC News, ‘[The faces from China’s Uyghur detention camps](#)’, May 2022

<sup>69</sup> The Jamestown Foundation-Dr Adrian Zenz, ‘[Sterilizations, IUDs, And...](#)’ (page 2-3), June 2020

‘The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show. Even while the use of IUDs and sterilization has fallen nationwide, it is rising sharply in Xinjiang.

‘The population control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and as a punishment for failure to comply. Having too many children is a major reason people are sent to detention camps, the AP found, with the parents of three or more ripped away from their families unless they can pay huge fines. Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.

‘...The result of the birth control campaign is a climate of terror around having children, as seen in interview after interview. Birth rates in the mostly Uighur regions of Hotan and Kashgar plunged by more than 60% from 2015 to 2018, the latest year available in government statistics.

‘... Once in the detention camps, women are subjected to forced IUDs and what appear to be pregnancy prevention shots, according to former detainees. They are also made to attend lectures on how many children they should have.

‘Seven former detainees told the AP that they were force-fed birth control pills or injected with fluids, often with no explanation. Many felt dizzy, tired or ill, and women stopped getting their periods. After being released and leaving China, some went to get medical check-ups and found they were sterile.

‘It’s unclear what former detainees were injected with, but Xinjiang hospital slides obtained by the AP show that pregnancy prevention injections, sometimes with the hormonal medication Depo-Provera, are a common family planning measure. Side effects can include headaches and dizziness.

‘...Some women have even reported forced abortions.’<sup>70</sup>

5.5.3 The ASPI report ‘Family De-planning: The Coercive Campaign to Drive Down Indigenous Birth-rates in Xinjiang’, published in May 2021 noted that:

‘In the past, the Chinese government sought to incentivize fewer births among the indigenous population of southern Xinjiang by offering cash inducements. In 2006, the XUAR government announced the “fewer births, faster prosperity” (少生快富) reward scheme.

‘Minority women with two or fewer births who were willing to undergo “long-term contraceptive measures” (IUD insertion or tubal ligation) were entitled to a single-time cash payment of 3000 RMB (US\$460).

‘In 2017, the Chinese government’s approach to birth control among minority nationalities shifted from “reward and encourage” towards a more coercive and intrusive policing of reproductive processes. Cash rewards were now supplemented with hefty fines, disciplinary punishment, internment or the threat of internment for any “illegal births.”

‘As a part of “mass supervision,” cash rewards are now handed out for informing on a neighbour or colleague. In Aksu City, for example, 5000 RMB

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<sup>70</sup> AP News, [‘China cuts Uighur births with IUDs, abortion, sterilization’](#), 29 June 2020

(US\$772) was offered for verified reports of illegal births and 2000 RMB (US\$309) for exposing any fraud, underreporting, false reporting or concealment of illegal births by family-planning officials in 2019.

'Family-planning officials in Xinjiang are told to carry out "early detection and early disposal of pregnant women found in violation of policy," and women of childbearing age must be visited monthly and undergo quarterly pregnancy checks. Only those women who are willing to undergo long-term birth control measures are considered "trustworthy" citizens. The result, as Chinese government officials openly admit, is a significant decline in the minority birth-rate. [...] This is part of what Chinese scholar-officials call the "optimisation" of Xinjiang's population structure and the gradual uplifting of its "bio-quality" (素质) which in practice means fewer "low-quality" Uyghur and other indigenous births.'<sup>71</sup>

5.5.4 In October 2021, the ASPI in a report 'The architecture of repression-Unpacking Xinjiang's governance' reported that:

'During the Re-education Campaign, authorities in Xinjiang launched a series of crackdowns on 'illegal births' (违法生育) to curb the birthrate among Uyghur and other minority women. Minority women found to have violated 'family planning' (计划生育) policies face hefty fines, disciplinary punishment, internment and mandatory sterilisation. 'Illegal births' that had occurred as early as in 1992 were retrospectively punished. As a result, Xinjiang's official birthrate fell by nearly half (48.74%) in the two years between 2017 and 2019. The decrease has been even more dramatic in southern Xinjiang, where the highest proportions of indigenous people live. These 'family planning' measures specifically target Uyghurs and other indigenous groups, while outside Xinjiang the party-state is attempting to boost birthrates by discouraging Han women from getting non-medical abortions.'<sup>72</sup>

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## 5.6 Detention and 're-education centres'

5.6.1 An August 2020 BuzzFeed News investigation into the internment camps in the Xinjiang stated that:

'...BuzzFeed News identified more than 260 structures built since 2017 and bearing the hallmarks of fortified detention compounds. There is at least one in nearly every county in the far-west region of Xinjiang... The new facilities are scattered across every populated area of the region, and several are large enough to accommodate 10,000 prisoners at a minimum, based on their size and architectural features.

'...With at least tens of thousands of detainees crowded into government buildings repurposed as camps by the end of 2017, the government began building the largest new facilities in the spring of 2018. Several were complete by October 2018, with further facilities built through 2019 and construction of a handful more continuing even now.

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<sup>71</sup> ASPI, ['Family De-planning: The Coercive Campaign to Drive Down...'](#), 12 May 2021

<sup>72</sup> ASPI, ['The architecture of repression-Unpacking Xinjiang's governance'](#), 19 October 2021

‘...The government has said its camps are schools and vocational training centers where detainees are “deradicalized.” The government’s own internal documentation about its policies in Xinjiang has used the term “concentration,” or 集中, to describe “educational schools.”

‘The government claims that its campaign combats extremism in the region. But most who end up in these facilities are not extremists of any sort.

‘Downloading WhatsApp, which is banned in China, maintaining ties with family abroad, engaging in prayer, and visiting a foreign website are all offenses for which Muslims have been sent to camps, according to previously leaked documents and interviews with former detainees. Because the government does not consider internment camps to be part of the criminal justice system and none of these behaviors are crimes under Chinese law, no detainees have been formally arrested or charged with a crime, let alone seen a day in court. The compounds BuzzFeed News identified likely include extrajudicial internment camps — which hold people who are not suspected of any crime — as well as prisons. Both types of facilities have security features that closely resemble each other. Xinjiang’s prison population has grown massively during the government’s campaign: In 2017, the region had 21% of all arrests in China, despite making up less than 2% of the national population — an eightfold increase from the year before, according to a New York Times analysis of government data. Because China’s Communist Party–controlled courts have a more than 99% conviction rate, the overwhelming majority of those arrests likely resulted in convictions.’<sup>73</sup>

5.6.2 The September 2020 Janes podcast episode featuring Alison Killing’s investigation into the internment camps in Xinjiang noted that it has been estimated by the UN and others that there are upwards of 1 million people being detained in Xinjiang out of a population of around 11 million. In the past few years there has been a change in the internment camps from makeshift camps to a more permanent infrastructure. As well as people being interned there has also been those who have been detained in education camps. There has also been a sharp increase in those arrested and charged with other crimes in Xinjiang of whom 99% are convicted. People who are convicted of crimes would end up in prison rather than internment camps although there is no meaningful distance between internment camps and the prisons, with no distinguishing features between the 2, and very similar security features<sup>74</sup>.

5.6.3 The Australian Strategic Policy Institute [ASPI] noted in their report ‘Documenting Xinjiang’s detention system’, published on 24 September 2020 that:

‘ASPI researchers have identified and mapped over 380 sites in the detention network across Xinjiang, counting only re-education camps, detention centres and prisons that were newly built or significantly expanded since 2017.

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<sup>73</sup> BuzzFeed News, ‘[China Secretly Built A Vast New Infrastructure To...](#)’ (part 1), 27 August 2020

<sup>74</sup> Janes podcast, ‘[Alison Killing and her investigation that identified...](#)’ (23 mins), 23 September 2020

'The findings of this research contradict Chinese officials' claims that all "trainees" from so-called vocational training centres had "graduated" by late 2019. Instead, available evidence suggests that many extrajudicial detainees in Xinjiang's vast "re-education" network are now being formally charged and locked up in higher security facilities, including newly built or expanded prisons, or sent to walled factory compounds for coerced labour assignments.

'...At least 61 detention sites have seen new construction and expansion work between July 2019 and July 2020. This includes at least 14 facilities still under construction in 2020, according to the latest satellite imagery available. Of these, about 50% are higher security facilities, which may suggest a shift in usage from the lower-security, "re-education centres" toward higher-security prison-style facilities. At the same time, according to satellite data we have examined, at least 70 facilities appear to have been de-securitized by the removal of internal fencing or perimeter walls. This includes 8 camps that show signs of decommissioning, and it is possible they have been closed. 90% of de-securitized camps are lower security facilities.

'...It is clear that a large number of towns and cities in Xinjiang have quite extensive centres for day learning or "community correction". These non-residential facilities are very different from the sites meant to house detainees but can still be considered part of the "re-education" network, as they require residents to visit for day-classes on regular occasions. It is possible that these facilities have mostly been retired after people have completed their syllabus. If that's the case, the buildings have probably been repurposed into other government official buildings or perhaps into real classrooms. These facilities are outside the scope of this dataset, but should be noted here as an element of Xinjiang's post-2017 "re-education" system.'<sup>75</sup>

#### 5.6.4 The BBC News report 'Xinjiang: China defends "education" camps' published in September 2020 noted that:

'Beijing has come under fire for a network of detention centres which mostly house Muslim minorities. But a new document says millions of workers have benefited from "education and vocational training". The US has likened the centres to concentration camps. It has placed sanctions on Chinese politicians allegedly involved and earlier this week blocked some exports it said had been made with "forced labour". A new Chinese government white paper, however, says "vocational training" is increasing job opportunities and combating poverty. "Xinjiang has built a large knowledge-based, skilled and innovative workforce that meets the requirements of the new era," the report reads. It says the training provided includes written and spoken Mandarin, labour skills and "knowledge of urban life". The report says people from rural areas have started their own businesses or got jobs in factories after receiving state support.

'China has long insisted that mass "vocational education and training" is necessary in far-western Xinjiang to counter terrorism and alleviate poverty.

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<sup>75</sup> ASPI, ['Documenting Xinjiang's detention system'](#), 24 September 2020

But human rights groups have said at least one million people have been incarcerated in camps which they describe as "re-education" centres. The Chinese report said that 1.3 million people had been through Xinjiang's "vocational training" scheme annually for six years. It's not clear how many of those "retrained" were sent to the specially built camps or if any of them went through the programme twice. But in total nearly eight million people out of a population of 22 million could have been through the programme, the new figures suggest.<sup>76</sup>

5.6.5 The CFR report on 'China's Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang', last updated in March 2021, stated: 'Chinese officials publicly maintain that the camps have two purposes: to teach Mandarin, Chinese laws, and vocational skills, and to prevent citizens from becoming influenced by extremist ideas, to "nip terrorist activities in the bud," according to a government report. Pointing out that Xinjiang has not experienced a terrorist attack since December 2016, officials claim the camps have prevented violence.'<sup>77</sup>

5.6.6 In its April 2021 report, Human Rights Watch stated:

'Detainees and their relatives interviewed by Human Rights Watch all reported that at no point did the authorities ever present them with a warrant, with evidence of a crime, or with any other documentation, nor were they ever informed of which authorities were responsible for their arrest. Lawyers told the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) that defendants facing terrorism charges are not allowed to plead "not guilty," and tend to be quickly put on trial and sentenced to prison terms. CHRD has also documented that lawyers risk being dismissed from cases for attempting to protect their clients' due process rights, and has reported cases of other procedural abuses such as verdicts being prepared before the trials take place, or government officials rather than judges deciding sentences.'<sup>78</sup>

5.6.7 Amnesty International in their report "Like we were enemies in a war": China's mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang' published in June 2021 noted that:

'Former detainees told Amnesty International that the reasons they were given for their detention were often not tied to specific acts; rather, detainees were informed that they had been detained because they had been classified as "suspicious" or "untrustworthy" or as a "terrorist" or an "extremist". The precise criteria for such classifications are not known; however, the government of China has used such terms – particularly "terrorist" and "extremist" – in over-broad ways in the context of counter-terrorism legislation. When specific acts were mentioned, they generally fell into a few broad categories. One category includes offences related to foreign countries. Numerous former detainees were detained for living, travelling, or studying abroad or for communicating with people abroad. Many were even detained simply for being "connected" with people who lived, travelled, studied, or communicated with people abroad.'<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> BBC, '[Xinjiang: China defends "education" camps](#)', 17 September 2020

<sup>77</sup> CFR, '[China's Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang](#)', Last update 1 March 2021

<sup>78</sup> Human Rights Watch, '[Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots](#)', 19 April 2021

<sup>79</sup> Amnesty International, '["Like we were enemies in a war": China's mass...](#)', 10 June 2021

5.6.8 The Human Rights Foundations report of August 2021 noted that:

“Re-education” camps are a network of internment centers where Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are imprisoned en masse. They were constructed under the expansion of the “concentrated educational transformation” program which seeks to reform lawbreakers, such as drug addicts and problem children, into model citizens. These vocational facilities in the Uyghur Region are marketed as centers for people to learn new skills to advance their careers and combat poverty. In reality, they are internment camps where mass atrocities are committed. These camps are intended to “break the [Uyghur peoples’] lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins.”

‘...Internment camps seem to vary in levels of confinement, ranging from reform school to prison. Placements within internment camps are determined by initial screenings which calculate the severity and length of detention. Descriptions of the internment camps consistently illustrate a desolate environment of torture, hunger, and abuse. The camps are thoroughly secured with high and thick concrete walls surrounding the compounds, barbed wire, and guard towers. The interior is filled with triple locking doors, locked cells, bolted corridors, and inescapable video surveillance.’<sup>80</sup>

5.6.9 In October 2021, the ASPI in a report ‘The architecture of repression-Unpacking Xinjiang’s governance’ reported that:

‘Researchers have identified a broad set of justifications used during the Re-education Campaign to detain Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, including religious expressions (fasting, prayer, wearing a headscarf or having a beard), foreign links (past overseas travel, contact with someone abroad or applying for a passport), consumption of unapproved information (use of Zappya or WhatsApp) or having too many children. At times, there is no justification at all...’<sup>81</sup>

5.6.10 The Daily Telegraph reported, on 23 May 2022, that: Six Uyghur people living outside China confirmed to The Telegraph that at least a dozen of their relatives and friends, who were released from internment camps by late 2019, have been re-detained in the past two years, for seemingly arbitrary reasons such as applying for passports.’<sup>82</sup>

5.6.11 In May 2022 a huge cache of police files, including speeches, images, documents and spreadsheets, were published after being obtained by an unidentified source from confidential internal police networks. The source claims that these documents were hacked, downloaded and decrypted from police servers in Xinjiang and then passed to Dr Adrian Zenz, a scholar at the US-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. Dr Zenz then shared these documents with the BBC. The documents can be accessed on the [Xinjiangpolicefiles website](#).

5.6.12 Following publication of the Xinjiang police files the BBC noted in their report ‘The faces from China’s Uyghur detention camps’ that:

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<sup>80</sup> HRF, ‘[100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...](#)’, August 2021

<sup>81</sup> ASPI, ‘[The architecture of repression-Unpacking Xinjiang’s governance](#)’, 19 October 2021

<sup>82</sup> The Daily Telegraph, ‘Uyghurs rearrested despite Beijing denials’, 23 May 2022

'The cache reveals, in unprecedented detail, China's use of "re-education" camps and formal prisons as two separate but related systems of mass detention for Uyghurs - and seriously calls into question its well-honed public narrative about both. The government's claim that the re-education camps built across Xinjiang since 2017 are nothing more than "schools" is contradicted by internal police instructions, guarding rosters and the never-before-seen images of detainees.

'...The hacked files contain more than 5,000 police photographs of Uyghurs taken between January and July 2018.

'Using other accompanying data, at least 2,884 of them can be shown to have been detained. And for those listed as being in a re-education camp, there are signs that they are not the willing "students" China has long-claimed them to be.

'...Many have been detained just for ordinary, outward signs of their Islamic faith or for visiting countries with majority Muslim populations.

'...The Xinjiang Police Files contain another set of documents that go even further than the detainee photographs in exposing the prison-like nature of the re-education camps that China insists are "vocational schools". A set of internal police protocols describes the routine use of armed officers in all areas of the camps, the positioning of machine guns and sniper rifles in the watchtowers, and the existence of a shoot-to-kill policy for those trying to escape. Blindfolds, handcuffs and shackles are mandatory for any "student" being transferred between facilities or even to hospital.

'...Most of the spreadsheets relate to a county in southern Xinjiang, known as Konasheher in Uyghur, or Shufu in Chinese. An analysis of the data by Dr Zenz shows that in just this one county, a total of 22,762 residents - more than 12% of the adult population - were in either a camp or a prison in the years 2017 and 2018. If applied to Xinjiang as a whole, that figure would mean the detention of more than 1.2 million Uyghur and other Turkic minority adults - well within the broad range of estimates made by Xinjiang experts, which China has always dismissed.'<sup>83</sup>

5.6.13 On 24 May 2022 UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss gave a statement following the leak of a cache of police files. The statement noted that:

'New evidence shows the extraordinary scale of China's targeting of Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities, including forced labour, severe restrictions on freedom of religion, the separation of parents from their children, forced birth control, and mass incarceration. The UK stands with our international partners in calling out China's appalling persecution of Uyghur Muslims and other minorities. We remain committed to holding China to account.'<sup>84</sup>

5.6.14 The US State Department, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom Report (USIRF) for Xinjiang, stated:

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<sup>83</sup> BBC News, '[The faces from China's Uyghur detention camps](#)', May 2022

<sup>84</sup> FCDO, '[China's human rights violations in Xinjiang: Foreign Secretary's statement, May 2022](#)', 24 May 2022

‘According to multiple human rights NGOs and academic sources, authorities held more than one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Hui, and members of other Muslim groups as well as some Christians, in a vast network of camps since 2017, many of them co-located with factories, where sources said detainees were subjected to forced labor and “reeducation.” Several human rights groups estimated the number of individuals interned to be up to 3.5 million. The government continued to use detentions to implement a XUAR-specific counterextremism policy that identifies “extremist” behavior (including growing beards, wearing headscarves, and abstaining from alcohol) in concert with the National Counterterrorism Law, which contains provisions on “religious extremism.”

‘...There were numerous reports of individuals being incarcerated, sometimes for lengthy periods of time, held under harsh conditions, physically and sexually abused, and subjected to involuntary sterilization. Many individuals disappeared in prior years, but relatives only learned what happened to them during the year.’<sup>85</sup>

- 5.6.15 On 14 June 2022 the UK was one of 47 countries at the UN Human Rights Council to sign up to a Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in China. The joint statement noted that:

‘We continue to be gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Numerous extensively researched and credible reports indicate that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained. Furthermore, there are reports of ongoing widespread surveillance, discrimination against Uyghurs and other persons belonging to minorities as well as of severe restrictions on Uyghur culture and the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of religion or belief. We are also concerned about reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced sterilization, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, and forced separation of children from their parents by authorities.’<sup>86</sup>

- 5.6.16 The Xinjiang data project, developed by researchers at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s (ASPI) International Cyber Policy Centre in partnership with a range of global experts, have produced an [interactive map](#) which details detention facilities across the Xinjiang province.
- 5.6.17 The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) have compiled a list of [detained Uyghur Intellectual and Cultural elites](#), who they define as ‘individuals who have received a university degree or diploma and/or who work in fields where they have made visible contributions to public intellectual, cultural, and/or political life through writings, lectures, performances, and other public-facing activity.’<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang’](#) (Section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>86</sup> UK Mission to the WTO, [‘UN Human Rights Council 50: Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in China’](#), 14 June 2022

<sup>87</sup> UHRP, [‘The Disappearance of Uyghur Intellectual and Cultural Elites: A New ...’](#), 8 December 2021

## 5.7 Torture and ill treatment in detention

- 5.7.1 An August 2020 BuzzFeed News investigation into the internment camps in the Xinjiang stated that: ‘...People detained in the camps told BuzzFeed News they were subjected to torture, hunger, overcrowding, solitary confinement, forced birth control, and a range of other abuses. They said they were put through brainwashing programs focusing on Communist Party propaganda and made to speak only in the Chinese language. Some former detainees said they were forced to labor without pay in factories.’<sup>88</sup>
- 5.7.2 BBC News reported in February 2021 that: ‘Women in China's "re-education" camps for Uighurs have been systematically raped, sexually abused, and tortured... First-hand accounts from inside the internment camps are rare, but several former detainees and a guard have told the BBC they experienced or saw evidence of an organised system of mass rape, sexual abuse and torture.’<sup>89</sup>
- 5.7.3 The March 2021 RWHRC report stated:
- ‘...Large numbers of Uyghur detainees have died or been killed under police or camp custody, and people who report such deaths can receive lengthy sentences. There is at least one confirmed report of mass deaths within an internment camp, and newly built crematoria in the region indicate that authorities may be concealing the overall number of deaths and torture within the camps. Elderly and prominent Uyghur religious figures, or detainees who succumb to the military-style routines, are particularly vulnerable to death or disappearance in detention, with a number of religious scholars dying shortly after taken into custody. The elderly also tend to be more susceptible than younger detainees to torture for failing to learn Chinese or requesting to use the toilet outside of designated times, while prominent Uyghurs have been selectively targeted in the mass detention drive, both in scope and scale of punishment, generally receiving 15 years to life in prison or being sentenced to death.
- ‘... According to eyewitness accounts, detainees are held in overcrowded cells... Detainees are often denied food for failing to comply perfectly with the rules or deliberately given spoiled food for speaking Uyghur or failing to speak Chinese. As a result, detainees generally experience extreme weight loss within the camps.’<sup>90</sup>
- 5.7.4 The RWHRC and Newsline’s March 2021 report stated:
- ‘Uyghur detainees within the detention sites are systematically tortured, subjected to sexual violence, including rape, and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, deprived of their basic human needs, and severely humiliated.
- ‘According to eyewitnesses, detainees can be tortured for failing to comply with strict military-style orders and rules or for simple everyday behavior, including speaking or whispering with each other, turning off the bright cell lights that remain permanently lit, or even smiling, crying, yawning, closing

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<sup>88</sup> BuzzFeed News, [‘China Secretly Built A Vast New Infrastructure To...’](#) (part 1), 27 August 2020

<sup>89</sup> BBC News, [‘Their goal is to destroy everyone’: Uighur camp detainees allege...’](#), 2 February 2021

<sup>90</sup> RWCHR and Newslines, [‘The Uyghur Genocide’](#), 9 March 2021

their eyes, eating too slowly, or exceeding the minimal time allotted for bathroom breaks. Former detainees have testified to designated “interrogation rooms” within the camps and detention centers, where there are no cameras and consistent brutal methods of torture are inflicted, sometimes lasting 24 hours and causing loss of consciousness.

‘...Detainees are also subjected to whippings and constant beatings by metal and electric prods or bare cords.

‘...Former detainees have testified to systematic mass rape and other sexual abuse in the detention facilities. There are also accounts of gang rapes perpetrated by security officials

‘...In addition to the well-documented serious bodily harm inflicted on Uyghurs, the mental harm suffered is so severe as to drive some to commit suicide, including from the threat of internment. Detainees are subjected to repeated daily routines of indoctrination, forced to watch CCP propaganda, chant Party slogans, set prayer mats on fire or eat pork, and are further punished by way of constant mock executions or solitary confinement.

...Suicides have become so pervasive that detainees must wear “suicide safe” uniforms and are denied access to materials susceptible to causing self-harm.

‘...Sleep deprivation, starvation, and unsanitary, dangerous, and overcrowded conditions are commonly reported in the camps. According to eyewitness accounts, detainees are held in overcrowded cells that generally contain one shared plastic bucket or open toilet to which detainees are confined to strict one to three-minute bathroom breaks under surveillance cameras.’<sup>91</sup>

#### 5.7.5 In an April 2021 report, Human Rights Watch stated:

‘Human Rights Watch and others have reported on torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees by the authorities in both political education camps and police detention facilities (看守所).

‘...Some former detainees reported having been strapped to metal chairs, known as “tiger chairs,” during police interrogations. Former detainees from political education camps and police detention facilities told Human Rights Watch about the use of physical and psychological punishments, ill-treatment of or lack of medical care for people particularly vulnerable to harsh detention conditions, and suicide attempts.’<sup>92</sup>

#### 5.7.6 Amnesty International in their report “Like we were enemies in a war”: China’s mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang’ published in June 2021 noted that:

‘In internment camps, all detainees were subjected to a ceaseless indoctrination campaign as well as physical and psychological torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

‘...Some detainees were physically punished if they spoke in a language other than Mandarin.

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<sup>91</sup> RWCHR and Newlines, [‘The Uyghur Genocide’](#), 9 March 2021

<sup>92</sup> Human Rights Watch, [‘Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots’](#), 19 April 2021

‘...There was insufficient food, water, exercise, healthcare, sanitary and hygienic conditions, fresh air, and exposure to natural light. Detainees had draconian restrictions placed on their ability to urinate and defecate. All detainees were required to “work” one- or two-hour shifts monitoring their cellmates every night. Many former detainees reported that during the first few days, weeks, or sometimes months after arriving at the internment camps, they were forced to do nothing but sit still – often in terribly uncomfortable positions – for nearly the entire day.

‘...Detainees were also required to write letters of “confession” or “self-criticism” in which they admitted to their “crimes”.

‘...Torture methods used during interrogations and as punishment included beatings, electric shocks, stress positions, the unlawful use of restraints (including being locked in a tiger chair), sleep deprivation, being hung from a wall, being subjected to extremely cold temperatures, and solitary confinement.’<sup>93</sup>

5.7.7 The Human Rights Foundations report of August 2021 noted that:

‘Due to the high number of detainees, hunger and overcrowding are frequent. Detainees are often forced to share a twin bed or sleep in shifts given the limited space. Furthermore, the “dorms” have no running water and the toilet is a bucket in the corner of the room. Detainees are handed food through an opening in the door and fed meager amounts of rice or porridge with little to no protein. The detainees are tightly monitored by cameras to ensure that they do not freely speak to each other. “You don’t have the right to talk, because you are not humans,” one guard reportedly said. “If you were humans, you wouldn’t be here.”

‘Detainees are also subject to a regimented daily routine comprised of political indoctrination, Chinese language training, and forced renunciations of Islam and Uyghur culture.’<sup>94</sup>

5.7.8 The 2021 DFAT report noted that: ‘The United States Government has determined that China’s actions in Xinjiang constitute genocide and crimes against humanity and the parliaments of Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Netherlands ... have passed motions referring to the situation in Xinjiang as “genocide”.’<sup>95</sup> In December 2021 the UK based Uyghur Tribunal also found that China had committed genocide against Uyghurs<sup>96</sup>.

5.7.9 The 2022 Freedom House annual report stated that: ‘The ongoing detention of more than one million Uyghurs and other Muslims in internment camps or forced-labor facilities in Xinjiang continued to limit birth rates among those communities. Rare first-hand accounts from inside the camps that were made public by international media during 2021 pointed to systemic sexual abuse and torture of detainees.’<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Amnesty International, [“Like we were enemies in a war”: China’s mass...’](#), 10 June 2021

<sup>94</sup> HRF, [‘100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...’](#), August 2021

<sup>95</sup> DFAT, [‘Country information report’](#) (para 3.10), 22 December 2021

<sup>96</sup> BBC News, [‘China committed genocide against Uyghurs, independent...’](#), 9 December 2021

<sup>97</sup> Freedom House, [‘Freedom in the World 2022’](#), 28 February 2022

5.7.10 The USSD 2021 Country report on human rights practices, published April 2022, noted that:

‘In Xinjiang there were reports of custodial deaths related to detentions in the internment camps. There were multiple reports from Uyghur family members who discovered their relatives had died while in internment camps or within weeks of their release.

...The government conducted mass arbitrary detention of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and members of other Muslim and ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang.

‘...Members of the minority Uyghur ethnic group reported systematic torture and other degrading treatment by law enforcement officers and officials working within the penal system and the internment camps. Survivors stated that authorities subjected individuals in custody to electric shock, waterboarding, beatings, rape, forced sterilization, forced prostitution, stress positions, forced administration of unknown medication, and cold cells.

‘...Some Xinjiang internment camp survivors reported that they were subjected to coerced comprehensive health screenings including blood and DNA testing upon entering the internment camps. There were also reports from former detainees that authorities forced Uyghur detainees to undergo medical examinations of thoracic and abdominal organs.’<sup>98</sup>

5.7.11 The BBC report ‘The faces from China’s Uyghur detention camps’, published following the release of the Xinjiang police files noted that:

‘The Xinjiang Police Files contain another set of unique photographs that appear to only further highlight the extreme levels of physical control that Uyghurs are subjected to in the attempt to forcibly reengineer their identity. They show what appear to be drills for subduing inmates - using similar methods to those described in the police documents for the camps - but this time in a detention centre. There are also what look like indoctrination sessions, again showing the overlap between camps and prisons.’<sup>99</sup>

5.7.12 The US State Department, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom Report (USIRF) for Xinjiang, stated: ‘There were numerous reports of individuals being incarcerated, sometimes for lengthy periods of time, held under harsh conditions, physically and sexually abused, and subjected to involuntary sterilization. Many individuals disappeared in prior years, but relatives only learned what happened to them during the year.’<sup>100</sup>

5.7.13 The Xinjiang Victims Database produced a report titled ‘[Detention Facilities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region](#)’, which details all the detention facilities in Xinjiang, the type of facility they are, their locations and changes to the structures over time<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>98</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China](#)’ (section I....), 12 April 2022

<sup>99</sup> BBC News, ‘[The faces from China’s Uyghur detention camps](#)’, May 2022

<sup>100</sup> USSD, ‘[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang](#)’ (Section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>101</sup> Xinjiang Victims Database, ‘[Detention Facilities in the Xinjiang Uyghur...](#)’, 30 May 2022

## 5.8 Forced labour

### 5.8.1 Part 4 of a BuzzFeed News investigation, of January 2021, into the internment camps in the Xinjiang stated that:

‘Forced labor has a long history in Xinjiang that predates the detention campaign. Some lower-security prisons were linked to farms, while many high-security prisons contained heavy industrial facilities, such as a smelting plant for lead and zinc, fertilizer plants, and coal and uranium mines. A few contained buildings for light manufacturing.

‘Factories started appearing in the makeshift camps of the early detention campaign in spring 2017. Often, they appeared as a single factory wedged onto the site wherever there was room, squashed between the existing buildings, or built on the sports field of a former school. At the same time, new and expanding high-security facilities also added factories, typically in larger numbers.

‘With the explosion of factory-building in 2018, new patterns emerged. The piecemeal addition of factory buildings on cramped existing sites continued. But the detention compounds on the edge of cities, which had more room, expanded to accommodate new factories that were typically arranged in a neat grid and often separated from the main compound — by a fence, or even a road with barbed wire walkways connecting the two. The factory area often had a separate entrance from the surrounding roads, allowing raw materials to be delivered and finished goods to be picked up without disturbing the wider camp.

‘While some of the new factories have been built in higher-security facilities, they are more often found in lower-security compounds, and they appear to be for light industry — manufacturing clothes rather than smelting zinc or mining. Much of the construction since 2017 has been concentrated in Xinjiang’s south and west: the regions with the highest numbers of Uyghur and Kazakh people.

‘Hotan prefecture, for instance, contains nearly a third of the factories built between the start of 2017 and the end of 2020. Two counties within it — Hotan and Lop — saw 1.9 million square feet and 1.8 million square feet of factories built there respectively during that time period.’<sup>102</sup>

### 5.8.2 Uyghur Human Rights Project stated in a submission to UN CEDAW in January 2021:

‘The government of China has for years used a complex system of “labor export programs” which coercing unmarried Uyghur women to work in factories outside the Uyghur Region under the promise of higher wages. Simultaneously, the Chinese government has forcibly sent an estimated 80,000 Uyghur laborers to other parts of China in factories under conditions which strongly indicate forced labor. The government of China specifically targets young, rural, and unmarried Uyghur women as participants for many of its labor export programs. Since 2007, authorities have deployed a number of deceptive tactics to lure young Uyghur women away from their homes in the countryside and into forced-labor factories. By first targeting

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<sup>102</sup> BuzzFeed News, [‘We Found The Factories Inside China’s Mass...’](#) (part 4), 4 January 2021

young Uyghur women aged 16-25 living in rural, economically depressed agricultural regions, authorities incentivize impoverished families with higher wages and relocation benefits working in far-away cities. After “accepting” these contract offers and relocating to factories in Eastern China, Uyghur women have been denied their expected wages and adequate living conditions upon arrival. One young Uyghur woman told researchers at the UHRP in 2008 that “We call this place a prison. I think that there is no difference between here and a prison.”<sup>103</sup>

5.8.3 The RWHRC and Newslines report of March 2021 found that:

‘The Government has also established a system of institutionalized long-term forced Uyghur labor within and outside the internment camps. Uyghur detainees are systematically transferred to cotton fields and factories adjacent to the camps or located hundreds of kilometers away in XUAR or in Eastern China. These forced labor programs can also be connected to internment, as satellite imagery has identified masses of people wearing identical uniforms transferred between the two sites. Forced labor factories have been verified on at least 135 of the XUAR detention sites. The construction of factories in XUAR parallels the rapid expansion of internment camps. An investigative report identified more than 21 million square feet of factory facilities within camp compounds as of December 2020.’<sup>104</sup>

5.8.4 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) made a statement on 29 March 2021 outlining ‘serious concerns about the alleged detention and forced labour of Muslim Uyghurs in China, ... Several experts appointed by the Human Rights Council said they had received information that connected over 150 domestic Chinese and foreign domiciled companies to serious allegations of human rights abuses against Uyghur workers.’<sup>105</sup>

5.8.5 The US State Department, 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: China, 1 July 2021 (USSD TiP report, 2021), stated:

‘The PRC continued its policies of mass detention and political indoctrination against more than one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and members of other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang, and it continued to expand these policies through the transfer of at least 80,000 detainees into forced labor into dozens of other provinces, according to NGO estimates and media reports.

‘... Many detained individuals approved to “graduate” from these facilities were sent to external manufacturing sites in close proximity to the camps or in other provinces and subjected to forced labor, while others were transferred and likely subjected to forced labor within a separate—and growing—formal prison system.

‘... The government continued to transfer some members of non-interned minority communities designated arbitrarily as “rural surplus labor” to other areas within Xinjiang as part of a “poverty alleviation” program and exploit them in forced labor. Authorities also used the threat of internment to coerce

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<sup>103</sup> UHRP, [List of Issues submission to CEDAW](#), January 2021

<sup>104</sup> RWCHR and Newslines, [The Uyghur Genocide](#), 9 March 2021

<sup>105</sup> UN OHCHR, China: [UN experts deeply concerned, ...](#), 29 March 2021

members of some Muslim communities directly into forced labor in manufacturing.

‘...NGOs report ethnic Han men may be increasingly able to force Uyghur and other Muslim women into marriages under the government’s discriminatory ethnic assimilation policies, placing them at higher risk of forced labor in domestic service and other forms of exploitation.

‘...The impact of formal discriminatory employment policies barring Uyghurs from jobs in many sectors—including in the annual cotton harvest—reportedly drives thousands of Uyghur farmers out of their communities in search of alternative work, placing them at higher risk of forced labor.’<sup>106</sup>

#### 5.8.6 The Human Rights Foundations report of August 2021 noted that:

‘Forced labor programs intersect and run parallel to detention camps. Detainees who have completed their sentence often enter into vocation programs and are then funneled into forced labor; laborers who have not been detained work in inhospitable conditions under the constant threat of detention. Forced labor programs are touted as “poverty alleviation” efforts, directed at providing “jobs” to current and former detainees, and poor rural individuals.

‘...In addition to gruesome manual labor with minimal to no pay, workers are subject to “re-education” that consists of political indoctrination, Chinese language learning, and other courses similar to those of the internment camps themselves. Many detainees are placed in factories inside of or adjacent to internment camps.

‘...A subset of laborers are also detained and transferred out of the region to work. Between 2017-2019, 80,000 Uyghurs were moved to work in factories across mainland China through the “labor transfer” program, also known as “Xinjiang Aid.” Workers live in segregated dormitories, undergo ideological brainwashing, and are stripped of any personal freedoms. Government documents reveal that workers are also assigned to government minders and security personnel who monitor their every move and regularly search their dorms.’<sup>107</sup>

#### 5.8.7 The October 2021 ASPI report noted that:

‘During the Re-education Campaign, Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities from rural parts of southern Xinjiang have been labelled ‘surplus labour’ (富余劳动力) or ‘poverty-stricken labour’ (贫困劳动力) and sent to work in factories in other parts of Xinjiang or China. Between 2017 and 2021, 600,000 ‘surplus labourers’ from southern Xinjiang were scheduled to be trained and transferred to new locations for work, according to state media.

‘...As part of the labour-transfer schemes, various departments in and outside Xinjiang are tasked with ‘fixing jobs’ (落实岗位) for Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in their particular industries. Instead of providing welfare, these acts of ‘job creation’ have displaced Uyghurs and other indigenous people from their homeland, tearing communities and families

<sup>106</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: China’](#), 1 July 2021

<sup>107</sup> HRF, [‘100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...’](#), August 2021

apart. Transferred workers are typically between 18 and 40 years old, many of whom leave children, elderly relatives and livestock behind. In Kargilik County (叶城县, a 93% Uyghur county), for example, 2,428 elderly residents, 1,941 children and some 336,900 animals were placed under state care following job assignments.<sup>108</sup>

5.8.8 Laura T. Murphy, et al's 2021 report 'Laundering Cotton: How Xinjiang Cotton is Obscured in International Supply Chains' noted that:

'Though it is technically against the law, the cotton industry in the Uyghur Region has long been supported by involuntary labor...Individuals have testified to having been forced to pick cotton and perform other manual labor for the state when they lived in the Uyghur Region. In the last several years, forced labor may have even expanded as large-scale cotton producers in the Uyghur Region have begun engaging more Uyghur workers, who represent a cost efficiency compared to migrant Han workers as they are "absorbed" through coercive state-sponsored labor programs that do not require funding for the long journey to the XUAR.'<sup>109</sup>

5.8.9 In December 2021 US President Joe Biden signed a law into legislation that banned the import of goods from Xinjiang. Reuters reported that: 'Key to the legislation is a "rebuttable presumption" that assumes all goods from Xinjiang, where Beijing has established detention camps for Uyghurs and other Muslim groups, are made with forced labor. It bars imports unless it can be proven otherwise.'<sup>110</sup>

5.8.10 In their annual report for 2022 Freedom House noted that: '...“surplus rural laborers” in ...Xinjiang ... have been relocated en masse by the authorities. Despite the government's claim that the relocations are voluntary and beneficial to participants, the evidence suggests conditions that are tantamount to forced labor, with members of ethnic minorities housed separately in prison-like environments, subjected to political indoctrination, and economically exploited.'<sup>111</sup>

5.8.11 The Xinjiang data project, developed by researchers at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's (ASPI) International Cyber Policy Centre in partnership with a range of global experts, have produced an [interactive map](#) which details detention facilities across the Xinjiang province.

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## 5.9 Families of those detained or abroad

5.9.1 In January 2021 the Intercept published a report following them obtaining a reporting tool developed by private defence company Landasoft and used by the Chinese government to facilitate police surveillance of citizens in Xinjiang. They noted that the information: '...corroborates reports that Uyghurs are monitored outside of China and that it's not just people who travel abroad and then return who are surveilled, but also their relatives and

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<sup>108</sup> ASPI, '[The architecture of repression-Unpacking Xinjiang's governance](#)', 19 October 2021

<sup>109</sup> Laura T. Murphy, et al, '[Laundering Cotton: How Xinjiang Cotton is Obscured...](#)', November 2021

<sup>110</sup> Reuters, '[Biden signs bill banning goods from China's Xinjiang over forced...](#)', 23 December 2021

<sup>111</sup> Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2022](#)', 28 February 2022

friends. ...Some relatives of detainees are visited daily by local police. Even those considered trustworthy are visited...'<sup>112</sup>

5.9.2 A March 2021 report by RWHRC noted that the number of children separated from their families in Xinjiang and placed in state run boarding schools had increased by 76.9% and numbered 880,500<sup>113</sup>.

5.9.3 The April 2021 Human Rights Watch report stated:

'In many cases, relatives have had no news about the whereabouts or well-being of their detained family members. Some may receive notices when their relatives are transferred to a formal prison, if they ever are. One online platform that allows relatives of detainees and activists to compile accounts of disappearances had recorded over 11,500 testimonies as of December 2020. In many cases, family members or friends—especially those based abroad—are afraid even to seek information about those who are missing, fearing that international communication or provision of assistance to those seeking to locate detained persons will result in retaliation by the authorities. In some cases, the authorities have detained people while their children are away at school.'<sup>114</sup>

5.9.4 The same report stated: 'In addition to separations stemming from mass detention and placement of former detainees in jobs far from home, many families have been separated as a result of heightened restrictions on the movement of Turkic Muslims. The tightening of passport controls and border crossings have left some children stranded in Xinjiang unable to join their parents, who had gone abroad.'<sup>115</sup>

5.9.5 The USSD TiP report, 2021 stated that:

'Authorities in some localities... subject the families of men arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang to forced labor in their absence. Contacts report families separated by this system are more likely to fall below the poverty line and are therefore at higher risk of sex trafficking and forced labor. Authorities place the young children of interned Muslims in Xinjiang in state-run boarding schools, orphanages, and "child welfare guidance centers," and force them to participate in political indoctrination activities and report on their families' religious activities. Authorities reportedly place older children among these groups in vocational schools, where some may be victims of forced labor.'<sup>116</sup>

5.9.6 UN Human Rights Council report on 'Enforced or involuntary disappearances, Report of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances' published on 4 August 2021 noted that: 'The Working Group remains concerned at the continued allegations of enforced disappearances of Chinese nationals of Uighur ethnicity residing in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, which seem to particularly target individuals with relatives residing abroad and have led to reprisals against individuals

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<sup>112</sup> The Intercept, '[Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database, Millions of...](#)' 19 January 2021

<sup>113</sup> RWCHR and Newslines, '[The Uyghur Genocide](#)', 9 March 2021

<sup>114</sup> Human Rights Watch, '[Break Their Lineage. Break Their Roots](#)', 19 April 2021

<sup>115</sup> Human Rights Watch, '[Break Their Lineage. Break Their Roots](#)', 19 April 2021

<sup>116</sup> USSD, '[2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: China](#)', 1 July 2021

whose relatives are attempting to obtain information or establish contact with them from abroad.<sup>117</sup>

- 5.9.7 The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) report “Your Family Will Suffer”: How China is Hacking, Surveilling, and Intimidating Uyghurs in Liberal Democracies’ published on 10 November 2021 noted that:

‘Chinese hackers are targeting Uyghurs abroad beyond the organizational level. Increasingly, individual Uyghurs, even those who are not politically active, are being attacked worldwide. Critically, the Chinese government has targeted Uyghurs online through social media and cyber campaigns and through malware and backdoors in smartphone software to collect data and spy on them. These efforts are part of an encompassing campaign. Since 2017, China has expanded its surveillance and information collection, both domestically and abroad, in lockstep with the so-called People’s War on Terror. Using hackers rather than the more “traditional” spies and informants reduces the cost of this data collection. Although it is difficult to implicate the Chinese state in such attacks directly, the fact that the attacks target Uyghurs suggests they are at the very least serving government interests.’<sup>118</sup>

- 5.9.8 A report by Safeguard Defenders published in January 2022 noted that: ‘Harassment and detentions of Uyghur families are commonplace as a means to force relatives overseas to come back.’<sup>119</sup>

- 5.9.9 In February 2022 Sky News reported, following an investigation, that: ‘China is targeting Uyghurs and critics abroad, pressuring other countries to detain and deport them...’ the report went on to note that: ‘Chinese agents and police routinely operate abroad, attempting to identify Uyghurs who have fled China. Some are coerced into spying for the Chinese government. Others, once detained in a third country, simply vanish.’<sup>120</sup>

- 5.9.10 The USSD 2021 Country report noted that:

‘Reports continued throughout the year regarding PRC pressure on Xinjiang-based relatives of persons located outside China who spoke publicly about the detentions and abusive policies underway inside Xinjiang.

‘...PRC media and authorities continued to harass and defame women who spoke about rape and sexual abuse in Xinjiang internment camps. Qelbinur Sedik, a Xinjiang camp teacher who fled China and now lives abroad, was repeatedly targeted by PRC media and received direct video messages from local Xinjiang police threatening reprisal against her family members still in Xinjiang. The BBC reported that Xinjiang police used social media to threaten Uyghurs living in Europe.

‘PRC state media also released videos of Xinjiang-based ethnic and religious minorities to discredit their overseas relatives’ accounts to foreign media. The persons in the videos urged their foreign-based family members to stop “spreading rumors” about Xinjiang. The overseas relatives said they

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<sup>117</sup> UNHRC, [‘Enforced or involuntary disappearances, Report of the UN Working...’](#), 4 August 2021

<sup>118</sup> UHRP, [“Your Family Will Suffer”: How China is Hacking, Surveilling, and...’](#), 10 November 2021

<sup>119</sup> SD, [‘Involuntary Returns: China’s covert operation to force ‘fugitives’ overseas...’](#), January 2022

<sup>120</sup> Sky News, [‘How China is using black sites in the UAE as they target Uyghurs...’](#), 9 February 2022

had lost communication with their Xinjiang relatives until the videos were released.

'...Numerous ethnic Uyghurs and Kazakhs living overseas were intimidated into silence by threats from government officials against members of their family who lived in China, threats sometimes delivered in China to the relatives, and sometimes delivered by Chinese government officials in the foreign country.'<sup>121</sup>

- 5.9.11 The BBC report 'The faces from China's Uyghur detention camps' published following release of the Xinjiang police files noted that:

'The spreadsheets give few details about the fate of such children whose parents have both been detained. It's likely a significant number have been placed into the permanent, long-term care of a system of state-run boarding schools built across Xinjiang at the same time as the camps. In fact, the closely shaved hair visible in so many of the images of children is a sign, overseas Uyghurs have told the BBC, that many are already made to attend such schools at least during weekdays, even if still under the care of one or both parents.'<sup>122</sup>

- 5.9.12 See also [Forced labour](#)

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Section 6 updated: 5 July 2022

## 6. State treatment of Muslims outside of Xinjiang

- 6.1.1 Bitter Winter reported that Islamic schools within mosques across China were being closed down in large numbers, with the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in the northwest among the most targeted areas, with these areas being home to the majority of China's ethnic Hui Muslims<sup>123</sup>. Bitter Winter also reported on the removal of Islamic symbols and writings on 70 Hui-run businesses in Chuxiong<sup>124</sup>, the removal of Islamic symbols from Mosques in Shandong and Henan provinces<sup>125</sup> and the removal of domes and star-and-crescent symbols from mosques in Henan province<sup>126</sup>. Bitter Winter also noted that Uyghur Muslims outside of Xinjiang were restricted for observing Ramadan and in one particular school in Shandong Uyghur students were forced to eat pork dishes with Han students during Ramadan and were restricted from engaging in any religious activities<sup>127</sup>.
- 6.1.2 In February 2021 The New York Times reported that the Utsuls, a community of no more than 10,000 Muslims, living in Sanya, a city on the resort island of Hainan have also been subjected to crackdowns on expressions of their faith, including the closure of 2 Muslims schools<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China](#)' (section 1 & 2), 12 April 2022

<sup>122</sup> BBC News, '[The faces from China's Uyghur detention camps](#)', May 2022

<sup>123</sup> Bitter Winter, '[CCP Cracks Down on Islamic Schools in Mosques](#)', 12 February 2020

<sup>124</sup> Bitter Winter, '[Islamic Symbols Removed from 300+ Hui-Run Businesses in...](#)', 28 June 2020

<sup>125</sup> Bitter Winter, '["Sinicization" of the Hui by Removing Symbols](#)', 10 May 2019

<sup>126</sup> Bitter Winter, '[Rectification of Mosques in Henan Continued Amid the Pandemic](#)', 26 May 2020

<sup>127</sup> Bitter Winter, '[China's Muslims Forced to Eat Pork During Ramadan](#)', 15 May 2020

<sup>128</sup> NYT, '[China's Crackdown on Muslims Extends to a Resort Island](#)', 14 February 2021

6.1.3 The CECC report ‘Hui Muslims and the “Xinjiang Model’ published in March 2021 stated:

‘Authorities outside of the XUAR have formally imprisoned Hui religious figures and detained Hui individuals for sharing materials related to the Quran online, criticizing restrictions on Islamic religious practices, buying Islamic books, performing the Hajj pilgrimage, traveling abroad, and resisting the destruction of a mosque. Hui Muslims outside of the XUAR whose identity documents were registered in the XUAR have also been sent to prison or re-education camps in the XUAR.

‘...Similar to the restriction and suppression of expressions of Islamic faith in the XUAR, officials in areas with large Hui populations have implemented policies and restrictions limiting Hui Muslims’ ability to practice their religion and culture. In locations throughout China, (including Beijing municipality, Gansu, Henan, Jilin, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Yunnan, and Zhejiang provinces, as well as the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region) officials have closed mosques, demolished or removed minarets, domes, and other Islamic features from mosques and placed surveillance cameras inside them, closed Islamic schools, and restricted Islamic preaching, clothing, Arabic script, halal food, and use of the Islamic financial system.

...The “sinicization” campaign has extended to Hui communities in the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province. Linxia is often described as China’s “Little Mecca,” and has a thriving Hui Muslim community with a majority Muslim population, a significant number of mosques, and visible displays of Muslim dress. However, as part of the “sinicization” campaign, authorities in Linxia and the surrounding villages have: demolished mosques; replaced Arabic-style minarets with Chinese-style ones; stopped restaurants from using the word “halal” in Arabic to reduce Arab influence; prohibited the Muslim call to prayer; and prevented children from attending Arabic or religious schooling.’<sup>129</sup>

6.1.4 The Diplomat noted in June 2021 that:

‘Despite the perception that Hui communities have thus far avoided repression on the scale the Uyghurs have faced, there are warning signs of grievances brewing and discriminatory practices emerging that bear resemblance to those of Xinjiang in 2014. China’s official campaign to “sinicize” Islam in Hui communities has resulted in government officials ordering mosques to promote government-sanctioned values, such as socialism and traditional Han culture. This practice reflects a growing tendency in policymaking circles to conflate all of Islam with extremism – a likely byproduct of the government’s view that Chinese culture and the Communist Party are wholly superior to other cultures and faiths.

‘Growing intolerance for Islamic cultural expression has raised serious concerns in Hui communities. ...Under sinicization, Hui schools in Inner Mongolia and mosques in Ningxia were restructured and redesigned to bear more traditional Han architectural traits.’<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> CECC, ‘[Hui Muslims and the “Xinjiang Model”](#)’, 29 March 2021

<sup>130</sup> The Diplomat, ‘[China’s Repression of the Hui: A Slow Boil](#)’, 15 June 2021

6.1.5 NPR News, an independent, non-profit media organisation, noted in an article from October 2021 that:

‘China is removing the domes and minarets from thousands of mosques across the country. Authorities say the domes are evidence of foreign religious influence and are taking down overtly Islamic architecture as part of a push to sinicize historically Muslim ethnic groups — to make them more traditionally Chinese.

‘...[In Xining city in China's Qinghai province] The dome removal campaign has met with limited public resistance. Xining residents say the Dongguan Mosque's imam and director were briefly detained and forced to sign in favor of it. Less than a mile away, Xining's marble Nanguan Mosque is also being prepped for dome removal. A shell of bamboo scaffolding encases its white dome.

‘...In other parts of China, sinicization has allowed the state to justify the confiscation of mosque assets, the imprisonment of imams and the closure of religious institutions over the last two years.

‘... The Hui Muslims, for the most part, have accommodated the ever-changing cultural pressures around them.’<sup>131</sup>

6.1.6 The CECC annual report for 2021 published in March 2022 noted that:

‘Officials in areas with large Hui populations continued to implement policies and restrictions limiting Hui Muslims’ ability to practice their religion and culture. Authorities demolished mosques serving Hui communities, placed Hui scholars and religious leaders under detention and surveillance, closed Arabic-language schools serving Hui students, and ordered the removal of religious inscriptions written in Arabic on Hui Muslims’ homes and businesses. There is evidence that authorities have begun using mass surveillance technologies and systems first implemented in the XUAR in other areas of the country with sizable Hui populations.’<sup>132</sup>

6.1.7 The 2021 USIRF report for China stated:

‘One source said the government used COVID-19 prevention as a pretext to close Islamic venues, particularly in Qinghai and Gansu Provinces and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, where Hui Muslims are concentrated, while allowing Buddhist temples to remain open.

‘...One Hui Muslim source said officials instructed children to report on their parents’ and family’s religious and cultural practices

‘...Local mosque leaders said authorities told them to remove loudspeakers that broadcast the call to prayer from the tops of minarets, place them on the ground, and turn down the volume. Authorities halted construction of a new mosque because of its supposedly “Arab” architectural elements.

‘... A Hui Muslim source told international media the government was attempting to remove characteristics of Hui religion and culture to make Hui citizens indistinguishable from Han citizens, with whom they share physical characteristics and language. Authorities took down minarets and domes

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<sup>131</sup> NPR News, ‘[China's 'sinicization' push leads to removal of mosque domes](#)’, 24 October 2021

<sup>132</sup> CECC, ‘[Annual Report 2021](#)’ (pg 115), 31 March 2022

and consolidated mosques. He said authorities trained clergy in Party doctrine and instructed them to pass those teachings on to their religious communities. The government targeted Hui cultural and business elites to remove Hui texts and art and cut off independent financial support to the community. The source called this a kind of “cultural genocide.”<sup>133</sup>

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Section 7 updated: 5 July 2022

## 7. Freedom of movement

### 7.1 Internal movement and restrictions

#### 7.1.1 According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Country of origin information report China’ published in July 2020:

‘A dense network of checkpoints throughout the province of Xinjiang makes it impossible for residents to move around unobserved in most of the province. These checkpoints use facial recognition technology and identity checks. Some checkpoints are equipped with devices that can copy data from mobile phones so that they can be traced later. Furthermore, some checkpoints are directly linked with the IJOP app’s database. If the IJOP app has identified a user as suspicious, the system will send a notification when this user attempts to pass through a checkpoint. This user can then be questioned, stopped or arrested. HRW has reports of people who were unexpectedly informed that they were banned from leaving their place of residence or region, because they had been designated as suspicious without their knowledge.’<sup>134</sup>

#### 7.1.2 The Intercept’s report January 2021 noted that: ‘...holding a passport is considered suspicious. Documents in the [leaked police] database indicate Uyghur passport holders are checked on by authorities more frequently than those without passports.’<sup>135</sup>

#### 7.1.3 The USSD 2021 TiP report noted that:

‘The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to confiscate, cancel, or refuse to renew the Chinese passports of Uyghurs and other Muslims living abroad, including those with legal permanent resident status or citizenship in other countries, as a coercive measure to lure them back to Xinjiang and likely detain them within the camps. There were also reports that authorities threatened, detained, and forcibly hospitalized these individuals’ family members in Xinjiang in an attempt to silence them and/or coerce their return. The PRC continued to seek the extradition of Muslim individuals who fled Xinjiang human rights abuses, including forced labor, and sought asylum abroad.’<sup>136</sup>

#### 7.1.4 The Human Rights Foundations report of August 2021 noted that:

‘The government began to deny applications and confiscate Uyghur passports. Firsthand accounts detail how local residential officers collected

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<sup>133</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: China’](#), (section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>134</sup> Netherlands MFA, [‘Country of origin information report China’](#) (para 9.62) 1 July 2020

<sup>135</sup> The Intercept, [‘Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database, Millions of...’](#), 19 January 2021

<sup>136</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: China’](#), 1 July 2021

passports under the false pretext of “registering” local residents. The Chinese government has also intervened in the ability of Uyghurs to make the Hajj pilgrimage — one of the main pillars of Islam — to Saudi Arabia. Passports are often seized to force Uyghur residents to join government-run Hajj tours or to prevent them from going to Saudi Arabia altogether.

‘In 2009, due to the escalation of the “Strike Hard” campaign, the local government shifted primarily to a policy of passport denials. Many accounts describe how their passport applications have been denied on baseless grounds. The government, once again also, exploits the comparatively low-income Uyghur population, instituting prohibitively high costs to prevent Uyghurs from obtaining passports. As of 2015, the government has begun to require all passport applicants in the Uyghur Region to provide biometrics as well. As a result of the myriad of bureaucratic hurdles, “virtually no Uyghurs have passports” — creating a region where Uyghurs are essentially unable to escape the clutches of the Chinese government.’<sup>137</sup>

- 7.1.5 The USSD 2021 Country report on human rights practices, published 12 April 2022, noted that

‘Uyghurs faced draconian restrictions on movement within Xinjiang and outside the region. Although the use of “domestic passports” that called for local official approval before traveling to another area was discontinued in 2016, authorities still made identification checks for individuals entering or leaving cities and on public roads. In Xinjiang, security officials operated checkpoints managing entry into public places, including markets and mosques, that required Uyghurs to scan their national identity card, undergo a facial recognition check, and put baggage through airport-style security screening. Such restrictions were not applied to Han Chinese in these areas.

‘...Uyghurs, particularly those residing in Xinjiang, reported great difficulty in getting passport applications approved. They were frequently denied passports to travel abroad. Since 2016 authorities ordered Xinjiang residents to turn in their passports or told residents no new passports were available.’<sup>138</sup>

- 7.1.6 For further information on internal relocation see the country policy and information note [China: background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).

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## 7.2 Restrictions of those outside of China

- 7.2.1 The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Country of origin information report China’ published in July 2020 noted that:

‘Uighurs living outside China can be subjected to intimidation by the Chinese government and possibly by the Chinese embassy in their country of residence. Members of the Uighur diaspora report that the Chinese police hack their communications with relatives in Xinjiang, or contact them directly and ask them to collect information on individuals in the local Uighur community for the Chinese government. China appears to be identifying the

<sup>137</sup> HRF, [‘100 years of suppression: the CCP’s strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur region...’](#), August 2021

<sup>138</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China’](#) (section 2d), 12 April 2022

Uighur diaspora in this way. Refusal to cooperate can lead to adverse consequences for the relatives of the person involved in Xinjiang, such as being sent to a detention camp.<sup>139</sup>

7.2.2 In its April 2021 report, Human Rights Watch stated ‘...Because Xinjiang authorities punish contact with those abroad, many Turkic Muslims report having lost contact with their relatives, including their young children, for months or even years. One consequence of government policies in the region, intentional or otherwise, has been the intergenerational separation of Turkic Muslims.’<sup>140</sup>

7.2.3 The April 2021 Human Rights Watch report stated:

‘...Chinese authorities have tracked down hundreds of Turkic Muslim asylum seekers around the world and forced them to return to repression and in some cases detention. In many cases, it is impossible to find out what has happened to returnees.’

‘The use of mass surveillance also extends beyond Xinjiang and into the Turkic Muslim diaspora outside China, as authorities pressure them to provide detailed information about themselves, including their address, phone number, and school or workplace. The government has also hacked into Turkic Muslims’ smartphones around the world by embedding malicious software in apps and software frequently used by Turkic Muslims, which can “remotely turn on a phone’s microphone, record calls or export photos, phone locations and conversations on chat apps.”<sup>141</sup>

7.2.4 Various US department reports noted difficulties that Uyghurs living abroad faced with gaining entry to the country. The reports noted that many Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims abroad had their passports confiscated, cancelled or were refused passport renewals as a means of encouraging them to return to Xinjiang. Some individuals reported that authorities threatened to detain family members in Xinjiang if they did not return to China<sup>142 143 144</sup>.

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<sup>139</sup> Netherlands MFA, [‘Country of origin information report China’](#),(para 9.9) 1 July 2020

<sup>140</sup> Human Rights Watch, [‘Break Their Lineage. Break Their Roots’](#), 19 April 2021

<sup>141</sup> Human Rights Watch, [‘Break Their Lineage. Break Their Roots’](#), 19 April 2021

<sup>142</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China’](#) (section 2d), 12 April 2022

<sup>143</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Xinjiang’](#) (Section II), 2 June 2022

<sup>144</sup> USSD, [‘2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: China’](#), 1 July 2021

# Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Religion in China
  - Religious demography
- Legal Framework
  - International Conventions
  - Constitution
  - Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA)
  - Xinjiang regulations
- State attitude towards Muslims in the Xinjiang province
- State treatment of Muslims in the Xinjiang province
  - Restrictions on Muslims in Xinjiang
  - Surveillance
  - Birth control and forced sterilisation
  - Detention and re-education centers
  - Forced labour
- Societal treatment
- Freedom of movement

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# Version control

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **6 July 2022**

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### **Official – sensitive: Start of section**

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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### **Official – sensitive: End of section**

## Changes from last version of this note

Update to the country information following a review by the IAGCI

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