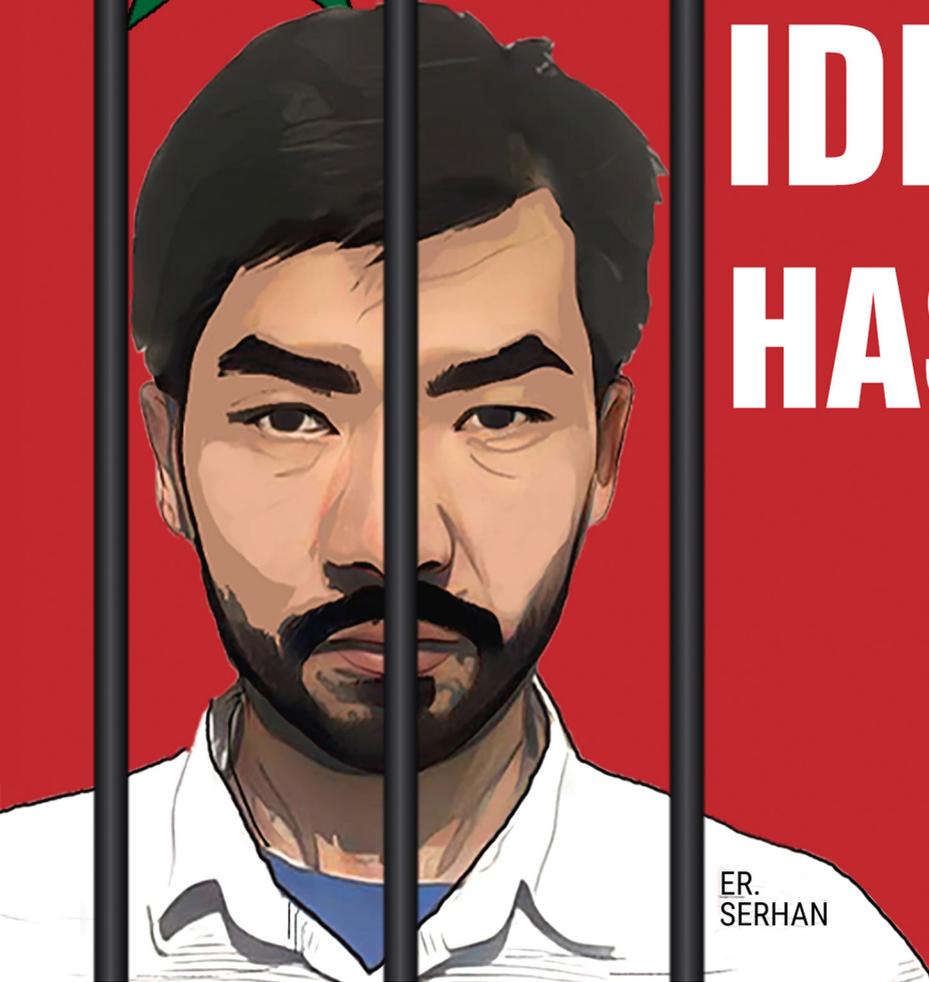




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BIDEN SIGNS BILL TO BAN GOODS MADE BY UYGHUR SLAVE LABOR

The White House says President Joe Biden signed into law Thursday a bill that bans the import of good produced by Uyghur slave labor.

“The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which got final Congressional approval last week after a year of negotiations, bans all imports from China’s Xinjiang region into the United States unless companies can show the U.S. government “clear and convincing evidence” their supply chains have not used the labor of ethnic Muslims enslaved in Chinese camps.

Beijing describes the camps as “re-education” facilities aimed at combating terrorism.

The renewed push to hold China accountable for rights abuses comes ahead of the February 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. The U.S. declared Chinese treatment of the Uyghurs genocide earlier this year and announced a diplomatic boycott of

the Winter Olympics last week.

Earlier this month, an independent tribunal found Chinese senior leadership holds “primary responsibility” for acts of genocide against the Uyghurs.

China has condemned the bill, describing the U.S. as hypocritical for not addressing forced labor within its own borders.

“China firmly opposes the interference by the U.S. Congress in China’s internal affairs under the pretext of Xinjiang-related issues. By cooking up lies and making troubles on such issues, some U.S. politicians are seeking to contain China and hold back China’s development through political manipulation and economic bullying in the name of human rights,” China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, said in a press conference last week.

Human rights groups have praised the legislation and said it marked an important starting point for countries to address Chinese treatment of the Uyghurs.



“It’s a signal to the rest of the world that the U.S. is actually going to take action on this,” Peter Irwin, senior program officer for advocacy and communications at the Uyghur Human Rights Project, told VOA.

“It can also set a template for other governments to pick this up and say we’re going to pass our own forced labor bill. For example, if the U.S. stops allowing in forced labor goods, then [Chinese] leaders shift their exports to Europe or to Canada. So having that template for other governments to pick up and actually pass these kinds of bills, that helps the U.S. — similar to the diplomatic boycott. The U.S. was first; other governments followed.”

U.S. companies Nike and Coca-Cola actively lobbied against earlier versions of the legislation. The Biden administration did come out in support of those versions, leading Senator Marco Rubio to claim the White House was holding back on his bill due to concerns from climate change envoy John Kerry. Irwin told VOA more than 40% of the world’s polysilicon supply comes from Xinjiang, a loss that would complicate the manufacture of solar cells and panels.

Rubio praised the compromise legislation in a statement last Tuesday, saying, “The United States is so reliant on China that we have turned a blind eye to the slave labor that makes our clothes, our solar panels, and much more. That changes today. Our Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act will require businesses importing goods into the United States to prove that their supply chains are not tainted with slave labor. It is time to end our economic addiction to China.”

The legislation marks a rare point of bipartisan agreement on Capitol Hill.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also praised the legislation, saying it marked an opportunity for the U.S. Congress to “continue to condemn and confront the CCP’s human rights abuses in Xinjiang and in the region and hold it accountable. If America does not speak out for human rights in China because of commercial interests, we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights any place in the world,” Pelosi said in a statement ahead of the vote.

VOA News



UYGHURS SUBJECTED TO GENOCIDE BY CHINA, UNOFFICIAL UK TRIBUNAL FINDS

Independent report says crimes include torture and the systematic suppression of births

Uyghur people living in Xinjiang province have been subjected to unconscionable crimes against humanity directed by the Chinese state that amount to an act of genocide, an independent and unofficial tribunal has found.

Hundreds of thousands and possibly a million people have been incarcerated without any or remotely fair justification, the tribunal's chair, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, said as he delivered the tribunal's findings in London. "This vast apparatus of state repression could not exist if a plan was not authorised at the highest levels," Nice said.

The UK-based Uyghur Tribunal comprises lawyers, academics and business-people. It has no government backing or powers to sanction or punish China, but

its organisers hope the process of publicly laying out evidence will compel international action to tackle alleged abuses against the Uyghurs, a largely Muslim ethnic group.

The tribunal's report says crimes including torture and the systematic suppression of births have occurred. Nice said China's treatment of the Uyghurs amounted under the Geneva conventions to an intent to destroy all or part of a group physically or biologically, a judgment he said largely rested on the suppression of births.

In response to the findings, a cross-party group of British MPs urged the Foreign Office to re-examine its refusal to join the Biden administration and declare a genocide in Xinjiang.



Nice said that although some Uyghurs had been killed in detention, there was no evidence of mass killings, and comparisons with the Nazi Holocaust were unhelpful.

Those detained were instead largely freed after indoctrination, Nice said, as part of a central government plan, ordered at the very highest levels, to reintegrate Xinjiang province and break up every aspect of Uyghur culture.

“Hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs – with some estimates well in excess of a million – have been detained by PRC [People’s Republic of China] authorities without any, or any remotely sufficient reason, and subjected to acts of unconscionable cruelty, depravity and inhumanity,” the tribunal’s report says. “Sometimes up to 50 have been detained in a cell of 22 sq metres.”

The report says there is evidence that detainees have been confined in containers up to their neck in cold water, shackled by heavy metal chains and immobilised for months on end. It says some of the detained have been subjected to extreme sexual violence, including gang rapes and penetration with electric shock rods and iron bars. Women were raped by men paying to be allowed into the detention centre for the purpose, the report says.

The extreme intrusive capacity of the Chinese state, including mass coerced labour assignments, intense monitoring and face surveillance, means parts of Xinjiang have become a form of open prison, the report says.

The tribunal found evidence of enforced abortions, the removal of wombs against women’s will, the killing of babies immediately after birth and mass enforced sterilisation through the insertion of IUD devices that were only removable by surgical means.

“Across the 29 counties with indigenous-majority populations for which we have 2019 or 2020 data, the birthrate has fallen by 58.5% from the 2011-15 baseline average,” the report says. “In those counties that are over 90% indigenous, the birthrate fell at an even greater rate, showing a 66.3% decrease in 2019-20.”

Hundreds of thousands Uyghur children have been taken from their families and placed in Han-ran boarding schools, burial grounds have been bulldozed or built over, mosques destroyed, and religious practice banned, it adds.

Nice said the tribunal would have been unnecessary if an international court had been asked by fearful governments to investigate the allegations, adding





there was an obligation to know the falsity or truth of fellow human suffering and breaches of international human law.

He insisted the tribunal had been determined to apply universal standards, act on the basis of proof beyond reasonable doubt and make every effort not to be ill-disposed to communism or the Chinese Communist party. The tribunal received no cooperation from the Chinese state, and instead some of its members have been subject to sanctions by the Chinese state, leading to their withdrawal from the process.

During a press conference this week, Zheng Zeguang, China's ambassador to the UK, said: "The so-called witnesses the organisers have put together are merely actors who have been making up the so-called persecution that never happened

at all." Zheng said he had asked the UK government "to stop the organisers from continuing such malicious behaviour".

A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in London denounced what it called a "pseudo tribunal" as "nothing but a political tool used by a few anti-China and separatist elements to deceive and mislead the public".

The report was published the day after the US House of Representatives voted by 428 to 1 to ban imports from Xinjiang over concerns about forced labour.

Responding to the vote, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said that "the so-called forced labour and genocide in Xinjiang are entirely vicious rumours" and accused the US of using Xinjiang-related issues to "spread rumours under the guise of human rights and engage in political manipulation and economic bullying".

Australia, the US and the UK have declared they will mount a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics next year. France has so far refused to do so.

By Patrick Wintour





FOREIGN INFLUENCERS USED TO WHITEWASH XINJIANG ABUSES: REPORT

Think tank says Beijing using foreign social media creators to ‘neutralise critical reporting’ of treatment of Uyghurs.

Foreign social media influencers are being used by the Chinese Communist Party as part of a “global propaganda push” to whitewash human rights abuses in the Xinjiang region, according to a report by an Australian think tank.

“Chinese state entities invite foreign social media creators on state-backed tours of the autonomous region and amplify video and other content that support ‘pro-CCP narratives,’ according to the report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI).

In the report released on Tuesday, the Canberra-based think tank said it iden-

tified at least 546 posts by Chinese state-controlled social media accounts that promoted Xinjiang-related content created by 13 foreign influencers.

The posts, spanning January 2020 and August 2021, included videos that depicted a “wholly positive image of life in Xinjiang” by focusing on the region’s food, culture and infrastructure, as well as more “overtly political” videos that disputed allegations of mass detention and forced labour.

“That content broadly seeks to debunk Western media reporting and academic research, refute statements by foreign governments and counter allegations of widespread human rights abuses in Xinjiang,” said the think tank, which receives funding from a range of sources including the Australian and United States governments, the tech industry, and arms manufacturers.

“Often, such content is then promoted by party-state media and diplomatic accounts across major international social

media networks and in Ministry of Foreign Affairs briefings. This trend is particularly notable given the difficulty faced by journalists reporting in Xinjiang.”

Zhang Heqing, a cultural attaché at the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, was the most prolific sharer of foreign influencer content, promoting it at least 56 times, according to the report.

The report, titled “Borrowing mouths to speak on Xinjiang”, said the strategy aligned with Chinese President Xi Jinping’s call earlier this year to “never stop expanding our circle of friends that understand China and befriend China in the arena of international public opinion”.

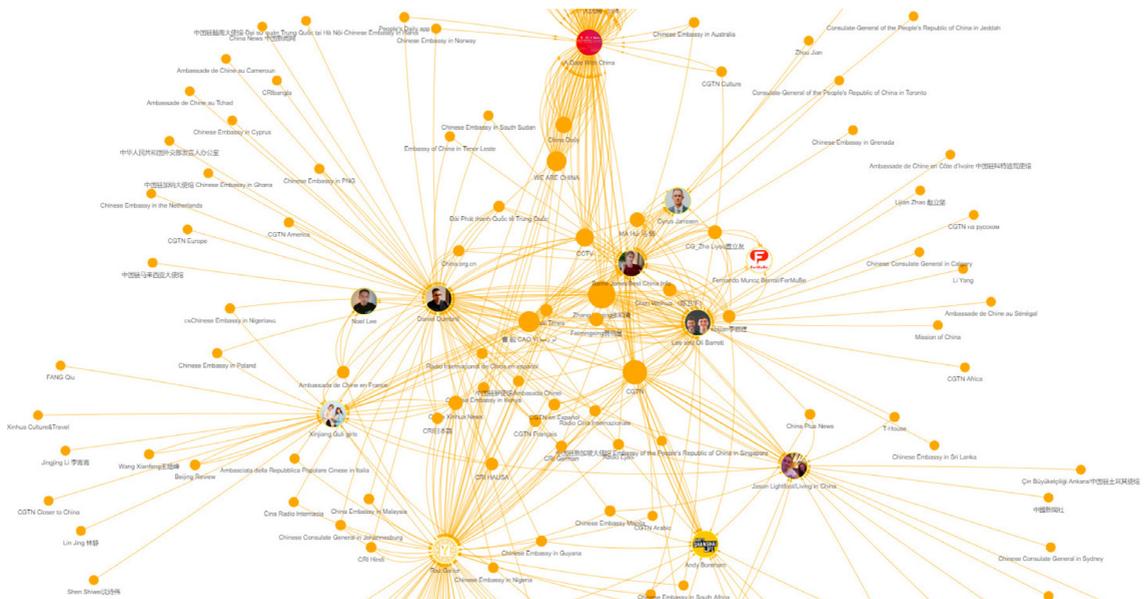
“By leveraging the popularity of foreign media influencers in China, the Chinese state propaganda apparatus can package their messages through potentially more persuasive voices in an attempt to neutralise critical reporting about human rights abuses in Xinjiang and depict a more positive image of the region,” the think tank said.

“In turn, those foreign social media influ-



encers may have their Xinjiang-related content promoted at MOFA conferences, cross-shared on US-based social media platforms and referenced in English-language party-state media articles, growing their profile and potentially offering new opportunities for monetisation and audience building.”

The think tank recommended social media companies “better craft and implement policies to identify accounts with state links, or content that has been di-



rectly facilitated by states— policies that should apply globally”.

A UN human rights panel in 2018 said it had received “numerous and credible” reports that authorities in Xinjiang had detained 1 million or more Uyghur and other ethnic minority Muslims in internment camps.

The office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said on Friday it was preparing to release its assessment of conditions in Xinjiang within weeks, after failing to make progress on arranging a visit to the region.

“The announcement came as the Uyghur Tribunal, an unofficial tribunal with no enforcement powers based in the UK, said it was “satisfied beyond reasonable doubt” that Beijing was responsible for genocide and crimes against humanity in the region.

Beijing has defended its “vocational education and training centres” as necessary to combat violent extremism and alleviate poverty.

Chinese Foreign Minister Spokeswoman Hua Chunying on Twitter accused ASPI of being a government-funded agency and said people should “follow the money” to understand why it published “so many fake reports about China”.

‘Military-industrial complex’

Daniel Dumbrill, a Canadian vlogger named in ASPI’s report, told Al Jazeera



the think tank had more significant conflicts of interest than the people it was drawing attention to.

“If their position is that it is problematic my content has been re-shared by government officials, it helps further emphasize my point about ASPI, who not only has their reports re-shared and utilized by government, who not only participate in government panels, but are funded by governments and the military industrial complex to begin with, which is a significantly more problematic and conflict of interest ridden issue,” Dumbrill said.

“Recognizing this is a valuable first step to then examine and reconcile why many of their reports are dishonest, biased and incomplete, because of course, their sponsors being beneficiaries of the work that they sponsor is not just coincidental.”

By John Power



US ANNOUNCES NEW SANCTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

As part of the Biden administration's efforts to infuse human rights into its foreign policy, the U.S. State Department on Friday designated 12 government officials from Uganda, China, Belarus, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mexico for "gross violations of human rights," according to Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Seventy-three years after the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, the department's commemoration of Human Rights Day targeted people like Mario Plutarco Marin Torres, a former Mexican governor charged with jailing and torturing journalist Lydia Cacho in 2005. Another official, Ugandan military intelligence chief Abel Kandiho, is no longer welcome in the United States after allegedly allowing his deputies to arrest and abuse people at odds with the Ugandan government.

"We are determined to put human rights at the center of our foreign policy, and we

reaffirm this commitment by using appropriate tools and authorities to draw attention to and promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses, no matter where they occur," Blinken said.

Under the congressionally approved foreign operations bill that funds the State Department, the secretary of state can bar foreign government officials and their close family members from entering the United States if they have been involved with corruption or human rights abuses.

Four current and former Chinese officials — Shohrat Zakir, Erken Tuniyaz, Hu Lianhe and Chen Mingguo — also made the list for their connection to Beijing's repression of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region.

"The U.S. practice constitutes serious interference in China's internal affairs, severe violation of basic norms governing



international relations, and grave harm to China-U.S. relations,” Chinese Embassy spokesperson Liu Pengyu said in response to a VOA request for comment about the sanctions. “China firmly opposes and strongly condemns that.”

Besides the State Department’s designations, the Treasury Department has sanctioned 25 individuals and entities under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. A statement published Friday outlined sweeping sanctions on people and organizations in China, Bangladesh, North Korea and Burma, as well as a Russian university and its provost for sponsoring visas for “hundreds” of construction workers tied to Pyongyang’s nuclear program.

One batch of sanctions targets a company invested in surveillance technologies used in Xinjiang; another targets the Rapid Action Battalion, a Bangladeshi task force that “[undermines] the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,” according to the department’s statement.

One Bangladeshi official and two Chinese officials designated by the State Department also appeared on the Treasury Department’s sanctions list.

“Xinjiang-related issues are never about human rights, ethnicity or religion,” Liu said. “Xinjiang affairs are entirely China’s

internal affairs. The U.S. has no right and is in no position to intervene.”

“On International Human Rights Day, Treasury is using its tools to expose and hold accountable perpetrators of serious human rights abuse,” said Wally Adeyemo, the department’s deputy secretary. “Our actions today, particularly those in partnership with the United Kingdom and Canada, send a message that democracies around the world will act against those who abuse the power of the state to inflict suffering and repression.”

Washington’s interagency actions join other efforts by the United Kingdom and Canada on Friday to sanction Burmese military officials involved in the country’s February coup, as well as a joint initiative by the European Union, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom last week to sanction Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko.

“The United States looks forward to continuing our partnerships with allies, partners and civil society alike in defending human rights and promoting accountability and good governance,” Blinken said in Friday’s statement.

Reporter Christy Lee of VOA’s Korean Service contributed to this report.

By John Bedard



CHINA IMPOSES SANCTIONS ON US OFFICIALS OVER XINJIANG

China announced sanctions on Tuesday on four members of the U.S. government's Commission on International Religious Freedom in retaliation for penalties imposed on Chinese officials over complaints of abuses in the country's northwestern Xinjiang region.

The tit-for-tat sanctions add to spiraling tension over Xinjiang. Washington has banned imports from the region that might be made with forced labor, while activists are calling for a boycott of February's Winter Olympics in Beijing. China has denied accusations of abuses and earlier retaliated by publicizing calls for boycotts of foreign shoe and clothing brands.

The chairwoman and three members of the U.S. panel are barred from visiting mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, and any assets they have in the country will be frozen, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said.

Zhao identified those targeted as chair-

woman Nadine Maenza, deputy chairman Nury Turkel and members Anurima Bhargava and James Carr. Zhao gave no indication whether they have assets in China.

China threatened to retaliate after the U.S. Treasury announced sanctions Dec. 10 on two officials accused of involvement in repression of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. Beijing is accused of mass detentions, forced abortions and other abuses.

Treasury targeted Shohrat Zakir, chairman of the region's government from 2018 until early this year, and Erken Tuniyaz, who holds the position now and previously was deputy chairman.

"The United States should withdraw the so-called sanctions and stop interfering in Xinjiang's affairs and China's internal affairs," Zhao said. "China will make further responses in accordance with the development of the situation."

By Associated Press



MEET THE NEW UYGHURS

China's propaganda narrative centers on the personal transformations of Uyghurs, removing the cultural and ethnic markers Beijing finds distasteful.

“In December 2019, CGTN, China's overseas television service, broadcast a four-minute report entitled “What's China's ‘re-education camp’ in Xinjiang really about?” In the segment, CGTN anchor Wang Guan poses a question about internment camps in the Uyghur region: “Was that a campaign of religious repression, or an unprecedented effort of deradicalization?” To seek an answer, he visits Kashgar and showcases four Uyghur former camp internees. Each person exhibits a vocational skill learned in the camps; there's an artist, a real estate agent, a cashier, and someone in “hospitality.” It's time to meet the “new” Uyghurs.

In the past five years, the world has

learned about the horrific scale of Chinese state repression against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples. The Uyghur homeland has been transformed into a land of arbitrary detention, hi-tech surveillance, and forced sterilizations. China has aggressively denied accusations of crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples through its media proxies, diplomatic corps, social media amplifiers, and some partner states.

However, in 2019, a new discourse emerged about Uyghurs, particularly those who had experienced time in “vocational education and training centers,” which survivors call concentration camps. Xinhua, the Global Times, and CGTN promoted a narrative centered on the personal transformations of Uyghurs. These “new” Uyghurs are fluent in Mandarin, have marketable skills, and have left Islam behind.

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) examined 307 texts comprising CGTN's output on Uyghurs and Xinjiang

from 2017-2020. One of the clearest patterns to emerge was this narrative of cleansed Uyghurs, which manifested in two ways. The first was the ideological purification of Uyghurs, enabling them to participate in state-defined social and economic productivity. The second was the representation of a pristine Uyghur homeland cleared for economic exploitation. Combined, these discourses propagate deracinated Uyghurs and a sanitized Xinjiang open for state-managed tourism and investment.



As leaked Chinese state documents have revealed, China's senior leadership, including Xi Jinping, green-lighted the human rights crisis in the Uyghur region. What's more, many of Xi's speeches outline how "stability" in Xinjiang is critical to the success of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Chinese state's 21st century ambitions. Stability would be achieved through a "round up" of "all who should be rounded up" and by demonstrating "absolutely no mercy" toward "enemies." Those enemies, we discovered, included any Uyghur as China's top leaders engaged in a collective criminalization of ethnicity. What emerged was a genocide and an obscuring discourse of a reinvented people. The most desirable Uyghurs in Beijing's eyes are those who neither speak Uyghur nor believe in Islam, but express gratitude to a version of modernization soaked with human rights violations. The

new Uyghurs CGTN displays are victims as much as any other Uyghur.

Why should we care that CGTN broadcasts these narratives of a cleansed people and land to the world? Does anyone even watch CGTN, or even take it seriously? CGTN's poor viewership is only part of the story. Disinformation needs a platform, a space to put on the record unfettered propaganda. In a December 2016 message to the newly launched CGTN, Xi counseled the organization to speak from a clear Chinese perspective and the broadcaster has not failed him. However, we should care because CGTN accrues credibility, or at least influence, through its overseas partnerships. For example, CGTN has agreements, through a Global Partners Program, to share or host content with other media outlets, such as Euronews.

Other Global Partners include news media agencies, communication service providers, media device manufacturers, hotel chains, terminal device managers, international broadcasting unions, think tanks, and research institutions. In the United States, CGTN's channels are distributed through a variety of cable, satellite, and internet protocol television providers.

As media corporations find ever more salient methods for connecting global media audiences, the availability of unbiased and sound reporting may find itself lost in the sea of narrative tactics by media entities with a state-sponsored agenda. CGTN's narrative creation of "new" Uyghurs is just one example of a type of global information warfare that threatens freedom around the globe. CGTN's overseas partners should not be complicit.

By Henryk Szadziwski



IMAGE: AP

ALLIES ARE SPLIT ON BIDEN'S DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF BEIJING OLYMPICS

The Biden administration's diplomatic boycott of Beijing's Winter Olympics is already showing signs of being a limited success.

The effort, aimed at allowing athletes to compete while protesting China's human rights abuses, has garnered the support of lawmakers in both parties, human rights groups and key U.S. allies such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

But support is far from universal.

France is sending diplomats to Beijing, saying it opposes using sports competitions to highlight concerns over human rights — such as Beijing's genocide against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, suppression of democratic freedoms in

Hong Kong and cultural repression in Tibet.

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) criticized France's refusal to join the boycott, while speaking on the Senate floor on Dec. 15.

"It is not too late to call out the serious, egregious conduct occurring in China," the senator said. "France, join us, as you have over time, in standing for human rights."

France is not alone.

South Korea is not participating in the diplomatic boycott of the Games, citing its coordination with China over North Korea in a sharp break with the U.S.

The European Union has yet to make a final decision on how it will approach the Games, with member nations on opposite sides of the debate.



Germany's foreign minister has reportedly called for a common response from European nations on the Olympics and Italy, which is expected to host the 2026 Winter Olympics, is not planning to join the U.S. in a diplomatic boycott, a government source told Reuters in early December.

Norway, which is viewed as one of the best performers in the Winter Olympics, is planning to send both its diplomats and athletes to the Beijing Games, Henrik Thune, the state secretary at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told The Hill, although changing COVID-19 precautions are being watched closely.

"Assuming that travel restrictions and other requirements related to the pandemic in February allow it, members of the Norwegian Government are planning to be present during both the Olympics and the Paralympic Games in Beijing," Thune wrote in an email.

"The Norwegian government does not generally consider boycotts to be an effective means of promoting peaceful development, human rights and mutual understanding between countries," he said.

Lithuania, a member of the E.U., is not sending diplomats to criticize China for instituting a campaign of economic coercion over Vilnius's decision to upgrade relations with Taiwan.

Diplomats from Japan will also reportedly

skip the Games, while New Zealand said it was keeping its diplomats at home amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

A senior administration official told The Hill that the Biden administration is "not coordinating a global campaign with other partners," but that the U.S. "consulted with allies and partners and informed them of our decision beforehand."

"We always fully expected each to make their own decision, as is their prerogative," the official said.

Mary Gallagher, director of the International Institute at the University of Michigan, said the lack of unity among U.S. partners can work to China's benefit.

"I think that the problem with these types of boycotts is that it tends to clarify to Beijing where the dividers are among U.S. allies or other Western democracies," she said. "It kind of highlights to China where there is disagreement and who isn't willing to stand behind the United States when it takes these actions."

That concern is being echoed by lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

"I am deeply concerned that our allies seem less determined than we are to stop China from using [the Olympics] as a huge propaganda win," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) told The Hill. "And in fact, China's using it in all kinds of subtle ways with influencers and other means to spread disinformation, I am hopeful that perhaps our allies will be stronger."

Wangpo Tethong, executive director of International Campaign for Tibet in Europe, said he has met with the International Olympic Committee and National Olympic

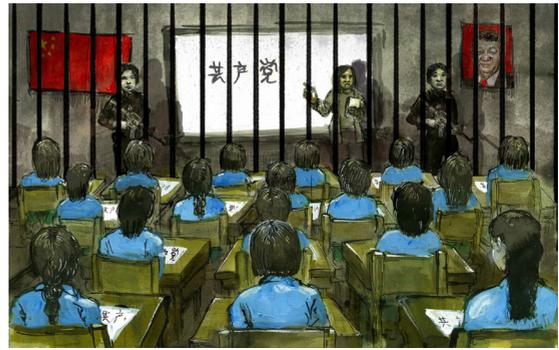
Committee of several European countries pushing for the publication of guidelines for athletes to avoid being implicated in Chinese media events that seek to present oppressed minority communities as celebrated.

“Often the people are asked to make some images, or be prepared to join some cultural activities during the Olympics, it can be something very subtle or simple, some image with a woman or man in traditional clothes — and we said, ‘Be careful because all these activities have some political connotations,’” Wangpo said he advised in meetings.

“It’s really not about just being there and participating, you have to give the athletes clear guidelines, how they can protect themselves from being exploited and both misused for these sorts of activities,” he said.

The senior administration official told The Hill that it expects the People’s Republic of China “to ensure the safety and well-being of our athletes,” adding that the U.S. will be in close touch with Team USA.

“We intend to provide consular and diplomatic security services to ensure our athletes, coaches, trainers and staff are



secure and have access to the American citizen services that we provide to all American citizens overseas,” the official said.

Human rights groups are still calling for a full athletic boycott of the Games, but in the meantime are focusing efforts on talking to athletes and athletic organizations about the experience of communities in China and Chinese-controlled territories that are suffering abuses.

“Times have only worsened for our people and it would be great for athletes to be part of that conversation, too,” Chemi Lhamo, a Tibetan-Canadian activist, told The Hill. Lhamo is trying to reach athletes directly to hold conversations about China’s human rights abuses.

She was recently arrested in Greece for protesting the Olympic torch lighting ceremony in Olympia, holding a sign reading “No Genocide Games.”

“On a human-to-human level, it would be lovely to connect [with athletes] and let them know about our stories, and also be able to have that opportunity to hear from them about their concerns and what role athletes play in choosing where these Games are allowed to be hosted and the repercussions of hosting these Games,” she said.

By Laura Kelly And Alex Gangitano

BOYCOTT BEIJING 2022





U.N. SAYS TO PUBLISH FINDINGS SOON ON ABUSES IN XINJIANG

GENEVA, Dec 11 (Reuters) - The United Nations' human rights office is finalising its assessment of the situation in China's Xinjiang region, where Uyghurs are alleged to have been unlawfully detained, mistreated and forced to work, a spokesperson said on Friday.

Rupert Colville said the office of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet hoped to publish its report in the coming weeks and that there had been “no concrete progress” in long-running talks with Chinese officials on a proposed visit.

Earlier on Friday, an unofficial British-based tribunal of lawyers and campaigners said Chinese President Xi Jinping bore primary responsibility for what it said was genocide, crimes against humanity and torture of Uyghurs and members of other minorities in the Xinjiang re-

gion. China dismissed the tribunal, which has no powers of sanction or enforcement, as a “farce”. [read more](#)

“The Uyghurs tribunal has brought to light more information that is deeply disturbing in relation to the treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang,” Colville told a U.N. briefing in Geneva.

“We have of course similarly identified patterns of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment in institutions, coercive la-



bour practices and erosion of social and cultural rights in general,” he said.

‘MANIPULATION’

China’s mission to the U.N. in Geneva, in a statement issued on Saturday, said it had frequently extended an invitation to Bachelet for a “friendly visit”.

“However, this visit shall in no way become the so-called ‘investigation’ under the presumption of guilt,” it said.

If her office were only interested in “po-

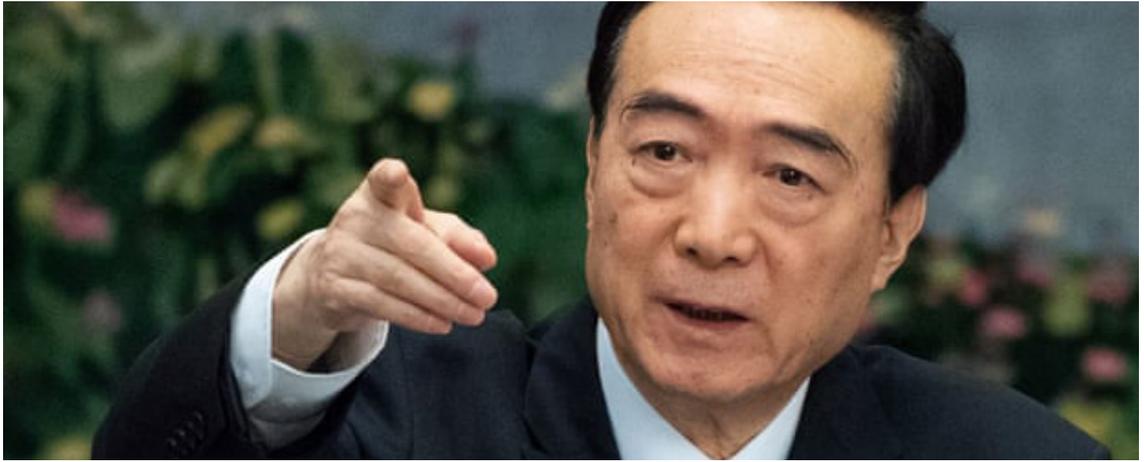
litical manipulation of anti-China forces in the U.S. and the West” then this would cast serious doubt on its impartiality, it added.

“In June, Bachelet publicly suggested a timeline for a visit this year. She has been negotiating the terms of such a visit since Sept. 2018, when allegations first emerged that some one million Uyghurs had been detained in mass camps.

Her findings need to be shared with the Beijing government before they could be made public, Colville said, adding he hoped that would in be a matter of weeks.

By Stephanie Nebehay





CHINA REPLACES XINJIANG PARTY BOSS ASSOCIATED WITH UYGHUR CRACKDOWN

It is not known if Chen Quanguo's replacement by Guangdong governor Ma Xingrui signals fresh approach

China has replaced the Communist party official widely associated with a security crackdown targeting ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslims in the far-west region of Xinjiang.

The state-owned Xinhua news agency said in a brief announcement on Saturday that Ma Xingrui, the governor of the coastal economic powerhouse Guangdong province since 2017, had replaced Chen Quanguo as the Xinjiang party chief. Chen will move to another role.

The change came amid a wider reshuffle ahead of next year's 20th party congress, scheduled for the autumn. It is not clear whether the move signals a rethink in China's overall approach to Xinjiang. Beijing would be sensitive to any interpretation that it was bowing to international pressure.

Some Chinese observers have noted Chen may be promoted further during the party congress. Others say his replacement, Ma, may focus more on the region's economic development.

Chen, 66, was appointed party secretary of Xinjiang in 2016. He is one of the 25 members of China's politburo and was placed on a sanctions list last year by the US.

On Thursday, Joe Biden signed into law a ban on imports from Xinjiang over Washington's concerns about forced labour. Beijing condemned the move.

Rights groups and the United Nations say about 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslims have been detained in re-education camps in Xinjiang in the name of combating religious extremism and terrorism.

Since 2017, Beijing's policy in the province has faced fierce criticism from abroad. Some western lawmakers and parliamentarians have described China's treatment of the Uyghurs as genocidal – a charge Beijing denies. There have also been calls for a boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics in February.

Chen's replacement, 62-year-old Ma, has a background in the aerospace industry. Before becoming governor of Guangdong he served as the party boss in Shenzhen from 2015.

By Vincent Ni



MOROCCAN ISLAMIST MOVEMENT PLEADS WITH GOVERNMENT NOT TO DEPORT UYGHUR ACTIVIST

The movement's statement insisted that "if this Uyghur Muslim is extradited to China, he will either be tortured and imprisoned for a long period or sentenced to death."

Fez - The human rights committee of the Movement of Unity and Reform (MUR), a grassroots youth movement affiliated with Morocco's former ruling Islamist

party PJD, has urged the Moroccan government not to comply with China's request to extradite Uyghur activist Yidiresi Aishan (or Idris Hassan).



Joining the public outcry initiated by both Moroccan and international advocacy groups, MUR's human rights committee released a statement on December 20 in response to the Moroccan Court of Cassation's ruling in favor of extraditing Hasan.

"We join our voice to those calling on the Moroccan authorities not to expel Yidiresi

Aishan,” said MUR’s statement.

The committee cited reports that several humanitarian and human rights organizations have issued statements against Morocco’s decision to deport the reportedly oppressed activist to China.

Referencing recent cases that have brought attention to the existence of blatant, cruel, and mass human rights violations in the Xinjiang province in northwest China, the statement from the PJD’s ideological umbrella said that “Yidiresi Aishan -Idris Hasan- should not be extradited to China because of the danger to his life.”

The statement insisted that “if this Uyghur Muslim is extradited to China, he will either be tortured and imprisoned for a long period or sentenced to death.”

UMR highlighted that Morocco’s Court of Cassation had earlier issued several decisions to deny extradition requests, particularly in the case of “political crimes, on the basis of a request of a political nature” or “is linked to racial and religious considerations, political opinions, and membership in a religious minority.”

The movement concluded its plea to the Moroccan government is “in light of the international treaties to which Morocco is a signatory, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention (...) and given his status as a father of three children.”

By Issam Toutate





XINJIANG: TWITTER CLOSES THOUSANDS OF CHINA STATE-LINKED ACCOUNTS SPREADING PROPAGANDA

Content was often ‘embarrassingly’ produced and pumped out via repurposed accounts, analysts say

Twitter has shut down thousands of state-linked accounts in China that seek to counter evidence of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, as part of what experts called an “embarrassingly” produced propaganda operation.

The operations used photos and images, shell and potentially automated accounts, and fake Uyghur profiles, to disseminate state propaganda and fake testimonials about their happy lives in the region, seeking to dispel evidence of a years-long campaign of oppression, with mass internments, re-education programs, and allegations of forced labour and sterilisation.

The networks were found to share themes and content, but often used repurposed accounts dedicated to pornography or Korean soap operas with little engagement except when they were amplified by Chinese diplomats and officials. Twitter is banned inside China but officials frequently operate accounts overseas.

According to analysts at thinktank the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), the content from the 2,160 accounts that Twitter closed down was often “embarrassingly” produced but provided a level of “implausible deniability” which muddied the waters around the issue.

The accounts linked to Chinese operations were in two sets, the largest being a network of 2,048 accounts amplifying the Chinese Communist party’s narratives related to Xinjiang, and the second set of

112 accounts connected to “Changyu Culture,” a private company that ASPI said appeared to be contracted by the Xinjiang regional authority to create videos of Uyghurs supporting the government.

More than 30,000 tweets from each network were identified, frequently responding to other tweets labelling evidence of abuses as “lies” under the hashtag #StopXinjiangRumours or sharing videos they claimed were “the truth” of Xinjiang, or targeting foreign politicians while claiming to be a Uyghur person.

When the data were analysed by ASPI, it found much of it linked to pornography, Korean soap opera fans, and spam accounts and content. “That’s most likely because they’ve taken over these existing accounts and repurposed them,” said ASPI senior analyst Fergus Ryan.

“They take them over and pump out this content that’s generally quite reactive ... It’s so ham-handed, and really not done very well. One of the really weird things about one data set was that for some unknown reason they include hundreds of tweets with this handle for an account @fuck_next.”

The tweets also repeatedly mis-tagged the account of former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, and many videos linked to the now-suspended Changyu Culture YouTube channel, which is known to be a marketing outfit backed by the Xinjiang provincial authorities.

The result was a torrent of highly implausible propaganda, obvious to most eyes but still a cause for concern, said ASPI.

ASPI found 97% of the identified accounts had fewer than five followers, and 73% of accounts had zero. While 98% of tweets

had no likes or retweets, the remainder were often boosted by Chinese diplomats and officials, spreading the content and giving it legitimacy.

“The target is not actually people who are sceptical of the Chinese government, but is giving content to people who trust Chinese state media and are sceptical of western mainstream media,” said ASPI researcher Albert Zhang. “It’s propaganda appealing to the base.”

ASPI’s report said the propaganda campaign reflected the likely direction of future information operations by the Chinese Communist party (CCP). However, Zhang and Ryan also said it also showed there might be a lack of understanding by Chinese propaganda and media purveyors about what is believable or legitimate – as was showcased last month with attempts to rebut concerns about tennis star Peng Shuai.

Ryan said a portmanteau term originally ascribed to China’s surveillance system – “Chabudwellian” – also applied here, combining “Orwellian” with the Chinese term “cha bu duo”, which means “almost” but is often used to describe something done with poor or minimal effort.

“Outside of China, foreigners think their surveillance system is highly sophisticated ... but in reality a lot of the time this infrastructure is gerry-rigged and not super effective,” said Ryan. “That can apply to the information campaigns as well.”

By Helen Davidson



INTEL APOLOGISES TO CHINA OVER SUPPLIER ADVICE

US microchip maker Intel has apologised following a backlash over its letter urging suppliers not to source products or labour from China's Xinjiang region.

The company's letter sparked criticism in China, with calls for a boycott.

The letter said Intel had been "required to ensure" its supply chain did not use labour or source goods from Xinjiang, following restrictions imposed by "multiple governments".

China has been accused of human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

The region is home to many of country's Muslim Uyghur population and there have been allegations of forced labour and possibly genocide.

In December last year, the BBC published an investigation based on new research showing China was forcing hundreds of thousands of minorities, including Uy-

ghurs, into manual labour in Xinjiang's cotton fields.

Beijing has repeatedly denied the claims.

In a Chinese-language statement on its official WeChat and Weibo accounts, Intel said that its commitment to avoid supply chains from Xinjiang was an expression of compliance with US law, rather than a statement of its position on the issue.

"We apologise for the trouble caused to our respected Chinese customers, partners and the public. Intel is committed to becoming a trusted technology partner and accelerating joint development with China," the firm said.



The White House said President Joe Biden signed into a law a bill that requires companies to prove that goods imported from China's Xinjiang region have not been produced with forced labour.

The bill was passed by Congress last week with the aim of stopping US companies from benefitting from forced labour, something which China denies is the case.



Many Weibo users derided Intel's apology as an attempt at protecting sales in China, with one saying: "A mistake is a mistake! Retract the statement about Xinjiang!"

Meanwhile, the hashtag "Is Intel's apology sincere?" was trending on Weibo on

Thursday, Reuters reported.

Singer Karry Wang said he would no longer serve as brand ambassador for Intel, adding in a statement that "national interests exceed everything".

Intel is not the first company to come under pressure over aims to comply with sanctions related to Xinjiang while continuing to operate in China.

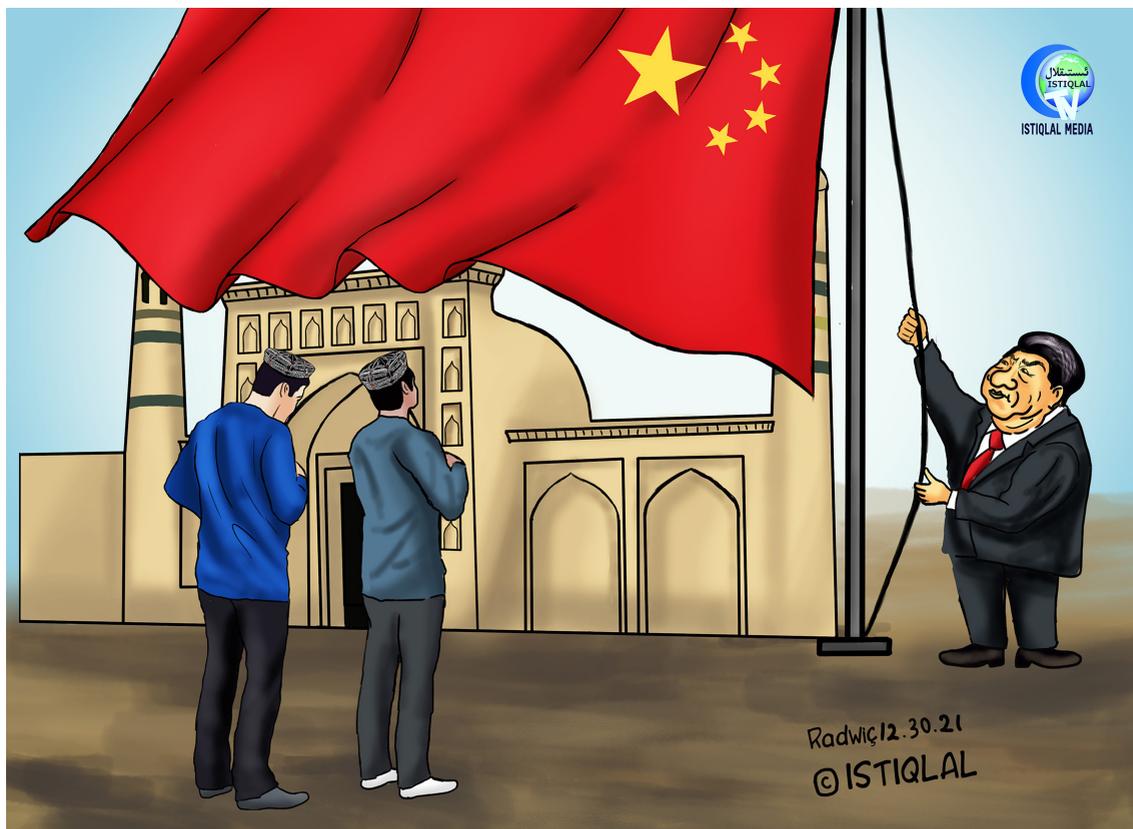
'Sensitive issue'

Retail giants Nike and H&M faced a backlash earlier this year after they expressed concern about the alleged use of Uyghur forced labour in cotton production.

Intel, which has 10,000 employees in China, said in its apology that it respected "the sensitivity of the issue in China".

Meanwhile, China's foreign ministry said "accusations of forced labour in Xinjiang are lies concocted by anti-China American forces" aimed at destabilising China and hindering its development.

"We note the statement and hope the relevant company will respect facts and tell right from wrong," said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian.



The Chinese regime continuously intensifies its terror policy so-called “Sinicization of Islam”, which is an important part of its evil plan to completely Sinicization the people of East Turkistan.

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What is happening in East Turkistan?

What is true and what is false?

The “ISTIQLAL” journal uses reliable sources, evidence and witnesses to reveal China’s crimes against humanity and shine a light on the oppression in East Turkistan as well as exposing China’s fake news propaganda.

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Sefaköy K.çekmece İSTANBUL**

info@turkistanmedia.com

www.turkistantimes.com/en

www.istiqlalhaber.com

www.istiqlalmedia.com

+90 212 540 31 15

+90 553 895 19 33

+90 541 797 77 00