

LEAKED EMAILS CONFIRM UN PASSED INFO TO CHINA IN NAME-SHARING SCANDAL



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U.S. SAYS CHINA'S REPRESSION OF UYGHURS IS 'GENOCIDE'

By Edward Wong And Chris Buckley

The finding by the Trump administration is the strongest denunciation by any government of China's actions and follows a Biden campaign statement with the same declaration.

WASHINGTON – The State Department declared on Tuesday that the Chinese government is committing genocide and crimes against humanity through its wide-scale repression of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in its northwestern region of Xinjiang, including in its use of internment camps and forced sterilization.

The move is expected to be the Trump administration's final action on China, made on its last full day, and is the culmination of a yearslong debate over how to punish what many consider Beijing's worst human rights

abuses in decades. Relations between the countries have deteriorated over the past four years, and the new finding adds to a long list of tension points. Foreign policy officials and experts across the political spectrum in the United States say China will be the greatest challenge for any administration for years or decades to come.

"I believe this genocide is ongoing, and that we are witnessing the systematic attempt to destroy Uyghurs by the Chinese party-state," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement, adding that Chinese officials were "engaged in the forced assimilation and eventual erasure of a vulnerable ethnic and religious minority group."

The determination of atrocities is a rare action on the part of the State Department and could lead the United States to impose more sanctions against China under the new Biden administration. President-elect Joseph R.

Biden said last year through a spokesman that the policies by Beijing amounted to “genocide.”

Other nations or international institutions could follow suit in formally criticizing China over its treatment of its minority Muslims and taking punitive measures. The determination also prompts certain reviews within the State Department.

The finding is the harshest denunciation yet by any government against China’s policies in Xinjiang. Genocide is, according to international convention, “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

Mr. Pompeo, State Department lawyers and other officials had debated for months over the determination, but the matter had gained urgency in the Trump administration’s final days. As was common with most China policy, the issue of Xinjiang had long pitted administration officials against one another: Mr. Pompeo and other national security aides advocated tough measures against Beijing, while President Trump and top economic advisers brushed aside the concerns.

The Chinese government has rejected any accusations of genocide and other human rights violations in Xinjiang and often deploys the language of antiterrorism to defend its practices.

■ The Chinese Embassy in Washington on Tuesday night said in a long statement that “the so-called genocide in Xinjiang is simply a lie,” adding that the overall population of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, as well as that of Uyghurs, had grown from 2010 to 2018. In addition, it said, policies in Xinjiang are part of a fight against “terrorism and

extremism,” and “these measures have proved to well service Xinjiang’s situation and produced notable results.”

To deflect criticism from U.S. officials, Chinese officials have also taken to underlining some of the Trump administration’s vast governance failures, including a death toll of more than 400,000 from the coronavirus pandemic and the deadly assault on the Capitol by a mob incited by Mr. Trump.



Some Uyghurs expressed gratitude for the decision. “Today’s determination of genocide is a signal of recognition to the long suffering of victims and survivors of the Chinese government’s internment camps, like my brother Ekpar, and millions of Uyghurs,” said Rayhan Asat, a lawyer in Washington whose younger brother is imprisoned in Xinjiang. “It is the starting point on the road to justice, freedom and accountability for these atrocities.”

Ziba Murat, a Virginia resident whose mother, Gulshan Abbas, is imprisoned, said, “This gives us hope that those who have attempted to water down what is happening with the destruction of our people can no longer hide their complicity.”

Before the new condemnation from Washington, the strongest statement by a government entity declaring that China’s actions in Xinjiang amounted to genocide came from a Canadian parliamentary subcommittee. Last October, the subcommittee concluded that the Chinese Communist Party was culpable of the crime.



Mr. Pompeo and senior State Department officials made the decision just days before Mr. Biden takes office. The finding could complicate his administration's dealings with Beijing, but it also offers a source of leverage. Mr. Biden's nominee for secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, said Tuesday at a Senate confirmation hearing that he agreed with the genocide determination and denounced the Xinjiang "concentration camps." He also asserted that China "poses the most significant challenge of any nation-state to the United States."

In the days before the decision, State Department officials had argued over whether China's actions in Xinjiang met the standard for genocide or whether they fell under crimes against humanity, which has a lower standard, said American officials familiar with the debate. Mr. Pompeo decided to use both.

One American official said the best rationale for the genocide label was the use of forced sterilizations, birth control and family separations to destroy Uyghur identity.

Several State Department officials said the decision was rooted in trying to meet policy goals; they said they hoped the move would spur other nations to take a harder public line against China on this and other issues.

Some officials opposed to the action pointed out that the department never made a determination on whether the Myanmar govern-

ment had committed genocide against the ethnic Rohingya Muslims, despite strong evidence of the crime. In 2017, the department said Myanmar had committed "ethnic cleansing."

Mr. Biden, a critic of China's human rights record during his decades in office, has used forceful language to describe its repressive policies. In August, he released a statement calling China's actions "genocide" and pressed the president to do the same. Mr. Trump, he insisted, "must also apologize for condoning this horrifying treatment of Uyghurs."

Mr. Biden was referring to an account by John R. Bolton, Mr. Trump's former national security adviser, who disclosed in his memoir that the president told Xi Jinping, the leader of China, at a summit in 2019 to keep building internment camps in Xinjiang, "which Trump thought was exactly the right thing to do." Mr. Bolton wrote that Mr. Trump had made similar remarks on a trip to China in 2017.

Mr. Bolton and other aides said Mr. Trump repeatedly ignored their recommendations to impose sanctions over Xinjiang to avoid jeopardizing trade negotiations with China. Mr. Trump has expressed little concern for human rights, and for most of his term publicly referred to Mr. Xi as a friend.

For years, Democratic and Republican members of Congress have urged the administration to take a more aggressive stand. An annual report released Thursday by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China said there was evidence that "crimes against humanity — and possibly genocide — are occurring" in Xinjiang. It stressed that budget legislation passed in December requires that the U.S. government determine within 90 days whether China had committed atrocities in the region.



Some lawmakers made a last-minute push for the Trump administration to issue a determination against China.

Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey and the incoming chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Tuesday that China had committed genocide, but stressed “this is an action that the Trump administration should have taken years ago, not as it is walking out the door – and not having given China a green light for its concentration camps, as Ambassador Bolton alleged.”

In October 2019, the Trump administration blacklisted police departments in Xinjiang and several Chinese companies. It has since issued other sanctions, including against senior Communist Party officials. On Wednesday, it announced a ban on imports of products made with cotton and tomatoes from the area.

The State Department’s determination further underscores how Xinjiang has become a central human rights issue for the United States and its allies.

China has for decades exercised heavy-handed control over Xinjiang’s ethnic minorities, who make up more than half of the region’s population of 25 million. For the largest groups, their Islamic religion and Turkic language and culture set them apart from China’s Han majority.

Tensions sharply worsened from 2009, when Uyghurs taking part in ethnic riots killed about 200 Han in Urumqi, the regional capital, after earlier tensions and violence. Chinese security forces began a sweeping crackdown. Attacks and more crackdowns occurred across Uyghur towns in the years afterward, as well as in some cities outside Xinjiang.

Since 2017, Xinjiang leaders pressed by Mr. Xi have begun or stepped up policies intended to transform the Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities into loyal, largely secular supporters of the Communist Party. The State Department determination said the Chinese government had committed “crimes against humanity” since “at least March 2017.”

Security forces have sent hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and Kazakhs — possibly a million or more by some estimates — to indoctrination camps intended to instill loyalty to the party and break down adherence to Islam. The Chinese government has defended the camps as benign vocational training schools and disputed the estimates of inmate numbers, without ever giving its own. Former inmates and their families who have left China have described harsh living conditions, crude indoctrination and abusive guards.

The swelling camps drew growing international condemnation, including from human rights experts who advise the United Nations as well as the United States and other nations. Journalists and scholars began writ-



ing articles on the camps and a sophisticated high-tech surveillance system in Xinjiang in 2017, well before foreign governments started discussing the issue.

The indoctrination camps, however, have formed only part of the Chinese Communist Party's broader campaign to drastically transform Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities. Other measures include labor transfers, schooling and cultural policies, and population controls.

Under Mr. Xi, Xinjiang has expanded and intensified longstanding programs to shift Uyghurs and Kazakhs from rural areas to jobs in factories, cities and commercial farming. The Chinese government has said that these work transfers are entirely voluntary and bring prosperity to impoverished peoples. But some programs have set targets for the numbers of people relocated for work and restricted recruits from choosing or leaving their jobs — hallmarks of forced labor.

Schools have largely discarded classes in Uyghur, pressing students to learn in Chinese. Uyghur academics who have sought to preserve and promote their culture have been arrested, and Uyghur-language publishing has been heavily curtailed. Officials have forced children into boarding schools, separated from their parents.

Programs in Xinjiang have also sought to stem the growth of the Uyghur population by forcing women to undergo permanent sterilization or have birth-control devices inserted, Adrian Zenz, a researcher in the United States who has focused on Xinjiang, said in a report last year. Chinese researchers have challenged the numbers and conclusions in Mr.

Zenz's report while not disputing that the government wants to bring down the population growth of Uyghurs.



The Chinese Embassy in Washington said on Twitter this month that Uyghur women had been "emancipated" and were "no longer baby-making machines." Twitter later removed the comment and told a reporter that the post had violated rules against "dehumanization."



SECRETARY OF STATE NOMINEE BLINKEN SEES STRONG FOUNDATION FOR BIPARTISAN CHINA POLICY

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's foreign policy team is vowing to work with like-minded partners around the world to take on pressing challenges, ranging from receding democracy to the growing rivalry with China, Russia and other authoritarian states.

Tuesday, Biden's nominee for secretary of state, Antony Blinken, told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations at his confirmation hearing that he believed President Donald Trump was right in taking "a tougher approach" to China, even if he did not agree with all his methods.

"As we look at China, there is no doubt that it poses the most significant challenge" to U.S. national interests, Blinken said, noting there's room for cooperation.

"There are rising adversarial aspects of the relationship; certainly, competitive ones, and still some cooperative ones, when it is in our mutual interests," he added.

Blinken was deputy secretary of state during the Obama administration and has close ties with Biden. He was staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when Biden was chair of the panel, and later was then-Vice President Biden's national security adviser.

The incoming Biden administration may take confidence-building steps to reverse irritants in U.S.-China relations, including easing visa restrictions on journalists and restoring closed consulates, according to Kurt

Campbell, who has been tapped as Biden's senior coordinator for Indo-Pacific policy at the White House National Security Council.

Uyghurs, Taiwan

Blinken on Tuesday endorsed the assessment that the Chinese Communist Party has engaged in genocide against the Uyghur Muslim population in Xinjiang. Outgoing Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the genocide determination earlier in the day.

China has rejected all accusations of abuses.

Blinken said under the incoming Biden administration, the United States will uphold its commitment under the Taiwan Relations Act to ensure that Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy, has the ability to defend itself against aggression.

Chinese officials have said that Xinjiang and Taiwan are among the most sensitive issues, warning against any “foreign interference.”

Relations between the U.S. and Taiwan have been governed by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act since Washington switched its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing to counter the then-Soviet Union.

China and Taiwan have been separately ruled since the 1949 end of China's civil war. Beijing still claims sovereignty over Taiwan and has not ruled out the use of force to unite the two sides.

The Chinese Communist Party has never governed Taiwan.

Blinken added the U.S. would like to see Taiwan “play a greater role around the world” and “in international organizations” that do not require the status of a country.

By Nike Ching





CHINESE SPIES TRIED TO CREATE FALSE “UYGHUR TERRORISTS” IN AFGHANISTAN

“ Ten Chinese agents were arrested and quietly expelled after trying to establish a false branch of the defunct East Turkistan Islamic Movement. ”

Last week, a chartered plane left Kabul airport to an unknown destination in China. Aboard were ten Chinese nationals, who had been arrested in Afghanistan on December 10, some in the house of one Li Yangyang, believed to be a high-profile intelligence agent, where weapons, ammunitions, and drugs had also been found.

Initially, the ten were accused of terrorism and of colluding with the Haqqani Network, a military arm of the Taliban. Afghanistan asked Chinese ambassador Wang Yu for a formal apology to have the agents expelled, and told him that without it, they will be tried by a local criminal court.

The Afghans, however, had it wrong. As the investigation proceeded, it came out that the Chinese spies were not trying to support a real terrorist organization but to create a fake one. The East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) did exist in the past as a group of radical Uyghur Muslims, founded in 1989. What he did, or did not do, is another matter. The group consisted of small groups of Uyghur expatriates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. They fought together with the Taliban in different phases of the Afghan conflicts. In 2002, the United States listed ETIM as a terrorist organization connected with al-Qa’ida. In 2003, ETIM leader Hassan Makhdum was shot dead by the Pakistani

Army. To his last day, he denied any connection with al-Qa'ida, although he admitted he supported the Taliban.

Not much was heard of ETIM in subsequent years. In 2008, something called the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIM) started manifesting itself as yet another small-scale ally of the Taliban, with suspected al-Qa'ida connections. It issued threats against the 2008 Beijing Olympics, some of which might have been real, and others created by the Chinese intelligence, not followed by real-life attacks. In February 2010, its leader Abdul Haq al-Turkistani was killed by a missile launched by a CIA UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) in Pakistan. China claimed that ETIM and TIM were one and the same, but others doubted it.

Most scholars of terrorism believe there is no evidence that ETIM, or even TIM, was responsible for terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, although more than 200 were attributed to them by Chinese authorities. There were some terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, but ETIM

or TIM did not claim responsibility for them. Some were real, others may have been invented by Chinese propaganda. In 2020, the U.S. eliminated ETIM from the list of terrorist organizations, claiming there was no evidence it still existed. The UN Security Council and several countries, on the other hand, still lists ETIM as a terrorist group.

But, if ETIM no longer existed, its trademark was up for grab. It is believed the Chinese agents were in Afghanistan to create a false ETIM, hopefully attract some Uyghur expatriates, perform terrorist attacks, and blame the Uyghur community, thus justifying repression in Xinjiang.

The plot was fooled by the Afghan intelligence, and to avoid problems with China the agents were quietly sent back home. But there is no reason to believe Beijing will not start such games again.

by Massimo Introvigne





DOMINIC RAAB URGES CHINA TO LET UN VISIT XINJIANG OVER PERSECUTION OF UYGHURS

Foreign Secretary's call comes after communal pressure for the government to adopt amendment to trade bill

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has called on China to allow the United Nations (UN) to visit a province where it is accused of “appalling” human-rights abuses against the Uyghur minority group.

Mr Raab, whose father was Jewish and came to Britain from Czechoslovakia in 1938 aged six, said reports of internment camps and women being forcibly sterilised in Xinjiang were “truly shocking” and that authorities in Beijing should permit the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the sites.

The Chinese government has denied accusations of widespread abuse in the north-western province, mainly targeted at the Uyghur minority group, including allegations of forced sterilisation, slave labour and mass internment.

This comes amid communal pressure for the government to support an amendment to the trade bill. If successful, the amendment which has been passed by the Lords, would allow the UK High Court to rule on whether China is committing genocide against Uyghur Muslims, and revoke trade deals with offenders, including companies using forced labour.

On Friday, 30 rabbis and communal leaders signed a statement organised by Rene Cassin calling for the amendment to be supported, while Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl wrote to the Prime Minister asking for his backing on the issue. On Thursday evening, the Board held an emergency meeting about the persecution of Uyghur Muslims.

Appearing on Sky News' Sophy Ridge On Sunday programme, Mr Raab was asked what the UK Government was doing amid accusations that China was holding a million Uyghur people in “re-education camps” and women were subject to forced sterilisation.

Mr Raab said the Government had recently announced measures that would make sure “we don’t have any British businesses that are either supplying to or profiting from the internment camps”.

Earlier this month, Mr Raab announced that firms will face hefty fines unless they meet requirements showing their supply chains are free from forced labour and will be given robust guidance on how to carry out due diligence checks to make sure they are not sourcing products tainted by the human-rights violations.

Speaking on Sunday, Mr Raab said: “I think it’s a shocking, truly shocking, set of circumstances in Xinjiang, against the Uyghur Muslims.”

Mr Raab said 38 other countries had followed the UK’s lead in “criticising and condemning human-rights abuses” in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

During the interview, Sky News presenter Sophy Ridge read to Mr Raab a tweet she said was sent by the Chinese embassy in the US discussing “eradicating extremism” and making Uyghur women “no longer baby-making machines”.

She said: “I just want to be clear, we’re talking here about people being forced to have abortions, given injections to stop their periods, having surgery in some cases, so they’re unable to have children. Are words of condemnation and a few restrictions on British business really enough?”

Mr Raab replied: “It’s absolutely disgraceful. It’s appalling and shocking in the modern world, in a leading member of the international community, and, no, this isn’t enough.

“What China says is this is all lies cooked up by the West, and Britain a leading member amongst them.

“What we say is if you dispute the allegations and the claims and the reports, there’s a simple way to clear this up: allow the UN Human Rights Commissioner to visit and access and see these sites.

“We are pushing for an authoritative third party, like the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the UN, to conduct that visit.”

Mr Raab was also asked if he thought the treatment of the Uyghur minority group in China was genocide and if the issue would be put on the agenda of the G7 summit that the UK is due to host in June.

He said: “I think it’s for a court to decide whether the very complex definition of genocide is met.

“But what is clear, frankly, whatever legal label you put on it, is that there are convincing and persuasive third party authoritative reports of serious violations of human rights on an appalling industrial scale.”

He said the UK was “excited” to work with the incoming President Joe Biden administration in the US on “making sure human rights and protecting democracy is on the agenda”.

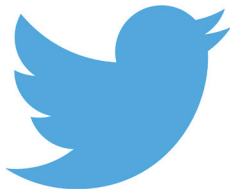
Mr Raab added: “As we preside over the G7, and it’s an exciting year for international leadership for the UK, that will be the case, and I’ve already talked with Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Pelosi of the House of Representatives, recently, including speaking to her over the Christmas period.”

After Raab appeared on Sky News, and then on Andrew Marr’s BBC show, the Board tweeted: “We hope Govt will back the Genocide Amendment so we can give the Uyghurs their day in court & show that when we say #NeverAgain, we mean it.”

By Jewish News Reporter



TWITTER LOCKS OUT CHINESE EMBASSY IN U.S. OVER POST ON UYGHURS



Twitter Inc. has locked the official account for the Chinese Embassy to the U.S. after a post that defended the Beijing government’s policies in the western region of Xinjiang, where critics say China is engaged in the forced sterilization of minority Uyghur women.

The tweet, which said Uyghur women were no longer “baby-making machines,” was originally shared on Jan. 7, but wasn’t removed by Twitter until more than 24 hours later. It has been replaced by a label saying, “This tweet is no longer available.” Even though Twitter hides tweets that violate its rules, it still requires the account owner to manually delete the post in order to regain access.

The account is still locked, a Twitter spokesman confirmed, meaning China’s U.S. embassy has not deleted the tweet. Operating under the handle @ChineseEmbinUS, the Chinese Embassy has not posted since Jan. 8, having published at least a dozen more tweets after the one breaking Twitter’s rules.

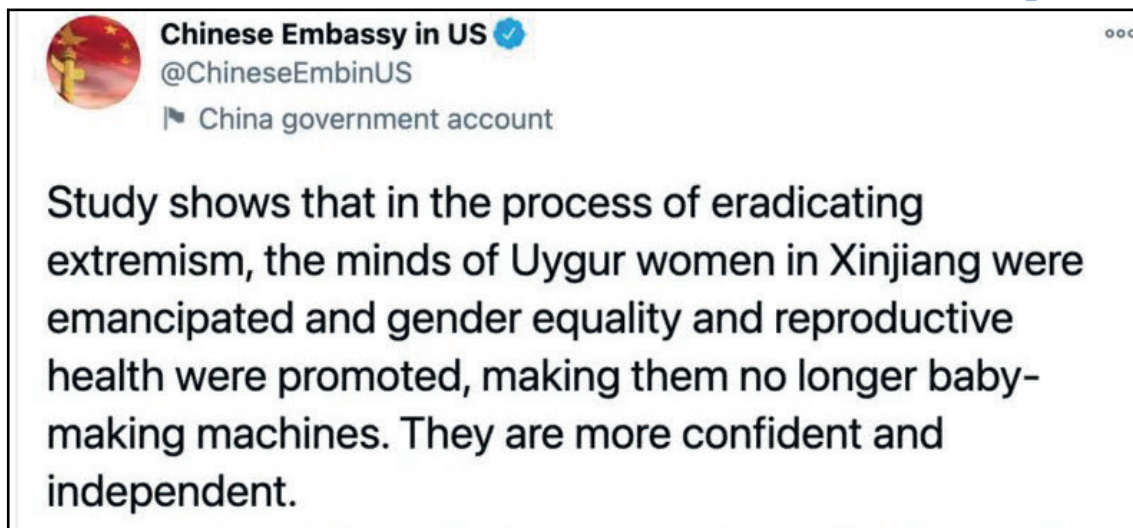
“We have taken action on this Tweet for violating our policy against dehumanization,” a

Twitter spokesman said in a statement. Twitter prohibits the “dehumanization of a group of people based on their religion, caste, age, disability, serious disease, national origin, race, or ethnicity.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying on Thursday said authorities were “puzzled” about why Twitter restricted the account, calling it the embassy’s responsibility to correct “fake reports and information related to Xinjiang.”

“We hope Twitter can adhere to objective and fair principles and not display double standards on this issue,” she said at a briefing in Beijing.

The move is the latest in a series of escalating steps Twitter has taken in recent weeks to enforce its policies. The suspension of the Chinese Embassy account came shortly after



Twitter permanently banned Donald Trump's account for repeated rules violations, and potentially complicates Beijing's efforts to reset relations with the U.S. under President Joe Biden.

On Tuesday, then-acting U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that China's actions against Uyghur minorities amounted to "genocide," a label that his successor Antony Blinken agreed with during his confirmation hearings this week. China has maintained that it is fighting separatism and extremism in the region, where the United Nations has estimated up to 1 million Uyghurs may be held in camps.

The decision to suspend the Chinese Embassy account also adds to an already complicated relationship between U.S. tech companies and China. Large social platforms like Twitter, Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google and YouTube are all banned in China, which has some of the world's strictest controls on the internet. Trump, meanwhile, had previously demanded that Chinese start-up ByteDance Ltd. spin off its successful video service TikTok in the U.S.

China's embassy in Washington joined Twitter in 2019 in the midst of heated trade talks between the countries, as more Chinese offi-

cial started using the platform to aggressively defend Beijing across the world in what has become known as "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy. Chinese officials and state-run media have used Twitter to accuse the U.S. of hypocrisy, particularly after a deadly riot at the Capitol earlier this month.

After the Chinese Embassy in Sri Lanka's account was suspended last year, it argued its "freedom of speech" must be honored, even though Twitter posts are blocked in the mainland.

Last month, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison demanded an apology after Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian tweeted a fake photo depicting one of his nation's troops holding a bloody knife to an Afghan child's throat. Chinese social media platform WeChat subsequently deleted a post by Morrison after he made a direct appeal to the Chinese community promoting Australia as a "free, democratic, liberal country."

In recent months China has moved to rein its own big tech companies, proposing anti-trust policies in November that would give the Communist Party sweeping powers over some of the country's biggest corporations.

By Kurt Wagner and Peter Martin



LEAKED EMAILS CONFIRM UN PASSED INFO TO CHINA IN NAME-SHARING SCANDAL

UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says controversial practice ended in 2015

GENEVA

The UN Human Rights Office is under fire for sharing the names of Chinese government opponents, including Uyghur activists, Tibetans and Hongkongers, who took part in UN activities, for a long period.

Emma Reilly, a staffer at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and a human rights lawyer, has repeatedly alleged that the office shared the names of dissidents with the Chinese government.

She recently shared the emails she received through the UN body’s internal emailing system while she was on active duty at the OHCHR with Anadolu Agency.

Although the OHCHR denies the allegations, some emails among its employees, press re-

leases and interviews have revealed that the UN shared the names of many Chinese activists and some opponents who attended panel discussions, conferences, and open sessions on human rights with the Chinese government.

The allegations have come to light after Reilly reported it to authorities.

Last week Reilly said on Twitter that she could be dismissed after accusing her employer of sharing the names of Chinese government opponents who took part in UN activities.

The OHCHR has denied the allegations, though, saying the controversial practice has ceased since 2015.

But a OHCHR press release issued in 2017 confirms that the Chinese authorities “regularly” asked the UN office to confirm whether particular names were attending their meetings.

“Chinese authorities, and others, regularly ask the UN Human Rights Office, several days or weeks prior to Human Rights Council meetings, whether particular NGO delegates are attending the forthcoming session. The Office never confirms this information until the accreditation process is formally under way, and until it is sure that there is no obvious security risk,” read the press release.

Human rights organizations, including UN Watch and Human Rights Watch, argue that the UN’s practice endangered not only the lives of Chinese activists and dissidents, but also their families and relatives.

‘Usual practice’ of requesting name sharing

In an email on Sept. 7, 2012, a diplomat from the Chinese Mission to the UN office in Geneva asked -- as a “usual practice” -- an NGO liaison officer at the OHCHR whether anybody from the list the diplomat had sent to the 21st session of the HRC requested accreditation.

The officer passed on two names, Dolkun Isa and He Geng, to the Chinese diplomat in a responding email.

In another email in 2013, the Chinese diplomat again wanted to confirm which of the names on the list would attend the session, thanking the office for cooperation.

In separate emails, it is evident that the Chinese mission even sent invitation to the OHCHR personnel for lunches.

Reilly says UN still continues name sharing

Reilly insists that the UN office still continues this controversial practice.

“I don’t actually have a job. The UN continues to pay me a salary that I have no terms of

reference. They cannot fire me because they know I’m telling the truth. But they don’t want me doing any work,” she told Anadolu Agency about what she experienced after reporting the UN’s practice.

After she first found out in February 2013 that the OHCHR was leaking the names of Chinese dissidents and activists, Reilly said she immediately started reporting it.

“I reported it to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the time. I reported it to the EU.”

She claimed that an OHCHR employee made false statements to the EU, and the EU did not follow up on the matter.

Reilly said she also reported the situation to Ireland, the UK, the US, and Germany.

“A lot of those member states reported to me that the UN had lied to them. Again, I give them the emails in which names were handed over.”

She said that the names of 50-70 people who are opponents of the Chinese government were handed over and among them are 8-9 people with US citizenship and 5-6 with German citizenship. Reilly also said that she informed both countries about the situation.

“So, it’s also a very big diplomatic consular issue that the UN is handing over the names of citizens of other countries to the Chinese government,” she added.

Denying the statement by the UN body that it has ceased “the limited practice” since 2015, Reilly asked: “And later in 2017, the OHCHR made up this story that it had stopped in 2015. Why did they put out a press release admitting it in 2017? Why did they admit it in court in 2019?”

Speaking of the legal process, Reilly said that she won the first case. “And in that case,



the judge ruled that the Secretary General had decided not to apply the UN policy in my case and that was not legal.

“The UN did not like that judgment very much. So they got rid of the judge,” she further claimed.

“Because of the structure of the UN, I can only take the UN to an internal employment tribunal. I cannot sue the UN for endangering people,” she added.

People’s lives are in danger

Reilly argued that the OHCHR does not have the right to share information about the participants in their meetings.

“There is actually a rule at the Human Rights Council. The rule is that if a country wants to know who is coming, they have to ask the plenary. They have to ask in front of the member states,” she stressed.

“And that rule is written, it’s very clear. And it was broken for China.”

Adding that the people whose names were handed over are in danger, she underlined that it was her responsibility as a UN Human

Rights Officer to speak up.

Isa, a prominent Uyghur politician and activist who attended the UN Human Rights Council meetings in Geneva in 2016 and 2019, was also among the people whose names were handed over to the Chinese diplomats, she said, adding that the activist testified in her favor.

“Chinese agents visited his family home to tell him to stop his advocacy. He’s been arrested several times. He was refused entry into the UN itself as a direct result of his name being given to the Chinese government. His brother was arrested,” she said.

Mostly Uyghur activists’ names leaked

Asked more about the people whose information were handed to China, Reilly said most of them were Uyghurs, but Tibetans, Hongkongers, and human rights lawyers are among them.

“It’s anyone that China wishes to have information about,” she said.

Reilly said that the UN practice was “complicit in international crimes”.

She said: “The UN Human Rights Office should not be actively endangering human rights defenders. And that shouldn’t be controversial. And it has been shocking that the only concern of the Human Rights Office has been to stop me reporting it, but not to stop the practice.”

UN denies Reilly’s allegations

Meanwhile, the UN has denied the allegations, as OHCHR Spokesperson Rupert Colville told Anadolu Agency on Jan. 14 that “since 2015, even this limited practice ceased.”

“For the past five years, OHCHR has not confirmed the names of individual activists accredited to attend UN Human Rights Council sessions to any State. Ms. Reilly’s repeated claims the practice continues to this day are false,” he stressed.

Isa confirms allegations, testifies in Reilly’s favor

Isa, the president of the World Uyghur Congress, told Anadolu Agency that they wanted to attend the UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2013 with Uyghur activist Rabia Kadir and other Uyghurs but the police attempted to get them out of the council room, which he says was the result of pressure from Chinese authorities.

Even in 2018, Isa said, a Chinese diplomat called him a “terrorist”, trying to stop him from entering the UN, but the issue was later solved by Germany’s initiative.

The Uyghur activist also noted that in 2017 he was detained before a meeting in Italy due to a pressure from China.

Isa said he had lost contact with his entire family since 2017, adding that that his mother died in a “concentration camp” in China in 2018, and his older brother was arrested while his younger brother has been missing since 2016.

He later learned from Chinese daily Global Times that his father had also died although he has no idea when or where he died.

Bayram Altug and Serife Cetin





TURKEY-BASED RELATIVES OF UYGHUR DETAINEES PAUSE PROTESTS AFTER CHINESE CONSULATE ACCEPTS DEMANDS

Istanbul’s mayor intervened after the group held 17 days of daily demonstrations.

A group of Turkey-based Uyghurs have suspended daily protests in front of China’s consulate in Istanbul after consular officials agreed to accept documentation of their family members held in internment camps in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) at the behest of the governor, group members said.

The group said in a statement last week that Yaşar Aksanyar, assistant to Istanbul Governor Ali Yerlikaya, had acted as a mediator between the demonstrators and the consulate, which was ultimately “forced” to accept the some of the demonstrators’ documents. The statement, dated Jan. 13, said that the group had agreed to suspend gatherings at the consulate after 17 days of uninterrupted protests.

Demonstrators recently told RFA’s Uyghur Service that they are working on revising the written materials they have prepared, which

include testimonies and lists of demands. The governor’s office plans to compile the materials and deliver them to the Chinese consulate, they said, although a date has not yet been set to do so. It will be up to the consulate to decide how to respond.

Authorities in the XUAR are believed to have held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a vast network of internment camps since early 2017. Chinese officials have said the camps are centers for “vocational training,” but reporting by RFA and other media outlets shows that detainees are mostly held against their will in cramped and unsanitary conditions, where they are forced to endure inhumane treatment and political indoctrination.

Habibulla Kuseni, himself a relative of a camp detainee, spoke with RFA about the Istanbul governor office's intervention and mediation between the consulate and Uyghur activists.

“The governor's office called in some of our kinfolk and informed them that the Chinese consulate would be accepting their demands and that we could select two people from among [the demonstrators] to meet with them,” said Kuseni, who has also spearheaded efforts to get Uyghur children into school in Turkey.

“But [the people who met with them] said they were not going to submit only their own demands. They requested that they be able to submit a compilation of the requests of all the demonstrators who have relatives in the ... camps.”

Kuseni said he was pleased the governor's office intervened in the situation and that he hopes the consulate accepts all of the documentation.

“This is a sign that our 17 days of protests have resulted in something,” he said.

“In the next few days, all of us will fill out forms, which will be collected in one place and then ... be sent to the consulate through the governor's office. If they agree to our demands, we will then discuss what to do next. If they do not agree, we will continue our activities.”

Growing pressure

Jevlan Shirmemmet, a Uyghur youth in Istanbul, told RFA that protests in front of the consulate began on Aug. 14, 2020, with demonstrators specifically advocating for

the Chinese government to account for the whereabouts of missing family members. However, the consulate had never indicated it would be willing to accept any materials from the group until daily gatherings began.

“The governor's office asked us to stop our demonstrations in the meantime,” Shirmemmet said.

“We couldn't say no to this, and so, because we also need time in order to collect materials from others, we decided to take a period of time off [from demonstrating]. But we're stopping only temporarily.”

Mirzahmet Ilyasoghli, another Uyghur youth demonstrator, said swelling support throughout Turkey and abroad is also likely to have helped to pressure the consulate to respond.

“These demonstrations of ours, first of all, we can say that our fellow Uyghurs have been very active in it—young people, older men and women, and elders ... alike all took part in them,” Ilyasoghli said.

“These 17 days of activism spurred Turkey to action. This has put a lot of pressure on China, who hasn't yet been criticized sufficiently for this. We also think it has put pressure on the Turkish government,” he added.

“Around 100 people showed up [to protests] and we were able to achieve results like this. There are some 50,000 Uyghurs in Turkey. This is a clear sign that we could achieve great things if just 1,000 Uyghurs were to stand up.”

Chinese officials did not respond to requests for comment on the activists and their protest.

Reported by Azigh for RFA's Uyghur Service. Translated by the Uyghur Service. Written in English by Joshua Lipis.



U.S. DEMANDS RELEASE OF UYGHUR DOCTOR WHILE CHINA URGES HALT TO SMEARS

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States called on Wednesday for the release of a Uyghur Muslim medical doctor whose relatives say she was sentenced to 20 years in jail in China because of family members' human rights activism in the United States.

The daughter of Gulshan Abbas told a briefing organized with the bipartisan U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) that the family had recently learned her mother received the sentence in March last year on terrorism-related charges after disappearing in September 2018.

In Beijing on Thursday, a foreign ministry spokesman said Abbas was sentenced for the crimes of joining a terrorist organization, helping terrorist activities, and “assembling a crowd to disrupt social order”.

“We urge certain politicians in the United States to respect facts and stop fabricating lies and smearing China,” the spokesman, Wang Wenbin, told a news conference.

The daughter, Ziba Murat, called the charges “preposterous.” Gulshan’s sister, Rushan Abbas, said they stemmed from activism by her and her brother Rishat Abbas, both of whom are based in the United States.

“We have committed to working to defend our people’s rights and advocate for justice, and now our sister is denied justice as a punishment,” Rushan said.

In a tweet, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor,

Robert Destro, said Gulshan Abbas must be released.

“Her forcible disappearance, detainment and harsh sentencing by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is evidence of a family suffering the consequences of speaking out against a government that has no respect for human rights,” he said.

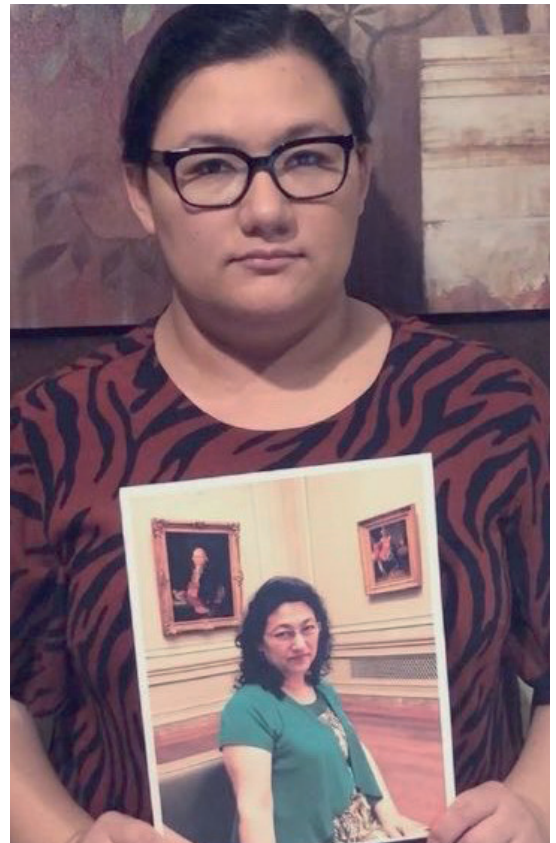
Ziba Murat said she could not reveal the source of the information on the sentencing to protect their identity. “We only learned that she is sentenced to 20 years, and we’re trying to get more information.”

My mom is a medical professional, non-political, kind person who has spent her life helping people,” she said, adding that her mother was in fragile health and suffered from multiple conditions, including high blood pressure.

The CECC chairman, Democratic Representative James McGovern, called the punishment of an innocent family member in what he said was an attempt to silence free expression “morally reprehensible.”

He said it was just part of a “mass persecution” of Uyghurs in China that has involved detention of as many as 1.8. million in internment camps, forced labor and other abuses.

U.N. experts and advocates say at least a million ethnic Uyghurs have been detained at some point in camps in China’s Xinjiang region.



China calls the heavily guarded centers educational and vocational institutes, and says all those who attended have “graduated” and gone home. Access to the camps is restricted and it is not possible to independently verify whether all have closed.

Reporting by David Brunnstrom and Daphne Psaledakis; Additional reporting by Gabriel Crossley; Editing by Leslie Adler and Clarence Fernandez



SHANGHAI DISNEY RESORT SAYS INVESTIGATING TRAVEL PLATFORM OVER UYGHUR REFUSAL

SHANGHAI, Jan 18 (Reuters) - Walt Disney's resort in the Chinese city of Shanghai said on Monday it was investigating after a travel agency apparently refused to let a member of the Uyghur Muslim minority use a resort and lodging package sold by a hotel nearby.

Screenshots of a conversation between a customer who identified as ethnic Uyghur and was looking to book a Disney resort package at the Aishabao Apartment Hotel in Shanghai, and travel booking platform Zlton.com, were shared on Chinese social media and on Twitter over the weekend.

The guest was shown a notification that the package was not open to Uyghurs, foreigners or holders of Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan identification cards, and was told the same

by a Zlton customer service representative, according to screenshots of the exchange.

Reuters could not verify the authenticity of the screenshots but a spokeswoman for the Shanghai Disney Resort, referring to them, told Reuters the information Zlton gave about the resort was “completely incorrect”. She also said that Disney did not have any partnership with the Aishabao Apartment Hotel.

“All visitors who hold a valid park ticket or annual card, Shanghai Disneyland reservation code, green health code, and pass the temperature test at the entrance of the resort can enter the park normally,” Shanghai Disney Resort said in a post on its Weibo social media account.

It also said it was investigating the Zlton platform. A staff member who answered the phone at Zlton's headquarters in the city of Suzhou declined to comment.

A staff member at the Aishabao Apartment Hotel, which sells packages priced as low as 699 yuan (\$108) that include Shanghai Disney Resort tickets and an overnight stay, told Reuters that it was not authorised by police to accept Uyghur guests.

Hotels and guest houses in China must typically have approval from authorities before being allowed to host foreign guests, who must be registered with the police.

Uyghur people speak a Turkic language and most come from the far western region of Xinjiang, where China says separatists want to establish an independent state.

The United Nations estimates at least 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslims have been detained in camps in Xinjiang under what China calls a counterterrorism and de-radicalisation effort, which has drawn widespread condemnation from around the world.

Beijing says the camps are vocational education and training centres and everyone sent to one had “graduated”.

REFUSED SERVICE

In recent years, there have been accounts in the media and on social media of Uyghurs being refused service at hotels or harassed by police after checking in, even though authorities have not announced any policy restricting their access to hotels.

“What’s new about this Disneyland case is that the hotel actually lumps Xinjiang Uyghurs together with foreigners and people



from Hong Kong and Taiwan,” said Ma Haiyun, an expert on Xinjiang and an associate professor at Frostburg State University in Maryland.

The Shanghai police bureau responsible for the Disney resort area said it had no knowledge of the matter.

Another hotel near the resort, similar to the Aishabao, said police had also said it could not let Uyghurs stay.

Five other hotels Reuters reached said they could host Uyghur guests but they had to report them to the police.

The Disney Resort’s two official hotels, Shanghai Disneyland Hotel and the Toy Story Hotel, said they accept Uyghur guests.

Disney faced controversy last year after the release of its movie “Mulan”, whose credits showed that it was partly shot in Xinjiang and included thanks to authorities there. Overseas activists called for a boycott of the movie.

Reporting by Brenda Goh in Shanghai and Yew Lun Tian in Beijing



THE SCOPE OF FORCED LABOR IN XINJIANG IS BIGGER THAN WE KNEW

China has constructed a vast string of factories inside the walls of Xinjiang mass internment camps, and Chinese authorities are forcing thousands of Muslim minorities to work in cotton fields, according to two recent investigations.

Why it matters: Xinjiang products are deeply integrated into lucrative supply chains around the world. The Chinese Communist Party's official embrace of coerced labor will force Western governments and institutions to choose between pleasing business leaders or enforcing universal human rights values.

Details: In the past three years, the Chinese government has forced hundreds of thou-

sands of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang to perform seasonal labor in the region's cotton fields, according to a December investigation from the BBC.

People are sent to the fields as part of a "labor transfer program," the BBC reports, drawing on Chinese government documents provided by Adrian Zenz, a leading expert on China's policies in Xinjiang.

Beijing claims the programs alleviate poverty by providing well-paid employment for rural residents without a regular income.

But researchers and rights groups say the labor transfer programs are part of the system of control, indoctrination and forced assimilation the Chinese government has deployed against Uyghurs.

Workers fear they will be sent to detention camps if they don't participate and are often underpaid.

A new report from BuzzFeed, based on satellite imagery, interviews and government documents, found more than 100 mass detention facilities in Xinjiang that together contain more than 21 million square feet of factory space.

Researchers identified more than 1,500 companies located in or near these facilities, with dozens of the companies exporting products to countries around the world.

The global response: Forced labor goes against international human rights conventions, but so far the U.S. is the only geopolitical power that has responded with substantive action.

The Trump administration last year sanctioned numerous Chinese officials and government bureaus deemed complicit in human rights violations in Xinjiang, including the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a quasi-military organization that owns vast swaths of farmland in Xinjiang and operates some mass internment camps.

The Commerce Department added to an export blacklist numerous Chinese companies deemed complicit in Xinjiang repression.

On Dec. 2, the U.S. blocked cotton imports associated with the XPCC.



But many feel pressure from China to avoid taking similar actions — a pressure that often manifests through economic ties.

By his own admission, President Trump resisted most action on Xinjiang until the U.S.-China phase one trade deal negotiations were finished and an agreement signed, in order to avoid losing leverage.

Despite its stated concern over forced labor, the EU just signed an investment agreement with China, with language that barely flicks at the massive violations in Xinjiang.

And some major companies, including Nike and Coca-Cola, have lobbied hard against a draft bill, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which aims to keep products made with forced labor out of the U.S.

U.S. law already prohibits the importation of products made with forced labor. But the office tasked with enforcing the ban, the Forced Labor Division, housed in Customs and Border Protection in the Department of Homeland Security, doesn't have the resources to trace the complex and opaque supply chains originating in Xinjiang, and it often relies on reports from news outlets and watchdog organizations.

This draft bill would instead put the onus on companies to prove their supply chains aren't tainted by coerced labor.

The bottom line: New investigations are revealing the expanded scope and scale of China's forced labor policies in Xinjiang. But so far, governments and companies around the world continue to put profits first.

Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, author of China

AKIDA'S STORY: THE DESPERATE CRY OF A UYGHUR WOMAN



“Dear world, please help!” The heartrending plea of a daughter who has been searching in vain for her mother, folklorist Rahile Dawut, for the past three years.

There is no end in sight.

Living with the agony of silence since the renowned Uyghur folklorist Rahile Dawut was snatched at Beijing airport in December 2017, her daughter Akida Pulat has left no stone unturned in her mission to find where in the murky labyrinthine tunnels of detention, so-called transformation through education camps, or extra-legal prison terms the CCP has buried her mother.

The black hole of silence has been deafening, and every plea for information from the Chinese government has been stonewalled.

Akida's life has been put on hold since her mother's disappearance. The once happy-go-lucky twenty-something young woman, who enjoyed her career, the company of friends, movie nights and shopping, has become obsessed with the search. She came to the USA in 2015 for a Master of Science in Information Systems at the University of Washington. Her mother joined her for six months as a visiting scholar in 2016, and the last time

they saw each other was at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport as the departure gates closed. “Neither of us expected that she would become one of the more than one million Uyghurs detained by the Chinese government,” Akida tells Bitter Winter ruefully.

Akida is one of tens of thousands of Uyghur exiles scattered throughout the world, who have been severed not only from their homeland, but also from their families. Which of them could have imagined that their visit to the West would be a one-way ticket, propelled alone or in small family groups into a future where going back was no option? The moment the new governor of Xinjiang province, Chen Quanguo, seized control of their destiny in August 2016, all contact with home was cut off. Those back in the homeland receiving a call from outside were summarily disappeared. If any dared to succumb to pressure and return, arrest at the airport was de rigueur.

There are those who have heard informally that relatives have been sent for “re-educat-

tion,” or been victims of kangaroo courts and sentenced to long periods behind bars, for crimes such as “unusual” beards, long skirts, or the Skype app on their phones. Their exiled relatives might cynically be described as the lucky ones. At least, they have heard.

Others such as Akida, and relatives of the hundreds of academics, poets and intellectuals who have simply gone missing, live in the twilight abyss of unknowing. Their children, often sent to study abroad to widen their horizons and work for a better future for themselves and their people, are now alone, wrenched from the umbilical cord of financial and emotional support, left to fend for themselves.

Akida finds herself constantly rehearsing all the “what if’s” and “if only’s” of those who have suddenly lost a loved one.

She admits with shame, and mountains of regret now, that her interests and those of her mother’s rarely coincided. She was busy pursuing a career in technology that was light years removed from the daily lives of those whose folk tales, ballads, dialects, superstitions, and religious traditions intrigued and captivated Rahile. As a teenager, holidays



spent in the depths of the countryside listening to the elders sharing memories and singing long forgotten songs were frustrating, even boring, she remembers. She could not wait to get back to “civilization” to gossip and shop with friends.

She is surprised at the changes in herself since this path was forced upon her.

These days she desperately tries to retrieve those precious memories and the days she spent with the simple villagers, endlessly generous, who showered hospitality upon them with a largesse they could barely afford. She is beginning to appreciate, not too late she hopes, the intensity of her mother’s love for Uyghur culture. But of course, it is too little too late now for her mother to benefit from this awakening camaraderie. Would that they could have shared together unearthing the precious cultural treasures scattered to the four winds of the deserts and mountains of her homeland. “Looking back, I wish she could have felt my support and companionship,” she says, hoping against hope for another chance.

She spoke to her mother via her website last year to wish her happy birthday, in the vain hope that somehow her message would get through.

Speaking on the video, she says, “Every day, I am being tortured with the thought of the uncertain fate that you and other innocent Uyghurs are facing, and the outrageous behavior of the Chinese government in response to the Uyghur people’s plight.”

As a young graduate with plans and hopes, in no hurry to put down roots and content to let the future take care of itself, her mother’s fate and that of millions of her people has thrown her into a turmoil of uncertainty, confusion and fear. Frantic for answers, the hunt for her mother and the crusade against the in-



justice against her people has consumed her. Her life and her destiny have been changed overnight. “I have become an activist. From morning to night, I think of nothing else. I will find my mother.”

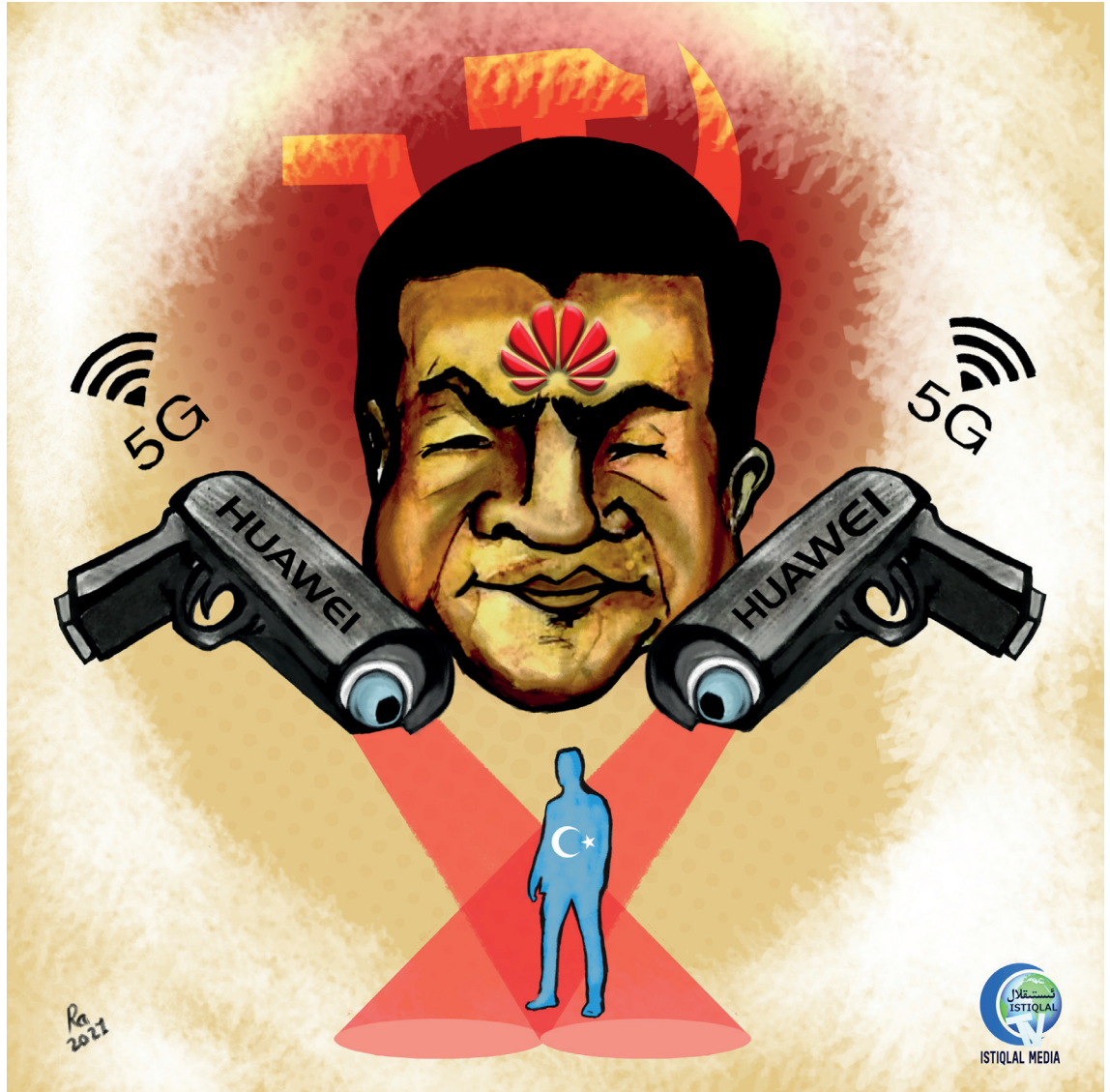
Consumed by the cruelty meted out to her mother, at first, she tried to juggle a full-time job with activism, but it all became too much. She has abandoned her profession and is now working full time for the NGO Campaign For Uyghurs, directed by Rushan Abbas, whose sister was sentenced in March 2019 to 20 years in prison. Her mission now and for the foreseeable future is to raise awareness of the ongoing plight of the Uyghurs, and campaign for world governments to join them in the fight for justice.

As she walked and talked with her mother beside the lake near their rented home in 2016, she remembers begging her to let her stay for a while to accrue more work and life experience. Rahile reluctantly agreed. But now in her daydreaming about the future,

she wonders whether she will ever be able to return. “Will I be able to spend the rest of my life near my mother? Will she be able to move to the suburbs after retirement to spend all day quietly reading and writing? Will she be able to help me raise the grandchild she longs for one day?”

“You always told me to be a good person, and I never forget that,” she says. “Happy birthday, mom. I love you. Please stay safe and mentally strong. I want to send beautiful gifts for your next birthday. I want to share every beautiful thing happening in my life with you. I trust God, and that day will come. At the end of this letter, I want to share with you a quote I recently read ‘Where there’s hope, there’s life.’ It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again. I love you and I miss you. Your loving daughter, Akida Pulat.”

By Ruth Ingram



■ Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei has been implicated in the Genocide of East Turkistan, Huawei provides facial recognition technology that was designed to identify Uyghur people to the Chinese regime.

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Sefaköy K.çekmece İSTANBUL**

info@turkistanmedia.com

istiqlalhaber.com

turkistanmedia.com

+90 212 540 31 15

+90 541 797 77 00

turkistantimes.com/en

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