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Czech MEP Zdechovsky : "Organ harvesting is a lucrative state-sponsored business in China"

By Willy Fautre

European Times (30.06.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3NEJ0uR> - "Organ harvesting is a lucrative business that is state-sponsored in China and specifically targets Falun Gong practitioners as well as other prisoners of conscience, which is unacceptable," Czech MEP Tomas Zdechovsky said in his introductory speech at an event organized at the Press Club in Brussels on 29 June, on the eve of the EU rotating presidency by the Czech Republic.

The conference was an initiative of [EU Today](#) which had invited to the debate [**watch full conference below**]

- Carlos Iglesias, head of the legal team of NGO *Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting* (DAFOH)
- Nico Bijnens, President of *Falun Gong Belgium*,
- A Chinese Falun Gong practitioner who had been a victim of the repression of the Chinese Communist Party, and
- Willy Fautre, director of the Brussels-based watchdog *Human Rights Without Frontiers*.

"I was one of those MEPs who tabled the last resolution against this practice adopted by the European Parliament on 5 May last," [Zdechovsky](#) said.

"The European Parliament considers that organ harvesting from living prisoners on death row and prisoners of conscience in China may amount to crimes against humanity, as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. If China wants to have harmonious commercial relations with the EU, it must put an end to this inhuman practice."

During the conference, the attendees could watch a video showing several phone conversations between a potential client abroad in search of an organ and several hospitals in China. It could be concluded from those discussions that human organs could be provided to him, even "à la carte." Indeed, the foreign client asked with insistence to get an organ from a Falun Gong practitioner because "those people have a healthy life, do not smoke or use drugs" and the potential traffickers in the hospitals agreed to this sort of transaction.

In the resolution, the Parliament is calling on the Chinese authorities to promptly respond to the allegations of organ harvesting and to allow independent monitoring by international human rights mechanisms, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Up to now, there has not been any constructive response.

The Parliament is concerned over the lack of independent oversight as to whether prisoners or detainees provide valid consent to organ donation. Its resolution also denounces the lack of information from the Chinese authorities on reports that the families of deceased detainees and prisoners are being prevented from claiming their bodies.

The EU and its Member States should raise the issue of organ harvesting in China at every Human Rights Dialogue, said **MEP Zdechovsky**, who insisted that the EU Member States should publicly condemn organ transplant abuses in China.

The resolution also warns EU citizens against transplant tourism to China and proposes to take the necessary measures in order to prevent such a business. No detail is however provided about the nature of such measures but some think this sort of tourism should be criminalized.

The issue has however become more complex since China has established transplant centers in the Gulf region which have advertised 'halal organs' which can only come from Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

The Parliament calls on its Member States to ensure that their conventions and cooperation agreements with non-EU countries, including China, in the area of health and research respect the EU's ethical principles in relation to organ donation and the use for scientific purposes of elements and products of the human body.

On the eve of its presidency of the EU, the Czech Republic should consider the resolution of the Parliament about the issue of forced organ harvesting as a matter of priority.

Watch and listen the conference [here](#)

COVID-19, Ukraine, Protests: Now the Chinese Communist Party is really Scared

The Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission warns that a Ukraine-style anti-Party "color revolution" may erupt in Chinese cities at all time.

By Hu Zimo

Bitter Winter (12.04.2022) - <https://bit.ly/367BhWC> - With citizens in Shanghai and elsewhere increasingly hostile to the COVID'19 quarantine, the real estate crisis negatively affecting many Chinese, netizens openly ridiculing the official pro-Russian narrative of the war in Ukraine, and continuing protests against the government's handling of the human trafficking case of the "[chained mother of eight](#)" in Jiangsu, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) starts being mightily scared that "color revolutions" may erupt in China as they once did in Eastern Europe. In fact, in the language of [Xi Jinping](#), "color revolution" is a generic term for any popular uprising threatening Russian or Chinese interests in any country.

On March 31 the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the [CCP](#), which oversees all public security and law enforcement in China, issued [a document analyzing the current political and social situation](#). Chinese read these documents with some skepticism. The [CCP](#) likes to portray the dangers threatening its power as worse than they actually are, to justify more surveillance and repression. However, it cannot be denied that in this text the language indicates a genuine and somewhat new concern.

The document is about urban areas and borrows from [Xi Jinping](#) the expression "five types of risk" (五类风险), meaning threats to political security, social security, social conflicts, public security, and network security. Large urban areas, the text says, is where "major risks" are and "major large-scale mass incidents" may suddenly develop.

We are told that we are now in a situation where a “political and security risk” may manifest in large cities, threatening the very existence of the [CCP](#). “Infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces” are already at work. The enemy is identified as “overseas anti-China forces” that “instigate color revolutions through ‘street politics.’” Conversely, for the [CCP](#) “the prevention of ‘color revolutions’ must always be the top priority.”

This is becoming difficult, the text says, because “at present, the situation around our country is becoming more and more complicated.” “Riots” are possible, and “stability is at risk.”

As Marxists, the [CCP](#) leaders know that the first battlefield is ideological. “Overseas hostile forces continue to hype social hot issues and stir up negative emotions. It is necessary to strengthen the management and construction of ideological positions in the cities, and effectively maintain ideological security.”

Security is also medicalized, and the document directs the cities to “timely detect people who are frustrated in life, mentally unbalanced, and behave abnormally, and intervene immediately and effectively.”

The second and third of the “five risks” threaten social stability. “Social conflicts may evolve into a major risk. It is necessary to further improve the ability to prevent and resolve various social conflicts.” City authorities should keep protests connected with the real estate crisis and the COVID-19 lockdowns in check. “It is necessary to prevent and resolve epidemic-related conflicts as an important task of current social governance in the cities.” If somebody is “spreading rumors” or rejecting the government’s instructions, “the crackdown should be resolute.”

The fourth risk concerns public security. Apart from major disasters such as the crash of a China Eastern Boeing last month, to which [Xi Jinping](#) devoted a meeting of the top leaders of the country, unrest is also caused by an alarming rise of traffic accidents, a serious concern for many citizens. “It is necessary, the document says, to systematically control the chaos of electric bicycles, the brutal driving of construction vehicles, and drunk driving. It is necessary to promote the construction of road traffic safety facilities, strengthen the investigation and removal of hidden dangers of roads and bridges, and improve the level of safety protection.”

The fifth risk, threatening network security, is something [Xi Jinping](#) continuously talk about. It is the problem of social media “full of fraudulent, fake, defamatory, and vulgar content,” sometimes openly criticizing the Party, as it happens with the official interpretation of the Ukraine crisis and the case of the “chained mother of eight.” It seems, the document says, that calls on “resolute crackdowns” by the President himself have not been answered by the quick and merciless action that was needed.

This situation, the document warns, is very serious. The “color revolutions” in other countries prove that online criticism eventually degenerates into offline revolt.

As mentioned earlier, it is well possible that this alarmist analysis of the situation in China exaggerates risks to justify current and future regulations introducing more repression. But it is also possible that intelligence and police reports tell the [CCP](#) leaders that the combination of different crises—real estate, COVID-19, human trafficking, Ukraine—is creating a volatile cocktail that may one day explode.

Int'l indifference to spate of self-immolations in Tibet has exposed world community's hypocrisy

VIJAY KRANTI

The Tibet Post (10.04.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3jGM65n> - International experts examine the reasons behind 160 self-immolations in Tibet and express concern over President Xi Jinping's ongoing campaign of national identity transformation of Tibet as dangerous and fear new waves of self-immolation in China's colonised Tibet.

Near-total indifference of world governments and international institutions toward the ongoing spate of self-immolations inside Tibet has exposed the hypocrisy of the world community. A group of international experts who examined the reasons behind 160 known cases of self-immolation in Tibet in recent years and shared views on this issue were unanimous in their observation that the process of eliminating Tibetan identity and replacing it with the Communist Chinese identity is dangerous and inhuman and calls for urgent attention of the world community.

These experts, belonging to Italy, Canada, India, and Tibet shared their views in an international webinar titled "Why over 150 Self-Immolations in Tibet" which was organised jointly by the Centre for Himalayan Asia Studies and Engagement (CHASE) of New Delhi and Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) from Dharamshala on the evening, April 9, 2022.

The experts were of the opinion that the current process of identity transformation through cultural genocide in Tibet has gained new momentum since President Xi Jinping took over China's leadership and it is bound to increase Tibetan people's frustration against the Chinese rule and could further accelerate the spate of self-immolations in near future.

The issue of self-immolations by ordinary Tibetan citizens against the Chinese rule has got into news headlines once again following two such cases happening within a gap of one month this year. On February 25, 2022, Tsewang Norbu, a 25-year-old popular Tibetan singer committed self-immolation in front of Potala Palace, the traditional residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in the capital city of Lhasa in Tibet. A month later, on March 27, 2022, an 81-year-old Tibetan, named Taphun, consigned his body to flames in front of the local Chinese police station in Ngaba town of Sichuan which is world-famous for the Tibetan Kirti monastery.

Mr Marco Respinti, a well-known China watcher from Milano, Italy, and Director-in-charge of 'Better Winter', a magazine focused on religious liberty and human rights, said that the Ngaba town of Sichuan has gained the dubious distinction as the 'world capital of self-immolations'. "The Chinese administrators of Tibet under the leadership of President Xi have imposed such strong restrictions on Tibetan people's movements and freedom of expression that self-immolation by individuals has become the only possible way of expressing their opposition to the Chinese rule," he said. "The cultural genocide in Tibet by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is working as an incitement to self-immolations in Tibet. This should help the world to understand who is the real killer behind these self-immolators?" he added.

Tenzin Lekshay, the spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the de-facto 'government-in-exile of Tibet' in Dharamshala, underlined that a very large majority among self-immolators are those youths who themselves as well as their parents were born much after China occupied Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama went into exile. "If

such youths commit self-immolation and call for a 'Free Tibet' and return of Dalai Lama to Tibet in the last moments of their life when their body is on fire, then it clearly indicates the level of frustration and opposition among Tibetan masses against the Chinese rule in Tibet." Pointing out at the ongoing mindless exploitation of Tibet's natural resources by China, Lekshay said, "Chinese rulers want Tibet but don't want the Tibetan people. That is why they are bent upon destroying Tibet's identity."

Ms Lhadon Tethong, a Canadian citizen of Tibetan origin and Director of Tibet Action Institute, blamed President Xi for the increasing frustration among the Tibetan masses because his draconian measures and use of modern technologies like digital surveillance, drones, and artificial intelligence have nearly ended the freedom of movement of Tibetan people even within Tibet and have blocked even intra-society communication. "Before Xi took power, an average of 2200 Tibetans used to manage to escape from Tibet via Nepal every year. But with current levels of surveillance and restrictions imposed by Xi, only five Tibetans could manage to escape in the past two years. This suffocation is forcing the ordinary Tibetans to extreme and desperate steps like self-immolation," she said.

Lhadon expresses serious concerns about the survival of Tibetan identity in near future. "President Xi has not only closed Tibetan language schools across Tibet but his government has started a new movement of snatching away Tibetan children as young as five years old from their parents and pushing them into residential Chinese language schools. In the name of education, these little kids are being subjected to communist brainwashing and loyalty to the CCP. The number of such children in these schools has now gone beyond 800 thousand which is about 80 percent population of Tibetan children in that age group," she added.

Vijay Kranti, a Tibetologist of international repute and Chairman, CHASE moderated the discussion. Commenting on the near-total absence of international concern over such a high number of self-immolations inside Chinese controlled Tibet, he said that mere the fear of losing business with China has pushed the governments, world business leaders, international institutions, and the world media to abandon their declared swearing and commitment to human rights, justice, and rule of law.

Prof Aayushi Ketkar, teaching at the Special Centre for National Security Studies at Jawahar Lal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, expressed her shock over the international indifference toward Tibet. "In a world where a single self-immolation by a poor shopkeeper in Tunisia could lead to upheaval in a dozen countries of the Middle East or self-immolation by a Vietnamese monk in Siagon in 1963 could pave way for the exit of the world's most powerful US Army from Vietnam, then how the same world community can afford to be looking another way when 160 Tibetans have consigned their lives to flames?" she asked.

EU diplomatic boycott of China's brutal Olympics essential

- *The 'Cinderella's Shoe' venue in Shougang, China, which will host snow sport events (Photo: [Wikimedia](#))*

By **ENGIN EROGLU**

EU Observer (02.02.2022) - <https://bit.ly/34bPpgD> - The Olympic Games are a lasting, universally revered celebration of humankind's sporting excellence. A festival of physical prowess and mental fortitude, in the spirit of fair play and equality.

But they are also symbolic of so much more. Since its rebirth in the modern age over a century ago, the founding values of the Olympic Movement have been to foster friendship, respect and understanding in the hopes of building a better, more peaceful world.

- *Protests in 2008 against China hosting the summer Olympics (Photo: Reporters Without Borders)*

And yet, as the snow settles in Beijing ahead of the most controversial Olympics in decades, EU leaders and officials have stalled and skirted around the question of a diplomatic boycott for far too long, failing, once more, to reach a consensus.

Let me be clear. China's notorious human rights abuses against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and its brutal suppression of freedom and democracy in Hong Kong have invalidated its right, and indeed privilege, to host the prestigious winter games.

In Hong Kong, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its cronies have systematically savaged the city's democracy, autonomy, and political pluralism as enshrined in Hong Kong's Basic Law and the internationally-recognised Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Through its imposition of the draconian National Security Law in 2020, Beijing has overseen the relentless campaign to wipe out political opposition through [arbitrary arrests](#) and the [mass incarceration of lawmakers, activists, and opponents](#), while many have been forced into exile.

Leaving no stone unturned in the crusade against its critics, the quisling Hong Kong regime has also thoroughly [dismantled press freedoms](#), shuttering independent publishers such as Apple Daily, Stand News and Citizen News, while jailing journalists and seizing assets.

Hong Kong's civil society has similarly bore the brunt of Beijing's crackdown.

More than 50 organisations, from trade unions to the Tiananmen solidarity group, have been [forced to disband](#) since the security law's introduction under mounting pressure, harassment, and the arrests of members by authorities.

And most recently, in December, Beijing sealed its totalitarian takeover of Hong Kong through [sham parliamentary elections](#) in which only vetted, CCP-approved candidates were permitted to run.

The result: in the Hong Kong legislature, 99 percent of lawmakers are Beijing loyalists.

In response to the endless catalogue of communist coercion, a significant cohort of countries, including the US, UK, Canada, and Australia, have heeded the growing international calls for a diplomatic boycott and ruled out sending official representation.

EU bloc divided

Joined by only a smattering of EU member states, notably Lithuania, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia and the Netherlands, the bloc remains very much divided.

And [despite pledges by France](#), the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, to coordinate a common position, with only a few days to go until the Olympics are underway, it appears unlikely that a continental consensus can be agreed.

The European Parliament, on the other hand, has consistently led the line in standing up to China on the European stage.

Just this month, MEPs [reaffirmed their staunch support](#) for an EU-wide diplomatic boycott of the Beijing games, as well as the imposition of sanctions on CCP officials guilty of abuses, and the implementation of a lifeboat scheme for desperate Hong Kongers fleeing Beijing-sponsored tyranny.

While a handful of member states have demonstrated brave leadership in the face of an ever-belligerent China, the EU as a whole has shrunk and shied away from principled and concerted action.

It cannot be acceptable for EU leaders and officials to pretend it is business as usual whilst China continues its crackdown in Hong Kong, on the Uyghurs, and fuels tensions with Taiwan, directly flouting the values of integrity, respect, and friendship that the Olympics are supposed to embody.

The EU must, therefore, get its act together fast and demonstrate its commitment to the universal values of freedom, human rights, and the rule of law by staging a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics.

Such a protest would send a clear message that the EU values human rights and condemns China's disdain for freedom and democracy. By not participating in a diplomatic boycott, the EU risks being complicit in China's plan to sport wash its brutal reputation.

Time is quickly running out for the EU to send a clear message to Beijing that its atrocities are shocking and will not be tolerated by the rest of the world.

[Engin Eroglu](#) is a German MEP with the [Renew Europe](#) group.

Beijing Olympics begin amid atrocity crimes

243 Global Groups Call for Action on Rights Concerns

HRWF note: Human Rights Without Frontiers and its US partner Women's Rights Without Frontiers are co-signatories

See the statement in other languages [here](#)

Human Rights Watch (29.01.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3r96Tmh> - The [2022 Beijing Winter Olympics](#) will open amid atrocity crimes and other grave human rights violations by the [Chinese government](#), 243 nongovernmental organizations from around the world said today. The groups urged governments to join a diplomatic boycott of the Games, slated to begin February 4, 2022, and for athletes and sponsors not to legitimize government abuses.

"It's not possible for the Olympic Games to be a 'force for good,' as the International Olympic Committee claims, while the host government is committing grave crimes in violation of international law," said [Sophie Richardson](#), China director at Human Rights Watch.

Under President Xi Jinping, Chinese authorities have been committing mass abuses against Uyghurs, Tibetans, ethnic groups, and religious believers from all independent faith groups. They have eliminated independent civil society by persecuting human rights activists, feminists, lawyers, journalists, and others. The government has eviscerated a once-vibrant civil society in Hong Kong, expanded tech-enabled surveillance to significantly curtail the rights to expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and allowed the use of forced labor, in violation of international law.

Chinese authorities also continue to threaten members of diaspora communities, public figures, and companies beyond China's borders through a sophisticated campaign of [transnational repression](#).

"That the Winter Olympics is held in Beijing sends a signal to the world that Xi Jinping's government is normal," said Renee Xia, Director of [Chinese Human Rights Defenders](#). "When the world rationalizes away such an abusive situation, it makes it harder for victims to stand up against injustice."

Since the Chinese government was awarded the 2022 Winter Games in 2015, nongovernmental organizations and media outlets have documented numerous serious human rights violations by Chinese authorities. Those include:

- Arbitrary detention, torture, and forced labor of millions of Uyghurs and other Turkic groups in Xinjiang (the Uyghur region);
- Decimation of independent media, democratic institutions, and rule of law in Hong Kong;
- High-tech surveillance systems enabling authorities to track and unjustly prosecute peaceful conduct, including criticism shared through apps, such as WeChat;
- Prosecution of people exercising rights to free expression, peaceful assembly, and association on behalf of vulnerable populations, including the lawyers Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiayi, the citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, the Tibetan monk and writer Go Sherab Gyatso, and public health activists known as the Changsha Funeng group; and
- Arbitrary detention, torture, and forcible disappearance of human rights defenders, including Gao Zhisheng and Guo Feixiong.

"The spectacle of the Olympics cannot cover up genocide," said Omer Kanat, executive director of the [Uyghur Human Rights Project](#). "It's hard to understand why anyone feels it's even possible to celebrate international friendship and 'Olympic values' in Beijing this year."

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has said that its human rights obligations, announced in 2017, do not apply to the 2022 Winter Games. The IOC has not met its responsibilities under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by carrying out human rights due diligence despite the well-documented abuses in China, the groups said.

In other respects, the IOC has shown that its stated commitment to human rights means little. IOC President Thomas Bach participated in a Chinese government propaganda campaign to whitewash the sexual assault allegations brought by three-time Olympian

Peng Shuai. The IOC has been unwilling to meet with the End Uyghur Forced Labor (EUFL) coalition, and has sported uniforms made by a company credibly alleged to use forced labor.

"The IOC claims that sport and politics do not mix, but the Chinese government was the one that used the 2008 Beijing Olympics to serve its political interests," said Bhuchung K. Tsering, interim president of the [International Campaign for Tibet](#). "Tibetans in Tibet then took the risk to tell the world about this, but the IOC didn't pay heed. The upcoming Beijing Olympics is a unique opportunity for the IOC and governments to empower their athletes and press Chinese authorities to abide by international norms."

The [top corporate sponsors](#) of the Games – Airbnb, Alibaba, Allianz, Atos, Bridgestone, Coca-Cola, Intel, Omega, Panasonic, P&G, Samsung, Toyota, and Visa – have also not fulfilled their human rights due diligence responsibilities. The companies have not provided meaningful public responses to concerns that their sponsorship creates or contributes to human rights violations, or whether they have acted to mitigate those violations. Sponsors should immediately disclose their human rights due diligence strategies, or explain their failure to carry out such assessments, the groups said.

Several governments, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have announced a diplomatic boycott of the Games in response to the Chinese government's human rights abuses. They will send no senior officials – a longstanding Olympic tradition – to the opening or closing ceremonies. All governments, whether joining the diplomatic boycott or not, should use the opportunity to not only support the athletes participating in the Games, but also demonstrate concrete support for human rights defenders across China.

"We urge governments to send messages of support to human rights defenders in prison or detention who are paying a great price for advocating reform, defending the rights of others, or simply discussing ways to strengthen civil society in China," said Sharon Hom, executive director of [Human Rights in China](#).

Those participating in the Beijing Olympics face a host of human rights risks, the groups said. IOC rules prohibit athletes from publicly expressing their views on human rights in China on the Olympic podium, and Chinese authorities' retaliation against critics creates a chill for athletes worldwide. The Chinese government's willingness to arbitrarily detain foreigners for peaceful criticism, such as the Swedish publisher Gui Minhai, further limits free speech. Olympic athletes, coaches, and other support staff are also likely to be subjected to pervasive state surveillance, particularly through monitoring of digital communications.

"Athletes upholding Olympic ideals should not have to face omnipresent surveillance, repression of free speech or belief, and an insecure human rights environment to participate in the Games," said Bob Fu, president of [ChinaAid](#).

Spectators around the world watching the Winter Games can play a positive role by educating themselves about the human rights environment inside China, and can take actions ranging from purchasing products not made with forced labor to encouraging their own governments to pursue accountability for Chinese government officials responsible for the worst international crimes. People can urge companies to sign the EUFL coalition's [Call to Action](#).

"The stark reality of the Chinese government's atrocity crimes and ongoing impunity should compel the IOC, sponsors, and others associated with the Olympics to question whether these Games are legitimizing and prolonging grave abuses," said Dolkun Isa,

president of the [World Uyghur Congress](#). "No one should want another Olympics like this."

Nongovernmental Organization Signatories

1. 6.12 Manchester Working Group
2. ACAT Belgium
3. Adas Israel Social Action Committee
4. Alberta Uyghur Association
5. All Citizenship Compact
6. Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy
7. ALTSEAN-Burma
8. American Alliance for Automotive Corporate Social Responsibility
9. Amigos del Tibet Chile
10. Anti-China Expansion Movement
11. Anti-Slavery International
12. Army of Survivors
13. ARTICLE 19
14. Asociación Cultural Tibetano-Costerricense
15. ASSEMBLY FOR DEMOCRACY IN VIETNAM
16. Athenai Institute
17. Athlete Activist
18. Athlete Ally
19. Australia Tibet Council
20. Australian Centre for International Justice
21. Australian East Turkestan Association
22. Australian Uyghur Association
23. Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association
24. Austria Uyghur Association
25. Bauhinias For Freedom
26. Bay Area Friends of Tibet
27. Be Slavery Free
28. Belgium Uyghur Association
29. [Redacted For Anonymity]
30. Bloc 8406 International
31. Blue Crescent Humanitarian Aid Association
32. Campaign For Uyghurs
33. Captive Nations Coalition of the Committee on Present Danger: China
34. China Against the Death Penalty
35. China Human Rights Defenders
36. ChinaAid
37. Chinese Democracy And Human Rights Alliance
38. Christian Coalition for Uyghur Freedom
39. Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
40. Citizen Power Initiatives for China
41. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
42. Comitato Lady Lawyer Village
43. Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet CAT
44. Congregation Beth Ora
45. Consortium for Intersectional Justice
46. Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience
47. Corporate Accountability Lab
48. CSW
49. Czech Support Tibet
50. Dawn of HongKong
51. Den norske uyghur komiteen
52. Dialogue China
53. Dominican Sisters Grand Rapids
54. Dutch Uyghur Human Rights Foundation
55. East Turkestan Press and Media Association
56. East Turkestan Union of Muslim Scholars
57. East Turkistan Association in Finland
58. East Turkistan Association of Canada
59. [Redacted For Anonymity]
60. East Turkistan Education and Solidarity Association
61. East Turkistan Entrepreneur Tradesmen and Industrialists Businessmen Association
62. East Turkistan Human Rights Watch Association
63. East Turkistan New Generation Movement
64. East Turkistan Nuzugum Culture and Family Association
65. East Turkistan Sports and Development Association
66. East Turkistan Union in Europe
67. Eastern Turkistan Foundation
68. Emgage Action
69. Equality League
70. European East Turkistan Education Association
71. Family Research Council

72. FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights
73. FIDU - Italian Federation for Human Rights
74. [Redacted For Anonymity]
75. Finnish Uyghur Culture Center
76. Football Supporters Europe
77. Frankfurt Stand With Hong Kong
78. Free Tibet
79. Free Uyghur Now
80. Freedom House
81. Freedom Ummah
82. Friends of Hong Kong Calgary
83. Friends of Tibet Bulgaria
84. Front Line Defenders
85. [Redacted For Anonymity]
86. Germany Stands with Hong Kong
87. Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities
88. Global Athlete
89. Global Peace Mission (GPM) Malaysia
90. Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete-Portugal
91. Havurat Shalom
92. [Redacted For Anonymity]
93. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
94. Hong Kong Committee in Norway
95. Hong Kong Democracy Council
96. Hong Kong Watch
97. Hong Kongers in San Francisco Bay Area
98. Hongkonger in Deutschland e.V.
99. HOPE not hate
100. Human Rights Foundation
101. Human Rights in China
102. Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa
103. Human Rights Watch
104. Human Rights Without Frontiers
105. Human Trafficking Search
106. Humanitarian China
107. Ilham Tohti Initiative
108. Indonesia Save Uyghur
109. International Campaign for Tibet
110. International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse In China (ETAC)
111. International Pen Uyghur Center
112. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
113. International Society for Human Rights
114. International Support for Uyghurs
115. International Tibet Network
116. International Union of East Turkistan Organizations
117. International Uyghur Human Right and Democracy Foundation
118. Isa Yusup Alptekin Foundation
119. Islamic Community Milli Gorus
120. Islamic Information Services Foundation
121. Japan Uyghur Association
122. Jewish Community Relations Council/American Jewish Committee Detroit
123. Jewish Movement for Uyghur Freedom
124. Jewish World Watch
125. Judicial Reform Foundation
126. Justice For All
127. Justice for Uyghurs
128. Lady Lawyer Foundation
129. Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice
130. [Redacted For Anonymity]
131. LICADHO
132. Louise Xin Group
133. LUNGTA - Actief voor Tibet
134. Malaysia Consultative Council of Islamic Organization (MAPIM)
135. Malaysia4Uyghur
136. Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organizations
137. Minaret Foundation
138. Minh Van Foundation
139. Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
140. Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM)
141. National Clergy Council
142. Netherlands for Hong Kong
143. Norwegian Uyghur Committee
144. Omer Uygur Foundation

145. Overseas Liaison Office
Representative for The Interfaith
Council in Vietnam
146. Peace Catalyst
International
147. Perth Anti-CCP Association
148. Power of Sport Lab /
Athletes for Human Rights
149. People for Successful
Corean Reunification (PSCORE)
150. Religious Freedom
Institute
151. René Cassin, the Jewish
voice for human rights
152. Reporters Without Borders
(RSF)
153. Santa Barbara Friends of
Tibet
154. Satuq Bugrakhan
Foundation of Science and
Civilization
155. Silk Road Peace Project
156. SoCal Students for Uyghur
Justice
157. Society for Threatened
Peoples
158. Society Union of Uyghur
National Association
159. Stand with HK@JPN
160. Stand with Hong Kong
Vienna
161. STANDNOW
162. Stefanus Alliance
International
163. [Redacted for Anonymity]
164. Stop Uyghur Genocide UK
165. Stop Uyghur Genocide
Australia
166. Stop Uyghur Genocide
Canada
167. Students for a Free Tibet -
Denmark
168. Students for Free Tibet -
Japan
169. Students For Liberty -
Myanmar
170. Sweden Uyghur Education
Union
171. Swedish Tibet Committee
172. Swiss Tibetan Friendship
Association
173. Switzerland East
Turkestan Association
174. Sydney Uyghur Association
175. Taiwan Association for
China Human Rights
176. Taiwan Association for
Human Rights
177. Taiwanese Human Rights
Association of Canada
178. Temple Shalom
179. Thailand and Hong Kong
Together
180. The Army of Survivors
181. The Community Human
Rights Promotion and Protection
Association (ACPDH)
182. The Norwegian Tibet
Committee
183. THE TAIWAN UNITED
NATIONS ALLIANCE (TAIUNA)
184. The Tibet Support
Committee, Denmark
185. The Viet Democratic Side's
International Forum
186. Tibet Action Institute
187. Tibet Initiative
Deutschland e.V.
188. Tibet Justice Center
189. Tibet Mx
190. Tibet Solidarity
191. Tibet Support Group
Ireland
192. Tibetan Community in
Britain
193. Tibetan Parliament in Exile
194. Tibetan Youth Association
in Europe
195. Transparency International
Deutschland e.V.
196. Tso Pema Non-Profit
197. Uigur Society of the
Kyrgyz Republic
198. Uigurische Gemeinde
Österreich
199. Umer Uyghur Trust
200. Unified Buddhist Church of
Vietnam
201. United Council of
Vietnamese Homeland and
Overseas
202. universitet Sulayman
Demirel
203. Uyghur Academy Australia
204. Uyghur Academy Canada
205. Uyghur Academy Europe
206. Uyghur Academy
Foundation
207. Uyghur Academy Japan
208. Uyghur Academy USA
209. Uyghur American
Association

- | | |
|--|--|
| 210. Uyghur Association of Victoria | 225. Verein der Tibeter in Deutschland |
| 211. Uyghur Center for Human Rights and Democracy | 226. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation |
| 212. Uyghur Cultural and Education Union in Germany | 227. Victoria Uyghur Association |
| 213. Uyghur Education Union | 228. Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley |
| 214. Uyghur Human Rights Project | 229. Visual Artists Guild |
| 215. Uyghur Projects Foundation | 230. We The Hongkongers |
| 216. Uyghur Refugee Relief Fund | 231. [Redacted For Anonymity] |
| 217. Uyghur Research Institute | 232. Women's Rights Without Frontiers |
| 218. Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project | 233. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) |
| 219. Uyghur Science and Civilization Research Foundation | 234. World Uyghur Congress Foundation |
| 220. Uyghur Support Group Netherlands | 235. (美国)民主中国阵线 |
| 221. Uyghur Transitional Justice Database | 236. 加拿大价值守护者联盟 |
| 222. Uyghur U.K. Association | 237. 台灣聯合國協進會 |
| 223. Uyghur Youth Union in Kazakhstan | 238. 民主中華傳媒 |
| 224. Uzbekistan Uyghur Culture Center | 239. 民主黨洛杉磯委員會 |
| | 240. 洛杉矶中国民主平台 |
| | 241. 自由中國 |
| | 242. 自由雕塑公園 |
| | 243. 華人基督徒公義團契 |

Counter China's devious human rights propaganda

By [Aaron Rhodes](#)

Providence Mag (07.01.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3IBk45x> - Both the United States and the European Union have taken belated steps to counter China's "Belt and Road Initiative," a vast project by which China is forging coercive economic and political ties with small and weak states, and attempting to induce Western democracies to accommodate a China-led world order. But they and other liberal democracies have done virtually nothing to counter China's human rights propaganda, by which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ruthlessly appropriates the concept of human rights to promote its version of Marxist ideology and glamorize its hegemonic global ambitions.

On December 8, 2021, China hosted its South-South Human Rights Forum, where an assortment of former national leaders, Chinese officials, and academics spoke as invitees from the "Global South" passively listened in what appeared to be a half-filled conference room. These speeches revealed what the CCP means by human rights, and what the CCP is trying to achieve with its human rights propaganda.

What, then, does the CCP mean by human rights? First and foremost, the Party means a concept of human rights totally detached from the obligation of governments to protect individual freedom, which is the principle that underlies the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the global system of human rights law. Tom Zwart, a professor at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, argued that human rights ought to be dissociated from "liberalism." International human rights have hitherto been a "liberal

social engineering project,” but this interpretation was now “losing its grip.” He went on to praise Chinese President Xi Jinping for promoting global “harmony” by bridging different civilizations.

China’s concept of human rights rejects the principle of inherent, universal human rights, another moral pillar of the UDHR. Each society, or regime, defines human rights in its own way and grants human rights as it wants. Human rights are not based in human nature but are government policies that reflect “national conditions.”

All speakers promoted economic development and welfare policies as the essence of human rights. Political scientist Zhang Weiwei of Fudan University emphasized that human rights must be seen not just as individual, but also collective. There can be no individual rights without collective rights, he claimed; individual rights (for example, freedom of speech) need to be restricted in the interests of collective rights. Zhang claimed, falsely, that the United States and other Western states pay no attention to economic and social rights and problems like poverty alleviation; he is apparently unaware that President Donald Trump’s State Department Commission on Unalienable Rights firmly endorsed the economic and social rights set forth in the UDHR. He and other speakers deployed anti-colonialist rhetoric, seeking to arouse resentment about past Western mistreatment of the peoples of the Third World, and the West’s putative indifference to inequality. They also contrasted these misdeeds with China’s own past victimization and current benevolent international policies.

Alongside promoting human rights as government gifts to society to improve economic standards, speakers thus showed how the CCP is using its human rights ideology to forge a new global order that China would dominate. Mohammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi banker, called for “global human rights governance.” Global warming, wealth inequality, and unemployment due to artificial intelligence are problems that can only be addressed by centralized global regulation and the emergence of a new “zero-profit” civilization. A former foreign minister of Kyrgyzstan said such a vision of global unity and harmony “originated from China.” A former prime minister of Guyana said China is an example of a “new democracy,” “putting people first,” and should be a model for the world. Speakers all praised multilateralism, except when multilateral initiatives threatened authoritarian regimes; Ambassador Hector Rosales of Venezuela used much of his speaking time to denounce the principle of “Responsibility to Protect”—an attempt to define when the international community can intervene to save populations at catastrophic risk—as a “crime against humanity.”

In the dictator-dominated UN Human Rights Council and other international human rights institutions, such baldly politicized rhetoric is common. But what is even more onerous is the absence of clear thinking and strong counter-arguments about human rights in the very societies that shaped the idea, and that, by incorporating human rights into their political and legal systems, have made wealth and freedom possible for millions. Western academics, activists, and diplomats, however, have forcefully contributed to the politicized concept of human rights that the oppressive Chinese communist regime has picked up and used to legitimate its repudiation of freedom and democracy. Seeking international legal, rather than local political, routes to achieving “social justice” goals, members of Western democracies have encouraged human rights proliferation and confluence between human rights and socialism. It is thus politically impractical for Western leaders to stand up to China’s human rights propaganda. But it is imperative for the future of free societies that they do.

The European Parliament stands with the people of Hong Kong

By Dr Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy for *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (22.01.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3IUvb9R> - On January 20, the European Parliament voted with an overwhelming majority (585 in favor, 46 against, 41 abstentions) in support of an [urgency resolution](#) on violations of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong. The resolution comes in the midst of a complex reality of EU-China relations; views regarding China continue to harden as Beijing doubles down on threats and retaliation against the bloc, just as the Beijing Winter Olympics are scheduled to begin in just a few weeks' time.

Human rights have long been a thorny issue in bilateral relations. But while in 2016 the EU committed to engaging China in a "[principled, practical and pragmatic](#)", and in 2019 even labeled it a "[systemic rival](#)", the EU has thus far failed to hold China accountable for its human rights violations, including for its [crackdown](#) on Hong Kong's freedoms. In the meantime, China has become more assertive in deflecting international criticism of its 'internal affairs' and more willing to use economic coercion in order to achieve its goals.

Notwithstanding a [growing convergence](#) across the EU on the need to rethink its China policy and to increase its strategic capabilities, there is no unified EU-stance on China, as there is no shared approach to a [diplomatic boycott](#) of the Olympics. This has emboldened Beijing to use its clout inside the bloc to undermine democracy through [influence operations](#) and by [weaponizing trade](#), seeking to ensure that the path the EU takes is favorable to the pursuit of its own national interests.

Against this backdrop, as one of the most vocal institutions of the EU regarding the respect of fundamental freedoms, the European Parliament has kept human rights on top of its own [agenda](#). It has urged the European Commission and the European External Action Service, as well as member states not to shelve human rights to the benefit of trade with China. The EP has been the leading voice of a conceptual shift inside the EU towards more realism and less naïveté in its engagement of China, including expanding ties with [Taiwan](#), shaping the EU's willingness to pursue strategic interests.

As such, last May Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted in support of [freezing](#) the legislative process for ratifying the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) with China until Beijing lifts [sanctions](#) against MEPs. For the first time since the EU arms embargo in 1989 following the Tiananmen Square massacre, Brussels imposed sanctions against four Chinese officials for human rights abuses in Xinjiang, [accusing](#) them of "arbitrary detentions and degrading treatment inflicted upon Uyghurs and people from other Muslim ethnic minorities, as well as systematic violations of their freedom of religion or belief".

Beijing responded with its own [sanctions](#) on European lawmakers, members of the EU's Human Rights committee (DROI), the EU's main foreign policy decision-making body and several think tanks in the EU, including Germany's Mercator Institute for China Studies.

The resolution on Hong Kong "condemns in the strongest terms the fact that freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of the press are as severely restricted in Hong Kong as they are in China". It reiterates solidarity with the people of Hong Kong, deplores the political persecution to which many journalists, who are now in exile or in

jail, have been subjected, and “calls on China to ensure that all journalists can conduct their work freely and without impediments and fear of reprisals”.

The resolution further stresses that the National Security Law, which Beijing imposed in June 2020 bypassing the Hong Kong legislature, “prevents a relationship of trust between China and the EU” and undermines future cooperation as well as leads to a further erosion of Beijing’s credibility on the international stage. Beyond Hong Kong, the text condemns China’s coercion and intimidation against Lithuania and urges the EU to defend the basic principles of the Single Market. The EU is at present in the process of preparing a new [anti-coercion instrument](#) to reinforce its resilience by addressing its vulnerabilities so that it can better defend its interests, which is expected to take months.

In the plenary debate preceding the vote, Slovak MEP [Miriam Lexmann](#) (EPP), Co-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China ([IPAC](#)), said the resolution reflects strong cross-party consensus to stand with the people of Hong Kong, but “concrete action” must follow on an EU-level, including on Lithuania, as it faces China’s economic coercion. Lithuanian MEP [Petras Auštrevičius](#) (EPP) noted that the EU must take immediate and firm action to prevent the ongoing coercive policy against Lithuanian and international companies. “It is time to react”, he said.

In the words of German MEP [Reinhard Bütikofer](#) (Greens/EFA), Chair of the Delegation for relations with the People’s Republic of China, it is important that the EP remains a champion of the defence of democracy and human rights, calling on member states to join forces as China continues to show willingness to break international rules to pursue its hegemonic goals.

Supported by several colleagues, Belgian MEP [Maria Arena](#) (S&D), Chair of DROI, emphasized that there should be no diplomatic representation at the Beijing Olympics. “If we want to protect our friends in Hong Kong or brave Lithuania, we Europeans must more coherently and loudly stand up to Chinese aggression”, added Czech MEP Marketá Gregorová (Greens/EFA), who recently visited Taiwan as Coordinator of the EP’s Special Committee for foreign interference in all domestic processes in the EU, including disinformation (INGE).

On behalf of the EU High Representative Josep Borrell, Commissioner Stella Kyriakides condemned the National Security Law, saying China uses it to stifle the exercise of fundamental freedoms. While China claims the situation in Hong Kong is an internal matter, the EU rejects this, she said, adding that the EU will continue to stand by the people of Hong Kong.

Although the EP resolution is a legally non-binding document, it contributes to the European Parliament’s efforts to champion human rights in the world. It is now time for member states to finally get serious about China.

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Human Rights, China and the Winter Olympics – Can democratic unity prevail?

By Dr Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy for *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (20.01.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3ASYVkh> - On February 4-20 Beijing will host the 24th Winter Olympics. Just weeks before the Games, China is battling multiple coronavirus outbreaks in several cities. The authorities are [doubling down](#) on their authoritarian virus-fighting methods, including their “zero-tolerance” COVID-19 policy rooted in [digital surveillance](#).

But as Beijing is struggling to hold up in the face of the omicron variant and ensure the Games go ahead undisturbed, the Chinese leadership is facing bigger challenges. For years, Beijing has attempted to frame an alternative model of ‘democracy’ in its search for a [legitimation narrative](#), while at the same time committing [the most horrendous human rights violations](#). This has put China at odds with democracies across the globe, with Beijing claiming the ‘West’ is seeking to undermine its sovereignty and political authority.

Given such normative differences, and mindful of the reality that democracies see China both as an important trade partner and as a security threat, the international community has so far failed to ensure China lives up to its own international commitments. The lack of coordination and consistency of democracies has emboldened China to weaponize trade and pursue its own agenda at the expense of human rights.

With the Games around the corner, democracies have the responsibility to stand together in the defence of human rights. A shared position concerning the Games must be part of a common strategy for the defence of human rights in China built on effective coordination. Will democracies stand together?

To boycott or not to boycott

“The Biden administration will not send any diplomatic or official representation to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, given the PRC’s ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses,” White House press secretary Jen Psaki [said](#) in December.

[New Zealand](#) became the first to join the US, with Deputy Prime Minister Grant Robertson saying the move was more influenced by safety concerns over the pandemic than rights issues. [Canada](#), [Australia](#) and [Britain](#) all followed Washington in announcing a political boycott. [Japan](#) said it would not dispatch a government delegation, but refused to call it a boycott, while [South Korea](#) also declined to join in, saying China’s “constructive efforts” were needed for denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula.

Seen in the context of the Indo-Pacific, ambiguity concerning China is not surprising. The US and China have been entangled in a long-term [strategic competition](#) for influence in the region, both projecting varying levels of influence onto the countries therein.

But while competing visions and objectives for the Indo-Pacific persist, democracies have consolidated security partnerships and regional cooperation, as seen, for example, through the revival of the [Quad](#) or the establishment of [AUKUS](#). These initiatives reflect interest in a shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, and can facilitate convergence regarding China.

The reality for now, however, is that expectations of an alignment with Washington's objectives in the region are not realistic. China has inextricable [trade links](#) with most of the Indo-Pacific nations and holds key positions in the regional value chains. If democracies in the Indo-Pacific are serious about their commitment to a rules-based order, they must support each other in their diversification efforts in trade and investment. By diverting China, they can reduce their vulnerabilities and strengthen their position vis-à-vis Beijing, ensuring that human rights are not marginalized.

Transatlantic relations have also seen positive developments in ways to deal with a more assertive China. After the EU imposed [sanctions](#) against Chinese officials over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang, the US, UK and Canada joined in, with UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab [saying](#) that the international community will "act in concert to hold those responsible to account".

Brussels and Beijing

Concerning the EU's own stance on China, things are complicated. While Brussels has been moving from a naïve to a [realistic approach](#) to China, the bloc remains divided. This is no different regarding the Olympics. While [Denmark](#) and [Belgium](#) aligned themselves with Washington, [The Netherlands](#) said it would not send officials to the Games, but insisted this was not a political boycott. While [France](#) announced it would not boycott the Olympics, Annalena Baerbock, the Foreign Minister of [Germany](#), China's largest [trade partner](#) in the EU, said she would boycott the Games, but the country's new chancellor, Olaf Scholz, did not echo her stance. In contrast, [Lithuania](#), the country that has recently been most exposed to China's economic coercion, announced that neither its president, nor ministers would attend.

In spite of [French ambitions](#) to coordinate, EU foreign ministers failed to agree on an EU-level boycott at their latest [meeting](#) in Brest. They couldn't even reach a shared approach, which could have come in the shape of a strong-worded EU-level statement sending a message of unity that human rights matter as much as the single market, which, in the words of German State Secretary at the Economy Ministry, Franziska Brantner, is "[sacred](#)".

This would have been the correct follow up to the European Parliament's 2021 [resolution](#) which called for the EU to boycott the Games unless Beijing demonstrates "a verifiable improvement in the human rights situation in Hong Kong, the Xinjiang Uyghur Region, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and elsewhere in China".

Unity, the way forward

In response to Washington's boycott, Beijing [accused](#) the US of betraying Olympic principles and said Washington would "pay a price". The threat of retaliation is central to Beijing's *modus operandi*, increasingly willing to exercise economic pressure to advance its interests.

After Taiwan opened a representative office in Lithuania under its own [name](#), Beijing didn't only [retaliate](#) bilaterally, but it went after Lithuania's trading partners in Europe, undermining the integrity of the European single market. Brussels has only [a few cards to play](#) and remains ill-equipped to protect itself from such economic coercion and to uphold human rights at once.

In reality, no country in the EU has faced the level of economic coercion that Lithuania has for the past months. Similarly, no country has for decades lived under an [existential threat](#) as much as Taiwan has. Their standing up to Chinese aggression should inspire the way forward, concerning the Games and beyond. They must strive for unity and

pursue joint action, including through the development of defensive trade tools against economic coercion and via legislative acts for the defence of human rights. Like-minded democracies have lessons to learn from Lithuania and Taiwan.

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An open letter to United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres

We are a coalition of over 250 global civil society groups representing Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hongkongers, Chinese, Southern Mongolians, Taiwanese, and other affected and concerned communities. We are writing to you with serious concerns about reports that you have accepted an invitation to attend the Beijing 2022 Olympic Games.

Since the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games, we have witnessed human rights abuses across all regions under Chinese rule spiral into an abyss. Extensive evidence highlights the government's systematic use of torture and suppression of human rights defenders, excessive use of force against peaceful protesters, and large-scale arrests of journalists, women's rights activists and lawyers. Freedom and democracy in Hong Kong have been entirely dismantled; Tibet is completely sealed off from the outside world; and state-led genocide and crimes against humanity—the gravest human rights abuses under international law—including mass detentions, torture, sexual abuse and persecution are being carried out against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.

The extreme nature of these violations has been widely acknowledged by United Nations (UN) special procedures mechanisms and treaty bodies. In June 2020 [more than 50 independent UN human rights experts](#) expressed grave concern at China's mass violations and called on "the international community to act collectively and decisively to ensure China respects human rights and abides by its international obligations." They further urged "the UN Human Rights Council to act with a sense of urgency to take all appropriate measures to monitor Chinese human rights practices."

The Chinese government's disregard for human rights can also be seen inside the UN by repeatedly blocking targeted sanctions against rights-abusing governments at the UN Security Council, attempting to silence debate at the Human Rights Council, and refusing to use its considerable leverage in some of the worst human rights crises.

In light of the evidence of the severe and downward spiral of human rights abuses, it is highly inappropriate for you, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to attend any part of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Games.

Your participation would undermine the United Nations' efforts to hold China accountable and go against the core principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant treaties. Furthermore, as the highest representative of the UN, your attendance will be seen as credence to China's blatant disregard for international human rights laws and serve to embolden the actions of the Chinese authorities.

We therefore urge you to reconsider your decision to attend the 2022 Beijing Winter Games.

Yours sincerely,

See the list of signatories [here](#).

Beijing's Taiwan territorial claims lack justification

There is no rational justification for a demand for the "reunification" of Taiwan with the PRC

A commentary by Aaron Rhodes

Radio Free Asia (26.12.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3ptZjSw> - Xi Jinping and other Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders are ramping up rhetoric about the necessity of "unifying" China by bringing Taiwan under their control as a "[sacrosanct mission of the entire Chinese people](#)."

Since 1949, the uneasy status quo in relations between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has allowed both to build their societies, and even cooperate, without it leading to overt conflict. But Beijing is now threatening to attempt a military solution that could lead to a devastating global war. In this situation, a sober examination of historical facts is appropriate.

A right to territory is generally based on historical precedent, cultural and ethnic affinity, political consensus or military conquest. China's claims on Taiwan are unconvincing when measured according to the first three of these criteria.

First, let's look back in history as far as possible. Mainland authorities have repeatedly [claimed](#) that "Taiwan has belonged to China since ancient times. The Chinese people first developed Taiwan." In fact, Taiwan was first [settled](#) by Austronesian peoples 6,500 years ago, members of the same cultural group that moved into a number of South Asian territories; some current citizens of Taiwan retain this identity.

The earliest official mainland Chinese government agency in Taiwan was not established until [1281 AD](#), when the Yuan Dynasty placed a patrol and inspection unit in Penghu, an island located between mainland China and Taiwan. From 1624, Taiwan was [occupied](#) by the Dutch. The first Han Chinese regime [was established](#) in Taiwan in 1662.

China ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895. In 1945, after the end of World War II and the Japanese occupation, Taiwan was [returned](#) to the Republic of China (ROC). In 1949, after the government of the ROC was driven from the mainland by victorious Communist forces in the Chinese Civil War, it established itself on Taiwan. Historically, mainland Chinese regimes thus only fully controlled Taiwan for 237 years out of the island's recorded history. Taiwan has never been part of the state established by the Communist Party in 1949. There is no rational justification for a demand for the "reunification" of Taiwan with the PRC, either on the basis of ancient or recent history.

Today, [over 95 percent](#) of Taiwan's 23.5 million people are Han Chinese, the result of waves of migration from the mainland over centuries, and thus share a root identity with the dominant ethnic group in PRC, in the same manner as many white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Americans share a cultural identity with most citizens of the United Kingdom, from which their ancestors immigrated centuries ago.

In the decades since the Republic of China established itself on Taiwan, however, its people have developed a unique and independent political and national identity. Originally a highly authoritarian state, the ROC has become a model of peaceful democratic transformation. While the mainland regime is totalitarian, Taiwan is [one](#) of the most free and democratic countries in the world.

Public sentiment in Taiwan is overwhelmingly opposed to becoming assimilated into Communist China, and [favors](#) Taiwan as an independent, democratic state. Before Xi began to threaten Taiwan, many Taiwanese supported a policy of "One China Two Interpretations," and wanted closer economic ties to the PRC. But with increasingly hostile signals from Beijing, those views have [receded](#).

One wonders if most mainland Chinese might support a status quo with Taiwan, while their rulers gin up irredentist aggression through ruthless media manipulation. Taiwan and the PRC have much to gain by peaceful cooperation, just as both the PRC and Hong Kong benefited from their economic cooperation.

But Xi Jinping and the CCP, without clear historical or cultural foundations, or political support for merging Taiwan into Communist China, are aiming to justify their territorial claim by conquering Taiwan militarily, creating a fact on the ground by force. The regime is preparing for a war to gain control of Taiwan by pouring resources into [a nuclear and conventional military build-up](#) in the face of an almost total lack of support for unification by the people of Taiwan.

An attempt to occupy Taiwan by force could lead to war with the United States, Japan, Australia and other countries, a war with devastating social, economic and environmental consequences. Even if an invasion were initially successful, the "reunification" of China would require long-term brutality that would destroy not only countless lives, but also the reputation and authority China has been attempting to build in the international community. It would halt China's economic progress.

Irredentism has long served fascist regimes, like those of Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, which have used the dream of recovering "lost" territories to stoke aggressive ethnic nationalism, and bolster their own fragile legitimacy. Xi Jinping's plan to subvert the democracy on Taiwan is not only historically, but also morally indefensible.

Aaron Rhodes is Senior Fellow in the Common Sense Society, and President of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe. He is the author of The Debasement of Human Rights.

Naomi Osaka expresses 'shock' over missing Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai

Former world No 1 joins others in voicing concern for Peng, who has not been seen since accusing ex-vice-premier of sexual assault

By Helen Davidson

The Guardian (17.11.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3FvzUqi> - Former world No 1 tennis star [Naomi Osaka](#) has joined the growing calls for answers on the whereabouts of Chinese player Peng Shuai, who has not been heard from publicly since she accused the country's former vice premier of sexually assaulting her.

Peng, one of China's biggest sporting stars, made the claims in a Weibo post on 2 November, [in which she alleged](#) Zhang Gaoli coerced her into sex and that they had an intermittent affair.

The Women's [Tennis](#) Association has called for an investigation and its chief executive, Steve Simon, has said that while they have received "assurances" Peng is safe, they have not been able to reach her.

Osaka, who has previously been ranked the best player in the women's game, issued a statement on Wednesday expressing shock at how Peng had "gone missing shortly after revealing she has been sexually abused".

"Censorship is never OK at any cost, I hope Peng Shuai and her family are safe and OK. I'm in shock of the current situation and I'm sending love and light her way. #whereispengshuai," said the Japanese player.

Osaka's statement followed a rush of calls by tennis stars earlier this week expressing their concern over Peng's silence.

The Chinese government has not responded to the allegations. A spokesman for the ministry of foreign affairs, which deals with international media, told reporters he was not aware of the situation.

"I have not heard of the issue you raised," the spokesman, Zhao Lijian said. "This is not a diplomatic question."

Peng's post went viral on Chinese social media, despite it being taken down by censors within minutes. Subsequent posts and reactions, even keywords such as "tennis", also appeared to be blocked, and numerous references to Peng were scrubbed from China's internet.

Peng's Weibo account is active, but has no mention of Zhang and comments appear to have been disabled.

In her post, the 35-year-old alleged she and Zhang, 75, had an on-off extramarital "relationship" over several years, which she said he tried to keep secret. Peng said Zhang had stopped contacting her after he rose in the ranks of the Communist party.

About three years ago, she alleged, Zhang invited her to play tennis with him and his wife and then sexually assaulted her in his house. "I never consented that afternoon, crying all the time," she wrote.

'Some are just psychopaths': Chinese detective in exile reveals extent of torture against Uyghurs

By Rebecca Wright, Ivan Watson, Zahid Mahmood and Tom Booth

CNN (05.10.2021) - <https://cnn.it/2ZOQXuk> - The raids started after midnight in [Xinjiang](#).

Hundreds of police officers armed with rifles went house to house in Uyghur communities in the far western region of China, pulling people from their homes, handcuffing and hooding them, and threatening to shoot them if they resisted, a former Chinese police detective tells CNN.

"We took (them) all forcibly overnight," he said. "If there were hundreds of people in one county in this area, then you had to arrest these hundreds of people."

The ex-detective turned whistleblower asked to be identified only as Jiang, to protect his family members who remain in China.

In a three-hour interview with CNN, conducted in Europe where he is now in exile, Jiang revealed rare details on what he described as a systematic campaign of torture against ethnic Uyghurs in the region's detention camp system, [claims China has denied for years](#).

"Kick them, beat them (until they're) bruised and swollen," Jiang said, recalling how he and his colleagues used to interrogate detainees in police detention centers. "Until they kneel on the floor crying."

During his time in Xinjiang, Jiang said every new detainee was beaten during the interrogation process -- including men, women and children as young as 14.

The methods included shackling people to a metal or wooden "tiger chair" -- chairs designed to immobilize suspects -- hanging people from the ceiling, sexual violence, electrocutions, and waterboarding. Inmates were often forced to stay awake for days, and denied food and water, he said.

"Everyone uses different methods. Some even use a wrecking bar, or iron chains with locks," Jiang said. "Police would step on the suspect's face and tell him to confess."

The suspects were accused of terror offenses, said Jiang, but he believes that "none" of the hundreds of prisoners he was involved in arresting had committed a crime. "They are ordinary people," he said.

The torture in police detention centers only stopped when the suspects confessed, Jiang said. Then they were usually transferred to another facility, like a [prison or an internment camp](#) manned by prison guards.

In order to help verify his testimony, Jiang showed CNN his police uniform, official documents, photographs, videos, and identification from his time in China, most of which can't be published to protect his identity. CNN has submitted detailed questions to the Chinese government about his accusations, so far without a response.

CNN cannot independently confirm Jiang's claims, but multiple details of his recollections echo the experiences of two Uyghur victims CNN interviewed for this report. More than 50 former inmates of the camp system also provided testimony to Amnesty International

for a 160-page report released in June, "'Like We Were Enemies in a War': China's Mass Internment, Torture, and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang."

The US State Department estimates that up to 2 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have been detained in [internment camps in Xinjiang](#) since 2017. China says the camps are vocational, aimed at combating terrorism and separatism, and has repeatedly denied accusations of human rights abuses in the region.

"I want to reiterate that the so-called [genocide in Xinjiang](#) is nothing but a rumor backed by ulterior motives and an outright lie," said Zhao Lijian, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, during a news conference in June.

On Wednesday, officials from the Xinjiang government even introduced a man at a news conference they said was a former detainee, who denied there was torture in the camps, calling such allegations "utter lies." It was unclear if he was speaking under duress.

'Everyone needs to hit a target'

The first time Jiang was deployed to Xinjiang, he said he was eager to travel there to help defeat a terror threat he was told could threaten his country. After more than 10 years in the police force, he was also keen for a promotion.

He said his boss had asked him to take the post, telling him that "separatist forces want to split the motherland. We must kill them all."

Jiang said he was deployed "three or four" times from his usual post in mainland China to work in several areas of Xinjiang during the height of China's "Strike Hard" anti-terror campaign.

Launched in 2014, the ["Strike Hard" campaign](#) promoted a mass detention program of the region's ethnic minorities, who could be sent to a prison or an internment camp for simply "wearing a veil," growing "a long beard," or having too many children.

Jiang showed CNN one document with an official directive issued by Beijing in 2015, calling on other provinces of China to join the fight against terrorism in the country "to convey the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions when listening to the report on counter-terrorism work."

Jiang was told that 150,000 police assistants were recruited from provinces around mainland China under a scheme called "Aid Xinjiang," a program that encouraged mainland provinces to provide help to areas of Xinjiang, including public security resources. The temporary postings were financially rewarding -- Jiang said he received double his normal salary and other benefits during his deployment.

But quickly, Jiang became disillusioned with his new job -- and the purpose of the crackdown.

"I was surprised when I went for the first time," Jiang said. "There were security checks everywhere. Many restaurants and places are closed. Society was very intense."

During the routine overnight operations, Jiang said they would be given lists of names of people to round up, as part of orders to meet official quotas on the numbers of Uyghurs to detain.

"It's all planned, and it has a system," Jiang said. "Everyone needs to hit a target."

If anyone resisted arrest, the police officers would "hold the gun against his head and say do not move. If you move, you will be killed."

He said teams of police officers would also search people's houses and download the data from their computers and phones.

Another tactic was to use the area's neighborhood committee to call the local population together for a meeting with the village chief, before detaining them en masse.

Describing the time as a "combat period," Jiang said officials treated Xinjiang like a war zone, and police officers were told that Uyghurs were enemies of the state.

He said it was common knowledge among police officers that 900,000 Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities were detained in the region in a single year.

Jiang said if he had resisted the process, he would have been arrested, too.

'Some are just psychopaths'

Inside the police detention centers, the main goal was to extract a confession from detainees, with sexual torture being one of the tactics, Jiang said.

"If you want people to confess, you use the electric baton with two sharp tips on top," Jiang said. "We would tie two electrical wires on the tips and set the wires on their genitals while the person is tied up."

He admitted he often had to play "bad cop" during interrogations but said he avoided the worst of the violence, unlike some of his colleagues.

"Some people see this as a job, some are just psychopaths," he said.

One "very common measure" of torture and dehumanization was for guards to order prisoners to rape and abuse the new male inmates, Jiang said.

Abduweli Ayup, a 48-year-old Uyghur scholar from Xinjiang, said he was detained on August 19, 2013, when police picked him up at the Uyghur kindergarten he had opened to teach young children their native language. They then drove him to his nearby house, which he said was surrounded by police carrying rifles.

On his first night in a police detention center in the city of Kashgar, Ayup says he was gang-raped by more than a dozen Chinese inmates, who had been directed to do this by "three or four" prison guards who also witnessed the assault.

"The prison guards, they asked me to take off my underwear" before telling him to bend over, he said. "Don't do this, I cried. Please don't do this."

He said he passed out during the attack and woke up surrounded by his own vomit and urine.

"I saw the flies, just like flying around me," Ayup said. "I found that the flies are better than me. Because no one can torture them, and no one can rape them."

"I saw that those guys (were) laughing at me, and (saying) he's so weak," he said. "I heard those words." He says the humiliation continued the next day, when the prison guards asked him, "Did you have a good time?"

He said he was transferred from the police detention center to an internment camp, and was eventually released on November 20, 2014, after being forced to confess to a crime of "illegal fundraising."

His time in detention came before the wider crackdown in the region, but it reflects some of the alleged tactics used to suppress the ethnic minority population which Uyghur people had complained about for years.

CNN is awaiting response from the Chinese government about Ayup's testimony.

Now living in Norway, Ayup is still teaching and also writing Uyghur language books for children, to try to keep his culture alive. But he says the trauma of his torture will stay with him forever.

"It's the scar in my heart," he said. "I will never forget."

'They hung us up and beat us'

Omir Bekali, who now lives in the Netherlands, is also struggling with the long-term legacy of his experiences within the camp system.

"The agony and the suffering we had (in the camp) will never vanish, will never leave our mind," Bekali, 45, told CNN.

Bekali was born in Xinjiang to a Uyghur mother and a Kazakh father, and he moved to Kazakhstan where he got citizenship in 2006. During a business trip to Xinjiang, he said he was detained on March 26, 2017, then a week later he was interrogated and tortured for four days and nights in the basement of a police station in Karamay City.

"They put me in a tiger chair," Bekali said. "They hung us up and beat us on the thigh, on the hips with wooden torches, with iron whips."

He said police tried to force him to confess to supporting terrorism, and he spent the following eight months in a series of internment camps.

"When they put the chains on my legs the first time, I understood immediately I am coming to hell," Bekali said. He said heavy chains were attached to prisoners' hands and feet, forcing them to stay bent over, even when they were sleeping.

He said he lost around half his body weight during his time there, saying he "looked like a skeleton" when he emerged.

"I survived from this psychological torture because I am a religious person," Bekali said. "I would never have survived this without my faith. My faith for life, my passion for freedom kept me alive."

During his time in the camps, Bekali said two people that he knew died there. He also says his mother, sister and brother were interned in the camps, and he was told his father Bakri Ibrayim died while detained in Xinjiang on September 18, 2018.

Xinjiang government officials responded to CNN's questions about Bekali during the Wednesday news conference, when they confirmed he had been detained for eight months on suspected terror offenses. But officials said his claims of torture and his family's detention were "total rumors and slander." His father died of liver cancer, they said, and his family is "currently leading a normal life."

'I am guilty'

From his new home in Europe, former detective Jiang struggles to sleep for more than a couple of hours at a time. The enduring suffering of those who went through the camp system plays on his mind; he feels like he's close to a breakdown.

"I am now numb," Jiang said. "I used to arrest so many people."

Former inmate Ayup also struggles to sleep at night, as he suffers with nightmares of his time in detention, and is unable to escape the constant feeling he is being watched. But he said he still forgives the prison guards who tortured him.

"I don't hate (them)," Ayup said. "Because all of them, they're a victim of that system." "They sentence themselves there," he added. "They are criminals; they are a part of this criminal system."

Jiang said even before his time in Xinjiang, he had become "disappointed" with the Chinese Communist Party due to increasing levels of corruption.

"They were pretending to serve the people, but they were a bunch of people who wanted to achieve a dictatorship," he said. In fleeing China and exposing his experience there, he said he wanted to "stand on the side of the people."

Now, Jiang knows he can never return to China -- "they'll beat me half to death," he said.

"I'd be arrested. There would be a lot of problems. Defection, treason, leaking government secrets, subversion. (I'd get) them all," he said.

"The fact that I speak for Uyghurs (means I) could be charged for participating in a terrorist group. I could be charged for everything imaginable."

When asked what he would do if he came face-to-face with one of his former victims, he said he would be "scared" and would "leave immediately."

"I am guilty, and I'd hope that a situation like this won't happen to them again," Jiang said. "I'd hope for their forgiveness, but it'd be too difficult for people who suffered from torture like that."

"How do I face these people?" he added. "Even if you're just a soldier, you're still responsible for what happened. You need to execute orders, but so many people did this thing together. We're responsible for this."

EU votes for diplomats to boycott China Winter Olympics over rights abuses

Non-binding [resolution](#) also calls for governments to impose further sanctions on China as tensions rise

By Helen Davidson

The Guardian (09.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3wyXLHf> - The European parliament has overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling on diplomatic officials to boycott the 2022 Beijing [Winter Olympics](#) in response to continuing human rights abuses by the Chinese

government. In escalating tensions between the EU and China, the non-binding resolution also called for governments to impose further sanctions, provide emergency visas to Hong Kong journalists and further support Hongkongers to move to [Europe](#).

It was passed with 578 votes in favour to 29 against, with 73 abstentions, and was supported by all of Europe's mainstream political groups, including the centre-right European People's party (EPP) group of the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the centrists of France's Emmanuel Macron.

The 28-point [resolution](#) called for EU officials and member states to [decline all government and diplomatic invitations](#) to the 2022 Winter Olympics "unless the Chinese government demonstrates a verifiable improvement in the human rights situation in Hong Kong, the Xinjiang Uyghur region, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and elsewhere in China".

The resolution had a focus on [the Hong Kong crackdown](#) and cited numerous specific instances of concern, including "notably" the shutdown of the pro-democracy newspaper [Apple Daily](#) and prosecution of staff and owners, the introduction and use of the national security law and a do-in community hotline, and changes to education, the courts, and elections.

"The promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law should remain at the centre of the longstanding relationship between the EU and [China](#), in line with the EU's commitment to upholding these values in its external action and China's expressed interest in adhering to them in its own development and international cooperation," it said.

Beijing has so far resisted calls for it to improve its human rights record in the face of an [Olympics boycott movement](#), instead denying any wrongdoing and accusing countries of interfering in internal affairs.

In response to separate boycott calls by the UK's Labour party, China's ministry of foreign affairs said on Thursday it accused some people of attempting to disrupt or sabotage the Olympics "out of political motivation".

"China firmly opposes the politicisation of sports, and the interference in other countries' internal affairs by using human rights issues as a pretext," said the ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin.

The EU resolution is the latest flashpoint between the EU and China over the latter's human rights issues, with recent tit-for-tat sanctions prompting the freezing of a [trade deal](#) before it was even ratified. The resolution said the deal would stay blocked until China lifted sanctions on EU parliamentarians and scholars.

China's nationalistic state-owned tabloid, the Global Times, decried the resolution as the act of "a collection of the most radical and extreme ideologies in western society, providing a stage for various political vices attempting to draw wide attention".

"At the [European parliament], regardless of facts, responsibility and consequences, those anti-China forces just attempt to achieve the loudest voice and biggest impact," it said, advising the body to "restrain themselves". "Beijing will not exchange China's core interests for some European forces' support of the Winter [Olympic Games](#)."

However, the editorial said the "destructive" effect of the EU parliament could not be underestimated, noting the blocked trade deal. "This proves that their efforts are not that futile," it said.

CCP: 100th Anniversary of the party who killed 50 million

Should we congratulate the Chinese Communist Party for killing more human beings than anybody else in history?

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (01.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3h1r76c> - Finally, here we are. The party for the Party starts, and what Chinese media have called the most memorable celebration in modern history hails the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Even some Western leaders are congratulating the Party. They offer as an excuse that the CCP achieved remarkable successes in the struggle against poverty or, as they said, "lifted millions of Chinese out of hunger." Scholars have proved that statistics on the wonderful successes of China in eradicating poverty are largely false or inflated. Nobody denies the economic progresses in China, but other countries have obtained similar or better results without killing a large number of their own citizens in the process.

There is only one world record the CCP holds without dispute, one we should all remember today in our meditations and prayers. No organization in human history killed more human beings than the CCP. Not Nazi Germany, nor Soviet Russia, not even the Mongol Invasions. The table above is based on averages obtained by comparing estimates by leading scholars of different genocides and "democides" (i.e., the extermination by a regime of a part of its own populations). They include executions, massacres, civilian victims of wars of conquest, deaths for exhaustion in labor camps, human-provoked famines and epidemics.

We have used averages from three or more leading scholars for each organization or event, have included scholars skeptical of higher figures, and have not been shy in mentioning the sins of the West. By using this method, in the United States and Canada 10 million native Americans were exterminated, including those who died because of epidemics and famines that could have been prevented and were generated by their encounters with the colonizers (we are aware mainline figures are contested as inflated by some revisionist authors). And 12 million (although many documents have been destroyed, and statistics are difficult) died when King Leopold II of Belgium ruled as a private possession Congo Free State and tortured, executed, and led to death by overwork and starvation millions of its inhabitants.

We are also aware of the ongoing debate about the 1997 French Black Book of Communism (which was published in English in 1999 by Harvard University Press), and criticism that certain figures may have been overestimated as part of the authors' effort to come to the round figure of 100 million. We have compared the Black Book data with other sources. However, we disagree with the criticism that victims of human-made famines such as the Holodomor in Russia or the Great Leap Forward should not be counted. These famines would not have happened if not for the criminal behavior of the regimes that caused them.

For China, our estimate of 50 million victims is extremely conservative. Others believe the figure to be closer to 80 million. During the Civil War, the Communist killed some 3 million civilians, often for the sole reason that they were perceived as "class enemies." (The Nationalists also killed many civilians, of course). In the immediate years after seizing the power, the CCP under Chairman Mao executed at least one million Chinese labeled as "class enemies" or "counter-revolutionaries." There were also human-created famines before 1958, which made another 500,000 victims. The Great Leap Forward and its consequence, the Great Chinese Famine, happened in 1958–1962, and are widely

regarded as the greatest human-made disaster in history. Again, victim estimates vary and by using our method of finding an average between different reliable scholars we counted 38.5 million (others believe the number to be much higher). A less controversial figure indicates in 1,5 million those who were executed during the Great Leap Forward to get rid of opponents and whistleblowers. 2 million is a conservative estimate of those killed during the Cultural Revolution. Scholars believe that excluding the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) periods, victims from 1950 to Tiananmen (1989) who were either executed, killed extra-judicially, killed during the repression of protests, and starved or exhausted to death in labor camps were at least 3 million. By counting 500,000 victims of the post-Tiananmen era, we consider some scholarly “minimalist” accounts of deaths in Tibet and Xinjiang to remain true to our method, although we suspect that the CCP in recent years has been much more lethal.

We are aware that the total result, 50 million, is a very conservative estimate. The late Rudolph J. Rummel, whom the CCP and some Western historians like to criticize but who was a respected American scholar with an unimpeachable academic career, originally estimated victims of the CCP up to the year 1987 (obviously, the CCP continued to kill after that date) to 38.7 million but, as new documents surfaced, particularly about the Great Leap Forward, revised his estimate to 76.7 million.

50 or 76.7 million, each unit in this statistic refers to a human being, who lived, loved, hoped, had relatives and friends, and believed in a future that the CCP cruelly destroyed. If we should celebrate something on July 1, we should celebrate the victims. Bitter Winter did it on June 11, when we offered a laurel wreath at the Washington DC monument to the Victims of Communism in memory of those murdered by the CCP, during an international ceremony organized by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, an organization authorized by a unanimous act of the U.S. Congress in 1993. Physically or metaphorically, please have your laurel wreath ready today, and shed a tear for the (at least) 50 million victims of the most criminal organization that ever devoted itself to mass murder in human history.

The CCP at 100: What next for human rights in EU-China relations?

By Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy

9Dashline (01.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3jFm839> - July 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. The CCP, as the ruling, and self-proclaimed “great, glorious, and correct” political party of modern China, has overseen the country’s economic growth, and imposed communist ideology and absolute party-state control over citizens’ lives. The CCP today remains central to society and the daily experiences that have shaped the Chinese people. July 2021 also marks 26 years since Brussels and Beijing launched a specific dialogue on human rights. The goal, as both established, was to engage and conduct open and frank discussions on “jointly agreed key priority areas”. Yet, in the following years, human rights have become one of their most challenging policy areas, even deciding the fate of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment.

In light of grand strategic, but increasingly mutually exclusive ambitions, namely Brussels’ ‘geopolitical’ agenda and Beijing’s ‘Chinese Dream’ to realise national rejuvenation and achieve great-power status, what are the prospects for human rights to gain a more prominent role in EU-China relations? With its toughening stance on China, but confronted with the enormous ideological challenge of the CCP as it turns 100, can

Brussels address the discursive dissonance burdening EU-China ties, and champion human dignity for all?

The big picture

In China's particular brand of authoritarianism, control remains key. Under President Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has tightened its grip over society and strengthened ideological control; minorities suffer mass arbitrary detention, surveillance, and indoctrination. Externally, seeing human rights as an "existential threat", Beijing has sought to undermine international human rights standards and institutions, including working to weaken the UN Human Rights Council, that could hold it to account, and promote alternative views at the expense of liberal democratic values.

As China entails a multi-dimensional threat to Europe, it requires a multi-dimensional strategy. Conferring a prominent role to human rights in its approach to China will be vital for Brussels' efforts to champion human rights for all.

Overall, the EU-China strategic partnership hit its lowest point in 2021, intensifying the underlying mutual distrust, with democracy, human rights, and rule of law remaining significant 'problems'. Politically, democratic governance in the EU is grappling with the ideological challenge of an authoritarian China. This is all the more dangerous to an EU weakened by its crisis management mode for over a decade, following the 2008 global financial crisis, migration, Brexit, with the pandemic accelerating negative trends such as rising populism and nationalism.

Along with internal challenges to democracy, external factors, such as the United States' abdication of power under President Trump and an aggressive Russia, have also affected self-perceptions inside the EU, forcing a re-evaluation of its global role, with an increasing number of voices urging greater self-reliance and resilience, or 'strategic autonomy'.

The EU's internal vulnerability has encouraged the CCP to double down on unofficial channels to influence internal debate and the political system in the EU, through opaque, deceptive or manipulative operations. This has meant going beyond legitimate public diplomacy, including using disinformation and 'wolf warrior' diplomacy to undermine Western democracies and sow internal divisions. In 2014, President Xi referred to the United Front Work Department (UFWD), a CCP-organisation to exert influence abroad, as a "magic weapon" for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people, there to serve the CCP's efforts "to seize victory, construction, and reform".

China's economic diplomacy and renewed mercantilism have served the CCP's ambitions to become a driver of change, fuelling a sentiment of national pride, supported by the belligerent 'wolf warriors' defending their country's national interests. Through initiatives such as the 16+1 framework, Beijing sought to divide the EU, damaging its ability to act cohesively on foreign policy issues, including on human rights. While trade remains a shared priority, the glaring asymmetry in market access has served the interests of the Chinese state and its state-owned enterprises (SOEs) at the expense of their European counterparts.

The 'problem' of human rights

"The reality is that the EU and China have fundamental divergences, be it about their economic systems and managing globalisation, democracy and human rights", European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and EEAS High Representative Josep Borrell recently said. As China's human rights record remains dismal, their divergence has only intensified.

In this climate of confrontation, holding China to honour its own commitments to respect human rights has grown to be an even bigger challenge. Human rights have always been a 'sensitive issue' — whereas Brussels sees these as universal and therefore up for discussion, Beijing perceives them as a domestic affair and therefore off-limits. As a result, the human rights dialogue established in 1995 to identify "jointly agreed key priority areas" never facilitated a convergence of views. Instead, the gap between the discourse in joint EU-China statements to embrace human rights, and the practice to effectively cooperate towards their protection has only widened.

Discourse has always played a powerful role in shaping bilateral relations. Since 2003, both parties have framed each other as 'strategic partners', agreeing "to continue to consolidate and develop the partnership to the benefit of both sides". Yearly summit statements have reiterated a bilateral cooperation approach based on "a considerable number of common priorities". In their 2019 summit, the two sides even recognised "their responsibility to lead by example" in global governance and reaffirmed that "all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated".

Yet, the reality of human rights in EU-China relations is one of normative divergence, which paradoxically, co-exists with growing bilateral trade, albeit to varying degrees for individual member states, despite headwinds to Chinese investment across the bloc.

CAI – values vs. interests?

Brussels' toughening stance on China, however, suggests that in the future human rights could play a more prominent role in bilateral ties. With the EU labelling China "a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance", a political reckoning is taking place on the kind of relationship Brussels wants to have with an increasingly authoritarian government that is oppressing its own people and undermining democracy abroad, as it continues to invest in Europe's critical infrastructure.

The reckoning includes reflections on the role Brussels — and member states — want the EU to play in the world, including in the Indo-Pacific, a region shaped by China's power projection, and the multilateral strategic alignment of like-minded democracies. A vocal European Parliament has been consistently pushing for "a new and more robust strategy to deal with a more assertive China", urging the EU to use its economic leverage to challenge China's crackdown on human rights by economic means.

In the early months of 2021, Brussels' and Beijing's diverging positions on human rights shaped the fate of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI). Following the conclusion of negotiations on CAI in December 2020, the EU sanctioned Chinese officials believed to be involved in human rights violations of the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang. In a significant step forward for human rights protection, Brussels imposed these sanctions under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime adopted in December 2020. Beijing retaliated with its own counter-sanctions on European individuals, including MEPs whose support was vital to CAI.

Signalling the European Parliament's (EP) willingness to prioritise human rights, its Members voted to freeze the CAI and called on the Commission to "use the debate around CAI as a leverage instrument to improve the protection of human rights and support for civil society in China". The EU is also adopting more robust measures to protect itself against perceived overseas threats, including an investment screening mechanism, and legislation to crack down on state-owned enterprises from outside the EU. EU institutions have agreed on a revised export control regime on cyber-surveillance and facial recognition software that can be used in human rights violations and issued a toolbox on 5G security and an action plan on disinformation. While the EP's role is

significant, it will be the member states' willingness that will shape Brussels' capacity to influence China's development.

The notion of Europe's normative power, particularly the idea that the EU can have a transformative impact on China, has been crucial in shaping the EU's approach to human rights. The concept is now side-lined by the perception that China is a "systemic rival". However, the past two decades have shown that despite the EU's efforts to shape China's development in line with international norms, "shared visions and interests" in bilateral relations, as the Commission stated in 2003, seem to be a thing of the past. Instead, Beijing is pursuing a grand strategy of reshaping and dominating the regional and international order through a variety of tools and influence campaigns. In this process, ideas, discourse, as well as critical technologies all matter. In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping spelt out his approach to international messaging as "working hard to create new concepts, new categories and new expressions that integrate the Chinese and the foreign, telling China's story well, communicating China's voice well".

Making China lovable

In June this year, President Xi said that "we must focus on setting the tone right, be open and confident but also modest and humble, and strive to create a credible, lovable and respectable image of China". This reveals the limits of the regime's heavy-handed style, and its failure to cultivate goodwill through soft power. Yet, instead of conforming to its own commitments to international norms and using genuine public diplomacy to win the hearts and minds of the world, the CCP is confronting the West while seeking to comfort its domestic audience. All this is geared to maintain its legitimacy.

The leadership's goal to build a "community of common destiny for mankind" as the primary aim of its foreign policy has however long raised questions in the international community. Document 9 raised even bigger questions, when reports appeared in the spring of 2013, that Party leadership was urged to guard against seven political "perils", including "universal values" and the promotion of "the West's view of media". Ironically, the communiqué urged Party members to strengthen resistance to "infiltration" by outside ideas and to handle with renewed vigilance all ideas, institutions, and people deemed threatening to unilateral Party rule. As the CCP celebrates its one hundred years, the message is to shape perceptions; to infiltrate and resist infiltration.

But the CCP's triumphalist rhetoric hides an inconvenient truth: the fracturing of Chinese society, due to ethnic and gender discrimination, as well as a severe rural-urban divide. Important sectors of society, whose support is vital for pursuing national goals, are unable to participate in China's intellectual and political life. As China faces dramatically declining birth rates, women still continue to be viewed as reproductive tools to achieve the nation's development goals.

Looking ahead

Does the decision to impose sanctions for human rights abuses in Xinjiang foretell Brussels' readiness to use its tools to ensure a more prominent role for human rights in EU-China relations? Beijing's attempts to manipulate Europe's political and economic vulnerabilities have brought about a backlash from EU member states, and decisive action from the European Parliament. But ultimately, it is the political will of member states that will be decisive in shaping the extent to which Brussels will use the measures in place and address human rights in its future dealings with Beijing.

"China is coming closer to us," said NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg with an ominous undertone. As China entails a multi-dimensional threat to Europe, it requires a

multi-dimensional strategy. Conferring a prominent role to human rights in its approach to China will be vital for Brussels' efforts to champion human rights for all.

DISCLAIMER: All views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent that of the 9DASHLINE.com platform.

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Missing Tibetan monk was sentenced, sent to prison, family says

Rinchen Tsultrim was accused of 'working to split the country,' a charge often leveled against Tibetans resisting assimilation into China's dominant Han culture.

By Sangyal Kunchok and Lobe

Radio Free Asia (24.06.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2SHKluB> - A Tibetan monk held incommunicado in custody following his arrest two years ago on suspicion of working to "split the country" was sentenced in a closed trial and is serving a four-and-a-half year prison term, family members say.

Rinchen Tsultrim, 29 at the time of his arrest, was taken into custody on July 27, 2019 in Sichuan's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county for peacefully expressing his thoughts on Tibetan political and social issues on social media, RFA was told in earlier reports.

He was then held without word given to his family on his whereabouts until earlier this year, Tsultrim's sister Kunsang Dolma told RFA, speaking from her home in exile in India.

"On March 23, 2021, my family in Tibet was informed by the Chinese authorities that my brother Rinchen Tsultrim was given a four-and-a-half year prison sentence without a fair trial and is now being held in [Sichuan's] Mianyang Prison," she said.

"He had been warned three times by the Chinese authorities for expressing his thoughts and writings on a range of Tibetan political, social, and cultural issues before he was arrested in 2019," Dolma said, adding, "At one time he was also compelled to sign some documents."

Tsultrim's ongoing contacts with Tibetans living in exile were another important factor leading to his arrest, a Tibetan living in exile in India told RFA's Tibetan Service in an earlier report.

Separatism, or "working to split the country," is an accusation often leveled by Chinese authorities against Tibetans opposing the assimilation of Tibet's distinctive national and cultural identity into China's dominant Han culture, and scores of monks, writers, educators, and musical performers have been arrested under the charge in recent years.

Communication clampdowns

Chinese authorities in Tibet continue to tighten controls over information flows in the region, arresting Tibetans for sharing news and opinions on social media and for contacting relatives living in exile, sometimes with news of anti-China protests, according to rights groups and other experts.

Particular targets of censors and police are images of the Dalai Lama shared on mobile phone and calls for the preservation of the Tibetan language, now under threat from government orders to establish Chinese as the main language of instruction in Tibetan schools.

Security is now being tightened in Tibet and Tibetan areas of China in the lead-up to the July 1 centenary celebration of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, said Golok Jigme, a former Tibetan political prisoner now living in exile in Switzerland.

“As the 100th founding anniversary of the CCP approaches, access to websites is being tightly controlled, and social media platforms are being especially closely watched,” Jigme said, citing sources in the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Gansu, and Qinghai.

“Anyone suspected of involvement in any kind of rebellious act is being taken into custody, because the Chinese government doesn’t want to take any chances.”

With Tibetans fearing the consequences of attention from the police, it has now become even more difficult than usual to receive news or other information from inside Tibet, Jigme said.

A formerly independent nation, Tibet was taken over and incorporated into China by force nearly 70 years ago, following which the Dalai Lama and thousands of his followers fled into exile in India, and Beijing maintains a tight grip on Tibet and on Tibetan-populated regions of western Chinese provinces.

China occupies sacred land in Bhutan, threatens India

The construction of Chinese villages in a holy Buddhist area in occupied Bhutanese territory is part of a wider anti-Indian strategy.

by Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (17.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3vwKPBW> - In early May, China announced that the construction of a new village called Gyalaphug in Tibetan or Jienuobu in Chinese had been completed in the southern part of Tibet Autonomous Region. There is only one problem with this, Gyalaphug is situated in Bhutan, not in China.

And there is more. We read in Foreign Policy on May 7 that China is building three villages (including Gyalaphug), “66 miles of new roads, a small hydropower station, two Communist Party administrative centers, a communications base, a disaster relief warehouse, five military or police outposts, and what are believed to be a major signals tower, a satellite receiving station, a military base, and up to six security sites and outposts,” all in Bhutanese territory.

What China is doing within the territory of a sovereign state is unprecedented, and the name of the area, “Beyul,” immediately evokes a deep religious meaning. In Tibetan Buddhism, beyuls are hidden valleys that the “second Buddha” Padmasambhava

designated in the 8th century CE as spiritual refuges. Beyuls are where the spiritual and the material world touch each other. They are also, Padmasambhava taught, where Buddhists will be able to retreat when the rest of the world will become too corrupt for their practice.

The exact number of beyuls designated by Padmasambhava is disputed, but Beyul Khenpajong, the area now occupied by the Chinese, is certainly one of them. By occupying another beyul, in addition to those in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, the CCP gives a powerful signal of its wish to keep Tibetan Buddhism under the Party's control.

The move has, however, also a geopolitical meaning. China and Bhutan do not maintain diplomatic relations, but there are periodical political talks, and wisely Bhutanese authorities have always tried to avoid a confrontational attitude towards their mammoth neighbor. They may choose to look the other side even when China occupies 495 square kilometers (191 square miles) of Bhutanese territory in the Beyul Khenpajong and Menchuma Valley area, although Foreign Policy commented that, "Given its incomparable importance for the Bhutanese and for Tibetan Buddhists in general, no Bhutanese official would ever formally relinquish this area to China, any more than Britain would yield Stonehenge or Italy Venice." It has never been a Chinese area, and China's claims are groundless.

Reportedly, in the political talks China has said it is willing to give back the part of Beyul Khenpajong it has occupied to Bhutan in exchange for another 269 square kilometers (104 square miles) of disputed areas—Doklam, Charithang, Sinchulungpa, Dramana, and Shakhatoe—in western Bhutan. Those areas are far away from Beyul Khenpajong, but close to the triple China-Bhutan-India border, and their control would offer to Beijing a decisive military advantage to threaten India.

Meanwhile, in China, hate campaigns against India do not subside. Bitter Winter reported about bad taste social media posts by official CCP institutions showing images of the cremation of India's COVID-19 victims accompanied by comments on India's supposed religion-based backwardness. While the posts were deleted, and criticized by many, Professor Shen Yi of Fudan University, who has become a social media hero in China for his ultra-nationalist comments, stated that the comparison of India's "backward" funeral pyres and China's "progressive" rocket launch was "very good," adding that "the temper caused by the flirtatious whore that is India is also necessary. As for the holier-than-thou bitches [referring to those who criticized the bad taste of the posts], if you want to express your feelings, please go to India and burn firewood."

900,000 Uyghur children: the saddest victims of genocide

The Chinese Communist Party has forcibly displaced them into Han Chinese families or state-run orphanages. Figures prove the program is expanding.

By Abdulhakim Idris

Bitter Winter (06.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3ijwG7l> - Undoubtedly, Uyghur children have suffered more than anyone during the ongoing Uyghur Genocide being committed by the Chinese Communist Party. In 2014, Beijing began to build concentration camps, imprisoning millions of East Turkestan (Ch., Xinjiang) residents beginning in 2017. Children forcibly taken from their families were either sent to Chinese orphanages, forced

to live with Han Chinese families, or were left homeless. Children with families in other countries are not permitted to join them. This cruelty experienced by children of East Turkestan constitutes a violation of human rights, universal values, international conventions, and law. The Chinese Communist Party is openly committing a crime against humanity, one that qualifies as an example of genocide.

The rights of every child under the age of 18, regardless of age, language, religion, gender, and race, are protected under international law. Protection of children's rights is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed in 1989. 196 countries, including the People's Republic of China, are parties to the convention. The 54-article convention aims to provide the necessary conditions for any child to lead a healthy life without discrimination, based on the child's interests in decisions affecting the child's life.

The Chinese Communist Party has violated international UN conventions on children and genocide. If we look at the Genocide Convention, the actions being committed by the Chinese Communist Party are considered genocidal, as reported by the Campaign for Uyghurs last year.

Article 2 of the Genocide Convention defines genocide crimes in part as "taking measures to prevent births in the group," and "forcibly transferring children from the group to another group." The Chinese Communist Party has been forcibly sterilizing women, and displacing Uyghur children into Han Chinese families or state-run orphanages.

When the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are examined, it is seen that the children of East Turkestan are under great victimization and persecution. Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that no discrimination should be made against children. When we look at the genocide in East Turkistan within the scope of this article, the following picture emerges: Uyghur children in East Turkistan are deprived the rights of education, shelter, health, access to food, because they are Uyghur. After their parents are sent to "Concentration camps" without reason, these Uyghur children are targeted for indoctrination according to the Communist doctrine, and forcibly separated from their own culture and values.

Article 9 of the Convention emphasizes that children cannot be separated from their parents unless there is maltreatment, neglect, or separation between spouses. Judicial remedy is also open for this decision. The only reason why more than 900,000 Uyghur children were taken away from their families is for the erasure of their Muslim, and Uyghur identities. There is absolutely no maltreatment of the mother and father against the child. There is no quarrel between mothers and fathers. The authoritarian government of Beijing is forcibly separating parents and leaving children alone without parental guide.

Article 5 of the Convention emphasizes that the parents' responsibilities, rights, and duties should be respected in guiding the child in line with the development of the child's abilities. It also emphasizes that distant family or relatives may also have a right in this regard if local traditions prescribe. However, the Chinese Communist Party allows neither parents nor any other relative to guide or direct Uyghur children. The CCP, which usurped this right of parents, wants to turn Uyghur children into atheist.

The Chinese Communist Party, which never allows any freedom in East Turkistan, Tibet, and South Mongolia violates the Children's Rights agreement with this policy. Articles 13, 14, and 15 of the Convention protect children's freedom of thought and freedom of religion and conscience.

Another important issue of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is Article 30. Article 30 defines the following: "In States where there are minorities or indigenous peoples based on ancestry, religion or language, a child belonging to such a minority or indigenous peoples shall benefit from his own culture together with other members of the minority community to which he belongs. they cannot be deprived of the right to believe and practice and to use their own language." This article expressly guarantees that every child, even an ethnic minority, has the right to learn his or her religion, language, and culture. However, the Chinese regime never allows any other culture, language, and religion to exist, much less be taught to children, apart from its own doctrine and Han nationalism..

Another article violated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Chinese Communist regime, which employs Uyghur mothers and fathers as slave laborers, is within this scope. Article 32 of the Convention ensures that children will not be forced to work. Contrary to this article, Uyghur children and students are forced to work by the Chinese Communist regime. The United States Department of Labor found that China has violated international law on child labor.

The Chinese Communist Party, despite saying that everything is guaranteed in its laws regarding religious freedoms, human rights, and similar issues, has never fully implemented them. The regime, which implements all kinds of prohibitions by taking shelter behind a concept such as 'disrupting public order', has a similar approach for children's rights. The Chinese constitution states that the state promotes the multifaceted moral, intellectual, and physical development of young people, that children are protected from the state, and that maltreatment is strictly prohibited. Beijing claims that there is no Uyghur culture, that they are only Chinese citizens. However, we can see that this is being artificially made through measure to prevent the development of Uyghur children.

As in every state, China has their own laws for the protection of minors. According to article 43 of China's Law on the Protection of Minors, the state's orphanages are responsible for orphans with no families. However, China repeatedly authorizes the removal of a Uyghur child from their relatives and send them to state-run orphanages. For this reason, taking children in East Turkistan without the consent and permission of their relatives, even if their parents are in a concentration camp, is outside of their own law.

The Chinese Communist Party, which violated its own constitution and laws and disregarded international law, removed approximately 900,000 Uyghur children from their families and sent them to the regime's orphanages and boarding schools. However, it is not known in this sense how many thousands of children were victims of genocide, because the CCP ruled East Turkestan with an iron fist behind closed walls. As Human Rights Watch's China Director, Sophie Richardson, has stated, removing children from their families constitutes one of the most brutal steps of the Communist regime. One of the first actions of Chen Quanguo, whose repressive policies are known to those who study East Turkestan and Tibet was the popularization of orphanages for children stolen from their families. He ordered these orphanages to house many children without the consent of the parents or the relatives concerned. The order includes those whose parents have died and those whose families have been sent to concentration camps. The Communist regime under Chen's secretariat set targets for local authorities to send Uyghur children to camps.

In December 2016, the Chinese Communist Party made an important decision concerning children's policies of oppression against Uyghurs. It was announced that only Chinese language should be taught in schools in East Turkistan, and the issues of loyalty to China and party loyalty will be emphasized. In the document published on the Ministry of

Education website in 2017, it was announced that boarding schools would be expanded. Adrian Zenz's report also revealed the extent of the pressure made to sinicize Uyghur children. According to the figures in the document, 40 percent of the students attending secondary and primary schools, which is about 497,800 children, stay in boarding schools.

Drawing attention to his research on China's human rights actions in East Turkistan, the comprehensive report published by Adrian Zenz in 2020 included comprehensive information on sending Uyghur children to public boarding schools. According to the information in the report, those whose parents were sent to concentration camps were defined as 'double-detained.' The Communist regime instructed local officials to collect detailed information on children. As a result of the data collected, most of the children in East Turkistan were deprived of the care of their families because their parents were in a concentration camp. An order has been given to take care of children whose families are detained as soon as possible, meaning that Uyghur children are taken from their relatives and sent to public boarding schools or orphanages. Since the real purpose of the Chinese Communist regime is to turn Uyghur children into Chinese, their concern is to educate according to the Communist doctrine. An instructor working at the place where the children are staying stated that their condition is horrible, and they wear the same thin clothes even on the coldest days of winter.

As of 2017, the number of boarding schools and private care centers in East Turkistan increased. In this context, it was planned to build 4,387 pre-school education institutions in February of that year, where education in only the Chinese language will be predominant. It is aimed that 562,900 children will receive education in these schools. From 2016 to 2020, it was planned to increase the rate of participation in pre-school education to 100 percent. The Chinese Communist Party has allocated approximately 8 billion RMB for the construction of pre-school education buildings. As a result of these plans of the Chinese Communist Party, there has been a great increase in the enrollment of students admitted to pre-school schools across East Turkistan. While the targeted figure for 2017 was 562,900, the actual numbers were 200,000 more than this and reached 759,900. It was aimed to enroll 1 million children in these schools for the last spring semester of that year. The actual figure reached 1.4 million. The number of students per school has also increased from 433 to 1000. Enrollment increases continued in the following year, and the figure rose to 1.6 million. Another evidence showing the consequences of the policy for Uyghur students to be educated within the framework of the Communist doctrine is the situation of schools according to their square meter size.

Between 2016 and 2017, there was an 85 percent increase in schools' total square meter size in East Turkistan. Especially in the Hoten region, this increase is greater and more than doubled. The size of the area covered by the schools reveals that not only the classrooms but also the boarding school sections have been expanded. In pre-primary schools, students are taught either as full-care or part-care. Full-care means that students go to school on Monday and stay until Friday. Half-care means only daytime training. The full-care system is specifically aimed at children staying behind whose parents have been sent to concentration camps. These programs, developed in line with the ideology of the Communist regime, include secondary school and other levels. It has become obligatory for children over a certain age to be sent to boarding schools in some regions. All students completing the 4th grade in Kashgar are automatically sent to boarding schools. According to the information obtained from another source, every child who reaches the age of 9 is sent directly to the boarding school of the Communist regime.

The Chinese Communist regime sent some children to concentration camps with their parents, as eyewitnesses found in the Xinjiang Victims Database. According to the information in this database, 100 of the 5000 people staying in one concentration camp

are children. Ömer Bakali, one of the Uyghur intellectuals, stated that some families were brought to the camp during their stay in the concentration camp.

As a result, it is clear that the biggest victims of the genocide in East Turkistan are children. A generation is wanted to be destroyed by genocide, and there is an embarrassing silence when the world should stand up against it. Governments and rulers who rely on the Beijing government ignore these crimes against humanity.

EU suspends efforts to ratify controversial investment deal with China

Euronews (04.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3ujRKOm> - The EU has suspended efforts to ratify an investment deal with China because of tensions between Brussels and Beijing.

The agreement was reached in principle last December but had yet to receive the necessary endorsement from EU institutions, such as the European Parliament.

"We have for the time being [...] suspended some efforts of political awareness on the part of the Commission because it's clear that, in the current situation, with the sanctions of the EU against China and the Chinese counter-sanctions, including against Members of the European Parliament, the environment is not conducive to the ratification of the agreement," Valdis Dombrovskis, executive vice-president of the European Commission, told French news agency AFP in an interview.

"We cannot ignore the wider context of relations between the EU and China."

"In any case, the underlying reasons for the agreement [...] are still very present, there is always an asymmetry in relations [with China]. This agreement would help us resolve this asymmetry."

The future of the deal had been already thrown into doubt after a recent diplomatic showdown between Brussels and Beijing.

In March, the European Union imposed the first sanctions against China in more than 30 years. The raft of measures, designed in coordination with Western allies, targeted four Chinese officials and one entity believed to be involved in the alleged human rights violations of the Uyghur Muslim minority.

China reacted swiftly and furiously: in an almost instantaneous counter-strike, the Chinese Foreign Ministry slapped sanctions on ten European individuals, including five Members of the European Parliament, and four entities, among which was the European Parliament's subcommittee on human rights.

Beijing also blacklisted democratically elected officials from the UK, the US and Canada. In total, more than 30 individuals and entities were sanctioned.

As a result, three of the main political parties in the European Parliament (S&D, Renew Europe and Greens), which together hold 45% of the seats, announced that, as long as the sanctions remain in place, the parliament will refuse to even open the debate for ratification.

As co-legislators alongside the Council, MEPs have the final say on the agreement.

An EU official sought to further clarify Dombrovskis's words.

"The agreement needs to be now legally reviewed and translated before it can be presented for adoption and ratification. However, the ratification process of the [investment deal] cannot be separated from the evolving dynamics of the wider EU-China relationship," the official told Euronews.

"In this context, Chinese retaliatory sanctions targeting Members of the European Parliament and an entire parliamentary committee are unacceptable and regrettable. The prospects for the [investment deal's] ratification will depend on how the situation evolves. So not quite suspended."

A controversial deal

An agreement on the investment deal was reached in principle at the end of December 2020 after seven long years of negotiations.

The breakthrough was made possible thanks to a deliberate and forceful push from German officials during the country's six-month presidency of the Council of the EU. The effort materialised in an eleventh-hour call between Chinese President Xi Jinping and European Commission President von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The draft text intends to create balanced EU-China trade relations by making Beijing commit to a greater level of market access for EU investors and to fair treatment for EU companies - what the European Commission calls the "level playing field". The deal also includes provisions on state-owned enterprises and subsidies.

According to the Commission, "for the first time, China also agreed to ambitious provisions on sustainable development, including commitments on forced labour and the ratification of the relevant ILO (International Labour Organization) fundamental Conventions".

The accelerated conclusion of the investment deal, in particular the assurances about labour rights, was met with criticism, scepticism and even disbelief among most Members of the European Parliament.

The Commission estimates that foreign direct investment from the EU to China has reached more than €140 billion over the last 20 years, while investment from China to the bloc totals almost €120 billion.

The main sectors where EU companies invest in China are the automotive sector, basic materials (including chemicals), financial services, agriculture/food and consumer products.

Sanctions expose EU-China split

By Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy

Tapei Times (25.03.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2OFhIBI> - On Dec. 30 last year, the EU and China reached an agreement in principle to launch negotiations for a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI). However, as Reinhard Butikofer, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the German Green party and chair of its EU-China delegation, said: "There is no deal until the European Parliament says it is a deal."

Come this month, and those who took this statement lightly are in for a reality check.

On Monday, the Green politician, along with fellow MEPs from different political groups, including German Michael Gahler (European People's Party, EPP), Slovakian Miriam Lexmann (EPP), Frenchman Raphael Glucksmann (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) and Bulgarian Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew Europe) found themselves on China's list of sanctioned entities and personnel.

Beijing also sanctioned members of the Dutch, Belgian and Lithuanian parliaments, German and Swedish academics, the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the EU and the entire Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament. Furthermore, the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Germany and the Alliance of Democracies Foundation in Denmark, two think tanks working on China, were sanctioned.

The sanctions were in retaliation for the EU blacklisting four Chinese individuals and one entity believed to be involved in the violations of the rights of Uighur Muslim minority in East Turkestan, or the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

Through the sanctions, the Chinese leadership stressed its firm determination to "safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests," elements at the core of all of the arguments Beijing has ever used whenever criticized over its human rights record.

So why did Beijing this time choose to retaliate in such a disproportionate and counterproductive manner, against the very lawmakers who are vital to the future of an investment agreement it claimed to badly want? What has Beijing identified as sufficient gain that it sees merit in risking the loss of the CAI? Why target think tanks working to help policymakers and societies across Europe better understand China, given their very function is to build bridges between people through independent and constructive analysis, at a time when the world is ruled by hostility, misconceptions and disinformation?

It has been clear to both sides that a normative divergence lies at the heart of their perception gap, with human rights being interpreted and understood in fundamentally opposing ways. Yet, up to now, and paradoxically, the gap has allowed the two sides to cooperate as "strategic partners," largely thanks to the EU's strong belief — noble by some, naive by others — in upholding "engagement," much to the chagrin of Washington, in particular under the former US administration.

Even labeling China a "systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance" in 2019 did not stand in the way of the two sides, two of the largest trading blocs in the world, agreeing on an investment deal, leading to doubts concerning the EU's toughening stance on China.

It is also clear that under Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平), Beijing has turned more repressive at home and aggressive abroad, set on an irreversible course driven by nationalism, primarily aimed at keeping a domestic audience under tight control, while claiming to seek to restore China's past glory.

Therefore, it is not Brussels' sanctions, albeit the first agreed on against China in more than 30 years, that made Beijing impose sanctions of its own. Instead, China has found itself trapped and stuck on its own irreversible path, where any language less than aggressive, belligerent and fueled by nationalism would make the leadership look weak and conciliatory in the face of "Western interference," as it describes any criticism of its human rights record.

Not hitting back with its own sanctions simply was not a viable option for Beijing, as disproportionate and counterproductive as this measure turned out to be.

It is difficult to judge the long-term consequences of such a significant twist in EU-China ties, or even the fate of the CAI, given the fragmentation inside the EU, and the economic interdependence between the two sides.

However, short-term, it is clear that China's disproportionate steps are already backfiring. Instead of further splitting an already divided EU, Beijing's aggressive measure is only nourishing the very convergence it has been seeking to block, including concerning Taiwan, treated as a "sensitive" issue in bilateral ties for too long.

Among the lawmakers sanctioned, it was also their supportive statements or activities on Taiwan that has angered China — and with it the "feelings of the Chinese people." What the sanctions will achieve is to strengthen willingness in the EU to engage Taiwan, and serve as inspiration to further warm ties with a like-minded partner, a technologically advanced economy and a thriving democracy in a hostile region.

The health crisis has brought a unique opportunity for the bloc to reconsider its ties with Taiwan, and consider it on its own merit as it rethinks its relations with China. With MEPs and other EU entities sanctioned, this time around a reckoning in the EU is real, and without a doubt in the European Parliament.

In line with its previous positive positions on Taiwan, it should be no surprise that MEPs might be the driving force in the process. However, in the end, it is not about CAI. It is the future of the international human rights regime that is at stake.

Recalling 10 March 1959 and origins of the CCP colonization in Tibet

By Jianli Yang

Citizen Power Initiatives for China (11.03.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3crhuAF> - The Chinese Communist Party's Sinicization of Tibet is a well-known fact of history but not regularly revealed. Neither is the military invasion of Tibet by China and the forcible occupation of a once free nation leading to the Tibetan uprising on 10 March 1959. Mikel Dunham in his classic work "Buddha's Warriors", reveals: "During the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, nearly 95 percent of the monasteries and temples of Tibet were razed to the ground and about 1.2 million Tibetans died. There are now over 7.5 million Chinese in Tibet compared with an indigenous population of 6 million."

For anyone interested in Tibet and wants to understand what the Chinese did to the region in this period, when they invaded Tibet, must read Dunham's graphic description of the carnage and violence inflicted by the PLA. It is an important reminder of what military force can do to a civilian population that had no means of defending themselves. The odds were clearly levelled against Tibet. That is precisely why it is important to remember and recall the sacrifices Tibetans made on 10 March 1959.

The annual observance by Tibetans and their supporters around the world of the 62nd anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day on 10 March 2021 is thus important. Uprising Day is observed every year to commemorate the 1959 peaceful uprising against Communist China's repression in Tibet's capital Lhasa. There are several instances of Chinese historiography which give us a glowing narrative of the successes of the CCP in

building China. However, what one does not find in the communist history of China, is a realistic appreciation of what China did to Tibet after it occupied this once free land in 1951. Obviously, China does not want to reveal its dark past!

It is worth recalling that Tibet was a sovereign state before China invaded in 1950 and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered northern Tibet. In 1951, a 17-Point Agreement was forced upon Tibetans by the CCP. While the past independence of Tibet was recognized in the Agreement, Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was a precondition for signing it. However, the most important fact is that Tibet was granted genuine autonomy,

Three years later over 200,000 PLA soldiers were stationed in Tibet. This led to famine conditions becoming rampant as Tibet's delicate subsistence agricultural system was stretched beyond its capacity. The invasion of Tibet and subsequent events demonstrated that China had no intention of preserving Tibetan autonomy and institutions. Many Tibetans escaped persecution by the CCP by going to India, but only a small percentage survived the difficult conditions of the journey. The March 1959 uprising in Lhasa was triggered by the fear of a plot to kidnap His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama.

On 1 March 1959, while the Dalai Lama was preoccupied with taking his Final Master of Metaphysics examination, two junior Chinese army officers visited him at the Jokhang Monastery and pressed him to confirm a date on which he could attend a theatrical performance and tea at the Chinese Army Headquarters in Lhasa. His Holiness replied that he would fix a date once the ceremonies had been completed. The Dalai Lama was told to come alone and, warned that no Tibetan military bodyguards or personnel would be allowed to accompany him. On 10 March, fearing for the 14th Dalai Lama's life, around 300,000 Tibetans surrounded Norbulingka Palace, to prevent the Dalai Lama, from accepting the PLA's invitation. After the crowds refused to leave the compound, the PLA launched an attack killing thousands of innocent civilians.

An estimated one million Tibetans perished and, 98 per cent of monasteries and nunneries were destroyed under the PLA's invasion under instructions of the CCP. The three major monasteries in Lhasa, Sera-Jey, Ganden, and Drepung, were seriously damaged by shelling, with Sera and Drepung being damaged nearly beyond repair. Members of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard who had stayed back in Lhasa were disarmed and publicly executed, along with Tibetans found to be harboring weapons in their homes. Thousands of Tibetan monks were executed or arrested, and monasteries and temples around the city were looted or destroyed.

The Tibetans were hopelessly outnumbered and only seven days later, fearing for the lives of his people, the 14th Dalai Lama escaped to India and took refuge along with around 80,000 other Tibetans. By 17 March, the Chinese had aimed artillery at the palace and the resulting melee ended up killing 86,000 plus Tibetans, with many more arrested or deported to labor camps. That day is marked as the most brutal and barbaric day on the part of China, leading to the death and imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans.

Also, 10 March is regarded as 'Tibetan Martyrs' Day', dedicated to the patriotism of the heroic men and women of Tibet.

In the aftermath of the uprising the CCP punished several thousand Tibetans and the consequences of this was embodied in a report of the International Court of Justice, Purushottam Trikamdas, then a Senior Advocate in the Supreme Court of India at a press conference (New Delhi) on 4 June 1959, Trikamdas stated that Tibetans were forced to work for China in the construction of roads and highways in Tibet. Many scores died performing this task, as they were underfed and kept in poor living

conditions. Additionally, the Chinese destroyed thousands of acres of agricultural land in this process. This period also marked the start of the process of Sinicization of Tibet. It was estimated then that five million Chinese had been settled in Tibet. The Tibetan population was then around 3 million.

Writing in the New York Times, (2016) Luo Siling said, "Generations of Chinese have been taught that the Tibetan people are grateful to China for having liberated them from "feudalism and serfdom," and yet Tibetan protests, including self-immolations, continue to erupt against Chinese rule". This reality can only be understood when one reads the history of Tibet, in particular its occupation by China and the swift but brutal military campaign carried out which resulted in the wanton destruction of Tibetan culture, religion and above all its identity as a nation. An understanding of Chinese actions in Tibet will explain to the world why Tibet has been in ferment and continues to be so. This is what one must remember as the world commemorates the 62nd anniversary of the Tibetan uprising on 10 March, 2021.

Tibet: Repression increases before Tibetan Uprising Day

March 10 commemorates the events of 1959. The CCP policy against minority ethnic and religious groups has unfortunately not changed.

by Tashi Samdup

Bitter Winter (09.03.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2N3e7aI> - Tibetans all over the world commemorate the Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10 every year, to remember the [1959 Tibetan uprising against the invasion by the People's Republic of China](#). From that day, many Tibetans, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, had to find refuge in India. In Dharamshala, India, a government in exile, called Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), was founded on April 28, 1959.

[Chinese atrocities against Tibetans](#) continue relentlessly since that day, targeting the free exercise of religion, the basic respect for human dignity, and the ability to use Tibetan language and preserve Tibetan cultural identity. The staggering fate of [Tibetan lay Buddhist girls and nuns routinely raped in reeducation camps](#), just like Muslim women in [Xinjiang](#), shows the routinized cruelty of the [CCP](#) policy against cultural identities, religious groups, and ethnic minorities. It seems as if in Tibet the [horrors of the Cultural Revolution](#) are not over yet.

But Tibetans did not remain idle. Many groups were created to claim respect and freedom. Some are internationally known as being very effective.

The [Tibetan Youth Congress](#) (TYC), founded on October 7, 1970 in Dharamshala, India, is an international non-governmental organization that advocates freedom for Tibet from China. This group has been playing a pivotal role for promoting the Tibetan Uprising Day and advocating for a free Tibet. Since its foundation, the organization has inspired young Tibetans to rise for the identity and freedom of their land. In 2008, when the protests by Tibetans in the Tibet [Autonomous Region](#) came to the attention of the world, and the Chinese government had to face several questions regarding [human rights](#) there, TYC members protested at the 2008 Summer Olympics torch relay.

[Students for a Free Tibet](#) (SFT), founded in 1994 is a global grassroots network of students and activists working for [human rights](#) and freedom of the Tibetan people. SFT has been a frequent organizer of Tibetan Uprising day protests in different countries. Local chapters of SFT have been the main organizers of Tibetan Independence Day on February 13, every year. Tibetan women also vowed to fight against the Chinese

violations of [human rights](#) in Tibet. An influential women group, the [Tibetan Women's Association](#) (TWA), was formed on September 10, 1984 in India.

Of course, Beijing has denounced these groups, falsely accusing them of "terrorism" —a standard [CCP](#) label for those opposing its regime—even if their activities have been and remain entirely peaceful.

Recently, addressing a large gathering in Dharamshala, Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong (i.e. President) of the Central Tibetan Administration, [stated that the leadership of the Tibetan freedom struggle is now passing to a new generation of Tibetans](#), both inside Tibet and in exile. He said that, "[i]t is the younger generation of Tibetans in Tibet who clearly and loudly demand their identity, freedom and unity. The new generation of Tibetans in exile participates in similar endeavors." Sangay also stressed the need for a "long-term strategy to strengthen and sustain their struggle," adding that "[w]e need to build self-reliance in the Tibetan world, in thought and action." He urged the importance of combining modern education with traditional values to secure stronger foundations for the Tibetan freedom movement to continue.

Earlier, the Dalai Lama had suggested that [China's Tibet policy is a failure](#), hurting China's own image, [as many intellectuals have pointed out](#). His Holiness had also the occasion of commenting that ["\[t\]he Communists brainwash, torture, bribe, and kill](#), but the Tibetan spirit hasn't been broken. The Tibetan people's determination is very strong, so there are many reasons to be hopeful about the future."

62 years after the 1959 uprising, it is time for China to stop violating [human rights](#) in Tibet and restore total respect for Tibetans' cultural identity and freedom of religion. The whole world is watching.

[Read Speech by Dr. Yang Jianli at the Rally Commemorating the 62nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising: We Have Our Answer to the Question: What Will be Tibet's Future?](#)

Uyghur Group Defends Detainee Database After Xinjiang Officials Allege 'Fake Archive'

The UTJD said forced witness statements and unsubstantiated claims will not undermine its work.

By Shohret Hoshur and Ekrem, writing by Joshua Lipes.

Radio Free Asia (11.02.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3jWFhMI> - An organization compiling information on Uyghurs detained in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has defended its findings after officials in the region accused it of spreading lies, saying forcing witness testimonies and making unsubstantiated claims will not undermine its work.

On Feb. 2, the Propaganda Department of the XUAR held a "Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues," during which it alleged that the Norway-based Uyghur Transitional Justice Database (UTJD) maintains a "fake archive" of detainees in the region's vast network of internment camps. Authorities in the XUAR are believed to have held up to 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the camps since early 2017.

The statement provoked a strong response from activists, former detainees, and others in the diaspora who have provided information about their friends and relatives back home to the UTJD, allowing the group to compile a list of more than 5,000 individuals who are missing and believed held in the camps.

Speaking at the conference, Professor Gulnar Obul, a former administrator of Kashgar University who currently works for the XUAR Bureau of Farm Machinery, testified that she was not in detention, despite being listed in UTJD's archive.

In September 2018, a staff member at Kashgar University's administration office confirmed to RFA's Uyghur Service that Obul had been removed from her post along with three other professors for being "two-faced," using a term applied by the government to Uyghur cadres who pay lip service to Communist Party rule in the XUAR, but secretly chafe against state policies repressing members of their ethnic group.

During a telephone interview, an official in Kashgar told RFA that Obul had been detained for publishing an article about Uyghur culture and history that included her opinions on religious extremism in 2016. The official said that while her views were praised at the time, they were now deemed to "go against government policy," and that "for this reason, she was accused of being 'two-faced.'"

Subsequently, an official source in the region told RFA that Obul had been released from detention two to three weeks after the initial report and transferred to work in the regional capital Urumqi.

Also discussed at the press conference was Erfan Hezim—a former member of China's national youth football team who RFA learned had been detained in February 2018 for "visiting foreign countries" after he traveled abroad to train and take part in matches. Officials with the XUAR Propaganda Department said Hezim is currently playing soccer and that the UTJD, which also lists him in its archive, was promoting falsehoods.

However, sources later confirmed to RFA that Hezim had been released from an internment camp in Dorbiljin (in Chinese, Emin) county, in the XUAR's Tarbaghatay (Tacheng) prefecture, after a year in detention. He was freed after the Netherlands-based International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPro) expressed concern over his confinement.

Officials at the Feb. 2 press conference said Tahir Hasan—a doctor from Aksu (Akesu) prefecture's Kuchar (Kuche) county whose disappearance and detention for communicating with "suspicious people" was documented by RFA in September 2019—is working "normally" and rejected the claim he is in detention.

They also claimed that Tahir Talib, Anwar Dawut, Ihsak Peyzulla, and Zoram Talib—all of whom are listed in the UTJD—are not currently being held in detention.

The XUAR Propaganda Department additionally spoke about several individuals who have been sentenced to terms in prison in a bid to justify their punishments.

They acknowledged a 25-year sentence for Akbar Imin, a student of jailed Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, who was taken into state custody in 2014 following his teacher's arrest and subsequent sentencing; a 20-year sentence for Ahat Ghoji, a construction contractor from Aksu's Bay (Baicheng) county; and a life sentence for Sami Bari, a student who returned to the XUAR from Egypt.

The officials claimed Imin had "founded a mafia group" and that Ghoji had "committed murder," adding that the inclusion of their names on the UTJD list is "a mistake."

Forced lies to discredit

Following the press conference, Bahtiyar Omer, director of the UTJD and its associated research and documentation activities, responded that China is forcing effectively captive people who lack freedom of speech to lie about their past, making public claims that counter the efforts of his and other organizations.

He told RFA that Obul had likely been forced to lie about her past, while claims that she, Hezim, and Hasan are currently not in detention does nothing to prove that they were never detained in camps in the past.

"None of the people who made an appearance at the press conference to give testimony, not even Chinese officials themselves, are people who can freely express their opinions," he said.

"They walk inside the lines that China has drawn for them. They recite things that [China] has written for them."

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.

Omer noted that regardless of the status of certain individuals, China can no longer deny the existence of the camps due to the overwhelming amount of evidence that has come out of the region, as well as that the policy of extralegal incarceration has led to countless deaths and the destruction of hundreds of thousands of families.

"Even though they've let a small number of people go with all sorts of conditions [placed on them] in order to evade punishment from the international community for locking up millions of Uyghurs under false pretenses, China will never be able to hide this genocide," he said.

Criticism and pushback

The UTJD's response came as the Norwegian Uyghur Committee, Hong Kong Committee in Norway, Norwegian Tibet Committee, and the Norwegian Taiwan Friendship Association held a Feb. 9 press conference and issued a joint letter calling on Norway's government to cancel a proposed free trade agreement with China, end

the normalization of bilateral relations, and prioritize human rights over economic interests.

Relations between Norway and China had been strained since the Oslo-based Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to late human rights activist and prisoner of conscience Liu Xiaobo in 2010, but ties were normalized in 2016.

However, amid growing global scrutiny of China's abuses in the XUAR and Washington's designation of them as "genocide" and "crimes against humanity" last month, Oslo has seen public opposition to strengthened ties with Beijing increase.

China has gone on the propaganda warpath against its critics in recent months but has been forced to play whack-a-mole as new and damning reports continue to emerge about the situation in the XUAR.

Last week, a report by the BBC included interviews with four women who claimed they were "systematically raped, sexually abused, and tortured" while held in the internment camp system, which China's Foreign Ministry and state media quickly dismissed as lies, repeating claims that there are no camps in the region and attacking the credibility of the women profiled in the piece.

On Thursday, Chinese state media reported that the National Radio and Television Administration determined that BBC World News had "seriously violated regulations ... in its China-related reports, which went against the requirements that news reporting must be true and impartial, and undermined China's national interests and ethnic solidarity."

The regulator said BBC World News would no longer be permitted to broadcast within China and that it would not accept the channel's broadcast application for the new year. Strict controls meant the service was not widely available to the public in China.

Will the EU-China investment agreement survive

Parliament's scrutiny?

A look at the remaining process for the CAI and the crucial role of the European Parliament, which could still vote the deal down.

- **HRWF consultant Dr Zsuzsa-Anna Ferenczy, currently in Taiwan, has just published a very interesting article in *The Diplomat* about the role of the European Parliament concerning the possible future of the CAI. Her very informative analysis will be extremely useful for NGOs willing to define their human rights advocacy strategy.**

By **Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy**

Credit: [Flickr/Friends of Europe](#)

The Diplomat (27.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3af20yq> - On December 30, the European Union (EU) and China [concluded](#) negotiations for a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI). Through the agreement the EU hopes to address the asymmetry in bilateral relations, a serious concern EU member states have had vis-à-vis China for years (and a concern they share with Washington). Reaching an agreement, however, is only the first step in the process. While the European Parliament (EP) does not have the power to amend the negotiated text, it has the power not only to ratify but also to monitor the implementation of CAI.

"There is no deal until the European Parliament says it is a deal," Reinhard Bütikofer, German Green Member of the European Parliament (MEP), and the leader of the EP's EU-China Delegation, [stressed](#). Belgian MEP Guy Verhofstadt of the Renew Europe Group [tweeted](#): "Arrests [in Hong Kong] again show that China is not becoming more open and democratic as a result of international agreements." The vice chair of the international trade committee (INTA), Iuliu Winkler of the European People's Party, [stated](#) that the committee's members stand committed to fully engage in the EP's scrutiny process. Understanding the EP's role in the process is therefore crucial.

Grasping the dynamics within the EU's foreign policy, which involves multiple layers and players, is also key to making sense of the strategic implications of CAI for the EU's global clout. This facilitates an appreciation of the limitations that the EU's inherent fragmentation as an international actor places on what Brussels can actually do when it comes to China. Putting things into perspective therefore helps adjust expectations about the EU's influence over China, a strategic partner it now also considers a "[systemic rival](#)."

For the Chinese leadership, reaching an agreement before the end of 2020 was crucial for at least two reasons. First, China wanted to ensure negotiations were completed under the rotating German presidency and Chancellor Angela Merkel's [pragmatic, pro-business approach](#), especially given her ambition to crown her EU Council presidency – and her 16 years in power – with a memorable deal before she steps down as leader later this year. With the agreement reached, Beijing has avoided the negotiations being dragged into the Portuguese and Slovenian presidencies (2021), or further into the French and Czech presidencies (2022), which could prove less predictable for China.

Second, by completing negotiations by the end of December, Beijing avoided further complications under a new administration in the White House. U.S. President Joe Biden, who took office on January 20, has promised to return to [cooperation](#) with Europe on global challenges, including to jointly [address](#) the "China threat." There is little doubt that already at this stage, the CAI is a [geopolitical win](#) for China. In contrast, for Europe the gains so far appear much less significant. Moreover, there is a real chance that, if ratified by the EP, CAI could even undermine the EU's élan for toughening its stance on China, and could undermine its credibility as a global human rights actor.

The foreign policy provisions of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty represented the most ambitious reform effort in the history of the EU's external relations policy, and sought to strengthen the bloc's global standing by consolidating its internal foundation. Yet, the EU has been in a state of permanent crisis management since the 2008 global financial crisis. The consequences of the unprecedented (and ongoing) migration crisis, Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic are yet to be understood and addressed. Dynamic change in Europe's southern neighborhood, an aggressive Russia, an assertive China, and a United

States reluctant to cooperate with Europe on global problems have all intensified internal debates on how to gain and preserve the bloc's strategic autonomy.

Despite the past decade being marked by enormous challenges for Europe, and as the EU-China CAI negotiations inched forward, the EP saw its role substantially enhanced. With Lisbon, the EP has now [joint powers](#) with the Council to adopt trade and investment legislation. Expectations that the EP will use its power in the ratification as well as the implementation of CAI are therefore well placed. That MEPs could actually refuse to ratify the agreement in protest against Beijing's human rights abuses is a real possibility.

In the case of the CAI negotiations, the European Commission (after the Council adopted its negotiating mandate) has been required to report regularly to the EP's INTA committee. While the EP has not had the power to engage directly in the negotiations or set their objectives, its oversight role has remained significant in several ways: first, by ensuring transparency; second, by insisting that the agreement is both rules- and value-based; and third, by giving it a role in the implementation of the CAI. Judging by the EP's track record of being the most vocal EU institution concerning the respect of core values, MEPs will definitely use their power to oversee the implementation process, once and if they ratify the agreement.

On January 22, the Commission made parts of the agreement public for key stakeholders. The text must still undergo the necessary legal and technical review. Then it must be approved by the European Council and translated into all official languages before it can be ready for official referral to the EP so that MEPs can start their scrutiny work. The formal procedure is therefore only expected to start in the last months of 2021, with a vote foreseen for the first months of 2022. Within six months after the official request for consent, a period extendable by further six months, INTA, as the committee in charge, will submit a recommendation to approve or reject the deal, and might accompany it with a resolution setting out the reasons why MEPs should give or refuse their consent. Finally, the EP will decide by means of a single vote on consent; no amendments may be tabled. If the majority required is not obtained, the CAI is deemed to have been rejected.

Assessing the EP's stance on China in the past years is a good place to start to appreciate the EP's likely approach to the CAI. For years, the EP has systematically called for [measures](#) to address China's growing economic weight and political influence in Europe, its attempts to undermine democracy, the continuous deterioration of human rights, the lack of political and economic reciprocity in bilateral ties, the government's repression of religious and ethnic minorities, in particular Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Tibetans, and Christians, the arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances, China's growing aggressive posture in the region, the introduction of the National Security Law in Hong Kong, and threats against Taiwan. The list has grown longer, and the grievances deeper, over time.

At the start of CAI negotiations, in its [October](#) 2013 "Resolution on EU-China negotiations for a bilateral agreement," the EP demanded that negotiations "be conducted with the highest possible level of transparency." In [November](#) 2020, the EP urged greater transparency and the establishment of "a parliamentary dimension with regard to the implementation of the agreement." It stressed "respect for human rights is a prerequisite for engaging in trade and investment relations with the EU."

Then, in its [December](#) 2020 "Resolution on forced labor and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," MEPs stressed that the CAI must include "adequate commitments to respect international conventions against forced labor." This echoes its [June](#) 2020 Resolution on the National Security Law for Hong Kong, whereby MEPs stated that they would take the human rights situation in China into consideration

when asked to endorse an investment agreement. The same point is at the core of its [January 2021 Resolution on Hong Kong](#), the first since the two sides concluded negotiations, giving a clear indication of what to expect from MEPs in the months to come.

These are just a handful of actions the EP has taken to make its position clear, in addition to its reports, parliamentary questions, and public hearings in its foreign affairs, security and defense, international trade (INTA), and human rights committees. The fact that in 2019 MEPs awarded renowned Uyghur human rights activist [Ilham Tohti](#) the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, stands as testament of the collective power of MEPs across different political groups and national delegations, to Beijing's great chagrin.

It is through these measures that MEPs have sought to hold the EU to its foreign policy ambitions on values, as articulated in the EU's [2020-2024 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy](#), including to build resilient, inclusive, and democratic societies and promote a global system for human rights. While EP Resolutions on China are not legally binding, they must be viewed as part of a larger process seeking to hold China accountable for its own commitments. This process, however, remains driven by national and corporate interests. As the German presidency rushed through the CAI, some [deplored](#) that reaching a deal on the CAI represents one step forward, two steps backward in the EU's policy on China, discrediting its claims to be taking a tougher stance.

In this context, the EP has set itself high standards that it now must live up to. It is hard not to see the irony in the fact that now one EU institution, the Commission, will have to convince another, the EP, that China can be trusted. It seems that China was successful in convincing the Commission – and first and foremost, member states – that it is worth having an investment agreement. Will the Commission succeed in convincing the Parliament now? Nota bene, this is the same Commission that promised to be geopolitical; to be [ambitious, strategic, and assertive](#), and to employ a [defensive toolbox](#) to protect its values and interests in the face of a mercantilist China. Will these tools become less relevant with a bilateral CAI in place?

Clearly, a huge gap remains in perspectives between the EU and China with respect to what a fair competition environment means. This comes in addition to a deep normative divergence between the two sides, which has limited the EU's normative power. Yet, for European democracies, there should be no doubt on the content of fair competition. Nor should there be any hesitation on the imperative to make the agreement value-based.

According to the Commission, the CAI [foresees](#) an institutional framework for monitoring the implementation of commitments, an ad hoc mechanism for fast engagement at the political level, and regular dialogue with relevant stakeholders. On the question of values, the Commission claims that the CAI includes a "commitment" with regard to China's ratification of outstanding ILO Conventions, provisions subject to a specifically tailored enforcement mechanism, including an independent panel of experts, and a high degree of transparency. The Commission maintains the CAI provides a specific working group to discuss matters related to sustainable development, including labor.

Using their collective power, MEPs must demand that the Commission ensures that international labor and environmental standards in the sustainable development chapter are respected. MEPs must urge the Commission to ensure transparency and clarify, in no uncertain terms, the institutional framework for monitoring the implementation. Should MEPs settle for less, their image as the most outspoken and consistent EU institution on China will be dented, along with the Parliament's credibility, and that of the EU as a normative power. If ratified by the EP, the Commission will have to convince the world

that the CAI will strengthen its strategic autonomy, and that it was not a strategic mistake to reach an agreement.

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy is a Ph.D. research fellow at the European Union Centre in Taiwan at National Taiwan University, Taipei; affiliated scholar at the Political Science Department at Vrije Universiteit Brussel; associate at 9dashline; and former political advisor in the European Parliament (2008-2020). She tweets @zsuzsette

Experts demand suspension of EU-China Investment Deal

By Maik Baumgärtner & Ann-Katrin Müller

Spiegel International (25.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3ct1Iaf> - *More than a hundred experts are demanding an end to the EU-China investment agreement, DER SPIEGEL has learned. They name serious human rights violations and the suppression of democracy movements in China as the reasons.*

A broad front in opposition to the deal has developed over the last several days. More than 100 renowned China experts, researchers and human-rights activists across the globe are calling for a suspension of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI). At least for now.

"Despite evidence of ethnic cleansing, forced labor, and other gross human rights violations, the leadership of the European institutions have chosen to sign an agreement which exacts no meaningful commitments from the Chinese government to guarantee an end to crimes against humanity or slavery," reads the open letter to EU institutions, which was provided to DER SPIEGEL prior to publication.

On Dec. 30, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the successful conclusion of seven years of negotiations with China. "Today's agreement is an important landmark in our relationship with China and for our values-based trade agenda," von der Leyen said.

The agreement is to improve access to the Chinese market for European companies and ensure fair competition. The agreement has not yet entered into force and must still be ratified by the European Parliament. The signatories to the open letter are eager to prevent ratification.

The deal is "based on a naïve set of assumptions about the character of the Chinese Communist Party," the letter reads, and "entrenches Europe's existing strategic dependency on China and runs counter to Europe's core values." Even the current degree of dependency, the authors write, is "alarming." They argue that Chinese state-owned companies took advantage of the period following the 2008 financial crisis "to buy substantial stakes in key European infrastructure."

Arguments presented by supporters of the investment deal, who say that China was forced to make significant concessions on labor rights during the negotiations, are rejected out of hand by the authors of the open letter. The concessions are "so vague as to be essentially useless," they write.

"Immediately Withdraw"

"Furthermore, it is delusional to imagine that China will keep promises on these issues of investment and trade when it has broken its promises so regularly in recent years," the

letter reads. As examples, the authors cite the suppression of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, forced labor camps for the Muslim Uighur minority, the most recent sanctions Beijing has imposed on Australia and sabre rattling in the direction of Taiwan.

Among the signatories are researchers from the London School of Economics and from Princeton University in addition to Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress, who lives in Germany. Former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata and Harriet Evans, a professor at the University of Westminster and an expert in gender and human rights issues in China, have also joined the effort.

The signatories are calling on the European Union "to immediately withdraw from the China-European Union Comprehensive Agreement on Investment" and to place any further negotiations on hold until "substantial and verifiable" progress has been made on the human rights situation in the country.

Andreas Fulda, one of the initiators of the letter and a senior fellow with the Asia Research Institute at the University of Nottingham, says: "The European Commission is acting as though it is possible to separate politics and the economy, which in the case of China is impossible."

China expert Mareike Ohlberg, a senior fellow with the Asia Program of the German Marshall Fund, likewise accuses Brussels of ingenuousness. "They are trying to sell the agreement as a success. It has thus become apparent that there is a lack of understanding about China's reliability as a treaty partner."

Jakub Janda, director of the European Values Center in Prague, believes Europe's sovereignty is in danger and is also critical of Germany's role in the negotiations. "Germany pushed for the agreement within the EU, thus prioritizing the egotistical greed of certain companies above Europe's geopolitical security."

The European Commission believes that the treaty will be completed by the beginning of 2022. The precise text is to be made public soon.

Sweden is about to deport activist to China—Torture and prison be damned

By Judith Bergman & Aaron Rhodes

Newsweek (05.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3okefjj> - As China continues what Human Rights Watch has called "the worst human rights crackdown in the post-Tiananmen period," Sweden is about to deport a human rights activist, Baolige Wurina, back to the country. If this happens, he is almost certain to face incarceration and torture, and Sweden will have violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

Baolige fled to Sweden ten years ago from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China (IMAR), after facing persecution from Chinese authorities for his rights activism. Since arriving in Sweden, Swedish authorities have refused to grant him asylum and ordered his deportation. Baolige and his wife, together with their two children, are waiting now for the Migration Court of Appeal—the last instance to decide on asylum cases in Sweden—to decide whether he will be granted Swedish protection. If the court decides on deportation, the family will be split apart. While Baolige will be sent to China, his wife, who is Mongolian, will be sent to Mongolia with their children.

Swedish authorities claim that Baolige is unable to prove that Chinese authorities constitute a threat towards him personally, even though Baolige has continued his rights activism in Sweden. He has participated in protests against China in front of the Chinese embassy, where he says embassy staff photographed the protesters. Swedish authorities have rejected the claim as "speculation," even though China is known for its surveillance and targeting of citizens who have fled the country.

The case law of the European Court of Human Rights requires the Swedish court to examine the consequences of sending Baolige back to China, bearing in mind not only his personal circumstances, which certainly seem to warrant Swedish protection, but also the general situation in China.

The decision to deport Baolige seems based on a misreading of the general situation in Inner Mongolia—perhaps because China's human rights abuses there are less known than those committed in Tibet and Xinjiang—but the situation is very grave and Sweden's embassy in China appears fully aware of that. On December 10, the embassy published a statement by the EU delegation in China:

"The EU... continues to be gravely concerned about the serious deterioration of the human rights situation in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia [our emphasis]. In addition to reports on continued large-scale extra-judicial detentions, severe and systemic restrictions on freedom of expression and association, and on freedom of religion or belief, there are growing concerns about the alleged use of forced labour, forced family separations and forced sterilization".

This fall China initiated a "dual language" policy in IMAR, similar to measures previously taken in Tibet and Xinjiang, according to which Chinese is now the language of instruction in primary and secondary school for numerous subjects previously taught in Mongolian. The policy caused widespread protests in IMAR and a subsequent crackdown by Chinese authorities. The Southern Mongolian Human Rights Centre (SMHRC) estimates that 8,000-10,000 ethnic Mongolians have been placed under some form of police custody in IMAR since late August.

"The punitive measures..." wrote the SMHRC, "include mass arrest, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance...house arrest...termination of employment, removal from official positions... and denial of access to financial resources...".

"Methods of coerced assimilation via police-state tactics, which have been used extensively in Xinjiang and Tibet, are now also being enforced in Inner Mongolia," wrote Dr. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, an Adjunct Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, in a report for the Jamestown Foundation in September. "...Other harsh measures already used include: the imprisonment of political dissidents; closure of anti-Beijing social media chat rooms; and even the collection of DNA from ethnic minority residents".

Swedish Minister of Justice and Migration, Morgan Johansson, was recently asked whether the Swedish government would cease deportations to Inner Mongolia. "I note," responded Johansson, "that the system we have for asylum review in Sweden contains effective guarantees to ensure a legally secure process."

That does not appear to be the case, however, when Swedish migration authorities clearly lack crucial information in their decision making process. Such lack of information has already had tragic consequences:

In 2012, Sweden deported two Uyghurs who had participated in demonstrations in Sweden in front of the Chinese embassy, just like Baolige. "I know that they had

participated in demonstrations held by the Swedish Uyghur community in front of the Chinese embassy in Stockholm," World Uyghur Congress spokesman Dilshat Raxit said at the time. "This is enough fodder for the Chinese authorities to punish them severely". The two Uyghurs were never seen or heard from again. The tragedy forced Sweden to temporarily stop the deportations of Uyghurs to China.

Will Baolige have to pay with his life in order for Sweden to stop the deportations of ethnic Mongolians to China?

EU-CHINA: Advocacy for the Uyghur issue

Speech on behalf of HR/VP Borrell at the European Parliament on forced labour and the situation of the Uighurs in Xinjiang

Madam President, Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

EEAS (17.12.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3p7IWI0> - The European Union has spoken out clearly and repeatedly on the situation of Uighurs: expressing grave concerns about political re-education camps, surveillance, and restrictions on freedom of religion and belief.

As High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell mentioned during the debate on the situation of Uighurs one year ago: "the policies applied to Xinjiang appear disproportionate to the stated aim of fighting against terrorism and extremism". The conclusions of United Nations experts expressing serious concerns are, regrettably, still valid.

During the past year, a number of reports have brought to light worrying allegations that Uighurs and other minorities in China are subject to forced labour and forced labour transfer schemes, as well as forced sterilisation and forced birth control. They add to the gravity and magnitude of concerns we already expressed.

EU leaders raised these concerns in their meetings with Chinese leaders this year: at the EU-China Summit on 22 June and at the EU-China Leaders' Meeting on 14 September. We also issued a comprehensive statement during the last UN Human Rights Council, under the 'Item 4' debate on human rights situations that require the Council's attention. We clearly highlighted the need for meaningful access to the region for independent experts.

We will continue to call on China to uphold its national and international obligations, and to respect human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet. Defending human rights and combatting forced labour are priorities for the EU.

As a key trading partner of the EU, China should ensure that business activities in its territory meet international standards on labour rights and responsible business conduct. We expect the Chinese authorities to implement those standards across all sectors of production and at all levels of supply chains.

Responsible business practices by European companies working in China play a very important role. While the Commission is working on a legislative proposal on sustainable corporate governance, the EU already has mandatory standards in some sectors and actively promotes international guidelines. European companies are already encouraged to implement effective due diligence practices across their supply chains.

The Commission and the European External Action Service will continue working with companies to underscore the importance of taking up international due diligence guidelines in all aspects, including human rights.

The new [EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime](#), adopted on 7 December [2020], enables the EU to forcefully stand up for human rights. It allows the EU to target human rights violations and abuses worldwide, irrespective of where they occur. The regime does not contain any listings yet; however, we expect discussions on listings to start soon.

I thank you all for your engagement in this debate and your contributions to further increase the awareness on this matter.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-200285>

Who are the Uyghurs? Canadian scholars give profound insights

FOREF interview with Dr. Susan J. Palmer* & Marie-Eve Melanson* McGill University, Canada

- **Cultural genocide: An estimated 3 million Uyghurs are currently in Chinese concentration camps according to new investigative reports**
- **Horror stories of kidnapping, torture, rape, separation from their families, being forced to break dietary laws, destruction of their mosques and more by Chinese authorities made headlines in Western media.**
- **The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is even persecuting them in foreign countries.**

Foref Europe (07.09.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3cR7252> - Numerous democratic states have expressed alarm, but Chinese authorities insist they are simply fighting "terrorism." Palmer and Melanson explain some of their findings of their current research on Uyghurs in Canada in the following interview:

What are the main questions you and your team addressed in this project?

PALMER: Our research explores the reasons and processes whereby many Uyghurs left China and settled in Canada, with a focus on the challenges related to transmitting the Uyghur identity to their children in both countries.

While over 12 million Uyghurs live in the northwestern region Xinjiang, since the election of president Xi Jinping in 2013, there has been an accelerating religious and cultural repression of Islam and traditional Uyghur practices that have made it difficult for Uyghurs to transmit the distinctive traits of their religious and cultural identity to the next generation.

On the basis of our interviews with over 25 Uyghurs who have arrived in Canada, it is evident there is a strong concern to safeguard and transmit their collective identity, as a response to what some of them refer to as the "cultural genocide" in China.

However, the challenges of achieving this goal in the Canadian context are daunting. In Canada, the Uyghurs are less than 2000, including first and second-generation immigrants, and they are spread out across the country. One challenge has been financial; many had to start their studies of professional activities over after they immigrated, although a few have recently begun to enjoy a more stable lifestyle. Another is familial. Since 2017, many Uyghurs living in Canada have lost contact with their relatives in China. Phone calls through the Chinese app WeChat were not answered, or their relatives begged to stop calling, since it prompted police visits and arrests. There are obstacles in obtaining tourist visas to invite family members to visit them in Canada.

After 2017, many cancelled their trips to China, fearing it would place their relatives in danger of being arrested and interned in the so-called “re-education centres”, where many already have friends or relatives detained. One might argue that these events appear have triggered a collective trauma that has become central to the Uyghur identity in Canada, as might be seen by the strong response to our research.

How did you go about this research?

PALMER: In February 2020, our team, including my research assistants Marie-Eve Melanson and Shane Dussault (graduate students in Religious Studies at McGill) and myself as principle investigator, visited the Uyghur School in Châteauguay, near Montreal, which is aimed at teaching children the Uyghur language, history, and culture.

We conducted our first interviews with some of the parents we met at the school. From there, word spread that researchers from McGill University were doing research on the Uyghur community in Canada, and we started receiving emails from Uyghurs we had already interviewed suggesting that we contact their friends or relatives across Canada.

Others contacted us directly after they received the information about our study from a WhatsApp group for Canadian Uyghurs. Currently, we have interviewed over 25 Uyghurs.

Despite the fact that many have serious concerns that their participation in our research could affect the security of their relatives living in China (thus their wish to remain anonymous (and we have taken steps to hide their identity), there is a resolute willingness to speak up and denounce what is currently happening to Uyghurs in China.

Since many Uyghurs go through or settle in Turkey after they leave China, we have recently started interviewing Uyghurs established in Istanbul, where political activism appears to be strong and well-organized. Turkey is a natural destination for Uyghurs who wish to leave China, as a majority Muslim country with a culture and a language similar to the Uyghurs’.

Moreover, Turkey offers Uyghurs a permanent residence permit, which allows them to legally reside in Turkey without a valid passport from China but also without being granted the same rights and privileges as Turkish citizens. Some of our Canadian participants have expressed a fear about Turkey’s friendly relationship with China in the last decades, which has led them to settle in Canada instead of Turkey.

What are the typical reasons your interviewees immigrated to Canada?

MELANSON: Many of our participants were professionals in China, in particular, successful traders and businessmen, nurses, electricians, engineers or university professors. Some came with student visas, but most arrived as skilled immigrants in the last two decades (i.e., at a time where the repression of the Uyghur identity was less severe than it is today). While the immigration stories collected in our interviews are

all unique, we can discern at least three patterns of exodus for Uyghurs to leaving their native land.

The first reason is *discrimination*. This prevails in the workplace, where Uyghurs have reduced chances of getting a good job or a promotion despite being qualified. Obtaining certain privileges that are readily available to the Han majority (e.g. a passport or a travel visa) can also be difficult for Uyghurs, who must pay off a number of people or need connections to obtain what they need. When Uyghurs face discrimination, it is also impossible for them to complain without risking further trouble. One of our participants told us that he quit his job as a university professor after he was unexpectedly requested to teach all his courses in Chinese language instead of Uyghur language, although almost all of his students were Uyghurs. Quitting was, according to him, the best way not to comply. Many of our participants said they left China so their children would not have to face discrimination and find better opportunities in a democratic country.

The second reason Uyghurs cited for leaving China was *incessant harassment* from the authorities. Many rationales for harassment are given by the CCP: making too much money, having traveled abroad, having been in touch with foreigners (especially if from a Muslim-majority country), having too many children, perceived to be an overly enthusiastic Muslim, or for opposing state policies. Police harassment can also occur after a Uyghur's relative has been accused of one of those things. One participant recounted how, although they had the right number of children that was permitted for them at the time, they frequently received visits from police officers they had to bribe in order to be left alone. Since his wife could not take the contraception the authorities provided for medical reasons, she had to report to the police every month for a pregnancy test. She was forced to have an abortion seven times.

The third reason for leaving China is *fear in the justice system*. Uyghurs fear that if they get trapped in the Chinese legal system—which can happen for various reasons—that they are going to be sent to jail or the rehabilitation camps. Some participants have seen their relatives, friends or acquaintances unjustly charged and tried for crimes they did not commit, or for actions that would not be considered “crimes” in the Western world (e.g. having participated in a student protest demonstration). Some have heard stories about Uyghurs being kidnapped in neighboring countries and brought back to China only to be jailed. Those who fear the justice system are often people who have ties with intellectuals, activists or religious figures and who know that they are being watched by the authorities, or who have been placed on the “black list” (sometimes because of politically active relative abroad).

How has the situation of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang changed in recent years?

PALMER: Since 2017, many Uyghurs living in Canada lost contact with their relatives in China. Either their phone calls were not answered, or their relatives suddenly begged them to stop calling. Those who are “lucky enough”—as they say—to still be in contact with their relatives can talk to them through the Chinese app WeChat, which they know is monitored. For this reason, they keep their conversations to mundane topics.

Most Uyghurs interviewed immigrated before 2017, and they have only witnessed the increasing policing of Uyghurs in Xinjiang whileabroad. Since it is highly risky for Uyghurs still living in China to share their experience in the camps with their relatives living abroad (or even with their relatives in China), the information that Uyghurs in the diaspora are able to get on the situation in Xinjiang (which they always refer to as “East Turkistan”) mostly comes from other Uyghurs in the diaspora who have shared their experiences via various media outlets, or social networks, or by giving speeches at events and protests.

In general, many of our participants claimed they never fully realized the scope of the problem the Uyghurs face in China until after they emigrated, since they could not access this kind of information in China due to censorship of the Press and the internet. When they came to Canada, many thus became more engaged in activist activities, especially once they felt settled in their new life.

Were any of your contacts forced into detention facilities in Xinjiang?

MELANSON: None of the Uyghurs we interviewed have been in the rehabilitation camps (which they routinely refer to as “concentration camps”). However, many have friends and relatives who have been detained or are currently detained in the camps. Those who got out of the camps do not necessarily want to speak about their experience with their relatives. One participant mentioned that her sister got out of the camp in very poor health and has practically stopped speaking ever since. Detainees are sometimes able to call their relatives or send them letters, however, they are strictly monitored. One participant whose uncle had been detained for a few years explained that whenever his uncle calls his son, he will only speak in Chinese, although he did not speak any Chinese before he entered the camp. The family also received a letter from him written in Chinese.

Based on your interviews, how important is Islam to Uyghur Identity?

MELANSON: While there has been many discussions in the media about the Chinese Communist Party’s repression of religious practices, not being able to practice Islam in China or having to adapt their Islamic religious practices to fit the patriotic requirements of the Chinese Communist Party appears to be a secondary concern for Uyghurs in our interviews.

Although Uyghurs have much to say about repression in China, the lack of freedom of religion in Xinjiang/East Turkestan almost never comes up unless we ask about it – although Islam is an important part of many Canadian Uyghurs’ life. This is perhaps due to the fact that, from a global perspective, Islam is thriving; unlike the Uyghur people’s history and culture which is currently threatened by the CCP’s policy of assimilation by the Han majority.

Being Muslim seems to be an important aspect of Uyghur identity of Uyghurs – one that they have in common with other ethnic peoples, rather than something that belongs specifically to them. An illustration of this is that there do not seem to be any real efforts to resist the Arabization of traditional Uyghur religious practices among Uyghurs, either in China or in the diaspora. On the other hand, there are strong efforts to recover and disseminate Uyghur history and literature. Thus, Uyghurs do not carry the burden of safeguarding Islam, while they do carry the burden of safeguarding their own ethnic identity. In short, it is principally the “ethnic” part of the ethno-religious identity of Muslim Uyghurs that seems to be the focus of Uyghurs’ concerns today, probably because it is this part of their identity that is being threatened with assimilation from a global standpoint.

How do Uyghurs seek to safeguard the Uyghur identity?

PALMER: There seems to be three main ways by which the Uyghurs aim to safeguard the Uyghur identity in the current context. The first one is transmitting the Uyghur language, which is essential for many Uyghur families living in Canada. This is done by speaking the Uyghur language at home and by teaching their children the Arabic script.

Another way to safeguard the Uyghur identity is through marriage. Our interviewees almost all mentioned that they hoped their children would marry within the Uyghur community, often citing as a reason the need to “counter the genocide going on in China.” Some of our participants who were first-generation immigrants have themselves married within the Uyghur diaspora after having immigrated. Many met their partner on Facebook or through a WhatsApp group, and then traveled to the location where the person was living to get married. They then sponsored their spouse as an immigrant to Canada.

Finally, there is a concerted effort in the diaspora to publish and disseminate Uyghur books, especially books that have been banned in China. One of the main Uyghur-owned publishing houses is located in Istanbul (we interviewed the owner). This publishing house seeks to obtain and publish works by Uyghur authors (academics, writers, poets, theologians, etc.), the purpose being to safeguard the writings of influential Uyghurs and to prevent Uyghur history from being erased. Other publishing houses also produce children books in the Uyghur language throughout the diaspora.

How do Uyghurs in Canada support their community?

MELANSON: Most Uyghurs we interviewed support their community, but some do it more publicly than others. On the one hand, some think that it is crucial to protest, loudly and clearly about the dire situation that Uyghurs are facing in China, despite the risks involved for their relatives living in China, because this is the only way for the Uyghur community to find justice. In this case, they will often be engaged in activism (e.g. organizing demonstrations, sending letters to politicians) or they will join an established association working for the defense of Uyghur interests. On the other hand, some prefer to play it safe and not “give the Chinese authorities one further reason” to arrest their relatives in China. In this case, they may prefer to make donations to Uyghurs in need, or to organizations working to defend the interest of Uyghurs in Canada or internationally. They can also be involved in the Uyghur schools, either supporting the school financially or by volunteer work; teaching children the Uyghur language, music, dances, cuisine, history, folk traditions, etc.

How has oppression of Uyghurs in China affected their lives as immigrants?

PALMER: Some of the Uyghurs we interviewed claimed to suffer from PTSD after having gone through traumatic events in China. Many expressed anxiety about the well-being of their relatives back home, which impaired their ability to function well in their daily life. One participant living in Turkey explained how he had trouble pursuing his studies after he learned of his mother’s detention. He states that he does not want to be informed about what is going on in the camps in East Turkestan/Xinjiang since it would make him more worried. Many Uyghurs we interviewed in Canada have said the situation of Uyghurs in China is constantly in the back of their mind. While they do have opportunities to share their worries together, in particular during the *meshrep*, a traditional festive gathering, most do not receive any kind of government support or professional assistance for dealing with traumatic memories and practical difficulties they have experienced since arriving in Canada.

Note: *Dr. Susan J. Palmer is a leading expert on religious movements, and a member of FOREF’s Scientific Committee.*

Marie-Eve Melanson is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Religious Studies at McGill and Head Research Assistant on the Uyghurs in Canada project. McGill and Concordia

graduate students, Shane Dussault Sean Renz and Maryam Amirdust are also Research Assistants Head on the team.

Huawei enables China's grave human rights violations

Religious Freedom Organization Urges European Governments And Citizens To Boycott Firm Providing China With Technology Used For Repression

FOREF Europe (11.08.2020) – The Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe (FOREF), a Vienna-based nongovernmental human rights organization, urged European governments and citizens to oppose purchase of Chinese technology giant Huawei's 5-G wireless networks because the firm enables grave human rights violations by the Chinese Communist regime.

“Huawei is enabling some of the worst violations of human rights and religious freedom happening in the world today, namely the persecution of millions of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, China,” according to Peter Zoehrer, an Austrian journalist and FOREF's Executive Director.

“We must not allow ourselves to be morally compromised by patronizing this firm; we must stand in solidarity with China's victims,” he said.

Huawei was founded by an officer from the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), and is considered an arm of the Chinese state. The firm supplies technology, infrastructure, and training to the public security bureau in Xinjiang, and gives the state intrusive surveillance capacity used to monitor, repress, persecute and enslave the Uyghur population. As many as 3 million Uyghurs are incarcerated in concentration camps, which the Chinese government claims are “vocational training centers” needed to eradicate terrorist threats.

Huawei's contribution to atrocities in Xinjiang was thoroughly exposed in a report by Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), entitled “Uyghurs for Sale: ‘Re-education,’ Forced Labour and Surveillance Beyond Xinjiang.” **“In making business decisions regarding Huawei, European governments cannot pretend to be unaware of the company's role in gravely violating religious freedom and human rights,”** Zoehrer said.

In the human rights and religious freedom magazine *Bitter Winter*, Ruth Ingram wrote that, “Huawei is ‘proudly’ working hand in hand with the Communist Party to crush the Uyghur people and other Turkic minorities in the region.”

Serious concerns also exist with regard to security threats posed by use of Huawei's technology, which may enable sabotage, espionage, and manipulation by the Chinese government.

Huawei Technology Used To “Prop Up Dictators Around The World”

According to Dr. Jianli Yang, a leading Chinese pro-democracy advocate and Tiananmen Square massacre survivor, Huawei's technology is a threat to freedom, democracy and human rights wherever it is used.

“Repression of the kind facilitated by Huawei is not meant to end at China's borders. China's total surveillance not only continues to protect China's dictatorship, it is also helping to prop up dictators around the world. Over a dozen countries such as Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Ecuador are using the system to conduct mass surveillance and repress dissidents,” Yang said.

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It's 'Captive Nations Week' — here's why we should care

BY MARION SMITH, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

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The Hill (20.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3jkXP86> - At the height of the Cold War in 1959, Congress established "Captive Nations Week" to show the American people's solidarity with the hundreds of millions suffering under communist regimes. Scheduled for the third week of July, the occasion gave rise to annual parades and rallies in major American cities, with thousands of people taking to the streets, supported by governors, mayors and officials at every level of government, to demand the liberation of communist-controlled nations.

Sixty-one years later, Captive Nations Week — which began Sunday — is all but forgotten. Yet the phenomenon of communist subjugation of free people is real and growing, and 20 percent of the world's population still lives under single-party communist dictatorships — more than in 1989. If ever there were a moment to bring back Captive Nations Week, this is it.

In creating this week, Congress specifically called out the "imperialistic policies" of the Soviet Union. Today, this phrase is just as easily applied to the People's Republic of China, which dominates a growing number of lands and peoples, and aggressively seeks to add more to the list.

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Hong Kong is the latest proof. Beijing has violated international treaty obligations with its passage in June of a so-called national security law that effectively ends the "one country, two systems" policy. The law empowers authorities to arrest anyone deemed to be "subversive" or "secessionist," which in practice means anyone criticizing the Communist Party or advocating democracy and freedom — ideals that are antithetical to Beijing's "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Hong Kong is now a captive city.

Yet Hong Kong is hardly the only place that Communist China has overrun. Congress noted the subjugation of Tibet when establishing Captive Nations Week, and to this day, Beijing seeks to stamp out Tibetan culture and the regional Buddhist faith. The regime's favored tools include the destruction of monasteries as well as the kidnapping and torture of Tibetan activists, which has led the Tibetan government-in-exile to warn of a Chinese-led "cultural genocide." The apparent successor to the Dalai Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was kidnapped at age 6 by the Chinese Communist Party in 1995 and remains captive to this day.

Beijing also is perpetrating a demographic genocide against the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang. A June investigation by The Associated Press found that Chinese authorities are "taking draconian measures to slash birth rates among Uighurs," including forced abortion and sterilization. The regime has shunted as many as 3 million Uighurs — nearly a third of the Uighur population — into modern-day concentration camps, which Beijing calls "Vocational Education and Training Centers." These tyrannical actions give new meaning to "captive nation" in the Chinese context.

Now China is signaling its intention to conquer Taiwan. The Chinese military recently held drills simulating the capture of Taiwanese territory, and communist officials and military officers have threatened war repeatedly with Taiwan in the past few months. Considering

that Beijing spent more than two decades telegraphing its eventual takeover of Hong Kong, America and the world would be foolish to ignore China's clear desire to make Taiwan its captive.

Captive Nations Week was created precisely to draw American attention to situations such as these. While Communist China is far and away the most aggressive nation that embraces a Marxist ideology, there are several others. Communist Cuba essentially has taken Venezuela captive, and it has tried to do the same with Nicaragua. So, too, are Laos, North Korea and Vietnam still beholden to communist tyranny. This week should be a time for Americans of all backgrounds to express our sadness at the plight of the more than 1.5 billion people who still live in communist regimes.

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Is it too much to ask to bring back Captive Nations Week? It may be too early to ask for the spontaneous street parades seen in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. But it's not too soon for policymakers to rally around this annual event. It could — and should — become a central theme of U.S. foreign policy, especially with the growing realization on both sides of the political aisle that America is now forced to counter the global ambitions and predatory behavior of China.

What would that look like? Captive Nations Week would be an excellent time to roll out new sanctions against individuals and companies that participate in Chinese oppression. It also could provide an opening to announce new trade and economic measures that prevent Beijing from profiting from the places and people it dominates. By tying these actions to the concept of captive nations, policymakers would give their policies the kind of moral foundation that often has been missing in recent years. It would reaffirm that America's pursuit of its national interests is inherently linked to the defense of universal ideals such as freedom and democracy.

Captive Nations Week once signified exactly that. Although it has been largely forgotten, its symbolic power remains as strong as ever — both for the American people and those who are oppressed around the world. The U.S. has nothing to lose, and something to gain, by bringing it back.

Marion Smith is executive director of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington. Follow him on Twitter [@smithmarion](https://twitter.com/smithmarion).

EU-China relations under the German presidency: is this "Europe's moment"?

By Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy and Ma Junjie

9Dashline (20.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/39fpcvD> - Germany is in a position of strength to accelerate the much-needed shift in EU-China relations towards economic and political reciprocity. Growing EU leverage over China gives Berlin the responsibility to act. But human rights can't fall victim to the pragmatic trade cooperation Berlin and the EU have maintained with Beijing.

In the midst of a global health crisis, on 1 July Germany took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, with Chancellor Angela Merkel in her last year in office. The six months will be no walk in the park: the aim is to succeed in positioning Europe as a united entity in the global great-power rivalry between the US, China and Russia.

These are particularly trying times for an internally divided Europe, with a more assertive China and a more aggressive Russia, a chaotic neighbourhood in the east and south of the Mediterranean, and a transatlantic relationship at a record low. As the Presidency motto "Together for Europe's recovery" [suggests](#), overcoming the consequences of the *coronavirus crisis* and supporting the economy are among the priorities. Another ambition is to seek a "*strong Europe in the world*". Striking a deal on the recovery package is no small task. Strengthening the EU's capacity to act as a global leader is an even bigger challenge. Yet, *Europe* – and perhaps the democratic world facing a growing authoritarian threat – *expects Berlin to deliver* on both tasks.

The belief in the West, shared by Germany, that through engagement in trade China would gradually liberalise, no longer holds as it did in 1967 when US President Richard Nixon spoke of the value of inducing change in China.

As a founding member of the EU, Germany has shown it has some of the essential drivers to live up to the task: the *leadership skills*, the *economic strength* and a solid record of *commitment to the European project* rooted in the defence of human rights, rule of law and democracy. German foreign policy is largely aligned with these core values, but also driven by important commercial interest, two ambitions Berlin has not managed to reconcile.

Berlin will need all these drivers to lead EU efforts to rebalance EU-China relations, a strategic partnership that suffers from a political and economic *imbalance*. But Berlin will need more: internally, *to consolidate its own China policy* to reflect the new reality and *to unite the EU* around it, and externally, to support an *affirmative strategy* with democratic countries to withstand efforts to undermine democracy.

German priorities

Concerning Berlin's priority to work on a post-pandemic recovery plan, inspired by a [Franco-German](#) initiative, the Commission has already [proposed](#) the "Next Generation EU" instrument of 750 EUR billion, to be embedded within the next long-term EU budget, and to be, controversially, financed through shared debts. A German herself, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [believes](#) this is "Europe's moment". [Not everyone](#) agrees though. With some member states calling for "*fair*" distribution of EU recovery funds, *the EU is divided*. At the time of writing this article, member states are split north and south, and east and west, [deadlocked in a protracted summit](#) over size, design and conditions of the multi-billion-euro package.

Concerning geostrategic priorities, Berlin knows well that both speaking with one voice, and working with allies are key to Europe's tackling *the lack of reciprocity* in EU-China relations. In Berlin's eyes, the EU has a "[great strategic interest](#)" in maintaining cooperation. The Presidency [priorities](#) explicitly say "we want to expand cooperation with China and work to foster greater reciprocity in all policy areas". From what has been officially articulated, Berlin appears determined. Ensuring continuity, the Presidency is building on the preceding [Finish Presidency](#), and their "strategic reflection" seeking a more balanced economic relationship. This is also in line with the EU's labelling China a "[systemic rival](#)" in March 2019. Germany has committed to working hand in hand with Brussels, particularly to increase pressure on Beijing to open up its markets to create a level-playing field for foreign and domestic companies. *But Berlin must still articulate the same commitment for human rights.*

Berlin and Beijing

When it comes to dealing with China, Germany's economic might has been decisive in shaping bilateral ties, but also EU-China relations. Trade cooperation has brought *prosperity for both sides* and has ensured Germany a *position of strength* within the EU vis-à-vis China. But cooperation has turned into *rivalry*, jeopardising Germany's leading role in high-tech manufacturing while supporting Beijing's state-driven economic model.

The belief in the West, shared by Germany, that through engagement in trade China would gradually liberalise, no longer holds as it did in 1967 when US President Richard Nixon spoke of the value of inducing change in China. But while the US has abandoned its ambition for a more closely integrated relationship with China, Germany does not follow the same path, at least not for now. *Germany itself remains torn with a government supporting cooperation, and a corporate sector calling for a tougher policy and urging caution at the same time, making concerns for human rights the least relevant.*

Since 2016 Germany has been *China's biggest trading partner* in Europe, with a volume of trade of almost 200 billion euros in 2018. China is important to Germany; it was the demand for German exports created by China that contributed to Germany reasserting its economic dominance in the eurozone following the 2008 financial crisis.

Sino-German economic cooperation even led to turning the Western German city of Duisburg, Wuhan's sister city since 1982, into "China's gateway to Europe" in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). But while Beijing promised tremendous opportunities, it has posed challenges to European interests to maintain an open and rules-based economic system, by creating dependencies and helping Beijing increase its political and economic leverage inside Europe.

Unprecedented in its scope and ambitions, BRI has left Germany's role in addressing the China question all the more important. But it was the 2016 acquisition of Kuka, a German robotics manufacturer, by China's Midea for 4.5 billion EUR, that signalled that the China opportunity turned into an even greater *threat*, demanding the strengthening of German competitiveness. Berlin's stance has toughened. Together with France, Germany has led the 2019 EU-China Strategic Outlook, which labelled China a "systemic rival". With Paris and Rome, Berlin also initiated a European-level investment screening mechanism to protect European interests and ensure a level-playing field to European businesses.

"Wandel durch Handel" no more?

In reality, *Germany remains split* between the preservation of cooperation and calls for a tougher stance. With the Presidency, this division is now of even higher relevance to the EU's efforts to adjust its China policy. Just as Germany's Foreign Minister urged Beijing to clarify its position on interning Uyghurs in prison camps, German carmaker VW has defended its presence in Xinjiang province, where it operates a production facility, justifying its decision as "purely economic". On China's passing a controversial security law in Hong Kong, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has urged dialogue with China and Chancellor Merkel made it clear Berlin aims to maintain a "critical, constructive" dialogue with Beijing.

But the Chancellor has come under heavy criticism from her own party and opposition politicians for not taking a tough enough position. Green parliamentarian Margarete Bause even accused Berlin of pretending to be sitting at a "side table in Brussels". Some even consider Germany stuck in a strategic grey zone; aware of the China threat, but not willing to step up. As the pandemic has reconfirmed, Berlin maintains its balancing act with Beijing, in a cordial partnership with only cautious opposition.

Notwithstanding divisions, Berlin remains in a position of *strength*, which carries a *responsibility* to represent both EU interests and values in their dealings with Beijing. Responsibility implies a relationship of *trust* inside Europe, as Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [noted](#), speaking about Europe's high expectations of the German Presidency. Because China [listens](#) to Germany, Berlin is in a special place to lead Europe's adjustment to a new reality with China through the consolidation of internal unity.

Image credit: European Council President/Flickr.

European consensus?

Internally, it is encouraging that European consensus is finally emerging on the need to address the asymmetry with China. Member states agree China has become a "systemic rival". A [shift](#) in tone is unfolding in Brussels, intensified by the pandemic. For the first time, Europe [accused](#) China of engaging in targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns around COVID-19 in the EU seeking to undermine democratic debate. Quite the blow to a "strategic" partner. In a further move, in a joint [statement](#), EU member states agreed on the need to further protect strategic assets and technology from foreign investments, thus strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy.

Yet, this consensus is vulnerable and skin-deep only. Member states continue their own cooperation with Beijing, which means *Berlin can't make genuine progress without internal unity*. The EU's complex decision-making has not facilitated coordination for the management of global challenges in general, including the health crisis, or the 2008 global financial crisis and the unprecedented wave of migration peaking in 2015. But on 1 July, Berlin [committed](#) to joint approved action, European solidarity and common values.

It is in these same areas that Europe has shown itself to be the weakest and most vulnerable to Chinese – and Russian – influence in fighting the virus.

Tough times ahead

The current state of global affairs is especially challenging for Berlin, and it might even get worse before it gets better in the second half of the year. The global health crisis has amplified confrontation in US-China ties, and intensified tensions in EU-China relations, while global challenges, such as climate change or poverty, have not disappeared. In the midst of global uncertainty, it is clear that if Germany wants to consolidate its central role in shaping Europe's future, as well as preserve the [European way of life](#) and help maintain the rules-based order, the moment to act is now. Former Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski's [words](#) uttered almost a decade ago in Berlin are particularly fitting now: "I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity".

Berlin must keep the pressure on China and discuss the most urgent issues with Beijing, namely both protecting EU interests and speaking up for human rights. It is useful to remember that with a deterioration in US-China relations, the EU and its companies are now all the more vital for China. But both economic and political reciprocity must be on the table. In the words of China's former Ambassador to Germany, Mei Zhaorong, [ideological differences](#) are cause for concern. But human rights can't fall victim to the pragmatic trade cooperation Berlin and the EU have maintained. Growing EU [leverage](#) over China gives Berlin the responsibility to act. It should also give the

Presidency the confidence to be upfront with China. It is around this reality that Berlin must bring member states together and consolidate the nascent consensus.

German Foreign Minister Maas declared Europe can only survive if we are united as the European Union. The time for hesitation has passed. China respects strategic strength and is contemptuous of vacillation and weakness, in the words of former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd. With its leadership skills, strong pro-European commitment and economic strength, as Europe's "indispensable nation" Germany is in the position to accelerate the much-needed shift in EU-China relations. And because no rebalancing will be sustainable without cooperation on urgent global issues, Berlin must support working together on global challenges with China and with democratic partners across the globe to ensure a sustainable future.

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Author's biographies

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Ma Junjie is CEO at ENC Centre for Global Affairs, Beijing. Image credit: European Council/Flickr.

If EU wants rule of law in China, it must help 'dissident' lawyers

- *Last month's online summit of Li Keqiang, Chinese prime minister, with Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, and Charles Michel, president of the European Council (Photo: [European Commission](#))*

By **SARAH M. BROOKS AND JUDITH LICHTENBERG**

GENEVA/BRUSSELS

EU Observer (10.07.2020) - https://euobserver.com/opinion/148875?utm_source=euobs&utm_medium=email The National Security Law which was imposed on Hong Kong on 1 July violates Hong Kong law, the Chinese constitution, and at least two UN treaties.

It is a fatal blow for the rule of law – so much so that even chambers of commerce are getting concerned, and institutional investors are re-considering risk.

Even for those companies and ministries for whom rose-coloured glasses are standard issue, hope for a trade agreement with China is dwindling in the face of political outrage at China's bullish behaviour.

In a parallel universe, China's lawyers – who should be the guarantors of the rule of law and the checks on Beijing's power – would have been essential to getting bilateral cooperation back on track and securing key preconditions, like legal certainty.

In this universe, sadly, the legal profession in China has had a tough go of it. For the five years since a widespread crackdown began on 9 July 2015, the only 'legal certainty' most of them know is repression.

Lawyer Yu Wensheng circulated a letter calling for constitutional reform online.

Gao Zhisheng defended others for their faith. Wang Yu wanted to protect schoolchildren from sexual abuse.

Li Yuhan wanted to help victims to use China's own laws to get access to information. Instead of being praised, they have been imprisoned.

Authorities have accused these lawyers of undermining national security, subverting the state, or "picking quarrels and provoking troubles".

They have harassed, detained, and disappeared lawyers and other activists – and meanwhile, chased their families out of their homes and kept their children out of school.

Recently, they have adopted more subtle tactics of repression: according to judicial regulations on lawyers and law firms adopted between 2016 and 2018, online speech, questions in court, and even being part of 'sensitive' online chat groups can result in revocation of a lawyer's license to practice, permanent disbarment, or worse.

What has happened in Hong Kong over the past month will make this repression even more severe.

Advocates in Hong Kong who could protest in favour of human rights lawyers – as they did following the so-called '709 crackdown' [7 July] in 2015 – are now facing their own risks. The noose is tightening and critical voices are being silenced.

Happening in Europe, too

In a feature article on 22 June, an EUobserver reporter noted that Chinese authorities harass EU citizens, residents and their families – within EU borders.

Those helping to support journalists and publishers, or to monitor Chinese companies. Those defending the rights of Uyghurs to practice their religion, speak their language, and reunite with their loved ones.

One need no further proof than the efforts by Chinese diplomatic missions to control the narrative. The day following the feature story on harassment of Uyghurs, EUobserver published a 'right of reply' by the Chinese mission in Brussels whose overwrought and aggressive language reinforces the very arguments it is meant to confront.

Uyghur activists, like lawyers in China and pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, these defenders are explicitly undermined by a Chinese Communist Party intent on gaslighting them at every opportunity.

So if human rights lawyers are the linchpin for structural change in China – changes that create a positive and reinforcing effect on Europe's interests and values – what should Europe's leadership do?

In one 'high-level dialogue' with China after another, EU leadership has opted for silence over strength.

The EU institutions and member states should strengthen their resolve to use the tools they have – such as export licenses, trade delegations and a targeted sanctions regime – to change the laws that target lawyers, and to see those who have been imprisoned, released.

The EU Commission has committed to multilateralism, but rarely clarifies what that really means.

Relying on 'European values' is not enough, when universal values are at stake. Strategic multilateral diplomacy, with European leadership, can make possible the establishment of a UN envoy to monitor China's rights abuses, including ongoing attacks on China's legal profession.

European states should hold each other accountable while voting at this year's General Assembly in New York. A China so emboldened to violate rights should not get elected to a Human Rights Council tasked with protecting them.

Finally, the EU and its members must continue to stand with the victims of China's violations and those who help them seek justice.

This means doubling down on the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, and ensuring that EU-China dialogues, rather than being ineffective talk shops, are reimagined to give voice to those most affected by Chinese policies.

Upon accepting the 2019 Franco-German Human Rights Prize, Li Wenzu expressed how encouraging this prize, and the attention of European diplomats in Beijing, was to her and to the families of other lawyers targeted by the so-called '709 crackdown'.

In a speech accepting last year's Sakharov Prize on behalf of her father, Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, Jewher Ilham was more direct: 'If you see a problem, please work towards a solution.'

And do it fast, because China's lawyers – and global rule of law – can't wait.

AUTHOR BIO

Sarah M Brooks is Asia advocate at the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), an NGO based in Switzerland dedicated to supporting and empowering human rights defenders and their communities. Judith Lichtenberg is a member of the board

of Lawyers for Lawyers, an independent, non-profit lawyers' organisation based in the Netherlands committed to upholding a free and independent legal profession worldwide.

U.N. experts call for decisive measures to protect fundamental freedoms in China

U.N. (26.06.2020) – UN independent experts have repeatedly communicated with the Government of the People's Republic of China their alarm regarding the repression of fundamental freedoms in China. They have denounced the repression of protest and democracy advocacy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), impunity for excessive use of force by police, the alleged use of chemical agents against protesters, the alleged sexual harassment and assault of women protesters in police stations and the alleged harassment of health care workers.

They have also raised their concerns regarding a range of issues of grave concern, from the collective repression of the population, especially **religious and ethnic minorities, in Xinjiang and Tibet**, to the detention of lawyers and prosecution and disappearances of human rights defenders across the country, allegations of forced labour in various sectors of the formal and the informal economy, as well as arbitrary interferences with the right to privacy, to cybersecurity laws that authorise censorship and the broadly worrying anti-terrorism and sedition laws applicable in Hong Kong. They have expressed concerns that journalists, medical workers and those exercising their right to free speech online in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak and pandemic have allegedly faced retaliation from the authorities, including many being charged with 'spreading misinformation' or 'disrupting public order'.

Most recently, the National People's Congress took a decision to draft a national security law for the Hong Kong SAR – without any meaningful consultation with the people of Hong Kong – which would, if adopted, violate China's international legal obligations and impose severe restrictions on civil and political rights in the autonomous region. The national security law would introduce poorly defined crimes that would easily be subject to abuse and repression, including at the hands of China's national security organs, which for the first time would be enabled to establish 'agencies' in Hong Kong 'when needed'.

The draft law would deprive the people of Hong Kong, who constitute a minority with their own distinctive history, cultural and linguistic and even legal traditions, the autonomy and fundamental rights guaranteed them under the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the 'One Country, Two Systems' governance framework. It would undermine the right to a fair trial and presage a sharp rise in arbitrary detention and prosecution of peaceful human rights defenders at the behest of Chinese authorities. The national security law would also undermine the ability of businesses operating in Hong Kong to discharge their responsibility to respect human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The independent experts urge the Government of China to abide by its international legal obligations, including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Sino-British Joint Declaration, and withdraw the draft national security law for Hong Kong.

The UN independent experts believe it is time for renewed attention on the human rights situation in the country, particularly in light of the moves against the people of the Hong Kong SAR, minorities of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, the Tibet Autonomous Region, and human rights defenders across the country.

The independent experts acknowledge that the Government of China has responded to the communications of UN independent experts, if almost always to reject criticism. However, unlike over 120 States, the Government of China has not issued a standing invitation to UN independent experts to conduct official visits. In the last decade, despite many requests by Special Procedures, the Government has permitted only five visits by independent experts (pertaining to rights involving food, discrimination against women and girls, foreign debt, extreme poverty and older persons).

Keeping in mind China's obligations under international human rights law, and the obligation to adhere to the ICCPR with respect to the Hong Kong SAR, and in view of the UN Human Rights Council's prevention mandate to act on the root causes of crises which may lead to human rights emergencies or undermine peace and security, the UN experts call on the international community to act collectively and decisively to ensure China respects human rights and abides by its international obligations.

The independent experts urge the Government of China to invite mandate-holders, including those with a mandate to monitor civil and political rights, to conduct independent missions and to permit those visits to take place in an environment of confidentiality, respect for human rights defenders, and full avoidance of reprisals against those with whom mandate-holders may meet.

They further urge the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to act with a sense of urgency to take all appropriate measures to monitor Chinese human rights practices. Measures available to the Council and Member States include but need not be limited to the possibility of:

- A special session to evaluate the range of violations indicated in this statement and generally;
- The establishment of an impartial and independent United Nations mechanism - such as a United Nations Special Rapporteur, a Panel of Experts appointed by the HRC, or a Secretary General Special Envoy - to closely monitor, analyse and report annually on the human rights situation in China, particularly, in view of the urgency of the situations in the Hong Kong SAR, the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region; and
- All Member States and UN agencies in their dialogues and exchanges with China specifically demanding that China fulfills its human rights obligations, including with respect to the issues identified in this statement."

*** The experts:** Ms. Agnès Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Mr. David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression; Ms. Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Ms. Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism; Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Mr. Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on minority issues; Mr. Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights of peaceful assembly and association; Surya Deva, Elżbieta Karska, Githu Muigai (Chair), Dante Pesce, Anita Ramasastry (Vice-chair), Working Group on Business and Human Rights; Ms. E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism; Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Ms. Leigh Toomey (Chair-Rapporteur), Ms. Elina Steinerte (Vice-Chair), Mr. José Guevara Bermúdez, Mr. Seong-Phil Hong, Mr. Sètondji Adjovi, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Mr. Diego García-Sayán, Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; Mr. Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory

occupied since 1967; Mr. Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Mr. Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Mr. Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Mr. Baskut Tuncak, Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes; Mr. Léo Heller, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation; Mr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Ms. Karima Bennoune, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Ms. Kombou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Ms. Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons especially women and children; Mr. Dainius Pūras, Special Rapporteur on the right to physical and mental health; Members of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances: Mr. Luciano Hazan (Chair), Mr. Tae-Ung Baik (Vice Chair), Mr. Bernard Duhaime, Ms. Houria Es-Slami, and Mr. Henrikas Mickevičius; Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children; The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination: Mr. Chris Kwaja (Chair), Ms. Jelena Aparac, Ms. Lilian Bobea, Ms. SORCHA MacLeod and Mr. Saeed Mokbil; Mr. Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls: Ms. Elizabeth Broderick (Chair), Ms. Alda Facio, Ms. Meskerem Geset Techane, Ms. Ivana Radačić, and Ms. Melissa Upreti (Vice Chair); Mr. Joe Cannataci, Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

The Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

[Read on HRWF](#)

EU-China Summit: Europe can, and should hold China to account

In Dealing With China, The 'European Way' Should Be One Of Courage And Integrity

By Yang Jianli & Aaron Rhodes

FOREF (20.06.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2YhzyHq> - As human rights advocates, we are appealing to European Union member states to condition trade relations with China on specific improvements in China's human rights practices, and on transparency as regards the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic. China's economy depends on European imports; trade between the two entities exceeds over one billion Euros per day. In this situation, Europe has a historic opportunity, and a responsibility to the moral principles upon which it was founded. The EU should use its immense soft power to help China stop persecuting religious, ethnic and political minorities, and start working with the international community to protect global public health.

China is the world's greatest threat to religious freedom and other basic human rights. Despite years of dialogue with the European Union, and increasing trade cooperation, human rights have deteriorated precipitously. China incarcerates and pressures its Muslim citizens, persecutes Christians, Falun Gong practitioners and other religious minorities, is ethnically cleansing Tibet, and persecutes human rights defenders; China has abrogated an international treaty guaranteeing freedoms to the people of Hong Kong. China has pushed an authoritarian approach to human rights in the UN system, one that degrades the sanctity of basic individual rights and freedoms. China is ranked 177 out of 180 countries in press freedom, and censorship allowed Covid-19 to get out of control. We can't even assess the loss of human life due to China's cynical malfeasance in suppressing, rather than dealing openly with the virus, and we need China's transparency to stop the crisis China created.

The episode has vividly confirmed that a state that mistreats its own citizens is not likely to respect the dignity and rights – and health – of others. But in the face of these threats, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell's call for a "big, positive agenda for EU-China cooperation" without mention of human rights issues dividing Europe and China is discouraging.

Josep Borrell, EU High Representative to Foreign Affairs

Trade imbalances need to be addressed. But the main challenge for Europe should not be to cut a better deal and assume an equidistant posture between the United States and China, as Borrell emphasized. Instead, it is to use the EU's huge moral and economic leverage to put China on notice that the regime cannot violate human rights, and the very idea of human rights, without consequences; that the people of Europe cannot have normal relations with a dictatorial, human rights-abusing government. The EU's failed, German-inspired "Change through Trade" policy needs to be transformed into a policy of no trade development without change.

More mercantilism and naiveté on the part of the EU will make the Union into an enabler of human rights atrocities. The Chinese Communist Party's grand strategy seeks to avoid direct confrontation with the United States, and to use global "rural areas," including Europe, to encircle the US. It wants to join the EU in a united front against the US, a Maoist strategy. The EU is thus a main battle-ground in China's cold war for world dominance. China is pretending to be a peace loving, benevolent authoritarian ruler to get a foothold in relations with the EU and to expand its political and economic influence. Central Europe is a particular target because the CCP believes it to be a weak link in the chain, where democracy has not firmly rooted — a region where China can achieve a breakthrough.

Since its formation, European Union leaders have claimed it to be a "community of values," that is, "European values," diametrically opposed to the totalitarian ideologies the EU was founded to protect citizens against. In fact, the European Union's basic political principles of individual human rights, democracy, and the Rule of Law are considered universally applicable in the international human rights framework. But the Chinese Communist Party subverts these principles at every opportunity, claiming that human rights are a gift from the state, and defending oppression as "human rights with Chinese characteristics." China is a one-party, essentially fascist state, and increasingly aggressive in its efforts to stamp out any dissent at home, while confronting opposition to its land-grabs in the South China Sea with bullying and violence.

To make a significant, not merely symbolic stand against these fearful trends will require moral discipline and a willingness to sacrifice. Referencing the Frank Sinatra song, High Representative Borrell spoke of the virtue of a European Way. Let that be the way of integrity and courage. Europeans, and people around the world, need the EU to stand firm for human rights, and refuse to be China's puppet against America.

Dr. Jianli Yang, a survivor of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, is President of Citizen Power Initiatives for China. Dr. Aaron Rhodes is President of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe and Human Rights Editor of Dissident Magazine.

China is the world's greatest threat to religious freedom and other basic human rights

By [Dr. Aaron Rhodes](#)

FOREF-Europe (07.06.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2B0GcIT> - **China is the world's greatest threat to religious freedom and other basic human rights. Free and democratic states and their citizens need to do what they can to help China's Communist-Party run government stop persecuting people for their religious beliefs and political opinions.**

With China as a primary market and supplier for the West, this will require moral discipline and a willingness to sacrifice. Leading nations must step up, among them Germany. But rather than doing so, the Germany government has become an enabler of China, and thus of China's human rights atrocities.

Dr. Andreas Fulda of the University of Nottingham states that "German governments, both past and present, have consistently prioritized trade with China over other enlightened German national interests, for example democracy and human rights."

"German governments, both past and present, have consistently prioritized trade with China over other enlightened German national interests, for example democracy and human rights."

"Such a commercially-driven China engagement, however, is not a value-free proposition. Whether it is the incarceration of 1.5 million Uyghurs and Kazakhs in mainland Chinese internment and labor camps, the suppression of Hong Kong's democracy movement, or the cover-up of Covid-19: German Chancellor Merkel does not seem to fully appreciate how continued Communist Party rule endangers peace, security and public health, not just in China, but around the world," he wrote on Twitter.

Everyone understands Germany's reluctance to assert itself, based on two world wars, and the country's habitual instinct to remain equidistant between major powers, based on the Cold War. But Germany needs to grow out of these atavistic habits and, using its huge economic and political influence, and its example of a humane social-democratic state, help protect human rights. "Change through trade" is not working.

Today we face not only the problem of German mercantilist-passivity, but also a willful parroting of Chinese Communist Party propaganda that is endangering the safety of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong. As Fulda points out, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made the claim that Hong Kong pro-democracy leader Joshua Wong "has a very

separatist approach, that is not the position of the [German] federal government.” A few months ago, Maas basked in the limelight with Joshua Wong; now he has backed up the Chinese Communist Party lie that Wong is a separatist with the moral authority of the German Federal Government. That is something German citizens, and all who cherish human rights, should reject.

Dr Aaron Rhodes is president of [FOREF Europe](#)

Beyond Xinjiang's camps, China threatens Uighurs globally

By Jianli Yang and Lianchao Han

The Hill (06.05.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3hdZ1Jg> - It's well known that China uses its vast surveillance network to monitor its ethnic minorities, including Tibetans and Uighurs. But leaked documents — the [Karakax list](#) — from the western region of Xinjiang show that across Europe, exiled Uighurs report surveillance by the Chinese state and threats of harm to their relatives in Xinjiang if they make noise about Chinese repression at home. The Chinese government [disputes reports](#) of the records, but it appears this has become part of the new normal for China, even as it continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [leaked documents](#) from Xinjiang show the Chinese government's reasons for detaining several hundred Uighurs. The Karakax list contains personal data on more than 300 individuals with relatives abroad. The Chinese government has flagged “people who leave the country and do not return” as a security risk in Xinjiang, because of their possible ties to exiled groups deemed as “separatists” by Beijing. Details about family members, social circles and religious beliefs, as well as perceived misdemeanors, are in the file.

This would appear to confirm China's surveillance and imprisonment of hundreds of individuals from the Karakax region, where Turkic Uighur Muslims make up more than 90 percent of the population. Uighurs in Xinjiang are being punished because of the actions of family members abroad, suggesting that the Chinese state and intelligence agencies have created a surveillance network in the West. The documents also contradict Beijing's claims that its “[re-education](#)” programs in Xinjiang are voluntary and target only violent extremists. Justifications for imprisonment of Muslims include their praying at home, keeping in touch with relatives overseas, and having more children than allowed by the state.

[Rahima Mehmud](#), a British activist and singer in the London Uyghur Ensemble, was one of the first to discover classified reports of the existence of detention camps. Mehmud says she lost contact with her family three years ago when they stopped answering her calls, and that even in the U.K., there appears to be [little support for Uighurs](#). According to Mehmud, one student at a British university warned her recently that “our university has already become red,” meaning a Chinese informant is on campus. The small community of Uighurs in the U.K. reportedly have stopped celebrations of their freedom from repression because of the fear that Chinese spies are everywhere.

The [World Uyghur Congress](#) (WUC), which works to protect the diaspora's rights, claims that China targets Uighurs living in the West and demands information on their community, promising safety for their relatives in Xinjiang in return. [Kerim Zair](#), a Uighur who moved from Norway to London, says he received an anonymous call a few years

ago: "They requested that I work for them. I rejected them. ... I don't know how they got my number."

Classified documents known as the [China Cables](#), accessed last year by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, throw light on how the Chinese government uses technology to control Uighurs worldwide.

According to the [China Cables](#), China uses sophisticated tools for population control and mass surveillance with a program called [Integrated Joint Operations Platform](#), or IJOP. This platform aggregates data about individuals, often without their knowledge, and flags data it deems potentially threatening or "suspicious." The Chinese government uses IJOP to compile databases of intimate information from a range of sources, including national identification documents, Xinjiang's countless checkpoints, closed-circuit cameras with facial recognition, spyware that police force Uighurs to install on their phones, Wi-Fi sniffers that collect identifying information on smartphones and computers, and package delivery. This technology tracks relatives of Uighurs who are based in the West and provides an opening to the Chinese state to infiltrate Uighur communities abroad.

Every two months, the WUC receives more than a hundred reports of Communist Party of China (CPC) officials allegedly harassing Uighurs living outside China to inform on their own people. This has a psychological impact on these exiles, who may break down because of the pressure. Families are being targeted in Xinjiang if their relatives abroad criticize the CPC. [One report](#), based on interviews with 12 Uighurs in the U.K., found that most of them developed problems such as paranoia, PTSD, depression, anxiety and night terrors.

A larger worry for Uighur rights activists is the health of those interned in Xinjiang. Activists say the cramped, unhygienic conditions in China's [concentration camps](#) allow for the unrestricted spread of COVID-19. During a World Health Organization (WHO) fact-finding mission this year, Chinese government officials played down the risks of coronavirus in the Muslim-majority region, saying most of those in the camps had "graduated" and been released. Records show that by early 2019, most individuals on the Karakax list had been allowed to leave the camps. However, Uighur activists outside China say they still cannot contact relatives in the country. The United Nations estimates about [1 million people](#) are being held in the camps, and UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has urged China to grant a team of monitors [unfettered access](#) to Xinjiang later this year.

Those who have been released from the camps reportedly have been relocated to other parts of China to work as slave laborers in factories. [A report](#) by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute alleges that authorities transferred thousands of Uighurs to work in factories producing goods for some of the world's biggest brands, while keeping them under close watch. Authorities in Xinjiang, and the companies accused of benefiting from forced labor, say the Australian report was part of a smear campaign.

While China continues its war with the U.S. over the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still concern over its treatment of Uighurs, both in Xinjiang and those living in exile. The [China Cables](#) and Karakax list appear to provide evidence of the extent to which the Chinese government uses technology to suppress and persecute Uighurs across the world, threatening their culture, way of life and very existence.

Jianli Yang is founder and president of [Citizen Power Initiatives for China](#), a Tiananmen Massacre survivor, and a former political prisoner in China.

Lianchao Han is vice president of [Citizen Power Initiatives for China](#). After the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, he was one of the founders of the Independent Federation of

Chinese Students and Scholars. He worked in the U.S. Senate for 12 years, as legislative counsel and policy director for three senators.

Key Questions for the World Health Organization

If the WHO is to remain a credible international organization, it must answer these questions – publicly and in detail (See HRWF comment at the end)

**World Health Organization (WHO) Director General
Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Denis Balibouse/Reuters)**

The American Interest (23.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2VwJ48b> - In view of ongoing controversies surrounding the World Health Organization's response to COVID-19, we have isolated the most important questions that need to be answered in order to form an objective assessment of the organization's record. These questions have been formulated after research of Chinese and other open sources.

When did the WHO receive information about COVID-19?

According to the pro-Beijing South China Morning Post, owned by Jack Ma (owner of the firm Alibaba and a member of the Chinese Communist Party), the first case of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, was confirmed on November 17, 2019. But according to the official website of the WHO, it first received a report from China about the virus outbreak on December 31.

Before that date, did the WHO receive or discover any other information about the outbreak? If so, what was the organization's reaction? What did Chinese authorities say in their first report to the WHO? Can the public see that report? If not, why not?

Was the WHO aware of China's suppression of research and information about COVID-19?

On January 1, 2020, the day after China's report, Hubei province health authorities ordered the company that first identified and sequenced the virus to stop testing, destroy all samples, and keep information secret. According to press reports, two days later, central health authorities issued a similar official order to testing facilities across the country. If the WHO was aware of these things, how did it react to China's cover-up?

What did the WHO do with information received from Taiwan about the risk of human-to-human transmission of COVID-19?

It is now well-known that on December 31, Taiwan alerted the WHO about the risk of human-to-human transmission of the new virus. What is less known is what the WHO did upon receiving the alert from Taiwan. Did the organization pass on the concerns to other countries?

Was the WHO aware of Chinese doctors becoming infected with COVID-19, even as the organization denied that the disease could be transmitted between individuals?

Like the Chinese government, the WHO officially denied until January 20 that COVID-19 could be transmitted from human to human. But between January 1 and January 11, at least seven doctors contracted the virus. The WHO was presumably aware that infected doctors are the most telling indicator of human-to-human transmission. Was the WHO aware of doctors infected in China during this time? Or did Chinese authorities not inform the WHO of these cases?

Why did the WHO continue to deny human transmission after confirming a case of COVID-19 in Thailand on January 13, 2020?

The WHO official timeline records that on January 13, "Officials confirm a case of COVID-19 in Thailand, the first recorded case outside of China." Why then did the organization continue to claim at its January 14 press conference that there was no evidence showing human-to-human transmission, and no case of doctors infected in China or Thailand?

Why didn't the WHO visit Wuhan hospitals where COVID-19 patients were being treated?

On January 20 and 21, a day before the Wuhan lockdown was declared, WHO experts from its China and Western Pacific regional offices conducted a brief field visit to Wuhan. The delegation visited the Wuhan Tianhe Airport, Zhongnan Hospital, the Hubei provincial Center for Disease Control (CDC), including the BSL3 laboratory in China's CDC. Why did the delegation not visit Wuhan Central Hospital, Jinyintan Hospital, or Wuhan Pneumonia Hospital—that is, the main hospitals treating infected patients? Did the WHO request such visits?

Did the WHO receive information from Zhongnan Hospital head Dr. Wang Xinghuan about the spread of COVID-19?

On January 19, the day before the WHO delegation's visit, top Wuhan public authorities came to inspect Zhongnan Hospital, and instructed the hospital administrators and professionals to be "mindful of political implications about what you are going to say to WHO." The hospital head Dr. Wang Xinghuan responded that, "I must tell them the truth. Have we learned any lesson from SARS? Saving lives is the biggest politics, so is telling the truth." That night, worried that Wang would reveal what he knew, the city government sent an official "friend" to talk to him.

Wang told the "friend" that political integrity "requires us to stand with the people, which is good for the Party's overall image." Can the WHO reveal what Dr. Wang told the delegation on January 20?

Given the massive evacuation from Wuhan during the week of January 20, why did the WHO wait until January 30 to declare the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)?

BBC health reporter James Gallagher's January 18 report begins: "The number of people already infected by the mystery virus emerging in China is far greater than official figures suggest, scientists have told the BBC. There have been more than 60 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus, but UK experts estimate a figure nearer 1,700."

During the WHO delegation's visit in Wuhan, residents desperate to avoid the virus were scrambling to leave the city for destinations in China and throughout the world. Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang confirmed at a January 26 press conference that more than five million Wuhan residents had left in the past week. Was the WHO delegation aware of this mass evacuation? Why was a PHEIC declaration not made at the WHO's meeting on January 22-23?

What took place when the WHO's Director-General met with Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping and other top Chinese leaders on January 28?

On January 28, a senior WHO delegation led by Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus traveled to Beijing to meet China's leadership, learn more about China's response, and offer technical assistance.

Tedros met with Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, but did not meet with the official head of the Chinese government's response, Premier Li Keqiang. Did Tedros request a meeting with Li? What did Tedros learn in China? Was his trip political or professional in nature?

Given China's suppression of information, failure to contain the COVID-19 epidemic, and delays in reporting on the nature of COVID-19, why did the WHO's Director-General praise the Chinese response and, indeed, the Chinese "system"?

In January 30, at the WHO news conference to declare the outbreak a PHEIC, Tedros hailed the CCP system, Xi Jinping's leadership, and China's response: "As I have said repeatedly since my return from Beijing, the Chinese government is to be congratulated for the extraordinary measures it has taken to contain the outbreak, despite the severe social and economic impact those measures are having on the Chinese people." He went on to note that the speed with which China detected the outbreak, isolated the virus, sequenced the genome, and shared it with WHO and the world are very impressive, and beyond words. So is China's commitment to transparency and to supporting other countries. In many ways, China is actually setting a new standard for outbreak response, and it's not an exaggeration.

At the same conference, he said, "Let me be clear. This declaration is not a vote of no confidence in China. On the contrary, WHO continues to have the confidence in China's capacity to control the outbreak." He seemed to feel the need to add later: "I'll repeat this. Let me be clear. This declaration is not a vote of no confidence in China. On the contrary. WHO continues to have confidence in China's capacity to control the outbreak."

Given the facts laid out above, why did the WHO's Director-General make such false claims? If the WHO was unaware of these facts at the time, does it now still stand by what Tedros said at the news conference? Does he still believe China was committed to "transparency"? Why did Tedros praise and defer to China?

Why didn't Tedros recommend restricting Chinese travel and trade on January 30?

At the January 30 conference, Tedros repeatedly stressed that the WHO did not recommend—and indeed opposed—any restrictions on Chinese travel and trade. Given the above information, and especially the Wuhan Mayor's admission on January 26 that more than five million Wuhan residents had escaped the city, why was Tedros opposed to restrictions on Chinese travel and trade? Does the WHO now admit that this judgment was incorrect?

Why did the WHO continue to oppose restrictions on Chinese trade and travel through the end of February?

As agreed by the two sides, China and the WHO convened Chinese and foreign experts to form a joint mission to investigate epidemic prevention and control in China. Starting on February 16, the joint mission visited Beijing, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Wuhan of Hubei province successively, ending on February 24.

The team leaders of the joint mission—Dr. Bruce Aylward, former WHO Assistant Director-General and senior advisor to the Director-General, and Dr. Liang Wannian, head of the Expert Panel on COVID-19 Response of China’s National Health Commission—held a press conference in Beijing before Aylward left China. At the press conference, Aylward continued to oppose restrictions on Chinese travel and trade. In retrospect, does the WHO think this was sensible?

Why didn’t the joint China-WHO mission inspect the infected areas of Wuhan?

At the end of the February 24 press conference, Washington Post Beijing bureau chief Anna Fifield asked the WHO’s Dr. Aylward why he was not in quarantine after staying in Wuhan over the weekend. Aylward said he didn’t go to any “dirty” areas in Wuhan and that he had been tested for the coronavirus that morning. He left China immediately without quarantining himself for 14 days. It is obvious that by “dirty areas,” Aylward meant infectious areas.

Why did the WHO experts on the mission to study and investigate the viral outbreak not go to the infected area?

(The WHO delegation visiting Wuhan on January 20-21, 2020, also does not seem to have gone to “dirty areas.”) Did the WHO experts on the mission have freedom to choose where they went, what hospitals they studied, and what people to talk to—doctors, the infected, relatives of the deceased, or people on streets for that matter? Or was the mission itinerary and agenda dictated by the Chinese authorities?

Why did the WHO’s Dr. Aylward lavish praise on China’s putative success in containing COVID-19?

At the same press conference, and without having personally seen infected areas of Wuhan and other places in China, Aylward lavished praise on the government’s success in containing the virus. But when a BBC reporter asked him to what extent he thought a cover-up and censorship played a role in allowing the virus to accelerate at the rate that it did, he replied, “I don’t know, frankly, didn’t look at that. I’m just being completely honest. . . .”

One purpose of the press conference was to make recommendations for a global response. Why, then, did an expert charged with that task not consider whether China or any country had made mistakes? Why did Aylward try to avoid that question? Does the WHO now think this approach was appropriate?

Why did the WHO wait until March 11 to declare COVID-19 a global pandemic? Why did Dr. Aylward continue to minimize the scope and threat of COVID-19?

At the press conference, Dr. Aylward also said, “Because every day we stopped to think about this disease and make decisions, should we do it or not, this virus will take advantage and almost double the number of cases. We have to move fast.” This shows that he understood the vital importance of speed. By March 4, as the number of cases and death toll soared in many countries, it had long met the criteria of transmission between people, high fatality rates, and worldwide spread. Yet on March 4, in an [interview with New York Times reporter Donald McNeil](#), he said, “We don’t have a global pandemic.”

Has the WHO run models to estimate how many lives could have been saved if it had acted more quickly to declare COVID-19, respectively, a public health emergency of international concern and a global pandemic?

Finally, does the WHO believe it has a duty to coordinate all affected countries to form a credible, independent scientific team to conduct an investigation into the origin of COVID-19?

The origin of the novel coronavirus has been at the center of a maelstrom of debate of accusations between countries. This is a first-order of question, and one that concerns all the citizens of the world. The question is ultimately a scientific one, and consistent with the organization's mandate. Can the WHO deliver?

Jianli Yang is founder and president of Citizen Power Initiatives for China. Aaron Rhodes is president of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe, human rights editor of Dissident Magazine, and the author of The Debasement of Human Rights (Encounter Books, 2018).

HRWF Comment

Peng Liyuan, the wife of Xi Jinping (General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and President of the People's Republic of China), is one of the five WHO Goodwill Ambassadors. A key position for lobbying/

Directly after the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 in June 1989, Peng Liyuan sang for the martial-law troops. A photo showing the scene in which Peng, wearing a green military uniform, sings to helmeted and rifle-bearing troops seated in rows on Beijing's Tiananmen Square, was swiftly scrubbed from China's Internet before it could generate discussion online.

In June 2013, the American *Foreign Policy* magazine's article Why Michelle Obama Shouldn't Meet With Peng Liyuan, approved the First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama's choice not to meet with Peng Liyuan who allegedly sang in support of Chinese troops in Tiananmen Square in 1989, following a crackdown on protesters on 4 June 1989.

Who is WHO Chief Tedros?

World Health Organization (WHO) Chief Tedros Has Got to Go

***World Health Organization (WHO) Director General
Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Denis Balibouse/Reuters)***

National Review (17.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2XHtSXw> - The international public-health group's head has aided China's coverup of the COVID-19 pandemic at every turn, endangering countless lives in the process.

The ultimate, primary responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic lies with CCP authorities, who concealed the outbreak from the beginning and suppressed the spread of accurate information about it. But Tedros also bears significant

responsibility for aiding and abetting the CCP's coverup. He is a living testament to the success of Beijing's aggressive efforts to coopt international institutions to its will, efforts that must be stopped sooner rather than later.

If the deadly and destructive made-in-China COVID-19 crisis has a silver lining, it is this: The strengths and weaknesses of particular leaders, governments, and institutions around the world have been exposed by the pandemic, thus providing an impetus for reform. The World Health Organization (WHO) has come under particular scrutiny at a time of rising skepticism about the ability of international institutions to act responsibly and transparently independent of corrupt political influence. The U.S., which is by far the single largest funder of the WHO, has enormous leverage in this case, and is now beginning to use it: The Trump administration, angered by the WHO's role in the pandemic crisis, recently announced that it would suspend and review the \$400 million annual American contribution to the group.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director-general, bears primary responsibility for its missteps in responding to the crisis, particularly its crucial early delay in classifying COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. It is thus appropriate to inquire about his background and the motivations that have driven his actions in this pandemic.

Tedros, a trained microbiologist who did earn an MSc in the immunology of infectious diseases at the University of London, was Ethiopia's minister of health from 2005 to 2012, and subsequently its minister of foreign affairs from 2012 to 2016. He was also served on the nine-member executive committee of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one of four ethnically based political parties making up the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the brutal authoritarian regime that ruled Ethiopia with an iron fist from 1991 to 2019.

When Tedros sought to become WHO director-general in 2017, he met with fierce opposition to his candidacy from Ethiopians angry with his service to and defense of the country's abusive regime, as well as his record as minister of health. He was ultimately confirmed despite allegations that, as minister of health, he directed the cover-up of three deadly cholera epidemics by simply insisting that they were Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD), apparently hoping to avoid the impact that the public admission of a cholera epidemic might have had on Ethiopian tourism and the image of his party.

For as long as he could, Tedros was happy to validate Beijing's clumsy efforts to minimize and downplay the viral outbreak in Wuhan. While China was actively covering up the virus and censoring information about it, Tedros lavished praise on Xi Jinping's response as "transparent," "responsible," and "setting a new standard of the world." Even as international pressure grew, he delayed declaring the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. When the declaration was finally made on January 30, 2020, he was careful to say that, it was "not a vote of no confidence in China. On the contrary, WHO continues to have the confidence in China's capacity to control the outbreak."

Days later, at a time when China had reported 361 deaths from the virus — and when, we know now, the actual number of Chinese deaths was actually much higher — Tedros, echoing the Chinese government's stance, remained adamantly opposed to restrictions that would "unnecessarily interfere with international trade and travel" in an effort to stop the pandemic's spread. Until at least as late as February 29, shortly before the extent of the pandemic's global reach and threat began to become clear, WHO was still officially opposed to such restrictions. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in turn, was all too happy to criticize the United States and other countries that had imposed early travel restrictions on China as having "violated the WHO's advice."

Meanwhile, plenty of countries believed the CCP and Tedros's WHO, and chose not to implement necessary border controls against the epidemic. As a result, the virus began to spread from country to country across the globe, until even those nations that had tried to restrict travel from affected areas early on were powerless to stop it from invading their shores.

What makes all of this even less forgivable is that the Tedros-led WHO was informed of the truth about the virus at a time when life-saving action could have been taken, and chose to ignore it. On December 31, 2019, scientists in Taiwan, which continues to be excluded from the WHO due to Chinese pressure, notified WHO officials of evidence of "human-to-human" transmission, but the officials did not pass on this information to other countries. (Ironically, Taiwan, forced to deal with the threat without any help from the WHO, fared better than many other countries in the end, because its natural distrust of the CCP meant it was not fooled by Beijing's efforts to downplay the outbreak's seriousness.)

For as long as he could, Tedros ignored Taiwan's warnings and validated China's grossly negligent lies. But when the world finally began to awaken to the threat of COVID-19, Tedros almost immediately began blaming the international community for its earlier inaction. On March 11, 2020, as the WHO declared that the coronavirus had become a global pandemic, Tedros had the gall to say that "some countries are struggling with a lack of resolve," that the WHO was "deeply concerned . . . by the alarming levels of inaction," and that "some countries are not approaching this threat with the level of political commitment needed to control it."

There is a lesson to be learned from WHO's response to this global crisis, and it concerns the corruption of international institutions by authoritarian regimes. Tedros favors dictators because he is favored by them, and vice-versa. His candidacy for director-general of the WHO was endorsed by health ministers from Algeria and numerous other nondemocratic countries. The World Health Assembly approved him for the post with an overwhelming 133 votes out of 185, despite strong opposition from many Ethiopians who knew his derisory domestic record. China was a major backer of Tedros's candidacy, as was his own TPLF party, which spent millions of dollars on his campaign.

Not surprisingly, Tedros's record at the WHO has been one of whitewashing and coddling dictatorships. On October 18, 2017, only three months into his tenure as director-general, Tedros appointed Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, one of the longest-ruling and most brutal dictators on the planet, to serve as a WHO goodwill ambassador focused on tackling non-communicable diseases in Africa. "I am honored to be joined by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, a country that places universal health coverage and health promotion at the center of its policies to provide healthcare to all," he said at a conference in Uruguay announcing the decision. (After the appointment was widely condemned by influential leaders in the health sector, politicians, and human-rights defenders, he eventually rescinded it.)

Of course, one need not even mention Tedros's general affinity for dictators to explain his direction of the WHO's response to the coronavirus pandemic. The CCP and Tedros clearly enjoy a reciprocal relationship, one based on material interests as well as common values. The CCP donated generously to Ethiopia while Tedros was the Ethiopian foreign minister, and provided forceful backing of his campaign to lead the WHO. In response to the widespread criticism of the organization's mishandling of the coronavirus outbreak, Chinese state-run media outlets have vigorously defended Tedros, claiming he is being "attacked by the West" for "helping us."

The ultimate, primary responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic lies with CCP authorities, who concealed the outbreak from the beginning and suppressed the spread of accurate information about it. But Tedros also bears significant responsibility for aiding and abetting the CCP's coverup. He is a living testament to the success of Beijing's aggressive efforts to coopt international institutions to its will, efforts that must be stopped sooner rather than later. And his actions have endangered hundreds of thousands if not millions of lives across the globe. The free citizens and governments of the world should not rest until he is removed from his post atop the WHO.

— *Jianli Yang is the founder and president of Citizen Power Initiatives for China. Aaron Rhodes is the president of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe, the human-rights editor of Dissident magazine, and the author of The Debasement of Human Rights.*

Open letter: The Communist Party's rule by fear endangers Chinese citizens – and the world

***An open letter to Chinese citizens and friends of China at home and abroad from parliamentarians, academics, advocates and policy leaders
HRWF signed the Open Letter***

Hong Kong Free Press (14.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2yUz283> - The current global crisis has been caused by the regime so many of you have been tolerating or supporting for decades.

On 2 April 2020, a group of one hundred Chinese establishment scholars [wrote](#) an open letter decrying the "many critical voices politicising the COVID-19 pandemic". They stated that "(at) this stage of the pandemic, the exact source and origin of COVID-19 remain undetermined, but these questions are unimportant and finger pointing is demeaning and hurtful to everyone". They also argued against what they alleged is the politicising of the epidemic.

The open letter exemplifies what the independent intellectual Professor Xu Zhangrun has called the "ridiculous 'Red Culture' and the nauseating adulation that the system heaps on itself via shameless pro-Party hacks who chirrup hosannahs at every turn".

Professor Xu—now under house arrest—has called on his compatriots to stop their uncritical support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and instead to "rage against this injustice; let your lives burn with a flame of decency; break through the stultifying darkness and welcome the dawn".

While the exact source and spread of the virus are not clear yet the question of origin is highly important, for the people of China and for all humankind: only by understanding how this global disaster could emerge we can prevent it from happening again.

The roots of the pandemic are in a cover-up by CCP authorities in Wuhan, Hubei province. Under the influence of the CCP the World Health Organisation first downplayed the pandemic. Taiwanese health officials also allege that they ignored their alerts of human-to-human transmission in late December. Under pressure from the CCP, democratic Taiwan—which has coped with the pandemic in exemplary fashion—is excluded from the WHO.

We should never forget that China's Chernobyl moment was a self-inflicted wound. The CCP silenced Chinese doctors who wanted to warn other health professionals during the

early stage of the outbreak: Dr Ai Fen can no longer appear in public after accepting a domestic media interview; her colleague Dr Li Wenliang died while fighting the virus in Wuhan. On his deathbed Dr Li famously said that “a healthy society shouldn’t have only one voice”.

The Chinese entrepreneur Ren Zhiqiang wrote that “without a media representing the interests of the people by publishing the actual facts, the people’s lives are being ravaged by both the virus and the major illness of the system.” He disappeared on March 12.

The courageous citizen journalists Chen Qiushi, Fang Bin and Li Zehua, who tried to report freely about the situation in Wuhan, now are also missing.

Mainland China’s political malaise goes beyond the leadership failure of Xi Jinping. In a recent video message a young student called Zhang Wenbin reflected on his evolution from an uncritical CCP supporter to a critical citizen with a conscience: “Since I scaled the Great Firewall, I gradually came to the realization that the Chinese Communist Party has extended its dragon claws into every corner of the world, including collective farming [1950s], the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976], the Great Famine [1958-1961], the One-Child Policy, the Tiananmen massacre [1989], as well as the persecution of the Falun Gong [spiritual movement], and the peoples of Tibet, Hong Kong and Xinjiang...Yet everyone continues to turn a blind eye, singing the party’s praises. I just can’t bear it”. Zhang disappeared shortly after recording his message. His friends fear he will face interrogation and torture by the secret police.

The global pandemic forces us all to confront an inconvenient truth: by politicizing all aspects of life including people’s health, continued autocratic one-party rule in the People’s Republic of China has endangered everyone. Rather than trusting the CCP’s intentions and accepting establishment academics’ uncritical approval of the party-state’s policies, we should pay greater attention to the voices of what can be termed ‘unofficial’ China. These independent-minded academics, doctors, entrepreneurs, citizen journalists, public interest lawyers and young students no longer accept the CCP’s rule by fear. Neither should you.

As an international group of public figures, security policy analysts and China watchers we stand in solidarity with courageous and conscientious Chinese citizens including Xu Zhangrun, Ai Fen, Li Wenliang, Ren Zhiqiang, Chen Qiushi, Fang Bin, Li Zehua, Xu Zhiyong, and Zhang Wenbin, just to name a few of the real heroes and martyrs who risk their life and liberty for a free and open China. Their individual voices are already forming a chorus. They demand nothing less than a critical evaluation of the impact of CCP policies on the lives of Chinese citizens and citizens around the world. We urge you to join them.

Coronavirus, the CCP should be asked to pay US\$4 trillion in damages: Here is why

By Ruth Ingram

Bitter Winter (04.08.2020) – <https://bit.ly/2V8AGKE> - An influential British think tank, the Henry Jackson Society, has published the most detailed legal paper so far on Chinese liabilities for the epidemic.

The Henry Jackson Society report

China must be made to pay for the carnage wreaked by Covid19 on the world.

According to a [UK think tank's report](#) released this week, Beijing and the CCP must be left in no doubt that they are responsible for not only the economic, but the myriad and devastating social and emotional fallout throughout the world, resulting from its willful negligence. And they must pay up.

Adding its weight to calls around the world for a legal response to the Coronavirus catastrophe, a joint co-authored paper released by the Henry Jackson Society (HJS) entitled: "Coronavirus compensation? Assessing China's potential culpability and avenues of legal response," has urged that Beijing face the full force of international law.

"If a company pollutes, we expect it to clear up the mess. Covid-19 spread because of China's negligence, cover-up, lies," rails [HJS's promotional video](#). "So far the world's biggest economies have spent £3.2 trillion cleaning up the mess. To make sure this never happens again, the world should explore the possibilities of legal action against China."

Mendoza: There is enough evidence to sue China and the CCP

Crunching the eye watering financial numbers this week on the UK's Talk Radio station, Dr Alan Mendoza, one of the authors of the report and Executive Director of HJS, denied Chinese accusations that their report was simply another example of "China bashing," but said that they were trying to "address issues of justice, compensation and reflection amid negligence and cover-ups by the Chinese state." "How did this virus get out of China to where we are today?" He asked.

Asked whether the blame for a virus could be lain at the door of a nation or the political party ruling it, Dr. Mendoza pointed to the safeguards other Asian nations had put in place following previous Coronavirus SARS and MERS outbreaks, whereas the CCP, ignoring every international protocol, covered up evidence in November and December of a new virus with the potential for human to human transmission. Not only did the CCP keep the discovery secret but employed bully boy tactics of intimidation and misinformation which allowed millions of people, potentially infected by the virus, to leave the epicenter and travel to all parts of China and the world, with disastrous consequences. "Had they taken action," said Dr. Mendoza, "this would never have happened."

He described how the CCP's lies manipulated and deceived the WHO, rendering it impotent. "The mechanisms to defend ourselves and the kindred spirit that the IHR (International Health Regulations) were supposed to instill were effectively were thrown away," and the WHO rendered "useless," he said. This confirmed in his mind, China's culpability, he added.

However fraught "going after" China or the CCP might appear, Dr. Mendoza and his colleagues have identified ten possible avenues of legal redress and urge individuals, companies and states to pursue justice in the courts.

"Although our own governments are responsible for what is happening in our countries, this all started in one place," he said. "We cannot have a situation where that is not brought to international attention and justice not brought to bear on that basis." He added that he and his colleagues wanted to see more than simply an acknowledgement by China of guilt. "We want much more than that given the level of damage. There's a clear line of evidence that goes back to China and they have to be held responsible for that."

Launching an action against the second largest economy on earth and the most populous nation on earth, however daunting, was possible, claimed Dr. Mendoza. He advocated going through the WHO to examine health regulations breached by China, its cover ups and deliberate concealment of information. Action was also possible through the International Court of Justice, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and Bilateral Investment Treaties. "We've identified avenues and they should be investigated," he insisted. Even if the process takes years, "this in itself should be a salutary lesson for the Chinese," he added.

Henderson: "China should pay US \$ 4 trillion"

Speaking on the program Wake Up Australia, this week, a co-author of the report and former British diplomat in China, Matthew Henderson, pressed for China to face punishment according to the law for the "negligent cover up" that created this catastrophe. "This is like a war," he said, admitting that the financial loss will increase exponentially as the epidemic progresses. "There are some things you can quantify but others, the full costs, the emotional, and psychological costs, deaths and diseases, loss of career, disruption of education, family breakup," he said, which have been unleashed on the world. "No one was prepared for it, because they didn't give us time to be prepared."

He and his co-author colleagues are asking for more than US\$4 trillion in compensation and urging for united action by the world in the pursuit of answers. "How much willpower is there to take this forward?" He asked. "We find ourselves and society being corroded by a dreadful disease. What exactly is this Covid-19?" He asked. "How can we defend ourselves against it?" He protested China's withholding of vital data depriving the world's best scientists of a chance to examine the virus. "China won't hand it over," he complained.

There were moral issues at stake here too, he pointed out. China should be faced with its flagrant disregard for the international laws it itself is a signatory to. "There is a question of honor here." He added: "Our opponents don't believe in the law. They just use it arbitrarily to control their people."

Mr Henderson despaired that China was getting away with flagrant international abuses, despite being a member of the UN. He asked why a Chinese official, for example, was recently appointed to a committee on human rights? "Something has gone badly wrong here," he said.

He pressed for a coalition of countries to tackle China. "Just as with rugby, we must form a line and not let them pass," he said.

First step: a pause in commercial dealings with China

Both Mr Henderson and Dr Mendoza urge a pause on dealings with China in a variety of fields as a result of the Covid-19 hiatus. "We have surrendered too much to China, says Mr Henderson. "It's wake up time," he says. "There is a great danger in hyper globalization with all routes leading to Chinese manufacturing. With countries not being able to control their own supply lines or produce materials domestically." He cited its many downsides in terms of unemployment and deskilling of the national workforce. "Now we are seeing the repercussions of global trade during a pandemic. This is giving us pause for thought."

Regarding future dealings with China over the 5G network, and the use of Huawei, Mr Henderson was adamant that national security should not be "bargained away." He decried the fact that Europe was now "in hoc" to a "hostile power," and dependent on China for its economic growth over the last few years. "This is clearly not sustainable," he

stressed, urging European states to look again at the source of their growth, and the protection of their “prized national assets.” He bemoaned the surrendering of intellectual property rights to China. “States like us live by what we invent, what we innovate, how we market that effectively and how we benefit from it. We’ve surrendered that as well,” he said.

Referring to China’s blatant disregard for internationally agreed treaties and agreements witnessed so clearly over Covid-19, he urged the G7 and its allies to “pool together in a corporate spirit” and devise a new set of policies. “We need to work out what kind of rules book we want to play by and how we respond to China when it refuses to do so?”

“It’s not about containment,” he stressed, “it’s about wake up time,” he said.

Pressure is mounting to call China to account over its handling of Covid-19. Only last weekend [in the Mail on Sunday newspaper](#), the UK’s Downing Street admitted that China faces a “reckoning” over their handling of coronavirus and risks becoming a “pariah state,” with Boris Johnson facing pressure to “scrap the Huawei deal.”

[Lawsuits in Florida](#) and Texas have been filed worth \$20 trillion dollars claiming the Wuhan virus is a “biological weapon of war” made in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

More suits are sure to follow.

Concluding its report, the members of the HJS emphasize that the rules-based international order places obligations on everybody, even though authoritarian states often act with impunity. “The Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC) is no exception to this rule. International law – in the form of Treaties, Covenants and Charters – places obligations on China, just as much as it does on the democracies of the West,” it stresses.

Coronavirus: CCP beware, the lawyers are coming

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (25.03.2020) - <https://bit.ly/33OQKW2> - Under international law, China and/or the Chinese Communist Party can and should be sued for the enormous damages they caused to the world.

When all this will be over, and perhaps even before, the CCP may find itself attacked by an enemy its mighty military power will not be able to stop, aggressive Western lawyers. It is slowly becoming obvious that there is ground in international law to sue the Chinese government and/or the CCP for the damages their irresponsible conduct caused to the whole world. [A study by American legal scholar James Kraska](#) discussed this point. I do not agree with all his statements, but am summarizing and developing here some of his ideas, adding others of my own.

What would be the legal basis for the lawsuits? It is, indeed, a basis the world created with China in mind. In 2002, SARS spread from China’s Guangdong province. By 2003, it had spread to 28 countries, with a total death toll of 774. The figure may now look small, compared to the victims of COVID-19, but the world realized that [many casualties could have been avoided](#), had China not tried to shroud in secrecy the epidemic for several weeks after it occurred. SARS led to the new [International Health Regulations](#) of the World Health Organization (WHO), adopted in 2005 and legally binding on all WHO

member states, including China. The Regulations refer inter alia to SARS as well as to similar diseases “caused by a new subtype” (such is the virus responsible for COVID-19), and establish an obligation by member states to share relevant information within the WHO “within 24 hours.”

No matter how much China uses its political leverage to control statements by WHO leaders, it is crystal clear that China has violated its obligation to report under the 2005 Regulations. The story of Doctor Li Wenliang (1986-2020), to whose family the CCP apologized when he had already died from the disease, shows clearly that China did not want information on the virus to go public internationally, and those who dared to speak about it were threatened or put in jail. The CCP [withheld crucial information for weeks](#), both at home and internationally, and there is a general consensus that, had China released them on time, thousands of lives would have been saved.

A crucial problem in international law is sanctions. Proclaiming that UN member states are responsible for their actions is easy. Sanctioning them is difficult. To help with the notoriously intractable problem of enforcing international law, the United Nations established in 1947 the International Law Commission (ILC). In 2001, this Commission published the [Draft Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts](#). Many have noted the limits of the ILC: its documents are authoritative but not legally binding on member states. However, the case law of the International Court of Justice tells a partially different story. The Court has used ILC documents, including the Draft Articles, as guidelines to interpret international law. Art. 34 of the Draft Articles states that a state that intentionally breached an international obligation is liable to “full reparation for the injury caused by the internationally wrongful act,” in “the form of restitution, compensation and satisfaction.” Of interest is also Art. 39, according to which, “In the determination of reparation, account shall be taken of the contribution to the injury by willful or negligent action or omission of the injured State or any person or entity in relation to whom reparation is sought.” This means that, in addition to China as a state, entities (such as the CCP) or persons (such as President Xi Jinping and others) who, to say the least, “contributed” to the Chinese breach of its obligation to share immediately information with the rest of the world through the WHO, are also liable.

The damages are obviously enormous. China may find several ways to reject the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, whose president, by the way, is a Chinese, Ms. Xue Hanqin. However, states have found alternative way to punish the wrongdoers. Since 2016, the Global Magnitsky Act authorizes the United States to take action against human rights offenders. Courts throughout the world have also accepted civil lawsuits seeking damages from foreign officials. The Western lawyers’ fantasy is almost without limits. There should be many ways to hold China, the CCP, Mr. Xi Jinping and all those who cooperated in the cover-up liable for the enormous amount of deaths, tragedy, and economic damages they caused. CCP beware: the lawyers are coming, and this may be good news for the world.

A timeline of the coronavirus outbreak and China’s coverup

Dailywire (20.03.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2xYSFeG> - The U.S. State Department on Thursday released two timelines: The first about the coronavirus outbreak and the second about the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) coverup of the outbreak.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo explained to Fox News' Sean Hannity earlier this week to talk about China's "disinformation campaign" regarding the coronavirus.

"This disinformation campaign, which began when we began to call out this risk that was created not only for the Chinese people, but now we can see people all across the world where the Chinese Government knew about this risk, had identified it, they were the first to know, and they wasted valuable days at the front end, allowing hundreds of thousands of people to leave Wuhan to go to places like Italy that's now suffering so badly. They tried to suppress this information – you talked about the means by which they did it – instead of trying to actually do the work to suppress the virus, which is what the world demanded. And the Chinese Communist Party didn't get it right and put countless lives at risk as a result of that," Pompeo said.

Below is a compiled list of both the outbreak and coverup timelines.

November 17: The first case of someone suffering from COVID-19 occurs in Wuhan, [according to the South China Morning Post](#)

December 10: Wei Guixian, sold goods in Wuhan's wet market, reportedly started feeling sick on this day. Thankfully, she was released from the hospital in January, The Wall Street Journal [reported](#).

December 27: Zhang Jixian, a doctor at the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, sounds the alarm about a new disease that has already affected 180 patients, the Morning Post [reported](#).

December 26-30: The first evidence of the new virus is revealed through Wuhan patient data, which had been sent to multiple Chinese genomics companies, Caixin Global [reported](#). Hubei's health commission orders a genomics company to *stop* testing the new virus and destroy all samples, according to [an anonymous source](#) in Caixin Global.

December 31: More than a month after the first incident of COVID-19, Chinese officials alert the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office about pneumonia with an unknown cause affecting people in Wuhan, Caixin Global [reported](#).

Chinese Internet authorities started censoring terms relating to the virus on social media, including "Wuhan Unknown Pneumonia," "SARS Variation," "Wuhan Seafood Market," and anything critical of the government's response to the disease, Citizen Lab [reported](#).

January 1: Eight doctors, including Dr. Li Wenliang, are detained and questioned by the Chinese government, who condemn them for "making false statements on the Internet," CNN [reported](#). Li is then forced to write a letter saying his warnings "had a negative impact," the Journal [reported](#).

Caixin Global [reported](#) that the Hubei health commission ordered genomics companies to stop testing the virus and destroy samples, confirming its earlier report.

The Wuhan seafood market where the virus allegedly first broke out was finally closed, though it is then "disinfected" without swabbing the individual animal cages or drawing any blood from the workers, meaning the evidence of what may have been the source of the virus was destroyed, the Times [reported](#).

January 3: China's National Health Commission issued a gag order and ordering pneumonia samples moved to designated testing facilities or destroyed. The Commission also orders institutions not to publish any information about the still unknown disease, Caixin Global [reported](#).

January 5: Professor Zhang Yongzhen of the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center provided the genomic sequence of the virus to Chinese authorities. On the same day, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission stopped releasing daily updates on new cases, the Journal [reported](#).

January 9: WHO released a [statement](#) about the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, suggesting the cases pointed to a coronavirus as the possible pathogen causing the issues. The statement also said China ruled out SARS, MERS, influenza, bird flu, and other common pathogens.

January 10: Wang Guangfa, a prominent People's Republic of China government expert, told state broadcaster China Central Television that the pneumonia outbreak was "under control" and downplayed the virus as a "mild condition," the Times [reported](#).

January 11: Because the Chinese government took no action on Yongzhen's genomic sequence, he published the data online to help the world work on testing methods, the Morning Post [reported](#).

January 12: The National Health Commission shared the virus genomic information with the WHO for the first time, Caixin Global [reported](#). On this same day, Youngzhen's lab in Shanghai is closed for "rectification," the Morning Post [reported](#).

January 14: WHO said there may have been human-to-human transmission of the virus, Reuters [reported](#). Also on this day, Chinese police wearing plainclothes start detaining journalists trying to report on the outbreak at Wuhan's Jinyintan Hospital. The journalists are forced to delete any footage taken and hand over their phones and cameras for inspection, [Business Insider](#) and the Times [reported](#).

January 15: Li Qun, head of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) emergency center, claims the risk of human-to-human transmission is "low," the Journal [reported](#).

January 17: After 12 days, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission started giving daily updates on new cases of the coronavirus.

January 18: Despite the presence of the coronavirus, Wuhan holds a "potluck" banquet for 40,000 families to try and break a world record, The New York Times [reported](#).

January 20: Dr. Zhong Nanshan, who helped fight SARS, says in a TV interview that the coronavirus is spreading from person to person. Nanshan also said later that if the Chinese government had acted in December or early January to contain the virus, "the number of sick would have been greatly reduced, the Journal [reported](#).

This same day, Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang said Beijing rules kept him from disclosing information about the threat of the coronavirus, the Journal [reported](#).

January 23: Wuhan is finally locked down, even though about 5 million people had already left the city without being screened by that time.

February 6: China President Xi Jinping orders the country's Internet watchdog to further control social media platforms, the Morning Post [reported](#). On this same day, citizen

journalist Chen Qiushi, who was also a former rights attorney, disappeared in Wuhan after posting footage from overcrowded hospitals and panicking families, the Times [reported](#).

February 7: Dr. Li Wenliang dies of the coronavirus, which he contracted from a patient. Wenliang was detained for sounding the alarm on the virus, the Journal [reported](#).

February 9: Another citizen journalist, Fang Bin, who was also a local businessman, disappeared after posting videos from Wuhan on Chinese social media, the Times [reported](#).

February 15: President Xi tightened control over Internet discussion even further, the Agence Free-Press [reported](#). On this same day, activist Xu Zhiyong was arrested for a February 4 essay calling for Xi to resign for suppressing information about the coronavirus. Xu had been on the run for two months, NPR [reported](#).

February 16: Professor Xu Zhangrun was put on house arrest and banned from social media and the Internet for publishing an essay stating "The coronavirus epidemic has revealed the rotten core of Chinese governance," The Guardian [reported](#).

February 19: Reporters for the Journal had their press credentials revoked by Beijing over their coverage of the coronavirus outbreak, the Journal [reported](#).

March 14: Another activist, Ren Zhiqiang, disappeared in Beijing after criticizing the way Xi responded to the coronavirus, the Times [reported](#).

Don't blame 'China' for the coronavirus – Blame the Chinese Communist Party

By Josh Rogin, Columnist

Washington Post (19.03.2020) - <https://wapo.st/2UrZltj> - It's crucial for our health and safety that the United States push back against the Chinese government's efforts to rewrite the history of the coronavirus pandemic. It's also crucial we don't fuel racism or stigmatize Chinese citizens or Chinese Americans while doing so. The key to accomplishing both goals is to separate the way we talk about the Chinese people from the way we talk about their rulers in Beijing.

President Trump insists on calling coronavirus "the Chinese virus." His rationale for doing so is simplistic but technically accurate: Chinese officials are intentionally spreading the lie the virus may have originated in the United States to deflect blame from their own early failings. "It's not racist at all, not at all. It comes from China, that's why. I want to be accurate," Trump said Wednesday.

As many have noted, accuracy is not the only consideration the president should take into account. Trump is ignoring the history of racism against Asians and Asian Americans in this country and neglecting vital context: a real rise in racist incidents against ethnically Asian people in this country since the crisis began.

An Asian American reporter said a White House official used the term "Kung-Flu" in her presence. That's unacceptable. The Asian American Journalists Association asked news

organizations not to use the term “Wuhan virus,” in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines warning that referring to the geographical origin of an illness in the name stigmatizes the people there.

Surely, many who are using “Chinese virus” or “Wuhan virus” are not racist. And surely, some are. For the person on the receiving end, there’s no difference. But there’s a well-founded way to honor the truth about the virus and hold those responsible to account without causing undue offense.

We must all be specific in blaming the Chinese Communist Party for its actions. It was the CCP that hid the virus outbreak for weeks, silencing doctors, jailing journalists and thwarting science - most notably by shutting down the Shanghai lab that publicly released the first coronavirus genome sequence.

The Chinese people are heroes in this story. Chinese doctors, researchers and journalists risked their lives and even died fighting the virus and warning the world. The Chinese public’s community solidarity holds lessons for us as our own situation worsens. The Chinese are also victims of their own government’s draconian measures, which caused massive extra suffering.

“It is critical to remember that the Chinese people have no meaningful say in the measures taken by their government,” said Christopher Walker, vice president for studies and analysis at the National Endowment for Democracy. “In the haze of authoritarian information curation and disinformation now coming from Beijing, we can’t lose sight of the massive authoritarian governance failure at the global pandemic’s point of origin.”

This is not just about the coronavirus, it’s a crucial point relative to our whole approach toward China. Our beef is not with the Chinese people, our problem is with the CCP - its internal repression, its external aggression, and its malign influence in free and open societies.

Part of the CCP’s strategy is to divide us along political, ethnic and racial lines. Chinese officials routinely toss out the racism accusation to rebut criticism of their government. They also accuse the United States of racism to distract from their own horrendously racist policies, such as jailing millions of innocent people in Xinjiang on the basis of ethnicity.

In the United States, most people aren’t attuned to this dynamic. In Australia, the political class has been debating CCP influence operations for several years. One report put out by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute suggested some clear guidelines on how to avoid the trap. The report states that we should avoid generalizations, clearly distinguish between the Chinese government and the Chinese people, and take care not to alienate ethnically Chinese citizens at home. In turn, we must also be careful not to attribute racist motives (unless justified) to those who criticize the Chinese authorities.

“Above all, the CCP has engaged in wedge politics to undermine legitimate public debate on Chinese Government policy and conduct within Australia,” wrote John Fitzgerald in the report. That’s happening in the United States, as well.

This is not political correctness run amok. This is about recognizing when an authoritarian regime is using our sensitivity to racism against us. We must avoid making accusations against the Chinese government unless supported by evidence. We must continue to press Beijing for more transparency and truth, which are crucial to stopping the spread.

Have we learned nothing from the Russian interference in 2016? We must not aid and abet the CCP’s efforts to stoke internal divisions and spread disinformation. Have we

learned nothing from the post-9/11 demonization of Muslims? Chinese and Chinese Americans need our support during this crisis and bring great strength to our response.

Let's stop saying "Chinese virus" - not because everyone who uses it is racist, but because it needlessly plays into the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to divide us and deflect our attention from their bad actions. Let's just call it the "CCP virus." That's more accurate and offends only those who deserve it.

North Korean workers in China forced to work overtime before sanctions deadline

North Korean workers at a fish processing plant in Hunchun, China.
AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

Radio Free Asia (23.10.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2KFIYXf> - North Korean authorities are forcing workers dispatched to China to work grueling overtime schedules in the few remaining months they have left as legal workers overseas, industry sources told RFA's Korean Service.

Sanctions aimed at depriving Pyongyang of resources that could be used in its nuclear and missile programs mandate that all overseas North Korean workers return home by the end of this year.

Pyongyang's overtime push is an attempt to squeeze every last penny they can out of their overseas workers before the well of foreign cash their work provides dries up.

A Chinese source, a quality control specialist at a fish processing plant in Donggang, China, told RFA's Korean Service Sunday that North Koreans there have been working grueling hours since last month.

"North Korean workers take on an extra four or five hours after eating dinner at 6 p.m. and they don't go to their rooms until 11," said the source.

The source said that the North Koreans were not working overtime on the company's orders.

"The North Korean supervisor asked the company if they could work overtime for extra pay. All the North Korean workers need to return home by the end of the year, but they are really driven to earn as much foreign cash as they can before their return," said the source.

But the source also revealed that the workers themselves aren't seeing the fruits of their extra work.

"All the extra pay they are earning is actually given in a lump sum of Chinese yuan to the supervisor at the end of the month," the source said.

"For all their toiling for extended hours into the wee hours of the night, they are not getting paid at all," the source said.

The source noted that most of the workers are young and are also trading away the best years of their youth.

"They eat lunch and dinner at the work site, so they can immediately get back to work without any break. It is so sad to see young girls struggling to work like the men, processing and packing frozen fish well into the night with no complaints," said the source.

Another source in Dandong, China said that North Koreans there were already in violation of sanctions.

"There are more than 10 fish processing companies in Dandong that employ North Koreans. Most of them are in China on short-term [30-day] visas, because they are not allowed to get working visas in China due to sanctions from the U.N. Security Council," the second source said.

"When their short-term visas expire, they go back home then immediately return [to China] to work again on another short-term visa," said the second source.

The second source said that even after the deadline, North Korea will find a way to send workers to China.

"The North Korean authorities ordered all their workers in China to return home by the end of December. But in the new year, [they] will find a way to send their foreign currency-earning workers back by any means necessary," said the second source.

According to a Forbes article published in July, there is an upper estimate of 80,000 North Korean laborers working in China.

Reported by Hyemin Son for RFA's Korean Service. Translated by Leejin Jun. Written in English by Eugene Whong.

Ilham Tohti is turning 50 tomorrow: EU's gift is the 2019 Sakharov Prize

Human Rights Without Frontiers welcomes the decision of the European Parliament and wishes him Happy Birthday!

HRWF (24.10.2019) - Today, the European Parliament on Thursday awarded its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur intellectual sentenced to life imprisonment in China for alleged "separatism". He will turn 50 tomorrow, 25 October.

Ilham is an economist fighting for the rights of China's Uighur minority and the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China. In 2014 he was sentenced to life imprisonment for separatism-related charges.

He has worked for over 20 years on the situation of the Uighur minority and on fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding in China.

Before his arrest in January 2014, he was a vocal advocate for the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China. He founded and ran the Uyghur Online website in Uyghur and Chinese about social issues.

He gained prominence as a moderate voice drawing attention to ethnic tensions in the region and taught at a Beijing university.

More than a million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities are reported to have been held in camps in China's restive Xinjiang region.

Mr Tohti, seen by many as a moderate voice, has always denied being a separatist.

The EU's top human rights award will be presented on December 18 at a ceremony in the French city of Strasbourg.

A month ago, Tohti received the Council of Europe's [Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize](#) and in 2017, he won the 2017 [Weimar Human Rights award](#).

For his work in the face of adversity he was also awarded the [PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award](#) (2014), the [Martin Ennals Award](#) (2016).

See also

HRWF Database of news about human rights violations in China
<https://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/China.pdf>

Ilham Tohti, a four-minute video: <http://bit.do/4minute-Ilham-video>

Statement to the Uyghur Service, Radio Free Asia before his arrest in July 2013:
<http://bit.do/statement-uyghur>

My Ideal and the Career Path I have Chosen by Ilham Tohti, <http://bit.do/ideals-career>

Present-day Ethnic Problems in Winjiang by Ilham Tohti, <http://bit.do/xinjian-analysis>

Voice of America Interview with Uyghur Professor Ilham Tohti in 2013: <http://bit.do/voa-interview>

Ilham Tohti awarded the 2019 Sakharov Prize

Ilham Tohti, renowned Uyghur economist fighting for rights of China's Uyghur minority, awarded 2019 Sakharov Prize © AP Images/Andy WONG

EU Parliament (24.10.2019) - Uyghur economist and human rights activist Ilham Tohti has been awarded this year's European Parliament Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

European Parliament President [David Sassoli](#) announced the laureate in the Strasbourg chamber at noon on Thursday, following an earlier decision by the Conference of Presidents (President and political group leaders).

"I am very pleased to announce that the European Parliament has chosen Ilham Tohti as the winner of the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Tohti has dedicated his life to advocating for the rights of the Uyghur minority in China. Despite being a voice of moderation and reconciliation, he was sentenced to life in prison following a show trial in 2014. By awarding this prize, we strongly urge the Chinese government to release Tohti and we call for the respect of minority rights in China", President Sassoli said, following the decision.

Mr Tohti is an Uyghur economist, scholar and human rights activist serving a life sentence in China on separatism-related charges. Read more about the laureate, as well as the other finalists and nominees [here](#).

The Sakharov award ceremony will be held in the European Parliament's hemicycle in Strasbourg on 18 December.

Background

The [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was set up in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Last year, the prize was given to the [Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov](#). It is named in honour of Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov and the prize money is 50 000 euros.

Opinion: The greatest mass murderer in history turns 70

By Reggie Littlejohn, President of [Women's Rights Without Frontiers](#)

Women's Rights Without Frontiers (04.10.2019) - This week, the Chinese Communist Party commemorates 70 years of brutal, totalitarian repression of the suffering people of China. It is fitting that the CCP has celebrated its big day October 1 with a massive military display, including the unveiling of the "Dongfeng-17," a new, hypersonic nuclear missile believed to be capable of evading the anti-missile defenses of the U.S. and its allies and to reach U.S. targets within 30 minutes.

The DF-17 weapon of mass destruction is consistent with the CCP's unique status. In my opinion, the Chinese Communist Party is the greatest mass murderer in human history.

400 million have been "prevented" through the One Child forced abortion and involuntary sterilization policy – each one a victim of communism. In addition, tens of millions died in the Great Leap Forward, the Great Famine, and the Cultural Revolution. Add to this the ongoing execution of countless prisoners of conscience – including Uyghur Muslims and Falun Gong practitioners -- to harvest their organs for transplant, and the decimation of the Tibetan Buddhists, hundreds of whom have resorted to self-immolation to draw international attention to their plight.

The list continues with the brutal persecution of human rights lawyers and other freedom fighters, the turning a blind eye to human trafficking and sexual slavery, the construction of a truly Orwellian surveillance state, an economy based on illegal slave labor and the theft of intellectual property. And let us never forget the thousands of unarmed student pro-democracy protestors massacred on Tiananmen Square.

The CCP seems locked in a race with North Korea for its place at the bottom of the human rights cesspool. It leaves people and governments of conscience little choice but to resist with all our economic and moral might.

Reading the most recent Congressional-Executive Commission on China [report](#) on the current state of human rights in China is like reading an indictment. As China's economy has grown, so has its notorious disregard of human rights:

- * More than 1 million Uyghur and other Muslim ethnic minorities are currently in "Political reeducation" concentration camps.

- *China exerts complete control and censorship of the media, jailing journalists who dare to tell the truth.

- *Xi Jinping has been consolidating his personal power. He essentially declared himself King, abolishing term limits so that he will remain President of China for life.

- *Underground Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, have undergone a tremendous persecution, with churches bulldozed, crosses torn down, pastors and priests jailed. In April, 2016, in Henan province, a pastor's wife, trying to protect her church from being bulldozed, was buried alive by the bulldozer. She has become a symbol of persecution in China.

- * The coercive enforcement of their population control policies is China's war against women. The CCP has functioned as "womb police," declaring life or death over every pregnancy in the land. This coercion, begun under the One Child Policy, has continued under the Two Child Policy.

This is the hallmark of Communist regimes – the peacetime killing of their own citizens.

The two-child policy has not stopped this slaughter. The new rule is that every **couple** is allowed to have two children. Therefore, it is still illegal for single women to have babies in China, and third children are still illegal.

Girls are still selectively aborted, especially second daughters.

And senior suicide has skyrocketed 500 percent in the past 20 years, because the One Child Policy has destroyed the family structure in China. Elderly widows are abandoned, destitute, and at risk of suicide.

Gender imbalance exacerbated by the One Child Policy is driving human trafficking and sexual slavery. In its June 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report, the State Department listed China as a "Tier 3" nation, one of the worst offenders in the world. Does the CCP refuse to crack down on the trafficking of women because doing so could cause an insurrection of the 37 million men who will never find wives?

What should we do?

The fact that China is a sovereign nation and we cannot unilaterally effectuate change within its borders should not cause us to throw up our hands and do nothing. We should do what we can.

* We should utilize the Global Magnitsky Act, which authorizes the U.S. government to sanction human rights offenders, freeze their assets, and ban them from entering the U.S. The Global Magnitsky Act should be used not only for family planning officials, but for all gross human rights offenders, who should be held publicly accountable. Let all that has been hidden in darkness be brought to light.

* The U.S. government should remain tough in the trade war with China. Appeasement diplomacy has never worked with China.

* Regarding the rights of women and girls, Women's Rights Without Frontiers is the only organization in the world that has boots on the ground saving babies from sex-selective abortion through our "[Save a Girl](#)" Campaign. We are also saving destitute and abandoned widows through our "[Save a Widow](#)" Campaign.

With 1.4 billion people, China holds almost one fifth of the population of the world. One in five people is suffering under the boot of this brutal, totalitarian regime. The world will not be free until the people of China are free.

One-child policy – China's War on Women! Video (4 mins)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjtuBcJUsjY

Statement by DROI Chair Maria Arena on the situation in Xinjiang

Statement by the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) Maria Arena on the incommunicado detention and possible execution of citizens in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China.

News European Parliament (27.09.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2nWZW9N> - "I am alarmed by the reported possible imminent execution of Tashpolat Tiyp, a prominent Uyghur academic and former President of Xinjiang University. He was convicted in a secret and unfair trial, following his enforced disappearance and incommunicado detention since 2017. Following his "suspended death sentence", which includes the possibility of commutation after two years imprisonment, he now reportedly faces imminent execution.

I remain equally concerned about other incommunicado detentions and harsh sentences handed down to the former director of the Xinjiang Education Supervision Bureau Satar Sawut, who may also be threatened by execution, as well as the case of writer and critic Yalqun Rozi, who is serving a life sentence because of unclear charges. I regard their detention as arbitrary and unjustified and they should be released, similarly to the alarmingly high number of Uyghur intellectuals and citizens who are in detention.

I call on the Chinese authorities to immediately halt any planned executions and provide credible information about the whereabouts of these citizens. The authorities should also ensure legal counsel of the detainees' choice and access to family members. Any arrests and court proceedings should be addressed in a manner fully consistent with internationally recognised standards of due process and fair trial."

"I've never encountered such persecution as in China anywhere else I have been to. There are surveillance cameras everywhere. There is no personal freedom," a Jehovah's

Witnesses elder from South Korea summarized to *Bitter Winter* his ten-year-plus experience living in China.

European companies get rich in China's 'open air prison'

Volkswagen, Siemens and more are making money in Xinjiang, where minorities are being herded into detention camps.

By Benjamin Haas

The New York Times (21.08.2019) - <https://nyti.ms/33Sh7d5> - Many people around the world may just now be learning that around a million Uighur Muslims and other minorities have been locked up in extrajudicial internment camps in the region of Xinjiang, in western China. There is a reason for that: Xinjiang is remote and the Chinese government has expended considerable effort to keep the news hidden, from harassing foreign journalists to seizing family members of activists to censoring information within its own borders.

Herbert Diess, however, should have no excuse.

Mr. Diess is the chief executive of Volkswagen, which opened a plant in Xinjiang in 2013 that employs almost 700 local workers and can make up to 50,000 cars a year. In an interview with the BBC in April, Mr. Diess said he was not aware of the system of camps or the Muslim minorities subject to mass detention, even though his company's factory is within a 90-minute drive from four such detention centers. (The company issued a new statement saying it did, in fact, know about the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang and was committed to human rights.)

What excuse do the other chief executives and board presidents use?

I have found that about half of the largest 150 European companies had some presence in Xinjiang, an area that Amnesty International has described as "an open-air prison." Their investments merit far more scrutiny from both regulators and the public, and European governments need to form standards for companies dealing with Xinjiang.

At the top of the list of companies that deserve a thorough review is Siemens. This large German conglomerate collaborates on advanced technologies in automation, digitization and networking with China Electronics Technology Group Corporation, a state-owned military contractor that has developed a policing app used in Xinjiang that, according to Human Rights Watch, has led some people to be sent to the camps.

The Spanish telecommunications firm Telefónica has a joint venture with China Unicom that appears to use big data for tracking people. The company markets the software as a way to deliver location-based ads or monitor public transportation use, and while it says the data is anonymous, I reviewed an internal presentation that appears to have shown ID numbers unique to each cellphone user. It is easy to see how such software could be used by the authorities in Xinjiang to track minorities in real time, and it has already been deployed in the region, according to a presentation.

Other investments are less immediately tied to abuses of the Uighur population. KfW, a German state-owned bank, provided 100 million euros (\$111 million) in funding for

the construction of a subway line that opened in 2018 in the regional capital, Urumqi, built with components from ABB, a Swiss engineering firm, and Airbus Defense and Space, the European aircraft manufacturer. Unilever and Nestlé both buy tomato products from a state-owned company in Xinjiang that could end up in the ketchup in kitchens across Europe. Neither company responded to questions about how products from Xinjiang are used.

While this research did not uncover any direct relationship between European companies and the internment camps, conversations with executives in Germany showed that most headquarters have little understanding of how their businesses operate in Xinjiang.

The Chinese government has long pushed to develop its far-flung western regions, partly to shore up their links with the rest of the country and partly in the hopes that economic development will depress religious observance and quell the desire for basic freedoms. In some cases, European companies have been pressured to start operations in Xinjiang as conditions for expansion elsewhere in China. Carrefour, the French supermarket chain, is just one example. It opened stores in Xinjiang only after receiving “strong advice” from Chinese officials. Other European executives told me that they had received similar messages.

But China’s desire for investment gives foreign companies with ties in the region — and European governments — real power. Now they need to use it.

The European Union should enact laws that set standards for companies operating in Xinjiang and punish those that fail to live up to European ideals of human rights, with audits on whether camp labor was involved in any part of their supply chains, where profits end up in China and how products and technology are used.

If all European Union members fail to agree on regulations, the charge should be taken up by national parliaments, especially in countries like Germany with extensive business in Xinjiang. These standards should apply to any European company, not just the large multinationals, and would have powerful ramifications beyond just Xinjiang.

Companies found to be flouting these standards could be barred from bidding for government contracts as an initial measure, with fines and government-appointed monitors as additional punishments. The European Union also needs to immediately impose export bans on technology that could be used in the repression of dissidents and religious minorities.

Business leaders and politicians frequently bristle at the idea of directly confronting China on its human rights abuses, worried that a firm stance could jeopardize future deals. But while China may issue statements condemning such actions and threaten to stop buying products from critics, it’s unlikely that Beijing is ready for another economic fight amid a slowing economy and a trade war with the United States.

European exports could take a hit or Chinese regulators may begin investigations into European companies as a punitive measure. But such actions would only further isolate China, a country that knows it needs all the stable economic relationships it has. While plenty of diplomatic protests and bombastic editorials in state-run newspapers are sure to follow such a move, President Xi Jinping cannot afford to further destabilize the economy over a political spat with the European Union, which is China’s largest trading partner.

This confluence of circumstances is exactly why the European Union must act now to stand up for its values and leverage its economic relationship with China to pressure it

to end one of the most egregious human rights violations in the world today. Feigning ignorance is no longer an option.

Belgium's Beijing Embassy calls Chinese cops on Uighur family

Belgian officials say their small country can't risk offending China

By Vanessa Frangville, Rune Steenberg

Foreign Policy (14.06.2019) - <https://bit.ly/31rRmzc> - Approximately 1.5 million people, mostly members of the Muslim Uighur ethnic minority, have been held in detention camps in China's western region of Xinjiang since 2017. The continuing crackdown on Uighur culture, religion, and political expression has resulted in a state of terror throughout the region-and in the destruction of numerous families, with parents, grandparents, and children often separated.

The failure of Muslim countries to speak up for their co-religionists, thanks to economic ties to China, has been much commented on. But while Western countries have been more outspoken on the plight of the Uighur people, they have often been hesitant to act when push comes to shove-even in countries that pride themselves on their advocacy of human rights, such as Belgium.

A tragic recent case highlights this. Ablimit Tursun, a Uighur from Urumqi, Xinjiang, holding Chinese citizenship, was on a business trip to Turkey in 2017 when he was informed that his brother had been detained. His family in Urumqi warned him not to come back, for fear a similar fate could await him. Foreign travel is often used by the Chinese government as an excuse to send people to the camps, as is having relatives overseas.

Tursun fled to Belgium, where he was granted asylum in 2018 and now works full time in a major Belgian company. He immediately began the process of applying for a Belgian family reunification visa for his wife and four children. The visa application included a letter describing the family's situation as critical, stressing the risk such an application put them in and the need for discretion.

Despite repeated requests by the family to simplify the visa proceedings in order to reduce this risk, the embassy insisted on them making two trips to Beijing. By itself, this put the family in danger: Uighurs traveling outside of Xinjiang are inherently seen as suspicious, monitored by police, and often detained at airports or stations.

On May 26, Tursun's wife, Wureyetiguli Abula, and their children (who are 5, 10, 12, and

17) secretly flew from Urumqi to Beijing for the second time to complete the visa application and hand in the last documents to the Belgian Embassy. They arrived on a late-night flight to avoid the airport police and checked into a hotel. Since Uighurs are routinely refused service from hotels, and their visits are often reported to the police, the hotel was pre-booked by a friend. Still, less than an hour after their arrival, after they were forced to show ID to register there, the Beijing police knocked at their door and interrogated them. Police officers came again the next evening, intimidating them and encouraging them to return to Urumqi.

Abula feared that if they were returned to Urumqi, they would be blocked from leaving the region again and possibly sent to the camps. Her fear turned into panic when

Belgian consular officials informed her the visa processing could take up to three months and advised that she wait in her home in Xinjiang. In fact, the visas were issued a mere two days later, but by then the damage was already done. The family refused to leave the embassy facilities until the visa application was processed.

A long discussion ensued, and security staff ushered the family out into the embassy's yard, where they lingered. At 2 a.m., the embassy called the Chinese police to the embassy facilities in order to remove the family. This is an extraordinary measure, only allowed in the most exceptional of circumstances.

As they refused to return to Urumqi voluntarily, they were put under house arrest in the hotel for a day. The next day, the Xinjiang police forcefully entered their room and dragged them into a car. As of June 12, Tursun has not been able to contact his wife and four children for 11 days and has no idea of their whereabouts or health. Friends informed him that the local police had interrogated all his relatives in Turpan and Urumqi, had searched his home, and had taken away the family's electronic devices. Those relatives may, in turn, be at risk of being sent to the camps.

Abula and her children's experience was typical of the oppression, discrimination, and absence of freedom experienced by many ordinary Uighurs in China. Abula was not able to travel freely to Beijing, she could not herself buy a ticket for travel out of Xinjiang, and she could not book a hotel room. The mere presence of a middle-aged woman and her children drew the attention of several police officers.

But there are also serious concerns raised by the behavior of the Belgian Embassy, which showed reckless carelessness and a lack of responsibility. The Belgian Embassy was repeatedly informed of the danger it would pose to Abula and her children to have to travel to Beijing several times at different occasions, yet still they insisted. Not only was a request for refuge at the embassy refused, but embassy staff also voluntarily called the police in the middle of the night-effectively sealing the fate of a vulnerable family.

Hong Kong's future in the balance: extradition bill eroding autonomy

Democracy Digest (13.05.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2LIb3yZ> - The political storm over a [contentious extradition bill](#) is set to escalate with pro-government lawmakers considering an unprecedented move to bypass normal vetting procedures to speed up its passage, the [South China Morning Post reports](#):

The strategy was floated after the government expressed "utmost regret" over the "uncontrollable" disorder at a Legislative Council committee meeting on the bill on Saturday, when clashes between rival camps ended with at least four lawmakers claiming they were injured. The meeting was adjourned before a chairman could be elected to begin scrutiny of the bill, which would allow a case-by-case transfer of fugitives to places Hong Kong lacks an extradition deal with, including mainland China and Taiwan.

Anger over the proposal that would let people suspected of crimes be extradited to mainland China led to pandemonium in Hong Kong's legislature on Saturday, as lawmakers scuffled and at least one was carried out of the chamber on a stretcher, according to The [New York Times \(HT: FDD\)](#).

Hong Kong democracy advocates this week bring their protest against the extradition

bill to the United States, [the Post adds](#). If the bill passes, Democratic Party founder Martin Lee warns, 'there's danger' in coming to Hong Kong. Lee and activist Nathan Law have been asked to testify about the bill before the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (see below).

China's ruling Communist Party seems powerful at the moment, but China is at a crossroads, [notes Benny Tai](#), associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong.

The kinds of cultural changes seen in Hong Kong may be coming to China before long, [he wrote for The Diplomat](#), in an essay drawn [from an article](#) in the April 2019 issue of the [National Endowment for Democracy's Journal of Democracy](#).

Beijing is also [curbing Hong Kong's vibrant civil society](#), a leading analyst claims.

A [Hong Kong district court](#) recently convicted nine core leaders of the [2014 Umbrella Movement](#) of conspiracy to commit public nuisance, [notes Victoria Tin-bor Hui](#), associate professor in political science at the University of Notre Dame. The movement demanded "genuine universal suffrage" because successive chief executives unaccountable to the public have eroded Hong Kong's freedoms. Protestors will persist on or off streets if the root causes are unresolved, she [wrote for the Journal of Democracy](#).

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) hosts a discussion on "New Threats to Civil Society and the Rule of Law in Hong Kong."

Speakers: Martin Lee, founding chairman of the Hong Kong Democratic Party; Nathan Law, founding chairman of [Demosisto](#); James To, member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council; Lee Cheuk Yan, member of the executive committee of the Hong Kong Civil Hub; and Mak Yin-Ting, former chair of the Hong Kong Journalists Association

12 noon. May 14, 2019. Venue: NED, 1025 F Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. [RSVP](#)

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China holds a hearing on "[Hong Kong's Future in the Balance: Eroding Autonomy and Challenges to Human Rights](#)."

Speakers:

- James To, member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council and the Yau Tsim Mong District Council;
- Lee Cheuk Yan, general secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions and member of the Executive Committee of Hong Kong Civil Hub;
- Former Hong Kong Legislative Council member Martin Lee, founding chairman of the Hong Kong Democratic Party;
- Former Hong Kong Legislative Council member Nathan Law, founding chairman of the Hong Kong Demosisto Party;
- Mak Yin Ting, former chair of the Hong Kong Journalists

Association. 10 a.m. – May 15, 2019

Venue: 2255 Rayburn House Office Building, Capitol Hill, Washington,

DC. RSVP Scott.Flipse@mail.house.gov

China's 'ham-handed' PR moves hurt its global image

Canada, Australia and EU push back at Beijing over perceived hostage diplomacy

By Chris Horton

Nikkei Asian Review (14.02.2019) - <https://s.nikkei.com/2DA9Geg> - Over the past 20 years, China has leveraged its economic growth and practiced deft diplomacy to craft an image as a responsible member of the global community. More recently, the political chaos of the Donald Trump presidency and Brexit have made China appear to be a steady presence in a changing world.

But over the past year, the Chinese Communist Party's handling of domestic and international affairs has eroded much of the goodwill it had built up, especially with middle powers such as Canada, Australia and the European Union. The party's missteps have not only undermined China's appeal among those that once viewed it as a counterweight to the U.S., but are also generating pushback.

Last year in Davos, Chinese President Xi Jinping was hailed as the new keeper of the global economic order. This year he was denounced as a grave threat to freedom. This criticism came not from protesters outside the World Economic Forum's exclusive events but from billionaire George Soros, in one of the forum's most widely covered speeches.

While Soros was in Switzerland branding Xi "the most dangerous opponent of those who believe in the concept of open society," China appeared to be engaging in hostage diplomacy with Canada. Two Canadians -- former diplomat Michael Kovrig and North Korea-focused businessman Michael Spavor -- have been detained in China since December. They have not been allowed family or consular visits, raising fears they are being interrogated and possibly tortured.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has called on China to respect judicial procedure and rule of law. Countries including the U.S., the U.K., Germany, France and Australia have voiced support for Canada with regard to the cases.

Another Canadian, Robert Lloyd Schellenberg, who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison for a drug conviction after waiting years for his original trial, was hastily retried and sentenced to death. All this occurred with remarkable speed following Canada's Dec. 1 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the Chief Financial Officer of China's national tech champion, Huawei Technologies, which like China is seeing its appeal fade in democracies around the world.

The U.S. aside, a growing number of democracies are feeling compelled to confront China, or at least speak up against it. Is this a result of China shifting its approach to diplomacy?

On the contrary, Jorge Guajardo, who spent six years in Beijing as Mexico's ambassador, said, "Rather than a shift, what I have seen is a lack of shift, a lack of adaptation, and therein lies the problem."

"The Chinese have one rule book which they seek to apply to every situation, even though the underlying dynamics may be completely different," Guajardo said.

This is not the first time China has detained Canadian citizens for seemingly retaliatory reasons. In 2014, Chinese security agents seized Kevin and Julia Garratt, who ran a coffee house near China's border with North Korea, on espionage charges. Echoing today's drama surrounding Meng, the couple, who were eventually released, believe their detention was in retaliation for the arrest by Canada of Chinese spy Su Bin for extradition to the U.S.

But Guajardo said Chinese authorities miscalculated when they detained Kovrig, in particular.

"They did not gauge that Michael Kovrig is a former diplomat, known by many of the foreigners who frequent Beijing, and by arresting him they made a whole swath of the China scholars abroad feel targeted," he said.

Indeed, in late January, more than 100 China-focused scholars and former diplomats from Canada, the U.S. and elsewhere signed a letter to Xi, imploring him to release both Kovrig and Spavor.

Scholars and others seeking to build bridges between China and the rest of the world are now more wary of traveling to or engaging China, which "will lead to less dialogue and greater distrust, and undermine efforts to manage disagreements and identify common ground," the letter read. "Both China and the rest of the world will be worse off as a result."

"We welcome normal activities by foreigners in China," said Hua Chunying, spokeswoman for China's foreign ministry, dismissing the letter at a press briefing. "As long as they abide by the law and regulations, they don't have to worry about anything."

Canadians are not the only ones disappearing in China. In late January, Australian national Yang Hengjun was detained by Chinese authorities on spying charges. Relations between Canberra and Beijing have also been frosty as of late. In August, Australia banned Huawei and fellow Chinese tech giant ZTE from involvement in its 5G mobile network.

Australia has been investigating Chinese meddling in its politics as well. One legislator, Sam Dastyari, resigned last year after echoing Chinese talking points on the South China Sea dispute in contradiction of his party's stance, and then getting caught warning Chinese property developer and major political donor Huang Xiangmo that the government had tapped his phone.

Last week, the Australian government surprised Huang by stripping him of his permanent residency and rejecting his long-delayed bid for citizenship. Huang had fallen under increased suspicion due to his ties to the Chinese Communist Party, and the opinion-shaping activities of his Australia China Relations Institute in Sydney.

Huang responded this week by describing Australia as having the "innate characteristics of a giant baby" in an interview with the Global Times -- a Chinese state-run tabloid. "The growth of a giant baby takes time, and Australia still has a long way to go."

China -- and Huawei -- are also having difficulties in the EU and the U.K., both of which appear to be leaning away from allowing Huawei's involvement in their 5G networks. If the company is indeed blocked from European networks, the turning point may have come in January, when Poland arrested a Chinese Huawei employee and a

Polish erstwhile security official for espionage. Unlike its response to Meng's arrest, Huawei fired the employee, while also denying the accusation of espionage.

Polish officials have taken their case to the EU, which has been growing wary of China for other reasons.

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy, a political adviser in the European Parliament, said the body's members generally see China as an "important partner."

"Yet," she said, "a new reality is unfolding, whereby working with China has become more difficult. The House has become increasingly aware and openly concerned witnessing China's willingness to use its economic weight to its own benefit, to the detriment of international norms and values, and most importantly at the expense of European integration."

Parliament members, she said, "recognize that China has become more skillful in influencing EU member states through strategic infrastructure investment and strategic communication, which would undermine the EU's common positions on China."

Other developments, including the March 2018 decision to eliminate the limit of two consecutive terms for China's presidency, the crackdown on Uighurs in Xinjiang and Chinese Christians, and Xi's bellicose message to Taiwan in early January, have all had an impact as well.

"The tone seems to have shifted in the European Parliament toward a more assertive posture, questioning the value of their strategic partnership" with China, Ferenczy said.

Given the unraveling of China's reputation in democratic capitals around the world, one might conclude that Xi and company do not care what other countries think of them and China. Guajardo, the former diplomat, said that is not the case.

"They pretend they don't care, but they do care," he said. "They obsess over China's lack of soft power and seek to burnish it, whether through Confucius Institutes, the Belt and Road Initiative, delegations -- it is all swiftly undone by their ham-handed actions."

China: facial recognition and state control (video)

Watch the video [here](#).

The Economist (24.10.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2Sf8bJ3> - China is the world leader in facial recognition technology. Discover how the country is using it to develop a vast hyper-surveillance system able to monitor and target its ethnic minorities, including the Muslim Uighur population.

Improving lives, increasing connectivity across the world, that's the great promise offered by data-driven technology - but in China it also promises greater state control and abuse of power.

This is the next groundbreaking development in data-driven technology, facial recognition. And in China you can already withdraw cash, check in at airports, and pay for goods using just your face. The country is the world's leader in the use of this emerging technology, and China's many artificial intelligence startups are determined to keep it that way in the future.

Companies like Yitu. Yitu is creating the building blocks for a smart city of the future, where facial recognition is part of everyday life. This could even extend to detecting what people are thinking.

But the Chinese government has plans to use this new biometric technology to cement its authoritarian rule. The country has ambitious plans to develop a vast national surveillance system based on facial recognition. It'll be used to monitor its 1.4 billion citizens in unprecedented ways. With the capability of tracking everything from their emotions to their sexuality.

The primary means will be a vast network of CCTV cameras. 170 million are already in place and an estimated 400 million new ones will be installed over the next three years.

The authorities insist this program will allow them to improve security for citizens, and if you have nothing to hide you have nothing to fear.

But not everyone is convinced. Hong Zhenkuai is a former magazine editor who was ousted by the government. He feels like he's under constant surveillance. Already the authorities are using facial recognition to name and shame citizens, even for minor offenses like jaywalking. In Beijing they're using the technology to prevent people stealing rolls of loo paper from public toilets, and across China police officers are now trialing sunglasses and body cameras loaded with facial and gesture recognition technology - it's helping them to identify wanted suspects in real-time.

What worries some people here is that as the technology develops, so too does the capacity for it to be abused. Some of those most at risk in this hyper surveillance future are the ethnic minorities in China. In Xinjiang province, the Chinese government is wary of the separatist threat posed by the Muslim Uighur population. According to local NGOs, an estimated 1 million Uighurs are being detained indefinitely in secretive internment camps, where some are being subject to abuse. It's been called the largest mass incarceration of a minority population in the world today.

The authorities are using facial recognition cameras to scan people's faces before they enter markets. The system alerts authorities if targeted individuals stray 300 meters beyond their home. In the future the government plans to aggregate even more data and build a predictive policing program that imposes even tighter controls here.

Without checks and balances, China will keep finding new ways to violate the human rights of its citizens. What's already happening in Xinjiang is a warning the rest of the world must heed.

What are the forces shaping how people live and work and how power is wielded in the modern age? NOW AND NEXT reveals the pressures, the plans and the likely tipping points for enduring global change. Understand what is really transforming the world today – and discover what may lie in store tomorrow.

China executes father and daughter cult members for murdering woman in McDonald's

The Independent (02.02.2015)- <https://bit.ly/2no6jTQ> - China has executed two members of what authorities called an "evil cult" for beating a woman to death in a McDonald's restaurant.

The deaths of Zhang Lidong and his daughter, Zhang Fan, were announced on Monday by the Yantai Intermediate People's Court in the eastern province of Shandong.

A spokesperson said the Supreme People's Court approved the death penalty after a case review because the crimes were "extremely serious, their means brutal and the incident brought an extremely bad social effect".

The pair were reportedly trying to recruit their victim for the "Church of the Almighty God" group, known in Chinese as Quannengshen, in May last year when the attack started.

The 35-year-old woman, Wu Shuoyan, had refused to give her phone number to the group in the town of Zhaoyuan.

Zhang Fan and her accomplice, Lyu Yingchun, then claimed Wu was possessed by an "evil spirit," and Zhang used a chair to bludgeon her head before stamping on her face, while inciting other cult members to join the attack, China's Xinhua news agency reported.

Her father allegedly beat the victim so hard with a restaurant mop that the handle snapped, while group members stopped McDonald's staff intervening or calling the police. Wu died at the scene.

An online video emerged shortly afterwards showing a man resembling Zhang Lidong hitting an unseen person with a mop, shouting "Damn you, devil! Go to hell!" as a woman yelled "Kill her! Beat her to death!"

Zhang Lidong reportedly said in a subsequent interview that he believed Wu was a demon and that "we had to destroy her".

Church of the Almighty God followers believe that Jesus was resurrected as Yang Xiangbin, the wife of the sect's founder, Zhao Weishan, also known as Xu Wenshan. The couple fled to the United States in 2000.

The anti-Communist sect, established in the 1990s in central Henan Province, claims to have millions of followers. Since the murder, which sparked public outrage, Chinese authorities have reportedly detained more than a thousand Church of the Almighty God members.

In 2012, China launched a crackdown on the group, which called for a "decisive battle" to slay the "Red Dragon" Communist Party, and preached that the world would end that year.

Zhang Lidong and Zhang Fan were known as particularly avid followers, authorities

claimed, holding hundreds of rallies in Zhaoyuan, printing leaflets and spreading articles online over five years.

They were among five cult members tried on murder charges in August.

Lyu was given a life sentence by Shandong's Yantai Intermediate People's Court for "intentional homicide and undermining law enforcement using heresy" as well as being "deprived of political rights for life" for illegal "cult activities".

Zhang Hang and Zhang Qiaolian, two other cult members who were relatives of the executed pair, were sentenced to ten and seven years in prison respectively.

The Church of the Almighty God is banned in China, along with other spiritual groups labelled "cults" by authorities.

Chinese law defines a cult as "an illegal organisation that tries to control people by deifying the sect leader, deludes members under the guise of religion, and engages in activities that harm society", according to state media.

China is thought to carry out the most executions of any country in the world annually. Although the actual number of deaths is a state secret, estimates range between 2,000 and 4,000 a year.

In its 2015 report, Human Rights Watch said that although the national constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the government restricts religious practices to officially approved mosques, churches, temples, and monasteries organised by five officially recognised religious groups.

"Any religious activity not considered by the state to be "normal" is prohibited," the report says, with activities, publications and financial records of all bodies strictly controlled.

"The government classifies many religious groups outside of its control as 'evil cults'." Thousands of alleged cult members have been arrested in the last year.