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South Korean rights groups decry recent forced repatriations of North Koreans who fled to China as "barbaric act"

[Christian Daily](#) (07.06.2024) - The "National Alliance against Forced Repatriation of North Korean Defectors," in which organizations such as the "Movement for Investigating Truth about Forced Repatriation of North Korean Defectors" and "Esther Prayer Movement" participate, held a press conference opposing the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors by the Chinese government on the afternoon of June 3rd in front of the Seoul Central Post Office near the Chinese Embassy in Myeongdong, Seoul.

In a statement released on the same day, they stated, "In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and North Korea, which was marked as the 'Year of Friendly Relations between North Korea and China,' Zhao Leji, the third-ranking official of the Chinese Communist Party, visited North Korea to discuss the development of friendly cooperation relations with Kim Jong-un on April 13."

"Shortly after the talks between the two countries, the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors detained in China resumed in earnest. On April 26, news spread through various channels that more than 200 defectors were forcibly repatriated from Baiyin Detention Center in China, and 50 to 60 from Tumen and Hunchun, and a small number from Dandong," they continued.

The alliance stated that "this incident occurred just six months after more than 600 people were forcibly repatriated following the Asian Games in Hangzhou last October," and expressed concerns that "experts fear that China may be offering North Korean defectors as a 'gift' to Kim Jong-un in light of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and China, and that the remaining defectors may be repatriated sequentially."

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) also strongly criticized the Chinese government, stating that this recent forced repatriation incident occurred shortly after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Chinese official Zhao Leji sought to strengthen relations between the two countries in North Korea," they added, and said, "HRW also urged the Chinese government to allow defectors to seek asylum or transit to South Korea or another safe third country."

The alliance mentioned, "The European Union (EU) evaluated in its annual report on human rights and democracy released on April 29 that the human rights and democracy situation in North Korea remained very serious last year," and "the EU also expressed concerns about the recent large-scale forced repatriation of North Korean defectors by the Chinese government and raised the issue with the Chinese government."

"Many human rights organizations, including the United Nations, have repeatedly reported that those forcibly repatriated to North Korea are subject to torture, sexual violence, forced labor, and even execution," they emphasized, and added, "Forcibly repatriating those who crossed into China to survive is a barbaric act. The entire world is

watching whether China will remain a barbaric nation or move towards a civilized nation that respects life and human rights."

The alliance urged the Chinese government to apologize to the world for the inhumane crime of forced repatriation; stop forced repatriation and allow North Korean defectors to go to the countries they want; respect the human rights of North Korean defectors in China and guarantee their UN refugee status; exercise influence as a member of the UN Human Rights Council to improve human rights issues in North Korea.

They concluded by stating, "If the Chinese government does not accept these human rights improvements, it should resign from the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Security Council."

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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. Engage 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
211. Uyghur Center for Human
Rights and Democracy
212. Uyghur Cultural and
Education Union in Germany
213. Uyghur Education Union
214. Uyghur Human Rights
Project
215. Uyghur Projects
Foundation
216. Uyghur Refugee Relief
Fund
217. Uyghur Research Institute
218. Uyghur Rights Advocacy
Project
219. Uyghur Science and
Civilization Research Foundation
220. Uyghur Support Group
Netherlands
221. Uyghur Transitional Justice
Database
222. Uyghur U.K. Association
223. Uyghur Youth Union in
Kazakhstan
224. Uzbekistan Uyghur Culture
Center
225. Verein der Tibeter in
Deutschland
226. Victims of Communism
Memorial Foundation
227. Victoria Uyghur
Association
228. Vietnamese Community of
Pomona Valley
229. Visual Artists Guild
230. We The Hongkongers
231. [Redacted For Anonymity]
232. Women's Rights Without
Frontiers
233. World Organisation
Against Torture (OMCT)
234. World Uyghur Congress
Foundation
235. (美国)民主中国阵线
236. 加拿大价值守护者联盟
237. 台灣聯合國協進會
238. 民主中華傳媒
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 dob-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.

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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 Turkistan 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 Norbulinga 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/2N3e7al> - 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 [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.

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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/3okefji> - 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 (SMHRIC) 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 SMHRIC, "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?
