



100 YEARS OF SUPPRESSION:
THE CCP'S STRATEGIES IN
TIBET, THE UYGHUR REGION,
AND HONG KONG

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Executive Summary

2021 marks the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the sole ruling party of China. In the past several decades, the Chinese government has perpetrated some of the worst human rights abuses the world has ever witnessed. The CCP's worsening crackdown on fundamental freedoms and growing authoritarian influence worldwide are of major concern to foreign leaders, concerned global citizens, and international human rights advocates.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the CCP's ambitions, it is important to analyze both the historical and current injustices perpetrated by the Chinese government, particularly in Tibet, Xinjiang¹, and Hong Kong – three regions where the CCP's state-sanctioned policies appear to be the most widespread and concerning.

The following are the main takeaways that are presented in this report:

1. The CCP aspires to create a society perfectly molded to the ideological tenets of Xi Jinping or what the CCP refers to as the "Chinese Dream" and "national rejuvenation" – a society that is **sinocentric, socialist, and homogenous**. Religious and cultural plurality are seen as hindrances to the CCP's policy of assimilation.²
2. **Space for genuine political participation is nonexistent, despite promises of political autonomy.** The Chinese government's rhetoric, which claims to safeguard "national security" and eradicate "terrorism, separatism, and extremism," is used as a pretext to hamper political involvement.
3. **There is widespread use of brute force and mass crackdowns in all three regions.** The latest crackdowns in Hong Kong mirror the large-scale violence that is pervasive in Tibet and the Uyghur Region.
4. The Chinese government's policies are designed to **assimilate people in each focus region to become "true patriots," individuals who are fiercely loyal to the party.** These policies are accomplished through initiatives that target younger generations and aim to destroy cultural identity.
5. **The incessant policing of religious practices has suffocated religious freedom in Tibet and the Uyghur Region.** The CCP uses repressive tactics to break down the links between Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan heritage, and Islam and Uyghur identity. Religious repression is not as strong in Hong Kong at this time.

¹ Xinjiang, officially called the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China (XUAR), is referred to as *the Uyghur Region* throughout the report.

² Shaoying Zhang & Derek McGhee, *Social Policies and Ethnic Conflict in China: Lessons from Xinjiang* 44 (2014) at 96.

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6. The Chinese government **uses an unprecedented amount of surveillance both online and offline to invade people's privacy.** By tracking people's speech, movement, and conduct, the government hopes to police people's behaviors and thoughts, and punish those who disagree with the regime.
7. **The Chinese government severely limits freedom of movement among locals and foreigners.** By preventing people from entering or leaving the three regions, the government ensures that their residents cannot access outside information and, by extension, democratic values.
8. **The Uyghur genocide must serve as a warning to the international community.** The genocide is a clear indicator that the Chinese government will not stop until they have assimilated the Uyghur people so that they align with the CCP's goals and ideology.
9. **The Chinese government's tactics of repression are similar within all three regions, but vary in scope.** It is important to note that specific tactics are shaped by each region's own unique histories, heritage, and culture.
10. **Suppression tactics are often refined and recycled.** This is most evident when considering the experiences of the Tibetan and Uyghur people, particularly with regards to their religious oppression and surveillance. It is expected that the tactics used in Tibet and the Uyghur Region will be recalibrated and used in Hong Kong in the future.

Introduction

HRF's report, *100 Years of Suppression: The CCP's Strategies in Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong*, highlights salient trends of human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chinese government in the three focus regions. The purpose of this report is to provide a better understanding of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) state-sponsored repression against its own civilians in these areas.³ The report also presents recommendations to international civil society organizations and policymakers on how to strategically counter the CCP's authoritarian influence, as well as how to safeguard fundamental human rights around the world. To achieve this end, the report is divided into five parts.

In Section B, we provide background information about the CCP, along with a brief overview of the country's political regime type. The section also introduces the three focus regions of this report – Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong.

Section C lays out the Chinese government's repressive tactics in all three regions and analyzes their similarities and differences. Several tactics that the CCP relies on are identified in this section, including political disenfranchisement; crackdowns, detention, and torture; cultural suppression and educational interference; religious repression; surveillance; and other severe limitations on fundamental freedoms. The section ends with a focus on the Uyghur genocide.

Section D concludes how the Chinese government's ideologies have led to widespread human rights violations, highlighting how various tactics and ideas have been transmitted across all three regions. It emphasizes how the Chinese government has acted with impunity for decades, and urges the international community to no longer remain idle in the face of these atrocities.

Section E, the last section of the report, presents recommendations for international civil society organizations and policymakers on how to counter the CCP's global threat to fundamental freedoms, and proposes methods of how to uphold human rights.

³ The findings and analyses presented in this report are based on qualitative research due to limitations of accessing primary sources within each region. It is important to note that it is virtually impossible for foreigners, independent researchers, and international NGOs to freely enter Tibet and the Uyghur Region to obtain first-hand information and report on country conditions. In addition, it has become increasingly dangerous for human rights advocates to enter Hong Kong and conduct critical investigations. As such, the report draws on existing literature, current events, and shared narratives from activists abroad and those living in-exile. Due to the widespread human rights abuses that are both historical and current, the findings of this report are by no means exhaustive. It is imperative to underscore that the CCP's campaign of persecution is ongoing.

Background

CHINA & THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in 1921 and is currently the only ruling party of modern China. The party maintains complete control over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of China's government, as well as the economy, educational system, and military.⁴ The ideology of the CCP is largely inspired by Marxism-Leninism, and consists of individuals who are primarily from the ethnic Han majority.

Chairman Mao Zedong was the founding father of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which was established on October 1, 1949. He inherited a land that was weakened and impoverished by two long-fought wars. However, Mao strongly believed that through Marxist-Leninist derived tactics, he could "achieve a Communist utopia through unity, physical labor, and sheer willpower."⁵ His rhetoric championed an ideal known as "national rejuvenation,"⁶ a political and social aspiration to revitalize the country after the trauma of the "century of humiliation," which was left over from a series of historic wars dating as far back as the 1800's.⁷

4 Eleanor Albert, Beina Xu, and Lindsay Maizland, *The Chinese Communist Party*, Council on Foreign Relations (June 9 2020), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinese-communist-party>.

5 Clayton D. Brown, *US, Asia, and the World: 1914-2012: China's Great Leap Forward*, *Asian Studies*, 29 (2012), <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/chinas-great-leap-forward-1.pdf>.

6 Friso M.S. Stevens, *China's long march to national rejuvenation: toward a Neo-Imperial order in East Asia?*, *Asian Security*, 46 (2021), DOI: 10.1080/14799855.2020.1739651.

7 Alison A. Kaufman, *The "Century of Humiliation" and China's National Narratives*, Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy" (2011), <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>.

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Within this context, the CCP capitalized on people's fear of repeating the horrible past, in order to justify having strong, centralized power under the guise of providing stability⁸ and cohesion. The CCP's propaganda served to appeal to the Chinese masses, and give the party legitimacy and justify its one-party rule, as well as created a space for gross human rights violations to occur. Following this ideological narrative, one-party rule was presented as the only way in which China can become a world power, otherwise it might fall into "civil unrest, national turmoil, economic stagnation, and so forth."⁹ In other words, the state promulgated the idea that sacrifices must be made for the greater good of China.¹⁰

Mao sought to realize his vision of "national rejuvenation" through political, social, and economic reforms. His first and most notable program was the Great Leap Forward, which resulted in one of the largest famines in world history,¹¹ during which an estimated 45 million people were starved and murdered between 1958-1961.¹² Despite the clear failure of the economic plan, the Chinese government continues until this day to deny the famine and resulting death toll, and refuses to acknowledge the long-lasting impacts the program continues to have on communities throughout China.

When the PRC was founded it ensured that freedom of religion and equal rights were available to everyone to provide the appearance that it had a cooperative relationship with the territories it had just invaded, among which included the Uyghur Region, Tibet, and others. Chapter I of the PRC's Constitution even indicates that all people within China, including minorities, are treated equally and fairly.¹³ Similarly, Article 36 of the PRC's Constitution formally recognizes the freedom of religious belief.¹⁴ In reality, however, Mao considered religion a threat to the stability and cohesion that the CCP was trying to build. He believed that religion and culture created division amongst the masses, and therefore, threatened the stability of the nation and diminished the power of the party. Mao even once famously declared that "religion is poison."¹⁵ He wished to replace any devotion that people held toward their faith with a "cult of Mao," wherein his thoughts and ideologies would reign supreme. Therefore, even though the CCP guaranteed de jure equality, Mao later cracked down on religious and ethnic minorities, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, in order to elevate party ideology as well as his own political status.¹⁶

8 Jinghan Zeng, *The Chinese Communist Party's Capacity to Rule: Ideology, Legitimacy, and Party Cohesion* 329-330 (2016).

9 *Id.* at 329.

10 *Id.* at 325.

11 Vaclav Smil, *China's Great Famine: 40 Years Later*, US National Library of Medicine (Dec. 18, 1999), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1127087>.

12 Arifa Akbar, *Mao's Great Leap Forward 'killed 45 million in four years'*, *The Independent* (October 23, 2011), <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/mao-s-great-leap-forward-killed-45-million-four-years-2081630.html>.

13 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Chapter 1 Article 4, http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm.

14 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Chapter 2 Article 36, http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm.

15 *The 'Poisonous Fruit' of Tibet's Religious Policy as China Publishes 'Living Buddha' Database*, International Campaign for Tibet (May 2, 2016), <https://savetibet.org/the-poisonous-fruit-of-tibets-religious-policy-as-china-publishes-living-buddha-database/#17>.

16 Maddie Brady, *Religion and State in Communist China*, <http://blogs.bu.edu/guidedhistory/law-and-religion/maddi-b>.

Mao sought to replace people's devotion to their religion or culture with "Maoist thought." By using his own brand of thinking to anchor not only the party, but the nation itself, he could assert control over the masses and solidify his power as supreme leader. According to Mao, "[g]etting to grips with the leadership of thought control is the first priority in maintaining overall leadership."¹⁷ Therefore, Mao launched the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in 1966, commonly known as China's Cultural Revolution, which aimed to destroy and eliminate the Four Olds – "old thinking, old culture, old customs, and old habits."¹⁸ The destruction of the "Four Olds" also implied the replacement of these traditions with the party's own ideologies and customs. As a result, the country's educational system was drastically altered not only to echo Mao's political ideology, but to also smother any "counter-revolutionary" voices. It was during this time that spying on neighbors and loved ones was encouraged and youth were told to pay attention to neighbors, classmates, and even relatives to find out if they harbored any criticism against the party.¹⁹ The decade-long Cultural Revolution resulted in violent power clashes, the destruction of textbooks, and the eradication of historical documents, and fostered a culture of deep distrust within countless families and communities. This campaign ultimately created a complete upheaval of the economy, society, and the nation; it heralded a new age of authoritarian governance wherein every aspect of society was remodeled according to the credo of the head of state. This set an important precedent for the Chinese government, and explains much of the inner workings of CCP's authoritarianism today.

Following the death of Mao Zedong, his successor, Deng Xiaoping, committed to transforming and rebuilding the country following the Cultural Revolution. Deng spearheaded a number of reforms that, in practice, abandoned most tenets of Marxian economics to jumpstart the economy, encourage development, and advance entrepreneurship.²⁰ His Open Door Policy welcomed and advocated for foreign investors to enter the Chinese market. His successful initiatives proved that the CCP was not just a political faction with revolutionary ideologies but a ruling party capable of developing China into an economic power.²¹ The party widely promoted propaganda which stated that the Chinese political system was more efficient at promoting economic growth and improving people's quality of life than democratic countries.²² Interestingly, during this time, freedoms and civil liberties were tolerated for the most part, in contrast to the previous decades.²³

In the late 1970's, the United States of America was eager to increase its foreign diplomacy with China. It hoped that deeper bilateral cooperation and economic integration would encourage the Chinese government to fully reform and liberalize. However in recent decades – especially in the wake of the brutal 1989 Tiananmen Massacre – it has become apparent that China, with the CCP at its helm, is far from democratization.

17 Zeng, *supra* note 8 at 309.

18 Denise Y. Ho, *Revolutionizing Antiquity: The Shanghai Cultural Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1968*, *The China Quarterly* 69, (2011), <https://history.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/revolutionizing%20antiquity.pdf>.

19 Denise Y. Ho, "Mao's Last Revolution": *China's Cultural Transformation*, Ohio State University and Miami University, <https://origins.osu.edu/milestones/august-2016-chinese-cultural-revolution-fifty>.

20 Shigeo Kobayashi, Jia Baobo, & Junya Sano, *The "Three Reforms" in China: Progress and Outlook*, Sakura Institute of Research (Sep. 1999), <https://www.jri.co.jp/english/periodical/rim/1999/RIMe199904threereforms/>.

21 Zeng, *supra* note 7 at 357.

22 *Id.*

23 Merle Goldman, *The Development of Human Rights in Communist China*, E-International Relations (July 21, 2009), <https://www.e-ir.info/2009/07/21/the-development-of-human-rights-in-communist-china/>.

Political regime type: China under Xi Jinping

Based on HRF's political regime analysis, the Chinese government is a fully authoritarian regime where the rule of law, transparency, and government accountability are severely lacking. There are no free and fair elections, and independence between the different branches of government are nonexistent. Fundamental human rights and civil liberties are not respected – and as an officially atheist government, freedom of religion is not embraced.²⁴



September, 2018 – Vladivostok, Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok

While the CCP's egregious human rights violations date back several decades, they intensified when Xi Jinping assumed power and became the leader of the party in 2013.²⁵ Under Xi, the government has increased its efforts to repress any dissent, particularly in China's peripheries where calls for independence and freedom are the loudest.

Through a series of ambitious policies and ideological reforms, it is evident that Xi is eager to cement his legacy as the leader who transformed China into a global superpower.

Xi's promise of a "Chinese Dream" is at the crux of his policymaking, and supposedly creates opportunity for upward mobility and higher quality of life for those living in China.²⁶ From a political perspective, it calls for a renewal of the CCP's power and a pledge to elevate China's ranking in the world order. In practice, however, this has translated into an aggressive campaign of persecuting dissenters and further tightening the party's control of "runaway" areas such as Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong, where the Chinese government has never been viewed as a legitimate power. The "Chinese Dream" is used "to justify political dictatorship and various limitations on civil rights," notably in the aforementioned regions.²⁷

In an effort to expand the "Chinese Dream," Xi has more formally articulated his aspirations through his own iteration of ideological reform. First, Xi has re-invoked Maoist concepts of "national rejuvenation" to assert his own leadership as the linchpin to China's ascendancy to the global stage. Under Xi's interpretation of "national rejuvenation," the CCP endeavors to achieve four specific goals, known as the "Four Comprehensives": build a moderately prosperous society, deepen reform, govern the nation according to law, and tighten party discipline.²⁸ In order to "tighten party discipline," Xi further consolidated his power through a

24 According to a Chinese government document titled "China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief," there are five religions that are formally recognized by the Party. The religious practices of these five must all be approved and registered with the government.

25 Sarah Cook, *The Battle for China's Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*, Freedom House (Feb. 2017), https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FH_ChinasSprit2016_FULL_FINAL_140pages.pdf.

26 *Corporate Intimidation and Censorship in China: Recommendations for Foreign Companies*, Human Rights Foundation, Center for Law and Democracy (June 2020), https://hrf.org/press_posts/report-corporate-intimidation-censorship-in-china/.

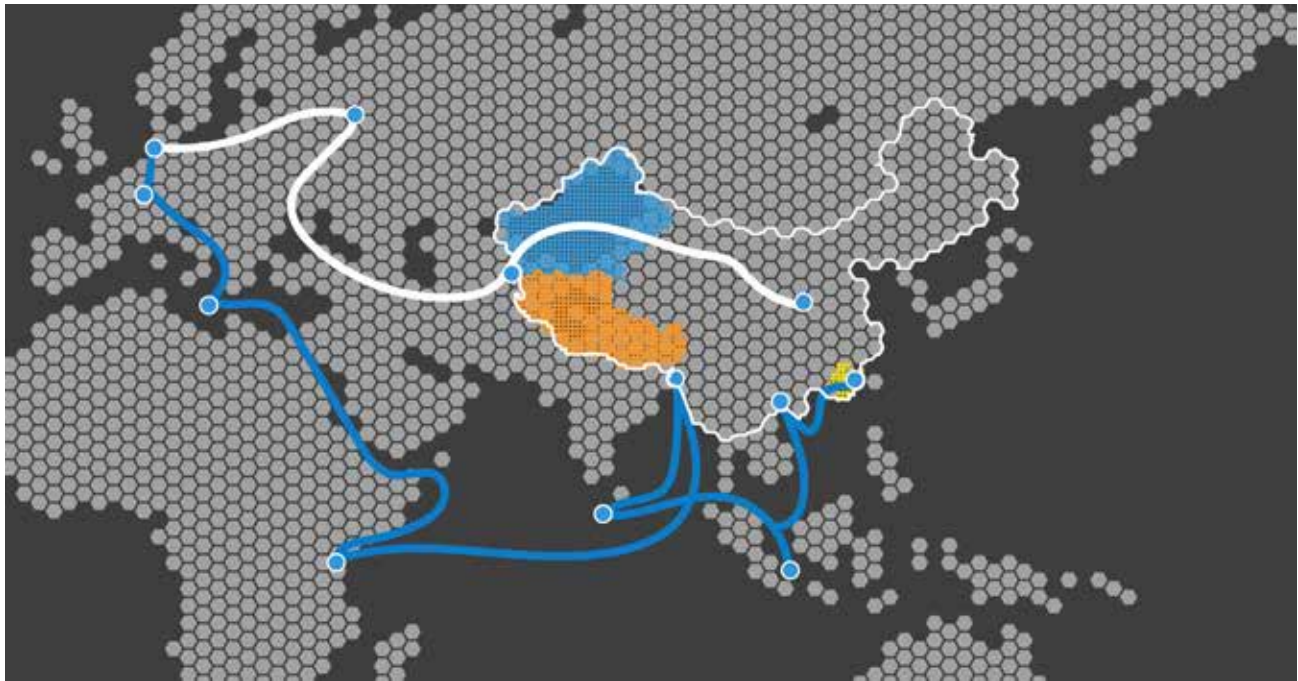
27 Zheng Wang, *The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context*, 19 *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-013-9272-0>.

28 John Garrick and Yan Chang Bennett, « Xi Jinping Thought », *China Perspectives* (2019), <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/7872>.

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constitutional amendment which abolished term limits and firmly entrenched the government's totalitarian dictatorship.²⁹ In the same amendment, the government also introduced "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics For a New Era."³⁰ This philosophy, commonly referred to as "Xi Jinping Thought," formally embraces Xi's own thinking, such as "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and – once again – achieving "national rejuvenation," as party ideology.³¹

Xi's "Chinese Dream" also has intentions to widen and deepen China's reach at the global level. This is best exemplified by his signature foreign policy, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which was formed in 2013. Through the BRI, Xi aims to connect China to the rest of the world via infrastructural developments such as seaports, highways and railways, which will all be financed by the Chinese government. The BRI is one of the most far-reaching campaigns spearheaded by Xi, touching virtually every corner of the earth, including Europe, Latin America, and Africa. All three focus regions – Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong – are of geopolitical and strategic importance to the Chinese government since their locations would help the CCP easily gain access to other countries in the world. Tibet, whose natural resources serve as a lifeline for harnessing energy, allows the Chinese government to reach Southeast Asia. Similarly, the Uyghur Region serves as a gateway to Eastern Europe which is crucial for the BRI. In addition, through Hong Kong, the CCP can access a well established free-market economy, seaports, and the international community.



Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong are all of geopolitical and strategic importance to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

²⁹ James Doubek, *China Removes Presidential Term Limits, Enabling Xi Jinping to Rule Indefinitely*, NPR (Mar. 11, 2018), <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/11/592694991/china-removes-presidential-term-limits-enabling-xi-jinping-to-rule-indefinitely>.

³⁰ China Focus: China's national legislature adopts landmark constitutional amendment, Xinhua (March 11, 2018), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/11/c_137032165.htm.

³¹ Backgrounder: Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, Xinhua (March 7, 2018), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/17/c_137046261.htm.

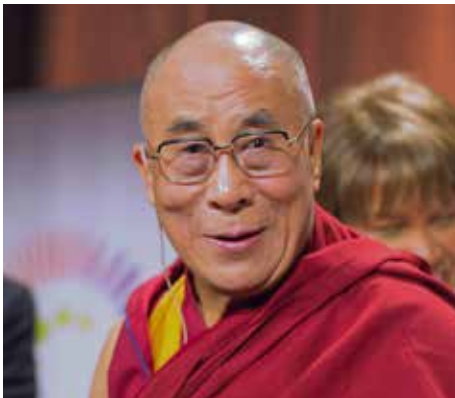
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Through repressive tactics, the CCP seeks to solidify its legitimacy as the ruler of the Uyghur Region, Tibet, and Hong Kong.³² In the Uyghur Region and Tibet, the Chinese government is adopting the rhetoric of the “global war on terror” and uses this as a pretext to justify its repression of ethnic minorities.³³ The government claims that cultural and religious expression are signs of “terrorism, extremism, and separatism,” which are otherwise known as the “Three Evils.”³⁴ The government also claims that there are issues of “national security” in Hong Kong which are used as grounds to crack down on civil society and dissent against the regime.

The circumstances in Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong are emblematic of the worsening human rights situation in China, and the regime’s widespread and systematic crackdown on anyone who opposes the government and its ideologies. Despite the fact that the CCP relies on dangerous rhetoric that slightly varies relative to each focus region, its goal remains the same: to shut down any dissenting voices and “threats” to the regime.



TIBET



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual and religious leader of the Tibetan people.

Tibet is situated on a plateau, and neighbors India, Burma, Bhutan, and China. It is the homeland of the Tibetan people, a civilization established in the region from as early as the 7th century with their own religious heritage, unique culture, language, and nomadic way of life. The Tibetan plateau is often referred to as the world’s “Third Pole” due to its abundant natural resources, including rivers, mountains, glaciers, and forests.³⁵ Consisting of three provinces, Tibet was historically independent with its own theocratic government under the political and spiritual leadership of the Dalai Lama.³⁶ The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama are two of the most revered figures in Tibetan Buddhism as they are both believed to

32 Zeng. *supra* note 8 at 373.

33 James Millward and Dahlia Peterson, “China’s System of Oppression in Xinjiang: How it Developed and How to Curb it,” Brookings Institute (September 2020), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FP_20200914_china_oppression_xinjiang_millward_peterson.pdf at 3.

34 Ramtin Araboulei & Rund Abdelfatah, *Who The Uyghurs Are And Why China Is Targeting Them*, NPR (May 31, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/31/1001936433/who-the-uyghurs-are-and-why-china-is-targeting-them>.

35 Tandong Yao, *Third Pole Climate Warming and Cryosphere System Changes*, World Meteorological Organization, <https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/bulletin/third-pole-climate-warming-and-cryosphere-system-changes>.

36 In March 2011, the Dalai Lama retired from his role as a political leader. He remains the religious and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and is currently living in exile in Dharamsala, India. The Sikyong, democratically elected by Tibetans in exile, serves as the Tibetan political leader.

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be reincarnations of the Buddha of Compassion and the Buddha of Boundless Light, respectively.³⁷

Upon the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Tibetan government became increasingly alarmed by the growing presence of Chinese troops approaching its borders. By late 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had invaded Tibet, where they started their mass campaign of political, cultural, and religious suppression. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Chinese government's objective was to achieve the "liberation of Tibet" by 1950.³⁸ Mao and his troops aggressively sought to coerce the Dalai Lama into accepting China's rule, and the Tibetan government – determined to safeguard Tibet's sovereignty – pleaded with global leaders for support against the Chinese government's encroachment.³⁹

In 1951, a Tibetan delegation traveled to Beijing where the Chinese government presented them with the Seventeen Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. The Plan emphasized how Tibet "shall return to the big family of the Motherland – the People's Republic of China."⁴⁰ According to several scholars and reports, it is believed that Tibet signed the Seventeen Point Plan agreement under duress, as "the Chinese made it clear to the Tibetan delegation that they had no choice but to sign it."⁴¹ The Plan stated that Tibet would maintain "regional autonomy"⁴² and that "the existing political system ... the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama"⁴³ would not be impacted. However, in the years following the ratification of the treaty, the Chinese government gradually – and violently – enforced reforms and new policies that were antithetical to the agreement in order to transform Tibetan society to fit China's ideal vision of a "new multiethnic Communist state."⁴⁴



The Potala Palace is one of the holiest sites in Tibet.

Clashes often occurred between the people of Tibet and the Chinese military. The Chinese government knew they would need to have the Dalai Lama on their side – even kill or kidnap him to silence him – if they wished to successfully reign in Tibet.⁴⁵ In March 1959, millions of Tibetans gathered in front of Potala Palace⁴⁶, where the Dalai Lama lived, determined to provide him with protection. In what later became known as the Tibetan Uprising Day, the Chinese military violently suppressed the gathering and indis-

37 *Is This the Face of a Man Held Captive Since the Age of Six?*, BBC News (Apr. 28, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-48071043>.

38 Melvyn Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*, University of California Press (1997), <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft2199n7f4;brand=ucpress>.

39 *Id.*

40 *Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet: The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, (May 1951), Point 1, <https://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>.

41 Claude Arpi, Facts about the 17-Point Agreement between Tibet and China, DIIR Publications, 58, <https://tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/FACTS-ABOUT-17-POINT-AGREEMENT.pdf>.

42 *Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet: The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, (May 1951), Point 3, <https://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>.

43 *Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet: The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, (May 1951), Point 4, <https://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>.

44 These initiatives have been omnipresent, and are indicated throughout this report.

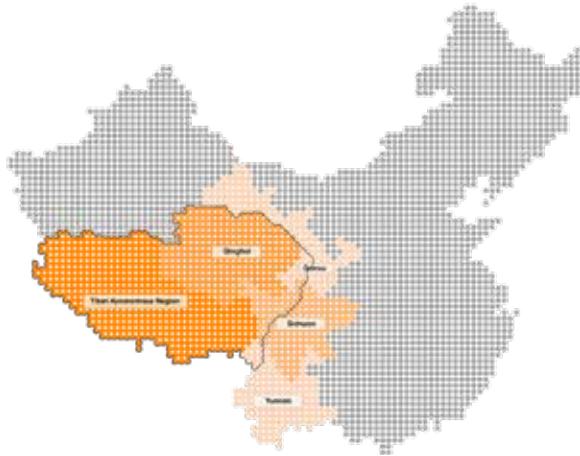
45 Jennifer Latson, *How and Why the Dalai Lama Left Tibet*, Time (Mar. 5, 2019), <https://time.com/3742242/dalai-lama-1959/>.

46 *The Tibetan Uprising 1959*, Free Tibet, <https://freetibet.org/tibetan-uprising-1959>.

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criminally killed thousands.⁴⁷ Shortly after the uprising, the 14th Dalai Lama – only in his early twenties at the time⁴⁸ – secretly fled to India where he established the Tibetan government-in-exile.⁴⁹

All aspects of Tibetan identity, including Tibetan Buddhism, language, history, and heritage, are considered a threat and highly sensitive to the Chinese government because it differs from the CCP's grand vision of achieving the "Chinese Dream" and "national rejuvenation." The Chinese government has continued to enforce repressive measures to crack down on all dissent through a series of state-sponsored campaigns – such as the aptly titled "Strike Hard" campaigns, "Go West Strategy," and "Patriotic Re-education" campaign – to sinicize Tibetan culture and language, to silence support for the Dalai Lama, and to smother calls for Tibetan freedom and independence.⁵⁰ The Chinese government refers to "liberation" and



promises of "ethnic regional autonomy"⁵¹ as a way to mask their true intentions vis-a-vis Tibet in the international arena.

In 1965, the Chinese government renamed historic Tibet to Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).⁵² The original three provinces of Tibet – Kham, Amdo, and U-Tsang – were split and reorganized into other provinces of China, both within and outside of the TAR. Therefore, while Tibetans predominantly reside in TAR, many also live in the surrounding Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.⁵³

A map of historic Tibet, which includes the now-Chinese-controlled provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai.

Due to the Chinese government's tight control on all aspects of civilian life and the resulting severe lack of political rights and civil liberties, Tibet has consistently ranked low on human rights indices. According to the 2021 Freedom in the World Report by Freedom House, for example, Tibet scored 1 out of 100, ranking lower than other authoritarian regimes such as North Korea and Eritrea.⁵⁴

47 Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the Commemoration of the 61st Tibetan National Uprising Day, Tibetan Parliament in Exile (Mar. 10, 2020), <https://tibetanparliament.org/statement-of-the-tibetan-parliament-in-exile-on-the-commemoration-of-the-61st-tibetan-national-uprising-day/>.

48 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life*, Edited by Nicholas Vreeland, 7.

49 About Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet.net, <https://tibet.net/about-cta/>.

50 "Yan Da" – China's strike hard campaign in Tibet, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (December 30, 1996), <https://tchrd.org/yan-da-chinas-strike-hard-campaign-in-tibet/>.

51 *New Progress in the Human Rights in the Tibet Autonomous Region*, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (Feb. 1998), <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/bjzl/t168910.htm>.

52 Country Profile: Tibet Autonomous Region, Nations Online, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/tibet.htm>.

53 About Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, <https://studentsforafreetibet.org/about/about-tibet/>.

54 *Freedom in the World 2021: Tibet*, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/tibet/freedom-world/2021>.



UYGHUR REGION

The Uyghur Region, officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China and also referred to as East Turkestan, is China's largest province and is located in the northwestern part of the country. The region is bordered in the northeast by Mongolia, in the north by Russia, in the west by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and in the south by Pakistan, India, and Tibet.⁵⁵ Due to its location, the Uyghur Region has historically been an important economic and cultural crossroad on the ancient Silk Road.⁵⁶ Today, the region contains many of China's nuclear testing facilities and large oil and mineral reserves.⁵⁷

The Uyghur Region is home to a number of ethnic minorities, most notably the Uyghurs. The Uyghurs are a Turkic-speaking ethnic group native to the region and have a history that dates back 4,000 years. They are predominantly Muslim with closer cultural and ethnic ties to groups in Central Asia as opposed to the Han Chinese of China. The Chinese first made significant contact with the Uyghurs in 1758 when the Qing empire conquered the Uyghur Region and named it "Xinjiang," meaning new frontier.⁵⁸ However, the Chinese empire was unable to directly rule over Xinjiang until the CCP in 1949.⁵⁹

The CCP implemented what they claimed were ethno-pluralist policies, asserting cohesion between all 56 ethnic groups in China.⁶⁰ In 1955, the Uyghur Region was designated the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), a symbolic gesture of ethnic unity.⁶¹ Similar to the promises that were made to Tibet, the PRC stated that autonomous regions "have the right to formulate self-government regulations...in light of the particular political, economic and cultural conditions of the ethnic group in that autonomous area."⁶² However, in reality, the CCP was laying the foundation for its strategy of ethnic assimilation which continues today. Any autonomy that may have once existed was replaced by the overarching control of the Chinese government that provides no right of secession.⁶³

55 James A. Millward and Peter C. Perdue, *Political Cultural History of the XinJiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century in Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, 27-62.

56 *Silk Roads Programme- Ürümqi*, UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/urumqi>.

57 Starr, S. Frederick, "Introduction" in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, 3-26.

58 James A. Millward & Nabijan Tursun, "Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978" in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, 63-100.

59 *Id.*

60 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33.

61 China Primer: Uyghurs, *Congressional Research Service* (Jun. 7, 2021), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10281>.

62 *How do China's Autonomous Regions Differ from Provinces?*, *The Economist* (May 23, 2021), https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/03/23/how-do-chinas-autonomous-regions-differ-from-provinces?itm_source=parsely-api

63 Millward & Tursun, *supra* note 58.

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In an effort to assimilate the region, the Chinese government appointed a new class of Uyghur officials who pledged allegiance to the Chinese government to the local party committee with minor positions in the region.⁶⁴ The CCP also weakened Islamic institutions by placing religious infrastructure under the jurisdiction of the Beijing-based Chinese Islamic Association.⁶⁵ All official religious activity, including training imams, would occur under strict government oversight. Lastly, the Chinese government established the Xinjiang Production Construction Corps (XPCC).⁶⁶ Through the XPCC, the Chinese government resettled millions of Han Chinese immigrants in the XUAR region, and built Han enclaves throughout the area which operated numerous state farms, industrial enterprises, labor camps, prisons, and “re-education” camps.⁶⁷

While most CCP leaders have sought to “tame” the “unruly province,” the region saw slight reprieve from Beijing’s ironclad grip under Deng Xiaoping who espoused a policy of “Opening and Reform.”⁶⁸ Deng’s liberal policies allowed people to practice their cultural and religious customs with a higher degree of freedom.⁶⁹ In the ‘80s, the CCP was divided in their strategy towards the Uyghur Region, but it escalated its repressive tactics in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre.⁷⁰

In the late 1990’s, the government refocused its attention on eradicating the “three evils” of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism under the “Strike Hard” campaigns. CCP officials began to propagate the notion that “separatists and anti-China forces use the cloak of religion to fan national separatism.”⁷¹ As such, the government was able to stifle dissent and arrest political protesters who they argued threatened national unity. In the words of one official, the goal of these “Strike Hard” campaigns is to “arrest quicker, sentence faster and punish harder.”⁷² The “Strike Hard” campaigns were coupled with the 2000’s “Go West Strategy” which also sought to assimilate the Uyghur people through economic development and modernization. The government characterized religion as a backwards tradition and breeding ground for the “three evils,” and thus were a danger to the new and modern Xinjiang that the government was trying to build.⁷³ These measures came to the hilt in 2014 when Xi, once more, escalated repressive tactics to an unprecedented degree.

64 Millward & Dahlia Peterson, *supra* note 33.

65 Millward & Tursun, *supra* note 58.

66 Debasish Chaudhuri, *Minority Economy in Xinjiang—A Source of Uyghur Resentment*, 46China Report 9, 10 (2010), DOI: 10.1177/000944551004600102.

67 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33.

68 *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 2005), <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

69 *Id.*

70 Michael Dillon, *Ethnic, Religious and political conflict on China’s Northwestern borders: The background to the violence in Xinjiang*, 51BRU Boundary and Security Bulletin 5 80, 82 (1997), <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.503.2817&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

71 Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 68.

72 Zhang & McGhee, *supra* note 2.

73 Nicolas Becquelin, *Staged Development in Xinjiang*, 178 *The China Quarterly* 358, 366 (2004).



HONG KONG

In 1842, following the First Opium War, the Qing dynasty ceded Hong Kong as a colony to the British Empire.⁷⁴ Citizens of Hong Kong enjoyed substantial individual and financial freedoms under British rule, including freedom of religion, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression.

On July 1, 1997, control over the entire Hong Kong territory was transferred by the British Empire back to China in accordance with with a 99-year lease. The terms of Hong Kong's transfer of sovereignty were stipulated under the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a bilateral treaty signed between China and the United Kingdom in 1984.⁷⁵ In light of Hong Kong's transfer of sovereignty back to China, the British government was concerned about the CCP's authoritarian influence and rule. Therefore, after lengthy discussions, the two governments eventually reached an agreement – outlined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration – that Hong Kong would be governed by the unprecedented “one country, two systems” principle.

Under the “one country, two systems” principle, Hong Kong would become a special administrative region of China, and would keep its previous social and economic systems. This framework also includes the continued enjoyment of political and civil liberties – such as freedom of speech and assembly – for a period of 50 years, until 2047. The principle also outlined a unique governing structure for Hong Kong, in which Hong Kong's government would enjoy a high degree of autonomy with their own legislative council (LegCo), executive government, and judiciary. The chief executive, the highest position in the Hong Kong government, is selected based on the results of limited committee elections and ultimately approved by the CCP; local representatives are elected by Hong Kong citizens. The basic policies of China's governing of Hong Kong are stated in the Hong Kong Basic Law – essentially the city's own mini-constitution – which also outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms of Hong Kong citizens.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *This Day in History: Hong Kong ceded to the British*, History (Jan. 2020), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/hong-kong-ceded-to-the-british>.

⁷⁵ *Hong Kong's National Security Law: The Nail in the Coffin for One Country, Two Systems*, Human Rights Foundation (July 1, 2020), <https://hrf.org/hong-kongs-national-security-law-the-nail-in-the-coffin-for-one-country-two-systems/>.

⁷⁶ *Id.*

After Hong Kong's return to China, the city struggled with its sudden change from democratic rule to authoritarian rule. Culturally, the city is highly westernized, with English and Chinese as the city's dual official languages, and deeply integrated with British culture. This caused significant tension between the city's people – especially the younger generation – and the Chinese government's authoritarian ideology. The conflicts worsened when large groups of the mainland Chinese population migrated to Hong Kong with ease, driving up already strained housing prices and causing further division between the two cultures.

Politically, because the Chinese government must approve the appointment of Hong Kong's chief executive, Hong Kong's government lacks the independence and autonomy that the Sino-British Joint Declaration envisioned. At the local level, elections in Hong Kong have been manipulated due to the Chinese

It is likely that the city's complete assimilation to align with the CCP's ideology is the end goal.

government's interference and oversight, jeopardizing the political rights of Hong Kong citizens. Under immense pressure from the Chinese government, Hong Kong's press freedom has declined rapidly.⁷⁷ Freedom of association has been under threat in Hong Kong, with the government rejecting the registration of pro-democracy groups. The Chinese government has also exerted pressure on the Hong

Kong government to prosecute dissidents and opposition politicians. Over the years, persecution of Hong Kong's pro-democracy activists have intensified under Xi Jinping's rule. It is likely that the city's complete assimilation to align with the CCP's ideology is the end goal.

⁷⁷ Sarah Cook, *Hong Kong Press Freedom Suffocates under Beijing's National Security Law*, Freedom House (Oct. 8, 2020), <https://freedomhouse.org/article/hong-kong-press-freedom-suffocates-under-beijings-national-security-law>.



Suppression Tactics

Fundamental human rights are protected by foundational documents, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These rights include freedom of speech, expression, association, thought, conscience, and religion, as well as the right to liberty and security of the person which protects against arbitrary arrest and detainment.

Given its authoritarianism, the Chinese government does not respect these rights and civil liberties. They are either declining or nonexistent within Tibet, the Uyghur Region and Hong Kong, where the government has implemented harsh tactics to repress human rights.

Although the CCP's tactics to exert government control are similar between the focus regions, they are not identical. The human impact of these tactics vary given each region's unique history and culture. However, despite these differences, **it is evident that the common underlying threads between the CCP's tactics throughout all three of these regions are that they are far-reaching and are designed to achieve the party's authoritarian political and ideological ambitions.** The resulting campaigns and policies continue to have a lasting impact on the livelihoods of these communities, both domestically and abroad.

BROKEN PROMISES: POLITICAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT

Although the Chinese government maintains that Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong are all “autonomous” regions that are able to go about their internal affairs without external pressure from Beijing, the CCP has deliberately attempted to encroach on these regions’ freedom by co-opting elites and loyalists to implement the CCP’s agenda.⁷⁸ Over time, the CCP has intentionally and deceitfully chiseled away at the peoples’ right to be freely involved in political affairs altogether.

Tibet: Unwarranted Interference



Tibet has its own government affairs run by the Kashag,⁷⁹ the highest local government cabinet, which counsels on political, external, and internal matters. When the Chinese government invaded Tibet in 1949, it strategically targeted both the Kashag and the Dalai Lama in its attempts to convince the Tibetan people to accept Chinese sovereignty. Their efforts were also in part driven by their desire to dissolve the Kashag, and to advance their own ideological and political agendas.

In March of 1959 in response to the Tibetan Uprising Day, the Chinese government issued “Decisions on Several Policy Issues Concerning the Implementation of Democratic Reforms by Crushing the Rebellion in Tibet” which claimed the Kashag had “betrayed the motherland.” Following the issuance of this document, more PLA troops entered the region – intensifying its political, social, and military control.⁸⁰ While the Chinese government claimed its actions were to “liberate” Tibet,⁸¹ in reality, they weaponized their control for political gain, silencing dissent, and bolstering party ideology.

Since then, the Chinese government has continued to interfere in Tibet’s internal political, religious, and social affairs and has created a hostile environment where people within Tibet are unable to freely express their desire for freedom and concerns about governance. Thousands of individuals are imprisoned for speaking out against the regime and, therefore, are being used as examples by the government to deter and pressure others not to engage in dissent. The Chinese government has arbitrarily detained thou-

⁷⁸ Zeng, *supra* note 8 at 450.

⁷⁹ The Kashag exists in-exile today under the Central Tibetan Administration based in Dharamsala, India.

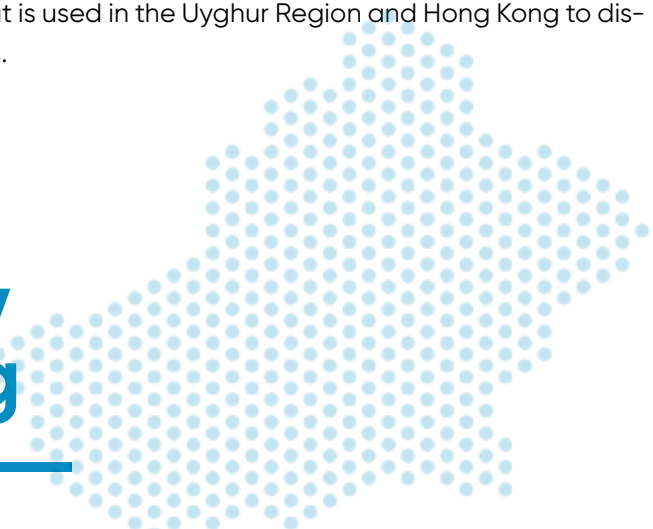
⁸⁰ Chen Jian, *The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China’s Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union*, Harvard University, <https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/jcws.2006.8.3.pdf>.

⁸¹ *Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva (Nov. 7, 2011), <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/rqrd/jblc/t953962.htm>.

sands of community figureheads and leaders, intellectuals, activists, environmentalists, nuns, and monks. The CCP's campaign of political disenfranchisement is heavily intertwined with the Chinese government's religious suppression of Tibetan Buddhism, as will be discussed later on in this report.⁸² According to the Tibetan Political Prisoner Database, there are more than 5,000 political prisoners who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.⁸³

A noteworthy feature of the Chinese government's pursuit of the political disenfranchisement of Tibet is that those who voice their discontent with its actions or express their desire for a free Tibet are targeted, and deemed to be tainted by the "three evils" – terrorism, separatism, and extremism.⁸⁴ Labeling individuals as being infected by the "three evils" and as a threat to national security is a tactic that is not only employed by the Chinese government in Tibet, but also one that is used in the Uyghur Region and Hong Kong to dissuade people from getting involved in political affairs.

Uyghur Region: The Impossibility of Power Sharing



Since being invaded by the Han Chinese during the 18th century, the Uyghur Region has been under a variety of power sharing configurations. However, the region has always considered itself a separate entity from China. Modern concepts of self-governance arose in the 1930's when the short-term para-state of Eastern Turkestan Republic was established.⁸⁵ The state was founded based on the common identity of Muslim Turks, grounded in the principle of self-determination.⁸⁶ While the state was short-lived, the idea that the Uyghur Region should have the right to self-governance continues to persist today.

The Uyghur people's unique sense of identity and right to self-determination, as well as the notion of the Uyghur Region being a sovereign state, have aroused fear and paranoia among the CCP. Accordingly, the government has used its fear of separatism, one of the "three evils," to justify exerting tight control over the region. Any form of legitimate political dissent is widely regarded as support for a "separatist" agenda and is harshly stifled. As a result, few Uyghur leaders have even attempted to participate in the political system.

⁸² More details in Religious Repression.

⁸³ *Tibetan Political Prisoner Database*, Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, <https://tchrd.uwazi.io/>

⁸⁴ *Testimony of Tenzin Dorjee on Tibet from "All Angles": Protecting Human Rights, Defending Strategic Access, and Challenging China's Export of Censorship Globally*, Congressional Executive Commission on China (Feb. 18, 2018), <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/documents/Testimony%20by%20Dorjee%20for%20CECC%20on%20Tibet.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Sean R. Roberts, "Colonialism, 1759–2001" in *The War on the Uyghurs: China's Internal Campaign against a Muslim Minority*, Princeton University Press (2020), 21–62.

⁸⁶ *Id.*



Prominent Uyghur activist Rebiya Kadeer was also a former speaker at HRF's Oslo Freedom Forum.

Historically, when the CCP formalized its power over the region through its designation of the Uyghur Region as the XUAR in 1955, they quickly sought to consolidate the paramountcy of the party by bringing in Han Chinese government officials into the region. These officials comprised 50% of the provincial people's government and 75% of the Party committee.⁸⁷ There was also a determined effort to recruit a crop of loyal cadres of ethnic minorities to support the Chinese officials, but only 5% of Uyghur cadres held positions above the county level.⁸⁸ The select few Uyghur CCP officials had short-lived careers and were eventually ousted from the party.

This was the case for Rebiya Kadeer, who was a prominent political activist and government official in the Uyghur Region. In a public government meeting, she vehemently condemned Chinese occupation of the Uyghur Region.⁸⁹ Two years later, she was arrested and falsely charged with tax evasion and leaking state secrets.⁹⁰ Stripped of all her titles, she was labeled "an ironclad separatist colluding with terrorists and Islamic extremists" and sentenced to eight years imprisonment.⁹¹

Apart from political figures, the Chinese government has also targeted intellectuals, such as Ilham Tohti, who advocated for a peaceful co-sharing power arrangement and interethnic understanding between the Uyghur people and the Han majority. Tohti, a Uyghur economics professor, founded UighurOnline, a Chinese-language website devoted to fostering understanding between Uyghur and Han people.⁹² In 2008, his website was shut down for alleged links to Uyghur "extremists" abroad.⁹³ He was detained a second time in 2014 and found guilty on trumped-up charges of "separatism."⁹⁴ The Chinese government refuses to engage in any peaceful cooperation with the Uyghur people, because their engagement would be predicated on the acknowledgement that the Uyghurs are a distinct group of people. As such, there is little political space for Uyghurs to meaningfully participate in political discourse.

The constriction of political space for civil society to engage in governance and public affairs is also evident in Hong Kong.

87 J. Lo, *Five Years of the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region 1955-1960*, *China Quarterly* (1961)

88 *Id.*

89 Peter Ford, *Spiritual mother of Uighurs or Terrorist?*, *Christian Science Monitor* (July 9, 2009), <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2009/0709/p06s15-woap.html>.

90 *Id.*

91 *Id.*

92 *Prisoners by Country, China: Ilham Tohti*, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, <https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/defending-freedom-project/prisoners-by-country/China/Ilham%20Tohti>.

93 *Id.*

94 Per Liljas, *China Charges Uighur Scholar Ilham Tohti With 'Separatism'*, *Time* (Jul. 31, 2014), <https://time.com/3062430/china-xinjiang-uyghur-ilham-tohti-charged-separatism/>.

Hong Kong: The Fallacy of "One Country, Two Systems"



The CCP has long been intervening in Hong Kong's internal affairs, despite its initial claims that the Hong Kong government would enjoy a high degree of autonomy under the "one country, two systems" framework. Fractures in the framework became especially evident since the Chinese government's implementation of the national security law in 2020.

Immediately after the handover from the British in 1997, legislative interference became a point of contention in Hong Kong. The Chinese government restructured Hong Kong's LegCo into an arrangement that made it easier for pro-Beijing fractions to gain seats. There are few limits on the chief executive, who is not directly elected by the people and must be approved by the Chinese government. Though the Basic Law allowed for universal suffrage after 2007, such a system was never implemented despite calls from pro-democracy groups.

Despite significant obstacles, the pro-democracy lawmakers in Hong Kong continue to strive for universal suffrage. They have repeatedly called for a public referendum and also peacefully demonstrated for democratic reforms. The 2014 Umbrella Movement, for example, was a major protest that brought together pro-democracy activists and lawmakers who participated in a 79-day Occupy Central civil disobedience movement.⁹⁵

Since then, the space for political participation has shrunk even further. In 2016, candidates for the LegCo election were screened by a government commission for their political loyalty, creating an environment preventing meaningful electoral competition. Multiple candidates who declined to sign a statement affirming Hong Kong was an inalienable part of China were disqualified.⁹⁶ Later, six elected lawmakers were removed from office after allegedly failing to take proper oaths.⁹⁷ In 2019, following the decentralized anti-extradition pro-democracy movement, PRC's National People's Congress further

⁹⁵ *Explainer: What was Hong Kong's 'Occupy' Movement all About?*, Reuters (Apr. 23, 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hong-kong-politics-occupy-explainer/explainer-what-was-hong-kongs-occupy-movement-all-about-idUSKCN1S005M>.

⁹⁶ *Hong Kong Activist Candidates Disqualified from Election*, Reuters (July 30, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-politics/hong-kong-activist-candidates-disqualified-from-election-idUSKCN10B01I>.

⁹⁷ Joshua Berlinger & James Griffiths, *4 Hong Kong lawmakers disqualified, fueling worries about Beijing's influence*, CNN (July 14, 2017), <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/14/asia/hong-kong-lawmakers-disqualified/index.html>.

imposed restrictions on LegCo candidates, stating that candidates would be disqualified if they did not respect China's rule of Hong Kong, or if they engaged with "foreign powers" to jeopardize national security.⁹⁸ Four pro-democracy lawmakers were subsequently disqualified and barred from the 2020 LegCo election.⁹⁹ Soon after, the pro-democracy camp announced that Hong Kong's democracy had met a "death knell" and, in support of the four disqualified lawmakers, the entire group resigned en masse.¹⁰⁰

Recently, as the world was distracted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress unilaterally approved of a controversial national security law in May 2020. Drafted in secret, the proposed law bypassed Hong Kong's legislative process and came into effect on June 30, 2020, an hour before the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China. The legislation gravely endangers the remaining civil liberties in Hong Kong given that any action that falls under the vague and broadly-defined terms "secession, subversion, terrorism, or foreign interference" are likely to be in violation of the law. "Offenders" can be sentenced to life in prison for nonviolent crimes, including speech-related offenses, which is in contravention of international norms.¹⁰¹

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Space for genuine political participation is non-existent, despite promises of political autonomy in the three focus regions.
- The Chinese government justifies its tactics of political disenfranchisement by claiming that it is safeguarding "national security" and eradicating the "three evils."
- The Chinese government has politically interfered with Tibet and the Uyghur Region by supplanting local governance systems with centralized CCP rule. In Hong Kong, however, the CCP is turning the Hong Kong government into a subservient administration.

98 *China: Disqualification of Hong Kong lawmakers Deals another blow to Rule of Law*, Amnesty International (Nov. 11, 2020), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/china-disqualification-of-hong-kong-lawmakers-deals-another-blow-to-rule-of-law/>.

99 *Id.*

100 Zen Soo, *Hong Kong's Pro-democracy Lawmakers to Resign en Masse*, Associated Press News (Nov. 11, 2020), <https://apnews.com/article/hong-kong-pro-democracy-resign-en-masse-7434a6f1ac28a059827b51d02987f71c>.

101 *Hong Kong National Security Law Full Text*, South China Morning Post (July 2, 2020), <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3091595/hong-kong-national-security-law-read-full-text>.

TIGHTENING THE IRON GRIP: CRACKDOWNS, DETAINMENT, AND TORTURE

The Chinese government's clampdown on all three regions has been orchestrated through mass crackdowns, arbitrary arrests, and even torture.

Tibet: Arbitrary Detention and Torture of Religious Individuals

The Chinese government has arbitrarily detained and tortured countless Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns. Within Tibetan society, it is common for families to send at least one child to the monasteries to receive an education and embrace the Tibetan Buddhist monastic lifestyle. As such, the Chinese government's targeting of religious figures has reverberated throughout society, impacting virtually each and every family.



Tibetan monks and nuns are highly respected leadership figures due to their involvement in both religious and community affairs.

Monks and nuns are highly respected leadership figures due to their involvement in both religious and community affairs. They also play an instrumental role in delivering speeches, distributing pamphlets, documenting experiences, and organizing events dedicated to advocating for the Dalai Lama, and opposing the Chinese government's authoritarian rule in their homeland.¹⁰² Therefore, the Chinese government views nuns and monks as "splittists"¹⁰³ and threats due to their influential role in society and ongoing commitment to religion.

Historically, as monasteries were destroyed or seized by the Chinese government¹⁰⁴, monks and nuns were forcibly evicted, de-robed, and humiliated. During the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and its aftermath, countless civilians along with nuns and monks were arbitrarily arrested. In the present, Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns are often targeted by police, and arbitrarily detained for their involvement with religious and community affairs.¹⁰⁵ Those who speak out against the Chinese government's actions in their homeland, or continue to adhere to their religious beliefs, are arbitrarily detained and subject to horrific forms of torture including severe beatings, rape, starvation, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, lengthy

¹⁰² *China's Control of Religion in Tibet*, Free Tibet (April 2016), <https://www.freetibet.org/religious-freedom>.

¹⁰³ Metta Spencer, *The Heart of the Tibetan Resistance*, Peace Magazine, 8 (Mar. 3, 1998), <http://peacemagazine.org/archive/v14n2p08.htm>

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Demick, *Eat the Buddha*, Random House, 47 (2020).

¹⁰⁵ *Tibet*, University of Massachusetts, <http://www.umass.edu/rso/freetibet/education.html>.

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interrogations, and other mental and bodily harm. They are even subjected to execution.¹⁰⁶ This is in spite of China having signed onto and ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.¹⁰⁷



Tibetan Buddhist monk Palden Gyatso (1933–2018) was the first to publicly reveal the Chinese regime's tools of torture to the international community.

Former prisoner of conscience and Tibetan Buddhist monk Palden Gyatso (1933–2018) was the first to publicly reveal the Chinese regime's tools of torture and campaign of political indoctrination and forced labor to the United Nations in 1995.¹⁰⁸ According to his testimonies, the Chinese government relied on various tools such as iron bars, electric shocks, leather belts, and cattle prods to torture detainees.¹⁰⁹ Gyatso was arbitrarily detained for 33 years in Chinese labor camps and prisons due to his commitment to the Dalai Lama, his desire to safeguard an independent Tibet, and his participation in the 1959 Tibetan Uprising.¹¹⁰

The Chinese government's ongoing authoritarian rule has resulted in the continued arbitrary detainment and torture of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns, regardless of their age. In March 2008, for example, on the 49th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising Day, hundreds of monks, nuns, and residents peacefully gathered across the region to protest the Chinese government's encroachment on their lifestyle, heritage and culture. There were roughly 344 protests. Participants carried pamphlets, Tibetan flags, and photographs of the Dalai Lama – all of which are banned. They peacefully chanted "Free Tibet," "We want freedom," and "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama," to which the Chinese police responded with tear gas, brute force, and gunfire.¹¹¹ Dozens of people were arrested for threatening China's definition of the country's sovereignty, and "incitement to separatism."¹¹² Out of the people arrested, monks and nuns were subject to increased torture and abuse.¹¹³ The timing of these protests were closely linked with the timing of the then-upcoming Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, when the Olympic torch was to pass through the capital of Tibet, Lhasa.

Following the March 2008 protests, the Chinese government enforced sweeping measures to further crack down on civil society in Tibet, including increasing military presence, amplifying its propaganda

106 Jamyang Norbu, *Buying the Dragon's Teeth*, High Asia Press (2004) 50.

107 *United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, United Nations Treaty Convention, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-9&chapter=4&lang=en.

108 *Tibetan Human Rights Advocated Palden Gyatso Passes Away at the Age of 85*, Free Tibet (Nov. 30, 2018), <https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/tibetan-human-rights-advocate-palden-gyatso-passes-away-age-85>.

109 *Tibetan Monk Tortured for 3 Decades in China's Prisons Dies*, Voices of America (Nov. 30, 2018), <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/tibetan-monk-tortured-3-decades-chinas-prisons-dies>.

110 *Speakers: Palden Gyatso*, Human Rights Foundation, https://hrf.org/event_speakers_posts/palden-gyatso/.

111 *2008 Uprising in Tibet: Chronology and Analysis*, Tibet, 17, <https://tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/tibetprotest2008.pdf>.

112 *"I Saw It with My Own Eyes": Abuses by Chinese Security Forces in Tibet*, Human Rights Watch (July 21, 2010), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/07/21/i-saw-it-my-own-eyes/abuses-chinese-security-forces-tibet-2008-2010>.

113 *Id.*

expanding its re-education campaigns, and locking down all access into the region.¹¹⁴

To date, monks, nuns, and other individuals are virtually unable to freely express their religious beliefs and political ideals. The severe repression that they are subjected to, coupled with the fear of arrest, torture, and execution, have become so intense, that many monks, former monks, and civilians have resulted to self-immolations to non-violently express their deep frustration with the Chinese government's actions, to publicly call for freedom, and to spur the international community to pay more attention to the abuses within the region.¹¹⁵ More than 150 Tibetan people have self-immolated since 2009, following the March 2008 protests.¹¹⁶

Uyghur Region: Quelling Civil Unrest Through Brute Force

With the increase of what the Chinese government perceives as “disruptive behavior,” the government has employed excessive amounts of police force to quell any and all signs of dissent in the Uyghur Region.¹¹⁷

The most notable example of police using deadly force took place in July 2009 in the city of Ürümqi. The mass protests were triggered by the mob killing of two Uyghurs working in a Guangdong factory after a fight broke out between Han and Uyghur workers.¹¹⁸ In order to dispel crowds and manage protesters, police used tear gas and live ammunition, which sparked violence between Uyghurs and Han residents.¹¹⁹ After the July 5th clashes, a harsh crackdown was put in place, including the subsequent large-scale disappearance of hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs over the following days and weeks.¹²⁰ Other protesters were imprisoned and executed following the denial of fair legal proceedings.¹²¹ According to government sources, an estimated 592 Uyghurs were eventually tried on spurious security charges between 2013 and 2014.¹²²

114 *2008 Uprising in Tibet: Chronology and Analysis*, Tibet, 177, <https://tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/tibetprotest2008.pdf>.

115 *Human Rights Violations and Self-Immolation: Testimonies by Tibetans in Exile*, International Federation for Human Rights, <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/tibet587a.pdf>.

116 *Self-Immolation Fact Sheet*, International Campaign for Tibet (Jan. 13, 2021), <https://savetibet.org/tibetan-self-immolations/>.

117 While arbitrary detention, particularly the detention of people with overt religious associations, is prevalent in the Uyghur Region, this is discussed in more detail in *Religion Repression: The Disruption of Daily Life*.

118 Uyghur American Association, *East Turkestan: UAA Condemns Killing Of Uyghur Workers*, Unrepresented Nations and People Organization (Jul. 1, 2009), <https://unpo.org/article/9768>.

119 “Justice, Justice:” *The July 2009 Protests in Xinjiang, China*, Amnesty International (Jul.12, 2010), <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/36000/asa170272010en.pdf> at 15.

120 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 46 at 3.

121 Cook, *supra* note 25.

122 *Id* at 78.

The constant use of indiscriminate violence and the inability to de-escalate high-tension situations connote a low quality of policing. The low quality policing is a result of the aftermath of the 2009 protests where many Uyghur police officers reportedly resigned on ethical grounds and were replaced with individuals who were not subjected to thorough background checks.¹²³ Many of the new police officers had violent criminal records.¹²⁴ In addition, as random attacks against police increased in the region, many police officers were armed with guns without having undergone adequate firearm training.¹²⁵ The police have continued to inflict violence against civilians even during smaller protests or house searches where a heavy handed response is uncalled for. The indiscriminate use of live ammunition has resulted in the injury and even death of parties involved, including bystanders and children.

The crackdowns in both Tibet and the Uyghur Region paint a picture about what may come next for the city of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: Behind Bars For Protecting the Truth



The right to freedom of assembly which is written in Hong Kong's Basic Law, was generally accepted and protected until the 2014 Umbrella Movement. During the 79-day protest that called for true universal suffrage, thousands of people joined the peaceful movement and camped out on the streets. To disperse the crowds, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) used tear gas to break up the protest without provocation. In addition, student leaders that year, including Joshua Wong, Alex Chow, and Nathan Law were charged with "unlawful assembly" for storming the Civic Square and sentenced to prison.¹²⁶ Though their sentences were overturned later, their conviction was upheld. The three are referred to as the first political prisoners of Hong Kong since the handover.¹²⁷ More recently, the police prevented the 2021 Tiananmen Square vigil from taking place by barricading Victoria park and warning protesters of possible persecution.¹²⁸

¹²³ *Id* at 74.

¹²⁴ *Id*.

¹²⁵ *Id*.

¹²⁶ *Writers at Risk: Joshua Wong, Alex Chow, and Nathan Law*, PEN America, <https://pen.org/advocacy-case/joshua-wong-alex-chow-nathan-law/>.

¹²⁷ Suzanne Pepper, *Hong Kong's First Political Prisoners? A Stormy Fortnight for the SAR's Core Values*, Hong Kong Free Press (Aug. 27, 2017), <https://hongkongfp.com/2017/08/27/hong-kongs-first-political-prisoners-stormy-fortnight-sars-core-values/>.

¹²⁸ Brittany Gibson, *China extends reach in Hong Kong over Tiananmen Square vigil*, Vox (Jun. 5, 2021), <https://www.vox.com/2021/6/5/22520233/china-democracy-power-hong-kong-activist-tiananmen-square-vigil>.



The 2019 anti-extradition law protests formed a new leaderless and decentralized pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong.

As a result, millions of people joined protests in the streets to demonstrate against the passage of the bill.¹³¹

The 2014 police tactics set the tone for the later 2019 anti-extradition law protests, when the police's use of force was even more rampant.¹²⁹ In 2019, the proposed Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill – commonly referred to as the “Extradition Bill”¹³⁰ – would have allowed the Hong Kong chief executive to extradite fugitives on a case-by-case basis and bypass standard legal procedures. This led to an outpouring of condemnation among Hong Kong citizens, who perceived the bill as Beijing's latest attempt to attack fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong.

The overuse of force by police escalated on June 12 that year, two months after the start of the protest movement, when approximately one million people marched peacefully on the streets of Hong Kong. The HKPF targeted peaceful protesters and journalists with rubber bullets and pepper spray. There have been multiple incidents since the 2019 protests of police using excessive force on the streets towards protesters or those perceived to be pro-democracy activists.¹³² The protesters have urged that an independent inquiry be conducted to investigate police brutality; the HKPF has not yet been held accountable for their actions, especially as police presence has since increased due to the national security law.

Additionally, mass arrests have become the newest human rights issue in Hong Kong, a city that had no political prisoners prior to the handover in 1997. On January 5, 2021, for example, the Hong Kong government conducted a mass arrest of many activists and virtually all pro-democracy lawmakers who, two months prior, had resigned en masse in protest of the deteriorating legislative independence. All of those arrested have been active in resisting the Chinese government's influence in Hong Kong, whether through grassroots activism, legislative means, or political activities. The arrests in 2021 came half a year after the Chinese government's widely-criticized, unilateral implementation of the national security law in June 2020.

The overbroad and vaguely worded national security law has been used to justify the arrests and those arrested were accused of “overthrowing” the government by organizing and participating in the primary. However, in reality, their arrests were an exercise of political cleansing.¹³³ Multiple people, including

¹²⁹ *Hong Kong Police Use Teargas and Pepper Spray to Disperse Protesters*, The Guardian (Sep. 24, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/28/kong-kong-police-teargas-pepper-spray-pro-democracy-protesters>.

¹³⁰ *Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*, Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, <https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/bills/b201903291.pdf>.

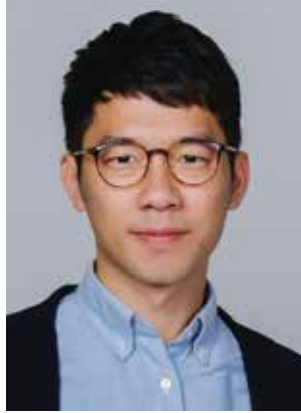
¹³¹ *Corporate Intimidation and Censorship in China*, Human Rights Foundation (June 9, 2020), https://hrf.org/press_posts/report-corporate-intimidation-censorship-in-china/.

¹³² *Haley Willis & Ainara Tiefenthäler, Hong Kong Police Shot a Protester at Point-Blank Range. We Break Down What Happened*, NY Times (October 1, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000006745719/hong-kong-protester-shot.html>.

¹³³ *Hong Kong Arrests Dozens of Pro-Democracy Figures in a Mass Raid*, Human Rights Foundation (January 6, 2021), https://hrf.org/press_posts/hong-kong-arrests-dozens-of-pro-democracy-figures-in-a-mass-raid/.



Agnes Chow was sentenced to prison for politically-motivated charges in December 2020, and spent her 24th birthday in jail.



Nathan Law is a prominent pro-democracy activist who was elected as the youngest lawmaker in Hong Kong at the age of 23. He is currently living in exile.

leading pro-democracy figures like activist Agnes Chow¹³⁴ and media tycoon Jimmy Lai, have been arrested under national security charges. A number of dissidents who went into exile are now wanted in Hong Kong, including activists Nathan Law, Sunny Cheung, and former British consulate staffer Simon Cheng.¹³⁵

The HKPF has also raided the headquarters of local pro-democracy media platform *Apple Daily* twice, resulting in the arrest of top executive staff and the seizure of electronic devices of journalists.

Alarming, after the second raid, the government froze millions of the publication's assets,¹³⁶ ultimately forcing *Apple Daily* to end their operations.¹³⁷ As of late June 2021, seven staffers of the publication have been detained for violating the national security law.¹³⁸

The national security law has played a striking role in the deterioration of civil liberties in Hong Kong, once a city known as a bastion of freedom. In addition to crippling civil society by forcing prominent local organizations such as Demosistō to disband¹³⁹ and local media platforms such as *Apple Daily* to shutter, the national security law also instilled a climate of fear amongst international NGOs and media publications who previously held offices in Hong Kong.¹⁴⁰ For instance, a unit of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation relocated to Taiwan,¹⁴¹ and the *New York Times* relocated some of their staff in Hong Kong to Seoul, South Korea.¹⁴²

Overall, this series of events all point to how the national security law has placed enormous pressure on civil society, private citizens, and media outlets to self-censor, remove content critical of the Chinese government, or to completely end operations in order to stay safe and evade arrest.

¹³⁴ Agnes Chow was released from prison in June 2021.

¹³⁵ Jeffie Lam & Chris Lau, *National Security Law and Hong Kong's Exiled Dissidents*, South China Morning Post (Oct. 10, 2020), <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3104917/national-security-law-and-hong-kongs-exiled-dissidents-wolds>.

¹³⁶ *Hong Kong's Apple Daily says only has cash for few weeks after assets frozen*, Reuters (Jun. 20, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kongs-apple-daily-says-only-has-cash-few-weeks-after-assets-frozen-2021-06-20/>.

¹³⁷ Michelle Toh, *Apple Daily's demise deals another blow to Hong Kong's battered reputation*, CNN Business (Jun. 25, 2021), <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/25/business/hong-kong-business-confidence-intl-hnk/index.html>.

¹³⁸ Helen Davidson, *Hong Kong police arrest senior Apple Daily journalist at airport*, The Guardian (Jun. 27, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/28/hong-kong-police-arrest-apple-daily-journalist-airport-fung-wai-kong>.

¹³⁹ Kelly Ho & Tom Grundy, *Joshua Wong's Pro-Democracy Group Demosisto disbands hours after Hong Kong Security Law Passed*, Hong Kong Free Press (June 30, 2020), <https://hongkongfp.com/2020/06/30/breaking-joshua-wongs-pro-democracy-group-demosisto-disbands-hours-after-hong-kong-security-law-passed/>.

¹⁴⁰ Jessie Pang, *Hong Kong pro-democracy paper Apple Daily to print last edition on Thursday*, Reuters (June 23, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-police-arrest-apple-daily-columnist-under-security-law-media-2021-06-23/>.

¹⁴¹ *Naumann Foundation relocates Global Innovation Hub to Taipei*, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (March 11, 2020), <https://www.freiheit.org/pressemitteilung/naumann-foundation-relocates-global-innovation-hub-taipei>.

¹⁴² Anne Marie Roantree & Marius Zaharia, *New York Times to Move Part of Hong Kong Office to Seoul in Wake of Security Law*, Reuters (July 14, 2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-security-media/new-york-times-to-move-part-of-hong-kong-office-to-seoul-in-wake-of-security-law-idUSKCN24G08T>.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The use of brute force and mass crackdowns are evident in all three regions.
- Protesters, community leaders, and intellectuals are frequently arrested en masse or arbitrarily detained.
- These tactics were only slowly introduced in Hong Kong following the 2014 Umbrella Movement, and have since intensified in the aftermath of the 2019 anti-extradition movement.

PRECIPITOUS ERASURE: CULTURAL SUPPRESSION

One of the striking similarities of the CCP's policies in all three focus regions is their aim to eradicate unique cultural aspects of all of their populations. The Chinese government's policies are designed to assimilate people in each focus region to become "true patriots," individuals who are fiercely loyal to the party. These policies have manifested themselves in the form of minimizing opportunities to learn and use the local language and banning religious and cultural practices.

The Dilution of Cultural Identity

Tibet: Sinicization of Tibetan Heritage



In line with the Chinese government's desire to force Tibet to align with its vision of a new "modern, democratic socialist society,"¹⁴³ the government has spearheaded population transfer initiatives from as early as 1949 to encourage more Han Chinese – the ethnic majority group in China – to move from the mainland to Tibet.¹⁴⁴ These transfers drastically transformed the demographics in Tibet, and has amplified the injustices and inequalities faced by Tibetans. Han Chinese settlers reap career and educational benefits that are not offered to Tibetans, and are also enticed by jobs, housing, land, and financial incentives. The government has propagandized the population transfer initiatives, by claiming it to be beneficial towards boosting the economy, improving the quality of life, and combating the "developmental backwardness and remoteness of Tibet."¹⁴⁵ Accordingly, the Chinese government's discriminatory and divisive rhetoric has fueled prejudicial attitudes among Han Chinese who view the Tibetan people as "dirty" or as "savages."¹⁴⁶

While the "Go West Strategy" from the 2000's indeed did boost the economy and welcome investments, the fruits of this campaign did not benefit the majority of Tibetan people. Since the Chinese government's encroachment has increased and tightened over the past few decades, Tibetans are left in "positions of relative disadvantage when compared to their Han Chinese counterparts."¹⁴⁷ For example,

143 *Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva (Nov. 7, 2011), <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/rjrd/jblc/t953962.htm>.

144 *Intervention on Population Transfer in Tibet*, Tibet Justice Center, http://www.tibetjustice.org/?page_id=182.

145 Andrew Martin Fischer, 'Population Invasion' versus Urban Exclusion in the Tibetan Areas of Western China, *Population and Development Review* 631, 631-662, (2008), <https://case.edu/affil/tibet/documents/fischer.pdf> at 638.

146 Barbara Demick, *Eat the Buddha* 80 (2020).

147 Dina Buck, *Tibet Under Chinese Rule*, University of Denver, Human Rights and Human Welfare, <https://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/china/TibetChina.pdf>

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population transfers have resulted in their unequal access to employment, business, and education opportunities.¹⁴⁸ It has also triggered the forced evictions and mass displacements of several communities from their ancestral lands, thus threatening Tibetan nomadic practices and diluting cultural identity. Consequently, thousands of Tibetans have fled Tibet to live in exile in order to enjoy basic rights and freedoms and to pursue lifestyles that are untainted by the party's authoritarian agenda.

In 2020, when the world was distracted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government enforced "Regulations on the Establishment of a Model Area for Ethnic Unity and Progress in the Tibet Autonomous Region." While the Chinese government has long claimed to be pushing for "harmony" and "unity" among ethnic minorities and the majority Han Chinese, this legislation undermines human rights and freedom for the people of Tibet. The law explicitly dictates how all individuals, institutions, and organizations – ranging from schools, religious centers, the military, businesses, and so on – must safeguard the "oneness of motherland" and take "an unambiguous stand against separatism,"¹⁴⁹ and also openly advocates for cross-ethnic marriages between Tibetans and Han Chinese.¹⁵⁰ These efforts are orchestrated by the Chinese government to further dilute Tibetan identity and sinicize the region, under the guise of easing social tensions and achieving "harmony."

The Dalai Lama has often referred to the Chinese government's actions in Tibet as a cultural genocide due to the government's concentrated efforts to eliminate the distinct and unique characteristics of Tibetan heritage and identity. Once the Dalai Lama went into exile in 1959, he established the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala, India, which plays a key role in the preservation of Tibetan culture and identity. The CTA serves as Tibet's government-in-exile and consists of democratically elected officials and oversees departments such as the Department of Education and the Department of Religion & Culture.¹⁵¹ The CTA and its departments, along with the global Tibetan community-in-exile, have been crucial in protecting Tibetan heritage. Together, they have sounded the alarm on the plight of the Tibetan people in the face of the Chinese government's unrelenting targeting and persecution.¹⁵²

148 Jamyang Norbu, *Buying the Dragon's Teeth* 79 (2004).

149 Kunsang Rinzin & Rikar Hussein, *Exiled Tibetans Alarmed by China's 'Unity Law'*, Voice of America (Jan. 24, 2020), <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/exiled-tibetans-alarmed-chinas-unity-law>.

150 *Freedom in the World 2020: Tibet*, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/tibet/freedom-world/2021>.

151 *Official Website of the Central Tibetan Administration*, Central Tibetan Administration, <https://tibet.net/>.

152 Lobsang Sangay, *Democracy in Exile*, Oslo Freedom Forum, <https://oslofreedomforum.com/talks/democracy-in-exile/>.

Uyghur Region: Destroying the Uyghur Identity



The Chinese government has long pushed for the assimilation and integration of the Uyghur people. A common strategy that the CCP uses to assimilate its border regions is mass immigration, a policy seen both in Inner Mongolia and Tibet.¹⁵³ Through the XPCC, Beijing was able to initiate a policy of large-scale Han Chinese migration composed mostly of retired PLA soldiers.¹⁵⁴ The state also relocated skilled Han migrants to work in the natural resource industries, particularly the oil, gas, and cotton industries.¹⁵⁵ Much of the development of the Uyghur Region was outsourced to Han migrants with minimal employment of Uyghur workers.¹⁵⁶ Resultantly, between 1949-1976, the percentage of ethnic Chinese in the Uyghur Region increased from 6% to 41.5%.¹⁵⁷

The Chinese government has long pushed for the assimilation and integration of the Uyghur people.

In the late '80s and '90s, Beijing revived this policy of heavy state-sponsored migration as the CCP leadership reverted to a strategy of tightening their grip on the outskirts of the nation. The government flooded the area with Han Chinese influence and re-engineered a systematic migration that resulted in 1.2 million Han Chinese settling in the region by the end of the '90s.¹⁵⁸ Han Chinese were motivated to partake in these waves of migration through economic and land ownership incentives. In the Uyghur Region, Han migrants were not obliged to follow the one-child policy and entitled to property rights and land ownership, unlike in the eastern parts of the nation.¹⁵⁹ Han residents often live in segregated communities with better facilities such as access to electricity and water and improved road conditions.¹⁶⁰ In addition, the government increased investment in infrastructure projects which created job opportunities often reserved for Han migrants.¹⁶¹ In the face of discriminatory employment practices, Uyghurs faced

¹⁵³ Dru Gladney, *The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as an example of separatism in China*, Pomona College (Jan. 2021), 85-104, <http://kulturnistudia.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Xinjiang-Uyghur-Autonomous-Region-as-an-example-of-separatism-in-China.pdf> at 95.

¹⁵⁴ Anthony Howell and C. Cindy Fan, *Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi*, 52 *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 119, 120 (2011), DOI: 10.2747/1539-7216.52.1.119.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*

¹⁵⁶ *Id.*

¹⁵⁷ *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*, Human Rights Watch (April 2005), <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

¹⁵⁹ Ayjaz Ahmad Wani, *Socio-Economic Impact of Han Migration on Xinjiang*, *Revista Română de Studii Eurasiatice* 215, 220 (2014), <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=141296>.

¹⁶⁰ *Id.*

¹⁶¹ Howell and Fan, *supra* note 154 at 120.

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high rates of unemployment and lower incomes than their Han counterparts.¹⁶² The result is a settler class of Han Chinese migrants, who have disproportionately benefited from the economic development of the Uyghur Region as compared to the locals.

One of the few incentives directed at the Uyghur population are efforts to encourage interethnic marriage with Han people through the promise of greater access to better welfare, education, and employment. The government believes that through intermarriage, the Uyghur people can be more quickly assimilated into the Han majority while having their ethnic identity speedily diluted. The policies mirror similar plans implemented in Tibet, which the government cites as a way to “ease social conflicts amid increasing incidence of terrorist attacks in the region.”¹⁶³

From cultural dilution to educational interference, the Chinese government has taken sweeping measures to ensure the homogenization of all people in the name of national unity and peace.

Targeting the Next Generation: Educational Interference



The Chinese government interferes with education because it plays a crucial role in the public perception of the CCP. By implementing “bilingual” education with an emphasis on Mandarin learning and doctoring curriculum materials that exalt the party, the CCP seeks to further assert its legitimacy in the minds of students at an early age. These initiatives are violations of fundamental human rights, and are the government’s attempts to mold the mindsets of future generations to be loyal to the party for years to come.

¹⁶² Becquelin, *supra* note 73 at 72.

¹⁶³ Cathy Wong, *Mixed marriages get cash gifts in Xinjiang*, Global Times (Sep. 30, 2014), <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/879657.shtml>.

Tibet: The Power of Language and Textbooks



The Chinese government has long felt threatened by Tibetan language and culture since they are so intimately linked with Tibetan nationalism and identity. Therefore, the policies and reforms carried out by the Chinese government include political, social, economic, religious and educational aspects of daily life for the Tibetan people.

The education system in TAR and its environs are managed by China's Ministry of Education whose initiatives, such as "bilingual education," serve to forcibly assimilate Tibetans.¹⁶⁴ The Chinese government claims that educational institutions in TAR are championing "bilingual education" but, in practice, has mandated that language courses in kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools are taught in Mandarin at the expense of Tibetan language. In fact, it is compulsory for all teachers to be fluent in Mandarin Chinese. As a consequence of this, young Tibetan students may feel unmotivated to learn their traditional language and history not only due to the lack of access to such education, but also because their teachers and classmates speak Mandarin, and their textbooks are written in Mandarin. According to the Endangered Language Alliance,¹⁶⁵ the Tibetan language is considered a language at risk of extinction. Notably, in 2018, the regime declared that institutions that aimed to protect the Tibetan language would be considered illegal and would be considered as "underworld gang crime."¹⁶⁶ In addition, Tibetan history is omitted from the curriculum and is replaced with CCP ideologies. These government policies, therefore, actively phase out Tibetan identity from academic institutions, under the guise of fostering "ethnic mingling."¹⁶⁷

Political indoctrination, referred to as "patriotic education," is one of the most damaging tactics used by the CCP towards Tibetans. The content taught in these sessions erase Tibetan history, shun religion, – including through the denunciation of the Dalai Lama – and demand complete allegiance to the Chinese government. "Patriotic education" was initially forced onto Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns, but has since expanded into broader communities to include the targeting of farmers, entrepreneurs, members of government, and academics. In addition to dictating the curriculum, the Chinese government has

164 *Education in Tibet*, K12 Academics, <https://www.k12academics.com/Education%20Worldwide/education-tibet>.

165 *Voices of the Himalaya: Tibetan*, Endangered Language Alliance, <https://elalliance.org/languages/himalaya/tibetan/>.

166 Sophie Richardson, *In Tibet, it's a Crime to Even Talk About the Value of Mother-Tongue Education*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 15, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/15/tibet-its-crime-even-talk-about-value-mother-tongue-education>.

167 *China's "Bilingual Education" Policy in Tibet: Tibetan-Medium Schooling Under Threat*, Human Rights Watch (Mar. 4, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/03/04/chinas-bilingual-education-policy-tibet/tibetan-medium-schooling-under-threat>.

reportedly even aimed to oversee the minor details of what students are permitted to wear and which food is acceptable to be eaten within classrooms.¹⁶⁸

Children as young as kindergarten are not spared from political indoctrination. According to a report released by the Tibet Advocacy Coalition in 2021, toddlers in kindergartens are required to take part in “military style political education” which includes partaking in flag-raising ceremonies, and even wearing Chinese military uniforms.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, Tibetan children living in rural areas or where the local schools may have been shut down have been sent to boarding schools far away from their communities. Alarmingly, there have also been reports that several students have been forcibly sent to these schools, despite their parents’ protests and pleas.¹⁷⁰ These schools are often located in cities where the population is predominantly Han, in an effort to assimilate the children. The classroom curriculum includes “ideological and political education, which include weekend visits to revolutionary and patriotic sites,” and there are little to no opportunities to embrace their native language.¹⁷¹ This boarding-school scheme is a clear example of the Chinese government specifically targeting the next generation through education, and is evident in the Uyghur Region as well.

Uyghur Region: Chinese Language Promotion



As is the aim with bilingual education in Tibet, the “bilingual” system in the Uyghur Region also seeks to erase local native languages and ensure proficiency in Mandarin.¹⁷² Over the past two decades, the local government has gradually escalated its efforts to make Mandarin Chinese the lingua franca of the region and eliminate the predominant use of the Uyghur language.

The Chinese government aimed to assimilate the Uyghur people through the sinicization of the education curriculum and the creation of joint Han and Uyghur schools since as early as the 1960’s.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ *The next generation: the state of education in Tibet today*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (Sep.15, 1997), <https://tchrd.org/the-next-generation-the-state-of-education-in-tibet-today/>.

¹⁶⁹ *Assaulting Identity: China’s New Coercive Strategies in Tibet*, Tibet Advocacy Coalition, 9 (2021).

¹⁷⁰ Tibetan children in Qinghai being forced into Mandarin language boarding schools, *Tibetan Review* (Sep. 13, 2020), <https://www.tibetan-review.net/tibetan-children-in-qinghai-being-forced-into-mandarin-language-boarding-schools/>.

¹⁷¹ James Leibold (2019) Interior Ethnic Minority Boarding Schools: China’s Bold and Unpredictable Educational Experiment, *Asian Studies Review*, 43:1, 3–15, DOI: 10.1080/10357823.2018.1548572, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/10357823.2018.1548572?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

¹⁷² Darren Byler, *Xinjiang Education Reform and the Eradication of Uyghur-language Books*, *SupChina* (Oct. 2, 2019), <https://supchina.com/2019/10/02/xinjiang-education-reform-and-the-eradication-of-uyghur-language-books/>.

¹⁷³ M.A. Rong, The development of minority education and the practice of bilingual education in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, *4Frontiers of Education in China* 188, 203 (2009).

After the “reform era” of the ‘80s, the government sought to make Mandarin Chinese the default language of the region by expanding the system of joint Han and Uyghur schools. In the 2000’s, the furtherance of bilingual education was consolidated under the “Go West Strategy.”¹⁷⁴ Given the rush of development and the influx of Chinese companies in the 2000’s, a bilingual education that minimized teaching in local languages was justified under the importance of “modernizing” the Uyghur Region and equipping local students for better job prospects.¹⁷⁵

In the past decade, policy efforts have steadily been introduced in stride to move toward a Chinese-only monolingual system. Under a number of school systems in the Uyghur Region, non-Han students are taught and tested solely in Mandarin Chinese.¹⁷⁶ In 2008, the government increased recruitment of “bilingual” teachers who, in actuality, were Han Chinese.¹⁷⁷ By 2017, many counties across the Uyghur Region have implemented Chinese-only language programs, some as early as primary school under the “The Standard Plan for Bilingual Education Curriculum in the Compulsory Education Phase of the Autonomous Region” directive.¹⁷⁸ At one of the most prestigious Uyghur high schools, authorities have also upended the curriculum, replacing Uyghur language instruction with Mandarin Chinese.¹⁷⁹ Former student, Jurat Obul, states that the move is an attempt by the local government to “whitewash [the school’s] importance as an institution of learning for Uyghur language, and culture.”¹⁸⁰ Under this education system, the state has even banned the purchase and use of textbooks that cover Uyghur culture and language.¹⁸¹ In and out of the classroom, it is difficult for children to freely learn their native tongue and history.

The Chinese government also strives to block the transmission of Uyghur language and culture by physically separating children from their families and communities through a state-funded “boarding school” program that coerces Uyghur students into Chinese-speaking environments.¹⁸² This practice started in the early 2000’s when the Chinese government established the Xinjiang Class, a program that pays for middle school students from Xinjiang – who are mostly ethnic Uyghur – to attend school in predominantly Han populated cities in eastern China.¹⁸³ In this program, students are sent away from their homes and only allowed to visit on the weekends.¹⁸⁴ Today, nearly all schools above the eighth grade have been converted to residential boarding schools, and in 2017, the government began converting many elementary schools and nurseries into boarding schools as well.¹⁸⁵ This means that children as young as age 3

174 *Id.*

175 Sonika Gupta and Veena Ramachandran, *Bilingual Education in Xinjiang in the Post-2009 Period*, 52*China Report* 306, 309 (2016), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310471668>.

176 *Id.*

177 *Xinjiang Authorities Recruit More Teachers for Mandarin-Focused ‘Bilingual’ Education*, Congressional Executive Commission on China (Dec. 20, 2008), <https://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/xinjiang-authorities-recruit-more-teachers-for-mandarin-focused>.

178 Byler, *supra* note 172.

179 *Xinjiang Authorities Institute Mandarin-Only Instruction at Prominent Uyghur High School*, Radio Free Asia (Jun. 12, 2020), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/school-06122020180620.html>.

180 *Id.*

181 Emily Feng, *China Targets Muslim Scholars And Writers With Increasingly Harsh Restrictions*, NPR (Nov. 21, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/21/932169863/china-targets-muslim-scholars-and-writers-with-increasingly-harsh-restrictions>.

182 Byler, *supra* note 172.

183 Timothy Grose, *The Xinjiang Class: Education, Integration, and the Uyghurs*, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*.

184 Byler, *supra* note 172.

185 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33.

can be quasi-detained in Mandarin speaking boarding schools and are unable to be cared for at home. By controlling what children learn through the school system, the government seeks to diminish the influence of local languages that dominate settings outside the classroom. This is also one of the goals of educational interference in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: Looming Guidelines and Bans



Though interference with Hong Kong's education system emerged much later than in Tibet and the Uyghur Region, the strategies employed by the state also consist of promoting Mandarin Chinese and discouraging discussions on material deemed sensitive to the CCP.

Shortly after the handover, Mandarin Chinese was incorporated into the core curriculum across schools in the city. Such a move indicated the beginnings of the government's intent to slowly phase out the local language, Cantonese.¹⁸⁶ The Education Bureau of the local government explicitly stated their long-term plans to implement Chinese – which they referred to as “the mother tongue” – officially in classrooms, under the guise of achieving a “biliterate... and trilingual” language environment to foster “better cognitive and academic development.”¹⁸⁷

Since the early 2000's, the Hong Kong government has also attempted to implement a “national education” curriculum that entails significant political indoctrination for primary and secondary schools. In 2012, for example, the government proposed the implementation of a curriculum to which students, parents, and teachers jointly protested against. They were concerned that the curriculum contained materials that praised China's one-party system and CCP leaders, and were alarmed that the proposal suggested that students should self-censor, asking them to “speak cautiously.”¹⁸⁸ As a result of sustained public pressure and peaceful demonstrations, which were only possible under the pre-national-security law atmosphere, the government eventually withdrew the proposal.

¹⁸⁶ Juliana Liu, *Cantonese v Mandarin: When Hong Kong languages get political*, BBC (Jun. 29, 2017), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-40406429>.

¹⁸⁷ [Archive] *Medium of Instruction, Education Bureau* --The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Sep. 1997), <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/applicable-to-secondary/moi/guidance-index.html>.

¹⁸⁸ *Hong Kong Fears Pro-China Brainwashing in Education*, The Associated Press (Sep. 7, 2012), <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/hong-kong-fears-pro-china-brainwashing-in-education-1.1296013>.

However, interference with the education system continued after the implementation of the national security law. Following the law's passage, the Hong Kong Education Bureau issued guidelines to schools regarding national security, and banned on-campus "political activities," as well as the expression of political opinions.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the guidelines stressed the importance of learning about the national security law, despite its overbroad and abusive nature. As a consequence of this, the national security law has had a chilling effect on freedom of expression in schools. For example, four students were arrested based on their social media posts,¹⁹⁰ while a teacher was disqualified for showing a documentary about a pro-independence activist in class.¹⁹¹

In addition, the national education program omits historical events from the curriculum and discourages teachers from discussing them, similar to what has been exhibited in Tibet and the Uyghur Region. For example, educators have been warned against discussing the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, and following the 2014 Umbrella Movement, passages relating to Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi were removed from textbooks. Many textbooks used in schools to teach liberal studies are undergoing a voluntary screening process, which education authorities say will eventually become mandatory.¹⁹² Textbook makers have been told to remove "separation of powers" as a feature of the government, emphasize the legal consequences individuals may face as a result of engaging in civil disobedience, and erase illustrations of anti-government protesters holding up political slogans and criticism of the Chinese government.¹⁹³ The government is editing educational materials to warn people from a young age that dissent against the government will not be tolerated.

189 國家安全：學校具體措施 [National Security: Specific Measures for Schools], Education Bureau - The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, <https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/sch-admin/national-security/specific-measures.pdf>.

190 *Hong Kong: National Security Arrests Over Social Media Posts Violate Freedom of Expression*, Amnesty International (July 30, 2020), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/07/hong-kong-national-security-arrests-over-social-media-posts-violate-freedom-of-expression/>.

191 *Teacher Disqualified for 'Promoting Hong Kong Independence'*, BBC News (Oct 6, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54431729>.

192 Chan Ho-Him, *Hong Kong publishers make changes to Liberal Studies textbooks after voluntary review*, South China Morning Post (Aug. 18, 2020), <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3097873/hong-kong-publishers-make-changes-liberal-studies>.

193 *Id.*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Tactics of Cultural Suppression Used in Each Region

	TIBET	UYGHUR REGION	HONG KONG
Han settler migration	X	X	→ The majority of Hongkongers are ethnically Han. However, it is important to note that there are major linguistic and cultural differences between Hongkongers and Mainland Han Chinese.
Family separation programs		X	
“Boarding school” system in predominantly Han cities	X	X	
Promotion of intermarriage with Han majority	X	X	
Erasure of local languages education	X	X	X
Promotion of Mandarin Chinese in schools, curriculum, books	X	X	X
Recruitment of Chinese-speaking teachers	X	X	X
Censorship on campuses, including in teaching materials and through self-censorship	→ Omitting Tibetan nationalism, history, religion, and language from textbooks and curriculum	→ Bannings books in the Uyghur language that include local stories and traditions	→ Banning pro-independence materials → Omitting major political events → Banning political activism on campuses → Disqualifying teachers who use censored materials

RELIGIOUS REPRESSION



Religion can be a philosophy, a lifestyle, and a social institution that distinctively marks a group of people as different from others. To many, religion is a way of life and the bedrock of their society but, to the Chinese government, religion is regarded as a threat to unity and symbolizes disloyalty to the CCP.

The systematic destruction of religious institutions reduces the power they have as spaces for fostering a sense of community and creating networks of social support. The incessant policing of everyday life ensures that people are unable to practice their religion in even the most intimate and private settings. According to the CCP, to disfigure every element of a religion is to take away from its legitimacy and assert the primacy of the party. Their message is clear: "your religion cannot provide for you the way the party can."

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The CCP uses particularly repressive tactics to breakdown the links between Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan heritage, and Islam and Uyghur identity. In comparison, though the region has a siz-

able Christian and Catholic community, religion is not viewed as integral to the Hong Konger identity, and will therefore not be addressed in this section of the report.

Systematic Destruction of Religious Institutions

Tibet: Dismantling of Religious Establishments

Tibetan Buddhist monasteries are not only an important place of worship, but also a central place for gatherings. In addition to functioning as an institution for religious practice, they also serve as community centers, libraries, schools, and cultural hubs. Many monks, community leaders, and other Tibetan people often congregate at monasteries to organize initiatives to counter the Chinese government's encroachment.

Because of the influence that Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have in Tibetan communities, the Chinese government actively sought to destroy these institutions in the late 1940's and into the 1950's and intensified its efforts after the 1959 Tibetan Uprising Day and into the Cultural Revolution.¹⁹⁴ Hundreds, if not thousands, of monasteries have been subject to the Chinese government's tightened control under the guise of "national security and enduring peace and stability."¹⁹⁵ In addition to demolishing monasteries, shrines, and temples, other aspects of Tibetan culture and religion such as prayer flags, ancient art, statues, sacred texts, and photographs of the Dalai Lama were ruined. Through "struggle sessions," public humiliation,¹⁹⁶ and the expansive system of spying on neighbors and loved ones that was common during the Cultural Revolution, anyone who was caught practicing religious rituals or displaying symbols of Tibetan Buddhism were violently suppressed, and even publicly executed.¹⁹⁷

After the decade-long Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government became slightly more accepting of religion under Deng Xiaoping's leadership in order to align with his vision for achieving opening and reform.¹⁹⁸ In stark contrast to Mao's efforts to prohibit and eradicate religion, Deng encouraged "greater

¹⁹⁴ Donald S. Jr., Lopez, *The Monastery as a Medium of Tibetan Culture*, Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine (March 1988), <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/monastery-medium-tibetan-culture>.

¹⁹⁵ Xi Focus: Xi Stresses Building New Modern Socialist Tibet, Xinhua News (Aug. 29, 2020), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-08/29/c_139327765.htm.

¹⁹⁶ Tsering Woeser, Robert Barnett, and Susan Chen, *Lhasa in the Cultural Revolution: A Photo Essay*, Los Angeles Review of Books China Channel (Nov. 13, 2020), <https://chinachannel.org/2020/11/13/forbidden-memory-photos/>.

¹⁹⁷ Dan Southerland, *After 50 years, Tibetans Recall the Cultural Revolution*, Radio Free Asia (Aug. 9, 2016), <https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/tibet-cultrev-08092016145355.html>

¹⁹⁸ The Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966 to 1976.

tolerance... and even state support for temple reconstruction."¹⁹⁹ These reforms, however, did not last and the Chinese government once again clamped down on Tibetans after a series of pro-independence protests in 1987.

Since then, the Chinese government's control over monasteries has intensified, including through an uptick of forced patriotic indoctrination, extreme surveillance, and heavy police presence within these institutions.²⁰⁰ The United Front Work Department (UFWD)²⁰¹ of the Chinese government spearheaded many of these initiatives, claiming that monasteries were "breeding grounds for activism."²⁰² They imposed strict regulations, allowing the government to have complete oversight and control over the management and records of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and other places of worship. These restrictions include limiting the number of monks and nuns to perform rituals,²⁰³ and requiring large events that are held in monasteries to first seek approval from the UFWD.²⁰⁴ Under the 1996 "Strike Hard" campaign, the Chinese government doubled down on removing and prohibiting the possession of photographs of the Dalai Lama in monasteries and even in private homes.²⁰⁵ Until this day, those found in possession of a photo of the Dalai Lama, or any text in relation to him, are subject to severe punishment, including arbitrary arrest and torture.²⁰⁶

Additionally, many monasteries and religious institutions have been appropriated by the Chinese government for the purpose of tourism. Trip packages and tours are only legally allowed to be conducted by travel agencies who are registered with the China National Tourism and Tibet Tourism Bureau.²⁰⁷ As such, Han Chinese settlers and loyalists to the party in Tibet benefit and profit the most from the region's tourism. Furthermore, travelers to the region are only permitted access to trip packages and tours whose experiences and narratives are approved by the Chinese government. Alarming, it has been reported that travelers who visit select religious institutions for tourist purposes are able to stay for "twice as long" in comparison to those who frequent the institutions for religious purposes.²⁰⁸ The Chinese government whitewashes its crimes by transforming these sacred monasteries and temples into financial opportunities that also amplify their own rhetoric.

199 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 28.

200 Sarah Cook, *Tibetan Buddhism: Religious Freedom in China*, Freedom House (2017), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/2017/battle-china-spirit-tibetan-buddhism-religious-freedom>.

201 The United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the Chinese government is dedicated to specifically conducting influence operations both within and outside the country. Their work includes the oversight of ethnic groups and religious affairs, as well as the development and dissemination of propaganda.

202 Barbara Demick, *Eat the Buddha*, Random House, 144 (2020).

203 *Tibetan Monks: A Controlled Life*, BBC News (Mar. 20, 2008), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7307495.stm>.

204 *2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: China - Tibet*, United States Department of State: Office of International Religious Freedom, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/china/tibet/>.

205 Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, *supra* note 46.

206 *March 10th 2019: 60th Anniversary of Tibetan Uprising Day*, Tibetan Nuns Project, <https://tnp.org/tag/tibetan-womens-uprising/>.

207 A Gorgeous Trip To Tibet With Tibetan Travel Agency, Tibet Shambhala Adventure, <https://shambhala-adventure.com/tibetan-travel-agency-tibet-travel-agent/>.

208 *China Cuts Hours for Tibetan Buddhists at Lhasa's Jokhang Temple to Half That of Tourists*, Radio Free Asia (May 18, 2021), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/hours-05182021154715.html>.

These ubiquitous regulations in Tibet are similar to what has unfolded in the Uyghur Region, and have had a tremendous impact on fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of association, freedom of thought and religion, freedom of speech and expression, as well as freedom from interference and coercion in matters of conscience.

Uyghur Region: The Ruination of Religious Infrastructure



The Uyghur people are a largely Muslim ethnic minority whose religion is an intrinsic part of their cultural identity as well as everyday life. The Chinese government seeks to incapacitate Islamic institutions that are fundamental to Uyghur life by physically reducing the visibility of Islam's influence in the region.

In recent years, countless historic shrines, mosques, and other sacred sites have been physically demolished or gravely altered. They have been rendered unusable and unrecognizable to the public. According to satellite imagery, approximately 16,000 mosques – 65% of the region's total – have been destroyed or damaged since 2017.²⁰⁹ In addition to the targeting of mosques, shrines and pilgrimage routes have also been demolished or substantially altered.²¹⁰ For example, at cemeteries, tombstones with Perso-Arabic script were destroyed so that people couldn't recognize their family member's burial site. Meanwhile, in an increasing effort to prevent Uyghur people from accessing their religious sites, many Han tourism companies – in particular, ones that manage visits to local shrines and religious sites – began instituting an entrance fee which the majority of local citizens cannot afford.²¹¹ These entrance fees, which are prohibitively high, have effectively hindered Uyghur people from being able to physically access their own places of worship. The Chinese government exploits the socioeconomic gap between Han migrants or tourists and local Uyghur residents to disrupt religious practices.

209 Nathan Ruser, Dr. James Leibold, Kelsey Munro, & Tilla Hoja, *Cultural Erasure*, Australian Policy Institute (Sep. 24, 2020), <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/cultural-erasure>.

210 *Id.*

211 Chris Buckley & Austin Ramzy, *China Is Erasing Mosques and Precious Shrines in Xinjiang*, New York Times (Sep. 25, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/25/world/asia/xinjiang-china-religious-site.html>.



The hypervisibility of the Chinese government in the Uyghur Region.

Additionally, the CCP also seeks to amplify the hypervisibility of the Chinese government in the region in both places of worship and daily life. Many mosques and other religious institutions are required to fly the Chinese flag.²¹² In one report, officials positioned the flag towards the city of Mecca, implying that congregants are praying to the Chinese flag.²¹³ This action was regarded by many Uyghur Muslims as deeply humiliating.²¹⁴ Moreover, architectural components deemed to be “un-Chinese” such as domes and minarets have been removed from many religious buildings, while others

have been commercialized and turned into bars or commercial shopping centers.²¹⁵ By destroying religious symbols or buildings altogether, the government is erasing important markers of heritage or sites of gathering. It also displaces religious communities who are no longer able to congregate for prayer or other religious purposes. To destroy or alter the physical infrastructure of religious institutions is to effectively displace the history and identity of the Uyghur people embedded into those physical structures. It is the literal manifestation of a strategy used to eradicate the quintessential pillars of the Uyghur community.

The Chinese government also uses less tangible methods to disrupt religious practices, including doctrinal manipulation. It interferes with traditions and customs integral to Tibetan Buddhism and Islam in order to elevate party ideology.

²¹² Yu Ning, *Concept of nation must be enhanced in religious people*, Global Times (Aug. 8, 2018), <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1113427.shtml>.

²¹³ Massoud Hayoun, *Uyghurs at Xinjiang mosque have to face China flag when praying*, Al Jazeera (Sep. 18, 2013), <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/9/18/uyghurs-bow-downtochineseflagatxinjiangmosque.html>.

²¹⁴ Cook, *supra* note 25 at 70.

²¹⁵ Buckley & Ramzy, *supra* note 211.

Doctrinal Manipulation

Tibet: Disruption of Religious Protocols and Reincarnations

The Chinese government aims to undermine Tibetan Buddhism by not only the physical destruction of sites and texts, but by also severely interfering with the religion's reincarnation cycles. By disrupting this sacred process and traditional belief, the Chinese government is sending a clear signal that they are determined to stamp out any and all inkling of Tibetan Buddhism.

While the Dalai Lama acts as the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, the Panchen Lama, the second highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism, serves as a leading religious mentor. In the reincarnation cycles of Ti-

betan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama identifies the next Panchen Lama, who would then discover the next Dalai Lama, and so forth. To date, there have been fourteen Dalai Lamas and eleven Panchen Lamas; The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, identified the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, on May 14, 1995.²¹⁶



The 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was kidnapped on May 17, 1995. He has not been seen since.

To express their utmost opposition toward Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan heritage, the Chinese government abducted Gedhun Choekyi Nyima – who was only six years old at the time – and his family members, just days after he was identified by the Dalai Lama. At the time of his kidnapping on May 17, 1995, he was considered “the world’s youngest political prisoner.”²¹⁷ He and his family members have not been seen since. At present, the Chinese government claims that they took Gedhun Choekyi Nyima to protect him from “separatists,” and that he is currently living safely in China. However, this has not been able to be verified.

²¹⁶ Gedhun Choekyi Nyima – The Panchen Lama, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, <https://www.uscifr.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/current-rpocs/gedhun-choekyi-nyima-panchen-lama>.

²¹⁷ Senate Hearing 106–266, [Challenges Facing the Next U.S. Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China -- \(Includes Nomination Heading of Adm. Joseph W. Prueher\)](#), Hearings before the Committee of Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Sixth Congress, First Session, Oct 27–29, 1999.

Shortly after the abduction of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Chinese government announced that they had selected Gyancaïn Norbu, a young Buddhist who was born to Communist Party members – and himself a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC),²¹⁸ an advisory body affiliated with the UFDW – as the 11th Panchen Lama.²¹⁹ At first, Gyancaïn was largely out of public view, but he has gradually started to participate in more public events. In fact, the Chinese government often parades Gyancaïn around CCP gatherings, religious social events, and monasteries so that they can push their own narrative and hand-picked successor onto the Tibetan community.²²⁰ In addition to being the Beijing-approved Panchen Lama, Gyancaïn was also selected to serve as the vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, a government-approved organization under the UFDW. As the vice president of this association, he is known to echo the same rhetoric and ideology of the CCP, and regularly states that Buddhism must “uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China.”²²¹ He is therefore very unpopular among many Tibetans, who often refer to him as “the Chinese Panchen.”²²²

In 2007, the Chinese government’s State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA)²²³ passed a new law called “Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism.”²²⁴ The legislation makes clear that all reincarnations must adhere to principles of “unification of the state,” and undergo several approval processes.²²⁵ In essence, the CCP uses the law to exert complete control over the reincarnation process which, in turn, helps them to tighten their grip over Tibetans. The current Dalai Lama has publicly denounced this legislation and the regime’s authoritarian interference with Tibetan religious affairs, highlighting how the Chinese government’s efforts are aimed “to eradicate our Tibetan cultural traditions.”²²⁶

The tampering in Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations is a reflection of how the Chinese government perceives the role of religion in society and more specifically, about the Dalai Lama as a leadership figure. The Dalai Lama’s positive influence among the Tibetan people is viewed as a threat to the party, which has – on multiple occasions – referred to him as a “wolf in monk’s robes” and “a secessionist chief.”²²⁷ The Chinese government’s disruption of the reincarnation process, as well as its refusal to reveal the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama have sparked international outcry from foreign governments,

218 Apa Lhamo, *Why the Chinese Communist Party Sees Tibetan Monks as ‘Troublemakers’*, The Diplomat (Mar. 10, 2021), <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/why-the-chinese-communist-party-sees-tibetan-monks-as-troublemakers/>.

219 *China urged to release Panchen Lama after 20 years*, BBC News (May 17, 2015), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-32771242>.

220 Tashi Wangchuk, Tenzin Dickyi, and Richard Finney, *China’s Panchen Lama Tours Tibet to Push Chinese government Agenda, ‘Signification’ of Buddhism*, Radio Free Asia (Oct. 29, 2020), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/panchen-10292020164639.html>.

221 Jaime Flor Cruz, *China’s Panchen Lama Gets High Profile*, CNN World (Mar. 3, 2010), <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/03/03/china.tibet/index.html>.

222 ‘Chinese’ Panchen Lama Appears on TV, BBC News (Feb. 10, 2002), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1812130.stm>.

223 The State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) was a department under the Chinese government that was specifically in charge of the oversight of all religious affairs in the country. In 2018, SARA and its mandate officially was absorbed under the UFDW.

224 *Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism (ICT Translation)*, Congressional Executive Commission on China (July 18, 2007), <https://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/measures-on-the-management-of-the-reincarnation-of-living-buddhas-in-0>.

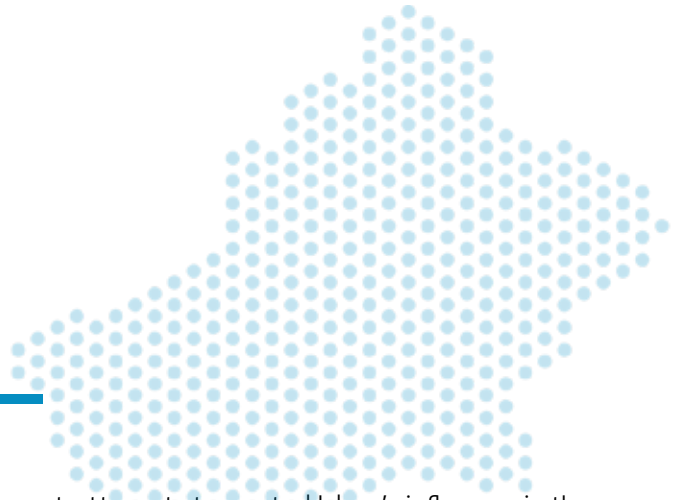
225 国家宗教事务局令- 第5号 [*The State Administration of Religious Affairs*], 中华人民共和国中央人民政府 [The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China] (July 23, 2007), http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2008/content_923053.htm.

226 *Reincarnation*, His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, <https://www.dalailama.com/messages/retirement-and-reincarnation/reincarnation>.

227 Xinhua, *Dalai Lama ‘Wolf in Monk’s Robes’: Official*, China Daily (Mar. 7, 2011), https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-03/07/content_12131293.htm.

including members of the European Parliament,²²⁸ the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom,²²⁹ the chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) Congressman Jim McGovern,²³⁰ and the former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo;²³¹ civil society organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International; and concerned global citizens. The Chinese government's actions are clear violations of religious freedom, freedom of thought and conscience, and Article 9 of the UDHR which states "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile."²³² They stand as strong indications of how the Chinese government continues to disrespect and sabotage the culture and heritage of the Tibetan people.

Uyghur Region: Appropriating Islamic Texts



By distorting religious doctrine, the Chinese government attempts to control Islam's influence in the region in order to have it strictly align with the CCP's values. Organizational bodies, including but not limited to the Islamic Association of China (IAC) and the SARA, are enlisted to parse through Islamic law and tease out elements that can be "repurposed" to justify the Chinese government's rule and give grounds for a sinocentric society.²³³ This initiative places particular emphasis on the Uyghur translation of the Quran, highlighting passages that are congruent with state rhetoric.²³⁴ On top of that, the CCP announced in November 2019 efforts to rewrite the Quran in its entirety to better reflect "socialist values."²³⁵ Using versions of the Quran that have not been approved by the CCP can be cause for arrest.²³⁶ The government has allegedly also disseminated compilations of the state-sanctioned Islamic teachings to every mosque in the Uyghur Region.²³⁷

228 David Thomas, *Over 30 MPs from Belgium, Scotland, and EP join global call for the release of Panchen Lama of Tibet*, The Tibet Post (May 18, 2020), <https://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/international/6774-over-30-mps-from-belgium-scotland-and-ep-join-global-call-for-the-release-of-panchen-lama-of-tibet>.

229 USCIRF Calls for Release of the Panchen Lama, The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (April 24, 2020), <https://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscirf-calls-release-panchen-lama>.

230 McGovern Statement on the Panchen Lama's 30th Birthday, House Representative Jim McGovern (April 25, 2019), <https://mcgovern.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398328>.

231 CTA President welcomes US Secretary of State's strong call for Panchen Lama's release, Central Tibetan Administration, <https://tibet.net/us-secretary-of-state-to-china-reveal-the-panchen-lamas-whereabouts-immediately/>

232 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

233 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 77.

234 *Id.*

235 Sebastien Falletti, *Xi Jinping veut réécrire la Bible pour l'adapter à la ligne du Parti communiste [Xi Jinping wants to rewrite the Bible to adapt it along Communist Party lines]*, Le Figaro (Dec. 22, 2019), <https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/xi-jinping-veut-reecire-la-bible-pour-l-adapter-a-la-ligne-du-parti-communiste-20191222>.

236 Christian Shepherd, *Fear and oppression in Xinjiang: China's war on Uighur Culture*, Financial Times (Sep. 12, 2019), <https://www.ft.com/content/48508182-d426-11e9-8367-807ebd53ab77>.

237 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 77.

The Chinese government also attempts to control the religion by presiding over the recruitment, training, and appointment of important religious leaders. In order to become a leader of a mosque or imam, students can only study at one of 10 state-approved Islamic institutes where the curriculum is filled with political education and Marxist theory.²³⁸ Furthermore, in the Uyghur Region, imams are policed by security personnel and undercover informants, and constantly risk dismissal, fines, and imprisonment if suspected of violating a myriad of regulations and directives.²³⁹ According to a new report published by the Uyghur Human Rights Project, since 2014, 1,046 imams and other religious figures have been detained for fulfilling basic duties such as leading prayer circles or refusing to burn religious texts.²⁴⁰

The Chinese government's effort to repress freedom of religion does not stop at the systemic level. The government continues to implement policies that reshape the daily lives of Tibetans and Uyghurs.

The Disruption of Daily Life

Tibet: Tightening Religious Expression



The clamp down on religious expression has been perpetrated through political re-education classes, and restrictions on worshipping and other religious practices. The Chinese government's weaponization of digital surveillance has also played a key role in the intensification.²⁴¹ Openly venerating the Dalai Lama or calling for the release of the Panchen Lama are considered crimes.²⁴² Monks, nuns, community leaders, and all supporters are forced to denounce these spiritual figures, or risk imprisonment under the government's "nationwide anti-organized crime program."²⁴³ Under this program, anyone caught with any pictures of the Dalai Lama or caught worshipping and supporting him are either detained, sent to political re-education classes, interrogated, or even tortured.

²³⁸ *Id.*

²³⁹ *Id.*

²⁴⁰ *Islam Dispossessed: China's Persecution of Uyghur Imams and Religious Figures*, Uyghur Human Rights Project (May 13, 2021), https://uhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Islam-Dispossessed_2021-05-15.pdf.

²⁴¹ Refer to "Surveillance in an Orwellian Society: Online Surveillance" in the report

²⁴² *Tibetan Woman Jailed in Protest Over Panchen Lama is Released in Failing Health*, Radio Free Asia (Aug. 18, 2020), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/released-08182020164629.html>.

²⁴³ *2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: China—Tibet*, United States Department of State, Office of International Religious Freedom (May 12, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/china/tibet/>.

There have been countless people – not only religious figures, but also poets, intellectuals, writers, and more – who have been punished simply for exercising their freedoms of expression and religion. For example, Tibetan monk and prominent scholar Gō Sherab Gyatso was detained more than once for expressing support of and owning a picture of the Dalai Lama, and for speaking up about the Chinese government's abuses and his desire for freedom.²⁴⁴ Gangbu Yudrum, a political activist, was detained in 2008 for publicly calling for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet.²⁴⁵ He has since been arrested multiple times again, in 2012 and 2021, because of his ongoing activism.²⁴⁶

Ever since Xi rose to power, the CCP's control over religious institutions and religious expression has escalated in an unprecedented manner to align with "Xi Jinping Thought" and his vision of the "Chinese Dream." In fact, it has been reported that all photos of the Dalai Lama in temples, private homes, and even public areas have been replaced with photos of Xi.²⁴⁷

Curfews and Bans on Public Gatherings

The Chinese government has labeled important events – including the peaceful demonstrations of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising, the pro-independence protests of 1987, the March 2008 rallies, the Dalai Lama's birthday, Tibetan New Year (Losar), and various CCP high-level political gatherings, among others²⁴⁸ – to be "sensitive anniversaries and events."²⁴⁹ As such, the strict regulations that are in place become even harsher leading up to these events, where public gatherings are banned or subject to imposed curfews. Extra security and roadblocks are set up, and government intimidation, harassment, and surveillance intensifies. Events that are able to take place are subject to significant monitoring and may be forced to shut down without notice should the Chinese security forces believe that the gathering has gotten too big or has showcased any sign of Tibetan nationalism.²⁵⁰ These bans and security measures are yet another tactic used by the government to tightly control the people of Tibet, providing no space for civil society to openly and freely engage in cultural, religious, and social affairs.

244 Chinese Authorities Detain Tibetan Educator and Author in Sichuan Capital, Radio Free Asia (Apr. 5, 2021), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/detention-04052021184855.html>.

245 China's Arrest of Tibetan Writers Blocks Dissenting Views: Rights Group, Radio Free Asia (Apr. 22, 2021), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/views-04222021163150.html>.

246 Chinese Police Arrest Six Prominent Tibetans in Kardze, Radio Free Asia (Apr. 14, 2021), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/arrest-04142021181927.html>.

247 Sam McNeil, *China Offers Glimpse of Tibetan Life Without the Dalai Lama*, Associated Press News (June 16, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/dalai-lama-tibet-china-europe-business-ee607f3daa747b03414c972541251306>.

248 *Access Denied: New US Legislation, The Quest For Reciprocity In Europe And The Lockdown In Tibet*, International Campaign for Tibet (June 15, 2020), <https://savetibet.org/access-denied-new-us-legislation-the-quest-for-reciprocity-in-europe-and-the-lockdown-in-tibet/>.

249 *China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) 2019 Human Rights Report*, United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (2019), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CHINA-INCLUSIVE-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>.

250 Sarah Cook, *Tibetan Buddhism: Religious Freedom in China*, Freedom House (2017), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/2017/battle-china-spirit-tibetan-buddhism-religious-freedom>.

Due to the Chinese government's ongoing lack of transparency and intense control over the entire country, curfews and other restrictions may be announced on "short notice" at any time.²⁵¹ Such an environment deepens the sense of fear among society.

Uyghur Region: Restricting Religious Behavior in Everyday Life



The minutiae of daily life in the Uyghur Region, ranging from religious attire to spiritual practices, is under the scrutiny and regulation of the government. The Chinese government codified into law many of these common practices that aim to restrict and punish religious behavior in daily life. In 2015, for example, the local government passed the Xinjiang Religious Affairs Regulations which confine religious activity to

The minutiae of daily life in the Uyghur region, ranging from religious attire to spiritual practices, is under the scrutiny and regulation of the government.

sanctioned realms and only permit religious expression in private spaces, effectively erasing religious practices from public life.²⁵² The regulations stipulate that the possession of "undesirable items" such as prayer rugs and the Quran can constitute "extremist behavior."²⁵³

Under the 2014 "Strike Hard" campaign, the government is attempting to remove any religious motifs that have the potential to inspire "religious extremism." This can include commonplace items such as names and clothes. For example, Uyghur babies who have Islamic or religious names are

barred from registering in the "hukou" household registration system through which healthcare and education is accessed.²⁵⁴

251 *China Travel Advisory*, United States Department of States• Bureau of Consular Affairs (June 16, 2021), <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/china-travel-advisory.html>.

252 Edward Wong, *Wary of Islam, China Tightens a Vise of Rules*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 18, 2008), https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/19/world/asia/19xinjiang.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

253 Ben Mauk, *Inside Xinjiang's Prison State*, The New Yorker (Feb. 26, 2021), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/a-reporter-at-large/china-xinjiang-prison-state-uighur-detention-camps-prisoner-testimony>.

254 *China Bans 'Extreme' Islamic Baby Names Among Xinjiang's Uyghurs*, Radio Free Asia (April 20, 2016) <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/names-04202017093324.html>.

In a similar vein, physical appearance is also systematically controlled through the regulation of communal institutions and the implementation of economic incentives. Public places, such as hospitals, libraries, and banks can explicitly deny service to Uyghur women who wear veils or men who grow long beards because they are considered by the state to have connotations that “incite religious extremism.”²⁵⁵ Some social welfare payments have even stipulated that recipients must sign pledges not to wear veils prior to receiving money.²⁵⁶ By exploiting the economic inequalities of the region, the government has created an environment where it is not only unsafe, but also expensive to be Muslim.

In addition to assimilating the Uyghurs by standardizing physical appearance, the government also heavily interferes with key religious practices from daily rituals to large holidays. Per the Xinjiang Religious Affairs Regulations, religious activities can only take place in registered venues, and practice in government offices, public schools, businesses, and “other places” is strictly prohibited.²⁵⁷ During the holy month of Ramadan, which entails fasting from sunrise to sunset, there are accounts of students being forced to eat in front of their teachers and blocked from attending prayers.²⁵⁸ Civil servants and teachers have reportedly been forced to sign pledges ensuring that they have not been fasting.²⁵⁹ The local Chinese government has even instituted programs that require Uyghurs to physically exert themselves in order to deter them from fasting.²⁶⁰ The Chinese government also controls how the Uyghur Muslims make their required religious pilgrimage to Mecca by running government-operated tours or seizing passports altogether. No part of Islam, from that which is most sacred to the most ordinary, is off limits from government intrusion. The Chinese government is creating an environment so inhospitable to the Muslims that neither the Uyghurs of today nor the future are able to maintain their religious faith.

Besides increased scrutiny and regulations, the “Strike Hard” campaign also gave the local government authorization to arrest Uyghurs for everyday activities critical to their religious practice. According to internal documents, police can arrest Uyghurs without substantial justification. Uyghurs can be arrested for committing activities as banal as group prayer, public dancing, and reading scriptures.²⁶¹ The large waves of detentions were in large part driven by quotas given to police, forcing them to arbitrarily arrest scores of people who have otherwise committed no crime.²⁶²

On top of punishing the Uyghur people from living their life, the Chinese government hopes to lure Uyghur children away from their religion.

255 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 71.

256 *Id.* at 78.

257 Wong, *supra* note 252.

258 Emily Rauhala, China Bans Ramadan Fasting for Officials, Students in Restive Northwest, Time (Jul.3, 2014), <https://time.com/2952833/china-bans-ramadan-fasting-for-officials-students-in-restive-northwest/>.

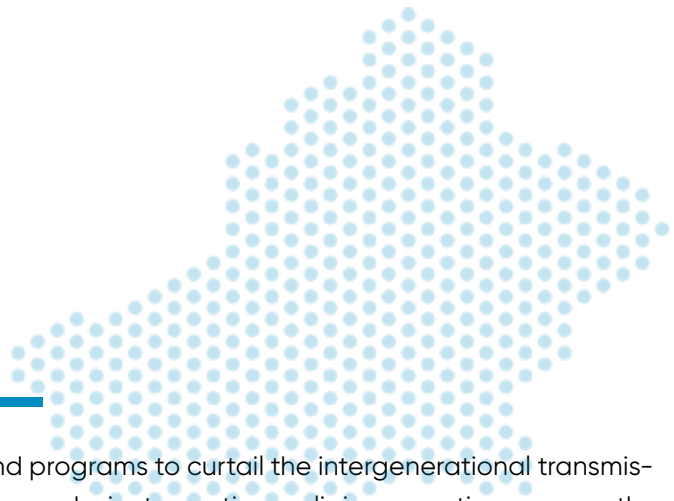
259 China bans Xinjiang officials from observing Ramadan fast, BBC (Jul. 2, 2014), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-28123267>.

260 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 71.

261 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 71.

262 *Id.* at 74.

Reducing the Religiosity Among Youth



The Chinese government has implemented laws and programs to curtail the intergenerational transmission of religion. The programs are designed to reduce a desire to continue religious practices among the youth to make certain that the religious and cultural identity of the Uyghur people can not continue as is.

These invasive regulations aim to sever children's ties from their culture and family. At school, children are heavily supervised to ensure that they do not participate in religious activities.²⁶³ In addition, atheism is promoted in school textbooks to dilute religiosity among youth.²⁶⁴ Just as religious leaders are meticulously screened for party loyalty, community leaders are also vetted for religious piety. Adults and educators who spend time with children are thoroughly vetted to ensure that devout believers do not become teachers or professors who may influence the students.²⁶⁵ The government has even stepped in to dictate how parents can or can not raise their children. In 2016, new education rules stated that parents and guardians could not "organise, lure or force minors into attending religious activities" nor could they force their children to wear "extremist" clothing, a term that connotes traditional Uyghur clothing.²⁶⁶ The goal of these measures is to limit children's exposure to Islam in order to weaken their sense of belonging to the Uyghur people.

The government also purposely promotes habits that are restricted in the Muslim faith.²⁶⁷ For example, the Uyghur government has worked to boost the use of alcohol and cigarettes, substances traditionally forbidden for Muslims, among children. While seemingly unrelated, a local Chinese government cadre admitted that cigarettes and alcohol are purposely paired with glossy advertisements and "eye-catching displays" to tempt Uyghur children who have quit smoking and drinking due to their Muslim faith. In June 2015, a beer festival and drinking competition took place in southern Xinjiang, which the state media proudly admitted was an attempt to "squeeze the space for illegal religious promotion."²⁶⁸

263 Chelsey Zhu, Constantly Watched But Nearly Invisible, *The Daily Pennsylvanian* (Sep. 30, 2020), <https://www.34st.com/article/2020/09/uyghur-college-students-xinjiang-china-internment-camps>.

264 Lin Yi, *A failure in 'designed citizenship': A case study in a minority-Han merger school in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*, *17Japanese Journal of Political Science* 22, 29 (2016).

265 Cook, *supra* note 25.

266 *China targets parents in new religion rules for Xinjiang*, *Reuters* (Oct.11, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang/china-targets-parents-in-new-religion-rules-for-xinjiang-idUSKCN12C0A6>.

267 Simon Denyer, *China orders Muslim shopkeepers to sell alcohol, cigarettes, to 'weaken' Islam*, *The Washington Post* (May 5, 2015), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/05/05/china-orders-muslim-shopkeepers-to-sell-alcohol-cigarettes-to-weaken-islam/>.

268 *Exiles angered as China holds beer festival in Muslim county*, *Reuters* (Jun 22, 2015), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ramadan-china-idUSKBNOP20L620150622>.

From explicit legislation to clever market schemes, the Chinese government has an extensive series of stratagems to undermine religion’s authority in Tibetan and Uyghur society.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Tactics of Religious Repression Used in Tibet and the Uyghur Region

	TIBET	UYGHUR REGION
Religious sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appropriating for tourism → Heavy policing of religious sites → Limiting worshippers’ access to monasteries and temples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Destroying mosques and shrines → Heavy policing of religious sites → Increasing entrance fees to prevent locals from entering often
Symbols of religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Banning prayer flags, ancient art, statues, and sacred texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Replacing flag flying toward Mecca at mosques with the Chinese flag → Banning possession of religious texts
Government oversight of religious personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Limiting the number of monks and nuns who are able to perform rituals → Disrupting the reincarnation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Initiating government recruitment and training of Imams → Appointing religious leaders
Freedom of assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Requiring approval from the Chinese government to host religious gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Forbidding public prayer sessions or religious activities
Doctrinal manipulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Washing religious texts and photos with "Xi Jinping Thought" and CCP ideology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Selecting quotes from the Quran that align with CCP ideology
Policing daily religious life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Banning images and veneration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama → Intense controlling of religious gatherings and prayer → Dictating what clothing can be worn, which festivals can be celebrated, and which food is acceptable to be eaten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Banning women from wearing hijabs in public → Banning beards on men → Banned names with religious undertones/that sound religious → Forcing civil servants to eat during religious fasting holidays
Restricting travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Imposing curfews and banning gatherings during important holidays (Tibetan New Year, Dalai Lama’s birthday) → Confiscating passports to restrict religious pilgrimages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Confiscating passports to prevent Uyghurs from performing the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca on their own
Reducing the religiosity of future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Promoting atheism → Mandating political re-education classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Promoting atheism → Encouraging habits that are forbidden in Islam (eg. the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes) → Mandating political re-education classes

SURVEILLANCE IN AN ORWELLIAN SOCIETY

Surveillance remains one of the Chinese government's central tactics of suppression. The government's emphasis and reliance on surveillance dates back to as early as the Cultural Revolution. Today, surveillance is conducted not only within mainland China, but also in Tibet and the Uyghur Region; what has unfolded in these two regions in the past few decades is likely to extend to Hong Kong in the coming years as well, especially as the city's freedoms continue to backslide under its draconian national security law.

The Chinese government's constant monitoring of people has a drastic impact on their livelihoods and freedoms given that at any time the actions and even thoughts of thousands of individuals are surveilled and heavily scrutinized by the regime. It is impossible to escape the Chinese government's watchful eye, since their surveillance circumvents boundaries and are ubiquitous both offline and online.

Offline Surveillance

Ever since Chinese troops invaded Tibet and the Uyghur Region, offline surveillance has been omnipresent in all aspects of life. There are now fears that the same tactics of offline surveillance will be applied in Hong Kong in the future.

Tibet: Community Infiltration and Heavy Monitoring



For decades, the Chinese government has continuously intensified their presence in TAR and Tibetan communities throughout China in order to keep a close eye on the Tibetan people. Their surveillance intensified after the 1959 Tibetan Uprising Day and the March 2008 demonstrations, and continues at the whim of the Chinese government. The intensification – which includes heavier police and military presence in the streets, both in uniform or undercover as plainclothes officers – is largely due to the government's desire to tightly put a lid on freedoms, dissent, and protests. There are also many checkpoints, where people are forced to share government documents – including certificates of residence, identity cards, vehicle registrations, and even documentation indicating whether or not they have a criminal

SUPPRESSION TACTICS

record²⁶⁹ – and where officers ensure that travelers are not carrying items that are considered to be dangerous to the government, such as pictures of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan flags, or books about Tibetan freedom and independence. Similar to the Cultural Revolution, people are encouraged to spy on one another, and to report to the police if they suspect anyone of “separatism” or “religious extremism.”²⁷⁰

Surveillance is heightened especially within monasteries and nunneries. In line with the Chinese government’s religious oppression, police and military personnel have been embedded in these institutions to ensure that events, publications, speeches, and other texts that are studied “serve the goals of the CCP and Chinese government.”²⁷¹ The increased physical presence of the military and police has added another layer of fear and is used as a tactic of intimidation to coerce people to align strictly with the party’s goals and ideologies.

Tibet has often been referred to as “China’s laboratory for repression,” because the Chinese government has tried a variety of surveillance methods in the region. As a result of the creation of the “grid system of social management,” which was spearheaded by then-Party Secretary of TAR Chen Quanguo, offline surveillance escalated dramatically in 2011.^{272 273} Under this system, entire neighborhoods were divided into smaller segments, allowing for more micro-level monitoring and even home searches. It introduced “convenience police-posts,” which are disguised as community centers^{274 275} and volunteer groups called the “Red Armband Patrols,”²⁷⁶ which were reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution’s “Red Guards.”

The “grid system of social management” was so successful that the CCP subsequently refined the system and implemented it in the Uyghur Region.

269 Tsering Woesser, *Checkpoint on the road to Lhasa*, New Statesman (October 18, 2012), <https://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/lifestyle/2012/10/checkpoint-road-lhasa>.

270 United States Department of State, Office of International Religious Freedom, *supra* note 215.

271 Congressional Executive Commission on China, *supra* note 84.

272 *A Joint Solidarity Statement. UN Human Rights Declaration: 70 Year Milestone – Stand Up for Human Rights for All People Under Chinese Rule*, International Tibet Network (December 9, 2018), https://tibetnetwork.org/hrd2018_jointstatement/.

273 *Chen Quanguo in Tibet*, Free Tibet, <https://freetibet.org/take-action/ban-chen/chen-in-tibet>.

274 Chun Han Wong, *China’s Hard Edge: The Leader of Beijing’s Muslim Crackdown Gains Influence*, Wall Street Journal (April 7, 2019), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-hard-edge-the-leader-of-beijings-muslim-crackdown-gains-influence-11554655886>.

275 United States Department of State, Office of Religious Freedom, *supra* note 228.

276 *China: Alarming New Surveillance, Security in Tibet*, Human Rights Watch (March 20, 2013), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/03/20/china-alarming-new-surveillance-security-tibet>.

Uyghur Region: The Creation of a Police State



The erosion of cultural-religious identity among the Uyghur people – which is enforced through vigilant monitoring – has resulted in the most modern and invasive iteration of a police state. Through extensive laws and regulations, the government has painstakingly articulated a litany of illegal behaviors that the police can then actualize through wakeful enforcement. **The result is a world where no action goes unmonitored, unrecorded, and unpunished.**

Police are explicitly told to supervise Uyghurs and pay close attention to religious activity that can be linked to “extremism.” In order to scrutinize the Uyghur population to the extent required, hundreds of thousands of police are dispatched and organized into networks of units. This system called the “grid management system” was pioneered by XUAR party secretary Chen Quanguo, who piloted this surveillance methodology in Tibet.²⁷⁷ Under this system, the police divide each city or village into squares; every square has a police station that collect information on the inhabitants through regular house visits.²⁷⁸ This information is corroborated through police officers’ extensive databases with detailed tracking information from where people refueled their cars and which hotels they have stayed in.²⁷⁹ In less populous areas, there is a sub-management arrangement that pairs a unit of six policemen or local officials with one native Uyghur who goes from house to house compiling dossiers of residents’ personal information.²⁸⁰ Some of these units may conduct random police raids in search of illegal activity.²⁸¹

Busier public areas are also surveilled through security checkpoints, which have become ubiquitous in the region. Many are equipped with armed guards, metal detectors, and police patrols in armed vehicles.²⁸² At major transit points, the identity cards of all passengers are scanned, photos are taken, and fingerprints are obtained, and women are demanded to remove their headscarves.²⁸³ Travellers have to undergo three rounds of bag checks before they are able to buy a ticket.²⁸⁴

277 China has turned Xinjiang into a police state like no other, *The Economist* (May 31, 2018), <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/31/china-has-turned-xinjiang-into-a-police-state-like-no-other>.

278 Yael Grauer, *Revealed: Massive Chinese Police Database*, *The Intercept* (Jan. 29, 2021), <https://theintercept.com/2021/01/29/china-uyghur-muslim-surveillance-police/>.

279 Bitter Winter, *The Police Region of Xinjiang: Checkpoints, Camps, and Fear*, World Uyghur Congress (May 12, 2020), <https://www.uyghur-congress.org/en/the-police-region-of-xinjiang-checkpoints-camps-and-fear/>.

280 ‘Extremist’ behavior is recounted in detail under “Religious Suppression -- Uyghur Region: Restricting Religious Behavior in Everyday Life.”

281 Mauk, *supra* note 253

282 *Id.*

283 *The Economist*, *supra* note 277.

284 *Id.*

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In regards to activity that is difficult to monitor, the local government relies on willing community members to police other residents. Monetary awards are regularly offered to informants who provide information about the illegal behaviors of Uyghurs in their homes.²⁸⁵ The state may threaten Uyghurs with the loss of social benefits, dismissal from work, expulsion from universities and fines if they are made aware of any transgressions.²⁸⁶ This creates a toxic atmosphere of distrust, self-censorship, and surveillance, fracturing community ties and fragmenting Uyghur society.

In addition to this informal network of informants, the Chinese government also carried out the “Pair Up and Become Family” program.²⁸⁷ Under this program, male Han Chinese officials, dubbed “relatives,” are assigned to monitor Uyghur homes where they teach Chinese and give lessons on political indoctrination.²⁸⁸ They stay in Uyghur homes for up to six days every two months, where they work, eat, and reportedly sleep in the same bed together.²⁸⁹ There are a number of disturbing accounts from Uyghur women who reveal that they have been taken advantage of when being forced to sleep in the same space with officials.²⁹⁰ According to a report in 2018, 1.1 million officials had already been paired with 1.6 million families, approximately half of the number of Uyghur households in the region.²⁹¹ The “Pair Up” program demonstrates the institutional ways in which mass rape of Uyghur women are implemented under the guise of surveillance and political indoctrination.

The Uyghur Region demonstrates how surveillance has become formalized and normalized through intricate methodologies of policing and government oversight. The CCP’s surveillance knows no bounds and, disturbingly, has made its way into the most intimate corners of home life.

The CCP’s surveillance knows no bounds and, disturbingly, has made its way into the most intimate corners of home life.

285 Cook, *supra* note 25 at 78.

286 *Id.*

287 Male Chinese ‘Relatives’ Assigned to Uyghur Homes Co-sleep With Female ‘Hosts’, Radio Free Asia (Oct. 31, 2019), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/cosleeping-10312019160528.html>.

288 *Id.*

289 Alexandra Ma, *China is reportedly sending men to sleep in the same beds as Uighur Muslim women while their husbands are in prison camps*, Business Insider (Nov. 4, 2019), <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-uighur-monitor-home-shared-bed-report-2019-11?op=1>.

290 Rosie Perper, *This is mass rape: Uighur activist condemns program said to pay Chinese men to sleep with Uighur women to promote ‘ethnic unity’*, Business Insider (Dec. 24, 2019), <https://www.insider.com/uighur-activists-mass-rape-chinese-men-xinjiang-2019-12>.

291 Fact Check: Lies on Xinjiang-related issues versus the truth, Xinhua (Feb. 15, 2021), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-02/05/c_139723816.htm.

Hong Kong: Emerging Espionage



Following the implementation of the national security law in Hong Kong, a national security bureau was set up to specifically examine and investigate cases that may have violated the legislation's stipulations.²⁹² Activists, including Joshua Wong and Agnes Chow, reported that they were followed by state agents, and that surveillance vehicles – likely from the new bureau – were stationed outside of their homes.^{293 294} In a particular incident, former pro-democracy politician Ted Hui confronted the agents who were monitoring him in a car with extensive filming equipment. The car escaped and injured him in the process.²⁹⁵ Notably, in the one-month period after the national security law came into effect, at least five activists reported being followed. Although the figures are likely to be higher, most pro-democracy activists are currently imprisoned and are unable to report on their experiences.

Additionally, in November 2020, the HKPF has spearheaded a “National Security Reporting Hotline,” encouraging citizens to report on community members, colleagues, teachers, and even family members, should they suspect someone of breaching the national security law.²⁹⁶ Such a tip-off line creates an atmosphere of fear and distrust in order for the state to exert stronger pressure on society, to achieve far-reaching thought control, and to ensure self-censorship. In essence, this hotline has turned regular citizens into community informants for the party to help surveil the thoughts, comments, and actions of society.²⁹⁷

The invasive level of monitoring creates the illusion that the government is inescapable. There is no room for freedom of thought and expression, as there are constant fears that one may be punished by the government. The Chinese government has used technology to perfect their veil of omniscience.

²⁹² China's National Security Office to Open Permanent Base in Hong Kong, Reuters (April 23, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/article/hong-kong-security/chinas-national-security-office-to-open-permanent-base-in-hong-kong-idUSL4N2MG2I8>.

²⁹³ Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong: 'A few cars are following me', BBC News (July 22, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-china-53491274>.

²⁹⁴ Zhou Ting's apartment under surveillance and Huang Zhifeng suspected of being followed by Guoan, Apple Daily (Oct. 8, 2020), <https://hk.appledaily.com/local/20200810/6D5R4MWPSD5K4QZ2W7XB146RW4/>.

²⁹⁵ Anzuna, Many pan-citizens claimed that Zhou Ting was followed by mysterious people and received far more attention than Huang Zhifeng and Xu Zhifeng, HK01 (Aug. 15, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3xCNcUL>.

²⁹⁶ Hong Kong: HRF Sends UN Urgent Appeal to Condemn National Security Law, Human Rights Foundation (Nov. 25, 2020), <https://hrf.org/hong-kong-hrf-sends-un-urgent-appeal-to-condemn-national-security-law/>.

²⁹⁷ *Id.*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Offline Surveillance Tactics Used In Each Region

	TIBET	UYGHUR REGION	HONG KONG
Community infiltration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Police presence, both in uniform or as plainclothes officers, is evident in everyday life, including at religious institutions and at home searches → Individuals are encouraged to spy on each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Police presence, both in uniform or as plainclothes officers, is evident in everyday life, including at religious institutions and at home searches → Individuals are encouraged to spy on each other → "Pair Up and Become Family" program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individuals are encouraged to spy on each other
Security checkpoints	X	X	
Grid-system monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Spearheaded first in Tibet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Refined and used in the Uyghur Region 	

Online Surveillance



Online surveillance has expanded the Chinese government's reach into the daily aspects of everyday life.

The Chinese government has gone to great lengths to censor and monitor access to information in the digital space within the country. These efforts are colloquially referred to as the "Great Firewall." The restricted internet is only filled with propaganda and messaging that strictly align with the CCP's ideologies. It is impossible to openly post and engage with content that is deemed to be a threat to the party – those who dare to do so are immediately censored, or risk imprisonment.

ment, fines, and threats from the government.²⁹⁸ The Great Firewall is fully enforced within Tibet and the Uyghur Region, and has yet to expand into Hong Kong. However, when the national security law was passed in Hong Kong in July 2020, many activists in the city decided to either close their online profiles, erase personal content on social media, or change their usernames to hide their identities in order to better protect themselves should greater government censorship and monitoring arise.²⁹⁹

Overtime, China's system of mass surveillance has also expanded due to the advent of new technologies, including but not limited to, smartphones, mobile applications, artificial intelligence (AI), big data analysis, movement tracking, and facial recognition systems. These technological advancements have resulted in a greater loss of privacy and even more human rights abuses, expanding the Chinese government's reach into the most personal parts of peoples' lives.³⁰⁰

Tibet: Plugged In but Disconnected from the World



Example of a police checkpoint in Lhasa

The Chinese government's efforts to quash dissent, demand ideological compliance, and silence criticism can aptly be described as "repression without borders."³⁰¹ The constant surveillance conducted by the government is expanding and evolving due to the newest emerging technologies. For example, checkpoints, monasteries, "convenience police-posts" and city streets are lined with video surveillance cameras equipped with facial recognition

298 Greg Baker, *Great Firewall of China closes loopholes*, Reporters Without Borders (Oct. 9, 2017), <https://rsf.org/en/news/great-fire-wall-china-closes-loopholes>.

299 *Hong Kong's National Security Law: The Nail in the Coffin for One Country, Two Systems*, Human Rights Foundation (Jul. 1, 2020), <https://hrf.org/hong-kongs-national-security-law-the-nail-in-the-coffin-for-one-country-two-systems/>.

300 *Key Takeaways from HRF's Event Series on China, AI, and Human Rights*, Human Rights Foundation (Nov. 2, 2020), <https://hrf.org/key-takeaways-from-hrfs-event-series-on-china-ai-and-human-rights/>.

301 *Testimony of Tenzin Dorjee, Tibet Action Institute, before the Congressional Executive Commission on China* (Sep. 30, 2020), <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/documents/Dorjee%20CECC%20Testimony%20Final%20Final.pdf>.

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technologies,³⁰² and AI.³⁰³ The Chinese government has started to build extensive biometric collections, utilizing advanced algorithms and high-tech systems to develop databases containing fingerprints, voice patterns, and even urine and DNA samples.³⁰⁴ Not only are these practices and collections violations of privacy, they are also incredibly discriminatory since they have been developed to specifically target religious minorities by detecting facial features, attire, and other identity indicators.³⁰⁵ Furthermore, due to the grid management system, police units assigned have “access to video and communications feed” within each of their respective grid areas, allowing for even more surveillance over the everyday actions and thoughts of these communities.³⁰⁶

The Chinese government’s sophisticated use of surveillance is evident in the digital space and, in particular through the Great Firewall. The juxtaposition between being connected to the internet and simultaneously disconnected from the rest of the world due to extreme censorship, has been referred to as “digital apartheid.”³⁰⁷ Notably, it is not uncommon for widespread internet shutdowns to occur during and after mass gatherings, pro-democracy demonstrations and self-immolations, further isolating Tibetans from the rest of the world.³⁰⁸

Digital security, privacy and anonymity are non-existent for the Tibetan people since the CCP has mandated that real names are used when registering for SIM cards, internet access, and all online platforms.³⁰⁹ As a result of this requirement, Tibetans experience significant limitations to their freedom of expression, firstly because of the internet censorship, and secondly because of their lack of anonymity



WeChat is one of the most popular apps used in China. In addition to text messaging, the app also allows for making mobile payments, networking, and location-sharing.

which places them at a heightened risk of being detained if they share their candid thoughts and opinions online. In fact, there have been many examples of Tibetans who have been unjustly punished by the government for their private messages via mobile applications. For example, in 2019, Sonam Palden, a young Tibetan Buddhist monk, was arrested for sharing a poem – titled “Father Tongue” – which expressed his views on Beijing’s suppression of the Tibetan language via WeChat, a Chinese messaging and social media phone application.³¹⁰ He remains detained incommunicado to this

302 Chris Meserole, *Technological surveillance of religion in China*, Brookings Institute (Jul. 22, 2020), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Meserole_USCIRF-testimony_7.21.20.pdf.

303 *Tibet Raised at UN Forum on Business and Human Rights*, Central Tibetan Administration (November 27, 2018), <https://tibet.net/tibet-bureau-geneva-at-un-forum-on-business-and-human-rights/>.

304 *China: Voice Biometric Collection Threatens Privacy*, Human Rights Watch (October 22, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/22/china-voice-biometric-collection-threatens-privacy>.

305 Chris Meserole, *supra* note 302.

306 *Id.*

307 Nithin Coca, *China’s Digital Wall Around Tibet*, *codastory* (May 16, 2019), <https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/china-digital-wall-tibet/>.

308 Oiwan Lam, *In Tibet and Uyghur Regions, Internet Blackouts Are the Norm*, *Advox* (Dec. 17, 2013), <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2013/12/17/in-chinas-ethnic-minority-regions-internet-blackouts-are-the-norm/>.

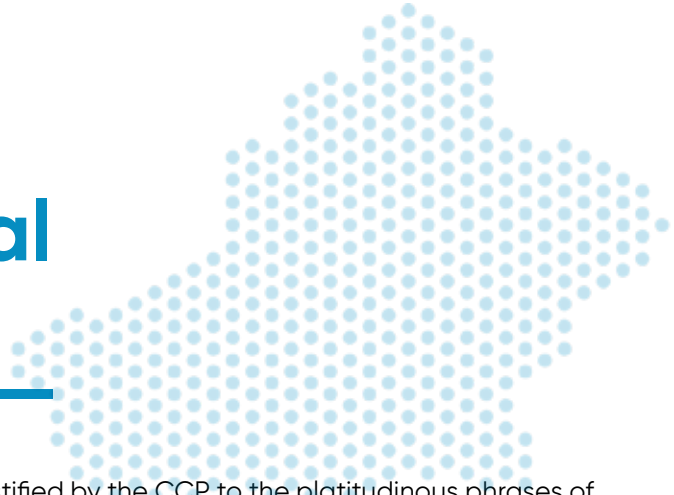
309 Chris Meserole, *supra* note 302.

310 *Submission to the UN committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Follow-up to the concluding observations of China’s Combined Fourteenth to Seventh Periodic Reports*, Tibet Advocacy Coalition (July 30, 2020), https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/INT_CERD_NGS_CHN_43689_E.pdf at 11.

day. In 2021, it was reported that several Tibetan teenagers were arrested and tortured simply for not registering and receiving approval for the creation of a WeChat group chat.³¹¹ Merely communicating with Tibetans overseas has also served as grounds for arrest or increased police surveillance.³¹² Additionally, similar to how physical photos of the Dalai Lama are confiscated, digital photos are censored and filtered. Those caught with these photos have been reportedly arbitrarily detained.³¹³

The government has claimed that its use of mass surveillance is necessary to enhance “the development and long-term stability” of “a beautiful Tibet” for “the happiness of the people.”³¹⁴ However, the reality is far from it as the Tibetan people continue to live under the Chinese government’s extreme suppression.³¹⁵

Uyghur Region: Building a Digital Panopticon



In the Uyghur Region, surveillance technology is justified by the CCP to the platitudinous phrases of “counter-terrorism” and “combat extremism.” In every corner of the region, the Chinese government is experimenting with the most advanced surveillance technology to perfect their police state into an unprecedented digital panopticon.

While the internet is often viewed as an untameable and overgrown wasteland, the Chinese government has sought to master the domain. Initially, the government would impose internet shutdowns after social activism and intense political events, such as the 2009 protests. In some extreme cases, network shutdowns included mobile networks so that even phone calls couldn’t be made into and from the region.³¹⁶

In the past decade, online surveillance has embraced the latest emerging technologies, including cutting-edge cloud-based databases and AI-driven technology. The objective is to monitor all internet activity, filter through the information, then organize the data into a comprehensive database. In order

311 *Three Tibetan Teens Arrested, One Put in Hospital, Over Failure to Register Chat Group*, Radio Free Asia (Mar. 3, 2021), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/teens-03032021205631.html>.

312 *China’s Crackdowns on Tengdro Monastery and Restrictions on Communications in Tibet*, Human Rights Watch (July 6, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/07/06/prosecute-them-awesome-power/chinas-crackdown-tengdro-monastery-and-restrictions>.

313 *China surveillance: WeChat users’ messages on Dalai Lama, Tibet disappear*, Tibet Action Institute, <https://tibetaction.net/project/china-surveillance-wechat-users-messages-on-dalai-lama-tibet-disappear/>.

314 *Development of Tibet in the New Era in Tibet -- Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation*, Information Office of the State Council of The People’s Republic of China (Sep. 1992), http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2019-03/28/content_74622432.htm.

315 *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China- Tibet*, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/tibet/>

316 Lam, *supra* note 308.

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to tackle this enormous goal, residents in the Uyghur Region are forced to install “nanny apps” onto their personal phones.³¹⁷ If an individual’s device has not downloaded the software, they can be detained for up to 10 days.³¹⁸ The app is intended to “prevent [residents] from accessing terrorist information,” as well as “illegal religious” activity and “harmful information.” In reality, the state uses the app’s hidden functionalities to observe personal messages and activity.³¹⁹ The app’s “remote control” feature can allow state actors or hackers to manipulate or steal from a person’s home network.³²⁰ Data can also be forcibly retrieved by requiring Uyghurs to give their phones to police, who then download their phone content for later analysis and scrutiny.³²¹

Many of China’s leading AI startups are dedicated to filtering through enormous amounts of text messages, as well as other forms of media messages, mostly on the commonly used super-app Wechat. This advanced technology enables the government to sort through massive amounts of information by filtering for keywords that are deemed to be extremist, such as “Quran” or “Allah.”³²² AI technology can also transcribe Uyghur speech sent in audio messages and then screen the transcripts for keywords as well.³²³ One start-up is working on “voice pattern” samples of individuals to establish a national voice database.³²⁴ The company hopes to develop a surveillance system that can identify targeted voices in phone conversations or recorded messages.³²⁵ Much of the information collected is then stored on cloud computing-based systems and organized using data analytics to more efficiently filter personal information.³²⁶ The government’s goal is to connect databases across regions and government departments to improve data sharing. By amalgamating both public and private information, the government can use voice recordings, personal communications, medical history, and even delivery records to account for every person’s whereabouts at any given point in time.³²⁷

In addition to an extensive dossier of a person’s whereabouts, the Chinese government is attempting to create a database of “multi-modal” biometric portraits of all residents in the Uyghur Region aged 12 to 65 under the Population Registration Program,³²⁸ including DNA samples, fingerprints, iris scans, and blood types.³²⁹ Sensitive biometrics, such as DNA and blood type, are collected by health personnel as part of the Physicals for All program.³³⁰ The program offers free medical screenings for all residents for

317 Lam, *China’s Xinjiang Residents Are Being Forced to Install Surveillance Apps on Mobile Phones*, Global Voices (July 19, 2017), <https://globalvoices.org/2017/07/19/chinas-xinjiang-residents-are-being-forced-to-install-surveillance-apps-on-mobile-phones/>.

318 Phil Muncaster, *Xinjiang Users Arrested over State Spyware Usage*, Info Security Magazine (Jul. 24, 2017), <https://bit.ly/3e7DzGc>.

319 Lam, *supra* note 317.

320 Lam, *supra* note 317.

321 Darren Byler, *The Xinjiang Data Police*, Noema Magazine (Oct. 8, 2020), <https://www.noemamag.com/the-xinjiang-data-police/>.

322 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33.

323 *Id.*

324 *China: Voice Biometric Collection Threatens Privacy*, Human Rights Watch (Oct. 22, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/22/china-voice-biometric-collection-threatens-privacy>.

325 *China: Police ‘Big Data’ Systems Violate Privacy, Target Dissent*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 19, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/19/china-police-big-data-systems-violate-privacy-target-dissent>.

326 Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 324.

327 *Id.*

328 *China: Minority Region Collects DNA from Millions*, Human Rights Watch (Dec. 13, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/13/china-minority-region-collects-dna-millions>.

329 *Id.*

330 Sui-Lee Wee, *China Uses DNA to Track Its People, With the Help of American Expertise*, NY Times (Feb. 21, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/business/china-xinjiang-uyghur-dna-thermo-fisher.html>.

the “purpose” of improving healthcare, detecting major diseases, and establishing digital health records.³³¹ This biometric database is once more justified as a way to bring “scientific decision-making” into policymaking with the end goals of alleged poverty alleviation, improved management, and social stability.³³² In actuality, this information is sent to the county police bureau for profiling and linked to each person’s national identification number.³³³ The accumulation of such sensitive information only fortifies the Chinese government’s ability to repress the Uyghur population.

With facial recognition cameras, the Chinese government is able to overcome a historically troublesome hurdle to population control – large crowds. City streets in the Uyghur Region are tightly lined with video cameras that are equipped with the capacity to identify pedestrians, even those wearing masks,³³⁴ read car number plates, and correlate them with the face of the driver.³³⁵ One company in particular claimed that its software could automate the identification of Uyghur faces based on physiological phenotypes.³³⁶

The government capitalizes on its surveillance infrastructure in order to arrest more “suspicious” persons who will then be funnelled into internment camps. The ultimate goal of these comprehensive surveillance measures is to be able to “predict ... individuals posing heightened risks” to public “safety.”³³⁷ The government hopes that they will be able to rely on an algorithm to determine future “security threats” and preemptively eliminate them. In the Uyghur Region, the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) is the regional data system used to determine individuals who are considered security threats by the state.³³⁸ If an individual is flagged as a potential terrorist in IJOP, they are automatically barred from entering public institutions such as hospitals, banks, parks, or shopping centers without the police being alerted.³³⁹ Other programs perform automatic searches of Uyghur internet activity and compare the activity to the database to look for predictors of “abnormal” behavior.³⁴⁰ The police then follow-up and conduct face-to-face interviews to assess whether the individual should be given a rating of “safe,” “average,” or “unsafe.”³⁴¹ Determinants of an “unsafe” rating include many factors discussed in detail in previous sections: whether or not they are Uyghur, if they pray regularly, have an immediate relative living abroad, travelled abroad, or have taught their children about Islam in their home.³⁴² Those with an “unsafe rating” are immediately detained and asked to name others who are also “unsafe.”³⁴³ In any given week, the system can flag approximately 25,000 “suspicious persons,” of which more than half will be sent to

331 Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 328.

332 *Id.*

333 *Id.*

334 Ross Andersen, *The Panopticon is Already Here*, *The Atlantic* (Sep. 2020), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/09/china-ai-surveillance/614197/>.

335 *The Economist*, *supra* note 277.

336 Darren Byler, *China’s Hi-tech war on its Muslim minority*, *The Guardian* (Apr. 11, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/apr/11/china-hi-tech-war-on-muslim-minority-xinjiang-uighurs-surveillance-face-recognition>.

337 Maya Wang, *Opinion: China’s dystopian push to revolutionize surveillance*, *Washington Post* (Aug. 18, 2017), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/08/18/chinas-dystopian-push-to-revolutionize-surveillance/>.

338 *China’s Algorithms of Repression: Reverse Engineering a Xinjiang Police Mass Surveillance App*, *Human Rights Watch* (May 1, 2019), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/05/01/chinas-algorithms-repression/reverse-engineering-xinjiang-police-mass>.

339 *Id.*

340 Elaine Yu, *Xinjiang surveillance app targets legal, everyday behavior: rights group*, *Agence France Press* (May 1, 2019), <http://southasia-journal.net/xinjiang-surveillance-app-targets-legal-everyday-behaviour-rights-group/>.

341 Byler, *supra* note 336.

342 *Id.*

343 *Id.*

internment camps.³⁴⁴ Through their systematic spying, the Chinese government was able to “legally” prosecute more than 350,000 people in 2017 and 2018.³⁴⁵

The Chinese government has harnessed the power of AI and other technology to digitize the repression of the Uyghur people. Through the digital mechanization of policing, it is evident that the government sees no humanity in the Uyghur people: “The only kind of U[y]ghur life that can be recognised by the state is the one that the computer sees.”³⁴⁶

“The only kind of U[y]ghur life that can be recognised by the state is the one that the computer sees.”³⁴⁶

Hong Kong: Intensified Fears



Since the 2014 Umbrella Movement, activists have reported possible surveillance by the Chinese government during phone calls. According to a US cybersecurity company, there was at least one spy ring coordinated by the Chinese government to surveil Hong Kong activists. One method that was used to infiltrate activists' mobile phones was to send text messages containing malware, which, when opened, gave hackers access to the phones' stored information.³⁴⁷

Concerns over digital surveillance intensified during the 2019 protests. Online, activists resorted to secured messaging services like Telegram which were used to organize some of the largest protests in the city's history. However, the Hong Kong government managed to infiltrate certain protest-related Telegram groups, and protesters searched for yet another method of secure communication. Bluetooth became a popular way to spread protest information as the transmission is offline and cannot be traced.

It has not yet been proven whether or not the Chinese government has deployed the same invasive technologies in Tibet and the Uyghur Region across Hong Kong to conduct surveillance. However, there have been increasing concerns among Hong Kong's population since it has been reported that the HKPF have purchased these technologies from Chinese companies affiliated with the atrocities in the Uyghur

³⁴⁴ Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 5.

³⁴⁵ *Id.*

³⁴⁶ Byler, *supra* note 336.

³⁴⁷ Suzanne Sataline, *Hong Kong activists fear they are being monitored by Beijing*, The Guardian (Dec. 14, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/14/hong-kong-activists-beijing-chinese-spying-pro-democracy>.

Region. Furthermore, current laws in Hong Kong do not explicitly bar police from using these technologies to monitor Hong Kong citizens.³⁴⁸ In order to further protect themselves from digital surveillance at pro-democracy demonstrations and everyday life, protestors and concerned citizens have also opted to turn off location tracking on their mobile devices and to hide their faces by wearing masks and helmets – some even have decided to no longer carry a personal mobile phone with them.³⁴⁹ Ever since the passage of the national security law, there have been increased fears that Hong Kong is quickly becoming a police-state.³⁵⁰

Additionally, doxxing by the pro-Beijing camp has become an issue that many protestors have become worried about. Around the height of the 2019 protests, the “HK Leaks” website emerged as a doxxing tool to instill fear amongst pro-democracy activists. The website collected and leaked personal information, including Hong Kong identification card numbers, home addresses, telephone numbers, and photos of protestors, activists, and opposition politicians. It targeted anyone – including both well-known activists and individual protestors – who had a pro-democracy stance. Thousands of people have been doxxed and listed on the website, which was registered on a Russian domain. The Russian origin of the website prevented the victims from taking the website down through legal means in Hong Kong. As of June 2021, the website is still live.³⁵¹

The Chinese government’s holistic approach to surveillance, evident both in the offline and online spheres, portray their strong desires to amplify the party’s control and power. Understanding how the state has weaponized surveillance technologies in Tibet and the Uyghur Region, Hongkongers fully grasp how China’s surveillance tactics know no borders or limits – and may one day be inescapable within the once-free city.

348 Blake Schmidt, *Hong Kong police have AI facial recognition tech – are they using it against protestors?*, The Japan Times (Oct. 23, 2019), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/10/23/asia-pacific/hong-kong-protests-ai-facial-recognition-tech/>.

349 K. G. Chan, *Surveillance fears over new HK ID cards*, Asia Times (Jul. 17, 2019), <https://asiatimes.com/2019/07/surveillance-fears-over-new-hk-id-cards/>.

350 China: National security law for Hong Kong risks turning city into police state, Amnesty International (June 28, 2020), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/china-national-security-law-for-hong-kong-risks-turning-city-into-police-state/>.

351 *Hong Kong protestors personal data leaked by Russian website*, DW, <https://www.dw.com/en/hong-kong-protesters-personal-data-leaked-by-russian-website/a-50515519>.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Online Surveillance Tactics Used In Each Region

	TIBET	UYGHUR REGION	HONG KONG
Internet shutdowns	X	X	
Infiltration of personal communication	X	X	X
Centralized database of all residents	→ Biometric database complete with voice scans, urine samples, DNA, fingerprints, etc.	→ Integrated Joint Operations Platform (tracking information and biometric data)	
Weaponization of the internet and emerging technology	→ Surveillance cameras with AI-powered facial recognition	→ AI-powered surveillance cameras → Installation of “nanny” apps with trackers	→ Increased concerns about surveillance technologies → Doxxing conducted by pro-Beijing individuals

AN ASSAULT ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The Chinese government views the freedom of movement as profoundly dangerous because it opens up the potential for liberal ideas to enter the country that may threaten the CCP's authoritarian rule. Furthermore, citizens who are not on home territory are less easily controlled by the government.³⁵² As such, the Chinese government has deliberately made it difficult for ethnic groups such as Tibetans and Uyghurs to exercise their right to freely leave and return to their country of origin. In addition, as the Chinese government continues to exert control over Hong Kong, many Hongkongers are becoming concerned that one day, it will be difficult for them to freely leave as well.

Tibet: A Myriad of Restrictions, Both Inbound and Outbound

The Chinese government exerts its powerful influence over the TAR and its surrounding areas by heavily limiting freedom of movement. The restrictions constrain travel plans and leisure activities. It has become increasingly difficult for Tibetans to freely leave TAR – and China – and, by the same token, it is practically impossible for foreigners, such as journalists and diplomats, to enter the region.

When Han Chinese apply for passports to leave the country, they are able to receive their required documents and approvals in a timely fashion. However, when Tibetans apply for passports, they are faced with a number of hurdles that are intentionally set up by the Chinese government which include time-intensive paperwork and often-delayed approval procedures to essentially prohibit and block Tibetans from travelling internationally. These hurdles also aim to instill fear, and to monitor Tibetans who travel. The required paperwork reportedly includes waivers which indicate that they will not partake in “illegal activity” or “activities harmful to the nation” while overseas.³⁵³ Oftentimes – even after waiting for months and even years – Tibetan passport applications have been denied, with no clear and justifiable explanation from the government.³⁵⁴

Those who have been able to receive passports and travel abroad are frequently faced with interrogations, and even imprisonment, when they return back to Tibet. In particular, because of the Chinese government's hostility toward religion and their ongoing desire to silence rhetoric that falls outside of the party's narrative, Tibetans who have traveled abroad for religious pilgrimages – such as to India

³⁵² While more difficult, the Chinese government does intimidate activists overseas to remain silent.

³⁵³ Husna Haq, *Passport Restrictions in Tibet*, BBC Travel (Jan. 29, 2013), <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20130129-passport-restrictions-in-tibet>.

³⁵⁴ *One Passport, Two Systems*, Human Rights Watch (July 13, 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/07/13/one-passport-two-systems/chinas-restrictions-foreign-travel-tibetans-and-others>.

to receive the Dalai Lama's blessing³⁵⁵ or to Nepal to visit holy sites – have reportedly been arrested or subjected to heavy fines, physical harm, and strict government monitoring upon returning.³⁵⁶

It is also extremely challenging for foreigners to enter the Tibetan region. In fact, it is impossible to safely set foot in Tibet without explicit permission and approval from the Chinese government. Those who are granted permission to visit are only able to see controlled aspects of life that are staged and accepted by the government. The Chinese government has weaponized access to the region, using it as a key component towards whitewashing its crimes. For example, in a piece published by *The Guardian* in June 2021, the journalists that were granted access to Tibet for this assignment were only able to capture picturesque and government-approved images of the region – completely neglecting the atrocities ongoing within.³⁵⁷ Such restrictive travel policies for foreigners, such as diplomats and journalists, to freely enter Tibet have grave human rights implications. It hinders access to witnessing first-hand the severe erosion of fundamental freedoms in the region and speaking candidly with locals about the human rights situation on the ground. These obstructions deeply hamper the ability to get information out of the region to help the international community hold the Chinese government accountable for their crimes against humanity.

These tight restrictions are not only limited to foreign journalists and diplomats, but also Tibetans living in the diaspora. Many Tibetans-in-exile overseas are unable to freely return to Tibet because they also face lengthy protocols, interrogations about their personal lives and religious beliefs, and discriminatory practices in Chinese consulates abroad while applying for a visa. Additionally, Tibetans in the diaspora who are outspoken against the Chinese government fear for their safety and the safety of their relatives should they be able to return to the region. Not only is this an example of severe restrictions of freedom of movement and overseas intimidation, but it is also a well-calculated strategy conducted by the Chinese government to fully break down cultural, and social ties among Tibetans by limiting access to their ancestral lands and relatives.³⁵⁸

The intensity of the Chinese government's efforts to limit all access to and from the region is similar to their actions northwest of Tibet, in the Uyghur Region.

355 *Arrested on return from India*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (March 1, 1998), <https://tchrd.org/arrested-on-return-from-india/>.

356 Dr. Uwe Meya, *Arrest Tibetan pilgrims returning from India and Nepal*, Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association (April 23, 2018), <https://gstf.org/en/2018/04/23/tibetische-pilger-nach-rueckkehr-aus-indien-und-nepal-verhaftet-straft-fuer-pilger/>.

357 Kevin Frayer, *Tibet: On the Roof of the World - in Pictures*, *The Guardian* (June 14, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2021/jun/14/tibet-on-the-roof-of-the-world-in-pictures>.

358 *Congressional Executive Commission on China* (Sep. 30, 2020), *supra* note 301.

Uyghur Region: No One In or Out



The policy of restricting travel in and out the Uyghur Region mimics those seen in Tibet. Harsher measures were implemented in the early 2000's, likely due to the "Go West Strategy" and the rise of unrest that ensued. The government began to deny applications and confiscate Uyghur passports.³⁵⁹ Firsthand accounts detail how local residential officers collected passports under the false pretext of "registering" local residents.³⁶⁰ The Chinese government has also intervened in the ability of Uyghurs to make the Hajj pilgrimage – one of the main pillars of Islam – to Saudi Arabia. Passports are often seized to force Uyghur residents to join government-run Hajj tours or to prevent them from going to Saudi Arabia altogether.

In 2009, due to the escalation of the "Strike Hard" campaign, the local government shifted primarily to a policy of passport denials.³⁶¹ Many accounts describe how their passport applications have been denied on baseless grounds. The government, once again also, exploits the comparatively low-income Uyghur population, instituting prohibitively high costs to prevent Uyghurs from obtaining passports.³⁶² As of 2015, the government has begun to require all passport applicants in the Uyghur Region to provide biometrics as well.³⁶³ As a result of the myriad of bureaucratic hurdles, "virtually no Uyghurs have passports" – creating a region where Uyghurs are essentially unable to escape the clutches of the Chinese government.³⁶⁴

As is the case with Tibet, it is incredibly difficult for foreigners to enter the Uyghur Region. Few foreign journalists have ever visited because of the guaranteed harassment and surveillance they'd face. Chinese officials have only invited journalists and politicians on strictly monitored state-sanctioned tours.³⁶⁵ Foreign journalists who have not reproduced state narratives on "happy Uyghurs" – instead reporting on internment camps or other atrocities – have been denied visas³⁶⁶ or expelled from China.³⁶⁷ Through these restrictions on people's movement in and out of the region, the Chinese government has effectively siloed the region from the rest of the world.

³⁵⁹ Briefing: Refusals of passports to Uyghurs and confiscations of passports held by Uyghurs indicator of second-class status in China, Uyghur Human Rights Project (February 7, 2013), <https://docs.uhrp.org/briefing-uyghur-passports.pdf> at 2.

³⁶⁰ China Confiscates Muslims Passports, Radio Free Asia (June 27, 2007), https://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_passports-20070627.html.

³⁶¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project, *supra* note 359.

³⁶² Guligiekela Kevoumu, Passport Application Process 'Not Easy' for Uyghurs, Radio Free Asia (Nov. 20, 2013), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/process-11202013151356.html/>.

³⁶³ Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 328.

³⁶⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project, *supra* note 359 at 2.

³⁶⁵ Thomas Peter & Cate Cadell, *In China's New Xinjiang: Patriotic Tourism, Police and Propaganda*, Reuters: The Wider Image (June 21, 2021), <https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/in-chinas-new-xinjiang-patriotic-tourism-police-and-propaganda>.

³⁶⁶ Josh Rudolph, *Buzzfeed's Megha Rajagopalan Denied Visa*, China Digital Times (Aug. 22, 2018), <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2018/08/buzzfeeds-megha-rajagopalan-denied-visa/>.

³⁶⁷ Reuters in Paris, *China Expels French Journalist Who Questioned Treatment of Uighurs*, The Guardian (Dec. 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/dec/26/french-journalist-expelled-from-china>.

Hong Kong: An International Hub, No More



Hong Kong has been an international travel hub for decades since its colonial times. Activists were free to travel in and out of the city. There were no serious concerns regarding freedom of movement until very recently. Concerns related to freedom of movement arose after the Chinese government's unilateral implementation of the national security law. The law drew widespread criticism from around the world, including from the British government.



Holders of the British National Overseas Passport, the BN(O), from Hong Kong are now provided a pathway to citizenship in the United Kingdom. This new visa scheme was launched in early 2021. The Chinese government now no longer recognizes the BN(O).

Designed to solve the citizenship issue created with the 1997 transfer of sovereignty, permanent residents of Hong Kong prior to 1997 who met certain requirements were eligible to apply for a British National Overseas passport, commonly referred to as BN(O). The BN(O) granted its holders an extended visa to live, work, and stay in the United Kingdom for five years. Originally, BN(O) did not offer its holders a direct pathway to citizenship, but the British parliament voted to change this rule after the promulgation of the national security law. The British parliament criticized the restriction of freedoms in Hong Kong, and voted to offer a pathway to citizenship for thousands of current BN(O) holders, as well as millions of potential BN(O) holders in Hong Kong. The intention is to give Hong Kong residents a way to emigrate from the increasingly authoritarian city.³⁶⁸

The Chinese and Hong Kong governments criticized the British parliament's vote to offer BN(O) holders and prospective holders a pathway to citizenship. A few months after the vote – perhaps in an attempt to prevent mass emigration that would negatively impact the city's economy, or perhaps to indirectly dissuade citizens from considering emigrating – the Hong Kong government passed the Immigration (Amendment) Bill that allows the immigration director to impose entrance or exit bans on those who emigrate, with judicial review.³⁶⁹ The bill gives the immigration director broad powers to not only regulate migration at the border, but also to prevent airlines from carrying certain passengers.³⁷⁰ The announcement raised concern in Hong Kong that their freedom of movement would be severely compromised.

368 *Hong Kong: UK makes citizenship offer to residents*, BBC News (July 1, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-53246899>.

369 Selina Cheng, *Hong Kong Lawmakers Approve Changes to Immigration Law Prompting Fears of 'Exit Bans'*, Hong Kong Free Press (April 28, 2021), <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/04/28/hong-kong-lawmakers-approve-changes-to-immigration-law-prompting-fears-of-exit-bans/>.

370 *Hong Kong passes new immigration law that could enable China-style exit bans*, CNN (Apr. 29, 2021), <https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/29/china/hong-kong-china-immigration-intl-hnk/index.html>.

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These concerns have compounded, especially for activists and journalists. Shortly after the forced closure of *Apple Daily*, it was reported that a former senior-level journalist was arrested at the airport while trying to flee the city.³⁷¹ This arrest serves as an indicator of how the government is willing and able to restrict the movement of those that may have violated the national security law. Many foreigners based in the city are now also concerned with whether or not they should stay.

Additionally, similar to what has happened in Tibet and the Uyghur Region, the Chinese government and the puppet Hong Kong government have started to delay and even deny issuing visas to foreign reporters.


KEY TAKEAWAYS

Restrictions Imposed on Freedom of Movement Across the Three Regions

	TIBET	UYGHUR REGION	HONG KONG
Denial or confiscation of passports	X	X	
Complicated passport application	X	X	
Entrance and exit bans on emigration			X
Halting the issuance of visas to foreign reporters	X	X	X
Limited approval of foreign visitors	X	X	

³⁷¹ Helen Davidson, *Hong Kong police arrest senior Apple Daily journalist at airport*, The Guardian (Jun. 27, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/28/hong-kong-police-arrest-apple-daily-journalist-airport-fung-wai-kong>.

THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE: AN INTENT TO ERASE

A woman wearing a blue hijab and a red patterned face mask is holding a white sign. The sign has the text "IT'S TIME TO CALL IT GENOCIDE" in large, bold, black and red letters. The background shows a city street with buildings and a large blue flag.

IT'S TIME
TO CALL IT
GENOCIDE

#StopUyghurGenocide

The genocide against the Uyghurs is perhaps the most heinous crime being perpetrated by the CCP today. While the Chinese government has constantly villainized the Uyghurs as “separatists,” Xi Jinping incited genocide when he ordered the local government to use the “organs of dictatorship” to show “absolutely no mercy” and subdue the Uyghur Region.³⁷² Under the false pretext of reducing poverty and curbing extremism, the Chinese government is attempting the complete eradication of a religious group through campaigns of mass internment, coerced labor, and forced sterilization.

“Re-Education” Camps

“Re-education” camps are a network of internment centers where Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are imprisoned en masse. They were constructed under the expansion of the “concentrated educational transformation” program which seeks to reform lawbreakers, such as drug addicts and problem children, into model citizens.³⁷³ These vocational facilities in the Uyghur Region are marketed as centers for people to learn new skills to advance their careers and combat poverty. In reality, they are internment camps where mass atrocities are committed. These camps are intended to “break the [Uyghur peoples] lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins.”³⁷⁴

An estimated one million people have been subject to internment since the camps’ inception.³⁷⁵ In spite of vehement denials by the Chinese government, satellite imagery has been able to identify and verify dozens of internment camps.³⁷⁶ An examination of more than 1,500 public government documents exposes that these re-education centers operate more like jails than schools. Cadres are instructed to “detain those who should be detained to the greatest extent possible.”³⁷⁷ As a result, the number of detention camps have outpaced the construction of these facilities – prompting retirement homes, hospitals, and even schools to be converted into camps,³⁷⁸ and private corporate bids to build dozens more.³⁷⁹ Though the Chinese government has not disclosed exact numbers, it is likely that more than 1 million Uyghurs have been detained.³⁸⁰

372 Austin Ramzy & Chris Buckley, *Absolutely No Mercy: Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims*, N.Y. Times (No. 16, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>.

373 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

374 Ben Dooley, *Inside China’s Internment Camps: Tear Gas, Tears, and Textbooks*, Agence France Presse (Oct. 25, 2018), <https://www.afp.com/en/inside-chinas-internment-camps-tear-gas-tasers-and-textbooks>.

375 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 30 at 6.

376 Megha Rajagopalan, Alison Killing, and Christo Buschek, *China Secretly Built A Vast New Infrastructure To Imprison Muslims*, BuzzFeed News (Aug. 27, 2020), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/china-new-internment-camps-xinjiang-uighurs-muslims>.

377 Ben Dooley, *supra* note 374.

378 Rajagopalan, Killing & Buschek, *supra* note 376.

379 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

380 “Like we were enemies in a war:” *China’s Mass Internment, Torture and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang*, Amnesty International (2021), http://xinjiang.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASA_17_4137-2021_Full_report_ENG.pdf.

Internment camps seem to vary in levels of confinement, ranging from reform school to prison.³⁸¹ Placements within internment camps are determined by initial screenings which calculate the severity and length of detention.³⁸² Descriptions of the internment camps consistently illustrate a desolate environment of torture, hunger, and abuse. The camps are thoroughly secured with high and thick concrete walls surrounding the compounds, barbed wire, and guard towers.³⁸³ The interior is filled with triple locking doors, locked cells, bolted corridors, and inescapable video surveillance.³⁸⁴ Due to the high number of detainees, hunger and overcrowding are frequent.³⁸⁵ Detainees are often forced to share a twin bed or sleep in shifts given the limited space.³⁸⁶ Furthermore, the “dorms” have no running water and the toilet is a bucket in the corner of the room.³⁸⁷ Detainees are handed food through an opening in the door and

“You don’t have the right to talk, because you are not humans,” one guard reportedly said. “If you were humans, you wouldn’t be here.”³⁹⁰

fed meager amounts of rice or porridge with little to no protein.³⁸⁸ The detainees are tightly monitored by cameras to ensure that they do not freely speak to each other.³⁸⁹ “You don’t have the right to talk, because you are not humans,” one guard reportedly said. “If you were humans, you wouldn’t be here.”³⁹⁰

Detainees are also subject to a regimented daily routine comprised of political indoctrination, Chinese language training, and forced renunciations of Islam and Uyghur culture.³⁹¹ For several hours, they must memorize key principles of “Xi Jinping Thought” by watching news broadcasts, documentaries, and speeches.³⁹² Detainees are also instructed to sing “red” songs praising the CCP.³⁹³ More formalized courses take place in rooms that are partitioned by iron bars, effectively caging in students while rifle-wielding guards watch over them.³⁹⁴ Students are sorted based on their education level: those who have a second-grade education take the lowest level class where detainees learn basic Chinese.³⁹⁵

381 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

382 *Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 19, 2021), https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting#_ftn63.

383 *Secret documents reveal how China mass detention camps work*, Associated Press (Nov. 25, 2019), <https://apnews.com/article/china-cables-ap-top-news-international-news-china-race-and-ethnicity-4ab0b341a4ec4e648423f2ec47ea5c47>.

384 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

385 Rajagopalan, Killing & Buschek, *supra* note 376.

386 *Allison Killing and Megha Rajagopalan, What They Saw: Ex-Prisoners Detail the Horrors of China’s Detention Camps*, BuzzFeed News (Aug. 27, 2020), https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alison_killing/china-ex-prisoners-horrors-xinjiang-camps-uyghurs.

387 Darren Byler, *How companies profit from forced labor in Xinjiang*, SupChina (September 4, 2019), <https://supchina.com/2019/09/04/how-companies-profit-from-forced-labor-in-xinjiang/>.

388 Rajagopalan, Killing & Buschek, *supra* note 376.

389 *Id.*

390 Byler, *supra* note 387.

391 Massimo Introvigne, *Uyghurs Are Forced To Denounce Their Faith To Survive*, The Association on Study and Human Rights (Oct. 8, 2018), <https://www.tasrhr.org/news-and-videos/conferences/uyghurs-are-forced-to-denounce-their-faith-to-survive>.

392 Mauk, *supra* note 253

393 Elise Anderson, *Compelled Silence and Compelled Sound in the Uyghur Genocide*, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs (Dec. 15, 2020), <https://gija.georgetown.edu/2020/12/15/compelled-silence-and-compelled-sound-in-the-uyghur-genocide/>.

394 Christina Lu, *Painting Xinjiang’s Brutal Camps in 3D*, Foreign Policy (Mar. 16, 2021), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/16/xinjiang-reeducated-documentary-uyghur-china-vr/>.

395 Mauk, *supra* note 253.

For more advanced learners, detainees take ideological indoctrination courses where they recite laws banning unapproved religious practices, for example.³⁹⁶ These language and political indoctrination courses emulate previously discussed cultural and religious suppression tactics geared towards erasing Uyghur, language, culture, and identity.

Countless testimonies reveal the heinous violence that takes place in the internment camps. First-hand accounts describe being forced to strip, being drenched with water during interrogations, and being shocked with an electric prod. Detainees are also frequently put in solitary confinement in squalid cells that are too small to even lie down in.³⁹⁷ Harrowing testimonies from former female detainees uncover the systematic abuse Uyghur women face at the hands of prison guards. Female detainees were tightly guarded and taken into separate “dark rooms” at night where they were raped, sometimes by multiple guards.³⁹⁸ Others recall being tortured by electric sticks that were forcibly inserted into their genital areas.³⁹⁹ It is evident that while marketed as educational facilities, the detention camps are sites where mass atrocities are committed.

The Commodification of Uyghur Lives: The Ubiquitous Use of Forced Labor

The commodification of Uyghur people is a key strategy to erase the Uyghur people and exploit them for the purpose of boosting China’s economic power. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, “the use of compelled labor as part of a concerted effort to eliminate a culture and religion sets the situation in Xinjiang apart.”⁴⁰⁰

Forced labor programs intersect and run parallel to detention camps. Detainees who have completed their sentence often enter into vocation programs and are then funneled into forced labor; laborers who have not been detained work in inhospitable conditions under the constant threat of detention. Forced labor programs are touted as “poverty alleviation” efforts, directed at providing “jobs” to current and former detainees, and poor rural individuals.⁴⁰¹ The “vocational” training is a coverup for the forced labor

396 Christian Shepherd, *Fear and oppression in Xinjiang: China’s war on Uighur culture*, Financial Times (Sep. 12, 2019), <https://www.ft.com/content/48508182-d426-11e9-8367-807ebd53ab77>.

397 Mauk, *supra* note 253.

398 Matthew Hill, David Campanale and Joel Gunter, ‘Their goal is to destroy everyone’: Uighur camp detainees allege systematic rape, BBC (Feb. 2, 2021), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-55794071>.

399 *Id.*

400 Amy K. Lehr & Mariefaye Bechrakis, *Connecting the Dots in Xinjiang: Forced Labor, Forced Assimilation, and Western Supply Chains*, CSIS (Oct. 2019), https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/Lehr_ConnectingDotsXinjiang_interior_v3_FULL_WEB.pdf at 2.

401 *Id.* at 5.

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and even detainment sentences that Uyghurs must complete. The local government is given quotas to ensure that a significant proportion of the population is interned, and local officials have been told that at least one member of each household must receive vocational training for a minimum of one to three months.⁴⁰² In addition to gruesome manual labor with minimal to no pay, workers are subject to “re-education” that consists of political indoctrination, Chinese language learning, and other courses similar to those of the internment camps themselves.

Many detainees are placed in factories inside of or adjacent to internment camps.⁴⁰³ Others are assigned to factories in newly built industrial parks, also known as “satellite factories” in the Uyghur Region.⁴⁰⁴ Many factories strategically assign laborers to different factories in order to keep families apart through long hours and laborious work. A subset of satellite factories, for instance, are equipped with daycare facilities nearby to justify the coercion of young female laborers with children.⁴⁰⁵ Another program titled the “secondary vocational training enrollment plan” prevents certain students from attending regular high schools and coerces them into factory work.⁴⁰⁶ In the region, students as young as 15 are being groomed to eventually work in factories as “surplus laborers.”⁴⁰⁷ These students are transferred to their work outposts without the consent or knowledge of their families, resulting in the disappearance of many working-age persons.⁴⁰⁸

A subset of laborers are also detained and transferred out of the region to work. Between 2017-2019, 80,000 Uyghurs were moved to work in factories across mainland China through the “labor transfer” program, also known as “Xinjiang Aid.”⁴⁰⁹ Workers live in segregated dormitories, undergo ideological brainwashing, and are stripped of any personal freedoms. Government documents reveal that workers are also assigned to government minders and security personnel who monitor their every move and regularly search their dorms.⁴¹⁰ Uyghurs were also forbidden from practicing their religion. If a Quran was found, the owner could be detained for three to five years.⁴¹¹ The physical monitoring of Uyghurs is coupled with electronic monitoring of WeChat messages.⁴¹² There are suspicions that workers are forced to download an unnamed smartphone app that tracks their movement.⁴¹³ The inhospitable working conditions – political indoctrination, invasive surveillance and physical abuse – recreate the conditions of the internment camps.

402 Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

403 Byler, *supra* note 387.

404 *Id.*

405 *Id.*

406 Byler, *supra* note 172.

407 Xinhua, *Employment and Labor Rights in Xinjiang*, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China (September 2020), http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202009/17/content_WSS5f62cef6c6d0f7257693c192.html.

408 Byler, *supra* note 172.

409 Vicky Xiuzhong Xu et al., *Uyghurs for Sale*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (Mar. 1, 2020), <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>.

410 *Against Their Will: The Situation in Xinjiang*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/against-their-will-the-situation-in-xinjiang#>.

411 Xu et al., *supra* note 409.

412 *Id.*

413 *Id.*

Forced labor is becoming deeply embedded into the global supply chains of the world's largest companies. The coercion of Uyghur labor has become profitable for both Chinese and global companies, who are able to sell products made by detainees and forced laborers at competitively low prices. According to the Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labor, "virtually the entire apparel industry is tainted by Uyghur and Turkic Muslim labor."⁴¹⁴ These global consumer markets and multinational companies implicated in these schemes are complicit in genocide and are responsible for perpetuating the continued commodification of Uyghur labor.

Global consumer markets and multinational companies implicated in these schemes are complicit in genocide and are responsible for perpetuating the continued commodification of Uyghur labor.

Reducing Regenerative Capacity: IUDs, Sterilization, and Mass Birth Prevention

While internment and forced labor have disrupted the bedrock of Uyghur society, the Chinese government has implemented a mass birth-prevention strategy to erase the Uyghur people in its totality. The tactics used to prevent the regenerative capacity of Uyghur people make clear the Chinese government's intent not just to repress, but utterly eradicate an entire people. Leaked documents have revealed government policies and directives to "carry out family planning sterilization," "lower fertility levels," and to "leave no blind spots."⁴¹⁵ While young Uyghur men are specifically interned to prevent them from procreating, former female detainees recount gruesome stories of systematic rape, forced sterilization, coerced IUD implantation, and the administration of anti-fertility drugs both within and outside the internment camps.⁴¹⁶ Within the camps, Uyghur women are subjected to forced IUD insertions, abortions, and injections, and are coerced into taking medication which halts their menstrual cycles. They are rarely provided with explanations as to what kind of injections and pills they are given. Former detainees recall being released from camps and getting medical check-ups only to find out that they were sterile.⁴¹⁷ On the other hand,

⁴¹⁴ 180+ Orgs Demand Apparel Brands End Complicity in Uyghur Forced Labour, End Uyghur Forced Labour (July 23, 2020), <https://enduyghurforcedlabour.org/news/402-2/>.

⁴¹⁵ *The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China's Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, Newline Institute for Strategy and Policy and Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, (Mar. 4 2021), <https://newlinesinstitute.org/uyghurs/the-uyghur-genocide-an-examination-of-chinas-breaches-of-the-1948-genocide-convention/>.

⁴¹⁶ Millward & Peterson, *supra* note 33 at 6.

⁴¹⁷ *China cuts Uighur births with IUDs, abortion, sterilization*, The Associated Press (June 29, 2020), <https://apnews.com/article/ap-top-news-international-news-weekend-reads-china-health-269b3de1af34e17c1941a514f78d764c>.

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Uyghur men of childbearing age are targeted for internment and confined separately, preventing them from reproducing.⁴¹⁸ Detainees must also attend lectures on how many children they should have.⁴¹⁹

The Chinese government has expanded its efforts of population control outside of the walls of the internment camps. Women are often subject to pregnancy checks, forced sterilization, forced implantation of IUDs, and even abortion.⁴²⁰ In 2014, the government forcibly inserted just over 200,000 IUDs in Uyghur women. By 2018, that figure rose to nearly 330,000 IUDs.⁴²¹ Sterilization rates surged seven-fold in the Uyghur Region from 2016 to 2018.⁴²² In Hotan, a city in the region where the population is almost entirely Uyghur, the government instituted a “free birth-prevention surgery” program, which aimed to sterilize more than a third of all women of childbearing age by the end of 2019.⁴²³ As a result of a combination of these efforts, the birth rate in the Uyghur Region plummeted by an estimated 60% in three years.⁴²⁴

The state’s intervention in family planning measures in the Uyghur Region contradicts its own measures to ease population control for the rest of mainland China. In spite of exceptions in place for minority groups, Uyghur parents with three or more children are heavily fined, threatened with detention, and in some instances, forced to have late-term abortions.⁴²⁵ In addition to these fees, police often unexpectedly raid Uyghur homes searching for hidden children.⁴²⁶ Through these family planning and birth planning campaigns, the Chinese government has created a climate of terror around having children, an implicit fear embedded into people’s minds to act that the state no longer needs to verbalize.

It is clear that the Chinese government engages in policies to destroy the Uyghur identity. The deliberate targeting of “guardians and transmitters of Uyghur identity” through the detention of community leaders, in combination with the destruction of key cultural sites and the disruption of religious practices, reveal an intent to “destroy the essential elements of Uyghur identity and communal bonds.”⁴²⁷ Policies, such as bilingual education, boarding schools, mandatory family planning, detention of young adults, restriction of movement, incessant surveillance and the promotion of inter-ethnic marriage, are all tailored to disrupt the foundational fabric of Uyghur society and eliminate the ethnic group over time. In light of the revelation regarding the detainment camps, mass sterilization, coerced labor coupled with the scores of suppressive tactics implemented, a number of experts, lawmakers, and governments around the world have declared that the Chinese government is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the Uyghur people.⁴²⁸

418 Newline Institute for Strategy and Policy and Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, *supra* note 415 at 5.

419 The Associated Press, *supra* note 417.

420 *Id.*

421 *Id.*

422 *Id.*

423 *Id.*

424 *China denies coercive birth control measures in Xinjiang*, The Associated Press (Jan. 11, 2021) <https://apnews.com/article/international-news-race-and-ethnicity-beijing-birth-control-china-84b8a13dbbb3d9a24d25bd0db7ad746e>.

425 *Xinjiang Hospitals Aborted, Killed Babies Outside Family Planning Limits: Uyghur Obstetrician*, Radio Free Asia (Aug. 17, 2020), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/abortions-08172020144036.html>.

426 The Associated Press, *supra* note 424.

427 Newline Institute for Strategy and Policy and Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, *supra* note 415 at 4.

428 Edward Wong & Chris Buckley, *U.S. Says China’s Repression of Uighurs Is ‘Genocide’*, N.Y. Times (Jan. 19, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/us/politics/trump-china-xinjiang.html>.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Uyghur genocide committed by the Chinese government in the Uyghur Region must act as a warning to the international community.
- Because of the international community's inaction toward the regime's severe human rights atrocities in both Tibet and the Uyghur Region over the past several decades, the CCP has seen that they can get away with such abuses without being held accountable and has since felt emboldened. This sentiment is especially evident, given the recent events in Hong Kong.
- This genocide is a clear indicator that the Chinese government's end goal is to secure absolute ideological compliance and complete assimilation among Uyghurs so that they align with the CCP's ideology.

Conclusion

The CCP remains steadfast in its main objective to assert its legitimacy as the sole ruling party in China. The CCP promises to be the only ruling party who can bring about “national rejuvenation” and fully realize the “Chinese Dream.” The “Chinese Dream” entails a world of sinicized uniformity, a citizenry with unwavering loyalty, and a cultish veneration of not only the CCP, but also of Xi Jinping. For decades, the CCP has actively molded an environment to ensure that the CCP’s legitimacy and the nation’s cohesion would be indivisible.⁴²⁹

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Chinese government viciously purges the country of people whose inherent identity is incongruous with the party’s ideals of homogeneity. The very existence of Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong – which each have their own unique identities and even separate ideas of statehood and sovereignty – is considered a threat to the survival of the CCP. As a result, the people of these regions have consistently been denied their fundamental freedoms and human rights.

The CCP’s suppressive tactics vary in terms of implementation, but are modeled off of successful practices between regions. The Uyghur Region which has become a police state is built on policies that were previously implemented in Tibet. The policies of these regions highlight how **the communication and transmission of ideas across regions has enabled the Chinese government to more effectively commit mass atrocities**. Policies within the two regions riff on each other, inform each other and ultimately share the final goal of quashing local traditions and practices. In Hong Kong, the CCP’s history of repression is slightly different, but have begun to mirror the government’s strategies to **ostracize and oppress**. The CCP has justified taking away Hong Kong’s freedoms because it believes that Hong Kong was taken away by the British and was finally returned to China, where it belonged and should have always been. The Chinese government rejects western influence over Hong Kong, and sees a total sinicization as the end goal. In all three focus regions, the CCP believes that ultimate control is required and, as a result, engages in widespread human rights violations – including genocide – with unparalleled force. At the time of writing this report, these countless atrocities are still ongoing.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ Zeng, *supra* note 8 at 34.

⁴³⁰ The authors acknowledge that this report has not captured everything that has happened, or is still currently unfolding.

Due to the international community's inaction in face of the CCP's severe human rights abuses in Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong, the Chinese government has felt emboldened and has continued to carry out its campaign of repression with impunity. It has also relied on its economic clout to grow and strengthen its global political influence. Despite these challenges, activists and communities both within China and abroad remain dedicated to the struggle for freedom and human rights and engage in acts of resistance every day.

It is imperative that the international community pay close attention to the CCP's gross human rights abuses and culture of impunity, so that they realize that what is happening in the three focus regions has the capacity to extend beyond China's borders in the future. Members of civil society and policymakers around the world must implement coordinated plans and strategies to combat the CCP's growing global authoritarian influence, and stand in solidarity with the people of Tibet, the Uyghur Region, and Hong Kong.

Recommendations

To date, the Chinese government is continuing to crush dissent through brutal, state-sponsored campaigns. Through its imposition of extreme human rights abuses, including religious persecution in Tibet, internment camps in the Uyghur Region, and the national security law in Hong Kong, the Chinese government has imposed a widespread climate of fear in all three regions.

As the space for dissent within China is rapidly shrinking, the Chinese government is also extending its influence far beyond its borders. In fact, the Chinese government aims to export its authoritarianism overseas through trade deals, technology, and the BRI. In the process, the Chinese government bolsters other authoritarian regimes around the world and undermines democracy. Accordingly, civil society organizations and policymakers around the world must act. The international community must help to amplify the voices of activists in China, and sound the alarm against the CCP's unrelenting campaign of repression. Together, we must condemn the Chinese government's abuses, and stand together to protect human rights, the rule of law, and democratic institutions.

The following are a series of recommendations for international civil society organizations and policymakers.



Recommendations for International Civil Society Organizations

- 1. Create and/or support platforms that provide a safe space for grassroots activists to tell their stories and to expose the Chinese government's human rights abuses.** It has become increasingly difficult for activists, both in China and abroad, to safely speak out against the severe erosion of human rights in the country. These platforms are necessary to both spread awareness and hold the Chinese government accountable.
- 2. Strengthen activist movements by building cross-border, multi-generational coalitions.** International civil society organizations should learn more about the struggles that activists are facing, and should strive to work together. By embracing common interests and goals, organizations and activists can form important alliances.
- 3. Take a clear, public stance in solidarity with activists and pro-democracy efforts.** Civil society organizations can no longer claim that they are unaware of the human rights situation in the focus regions. In order to avoid being complicit, they must ensure that they use their platforms to support human rights efforts on the ground and condemn the Chinese government.

Recommendations for Policymakers

- 1. Incorporate human rights in foreign policy and economic agendas by adhering to international standards, and by consulting with local and diasporic civil society groups.** States have a moral and legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill fundamental human rights. As such, human rights must be at the forefront of international negotiations and agreements. In order to do so, policymakers and relevant stakeholders should familiarize themselves with international human rights frameworks and conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Furthermore, states should engage with civil society groups and independent experts to ensure that their foreign policies and economic negotiations are not complicit to the Chinese government's crimes including genocide, and Uyghur forced labor.
- 2. Bridge the gap across political aisles.** Discussions about China should be non-partisan and should underscore the importance of the protection of human rights. Policymakers should also find ways to work human rights into conversations with high-level decision-makers, while also recognizing that the people within China are not a monolith. They should remain cognizant to stray from any language that may be fear-mongering or xenophobic.

3. Spearhead the creation of a multilateral infrastructure initiative to counter China's BRI. Most importantly, such an initiative should include clear human rights clauses and robust accountability mechanisms. With China's economic clout, the Chinese government is strategically expanding its political influence throughout Southeast Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Africa. As a result, countries on the receiving end of BRI loans are more eager to help amplify China's authoritarian rhetoric and goals. In order to combat the CCP's authoritarian influence, policymakers from democratic countries should spearhead a new infrastructural initiative that could be an alternative to the BRI, and that could ultimately provide support to countries in need.