



**BaLMUN 2021**

**Topic Guide**

**Social and Humanitarian  
Committee**

## ***A letter to the delegates***

*Dear delegates,*

*We would like to welcome you to the Social and Humanitarian Committee at the 8<sup>th</sup> Banja Luka International MUN conference.*

*It is a true honour and pleasure to be your chairs at this committee. Social and Humanitarian Committee is of great importance for the world as we know it nowadays since it deals with current issues regarding violation and protection of human rights. Therefore, we hope that our moderation of your debate as well as your ideas will result in effective resolutions. During this year's sessions you will be creating resolutions concerning the Uyghur crisis in China. We believe that this topic, among many others, are of great importance at the moment. We look forward to successful discussions, diplomatic conduct and pragmatic solutions to the aforementioned issues. Our wish for you is to gain new knowledge, meet new people and create memorable experiences at this conference!*

*Sincerely,*

*Your chairs Irina and Milana*

*P.S. Always remember that research is the key towards a successful debate.*

# **Topic: Treatment of the Uyghur Muslims** **in China**



Two people wearing masks showing colors of the Uyghur heartland's flag with a hand painted with the Chinese Communist Party's colors over it. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC**

The Chinese government has reportedly detained more than a million Muslims in reeducation camps. Most of the people who have been arbitrarily detained are Uyghur, a predominantly Turkic-speaking ethnic group primarily from China's northwestern region of Xinjiang (which is why the Uyghur crisis is also known as the Xinjiang conflict).

Human rights organizations, UN officials, and many foreign governments are urging China to stop the crackdown. But Chinese officials maintain that what they call vocational training centers do not infringe on Uyghurs' human rights. They have refused to share information about the detention centers, and prevented journalists and foreign investigators from examining them. However, internal Chinese

government documents leaked in late 2019 have provided important details on how officials launched and maintain the detention camps.

## **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE CAMPS?**

Information on what actually happens in the camps is limited, but many detainees who have since fled China describe harsh conditions. Detainees are forced to pledge loyalty to the CCP and renounce Islam, they say, as well as sing praises for communism and learn Mandarin. Some reported prison-like conditions, with cameras and microphones monitoring their every move and utterance. Others said they were tortured and subjected to sleep deprivation during interrogations.

Women have shared stories of sexual abuse, with some saying they were forced to undergo abortions or have contraceptive devices implanted against their will. Some released detainees contemplated suicide or witnessed others kill themselves.

## **WHAT DO CHINESE OFFICIALS SAY ABOUT THE CAMPS?**

Government officials first denied the camps' existence. Starting in October 2018, officials started calling them centers for “vocational education and training programs.” In March 2019, their official name became “vocational training centers,” and Xinjiang’s governor, Shohrat Zakir, described them as “boarding schools” that provide job skills to “trainees” who are voluntarily admitted and allowed to leave the camps. But documents leaked in late 2019 showed how officials worked to repress Uyghurs, lock them in camps and prevent them from leaving.

Chinese officials publicly maintain that the camps have two purposes: to teach Mandarin, Chinese laws and vocational skills, as well as to prevent citizens from becoming influenced by extremist ideas, to “nip terrorist activities in the bud,”

according to a government report. Pointing out that Xinjiang has not experienced a terrorist attack since December 2016, officials claim the camps have prevented violence.

The government has resisted international pressure to allow in outside investigators, saying anything happening inside Xinjiang is an internal issue. It denies that people are forced to denounce Islam, are detained against their will, and experience abuse in the camps. In early 2019, it organized several trips for foreign diplomats to visit Xinjiang and tour a center; a U.S. official criticized them as “highly choreographed.”

## **WHAT IS THE GLOBAL REACTION TO THE CRISIS?**

Several Western countries have imposed sanctions on officials in China over rights abuses against the mostly Muslim Uyghur minority group. The sanctions were introduced as a coordinated effort by the European Union, UK, US and Canada. China responded with its own sanctions on European officials. It has denied the allegations of abuse, claiming the camps are "re-education" facilities used to combat terrorism. But UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the treatment of Uyghurs amounted to "appalling violations of the most basic human rights".

The EU has not imposed new sanctions on China over human rights abuses since the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, when troops in Beijing opened fire on pro-democracy protesters.

The sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, target senior officials in Xinjiang who have been accused of serious human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims. Those targeted have been named as:

- Chen Mingguo, the director of the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau, the local police force
- Wang Mingshan, a member of Xinjiang's Communist Party standing committee, who, the EU says, "holds a key political position in charge of

overseeing" the detention of Uyghurs

- Wang Junzheng, party secretary of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a state-owned economic and paramilitary organisation
- The former deputy Communist Party head in Xinjiang, Zhu Hailun, who is accused of having held a "key political position" in overseeing the running of the camps
- The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Public Security Bureau, which is in charge of implementing XPCC policies on security matters, including the management of detention centres

Mr Raab called the abuse of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang "one of the worst human rights crises of our time".

## **USEFUL LINKS:**

1. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-repression-uyghurs-xinjiang>
2. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/video/china-s-uyghur-crisis-when-muslims-are-abused-the-worldturns-a-blind-eye-65783365811>
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/31/china-uyghurs-muslims-religious-minorities-marco-rubio>
5. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/features/uyghurs/>
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/09/chinas-treatment-of-uyghurs-breaches-un-genocide-convention-finds-landmark-report>
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56487162>





