

T.C.
ANTALYA BILIM UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

**GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MASTER THESIS**

**DYSTOPIA IN CONTEMPORARY XINJIANG:
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST UYGHUR MUSLIMS BY CHINA**

Hina AARIF

JANUARY 2023

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This thesis was accepted by the jury with unanimous vote on the date 27/01/2023 in the
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DECLARATION

Master Thesis of this study named “DYSTOPIA IN CONTEMPORARY XINJIANG: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST UYGHUR MUSLIMS BY CHINA”, which I presented, I declare that scientific moral principles were followed in the preparation of this study, in case of benefiting from the works of others, reference is made in accordance with scientific norms, no falsification has been made in the data used, and that any part of this study is not presented as another academic study.

30/12/2022

Hina AARIF

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ABSTRACT

DYSTOPIA IN CONTEMPORARY XINJIANG: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST UYGHUR MUSLIMS BY CHINA

Hina AARIF

Master Thesis in Global Politics and International Relations

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. İbrahim KASAPSARAÇOĞLU

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Recently human rights organisations have criticised the discriminatory framework being drawn by the Chinese government in the autonomous region of Xinjiang, China, against the minority Uyghur Muslims. Reports from Human rights organisations like Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) have surfaced where Chinese government is seen using brute force, repression, and detention to control movement within the autonomous region of Xinjiang. According to the Chinese government, the strict measures being implemented on the Uyghurs are so done to counter terrorist activities within the north-western region. The state of China is strongly criticized and condemned by European Parliament and is accused by Uyghurs of human rights violation, who have fled to foreign countries from Xinjiang fearing persecution by the Chinese government. This thesis is intended to draw a profound summary to criticise and question the government about its plans for Xinjiang and the Uyghur Muslims. The purpose of writing this thesis is to bring certain important issues under the microscope so as to analyse the extent of China's approach and aim to control a particular ethnic and religious community in Xinjiang. The thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of the situation of Uyghurs in particular and the human rights violations in China in general.

KEYWORDS: China, Xinjiang, Human Rights, Uyghurs, UN.

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ÖZET

SİNCAN'DA YAŞANAN DİSTOPYA: ÇİN TARAFINDAN UYGUR MÜSLÜMANLARINA YAPILAN İNSAN HAKLARI İHLALLERİ

Hina AARIF

Küresel Siyaset ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Son zamanlarda insan hakları örgütleri, Çin hükümetinin Sincan özerk bölgesinde Uygur Müslümanlarına karşı çizdiği ayrımcı çerçeveyi eleştirmektedir. Uygur İnsan Hakları Projesi (UHRP) gibi insan hakları örgütlerinden gelen raporlar, Çin hükümetinin Sincan özerk bölgesindeki hareketleri kontrol etmek için kaba kuvvet, baskın ve gözaltı kullandığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Çin hükümetine göre, Uygurlara uygulanan sıkı önlemler, kuzeybatı bölgesindeki terörist faaliyetlere karşı koymak için yapılmaktadır. Çin devleti, Avrupa Parlamentosu tarafından şiddetle eleştirilmekte ve kınanmaktadır. Çin hükümetinin zulmünden korkarak Sincan'dan yabancı ülkelere kaçan Uygurlar Çin hükümetini insan hakları ihlalleri ile suçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Çin hükümetinin Sincan ve Uygur Müslümanları için gelecekteki planlarını sorgulamak için bir çerçeve çizmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Çin'in yaklaşımını analiz etmek ve Sincan'daki belirli bir etnik ve dini topluluğu kontrol etmeyi amaçlayan politikaları mercek altına almaktır. Bu çalışma ile, Uygurlar meselesine bilimsel bir katkıda bulunulması hedeflenmektedir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Çin, Sincan, İnsan Hakları, Uygurlar, BM.

TEZ JÜRİSİ:

Doç. Dr. İBRAHİM MURAT KASAPSARAÇOĞLU (Danışman)

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
EU	: European Union
GPS	: Global Positioning System
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
IJOP	: Integrated Joint Operations Platform
IHRL	: International Human Rights Law
IUD (IUCD)	: Intrauterine Contraceptive Device
NSO group	: Niv, Shalev and Omri
OHCHR	: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRC	: The People's Republic of China
UDHR	: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	: United Kingdom
UN	: United Nations
WHO	: World Health Organization
WWII	: Second World War
XUAR	: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

PREFACE

I would like to extend my gratitude to my parents for supporting me throughout my thesis, as well as my classmates and friends for helping me even when my morale was at the bottom for keeping me on track regardless of how distracting life was during these difficult times, and being a family, when mine was far away. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my advisor Assoc. Prof. İbrahim Murat Kasapsaraçoğlu for assisting me in finishing my thesis.



1. INTRODUCTION

Drastic developments were taking place regarding the concern of protecting human rights of the people, certain minorities, communities, and ethnic groups/religious groups after WWII had ended. One of the important developments that took place were the transitions on the law of global human rights. Due to the horrifying events of WWII, protection of human rights, the relationship between the state and human rights were seen as an important concern. Given how the Nazi regime treated the people, the violations were carried out against their own citizens, where they were subject to persecution and mass executions. Moreover, the seriousness of the crimes done against the Jews during the Holocaust raised questions and concerns for protecting the human rights. Therefore, certain important provisions were made in the United Nations (UN) charter concerning the human rights and the relationship of the state with the people, where interventions could be met, regardless of the matters to be regional/domestic or national/international. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and documents, significant developments have been made as one of the major sources of the binding force (Lattmann, 2014, pp. 14-16). Specific International treaties have been imposing sanctions and have strong binding power when it comes to establishing certain laws in countries as ratifications, which means that the state has the obligation to abide by certain provisions set by the international treaties for human rights if it is bound by a treaty. According to the Article 14 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969, "*Consent to be bound by a treaty expressed by ratification, acceptance or approval*", also according to the Article 38 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969, "*Rules in a treaty becoming binding on third States through international custom*" (Vienna Convention 1969), in such cases, the treaty therefore is a binding force for the state under an international plane.

Such human rights treaties recognise and address human rights both to regional and international levels. According to the international treaties, they have responsibilities towards protecting human rights of individuals and regards the citizens under obligation of international customary law. These treaties are extremely complex and have a decent claim to protect the rights of the individuals. The state under these binding treaties are obligated to protect the human rights of the people against any sort of human rights violation, the role of international treaties is crucial in treating the violations and countering them in international human rights law by the code provided in the provisions of the conventions of the international treaties (Lattmann, 2014, pp. 13-14). The UN General Assembly embraced the UDHR on December 10, 1948, post the rise of movement of international human rights (Lattmann, 2014, p. 17). Initially it was drafted as a standard for achieving human rights of all peoples and nations. It was first of its kind where like social, cultural, religious, political, economic rights were given to people regardless of their backgrounds as fundamental human rights. Along with two other covenants, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, two protocols and *The International Covenant on Economic Social Cultural Rights* were accepted. Many treaties and instruments for international human rights drafted, signed, and passed from the year 1945 have shaped the international human rights body while some are adopted and implemented by state governments at regional and national levels. The state is obligated to follow, respect, and abide by the laws laid down by the body of the state binding international treaties. With the treaties of international human rights, the state

needs to ensure that the constitution creates practical mechanisms and laws for the free and easy facilitation of human rights among the people regardless of the background they come from. According to the articles mentioned under the UDHR, protection of human rights is one of the core and fundamental pillars of a person's existence. Among thirty articles under UDHR, every individual has the right to live freely with dignity and honour. It also consists of thirty sub articles which systematically address the rights of individuals regardless of their religious, ethnic, political, nationality backgrounds. According to UDHR, human rights must be of utmost importance and must be protected by the law of the state. UDHR ensures to keep check on human rights and the fundamental rights of the individuals. The UN General Assembly has simultaneously proclaimed human rights as fundamental standards for ensuring and promoting them as measures of institutionalising progress for societies and its individuals at national and international levels. UDHR has so far successfully been recognised globally and regionally, paving routes of inspiration for implementing human rights and has also been one of the key factors of making over seventy human rights treaties applicable permanently at international and national level.

Nowadays, the policies of the People's Republic of China towards the people living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are intrinsically problematic. According to Amnesty International's report by (Poon, 2018) special laws are applied and used against the Uyghur community, and the allegations against the Chinese government are denied by China given its policy on controlling and restricting knowledge. Human rights organizations are not allowed and are denied access, interviews and interventions concerning the Xinjiang region, where Uyghur Muslims have suffered state repression (Poon, 2018). On one hand, China denies any connection to the human rights abuses involving the Uyghurs, on the other hand, its current policies contradict with its intention to harmonize towards the Muslims from the Uyghur ethnicity. Furthermore, China justifies its strict and restrictive laws and policies towards the Uyghurs as a security measure to combat terrorism in Xinjiang (Chiu, 2021, p. 6)

This study aims to analyse the extent of violations committed against Uyghur Muslims by the Chinese government in context with significant international legal norms and to exemplify the same by understanding the dynamics of ethno-religious and political frameworks set up by Peoples' Republic of China for the Muslim Minority (Uyghurs) in the autonomous region of Xinjiang.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology implemented in this research has been carried out using a qualitative and descriptive method. As for the data collection, both primary and secondary data has been used to describe the prevailing socio- economic, cultural, political, and religious status of the ethnic Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang under the leadership of Peoples' Republic of China. Moreover, the research thesis being on human rights, it is ensured to systematically show how and whether the policies of the government of China abide by the international law of Human Rights in Xinjiang. International law on human rights and Universal Declaration of Human rights is used as an instrument in conducting the research to mark the number of human rights violations done against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Also, the policies of the Chinese government are put to scale in context to the Uyghur Muslims and the rest of the ethnic minorities, in the light of international human rights and UN conventions. This thesis is based on academic papers, interviews, and testimonies of Uyghur Muslims from Xinjiang, reports on human rights by United Nations, European Union, and previously conducted research on the issue of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

While collecting the data to establish an argument for this research, relevant data and literature was thoroughly studied using a qualitative approach. i.e. previously conducted academic research, accurate sources like reports from human rights organisations which are acknowledged and recognised by the United Nations. While writing this thesis, only relevant and reliable, factual resources were picked while questionable and controversial data were avoided. Also, in the end the reader will come across the argument of the researcher while understanding the ethics and codes of International Human Rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and International Human Rights Instruments.

3. BACKGROUND OF XINJIANG PROBLEM

3.1. The Structure of Xinjiang

Xinjiang, also known as East Turkistan, is one of the largest provinces in China. In Xinjiang, most of the population is the ethnic Muslim minority group called the Uyghurs unlike the rest of China which predominantly is populated with the Hans. The province of Xinjiang is dominated by the Sunni Muslims of the Turkic background, they have a unique set of cultural and religious beliefs, which stem from their Hanafi School of thought. The Muslims of Xinjiang have been following the heritage that is influenced from the Turkic practices and from the cultures of the people of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, since the region has been sharing its borders with the said countries (Fathil, 2019, p. 359).

Before Xinjiang was annexed by the Chinese, many other Central Asian countries were called the Western Provinces. *The Silk Route*, has been one of the reasons of China's interest in Xinjiang since Xinjiang was a buffer zone that linked China to the Europe and the Arabian Peninsula because silk route passed through Xinjiang. Given how important the province of Xinjiang was for China as far as the economic goals of China were concerned, also, for political superiority, the Chinese rulers ensured to maintain political dominance in the eighteenth century over the whole of Central Asia. The year, 1759, marked Xinjiang as a Chinese province, later was renamed as Xinjiang which translates to "New Frontier" (Fathil, 2019, p. 359). Till the twentieth century, Xinjiang was handled by the local Muslim governing bodies. Later in 1955, since the province held a political economic leverage in favour of China, under the rule of Peoples' Republic of China, it was officially renamed as, Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) (Fathil, 2019, pp. 359-363).

Other provinces in China in the western and northern regions, Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu, where Muslims live in a decent population, but unlike these regions, Xinjiang holds the largest number of Uyghur Muslims throughout China. Around 23 million Muslims (Uyghurs) live in Xinjiang which makes it about 1.7% of the whole Chinese 1.4 billion population. In Xinjiang alone the Uyghur Muslims make up to 48% of the population, rest are remaining ethnic groups, like Kazakhs making up to 7%, Hui 5%, and other ethnicities which are Muslims as well including Tajiks, Kyrgyzs. When it comes to the non- residents of Xinjiang, the Hans make up to 40% of the total population (Fathil, 2019, p. 359).

3.2. Socio-economic Conditions of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang

The Uyghurs that reside in Xinjiang are of Turkic ancestry. Literally, the term "Uyghur" means "fellowship or oneness." Their forefathers are said to have come from the *Ding ling* wandering tribe, which existed in the third century AD along the banks of the Baikal River in northwest China (Mellisa Towadi, 2021, p. 56). The Uyghurs congregated in the *Yutian* region because Turks had taken over the region in the ninth century. 23,000,000 Turkish-speaking Uyghur Muslims live in the officially designated territory of XUAR, which is in the southern region of Kashgar. East Turkistan is how the Uyghurs refer to Xinjiang, which the Chinese government refers it as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Mellisa Towadi, 2021, pp. 56-57) . Currently, the Uyghur

population in Xinjiang is at threshold, given its socio-economic and cultural condition. This ethnic group in China is subject to policies which other ethnicities are not. Unemployment is a norm among the Uyghur Muslims, as the Han Chinese – a non-Muslim ethnic group, receives the benefits from the Chinese government, for example, the subsidies for business investment and state/ centre sponsored job opportunities which the Uyghur Muslims either rarely have access to or do not have access to at all. As China has absolute control over drafting policies for the people living in Xinjiang, especially for the Uyghur Muslims, it has affected the socio-economic status of the people of the autonomous region. More than 80% of the people from the Uyghur population live below the poverty line despite abundance in Xinjiang's natural resources (Max, 2020, pp. 253-254). The authorities from PRC, control the consumption, extraction, and distribution, (import and export) of the natural resources of Xinjiang (autonomous region) like precious metals gold and silver, liquid gold like oil and gas, on contrary the native Uyghur receive no profit from their own resources.

The religious practices of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang are not entertained by the Chinese authorities, the Uyghurs are not allowed to grow beards or wear the Islamic Veil, practice their basic Islamic rituals (BBC, 2017) , which is a violation of Article 18 – Right to practice religion (UDHR), also reports say that the Uyghur Muslim children are forbidden from attending government schools (BBC, 2017) , violating Article 26 - Right to education (UDHR). This has increasingly developed a sense of alienation among the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang leading to violent protests since other ethnicities are not forced to not practice their religious, socio-cultural practices and obligations.

In Xinjiang, the political scenario and the administrative institutions have been affecting the ethnic minority, economically. On one hand, the Chinese authorities have been making statements that the reason of placing the central authority as a government in Xinjiang is for and in support of the Uyghurs from an economic perspective since the government claims that it would economically enhance the condition of Xinjiang and its people. On the contrary, questionable reports have surfaced, like the non-Chinese Han ethnic group has been benefiting from the economic outcome generated in Xinjiang and not the Uyghurs (Chaudhuri, 2019, p. 25). In Xinjiang, repression is used to handle and address the economic and political demands of the minorities. According to the Uyghur Muslims, the central government of China appointed in Xinjiang to control the region has been persistently depriving the people especially the ethnic minority- the Uyghurs, to grow the economy, by not letting them invest in the central budget, or having access to the regions resources, the Uyghur are not allowed to perform or establish trade through foreign exchange (Chaudhuri, 2019, pp. 20-24).

It is still being a matter of question whether the people of Xinjiang- the Uyghur Muslims benefit from the economic wealth generated by Chinese authorities in the western province as the Chinese government has not made it clear about the economic policies and the implementations, the economic benefits the people of Xinjiang- Uyghurs would have the share or not. China's biased policies on economy has been inherently proven to be disastrous for the economic rights of the Uyghurs of Xinjiang, while simultaneously the Han ethnic immigration into Xinjiang has been accelerated (Chaudhuri, 2019, pp. 15-17). The unequal geographical distribution has led to economic crisis in Xinjiang, as the urban areas are mostly allotted to the Han ethnic group, who

have a better chance of having economic opportunities in comparison to the Uyghur Muslims who have been relocated to settlements away from the urban areas. On one hand, the Han group has access to superior institutions where they may engage and make investments in the economy, which provides them with stable subsistence. while on the other hand, the Uyghurs are mostly left to work on agricultural land or work as artisans in the industry of handicrafts. Biased, irregular, unequal distribution of economic sectors has led to tensions between the Han ethnic group and Uyghur Muslims (Chaudhuri, 2019, pp. 16-17).

Unprecedented access to Han Chinese to the monopolised sectors of the Xinjiang province post the immigration of the Han community has led to many incidents of tensions and clashes between the Uyghur community and Chinese authorities over economic discrimination. As far as the socio culture and ethnic identity of the Uyghurs is considered, their rituals, practises, religion, ethnic identity is considered intolerable by the Chinese government, and henceforth requires to be filtered, so as to integrate and assimilate them into the Republic of China. The Uyghur Muslim community places a high value on their culture and religion. They perceive these policies as being prejudiced frameworks of the Chinese government that pose a danger to their identity, which has caused the emergence of several distinct organisations that do not share the Chinese nationalistic viewpoints. The sentiment of having to seek autonomy has grown as a result of this continued hostility between Uyghur Muslims and Chinese authorities, and the right to self-determination has created a feeling of political separatism inside the Uyghur population. (Fathil, 2019, p. 361).

3.3. Demand for Autonomy

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang have shown disagreement towards China ruling the said territory. During the 20th century, the Western region of Xinjiang witnessed freedom as total control of China and that of the Soviet aligned East Turkistan republic was not established until the year 1949. Therefore, there had been numerous instances where the Uyghurs of Xinjiang have shown strong disapproval, be it political or administrative in nature, towards the Chinese authorities (HRW, 2005, p. 13). In China existence of any opposition parties in any public establishment is not allowed. However, many opposing ideological groups, brew in secrecy. In context to Xinjiang, the opposition groups work as shadow organisations in Kashgar and Hetian in the Southern parts of the region. These groups have been working on incorporating religious ideologies with that of the political policies and formats for establishing Islamic rule in Xinjiang while rejecting the Communist ideologies and nationalistic policies of China (HRW, 2005, p. 14).

In 1990, Beijing became strict with the autonomous region of Xinjiang and people living there, since there was a mass insurgency in the north-western region of current day Kashgar. It was then when, political frameworks began to take shape for accelerating the integration of Xinjiang with that of the People's Republic of China. In order to do that, one of the policies that China adopted was the migration of the Han ethnic (non-Muslim community) into Xinjiang.

The Hans ethnic group was strategically migrated by the government authorities, since the establishment of the New Frontier, into Xinjiang to change the regions demography (Clarke, 2015, p. 129). This change in population, ethnic, religious, and

cultural differences between the Hans and the Uyghurs have led to innumerable events of riots, chaos, and hysteria between the said ethnic groups in the autonomous region (Clarke, 2014, p. 3). The reason behind the rise of clashes stem from not only the culture and the religion but also from the socio- political and socio- economic inclinations, preferences and ideologies of the Uyghur Muslims as they have been demanding autonomy and have been protesting for self-determination against the Peoples' Republic of China to establish a free state of *Uyghuristan* which they also call the East Turkistan Islamic Republic, something that the state actors sitting in China do not approve of (Fathil, 2019, pp. 350-360). The government of China ensures to counter these voices with policies which they call the countermeasures, to keep Xinjiang an inseparable part of China (Bovingdon, 2010, pp. 3,11,90). Apparently, the policy makers of China were able to maintain temporary peace in the region but are seen by the Uyghurs of Xinjiang as discrimination and prejudice against them, given the hard and biased nature of the stern policies imposed over the Uyghurs (Fathil, 2019, p. 360).

The demand for independence by the separatist organisations in Xinjiang is not a new voice being made, in fact the movement for seeking autonomy has been going on for decades since 1950s, which led to the formulation of many separatist parties. For example, the Eastern Turkistan People's party which led to innumerable riots and protests between 1980 to 1990 and has not stopped till date. Re-creation of the state of *Uyghuristan* that was established between 1930s and 1940s by certain Muslim leaders prior to the annexation by China, has been one of the motives of, separatist Muslim leaders in Xinjiang (Fathil, 2019, p. 363).

4. FINDINGS

The case of Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang is rooted in the gravity of the atrocities that people are everyday suffering under the communist regime. The case of Uyghur Muslims is different because China's policy of restricting entry to the region has led to a quiet crackdown in China against Muslims. According to (Watch, 2019, p. 9) and a report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (McDonnell, 2013), Muslims in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region have faced disapproval from the Chinese government over their violations against Uyghur Muslims by the Chinese government (McDonnell, 2013).

4.1. Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang

4.1.1. Censorship and Surveillance

The autonomous region of Xinjiang is a Muslim majority region, which has become an open laboratory of surveillance and censorship since the Chinese authorities have implemented policies and strict measures to monitor the Uyghur Muslim at an unprecedented scale. This should be noted that while there are recorded documents and UN reports about China's intrusive cyber policies against the Uyghur Muslims (OHCHR, 2022, pp. 30-31). China on the other hand denies allegations, and instead claims the said cyber laws are meant to be in favour of the national security of the Republic of China and its population regardless of the identities and backgrounds of the people. According to the national security law which was passed by Peoples' Republic of China in 2015, China proclaims the need for and importance of maintaining national stability and state security (OHCHR, 2022, p. 10). On one hand, the law rests on the parameter of protecting the rights of the people and their interests, a total opposite has been documented by international & social activist organisations and human rights committees. The law regarding national security passed in 2015 significantly includes the terms of internet/Cyber consumption by people.

In 2019, shocking satellite imagery left the world audience stunned, the images and footages, were from Xinjiang, China. Blindfolded people, shackled in chains, were documented to being detained by uniformed men from China. They were being detained into the infamous concentration centres in Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities have been making sure to keep the heavily Muslim populated Xinjiang region under strict surveillance and therefore have transformed the autonomous region into the strictly controlled and surveilled regions across the globe. Moreover, a report by, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Uyghur Muslims, aged 12, and above, are obligated to submit their biometric ordinates and data, including blood samples, voice samples, DNA samples, and iris scans (HRW, 2005, p. 15) Given how impactful and powerfully intrusive this techno authoritarian tactics are, the Chinese technological companies of surveillance have been expanding their market by selling it to autocratic governments across the world. A study and report by Human Rights Watch documented that the same autocrats keep check of their rivals and oppositions by using the spyware purchased from China. These extremely sophisticated technological tactics are unfortunately gaining attention from governments at the global level (Wang, 2021). Cyber surveillance is mainly used to spy on and over the dissenting populations of a state, providing to the latter an intrusive and unprecedented control, over communication,

movement, media, daily life, religious choices, bank details, political inclination, etcetera of the common people.

According to Thomson routers foundation, in the UK alone, it is estimated that government uses at least 4 to 6,000,000 CCTV cameras linked to the abuse of Uyghur Muslims (Schapiro, 2021). The same companies have been linked to the exploitation of millions of Muslims from Xinjiang China. Many countries and their governments were and are moving and swapping to Chinese model of censorship and automated surveillance (Foundation, 2021). Moreover, given how effective and dangerously intrusive Chinese cyber system is, China has become a techno prototype of techno authoritarianism in the 21st century. China, being an economic giant in the global market, has easily managed to sell, dangerous cyber spyware at extremely low costs, putting the world population into jeopardy, by selling it to powerful, autocrats, dictators, and world hegemons. Not to forget, how the Israel's spyware by NSO group was used to hack and monitor the family of the famous Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi's who was conspired and later murdered outside of the country in a Saudi embassy in Turkey on 2nd October 2018 (Callamard, 2021). Currently Chinese spyware and surveillance technology is being exported to foreign powers to further repress the world citizens (Feldstein, 2021).

Furthermore, given the nature of the security policy, the authorities control even the private activities of the population, especially in Xinjiang, by the Uyghur Muslims (Dat, 2022). Moreover, the Chinese authorities do not disclose the extent of control they have over the Uyghur population, while they implement cyber regulations. In 2009, in Xinjiang, the Chinese authorities carried out a mass communication, blackout for a period of 10 consecutive months, which is a violation of the basic human and fundamental rights given by United Nations General Assembly in November 2015. The government of China ensures to control and restrict the influx of knowledge and information by and from the Muslims dominating Xinjiang (Rue, 2011, pp. 10-11). While China has been labelling and hence justifying the Uyghur movement and their religious preferences as militant and violent in nature which supposedly projects a threat to the national security of China and to the rest of non-Muslim Chinese people, the authorities prevent the Uyghur Muslims from accessing internet – violating Article 21.1 - right to equal access to public service (UDHR) (Access to Communication). China denies the allegations while simultaneously restricting a population of a basic human rights granted under the (UDHR) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (McDonnell, 2013). As this blanket repression continues to take place the Uyghur Muslims face an existential crisis and have been facing digital invisibility in the world. When it comes to China's relationship with the West, it seems to have deteriorated following the internationalisation of the Uyghur tensions in the autonomous region of Xinjiang (Clarke, 2014, pp. 1-4). The relationship with America and Australia has had an intense impact due to the reports that had been coming out post-2009. Due to the several social media posts about tensions, erupting between the Han Chinese and the Uyghurs had a devastating effect on the image of the Chinese government-given the tactics being used by the state against one community i.e. the Uyghurs. Chinese government ensures to promote Xinjiang as an integral part of peoples Republic of China in the aftermath of the violence that engulfed the year 2009 at the hands of the rumours against Uyghur men raping Han women. (Clarke, 2014, p. 1) The Chinese government did not maintain the ethical and constitutional rights, of the Uyghurs, instead compensated the Han, Chinese

community with around 200,00 Yuan (US\$29,282) for being “the victims of the Urumqi violence. (Clarke, 2014, p. 2). The news spread like wildfire through internet, social media posts, and since then rekindled the questions about China’s handling of the Xinjiang region.

According to the state of China, it is to understand and acknowledge Censorship as an important and impactful instrument of controlling the social, cultural, and religious practises of the Uyghurs of the autonomous region. More importantly, the government has been censoring, and restricting the use of the native language of the Uyghurs and has been banning it in academia as well. This should be noted that the censorship has been mainly on the literature that highlights the historical facts about the Uyghur politics and culture in Xinjiang which has been called also as “East Turkistan” by the Uyghurs. When we go deeper into researching, we break down the tactics to understand the cyber gag and surveillance implemented by the government, it affects the scholars of Xinjiang , especially those who claim and accuse of oppression and impunity at the hands of the government (Tanczer, McConville, & Maynard, 2016, pp. 346-349). Furthermore, given how the Chinese government tries to restrict and control the population of the Uyghurs, it has affected academia and literature immensely. The techno authoritarian characteristics of the People’s Republic of China has been proven in suffocating and a major reason of academic and intellectual dryness. The Chinese government has been keeping a check on the online activities carried out by the Uyghur population in Xinjiang. While it is posed as a security measure in front of the world, it has been keeping the Uyghurs from expressing and voicing themselves. The government considers the Xinjiang population a threat to the national security of China as their religious and cultural preferences are seen as the same (Fathil, 2019, p. 355).

As the state of China continues to make efforts to disintegrate the Uyghur population regarding their ethnic identity, as according to the state, the Uyghur majority is seen as a risk for any unpredictable violent event against China. According to the Communist regime-China, if the Islamic consciousness stays alive in the Uyghur community, it will be a threat to the national security and national stability of China. Moreover, when it comes to delegitimising the voice and cause of the Uyghurs, the government of China has been equating calls for autonomy of the Uyghurs with terrorism and violent activities. The government also uses 9/11 attacks as a diplomatic tactic to gain leverage internationally, therefore, invalidating the voice of the Uyghurs (Störig, 2020, p. 16). To understand the tactics used to censor and monitor people in China by the Chinese government, this should be noted that the government of China currently ensures to be in control as a techno authoritarian regime in the 21st century (Störig, 2020, p. 29).

Surveillance being a major tactic used by the Communist powers in China against the people of Xinjiang, is used to collect bio data of the Uyghurs, as being already labelled as violent minded people and a threat to the Chinese integrity and security. Chinese government collects the private, professional, social et cetera data of the Uyghur Muslims. The movement of the people is restricted, therefore the right to live freely is violated. A report by Human Rights watch (HRW, 2019) revealed the tactics used by Chinese government to surveil and monitor Uyghurs is at an exponential and uncontrolled rate. The people are mass profiled and monitored. According to the

surveillance reports collected by Human Rights Watch, it was revealed that the government uses intrusive methods and measures to collect data of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, from the use of contraception by Uyghur Muslim women to the political inclination and ideological preferences, Chinese government observes the Uyghur population as a suspicious community, thus they impose laws on them, which compromises the human rights to privacy and movement, non-interference with privacy, Article 12, (UDHR) , freedom_of movement, Article 13, (UDHR) that have been granted to the entire world citizens internationally.

The government of China, uses a dangerously intrusive digital application called *Integrated Joint Operations Platform* (IJOP), which considers normal day to day activities of the people, “violent”, for example, it will be considered a threat to the state security if an Uyghur individual from Xinjiang uses the backdoor of his home for leaving or entering; Example 2: if an Uyghur is selectively social with neighbours or avoids interacting with fellow citizens without any ill will, this will be considered unlawful and violent behaviour (Watch, 2019, pp. 2,26); Example 3: the use of encrypted, social media applications like WhatsApp and viber is seen as suspicious activity which requires immediate investigation by Chinese authorities and the people in question are subject to interrogation.

While the government calls, IJOP as a mode/instrument of collecting important information, this was seen and observed by the team of HRW that the objective of Chinese authorities of using this intrusive surveillance app on Uyghur Muslim was not just data collection or security but had darker and otherwise intentions towards the Uyghur population.

For instance, if an Uyghur from Xinjiang leaves/exists the regions without letting the people in authority know about the exit, the surveillance application’s system would create a flag and send signals to the authorities by sending them “micro clues” and would prompt of illegal and suspicious activity. Hence the person in question would automatically become subject to interrogation and severe investigation (HRW, 2019, p. 2). All these activities are normal and legal, but by the Chinese government these activities by the Uyghur Muslims are seen as a threat to the national security and the government ensures that they do not let anyone intervene or interfere while implementing and carrying out the law regarding surveillance and censorship upon the Uyghur Muslims.

4.1.2. Counter Policies

While addressing Xinjiang issue that has already attracted international attention, the Chinese state has been modifying and drafting policies to counter the narratives given by the Uyghur and their supporters/activists. On one hand, the Chinese government has been claiming that the policies are an important tool for integrating the Uyghurs to the Chinese republic, which have been shown and promoted as a law which is subtle and nationally inclusive and integrating. The said policy / law is contradictory to the narratives of the Chinese state and have not been in favour of the Uyghurs of the autonomous region (Fathil, 2019, pp. 357-358). If discussing about the identity and the background of the Uyghurs, the said ethnic group has certain cultural preferences, religious inclinations, also political priorities which seem to be discouraged by the

government of People's Republic of China that has been implementing *Confucian* ideologies among its people, therefore have been encouraging the Chinese population (which is 90% of the Han ethnic group and rest are non-Han groups and among which are the *Uyghurs*- a sub category of a minority) to inculcate Chinese nationalism instead of the ideologies cherished and followed by the Uyghurs from centuries.

Moreover, the people in Xinjiang have a separate set of complex political preferences, which has resulted in the implementation of restrictive counter policies in Xinjiang. The policy ensures that there is a Zero Tolerance policy towards any sort of opposing ideologies which do not favour the ideas of nationalism set and designed by China. The purpose is to make the Uyghurs renounce their belief system and adopt Chinese nationalism as Chinese patriots and nationalists would do. Thus, to make the autonomous group renounce their Turkic-Uyghur, ethnicity (Fathil, 2019, p. 362;366). This has created a lot of chaos among the two parties (the state and the Uyghurs), due to the clashes of ideologies and separatist opposition from the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, the government of China has been implementing and imposing restrictive counter policies, which are shown as counter-terrorism policies, the reason for carrying out such policies is that the Uyghur movement is viewed as a terrorist threat to the state of China. To counter and “nip the problem in the bud”, the government ensures and imposes policies to erase any anti-government movement or revolt. These oppressive measures are claimed to maintain the national security and stability of the People's Republic of China regardless of what and how these policies make the Uyghurs feel about their ethnicity being erased gradually by the state.

The stance of the People's Republic of China towards the concept of religion has been tolerant to the majority belief system of the people of China, However the belief system / the religion / the religious sect, etc shouldn't be a threat to the authorities of the Chinese state, or to the economy of the country (HRW, 2005, pp. 26-27). On one hand, the constitution of the People's Republic of China propagates protection of the rights of religion, whether the person wants to be religious or chooses otherwise. However, on the other hand, the constitution of China does not guarantee an individual's right to express his religion through any sort of activity. The international bodies in the United Nations addressed this concern of religious freedom and the policies/ laws in the constitution of People's Republic of China to be reconsidered for a revision so as to prevent religious discrimination between ethnic minorities in China since the policies for religion in China directly violate international rights of a human being under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (HRW, 2005, p. 47). According to the said instrument of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an individual is guaranteed to practice his religion and manifest it totally, which means that an individual can practice, preach his or her religion with absolute freedom regardless of which country, race etc background he or she comes from.

In the case of Uyghurs in question, the extent of human rights violations taking place at the hands of the Chinese authorities in the XUAR, has been unprecedented according to the International Human Rights Organisations where the fundamental religious and human rights of the Uyghurs are being silently violated by the Chinese government under the pretext of harmonious integration of Xinjiang into the Republic of China. According to the Article 18 – right to practice religion (UDHR), every individual

has the right to practise and preach or renounce his or her religion with full immunity, and this right comes inherently once a person is born. However, in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, under the Chinese regime, the Muslim minority, (Uyghur Ethnic group) is deprived of this right that every individual in the world is granted (Abdulkhamidova, 2021, pp. 13-14). The Chinese government has been putting Uyghurs in concentration camps to re-educate them (vocational training centres) where simultaneously, contradictory testimonials have surfaced where the former detainees have claimed torture, humiliation, rape, forced contraception, tactics of tormenting a human being at the hands of the Chinese authorities stationed in the concentration camps of Xinjiang. The Chinese government has been ensuring that they ban practicing religion in Xinjiang by the Uyghur Muslims (Anand, 2022, pp. 25, 30). Many Uyghur women who have been former detainees in concentration camps have given testimonies of being tormented and raped by Chinese officials (Matthew, 2021). China's regulations on religious practise assure that any unregistered religious group would face persecution under Chinese law, especially if it follows the religion practised by Uyghurs in the Xinjiang (Anand, 2022, pp. 24, 28-30). In the Chinese concentration camps, people who are detained are sentenced indefinitely in the “Indoctrination camps” for they are seen as threats by the communist regime in Beijing, the detainees are treated inhumanly for practicing their religion- Islam (Abdulkhamidova, 2021, p. 4).

Many religious organisations, mosques and religious personalities have been attacked, shut down, burned down, gutted down “post 1960s- Great Cultural Revolution”. Furthermore, the government of China has been since then been modifying the laws, policies regarding the Islamic bodies and organisations. At many instances, the government officials made authoritative bodies to regulate the preaching and functioning of Islam and its branches. According to the Chinese Islamic association, the Islamic heads like the imams, religious scholars and Madrassa founders, schools were ordered, that they were to be required to register their organisations and schools/associations with local Chinese officials (Fathil, 2019, p. 362). As any unregistered, Islamic body and organisations were forced to be shut down with immediate effect. Post the violent event of 1990s-‘Strike hard and Maximum Pressure Campaign” was run by the year 1996 which resulted in severe gagging using control policies if any unregistered Islamic organisation or school or any Islamic body, was brought to notice. Muslims, after 1996, faced repressive policies at the hands of the Chinese government, they were not allowed to pray, fast, go to mosques, wear their religious attire, Islamic dress- the veil and the Islamic skull caps. Basically, Muslims were not allowed to preach, practice, follow their religion without the permission of the local Chinese authorities (Fathil, 2019, p. 366)

Currently, such counter policies are used and imposed by the Chinese state upon the Uyghur Muslims has a unique yet dangerous reason of implementation, to contain the problem within and ensure that the autonomous region remains as an integral part of People’s Republic of China. China has become a contemporary prototype of authoritarianism where its citizens particularly the Uyghur Muslims have been kept from practising the legal and normal routine. China’s idea of nationalism has a huge role in being big obstacle for Xinjiang to achieve self-determination. Since, China discourages any form of opposition from the ethnic Uyghurs and their preferences are labelled as a threat to the national security and integrity. Therefore, China implements and imposes control and counter policies to the remove and eliminate any such “threat” which has

resulted in violation of religious practice, and fundamental rights of the Uyghurs (Yazici, 2019, p. 149).

Also, in 2019, 22 countries came together and wrote a letter to the UN human rights Council to call out China for its crimes against humanity/the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. In the said report, around 3 million people which included the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz minorities and specially the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang (Sheena Chestnut Greitens, 2020, p. 10). These minorities were indefinitely detained by the Chinese authorities in over 1200 newly constructed concentration camps of Xinjiang. During the detention, the detainees were subject to re-education in terms of cleansing them of their religious ideologies, indoctrinating them with nationalistic Communistic ideologies of the People's Republic of China. Simultaneously, the state of China has been ensuring to reduce international pressure, to deflect the accusations of human rights violations against China while using counterterrorism policies as a justification and a shield (Fathil, 2019, p. 366).

4.1.3. Arbitrary Detention

The Chinese government has been detaining Uyghurs activists, students, scholars, local Uyghur civilians where they are treated as prisoners, with serious charges of separatism, treason, and terror activities on them. These serious charges have put them on the risk of being jailed for life. It is still unclear if they have been released or are still in Chinese prisons indefinitely (BBC, 2014). One of such Uyghurs happens to be an academician namely Ilham Tohti. (BBC, 2014) reported that the said Uyghur was detained and was not given food for more than 10 days, he was physically restrained where his legs were in chains according to his lawyer. He was immediately arrested by the Chinese officials after the 2014 attacks on Kunming train station took place. Yet given, that the Chinese authorities accused, the Uyghur separatists of executing the attacks on the Kunming train station, Ilham Tohti was taken into custody. Surprisingly, they were no records of him being involved in any sort of separatist activity. On contrary, he had been working on the common benefits of the Han and the Uyghur communities. While being detained, he was not allowed to have halal certified food or pray in detention, violating Article 18 – Right to Practice Religion (UDHR), where he was force-fed by the Chinese authorities resulting in internal bleeding of his organs. The 52-year-old began penning down the Socio-economic issues faced by the Uyghurs of Xinjiang since 1994. Eventually, he was arrested on terrorist activity charges after the Kunming train attacks by the Chinese authorities. Many Uyghur students who happened to be his student, have also been detained and it is still not clear if they have been released or not. This mass crack down on the Uyghurs started taking place the very year the government launched “Strike hard campaign against violent terrorism” against the Uyghur Muslims of the autonomous region. This arbitrary, detention of the Uyghurs took shape in the form of concentration camps, prisons, which the Chinese government calls and claims to be re-education camps for the Uyghur Muslims. The arbitrary detention (in the form of re-education camps) - of the Uyghur Muslims is a cleansing method to rid China of terrorist ideologies against state according to the Chinese government. Many of the Uyghur Muslims have disappeared into the Chinese custodies after being arbitrarily detained on charges of terrorism against the state. While being in detention, the family members are not allowed to visit the prisoners. Moreover, due to the surveillance programmes of the

Chinese government, the family members of the said prisoners are always monitored and many of them are periodically kept under house restraint (HRW, 2022). In the past, the government has been conducting security crackdown, especially on the Uyghur community while detaining innumerable Uyghur Muslims into Chinese custodies (BBC, 2014)

On 4th of October 2018, a resolution was passed, in the European Parliament on the detention of the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, in Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region,

“Is deeply concerned about the increasingly suppressive regime imposed on different minorities, in particular Uyghurs and Kazakhs, with additional restrictions being placed on the constitutional guarantees of their rights to freedom of cultural expression and religious belief, speech and expression, and peaceful assembly and association; demands that the authorities respect these fundamental freedoms; Calls on the Chinese Government to immediately end the mass arbitrary detention of members of the Uyghur and Kazakh minorities, to close all camps and detention centres and to release detained persons immediately and unconditionally; is deeply concerned by the numerous allegations of poor conditions, torture and deaths inside the camps; reminds the Chinese authorities that re-education facilities have no legal basis.” (European Parliament, 2018).

4.1.4. Concentration Camps

At least one million Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic ethnicities are arbitrarily detained into Chinese custodies where they eventually end up in Chinese concentration camps to cleanse them of their “violent” religious ideologies. In the same concentration camps, they are exploited with the tactic of forced labour and re-education policies of the Chinese government (UHRP, 2020). Because of the arbitrarily detained community, the Uyghurs are reported to be separated from their families in Xinjiang. The unlawful detention camps have been detaining at least 1 million Turkic Muslims since 2017. Moreover, the Chinese authorities have been separating children from their parents and have been putting them in indoctrination, internment centres. The number of Uyghur children in the internment camps is still unknown. Also, the Chinese government ensures to monitor the region strictly while keeping an eye on those Uyghurs who live abroad in order to prevent any sort of comprehensive documentation.

This has resulted in a complete blackout between the families and the Uyghur children in the Chinese concentration/indoctrination camps in Xinjiang (HRW, 2021, p. 3). The indefinite enslavement and torture of Uyghurs in the Chinese concentration camps is violation of Article 5 of the Universal declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (UDHR). The government of China has been denying accusations of torture by the Chinese officials in the vocational education and training centres of Xinjiang in China. And on the other hand, there have been testimonies reporting violation of the detainees. Many of the detainees were sentenced to stay in the camps for months and even years. Some of them were sentenced to stay in the vocational centres for 18 months in different parts of Xinjiang region where they were subjected to torture and innumerable forms of interrogation tactics. Several former detainees claimed that they were beaten with gun

batons for countless hours, which included being electrocuted for a prolonged period of time in the “tiger chair”. (The tiger chair is one of the devices that has been used to interrogate and torture an individual where he she is strapped/ bound to a chair by the limbs and hands.) Later the individual in the chair is tortured and interrogated for hours. The individual is also interrogated using electricity by the person in authority. This inhuman technique of interrogating an individual is a violation of Article 5 “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (UDHR).

4.1.5. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

“Any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (UNGA, 1993).

A statement that was established in UN conference ironically on Women in China. It represented to analyse and identify any sort of gender-based violations, like rape, violence between intimate partners, etc. population. It is called Gender-based violence because it is done particularly against the female gender where her gender is used against her, where her gender is violated with acts like rape and abuse of any sort. Many cultures, societies, state institutions have been using sexual and gender-based violence to establish or justify their actions. Many women are rendered voiceless, ostracised, victimised, and even objectified due to the persistent sexual abuse against them (WHO, 2021)

Several forms of sexual and gender-based violence, which includes rape, targeting the female Uyghur Muslims, have been reported in the office of the High Commissioner. According to the testimonials, sexual humiliation, and rape, happen to be some of the forms of torturing and interrogating the female Uyghur detainees in the concentration camps in Xinjiang by the Chinese authorities (OHCHR, 2022, pp. 23-25) . There are accounts documented where female Uyghur Muslims were taken and systematically raped by the Chinese officials. Furthermore, the former female Uyghur detainees of the concentration camps of Xinjiang also gave testimonies where they were subjected to intrusive medical examinations. In the vocational education and training centres, in Xinjiang, the Chinese officials who were appointed there, were accused by the female detainees, of rape, inhuman and degrading treatment as a tactic of interrogating the Uyghur women. Ironically, the government of China has been denying all these accusations (OHCHR, 2022, p. 25). There have been allegations by female Uyghur detainees of being systematically raped in Chinese concentration camps (Khanam, 2021)

From time to time, many regimes have tried to change the demography of a particular land using tactics like systematic migration of people, family planning policies etc. in Xinjiang, under the Chinese government, testimonies been reported by the Muslim Uyghur women, where they have accused the Chinese state of sterilising them against their will. The Uyghur Muslim women are subjected to undergo sterilisation regardless of their age. The state has made it mandatory for Uyghur women to use intrauterine devices. (POMPEO, 2020). Moreover, in Xinjiang, the state of China uses enforced sterilisation, intrusive family planning policies, especially for the Uyghur Muslims as a

tactic of repressing them while the other non-Muslim ethnic group-Hans Chinese are not obligated to undergo such surgical procedures. Over the years, the Muslim Uyghur population has drastically decreased in Xinjiang. The enforced sterilisation of Muslim women has led to reproductive health concerns and changes in the demography of the autonomous region of Xinjiang over the years. (Kuo, 2020). Apart from enforced sterilisation, the Chinese government forces Uyghur Muslim women to marry non-Muslim Han Chinese, in order to alter the Muslim population of the autonomous region of Xinjiang (UHRP, 2022, pp. 1-4) Violating Article 16 – Right to Marry without limitation (UDHR).

In China, the state actors have drawn frameworks for controlling the population of Xinjiang, enforcing sterilisation in Uyghur women. While simultaneously increasing the ratio of the Han population by strategically migrating them inside Xinjiang. Even though China already had one child policy, but the strict rule of having a single child was relaxed in early 2016, where the state of China allowed families to have two children. However, given the population ratio of Xinjiang authoritarian measures are being imposed on Uyghur women where they are obligated to undergo surgical procedures which render them sterile permanently. Uyghur community claims that the Chinese government has been and is forcing them into getting sterile in order to dilute and assimilate the minority ethnic group in the name of integrating it to the Republic of China (Regmi, 2022, p. 281). These draconian population altering policies being implemented on the Uyghur community might be seen as a hostile campaign intended to change the demography of the land.

According to Section D, Article II, of the UN convention on The Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, forced sterilisation which eventually leads to demographic changes might be considered a violation of the said article – “Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”, (OHCHR, 1951); According to the population plans of the Chinese authorities for Xinjiang for the year 2019, 80% of the fertile woman, who had not reached menopause naturally were obligated to undergo surgical birth control measures which had long-term effects on their reproductive cycles (Zenz, 2020, p. 15). Moreover, the intrauterine devices that are surgically implanted in fertile woman to prevent conception, are permanent birth control devices that cannot be removed unless done surgically. Any unregistered such surgical procedure of removing the IUDs is punishable with jail term under Chinese Law (Zenz, 2020, pp. 9-13)

4.1.6. Marginalization

In 2013, reports of clashes between the Uyghur, Muslims and Han Chinese settlers in Xinjiang started surfacing since the government had started making policies where the Uyghur Muslims were forced to hand over the farming land to the government. The Uyghurs were apprehensive that they would not even receive their rightful compensation. This led to fear of unlawful grabbing of land among the Uyghur Muslims (Max, 2020, pp. 252-253). Rather than pacifying the political situation in Xinjiang between the Han Chinese settlers and the native Uyghur Muslims, the government however drafted certain policies which benefited The Hans Chinese and indiscriminately dislocated Uyghur Muslims from their places. Also, given, Han Chinese community having a strong position in the nationalistic Chinese population, they are appointed in public administration in Xinjiang. Apparently, the Han Chinese have control over the

economy of Xinjiang, leaving lesser opportunities for the native Uyghur Muslims. On very rare occasions do they, the Uyghur Muslims find themselves benefiting from those administrative blocks since they are deprived of participating in adding to the economy of their native region. This indiscrimination is not just restricted to land and farmers, when it comes to job opportunities in Xinjiang, the Uyghur Muslims are not given access to the state sponsored jobs/companies, leaving them economically parched and marginalised. Moreover, the demographic changes carried out by the Chinese authorities by strategically moving the Han Chinese ethnic group inside Xinjiang, the Uyghurs face massive economic exclusion (WUC, 2009).

While talking about marginalization of Uyghurs, it's not just the socio-economic sector where they are kept aside, and made invisible but also when it comes to the lingual identity of the Uyghurs, they face lingual marginalization (Baranovitch, 2022, p. 152). According to the Chinese authority's education system, the bilingual education policy has been a serious concern for the Uyghur community. For them their language which comes from a Turkic background is a part of their identity. Simultaneously the People's Republic of China has implemented a bilingual education system where speaking native Chinese-Mandarin is mandatory for the Uyghurs to study as compulsory mode of learning and a language to seek education. This compulsion of speaking in authentic Chinese has put the Uyghur students under and unrealistic pressure of giving up their mother tongue as a bargain to seek education in Xinjiang resulting in the marginalization of the Uyghur language speaking community (Veena, 2016, pp. 317-318). The language policy in the autonomous region of Xinjiang witnessed significant transitions, in the mid of 2000s, where the Chinese government made it, mandatory to seek education in the national Chinese language, Mandarin Chinese. Even though it is termed as *bilingual education*, in reality, it has become a monolingual education system in China, especially for the Uyghur Muslims (Veena, 2016, p. 317). In the early 1990s, this policy had already started taking shape of eradicating the lingual identity of the Uyghurs, so as to assimilate the whole of Xinjiang into the People's Republic of China, the approach of integrating Xinjiang eventually has led to the eraser of Uyghur language. Thus, the Uyghur ethnicity stands marginalised and downgraded (Baranovitch, 2022, pp. 140-145).

5. ARGUMENT

In Xinjiang, the condition of the Uyghur Muslims seems to be socially, economically, culturally, and religiously disintegrated because of the policies implemented by People's Republic of China over the said ethnic minority of the Uyghurs. Contemporary dystopia in Xinjiang also known as East Turkistan, by the ethnic minority, seems to stem from the counter policies implemented by the Chinese government over the Muslims. Moreover, it would not be inappropriate to make a statement that the unrest being witnessed in Xinjiang by the Uyghur separatist groups is a by-product of the assimilation policies and strategic law-making tactics of Chinese government. At innumerable levels, the Chinese government has violated articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights where the Chinese government was obligated to abide by them. To stabilise the current situation between the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang and Chinese government, the Chinese state should first ensure to abide by the international law of human rights, which is equal for everyone in the world. And secondly, human rights organisations, including the Office of the Human Rights Commission should persistently intervene and create immediate strategies to safeguard the rights of the Uyghur Muslims in China. Furthermore, Article 36 of the Constitution of People's Republic of China clearly mentions and guarantees the rights of religious freedom of every Chinese citizen. The minority community of the Uyghurs is also guaranteed similar rights under Article 4 of the Constitution of China. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government of China to first create a safe space for the ethnic minorities, particularly the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang. International human rights organisations should be given a right to intervention to inspect the just and unbiased implementation of policies over the Uyghurs, especially in conflict zones. Hegemon countries like the US, holding Responsibility to Protect (R2P), should make an unbiased, apolitical strategy while keeping its sour terms with China away to serve sheer justice in creating a haven for the said ethnic minority in China and elsewhere.

Moreover, in order to understand the contemporary reasons of conflict between the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the Chinese authorities, the current policies implemented by China over the ethnic minority in Xinjiang do not imply that the cause of conflict between the two parties is mere implementation of the laws and policies over the Muslims in the western province of China. Had that been the case, history would have had records of peace and harmony between the ethnic minority and the nationalistic Chinese. The conflict between Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the state of China started after China annexed East Turkistan. This should be understood that China has been preventing the people of Xinjiang from acquiring autonomy, and the government that controls Xinjiang is centralised, which controls the life of the ethnic minority with strict policies unlike the rest of the non-Muslim ethnic groups of China.

Concurrently, there has been constant denial from the Chinese authorities where they are seen invalidating, and not acknowledging its atrocities committed over the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang simultaneously implementing strict policies over them. Also, the leaders from the capital of Xinjiang, Ürümqi and the state actors from Beijing haven't come to a common term to discuss the political intricacies and law and order to maintain peace within the western province of Xinjiang while keeping in mind to not violate the fundamental rights of the Uyghurs living there. There has been constant

dismissal by the Chinese authorities over the issue of imposing strict policies to be violating the fundamental rights of the Uyghurs, rather they justify the counter policies as measures to maintain Xinjiang as an integral part of the People's Republic of China.



6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As this study shows, despite being an economic giant in the world, and a permanent member in the UN, China has been violating some of the most crucial, internationally acknowledged human rights of the Uyghur Muslims. The leaders sitting in Beijing have implemented policies which have been made obligatory for the Muslim ethnic group – Uyghurs of Xinjiang. As of now there has not been any official admission by the Chinese authorities over the accusations of human rights committed against the Uyghur Muslims rather have been reports of dismissal over the claims of human rights violations by the Chinese government. Simultaneously, testimonials from the Uyghur diaspora over the abuses committed against them have been surfacing. From arbitrary detention, to sexual and gender-based violence the Uyghur Muslims have been accusing China of a silent genocide against their ethnicity.

The policies and measures used and implemented by the government of China upon the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang, having mentioned innumerable submissions of reports over human rights violation concerns, the Chinese government has been violating international human rights which directly is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Also, human rights that are inherent in nature and are validated and acknowledged by international human rights law (IHRL) have been time on and time again been violated by use of severe counter policies/measures imposed on the Muslim minority. In order to prevent China from further violating the human rights of the people, the office of the High Commissioner of human rights and the International Human Rights organisations should ensure in making China come up with an unbiased and unfiltered list of laws that China applies on the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang so as to have them revised to guarantee that China does not violate any internationally acknowledged human rights of the Uyghur Muslims and of the other ethnic minorities in the future.

To conclude, currently the human rights violation taking place in Xinjiang has not yet received full-fledged attention from majority countries and apparently seems that the state of China does not prioritize the fundamental rights of the Uyghur minority, the same rights that have been recognised and granted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the people. Since the People's Republic of China is somewhere being successful in silencing and deflecting the accusations claimed by the Uyghur Muslims, and certain countries who accuse China of committing crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. It will not be inappropriate or irrelevant to make a statement that without proper international pressure China will not stop framing policies which violate the fundamental human rights of the Uyghur community. The violation of human rights of the Muslim minority in the north-western Xinjiang province of China is troublesome in nature, and it is the responsibility of the rest of the countries to ensure that no innocent individual suffers at the hands of any regime. The longer this humanitarian issue persists to stay intact in Xinjiang, the worse the situation will become for the Uyghurs. The stern policies of China regarding its minorities, needs to be questioned, revised, and submitted in the Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). Moreover, the violations China has committed against the universal declaration of human rights and other international human rights instruments, those violations must be served with justice.

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