



Plenary sitting

B9-0431/2020

15.12.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **Forced labour and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**
(2020/2913(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

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European Parliament resolution on Forced labour and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (2020/2913(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 16 December 1966;
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its Additional Protocol;
 - having regard to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998;
 - having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of 2011;
 - having regard to OHCHR Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviews the report of China of 13 August 2018;
 - having regard to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD) follow up letter on China, which focuses on the four Concluding Observations identified as critical during the 2018 review from the 24th of November 2020;
 - having regard to the joint statement of the 21st EU-China summit of 9 April 2019;
 - having regard to the 37th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, held in Brussels on 1 and 2 April 2019;
 - Having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 12 March 2019 entitled ‘EU-China – A strategic outlook’ (JOIN(2019)0005);
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. Strongly condemns the use of all types of forced labour ; notes with great concern that ILO estimates that 24.9 million people are in forced labour (2016) in the world out of which 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture, 4.8 million persons in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities;
- B. Whereas Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwest of China is home to 23 million people from several ethnic groups, including around 11 million Uyghurs and around 1,5 million ethnic Kazakhs.

- C. Whereas Xinjiang has seen rapid economic growth in the past few years, with infrastructure projects bringing the region closer to the Central and Eastern regions of China being since three decades the engine for the overall socio-economic development of the country; whereas the Belt and Road Initiative, aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient trade routes of Silk Road, has injected new impetus to Xinjiang's development;
- D. Whereas the government's ongoing effort to economically develop the region and its policy of ethnic assimilation, has conflicted with the Uyghurs' right to preserve their culture, religion and language; whereas as result Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has been a central point of ethnic and other tensions for decades, including the emergence of separatist political movements; whereas the opposition to central and local government policies has been often expressed in non-parliamentarian forms, peaceful protests and demonstrations, but also through destabilising activities;
- E. *whereas the long standing issue of "radicalization" and terrorist activities in the region since late 80's; whereas the situation in Afghanistan since the invasion, of NATO, US and EU has contributed to the dissemination of terrorism and violence in the all region including by pressing central Asia and the Chinese border (Xinjiang)*
- F. Whereas Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has come to be known as one of the most heavily policed regions in China as well as in international comparison; whereas Chinese authorities justify their policies in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region by countering terrorism and separatist violence, including combating religious extremism of some ethnic minority groups;
- G. Whereas since 2017 different NGOs have repeatedly reported that China has pursued an unprecedented campaign of mass detention of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang;
- H. Whereas in 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that the Chinese government "ensure its laws and regulations...provide an open space for civil society, and specifically for non-governmental organizations working to combat racial discrimination", and asked the government to provide data on the number of NGOs working on combating racism in China;
- I. whereas the US National Endowment for Democracy has funded the World Uyghur Congress, the Uyghur Human Rights Project, the Campaign for Uyghurs, and the Uyghur Transitional Justice Database Project since 2004 with over \$8.7 million dollars; whereas this funding has increased in recent years under the Trump administration;
- J. Whereas in October 2020, 39 Western diplomats at the United Nations criticized China for its human rights abuses against ethnic Uighur Muslims for "Widespread surveillance disproportionately continues to target Uighurs and other minorities, and more reports are emerging of forced labour and forced birth control, including sterilization."; whereas the Chinese government has continuously rejected these accusations ;

- K. Whereas in November 2020 during its 101st session, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the follow-up report submitted by the Government of China, pursuant to article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 (1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee; whereas according to Chinese authorities, no extra-legal detention facilities exist and no instances of extrajudicial detention have occurred within the territory of China including the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region ; whereas the UN Committee, maintain its assessment: “*remains alarmed by multiple reports that large numbers of Uighurs and members of other minorities are arbitrarily detained in extrajudicial detention facilities operating as education and training centres and in forced labour camps in the State party’s territory, in contravention to any recognized legal process with fair trial rights*”;
- L. whereas in December 2020, the ICC has asked for evidence before they would open an investigation into the claims of genocide of the Uyghurs by China;
- M. Whereas the UN Committee is furthermore concerned about reports that children of those detained have been placed in state-run institutions, even of parents that have not given consent or where other close relatives are willing to care for the children;
- N. Whereas China is one of the two largest cotton producers (with the Uyghur Region accounting for over 20% of global production), the largest producer and exporter of yarn, and the largest producer and exporter of textiles and apparel; whereas the Chinese government plans on doubling manufacturing capacity in the Uyghur Region by 2025, with apparel and textiles forming a key element of that plan; whereas 84% percent of Chinese cotton comes from the Uyghur Region;
- O. Whereas 83 major brands have been identified and implicated in report on forced labour of ethnic minorities from Xinjiang assigned to factories across provinces
- P. Whereas under current EU legislation (either at EU or national levels), companies have no legal responsibility to take action to prevent them human rights abuses in their supply chains; whereas the EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive imposes a reporting obligation on companies, but does not require companies to take steps to prevent harm in their supply chains does not allows to hold them accountable nor does it guarantee victims’ fundamental rights access to justice and remedies;
- Q. Whereas the EU recently published its Conclusions on “Human Rights and Decent Work in Global Supply Chains” which calls on the European Commission to table a proposal for an EU legal framework on sustainable corporate governance, including cross-sector corporate due diligence obligations along global supply chains.
1. Expresses its deep concerns about the allegations of mass detention in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and other breaches of human rights such as forced labour and crackdown outlawing both public and private displays of Uighur culture or identity;

2. Calls to stop the practice of all arbitrary detentions without lawful charges, trials or convictions and for the immediate release of all individuals currently detained under these circumstances
3. Stresses that the alleged detention of ethnic Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslim minorities at the political education detention centres would be contrary to fundamental rights enshrined in the Chinese Constitution and violate international law on human rights;
4. Recognises that China for creating extraordinary prosperity and lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, including in the eight multi-ethnic provinces and regions, but remained concerned over the growing inequality, particularly for ethnic minorities who continued to disproportionately experience poverty;
5. Denounces any kind of instrumentalization of human rights for geopolitical reasons with the aim of destabilising a country;
6. Endorses the UN recommendation for Chinese authorities to undertake prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all allegations of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious profiling, holding those responsible accountable and providing effective remedies, including compensation and guarantees of non-repetition, and provide an update on the availability and actual application of these measures in the next UN periodic report;
7. Calls in the same way the Chinese authorities to develop measures to identify possible racial profiling through proper analysis of the statistics on individuals stopped by law enforcement, the reasons for and outcome of those stops, report publicly on the information collected at regular intervals;
8. Condemns the 83 major brands implicated in report on alleged forced labour of ethnic minorities from Xinjiang assigned to factories across provinces;
9. Reiterates that the activities of European companies present in third countries must be entirely consistent with international human rights standards; calls, therefore, on the Member States to ensure that companies which come under their national law respect human rights or the social, health and environmental standards which apply to them when moving to, or doing business in, a third country; calls on the Commission and Member States to take the requisite action against European companies which do not comply with those standards or which do not adequately compensate victims of human rights violations for which they are directly or indirectly responsible;
10. Calls on the introduction of a mandatory human rights due diligence legislation, with supply chain mapping disclosure and civil liability attached, to ensure EU companies take action.
11. Calls more specifically, with regard to the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, for an independent investigation under the auspices of UN into compliance by European

companies with labour standards, in particular in the cotton sector and with specific reference to forced labour;

12. Reiterate the call for the adoption of a binding and enforceable trade and sustainable development chapter, including robust language on human rights, in the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment
13. Urges that the relations of the European Union and its Member States with the People's Republic of China should be based on the respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and International Law
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China.