



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2019)0110

Situation of the Uyghur in China (China-cables)

European Parliament resolution of 19 December 2019 on the situation of the Uyghurs in China (China Cables) (2019/2945(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in China, in particular those of 18 April 2019 on China, notably the situation of religious and ethnic minorities¹, of 4 October 2018 on mass arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Kazakhs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region², of 12 September 2018 on the state of EU-China relations³, of 15 December 2016 on the cases of the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and Ilham Tohti⁴, of 10 March 2011 on the situation and cultural heritage in Kashgar (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region)⁵, and of 26 November 2009 on China: minority rights and application of the death penalty⁶,
- having regard to its decision to award the 2019 Sakharov Prize to Ilham Tohti, an Uyghur economist fighting peacefully for the rights of China's Uyghur minority,
- 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 the EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the statement of 26 October 2018 by the spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the situation in Xinjiang,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0422.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0377.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0343.

⁴ OJ C 238, 6.7.2018, p. 108.

⁵ OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 185.

⁶ OJ C 285 E, 21.10.2010, p. 80.

- having regard to the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of 9 December 2019 on the launch of preparatory work on a horizontal sanctions regime to address serious human rights violations,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2019 on a European human rights violations sanctions regime¹,
 - having regard to the EU’s Item 4 oral statements at the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council on 18 September 2018, and to those by the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Finland and Canada, which expressed concern over the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs in camps in Xinjiang,
 - having regard to the joint statement on human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang issued by the UK’s Permanent Representative to the UN on behalf of 23 states, including 14 EU Member States, to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 29 October 2019,
 - having regard to Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of religious belief, and to Article 4 thereof, which upholds the rights of minority nationalities,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966, which China signed in 1998 but has never ratified,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of 2011,
 - having regard to the concluding observations of the report on China by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law should remain at the centre of the EU’s policy towards China, in line with the EU’s commitment to uphold these very same values in its external action and China’s commitment to adhere to them in its own development and international cooperation;
 - B. whereas since President Xi Jinping assumed power in March 2013, the human rights situation in China has continued to deteriorate; whereas the Chinese Government has increased its hostility towards peaceful dissent, the freedoms of expression and religion, and the rule of law; whereas the Chinese authorities have detained and prosecuted hundreds of human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists;
 - C. whereas the situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where more than 10 million Muslim Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs live, has rapidly deteriorated in the last few years, not least since the launch of the ‘Strike Hard against Violent Terrorism’ campaign in 2014, as control of Xinjiang has been made a top priority of the Chinese authorities, fuelled by instability and security threats that Uyghurs are allegedly posing to Xinjiang and the strategic location of Xinjiang as a core region for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with ambitious future production targets for textiles and other labour-

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0215.

intensive manufacturing products; whereas the Chinese Government's war on terror in Xinjiang is increasingly turning into a war on religion and ethnicity; whereas there is information suggesting that the Xinjiang camp system has been expanded into other parts of China;

- D. whereas the Chinese authorities are conducting an increasingly intense campaign of mass internment, intrusive digital surveillance (including facial recognition technology and data collection), political indoctrination and forced cultural assimilation; whereas, moreover, there is reliable information to suggest that Uyghurs and other primarily Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region have been subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, egregious restrictions on religious practice and culture, and a digitised surveillance system so pervasive that every aspect of daily life is monitored – through facial recognition cameras, mobile phone scans, DNA collection, and an extensive and intrusive police presence;
- E. whereas numerous credible estimates put at as high as around one million the number of people that are or have been arbitrarily detained in what are being called 'political re-education' centres for undetermined periods of time on the pretext of countering terrorism and religious extremism; whereas these re-education facilities are also referred to as 'vocational training centres'; whereas this represents the largest mass incarceration of an ethnic minority population in the world today; whereas according to some former detainees, treatment and conditions in these camps include crowded and unsanitary conditions, food deprivation, beatings and sexual abuse; whereas there are reports that young children have been sent to state-run orphanages if even one of their parents is detained in the internment camps; whereas some re-education camps reportedly contain factories producing goods for export;
- F. whereas the China Cables revelations, which were released in November 2019, are an investigation into the surveillance and mass internment without charge or trial of Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in China's Xinjiang province, based on leaked classified Chinese Government documents; whereas the secret documents came to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists via a chain of exiled Uyghurs and their authenticity has been confirmed by several leading experts; whereas the publication of these documents has also unearthed classified Chinese Government information revealing the inner workings of the camps, the severity of conditions behind the fences, and the dehumanising regime regulating inmates' daily routines; whereas the documents bring to light China's systematic brainwashing of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in a network of high-security prison camps and the mechanics of Xinjiang's system of mass surveillance and predictive policing, thus confirming the findings of experts based on satellite imagery, data and eyewitness accounts that were published in recent years; whereas the Chinese Government has consistently claimed that the camps offer voluntary education and training; whereas the China Cables show unprecedented evidence that the groundwork for the repressive measures against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and others was being prepared at the highest political level since as long ago as April 2014;
- G. whereas the detention and persecution of Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang has compelled many to stop communicating with their family and friends based abroad, including in Europe, for fear of retribution by the authorities;
- H. whereas repression has intensified since the entry into force of the regulations on religious affairs in February 2018, which have restricted the activities of religious

groups and forced them to act more closely in line with party policies; whereas under those regulations, public or even private demonstrations of religious and cultural affiliation can be considered extremist; whereas the new rules threaten persons associated with religious communities that do not have legal status in the country; whereas religious communities have been facing increasing repression in China, making the country home to one of the largest populations of religious prisoners;

- I. whereas in August 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination challenged the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) over abuses in Xinjiang, including the establishment of mass arbitrary detention camps; whereas in September 2018, during her first ever speech in the role, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet noted the 'deeply disturbing allegations of large-scale arbitrary detentions of Uyghurs and other Muslim communities, in so-called re-education camps across Xinjiang'; whereas the Chinese Government has refused numerous requests from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN Special Procedures mandates to send independent investigators to Xinjiang and give them access to the camps;
- J. whereas the internment camps in Xinjiang expanded rapidly after the appointment of Chen Quanguo as party leader for the region in August 2016; whereas the Governor of Xinjiang, Shohrat Zakir, claimed in December 2019 that all 1.5 million people in re-education and internment camps had been 'returned to society' without providing any proof;
- K. whereas some Chinese minority communities residing in the EU have been harassed by the Chinese authorities; whereas Uyghurs overseas have been pressured to return to China; whereas the China Cables documents detail explicit directives to arrest Uyghurs with foreign citizenship and to track down Xinjiang Uyghurs living abroad, some of whom have been deported back to China by authoritarian governments; whereas the documents indicate that Chinese embassies have been instrumental in this practice;
- L. whereas on 4 December 2019 the US Congress adopted the Uyghurs Human Rights Policy Act, which urges the Secretary of State to take immediate measures to protect human rights and to consider imposing visa and economic sanctions, pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Act, on PRC officials responsible for human rights abuses in Xinjiang province, while protecting Uyghurs residing in the USA from Chinese harassment and persecution;
- M. whereas the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2019 was awarded to Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti, who was sentenced to life imprisonment on 23 September 2014 for alleged separatism, after being detained in January of the same year; whereas seven of his former students were also detained and sentenced to imprisonment of between three and eight years for alleged collaboration with Mr Tohti; whereas Ilham Tohti has always rejected separatism and violence, and has sought reconciliation based on respect for Uyghur culture;
- N. whereas in its Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU pledged to step up its efforts to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law across all aspects of its external action, and to place human rights at the centre of its relations with all third countries, including its strategic partners;

1. Expresses its deepest concerns about the increasingly repressive regime that Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities are facing and demands that the authorities respect their fundamental freedoms, as recommended by credible reports; strongly condemns the sending of hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs to political ‘re-education camps’ on the basis of a system of predictive policing, including for having travelled abroad or being adjudged too religiously devout; calls on the Chinese authorities in Xinjiang to provide information about the locations and medical conditions of those detained; urges the Chinese Government to put an immediate end to the practice of arbitrary detention without charge, trial or conviction for a criminal offence of members of the Uyghur and Kazakh minorities, to close all camps and detention centres, and to immediately and unconditionally release those detained; emphasises that any kind of detention, when applied in violation of fundamental international laws, that persecution against specific persons or groups on ethnic, cultural or religious grounds, and that other inhumane acts causing great suffering or serious injury, when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on any civilian population, are unacceptable in the light of the international legal framework;
2. Calls on the Chinese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti and all other human rights defenders, activists, lawyers, journalists and petitioners detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their freedom of expression, and to end the ongoing crackdown involving detention, judicial harassment and intimidation; calls on the Chinese Government to ensure that they have regular, unrestricted access to their families and lawyers of their choice, and to ensure that they, their families and their lawyers are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; insists that the conditions of all those in detention must meet the standards laid down in the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988, including access to medical care; calls for an immediate, effective and impartial investigation into the alleged torture of Ilham Tohti and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
3. Reiterates its call on the Chinese authorities to allow free, meaningful and unhindered access to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region for independent journalists and international observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the mandate holders of the UN Human Rights Council Special Procedures; notes the imbalance in press access and freedom between the EU and China; calls on China to provide EU media outlets with the same rights and access that Chinese media outlets are afforded in the Member States; believes that the EU and the Member States should take the lead during the next session of the UN Human Rights Council on a resolution establishing a fact-finding mission to Xinjiang;
4. Expresses deep concern over reports concerning the harassment of Uyghurs abroad by the Chinese authorities in order to force them to act as informants against other Uyghurs, return to Xinjiang or remain silent about the situation there, sometimes by detaining their family members; urges the Commission and all Member States to investigate these reports as a matter of urgency, to take specific measures to ensure that members of the Xinjiang diaspora are protected in their respective countries, and to expedite asylum requests from Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims; welcomes the decision taken by some Member States to suspend the return of all ethnic Uyghurs, Kazakhs or other Turkic Muslims to China in view of the risk of arbitrary detention, torture or other ill-treatment, and calls on all other Member States to follow suit;

5. Notes with concern that the critical importance of ‘long-term stability’ in Xinjiang to the success of the BRI has led to the intensification of long-standing control strategies bolstered by a variety of technological innovations and a rapid increase in spending on domestic security, and the use of counter-terrorism measures to criminalise dissent and dissident individuals by applying a broad definition of ‘terrorism’; expresses deep concern at the Chinese State’s measures to ensure the ‘comprehensive supervision’ of Xinjiang through the installation of Skynet electronic surveillance in major urban areas and GPS trackers in all motor vehicles, the use of facial recognition scanners at checkpoints and train and petrol stations, and the blood collection campaign by Xinjiang police in order to further expand China’s DNA database; express further concerns that China is exporting such technologies to authoritarian regimes around the world;
6. Expresses deep concern over reports of the possible use of forced labour drawn from internment camps in the supply chain of international companies doing business in Xinjiang and over reports of collaboration with the Chinese institutions involved in the mass surveillance or detention of members of the Uyghur population; emphasises that actors from the private sector should assess their engagement in Xinjiang in order to scrutinise their supply chains to ensure they are not involved in human rights violations, including by putting in place a robust human rights due diligence system to make sure they are not implicated in forced labour or complicit in acts of repression against the Uyghur people; stresses that if products are produced in re-education camps they should be banned from EU markets;
7. Urges the Chinese Government to immediately publish a list of all those in detention and all those who have been released, and to release the full details of persons disappeared in Xinjiang to their families;
8. Urges the Commission, the Council and the Member States to take all the necessary measures to persuade the Chinese Government to close the camps, to end all human rights violations in Xinjiang, and to uphold the linguistic, cultural, religious and other fundamental freedoms of the Uyghurs; Urges the Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), the EEAS and the Member States to more intensively monitor the worrying human rights developments in Xinjiang, including increased government repression and surveillance, and to speak out against violations of human rights in China both privately and publicly and at the highest levels; expresses its disappointment at the fact that the 37th round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue brought no substantial results, despite the EU raising the system of political re-education camps as a worrying development; regrets the fact that the approach taken and tools used by the EU so far have not yielded tangible progress in China’s human rights record, which has only deteriorated over the last decade; calls on the VP/HR to insist on an independent investigation into the scale and nature of the internment camp system and the numerous allegations of serious and systematic human rights violations; urges the new Commission to devise and implement a holistic EU strategy with a view to securing genuine progress on human rights in China;
9. Underlines the fact that in their joint statement issued after the 21st EU-China summit, the EU and China reaffirmed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; emphasises that the promotion of human rights and the rule of law must be at the core of the EU’s engagement with China;
10. Calls for the EU, its Member States and the international community to consider ways

of halting all exports and technology transfers of goods and services that are being used by China to extend and improve its cyber surveillance, by making effective use of appropriate export control mechanisms; calls on the co-legislators, in this regard, to conclude a common position on reform of the Dual Use Regulation on the grounds of national security and human rights considerations; stresses that Parliament has further developed and strengthened the Commission's proposal on the inclusion of strict export controls for listed and non-listed cyber-surveillance technology;

11. Recalls the importance of the EU continuing to raise the issue of human rights violations in China, and in particular the case of minorities in Xinjiang, at every political and human rights dialogue with the Chinese authorities, in line with the EU's commitment to project a strong, clear and unified voice in its approach to the country; reiterates that in its ongoing reform process and increasing global engagement, China has opted into the international human rights framework by signing up to a wide range of international human rights treaties; calls, therefore, for the establishment of a dialogue with China so as to encourage it to live up to these commitments; urges the Chinese authorities to continue to implement the national reforms required to ratify the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was signed by China in 1998, and to implement the recommendations of UN human rights bodies;
12. Welcomes the adoption by the US Congress of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act and the recent decision by the Foreign Affairs Council to start working on an EU global sanctions regime for human rights violations; calls on the Council to adopt targeted sanctions and assets freezes, should they be deemed appropriate and effective, against the Chinese officials responsible for devising and implementing the policy of mass detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang and for orchestrating a severe repression of religious freedom, freedom of movement and other basic rights in the region;
13. Calls for the EEAS to include the good practices of interreligious dialogue as a tool in its communication strategy towards third countries and to foster mediation in conflict situations for the protection of religious minorities and the freedom of religion and belief;
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.