
ASSEN MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020
COMMITTEE GUIDE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



*Solving the situation revolving the human
right violations in Xinjiang: the violence
against Uighurs*

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CHAIRS

David Dijkman

Hi, I am David and a year 6 VWO student. In the last couple of years, I have participated in several MUNs in and outside of the Netherlands. The chairs I have had in the past were always able to make the committee sessions more enjoyable through their enthusiasm and humour. This is my first time chairing and I hope I can use that same energy to make this a memorable MUN for you.

Camiel Koning

Hello, my name is Camiel, I'm 17 years old and after years and years of sitting on chairs and the like, I finally decided to fully embrace my furniture overlords and become one of them. This will be my first time chairing in an MUN conference. My iron fist shall be felt throughout the debate! Nah probably not, but I will have to make sure everyone conforms to the standard procedural rules. Any deviation will result not so serious punishment. Anyways I hope to make this MUN experience more bearable for everyone involved and please remember: Epstein didn't kill himself.

WRITER

Dear Delegates

I was pleased to have the opportunity to write about such an important issue. During the process of writing I was astonished by what I learned about the Uighurs. The fact that the Uighurs are being discriminated and oppressed at this very moment is horrifying to me.

A core value of China is sovereignty; therefore, China has been able to keep these crimes a secret for a long time. When the public discovered what happens in Xinjiang, I learned that there are countries who support China. That is what makes this situation complex. At times it was hard for me to stay objective.

Currently there has not been taken any action, therefore I am incredibly curious what solutions you will find for this problem. I hope you enjoy this topic and the conference.

Greetings from Anna van Beek

COUNTRIES IN THE COMMITTEE

- Libya
- Sudan
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Burkina Faso
- Egypt
- Djibouti
- Japan
- China
- India
- Republic of Korea (South Korea)
- Pakistan
- Qatar
- Afghanistan
- Philippines
- Russian Federation
- Czech Republic
- Brazil
- Venezuela
- Uruguay
- Peru
- Australia
- Spain
- South Africa
- Italy
- Denmark



INTRODUCTION

Lately China has been getting attention concerning the human rights situation in Xinjiang. Uighurs are a large Muslim group located in Xinjiang. There have been reports of violations of numerous human right laws, for example the freedom of movement and the right of a fair trial. The controversy around this topic has caused a lot of international uproar, attention in the media and a lot of protests in the country as well. As the Human Rights Council, you must resolve this issue through a resolution. After all, goal 10 of the sustainable development goals is reducing inequality within and among countries. Good luck.

HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The United Nations Human Rights Council is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the globe. The council is comprised of 47 members who are elected for a three-year term. The UNHRC discusses human right issues and makes recommendations based on them.

During the Council sessions, besides the member states, there are observers, international governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations who actively participate. However only the member states who have been elected have the right to vote.

The council discusses topics such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT rights and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

The Human Rights Council has multiple functions:

1. The Human Rights Council's Periodic Review. It is an extensive review of human rights of all member states. The review notes what measures the states have taken to improve the human rights situations in their country as well as the challenges they are facing. At the moment, this process is unique.
2. The council can start fact-finding missions to investigate the situation regarding human rights violations. This is done by sending UN observers to the country.
3. The advisory committee. It contains experts and advisors who advise the council on human rights related issues. The goal is to provide expertise to the council.
4. The complaint procedure. This procedure allows individuals to report human rights violations.



THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The UNHRC decides whether a situation breaches human rights based on The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. It sets out fundamental human rights who should be universally protected.

The Uighurs situation in China does not follow multiple articles in the declaration. For example, Article 2. China does make distinctions between different races.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Uighurs in China

In China there are approximately 11 million Uighurs living in Xinjiang, China's north-western province. Uighurs are the largest Muslim group in China. They are ethnically distant from the indigenous people, Han Chinese. In China 92% of the inhabitants are Han Chinese. There are many differences between these races including their language, culture and religion. The Uighurs do not feel connected to their country. Lately many Han Chinese moved to Xinjiang and the Uighurs feel their culture and livelihoods are under threat.



The Uighurs therefore want to separate and make Xinjiang independent. The Uighurs started protests, but these became violent. There were attacks as well. In 2013, a suicide-driver crashed into pedestrians in Beijing. In 2014, 31 travelers were stabbed. However, China is not willing to let Xinjiang become independent, because Xinjiang is valuable to China.

Xinjiang is valuable, because it the biggest domestic producer of oil and gas. Xinjiang produces more than 20% of China's energy reserves. Another contributing factor why China wants to keep Xingjiang is the Belt and Road Initiative. The Initiative is a global development strategy to build a road that connects the Middle East and Europe with China. This road goes through Xinjiang. Therefore, Xinjiang is important to the Initiative.

The government reacted to the terrorism and violence with repression. In 2016 the repression grew when Chen Quanguo, a Chinese politician, was chosen as secretary of Xinjiang. He increased the security in the region. Due to these changes Xinjiang transformed into a police state.

To illustrate this situation, in Xinjiang there are checkpoints where people need to leave their car to scan the identity cards and to take photographs and fingerprints. Uighurs are told to install an app on their mobile phone which makes the police able to see everything on it . There can be up to four checkpoints per kilometers. Because of these checkpoints, the freedom of movement is restricted.

In China Muslim names, like Muhammad, are banned for newborns. Uighurs are not allowed to speak their native language and mosques are closed. Uighurs are constantly observed to report 'extremist behavior' like not drinking alcohol, praying, possessing a Koran or 'having an attitude'.

If the police notice 'extremist behavior', Uighurs are sent to a vocational-training center. This is a camp where Muslims are re-educated to become a communist and learn the Chinese culture and language. Additionally, they are forced to criticize their faith. There are reports of torture and people who died in these centers. It is estimated that there are up to 1 million Uighurs detained in these centers.

With the help of satellite images, the destruction of mosques and creation of camps can be followed. Over time more camps have been added and expanded.

Currently there is little information what happens exactly in these camps because the Uighurs are pressured to remain silent about the activities in the centers.

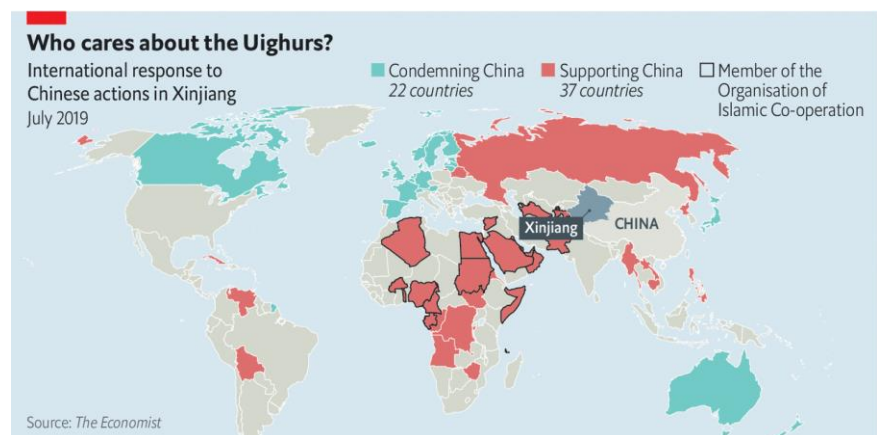
In the past China has kept this issue a purely internal matter, little information was shared to other countries. Lately this issue has been getting more and more attention from the world.

Recent Events

July 8th 2019, 22 countries signed a letter to the UN Human Rights Council for China to 'uphold its national laws and international obligations and respect human rights', additionally they request to grant the UN observers access to the detention camps. This letter was signed by mostly European countries.

Days after the release of the letter, 37 other countries responded with a letter defending China's policies. The letter cites: 'We note with appreciation that human rights are respected and protected in China in the process of counter-terrorism and deradicalization.' These countries support China's action because safety is created for the inhabitants of Xinjiang.

There is growing international criticism of China's treatment, but no country has yet taken any action.



BLOC POSITIONS

Developed countries

Developed countries are most likely to condemn the actions of China, because the priority is given to human rights. The countries are disturbed by the reports of the detentions of Uighurs and want China to stop the detention and restrictions in Xinjiang.

Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC's)

Some developing countries rely on the investments of China, those countries will support China, in spirit of not biting the hand that feeds you. When they do turn against China, the investments most likely will be cut off, these consequences will be devastating to these dependent countries.

Islamic Co-operation

The Islamic Co-operation signed the letter which supports China. These Muslim-majority countries praise China for 'providing care to its Muslim citizens' and want to cooperate with China.



FURTHER READING

Information about the Human Rights Council:

- https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/HRC_booklet_EN.pdf
- <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/AboutCouncil.aspx>

Situation in Xinjiang:

- <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/31/china-has-turned-xinjiang-into-a-police-state-like-no-other>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-45474279>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/08/world/asia/china-muslims-camps.html?module=inline>

Other information about Xinjiang:

- <https://www.powermag.com/energy-industry-xinjiang-china-potential-problems-solutions-web/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer>

Letter sent to the UN from countries who condemn China's actions:

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/190708_joint_statement_xinjiang.pdf

Letter sent to the UN from countries who support China's actions:

- https://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/E/HRC/c_gov/A_HRC_41_G_17.DOCX

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

- https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

The Sustainable Development Goals:

- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Latest news about the Uighur situation:

- <https://nos.nl/artikel/2314896-china-zendt-arsenal-wedstrijd-toch-niet-uit-na-oeigoeren-tweet-ozil.html>