



DEBATE PACK

CDP 102 (2020) | 8 October 2020

E-petition 300146 relating to China's policy on its Uighur population

Westminster Hall

Monday 12 October at 6.00pm

Debate led by Chris Evans MP

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. E-petition 300146

This is an e-petition debate following a petition uploaded to the Petitions website. As this e-petition attracted over 100,000 signatures, the Petitions Committee agreed that a debate will be held.

The debate will be held under the motion, "That this House has considered [e-petition 300146](#) on China's policy on its Uyghur population."

The petition ran for six months and closed on 6 September 2020 and received 146,344 signatures. It stated:

The UK Government plans to introduce "Magnitsky law", a law which targets people who commit gross human rights violations. Through this law or alternative means, this petition urges the UK Government to impose sanctions on China for their human rights violations on the Uyghur people.

Since 2017, there have been many reports of the "cultural genocide" of Uyghur Muslims, a minority Turkic ethnic group native to Xinjiang, China. They are subject to mass detention, mass surveillance, restriction of religious and cultural identities, as well as other gross human rights abuses. Over a million Uyghurs have been forced into "re-education" camps.

In front of the United Nations in October 2019, pressure was placed on China regarding the treatment of Uyghurs during a joint statement from 23 countries. Despite this statement and growing public awareness, nothing substantial or concrete has been done to resolve the crisis and help the Uyghur people.

Government response

On 6 July, the Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. In a statement to Parliament, the Foreign Secretary set out in full the scope of the UK's new Global Human Rights sanctions regime. He announced the first tranche of designations, as well as the Government's approach to future designations.

This sanctions regime will give the UK a powerful new tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses. The sanctions regime is not intended to target individual countries. It will allow for sanctions to be imposed on individuals and entities involved in serious human rights violations or abuses around the world.

We will continue to consider potential designations under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime, but it is not appropriate to speculate about who we may be considering, as to do so may reduce the impact of those future designations.

As the Foreign Secretary said in the House of Commons on 20 July, we have been clear about our grave concerns regarding the gross human rights abuses being perpetrated against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. This includes the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in “political re-education camps”, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities.

Reports indicating that forced labour is being used and children are being forcibly separated from their parents add to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

Since 2018, the UK has played a leading role in drawing attention to the deeply concerning situation in Xinjiang, working with international partners in relevant UN bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council. As the petition notes, in October 2019, the UK’s Permanent Representative led a statement raising concerns about the situation on behalf of 23 countries at the UN Third Committee.

On 30 June at the most recent UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the UK led a formal Joint Statement with the support of 27 international partners, setting out our deep concern both on Hong Kong, and the situation in Xinjiang. This statement, delivered through UK leadership, underlines the strength and breadth of international concern.

On 10 March at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UK raised concerns about systematic human rights violations and reports of forced labour in Xinjiang during our national statement. On 25 February at the same session, Lord Ahmad, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, raised concerns about Xinjiang during the UK's opening address, calling on China to allow the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights unfettered access to the region.

We also frequently raise our concerns directly with the Chinese authorities. On 9 March, the Foreign Secretary raised the human rights situation in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi. On 5 March, the Minister for Asia raised similar concerns with the Chinese Ambassador to the UK.

The Government will continue to urge the Chinese authorities to change their approach in Xinjiang and respect international human rights norms, both bilaterally with China, and at the UN alongside our international partners.

2. Background

Successive UK governments have expressed concern about the human rights situation of the Uighurs in the far-western province of Xinjiang since 2009, when peaceful protests there were violently repressed.

Global concern has [increased markedly](#) since 2018, when reports emerged that China had interned about one million Uighurs in political education camps.

As UK-China relations have deteriorated in recent months, political pressure on the UK Government to give [greater priority](#) to human rights issues such as that of the Uighurs has grown.

This pressure has increased as new evidence has emerged about the alleged abuses which Uighurs are experiencing. These include the imposition of [sterilisation measures](#) on Uighur women.

At the end of June 2020, The UK joined with 26 other countries in [issuing a statement](#) at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) expressing deep concern about the situation in Xinjiang Province. The UK supports calls for UN human rights investigators to be allowed access to Xinjiang by the Chinese authorities.

Belarus issued its own [statement](#) supported by 45 other countries including China, Iran and Zimbabwe at the same UNHRC session, in which it noted “with appreciation” the measures undertaken in Xinjiang to “safeguard the human rights of all ethnic groups” in the region.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, is [said to be](#) in discussions with the Chinese authorities about visiting Xinjiang.

In mid-July, Lisa Nandy, shadow foreign secretary, called on the Government to [introduce sanctions](#) against Chinese individuals responsible for human rights abuses against the Uighurs under the UK’s new Magnitsky legislation.

3. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[39 countries denounce China's abuses of Uighur Muslim in Xinjiang](#)

Daily Sabah
7 October 2020

[Dominic Raab hints UK could boycott China's Winter Olympics over Uighur Muslims treatment](#)

Daily Telegraph
Danielle Sheridan
6 October 2020

[Saving Uighur Culture from Genocide](#)

The Atlantic
Yasmeen Serhan
4 October 2020

[China's vast network of 're-education camps' and prisons where hundreds of thousands of Uighur Muslims are detained is growing, new Australian mapping project reveals](#)

Mail Online
Levi Parsons
24 September 2020

[US to block key exports from Chinese region](#)

BBC News
9 September 2020

[Over 130 UK MPs write letter to Chinese envoy on Nazi like treatment of Uyghurs](#)

Economic Times
Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury
9 September 2020

[Uighur Muslim teacher tells of forced sterilisation in Xinjiang](#)

The Guardian
Emma Graham-Harrison and Lily Kuo
4 September 2020

[The Uighurs and the Chinese state: A long history of discord](#)

BBC News
20 July 2020

[Why do Muslim states stay silent over China's abuse of the Uighurs?](#)

The Guardian
Nick Cohen
4 July 2020

[China transferred detained Uighurs to factories used by global brands – report](#)

The Guardian
Lily Kuo
1 March 2020

[China's Biosecurity State in Xinjiang Is Powered by Western Tech](#)

Foreign Policy
Jessica Batke and Mareike Ohlberg
19 February 2020

[Which Countries are for or Against China's Xinjiang Policies?](#)

The Diplomat
Catherine Putz
15 July 2019

4. Gov.uk

[Human rights situation in Xinjiang and recent developments in Hong Kong: joint statement](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

6 October 2020

Madam President, I have the honour of delivering this cross-regional joint statement on behalf of the following 39 countries: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country Germany.

We are gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong.

In June 2020, 50 UN Special Procedures mandate holders issued an exceptional letter of concern, calling on the People's Republic of China to respect human rights. We share their grave concerns. We call on China to respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet.

On Xinjiang, we are gravely concerned about the existence of a large network of 'political re-education' camps where credible reports indicate that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained. We have seen an increasing number of reports of gross human rights violations. There are severe restrictions on freedom of religion or belief and the freedoms of movement, association, and expression as well as on Uyghur culture. Widespread surveillance disproportionately continues to target Uyghurs and other minorities and more reports are emerging of forced labour and forced birth control including sterilization.

We also share concerns expressed separately by a group of UN experts that a number of provisions in the Hong Kong National Security Law do not conform to China's international legal obligations. We have deep concerns about elements of the National Security Law that allow for certain cases to be transferred for prosecution to the Chinese mainland. We urge the relevant authorities to guarantee the rights which are protected under the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the Sino-British Joint Declaration, including freedoms of speech, the press and assembly.

Mr Chair, we call on China to allow immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, and relevant special procedure mandate holders; to urgently implement CERD's eight recommendations related to Xinjiang, including by refraining from the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and members of other minorities. In view of our concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, we call on

all countries to respect the principle of non-refoulement. We also call on China to uphold autonomy, rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, and to respect the independence of the Hong Kong judiciary.

UN Human Rights Council 44: Cross-regional statement on Hong Kong and Xinjiang
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
30 June 2020

Thank you Madam President. I am delivering this cross-regional joint statement on behalf of 27 countries.

A number of the signatories to this statement submitted a letter last year to express concern about arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly targeting Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. These deep concerns have been reinforced by additional information now in the public domain. We urge China to allow the High Commissioner meaningful access to Xinjiang at the earliest opportunity.

We further wish to raise our deep and growing concerns at the imposition of legislation related to national security on Hong Kong, with clear implications for the human rights of people in Hong Kong. The Joint Declaration, a legally binding treaty, registered with the United Nations, sets out that Hong Kong is guaranteed a high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of the press, of assembly, and of association and that the ICCPR and ICESCR shall remain in force. These rights are also guaranteed in the basic law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Making such a law without the direct participation of Hong Kong's people, legislature or judiciary of Hong Kong undermines 'One Country, Two Systems'.

We urge the Chinese and Hong Kong Governments to reconsider the imposition of this legislation and to engage Hong Kong's people, institutions and judiciary to prevent further erosion of the rights and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed for many years.

High Commissioner, we note your calls for legislation to respect human rights obligations relating to Hong Kong, and the serious concerns raised by the mechanisms of this council. We encourage you to provide regular information on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms which are guaranteed under international law.

Thank you

As of 15 July, this statement was supported by Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom

[Joint statement on human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
29 October 2019**

Statement delivered by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN at the Third Committee session on the Committee for the elimination of racial discrimination.

Mr. President,

I have the honour to read this statement on Xinjiang on behalf of a group of 23 countries including:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United States of America and of course the United Kingdom.

We share the concerns raised by the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in their August 2018 Concluding Observations on China regarding credible reports of mass detention; efforts to restrict cultural and religious practices; mass surveillance disproportionately targeting ethnic Uighurs; and other human rights violations and abuses in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

We call on the Chinese government to uphold its national laws and international obligations and commitments to respect human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, in Xinjiang and across China. The Chinese government should urgently implement CERD's eight recommendations related to Xinjiang, including by refraining from the arbitrary detention of Uighurs and members of other Muslim communities. In view of these concerns, we call on all countries to respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Furthermore, we call on the Chinese government to allow the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Special Procedures immediate unfettered, meaningful access to Xinjiang.

Mr. Chair, I'll close with a question: What measures should the Chinese government undertake to address the concerns raised in CERD's Concluding Observations regarding restrictions on the right to freedom of religion or belief and the right to freely participate in cultural life?

[EU statement on human rights in Xinjiang](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
30 October 2018**

The UK supports the below EEAS statement issued on 26 October on the revision by the Chinese authorities of the 'Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification'.

Statement by the EEAS Spokesperson on the situation in Xinjiang:

The revision by the Chinese authorities of the “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification” highlights the deteriorating human rights situation in Xinjiang. There are credible reports of mass detentions in political “re-education camps” affecting Uighurs and other minorities; of mass surveillance; of restrictions on travel; and of Uighurs abroad allegedly being returned to China involuntarily.

These revisions run counter to the recommendations provided by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which call on China to change its policy in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

In this context, the EU expects China to respect freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression, as well as the rights of persons belonging to ethnic or national minorities, as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which China is a signatory.

5. Human Rights and Democracy Report

[Human Rights and Democracy: the 2019 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report \[Extract\]](#)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

16 July 2020

China

The human rights situation in China has continued to deteriorate significantly and consistently since 2018. China continued to place restrictions on expression of religious belief, ethnic minorities, the media and wider freedom of expression, as well as detaining and harassing human rights defenders, and restricting the space for civil society to operate. The authorities' use of arbitrary detention continued, as did a lack of judicial transparency and due process, particularly in cases deemed 'politically sensitive'.

In Xinjiang, credible estimates indicate that over 1 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have been extra-judicially detained in internment camps across the region. Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang continued to suffer systematic restrictions on their culture, language, and religious activity. An invasive and indiscriminate surveillance apparatus also remained in place. Credible reports of forced labour increased, especially in the cotton industry. In November, high-profile leaks provided further evidence of the coercive nature of the 'political re-education' programme. The Chinese authorities continued their efforts to present the measures in Xinjiang as legitimate and necessary to combat extremism and terrorism.

In October, the UK read a joint statement on behalf of 23 countries at the UN General Assembly Third Committee drawing attention to the human rights violations in Xinjiang, and calling on China to uphold its obligations to respect human rights. The UK also co-sponsored side events at the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly raising concerns about the serious human rights situation in Xinjiang and calling for China to allow UN observers unfettered access to the region. The UK also raised concerns about the situation in China at all 3 sessions of the Human Rights Council. In July, the UK and 24 other countries registered their concerns about Xinjiang in a public letter to the President of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

6. Parliamentary material

6.1 PQs

[China: Uighurs](#)

08 Oct 2020 | 98930

Asked by: Shabana Mahmood

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness of the legal action taken through the International Criminal Court against the Government of Myanmar on the Rohingya population and (b) potential merits of similar international action on the detention of Uighur and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang in China.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is monitoring the Prosecutor's investigations into alleged crimes by the Myanmar military. The UK is clear that the Myanmar military bears responsibility for atrocities against the Rohingya and other minorities. There has been no meaningful accountability for these acts. Accountability is essential to any long-term progress on the crisis.

In respect of the situation in Xinjiang, the UK is focused on building a coalition of likeminded partners and raising concerns at senior levels bilaterally with China to increase pressure on China to change course. Most recently, on 6 October the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Xinjiang, including the mass detention of Uyghurs in political re-education camps.

[China: Uighurs](#)

08 Oct 2020 | 98929

Asked by: Shabana Mahmood

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to (a) his counterpart in China, (b) international bodies and (c) individual countries on the detention of (i) Uighur and (ii) other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang in China.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We regularly raise our serious concerns about the extra-judicial detention of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, both directly with the Chinese authorities and at the UN alongside international partners. On 6 October, the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Xinjiang, including the mass detention of Uyghurs in political re-education camps. This growing coalition reflects UK diplomatic leadership, including the personal involvement of the Foreign Secretary in raising the issue with a wide range of partners.

On 28 July, the Foreign Secretary raised human rights violations in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

[China: Uighurs](#)

07 Oct 2020 | 98298

Asked by: Imram Ahmad Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recent findings by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute showing 380 detention camps in Xinjiang in China.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The recent Australian Strategic Policy Institute report is further evidence that, despite China's claims to the contrary, internment camps continue to be used to extra-judicially detain Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities across the region. On 25 September at the UN Human Rights Council, we raised our deep concerns about the human rights violations in Xinjiang and called on the Chinese Government to end its policy of extra-judicial detention and to release all those who are arbitrarily detained.

[Uighurs: China](#)

05 Oct 2020 | HL8775

Asked by: Lord Suri

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Grimstone of Boscobel on 23 September (HL7967), what plans they have to introduce legislation to ban imports of all goods (1) mined, (2) produced, and (3) manufactured, in Xinjiang, unless proven by clear and convincing evidence that goods were not produced using forced labour.

Answered by: Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Department for International Trade

HM Government have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, with credible reports of the use of forced labour. It has always been the case that, where we have concerns, we raise them, as we did on this issue at the UN Human Rights Council in March. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

HM Government is committed to eliminating modern slavery. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 made Britain the first country in the world to require businesses to report on how they are tackling modern slavery, including forced labour, in their operations and supply chains. Section 54 of the Act was designed to empower consumers, investors, civil society and others to scrutinise the action that businesses are taking to identify and address modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

[China: Uighurs](#)

05 Oct 2020 | HL8402

Asked by: Lord Anderson of Ipswich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to support the establishment of, (2) to attend, and (3) to provide evidence to, the independent tribunal established by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC to examine whether the Uighur people are being subjected to genocide.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have serious concerns about gross violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang and welcome any work that is rigorous, balanced and raises awareness of the situation faced by Uyghurs and other minorities in China. We are aware of this initiative by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC and will study any resulting report carefully.

[China: Uighurs](#)

02 Oct 2020 | HL8355

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that Uighur Muslim women have been subjected to forced abortions and womb removals, (2) that Uighur children are being separated from their parents and placed in orphanages, and (3) of the treatment of those children in such orphanages, in China.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are deeply concerned by reports of suppression of birth rates and the mistreatment of Uyghur children in China, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. As the Minister for Asia set out during an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on 9 September, we are seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. On 25 September, at the UN Human Rights Council, I also raised serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including credible reports of forced labour and forced birth control in the UK's 'Item 4' national statement. It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities' own figures show a drastic decline in birth rates in Xinjiang. These reports add to the growing body of evidence about serious and widespread human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. We continue to raise our concerns at the UN, and directly with China.

[China: Uighurs](#)

02 Oct 2020 | HL8352

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 September (HL8043 and HL8044), what action they have taken at (1) the UN General Assembly, and (2) the UN Human Rights Council, to address human rights violations against Uighur Muslims in China; and what assessment they have made

of the impact of the government of China's use of veto powers at the UN Security Council on the way in which they conduct their actions at the UN.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has played a leading role at the Human Rights Council, and in the UN Third Committee to register the breadth and depth of international concern about the situation in Xinjiang. The UK is the only country to have led formal joint statements on the issue. On 30 June, the UK read out a formal statement on behalf of 28 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council highlighting arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly those targeting Uyghurs and other minorities, and urging China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meaningful access to Xinjiang. On 29 October 2019, the UK read out a statement on Xinjiang on behalf of 23 countries at the UN Third Committee in New York. We will continue to work with international partners at the UN to maximise pressure on the Chinese Government over its egregious human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang.

**[China: Human Rights](#)
01 Oct 2020 | HL8104**

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by United States Customs and Border Protection to issue five Withhold Release Orders on products from China allegedly produced with state-sponsored forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region; what products have been produced with such forced labour; what assessment they have made of the statement by the government of the United States that "the Chinese government is engaged in systemic human rights abuses against the Uyghur people and other ethnic and religious minorities"; and what plans they have to take similar action.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are aware of the United States' Withhold Release Orders on products allegedly produced using forced Uyghur labour. The UK Government remains seriously concerned about the gross human rights violations being perpetrated against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including reports indicating that Uyghurs are being placed into forced labour programmes following "graduation" from the camps. We urge all businesses involved in investing in Xinjiang, or with parts of their supply chains in Xinjiang, to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to support, any human rights violations or abuses. We keep our policy under review. We are committed to raising human rights with the Chinese authorities and do so regularly.

[China: Uighurs](#)

29 Sep 2020 | 94455

Asked by: Chris Law

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he plans to make at the forthcoming 45th session of the Human Rights Council on the situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has played a leading role at the Human Rights Council in registering the breadth and depth of international concern about the situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and will continue to do so. Most recently, on 30 June, the UK read out a formal statement on behalf of 28 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council highlighting arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly those targeting Uyghurs and other minorities, and urging China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meaningful access to Xinjiang.

[China: Uighurs](#)

29 Sep 2020 | 94454

Asked by: Chris Law

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to impose sanctions on the people responsible for human rights abuses against Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament. This sanctions regime enables the UK to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

[China: Uighurs](#)

29 Sep 2020 | 93568

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of proposals to establish a monitoring mechanism for human rights abuses against Uyghurs in Xinjiang under the UN (a) Human Rights Council and (b) General Assembly.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has played a leading role at the Human Rights Council, and in the UN Third Committee to call for the UN High Commissioner for

Human Rights to be allowed meaningful access to Xinjiang. The UK is the only country to have led formal joint statements on Xinjiang in relevant UN fora, including on the issue of UN access. On 30 June, the UK read out a formal statement on behalf of 28 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council, and on 29 October 2019, the UK read out a statement on Xinjiang on behalf of 23 countries at the UN Third Committee in New York. We will continue to work with international partners at the UN to maximise pressure on the Chinese Government over its egregious human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang.

[China: Uighurs](#)

29 Sep 2020 | 93566

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to vulnerable Uyghur Muslim refugees from China in Turkey.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK recognises and supports the extraordinary generosity of Turkey in hosting over 4 million refugees - more than any other host country in the world. 3.6 million of these refugees are from neighbouring Syria where the brutal conflict is now in its tenth year.

The UK supports the efforts of the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, which provides assistance and protection to refugee population groups, irrespective of nationality, across Turkey and UNHCR's Global Operations.

[China: Uighurs](#)

25 Sep 2020 | 93670

Asked by: Afzal Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the treatment of Uyghur children in special orphanages for Uyghur children in China.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are deeply concerned by reports of the mistreatment of Uyghur children in China, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. These reports add to the growing body of evidence about serious and widespread human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. We continue to raise our concerns at the UN, and directly with China.

China: Uighurs

25 Sep 2020 | 93669

Asked by: Afzal Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of (a) forced abortions and (b) removal of wombs among Uyghur Muslim women.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Reports of suppression of birth rates add to our deep concern about the situation in Xinjiang. It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities' own figures show a drastic decline in birth rates in Xinjiang. We have repeatedly condemned the egregious abuses of human rights perpetrated against Uyghurs in Xinjiang - including at the UN and directly with China.

Olympic Games: China

23 Sep 2020 | HL8103

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool | Party: Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much public funding has been allocated for UK participation in the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing; whether, in the light of reports of serious human rights violations against Uighurs and others, they have made representations to the International Olympic Committee about reconsidering the suitability of Beijing as a host city; and what plans they have to reconsider UK participation if any such violations continue and the host city remains unchanged.

Answering member: Baroness Barran | Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

The Government, through UK Sport, is investing £20m into Winter Olympic sports during the current Beijing 2022 funding cycle. UK Sport's current funding figures for Summer and Winter Olympic Paralympic sports can be found here: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/investing-in-sport/current-funding-figures>

Decisions on which cities should host Summer and Winter Olympic Games are matters for the International Olympic Committee.

The British Olympic Association (BOA), a privately funded organisation independent of Government, is responsible for Team GB's participation at Summer and Winter Olympic Games. As the National Olympic Committee (NOC) for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the BOA may cooperate with governments, but rule 27.6 of the Olympic Charter states "The NOCs must preserve their autonomy and resist all pressures of any kind, including but not limited to political, legal, religious or economic pressures which may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter."

[China: Sanctions](#)

23 Sep 2020 | HL7965

Asked by: Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to apply sanctions to any Chinese Communist Party Official found to be responsible for the forced sterilisation of or other human rights abuse against Uyghur Muslims in China.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The FCDO are carefully considering further designations under the Global Human Rights regime. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review. It is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce their impact.

[China: Uighur Internment Camps](#)

23 Sept 2020 | 805 cc1833-1836

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the condition of Uighur internment camps in Xinjiang in China.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, there are reports of torture and overcrowding in detention centres in Xinjiang, where over a million Uighurs are extrajudicially detained. We have repeatedly condemned the abuses of human rights perpetrated against the Uighurs in Xinjiang and again call upon China to immediately allow UN observers unfettered access to the region and to end extrajudicial detention.

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

I thank the Minister for his reply. The International Olympic Committee's charter states that its goal is to

"place sport at the centre of harmonious development ... with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."

Given that the Chinese Communist Party's treatment of the Muslim Uighur minority in Xinjiang contravenes the principles of preserving human dignity, will the Government consider holding the IOC to account by pushing for a review of its decision to hold the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in the People's Republic of China?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, as the right reverend Prelate will know, any representation to the IOC would be a matter for the National Olympic Committee. The British Olympic Association operates independently of the Government. However, ensuring human dignity should be the approach of the Olympic committee or, indeed, any Government.

Asked by: Baroness Bakewell

My Lords, I am co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group. Does the Minister acknowledge the strength of feeling of people of all faiths on this matter? Will the Government persist in opposing the crimes of blasphemy and apostasy around the world, particularly in the case of Mubarak Bala, a humanist arrested for blasphemy in Nigeria?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I can assure the noble Baroness that the Government's priority is, and will remain, to stand up against abuses of all human rights and for freedom of religion or belief anywhere in the world.

Asked by: Baroness Northover

My Lords, the noble Lord will now be very familiar with the China Tribunal's conclusions on the forced removal of organs from the Uighurs and others. Are the Government now taking this report seriously? Are the Magnitsky sanctions being considered for those who may be involved in this appalling practice?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, on the noble Baroness's second point, I cannot speculate on designations. On the organ harvesting report, I have, as she knows, met with Sir Geoffrey Nice. We have also carefully considered the group's report of 1 March. That report contains numerous disturbing allegations of serious human rights abuses, including sexual violence, torture, and forced DNA testing. After reviewing the situation this morning, I have again written formally to the World Health Organization

Asked by: Lord Polak

My Lords, the appalling treatment of the Uighur Muslims by the Chinese regime is horrific. Yet China is expected to be re-elected to the Human Rights Council next month. Sadly, it seems that nothing can be done to halt the increasingly sinister influence of China within UN structures, seriously undermining the UN's credibility. Will the Minister confirm that China is continuing to block the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from having a presence in China? Will he also confirm that we will not support China's election to the Human Rights Council?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, on the issue of election to the Human Rights Council, I assure my noble friend we consider carefully all countries' policies on standing up for human rights both internationally and domestically. On his earlier point, I spoke with High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet last week, and we have made the point directly to her that we continue to lobby for her unfettered access in Xinjiang.

In terms of the UN machinery generally, the United Kingdom has led on two statements—the only joint statements at the UN on Xinjiang—once last year and once this year in June at the Human Rights Council. I am intending to raise the issue in the UK's national statement at the 45th session of the UNHRC, which is scheduled shortly.

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

My Lords, I should mention I am vice-chairman of the all-party group on the Uighurs.

In the light of the near impossibility of arriving at a legal determination of alleged genocide or crimes against humanity in the Uyghur region, which Ministers in the other place have acknowledged, will the Minister join me in welcoming the new initiative of Sir Geoffrey Nice QC in setting up the Uighur tribunal? Will he confirm that the Government will do everything possible to co-operate with the tribunal, including providing evidence and agreeing to take seriously what will be a rigorous and impartial judgment when the process is completed?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, I am fully aware of the formation of this new inquiry, and we are looking at it carefully. I am discussing our approach with officials. We intend to attend the inquiry as we did the inquiry on organ harvesting.

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, I welcome the fact that the Minister has written to the WHO about forced organ harvesting. But it is not enough to write with the evidence; there needs to be concrete evidence. Would he argue with the WHO that this so-called self-assessment process needs to end, and that there ought to be independent verification of the harvesting of organs? Also, will he commit the Government to support my noble friend Lord Hunt and the noble Baroness, Lady Finlay, in making changes to the medicines Bill, which can address this issue and have concrete action to end this awful practice?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, on the latter issue of the medicines Bill, that will be discussed in your Lordships' House; however, as a domestic piece of legislation, I do not think it is the right instrument with which to be looking at this issue, which is about international action. As for the World Health Organization, as I have said, we have taken steps. I will also seek a meeting with it to see what action can be taken. The evidence base is building, and it is clear that, if proven true, the abuses will be there for all to see. It is now important for the World Health Organization to consider the evidence carefully.

Asked by: Baroness Smith of Newnham

My Lords, returning to the original Question: could the Minister tell us what it would require for Her Majesty's Government to analyse the treatment of the Uighurs as a potential genocide, and what it would take for them to raise that internationally?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, as I have already said, as well as raising this internationally, we are raising concerns bilaterally and directly, as my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has done, with the Chinese Foreign Secretary and State Councillor. We are also raising this through

multilateral fora, through the third committee at the UN and the Human Rights Council. On the specific definition of genocide, the noble Baroness is aware of the Government's position that this is something for tribunals or judicial authorities to assess.

Asked by: Lord Mackenzie of Framwellgate

My Lords, China has shown a callous disregard for the human rights of minority ethnic groups over a number of years. The evidence is now clearly overwhelming. Does the Minister not agree that the time is now right to instigate Magnitsky sanctions against those who perpetrate these indefensible wrongs against their own citizens? Words are clearly ineffective—this is time for decisive action.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, as I have already said, I cannot speculate on future designations, but I am pleased that we have now initiated, through my right honourable friend's efforts, a formal procedure through the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, to ensure that those who abuse human rights are held to account.

Asked by: Baroness Warsi

My Lords, does my noble friend agree that states that do not live by basic international human rights standards should not have unfettered access to international trade markets? Is he aware of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which was recently passed by the US House of Representatives? Do Her Majesty's Government have plans for similar legislation to be introduced here in the United Kingdom?

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, my noble friend raises an important point. She will also be aware that it was through our support and initiation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and our support for the evidence taken by a particular inquiry in Australia that we saw many companies changing their approach to trade initiatives, particularly in Xinjiang. We are looking at the US legislation carefully, and whatever the outcome of those discussions, I will write to my noble friend.

Asked by: Baroness Deech

My Lords, the tragedy of this is that we have seen it before—these steps towards genocide. It is even more tragic that the United Nations is impotent due to the position of China. The only thing I believe the Government can do is publish a list of those brands to which it is thought forced labour by the Uighurs is contributing and call on the population to boycott those brands and hopefully prevent their import.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, I have already detailed the action the Government have taken, and I believe it is for companies to make their decisions in light of that evidence.

[Trade Agreements: China](#)

21 Sep 2020 | 91142

Asked by: Afzal Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of inserting clauses on human rights in future trade deals with China in order to help tackle forced Uyghar labour in that country.

Answering member: Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade

The United Kingdom has a strong history of promoting our values globally. We will continue to encourage all states to uphold their international obligations and are clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of rights and responsibilities.

China remains an important trading partner for the United Kingdom and we are pursuing increased bilateral trade, but do not have plans to negotiate a free trade agreement currently.

[Engagements](#)

09 Sep 2020 | 679 c614

Asked by: Siobhain McDonagh

They herd them on to trains, they shave their heads, they abort their babies. A genocide of the Uyghur people by the Chinese Government is taking place before our eyes. It is easy to criticise the next world superpower, but harder to take action. What action will the Prime Minister take to stop the ethnic cleansing of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang? When will he lead the organisation of an international tribunal, because this time no country can say that it did not know?

Answered by: Boris Johnson | Prime Minister

The hon. Lady is entirely right to draw attention to the plight of the Uyghurs, as both I and the Foreign Secretary have done. We raise these concerns directly with the Chinese authorities and will continue to do so in the G20, the UN and every other context.

[China: Uighurs](#)

08 Sep 2020 | 82664

Asked by: Rushanara Ali

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the size of the Uighur population in Xinjiang region for each of the last five years.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Official figures from the Chinese Government state that, in 2018, the population of Xinjiang was approximately 24.9 million. The Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) does not produce its own population statistics for the region.

[China: Freezing of Assets](#)

08 Sep 2020 | 82661

Asked by: Rushanara Ali

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what provisions he has made to freeze individual Chinese assets if they have played a role in the repression of the Uighur minority population; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament. This sanctions regime allows for asset freezes and travel bans on targeted individuals and organisations. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

[China: Uighurs](#)

08 Sep 2020 | 82660

Asked by: Ali, Rushanara

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that no products made from human hair taken from the Uighur population in Xinjiang, China are (a) imported and (b) sold within the UK.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

HMG advises in our Overseas Business Risk Guidance that all businesses involved in investing in Xinjiang or with parts of their supply chains, including businesses that import goods from Xinjiang, should consider conducting appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to be supporting, any human rights violations or abuses. We keep our advice to UK business under review, working closely with relevant departments across government.

[China: Uighurs](#)

08 Sep 2020 | 82658

Asked by: Rushanara Ali

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the number of detention camps in Xinjiang region, China where Uighurs and other minority communities are allegedly being held.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Open source reports indicate that there may be over 250 detention camps in Xinjiang. We judge that at least one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have been extra-judicially detained in these camps.

[China: Uighurs](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 78709

Asked by: Chris Law

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is taking steps to implement the recommendation of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales and use all available offices and legal means to investigate, apprehend and punish alleged perpetrators of any violations being committed against Uyghur and Turkic Muslim populations.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of the Bar Human Rights Committee report published on 22 July. We are carefully considering its findings. We regularly raise our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including at the UN Human Rights Council on 30 June.

6.2 Debates

[China's Policy on its Uighur Population](#)

11 Mar 2020 | 673 cc129-152WH

[Human Rights: Xinjiang](#)

29 Jan 2019 | 653 cc323-347WH

7. Further reading

[The UK-China relationship](#)

Commons Library Research Briefing
14 September 2020

[Responsibility of States under international law to Uyghurs and other turkic muslims in Xinjiang, China](#)

Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales
22 July 2020

[China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang](#)

Council on Foreign Relations
30 June 2020

[Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP's Campaign to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang](#)

The Jamestown Foundation
29 June 2020 (updated 21 July 2020)

[2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: China – Xinjiang](#)

[Executive Summary]
Office of International Religious Freedom - US Department of State
10 June 2020

[China's policy on its Uighur population](#)

Commons Library Debate Pack
6 March 2020

[Uyghurs for sale](#)

Australian Strategic Policy Institute
1 March 2020

[Xinjiang homepage](#)

Human Rights Watch

[China homepage](#)

Amnesty International

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