



SOCHUM



ADAMUN'26

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Letters

Letter from the Secretariat Team

Dear Esteemed Participants,

It is with great honor and sincere appreciation that we welcome you all to ADAMUN 2026.

Bringing individuals together in an environment where ideas and perspectives can be shared carries a value that extends beyond the moment itself. In a world where communication often takes place at a distance, creating such a space allows for more direct, thoughtful, and meaningful interaction. It is within this setting that understanding can grow, shaped by the contributions and viewpoints each of you brings.

Your presence at ADAMUN is what gives this experience its true significance. The willingness to engage, to listen, and to actively participate reflects a shared commitment to making the most of this opportunity. Each of you plays a role in shaping the discussions and in contributing to an atmosphere where ideas can be exchanged with both respect and purpose.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to you for being here and for the effort you have dedicated to taking part in this conference. What makes this experience meaningful is not only the structure of the program, but the exchange of ideas and the connections formed throughout the process.

We hope that your time at ADAMUN will be both engaging and enriching, and that it provides you with the opportunity to explore new perspectives and to take part in meaningful discussions.

Once again, we are honored to welcome you, and we wish you a productive and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Deniz Özkubat

Su Ağbal

 Secretary Generals of ADAMUN 2026

Letter from the Under Secretary Generals: Duru Solmaz and Mehmet Kürşat Keleş

Esteemed Delegates,

It is our great honor to welcome you to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) at ADAMUN 2026.

In this committee, you will address two significant and sensitive agenda items: the humanitarian crisis and the issue of assimilation in East Turkestan. These topics involve complex discussions surrounding human rights, state sovereignty, and international responsibility, requiring careful analysis from multiple perspectives.

We strongly encourage you to come prepared by conducting thorough research and developing a clear understanding of the different dimensions of the topic. Engaging with various viewpoints and considering both regional and international implications will be essential for productive debate.

Throughout the conference, this committee aims to provide an environment where ideas can be exchanged respectfully and constructively. It is also an opportunity to improve your skills in diplomacy, critical thinking, and public speaking.

We hope that this experience will be both intellectually engaging and enjoyable for all participants. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to meeting you and wish you a successful conference.

Best regards,

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Under Secretary Generals of SOCHUM, ADAMUN 2026

Introduction

Introduction to the Committee: Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (also known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee or SOCHUM or C3) is one of six main committees at the General Assembly of the United Nations. It deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs and social matters.

The Third Committee meets every year in early October and aims to finish its work by the end of November. All 193 member states of the United Nations can attend. As in previous sessions, an important part of the work of the committee will focus on the examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council which was established in 2006.

The committee's scope has expanded to include modern issues such as the protection of digital privacy, the social impact of artificial intelligence, and the protection of rights in the digital age. Regional crises, such as the situation in East Turkestan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), are brought before this commission because they raise complex social, cultural, and humanitarian issues that are more than political disputes. During its deliberations, the commission often tries to make contact with the principle of state sovereignty with the international responsibility to protect human rights. By providing a platform for dialogue among all member states, SOCHUM ensures that humanitarian considerations remain a priority, regardless of shifts in geopolitical interests.

Introduction to the Topic: Humanitarian Crisis and Assimilation at East Turkestan

The balance between national security and human rights remains one of the most polarizing challenges in contemporary international relations. In the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), this dilemma takes center stage as the human rights situation within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in China is examined. The core of this debate centers on a complex clash of narratives: on one side, a sovereign state implementing strict counter-terrorism measures and economic development programs; on the other, a growing body of international reports alleging systemic violations of fundamental human rights, religious freedom, and cultural identity.

Historically, the region has been a critical hub along the ancient Silk Road, serving as a crossroads of diverse cultures, languages, and religious traditions for centuries. However, the early 21st century brought a wave of ethnic tensions and violent incidents that prompted the central government to launch its Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism. Under this security-first doctrine, authorities implemented highly aggressive counter-terrorism and de-radicalization laws aimed at eliminating what they defined as the Three Evil Forces: terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

From the state's perspective, these strategies have been highly successful in restoring public safety, providing vocational skills, and alleviating poverty. The establishment of Vocational Education and Training Centers (VETCs) is defended as a humane and preventive alternative to standard criminal incarceration. However, international observers, human rights organizations, and the landmark 2022 UN OHCHR report present a starkly different reality. These bodies characterize the centers as extrajudicial internment facilities and argue that the definitions of extremism are so broad that everyday cultural and religious expressions are routinely criminalized.

This tension extends directly into the daily lives of the local population. The integration of artificial intelligence and algorithmic surveillance -such as the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP)- has turned the region into a testing ground for preventive policing. While the state highlights these technologies as modern tools for social stability, critics view them as a massive breach of the right to privacy and physical integrity.

Furthermore, the committee must address the deep economic and cultural dimensions of this topic. State-mandated labor transfer programs, framed by the government as poverty alleviation initiatives, have sparked intense global debate over forced labor. This has forced international corporations and member states to reconsider the ethics of their supply chains. Simultaneously, policies aimed at sinicization have led to documented restrictions on native languages, religious practices, and the institutionalization of children in state-run boarding schools, raising alarms over the potential permanent loss of intangible cultural heritage.

The overarching challenge is to navigate this deeply divided landscape. Evaluating how the international community can foster transparency, protect cultural diversity, and ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not come at the absolute expense of human dignity and fundamental freedoms remains the primary focus of the discussion.

Key Terms and Definitions

- **De-radicalization:** The official campaign to counter what the state identifies as religious extremism through legal, educational, and psychological interventions.
- **Extrajudicial Detention:** The arrest and holding of individuals by government authorities without a trial, formal charges, or access to the standard legal process.
- **Intangible Heritage:** The traditions, oral expressions, performing arts, social practices, and rituals of a community. In this context, it refers to the unique cultural and religious practices of the minority groups that are facing restrictions.
- **Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP):** A big-data system that aggregates information from surveillance cameras, ID checks, and mobile phones to flag individuals for preventive policing and detention.
- **Pair Up and Become Family:** A government program where state workers are assigned to live with local families in the region to promote integration, which critics view as a tool for intrusive surveillance and cultural policing.
- **Sinicization:** The process of cultural assimilation aimed at aligning the languages, traditions, and religious practices of minority groups with traditional Chinese culture and state ideology.
- **Three Evil Forces:** The official term used by the central government to categorize terrorism, extremism, and separatism in the region, which serves as the primary legal justification for security measures.
- **Vocational Education and Training Centers (VETCs):** Facilities established by the state to provide language, legal, and vocational training, which independent reports characterize as internment camps.

Historical Background of the Topic

Geopolitical Significance of the Region

The East Turkestan region, officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, occupies a unique strategic position in the heart of Central Asia. Covering one-sixth of China's total land area and sharing borders with eight countries -including Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan- it forms a vital land bridge between East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Historically, this region was at the heart of the ancient Silk Road, facilitating the exchange of goods, cultures, and ideas across continents.

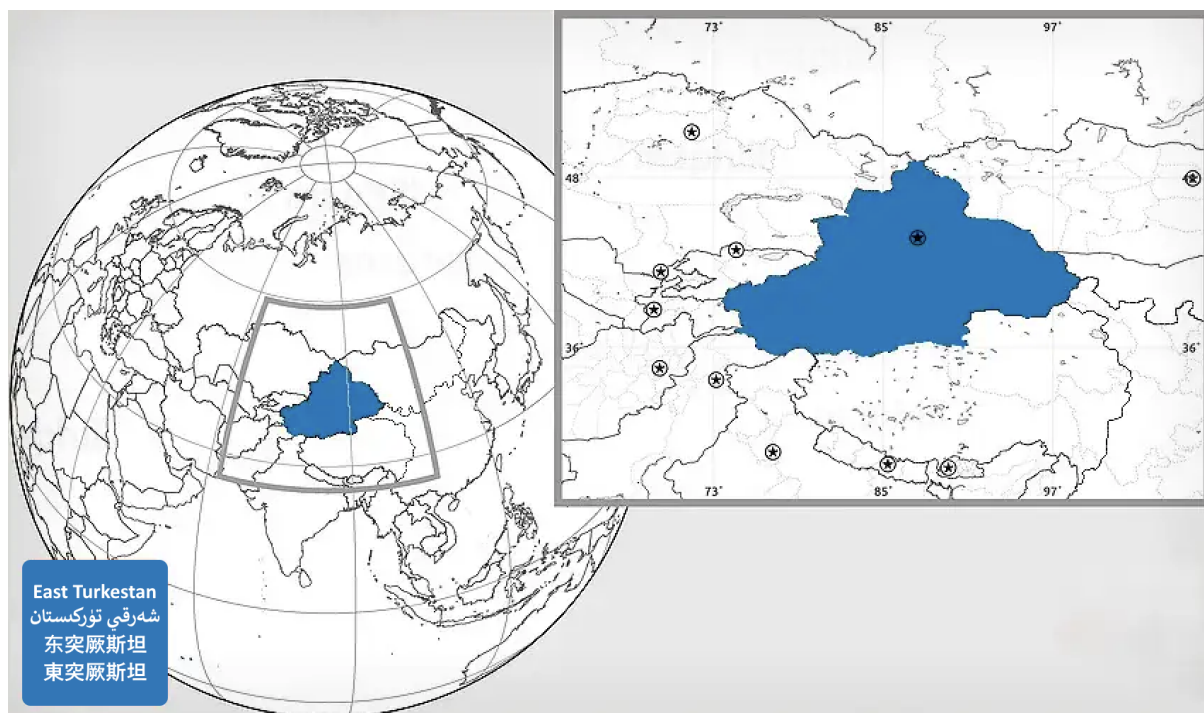
In the modern era, this historical significance has been revived by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As the starting point for major international trade corridors, the region is essential to the state's ambition to establish secure land trade routes, bypassing the maritime bottlenecks of the South China Sea. Therefore, the stability and integration of this region are considered by the central government to be a matter of national security and economic survival of paramount importance.

In addition to its role as a transit hub, the region is exceptionally rich in natural resources, making it a pillar of national energy security. It contains some of the country's largest reserves of oil, natural gas, and coal. Furthermore, the region has become a global leader in the production of raw materials essential to the energy transition, including polysilicon used in solar panels and rare earth elements needed for high-tech manufacturing. Its vast, sun-drenched landscapes and windswept plains also offer ideal conditions for large-scale renewable energy projects.

Since the national economy is heavily dependent on the regular flow of these resources to the industrial centers in the east, any social or political instability in the region is perceived as a direct threat to the country's overall economic performance. This abundance of resources explains the central government's rigorous administrative and security presence in this area, geographically distant from the capital.

The region's geopolitical importance is also defined by the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. As a multi-ethnic border region, its governance requires balancing the interests of indigenous groups with the national objective of territorial integrity. The region's proximity to unstable areas of Central and South Asia has led to a security-oriented approach to governance.

The central government asserts that the region constitutes a front line against what it calls the three scourges: separatism, extremism, and terrorism. From a geopolitical perspective, the state fears that instability within its borders could be exploited by external actors or spread to neighboring countries, potentially destabilizing the entire Silk Road economic belt. Consequently, the domestic policies examined by this committee are inextricably linked to the region's role as a strategic buffer zone and economic hub.



Post-1949 Developments

The modern administrative history of the region begins in 1949, after the end of the Chinese Civil War. Prior to this, the region had experienced varying degrees of local autonomy and short-lived independence movements. With the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, the central government embarked on a process of institutional integration to bring this border region under national control. A significant milestone in this process was the official designation of the region as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in 1955.

This status was intended to grant indigenous ethnic groups, particularly the Uyghurs, a degree of cultural and administrative autonomy. However, the concept of autonomy has evolved considerably over the decades, shifting from a model of cultural recognition to one of strict central administrative control.

One of the most prominent features of the post-1949 era was the establishment of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, commonly known as the Bingtuan. This unique paramilitary and economic organization was established in 1954 to develop the region's infrastructure, secure its borders, and promote agricultural production. Over time, Bingtuan transformed into a vast state entity, managing its own cities, schools, and industries in cooperation with the civilian government.

The organization's presence led to a significant demographic shift in the region. In 1949, the Han population was estimated at around 6%; by the beginning of the 21st century, this figure had reached nearly 40%. This migration was driven by government incentives designed to encourage workers and professionals from the eastern provinces to settle in this border area, resulting in rapid urbanization but also socio-economic tensions between the newcomers and the local population.

Relations between the central government and the regional population gradually deteriorated in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In the 1980s, a brief period of cultural liberalization allowed for greater freedom of religious and linguistic expression. However, this trend reversed in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of neighboring Central Asian states, raising concerns in the capital about potential separatist movements. These tensions culminated in the 2009 Ürümqi riots, a major turning point that led to a significant tightening of security measures.

Since then, the central government has abandoned a policy of cultural accommodation in favor of a strategy of aggressive integration. This historical trajectory explains the transition from an autonomous border region to a heavily regulated administrative zone, paving the way for the humanitarian and cultural policies currently under discussion.

Counter Terrorism Narrative

The current regional policies are justified by a national narrative focused on combating the three evil forces: separatism, extremism, and terrorism. Following the global shift in security perspectives after 9/11, the central government framed local unrest as part of an international struggle against political violence. This discourse creates a legal framework where high-intensity interventions are viewed as necessary for maintaining territorial integrity and social harmony. By labeling demands for autonomy as extremist movements, the state justifies proactive measures to ensure national stability.

A major turning point occurred between 2009 and 2014 following several violent incidents, leading to the strike hard campaign in 2014. This marked a shift from reactive policing to preventative measures. The official narrative compares extremism to a virus and suggests that individuals must be "cured" through education before a crime is committed. This medicalized view of ideology is the primary justification for vocational centers, which are presented as tools to immunize the population against radicalization through ideological and linguistic training.

The legal basis for this approach was solidified by the 2015 Counter-Terrorism Law and 2017 De-Radicalization Regulations. These laws provide broad definitions of extremism, allowing the state to intervene in private behaviors like religious dress or the possession of certain texts. The government claims these measures have prevented major incidents since 2017, using this success to counter international human rights criticism.

Agenda Item A: Humanitarian Crisis at East Turkestan

High-tech Surveillance Systems

The humanitarian situation in the region is marked by the use of advanced technologies to monitor and control the daily lives of its citizens. This system is often described as one of the most sophisticated surveillance networks in the world. The central government justifies this high-tech approach by the need to maintain public order, prevent crime, and identify potential security threats before they materialize. From an administrative perspective, the goal is to create a smart governance model where data is used to ensure social stability. However, for the region's inhabitants, this means that almost all their movements and digital interactions are recorded and analyzed by the state.

At the heart of this network is the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP). This massive data system collects information from various sources, including facial recognition cameras, police checkpoints, and personal smartphones. The system monitors common behaviors that the state deems suspicious, such as excessive electricity consumption, owning multiple phones, or communicating with people living abroad. When an individual is flagged by the system, it can lead to a police investigation or even detention in a re-education camp. This automated surveillance process creates a climate of fear and constant monitoring, resulting in a significant breach of privacy and a breakdown of trust within the community.

In addition to digital tracking, the collection of biological data is a key component of this surveillance strategy. Residents are often compelled to provide authorities with DNA samples, fingerprints, and voice recordings, sometimes under the guise of free health checkups. This information is then linked to their national identity cards, allowing the state to track individuals with extreme precision using facial recognition software installed on thousands of cameras throughout the region. At physical checkpoints, located at nearly every intersection and public building, citizens must scan their identity card and face to gain entry. Human rights observers argue that this level of surveillance violates the right to privacy and freedom of movement, as it places the entire population in a state of constant suspicion.

Re-education Camps

The system of re-education camps, officially designated by the state as vocational training centers, is the most controversial element of the regional administrative framework. These facilities expanded rapidly around 2017, following the introduction of new anti-extremism regulations. According to official statements, their primary objective is to provide a controlled environment for individuals perceived as being influenced by extremist ideologies. The government claims that by teaching the national language, offering vocational training, and providing legal education, these centers help citizens integrate into modern society and steer clear of illegal activities. From the state's perspective, these centers are a preventative tool designed to curb social instability before it even arises.

However, the international community and various human rights organizations view these facilities differently. Based on satellite imagery, leaked administrative documents, and testimonies from former detainees, critics argue that these sites operate as extrajudicial detention centers. The primary human rights concern is that individuals are frequently sent to these camps without trial, legal representation, or charges. In many cases, people have been detained for seemingly minor actions, such as possessing certain apps on their phones, traveling abroad, or participating in religious ceremonies. This lack of due process is considered a violation of the fundamental rights to liberty and a fair trial, as recognized by international human rights standards.

The conditions of detention in these centers are also under intense scrutiny. Reports describe a highly regulated environment where daily life is strictly controlled and detainees are required to undergo intensive ideological and linguistic training. This training aims to replace local cultural and religious affiliations with loyalty to the state and its official ideology. Human rights observers emphasize that the detention of hundreds of thousands of people -some estimates suggest more than a million- in such a closed system creates a humanitarian crisis. The psychological impact of prolonged detention, combined with the separation of individuals from their families, remains a major problem.

Post-release Surveillance

One of the most complex aspects of the current situation concerns the status of people released from re-education camps. The central government regularly asserts that many of them have completed their journey and successfully reintegrated into society. According to the official narrative, these individuals use their new professional skills and improved command of the national language to find stable employment and contribute to the local economy. From the state's perspective, the process is complete once a person is reformed and demonstrates loyalty to national laws and social norms.

However, reports from human rights observers and former residents indicate that release from a camp does not signify a return to normal or private life. On the contrary, these individuals are often placed under a system of post-release surveillance that is just as restrictive as the camps themselves. Many are assigned to specific factories under strict surveillance, with their movements limited to dormitories and work sites. Their national identity cards are often flagged by the digital surveillance system, preventing them from traveling between cities, visiting relatives, or even accessing public spaces without police checks. This creates a state of "conditional release" where any behavior deemed suspicious can lead to immediate detention.

A key component of this ongoing surveillance is the family sponsorship program. Under this policy, over a million civil servants and state agents have been assigned to live with families from ethnic minorities. Officially, these officials are there to help families cope with economic hardship and introduce them to the national culture. However, in reality, they act as overseers, intruding on the private sphere of the home. They observe whether family members pray, what language they speak at the table, and whether they adhere to secular practices. This constant presence of a state representative within the home obliterates the notion of the home as a private sanctuary.

Forced Labor Allegations

The issue of forced labor in the region is closely linked to the state's economic and social policies, particularly those aimed at combating poverty. The central government manages various labor transfer programs designed to direct rural workers to industrial jobs, both within the region and in other provinces of the country. Officially, these programs are presented as an opportunity for ethnic minorities to access stable employment, increase their income, and integrate into the modern national economy. From the state's perspective, transferring people from traditional agriculture to factory work is a key step in modernizing the region and reducing the influence of extremist ideologies through economic development.

However, international human rights organizations and labor experts have expressed serious concerns about the voluntary nature of these programs. Reports indicate that many people are placed in these jobs after being held in re-education camps or under administrative duress. In many cases, refusing to participate in a labor transfer can lead to being labeled as non-cooperative or extremist, which can result in detention. Furthermore, these workers often live in highly regulated environments, such as factory dormitories, where their movements are restricted and they are required to attend ideological training sessions after work. This lack of choice and constant surveillance has led many to characterize these programs as a system of forced labor.

This situation has significant repercussions for the global economy, as the region is a major producer of raw materials and finished goods. It produces approximately 20% of the world's cotton and a significant portion of the polysilicon used in solar panels, as well as various electronic components. Because these materials are used by major international brands, allegations of forced labor have compelled many countries to adopt laws requiring companies to demonstrate that their supply chains are free of coercive labor.

Global Supply Chain

The humanitarian situation in the region is not merely a local or national issue; it poses a major challenge to the global economy. As a significant producer of raw materials, the region's domestic policies directly impact the international supply chains of many sectors. The central government describes the region's economic role as a key component of the Belt and Road Initiative, viewing it as a hub for resource production and extraction. From the state's perspective, integrating the region into global trade is a key strategy for regional development and social stability. However, for international businesses and consumers, the link between regional labor practices and global products raises a complex ethical and legal dilemma.

The textile industry is the most striking example. The region produces approximately 20% of the world's cotton, used by major international fashion brands. Following revelations of forced labor in cotton fields and processing plants, numerous international organizations and governments have expressed concerns about the potentially tainted nature of these products. This has led to significant policy changes in countries like the United States, where laws such as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) have been adopted. These laws presume that any goods produced in the region involve forced labor, unless the company can prove otherwise. As a result, many international brands have had to relocate their supply chains out of the region to avoid legal sanctions and reputational damage.

Beyond the textile sector, the region is also a key supplier for the global energy transition. The vast majority of the world's polysilicon, a material essential for solar panels, is produced there. Similarly, many electronic components and automotive parts are manufactured in factories participating in labor transfer programs implemented by governments. This situation can create a conflict between the international community's environmental and technological objectives and its human rights commitments.

PRODUCT	EXPORT VALUE	% OF TOTAL EXPORTS
APPAREL	\$4.49B	25.4%
FOOTWEAR	\$1.81B	10.2%
ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT	\$1.6B	9.1%
OTHER MACHINES (I.E., MECHANICAL APPLIANCES)	\$1.15B	6.6%
TOYS AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT	\$971M	5.5%
PLASTICS	\$747M	4.2%
VEHICLES (EXCLUDING RAILWAY)	\$712M	4.0%

Source: "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019.

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Freedom of Movement

The right to freedom of movement, both within the region and across international borders, is significantly restricted under the current security framework. The central government claims these controls are a key component of its counterterrorism strategy, aimed at preventing the movement of individuals suspected of involvement in illegal activities. Administratively, the objective is to create a grid-like management system that allows for the monitoring of every person's location at any time to ensure public safety. However, for the local population, this has fostered an atmosphere where freedom of movement is perceived as a privilege granted by the state rather than a fundamental right.

In the region, the most visible signs of these restrictions are the thousands of police checkpoints located at the entrances to cities, towns, and even neighborhoods. To pass through them, residents must scan their national identity cards and undergo facial recognition. For many people from ethnic minorities, simply moving from one city to another requires official authorization from local authorities, and any overnight stay must be reported to the police. This system effectively creates a series of internal borders that limit social and economic interaction between different communities. Human rights observers say these measures specifically target certain ethnic groups, creating a two-tiered system where some citizens move freely while others are subjected to constant questioning.

International travel is even more tightly controlled. Since around 2016, there have been numerous reports of authorities confiscating the passports of ethnic minority residents, often without clear legal justification. Traveling abroad or even applying for a passport requires undergoing a lengthy and complex approval process involving multiple government agencies. Even those who manage to leave the country often face pressure to return, and their families remaining in the region can suffer the consequences if they refuse.

Health and Reproductive Rights

In recent years, health and reproductive policies implemented in the region have been the subject of major international scrutiny. These policies are part of a broader state effort to regulate population growth and improve public health through standardized medical services. According to official government reports, these measures aim to improve access to healthcare in rural areas and ensure access to family planning services for all ethnic groups. The state claims that these actions contribute to improving women's quality of life by reducing unintended pregnancies and enabling families to provide for their children.

However, many independent researchers and human rights advocates have highlighted a different reality. Data from official regional yearbooks show a marked and unusual decline in birth rates in areas with large minority populations since around 2017. Reports suggest that this decline is not the result of natural social changes but is linked to the strict enforcement of birth control measures. These measures include mandatory pregnancy tests, forced insertion of contraceptive devices, and, in some cases, forced abortions and sterilizations. Human rights organizations argue that while family planning is a common state policy, the use of coercion and the targeting of specific ethnic groups violate the fundamental right to bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom.

Another concern relates to the mandatory medical examinations that residents are required to undergo regularly. Although officially presented as free public health services, many observers note that these examinations are often used to collect biometric data, such as blood types and DNA samples, without the explicit consent of the individuals concerned. This data is then fed into the regional surveillance databases mentioned earlier.

Agenda Item B: Assimilation in East Turkestan

Language and Education Policies

Education is the cornerstone of the state's long-term strategy for regional integration and social transformation. The central government asserts that a unified and standardized education system is essential for national stability and economic development. Officially, the priority given to Mandarin in schools is a pragmatic measure to equip students with the linguistic tools necessary for success in a modern and competitive national labor market. The state maintains that by eliminating language barriers, it promotes social mobility and enables populations in border regions to fully participate in the country's technological growth.

However, the rapid transition from a bilingual model to a common national language system has effectively led to the marginalization of indigenous languages. Over the past decade, the use of local languages in primary and secondary education has been systematically abandoned. International observers and linguists argue that this development is not merely a matter of communication; it represents a direct attack on the cultural identity of the younger generation. When a language is removed from classrooms, the unique literature, history, and worldviews embedded within it risk disappearing, creating a profound cultural divide between generations. The most significant development in this regard is the massive expansion of state-run boarding schools across the region.

Many children, sometimes as young as five, are placed in these institutions while their parents are detained or participate in forced labor programs. In these highly regulated environments, children are immersed in instruction exclusively in Mandarin and follow a curriculum that emphasizes nationalism. While the state justifies these schools by claiming they provide quality education in rural areas, human rights advocates view them as a systematic attempt to sever children from their cultural roots.

This system ensures that the younger generation adopts a national identity that overrides their ethnic and religious heritage. Furthermore, these policies exert psychological pressure that leads to the perception of indigenous culture as an obstacle to progress. The devaluation of local languages in schools conveys the message that national culture is the only path to modernity.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The regulation of religious life is a central pillar of the region's security and administrative framework. Officially, the state claims to protect normal religious activities while combating what it calls religious extremism. From the government's perspective, these restrictions are necessary to prevent religion from being used for separatist or radicalization purposes. By aligning religious practices with national laws -a policy often referred to as sinicization- the state aims to create a secular and unified national identity that transcends regional ethnic and religious loyalties.

In practice, however, these policies have resulted in significant restrictions on everyday religious expression. The 2017 Deradicalization Regulations provided a legal framework for authorities to monitor and punish behaviors previously considered common personal choices. These include restrictions on wearing certain types of beards, wearing the religious veil in public, and observing the traditional fast during Ramadan. Furthermore, numerous mosques and historical religious sites have been closed, demolished, or architecturally altered to remove Islamic symbols such as domes and minarets. Human rights observers consider these measures a systematic attempt to marginalize religion within a strictly controlled private sphere.

The impact of these restrictions is particularly felt in the daily lives of minority populations. Possessing religious texts at home or teaching religion to children can be flagged by surveillance systems as suspicious behavior, potentially leading to administrative detention. This climate of constant surveillance has transformed religious practice into a high-risk activity, forcing many to abandon their traditional religious practices to escape state pressure.

Social Engineering

Social engineering in the region refers to the systematic effort by the state to reshape the fundamental structure of societies belonging to ethnic minorities. Beyond mere political control, these policies aim to transform the habits, family structures, and loyalties of the population in order to ensure lasting stability and integration. The government justifies these actions in the name of a policy of modernization, arguing that the transition of populations from traditional rural lifestyles to modern urban and industrial environments is the only way to reduce poverty and eliminate the root causes of social unrest.

A key instrument of this social engineering is belonging and starting a family program. Under this policy, more than one million civil servants have been assigned to the homes of families belonging to ethnic minorities. Officially, their mission is to provide economic assistance and cultural education. However, they also play a surveillance role, observing the most intimate aspects of family life, such as verifying whether a family speaks the national language at home or adheres to secular social norms. This program effectively abolishes the boundary between the state and the private sphere, thus placing the family unit under the direct control of the government.

Another important aspect of social engineering is the mass relocation of rural populations to industrial areas. By uprooting them from their ancestral lands and housing them in factory dormitories or public housing, the state severs the social bonds that have historically shaped these communities. This process is often accompanied by intensive ideological indoctrination aimed at replacing ethnic identity with a sense of national belonging.

Situation of Children

The impact of regional policies on youth is one of the most concerning aspects of the current humanitarian situation. The central government claims that its educational and social programs for children aim to provide them with a safe and modern environment, particularly for children whose parents work in remote factories or are unable to care for them. From the state's perspective, regional boarding schools and specialized children's homes are essential tools in the fight against poverty, guaranteeing children from rural minority families a quality education and early learning of the national language.

However, international observers and human rights organizations view these institutions as a system of state parenting that severs children from their cultural and familial roots. Many children placed in these facilities have parents detained in re-education camps or assigned to forced labor programs in other provinces. In these boarding schools, children are often kept in a strictly controlled environment where only Mandarin is spoken and their contact with relatives is limited.

The curriculum emphasizes loyalty to the state and the dominant national ideology, effectively discouraging the expression of their ethnic or religious heritage. The psychological consequences of this separation are the subject of intense debate. Experts argue that removing children from their families during their most formative years creates a cultural rupture, compromising the transmission of traditions, language, and family values. This systematic isolation is seen as a way to ensure that the next generation identifies primarily with the nation-state rather than with its ethnic community.



Loss of Intangible Heritage

Beyond the physical destruction of buildings, the region faces a significant decline in its intangible cultural heritage. This includes oral traditions, music, dance, social rituals, and traditional knowledge that have shaped the identity of ethnic minority groups for centuries. The central government claims to be actively preserving these cultures by showcasing traditional dances and crafts at state-organized tourist festivals. Officially, these efforts demonstrate that the state supports cultural diversity as long as it remains secular and consistent with national identity.

Conversely, cultural experts and members of the diaspora believe that these state-orchestrated events are superficial and fail to reflect the living, authentic culture of the people. Much of the region's intangible heritage is deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and community gatherings, which are now strictly regulated or even prohibited. For example, traditional community festivals and storytelling sessions have been replaced by state-organized events that emphasize national unity.

With the decline in the use of Indigenous languages in schools and public life, traditional poetry, songs, and historical narratives that rely on these languages are rapidly disappearing. The loss of this heritage is perceived as a form of cultural erasure. When a community is no longer allowed to practice its traditional customs naturally and spontaneously, the core of its identity begins to fade. Systematic surveillance of private life and the discouragement of traditional social practices have deterred many people from engaging in their own cultural practices.

Further Research

Block Positions

People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China asserts that its regional policy is strictly a matter of internal affairs and that any external interference constitutes a violation of its national sovereignty. The central government maintains that these measures are not aimed at any particular ethnic or religious group, but rather represent a necessary and effective response to the three plagues of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. According to the official narrative, the region faced serious security threats between 2009 and 2014, and the current administrative framework -including vocational training centers and enhanced surveillance- has prevented major violent incidents since 2017. The state emphasizes that these policies protect the fundamental right to life and security for all its citizens.

Furthermore, China presents its regional strategy as a successful model for poverty alleviation and social modernization. The government asserts that by offering vocational training, language courses, and employment opportunities through labor transfer programs, it is integrating a previously isolated population into the national economy. From the Chinese perspective, international criticisms regarding forced labor or cultural assimilation are dismissed as politically motivated disinformation aimed at hindering the country's peaceful development. The official position remains centered on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, affirming that the state has the exclusive right to maintain social stability and national unity through its own legal and administrative means.

United States of America

The United States strongly condemns the systematic treatment of ethnic and religious minorities in the region. The U.S. government officially characterizes the state-led campaign, characterized by mass detention, forced labor, and forced sterilization, as crimes against humanity and genocide. From the U.S. perspective, the scale of the surveillance and the expansion of re-education camps constitute a grave violation of international human rights standards and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States affirms that the fight against terrorism must not be used as a pretext to suppress the peaceful expression of religious faith or to destroy the unique cultural identity of a people.

In response to this situation, the United States has implemented a series of legislative and economic measures aimed at holding regional administrations accountable. These include the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which presumes that all goods manufactured in the region are made using forced labor unless proven otherwise, thereby restricting their access to the U.S. market.

Furthermore, the United States has imposed targeted sanctions on certain government officials and technology companies involved in the region's advanced surveillance infrastructure. The U.S. position emphasizes that economic growth and national security cannot justify the erosion of fundamental freedoms, and it continues to demand unrestricted access for independent international investigators to assess the situation on the ground.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation views the situation in the region as a strategic partnership and based on the principle of non-interference in the sovereign affairs of states. Moscow's official position is that the administrative and security measures taken by China fall within its internal affairs and are aimed at ensuring national stability and combating the three scourges of terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Russian officials frequently emphasize that every nation has the right to choose its own path of development and its own model of governance, based on its unique historical and cultural context, without being subjected to external pressure or criticism regarding human rights, which Russia considers politically motivated.

Furthermore, Russia maintains close alignment with China within international bodies such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The Russian government rejects the use of unilateral sanctions and extraterritorial jurisdiction by Western powers, viewing them as instruments of geopolitical competition rather than genuine humanitarian concerns.

From Russia's perspective, the international community should prioritize concrete cooperation in the fight against terrorism rather than instrumentalizing human rights rhetoric to undermine the territorial integrity of sovereign states. By supporting China's discourse on deradicalization and social integration, Russia reinforces a shared vision of a multipolar world order where national sovereignty is the fundamental guiding principle of international relations.

Republic of Türkiye

The Republic of Turkey occupies a unique and complex position regarding the situation in the region due to deep ethnic, cultural, and linguistic ties with the local population. Ankara's official position is characterized by a dual approach: maintaining close bilateral relations with China while relentlessly defending the protection of the fundamental rights and cultural identity of its ethnic minorities. Turkey affirms that the security, well-being, and religious freedom of minorities are of paramount importance and must be guaranteed within the framework of China's territorial integrity. From the Turkish perspective, preserving the region's unique Turkic-Islamic heritage is a major humanitarian and cultural imperative.

In its diplomatic relations, Turkey emphasizes the importance of transparency and constructive dialogue. While recognizing China's right to combat terrorism and ensure social stability, Turkish authorities have frequently called for such measures to be proportionate and respectful of universal human rights standards. Turkey has expressed concern over reports of mass detentions and cultural restrictions, frequently raising these issues through direct bilateral channels and international bodies such as the United Nations.

At the same time, Turkey remains committed to its one China policy and seeks to play a mediating role, encouraging the Chinese government to allow independent observers to visit the region. Turkey's position reflects a delicate balance between economic and strategic cooperation with a major world power and the moral responsibility to safeguard the cultural survival of a related people.

Central Asian Turkic Republics

The Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia -Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan- occupy an extremely precarious position, marked by a complex tension between ethnic solidarity and economic necessity. These nations share deep linguistic, religious, and historical ties with the minority populations living on both sides of their borders. However, their geopolitical reality is heavily influenced by their participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and their dependence on China, their main trading partner, energy consumer, and source of infrastructure investment. Consequently, the official position of these governments is primarily guided by the principle of non-interference and a commitment to maintaining stable bilateral relations with Beijing.

In their diplomatic discourse, these states generally treat the situation as an internal Chinese matter, often reiterating the idea that regional stability is essential to the collective security of the Silk Road economic corridor. Despite strong domestic pressure from their citizens -many of whom have family in the region- these governments have largely refrained from any public criticism. Instead, they favor discreet diplomacy to resolve specific cases concerning their dual nationals or ethnic relatives. For the Central Asian republics, the main challenge lies in balancing the preservation of their shared cultural heritage with the existential need for economic cooperation and regional security within a framework that respects the territorial integrity of their powerful neighbor.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) occupies an important but complex position, representing the collective voice of the Muslim world. Its official stance is primarily guided by the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of member and partner states. In its official statements, the OIC has frequently commended China's efforts to care for its Muslim citizens and expressed its support for the state's measures to combat terrorism and radicalization. From the OIC's perspective, maintaining a constructive and cooperative relationship with China is essential to the economic and strategic interests of the Islamic world, particularly given the substantial investments and infrastructure projects associated with the Belt and Road Initiative.

However, the OIC's position is not without internal tensions and external criticism. While many member states prioritize their economic and diplomatic relations with Beijing, international human rights organizations and some segments of the global Muslim community have urged the organization to take a firmer stance in response to reports of religious and cultural restrictions in the region.

Despite this pressure, OIC resolutions have generally avoided direct condemnation, instead favoring the promotion of dialogue and the strengthening of cooperation between China and the Muslim world. This approach reflects a strategic preference for discreet diplomacy over public confrontation, aiming to ensure that the religious rights of minorities are respected within a framework of mutual respect and partnership with the Chinese government.

European Union

The European Union adopts a dual-track approach that seeks to balance its vital economic partnership with China against its fundamental commitment to universal human rights and the rule of law. The EU's official position is one of deep concern regarding reports of arbitrary detentions, widespread surveillance, and systemic restrictions on religious freedom in the region. From the European perspective, these policies are incompatible with international human rights conventions to which China is a signatory. The EU consistently calls for the immediate release of those held in vocational facilities and urges the central government to allow independent observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to conduct meaningful and unrestricted investigations on the ground.

In practice, the EU has increasingly utilized its economic and diplomatic leverage to signal its disapproval. This includes the imposition of targeted sanctions under the "EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime" against specific regional officials and entities. Furthermore, the European Parliament and the European Commission have introduced regulations aimed at banning products made with forced labor from entering the single market, a move that directly impacts trade relations related to the region's industrial output.

While the EU maintains that it does not seek to de-couple its economy from China, it emphasizes de-risking by ensuring that European supply chains are not complicit in human rights violations. The European stance reflects a firm belief that sustainable economic cooperation must be predicated on the respect for human dignity and minority rights.

Previous United Nations Reports

The United Nations is closely monitoring the situation in the region through various human rights mechanisms, which has led to several important conclusions. The most significant document to date is the Human Rights Concerns Assessment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), published in August 2022. This report concludes that the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detentions of ethnic and religious minorities may constitute international crimes, specifically crimes against humanity. The UN findings highlight credible evidence of torture, forced medical treatment, and sexual violence within vocational training centers.

Beyond the 2022 assessment, the UN's work is reflected in numerous communications from special procedures and independent experts. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have repeatedly expressed grave concern about the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP), describing it as a tool for mass surveillance and racial profiling. These reports assert that the legal definitions of extremism and terrorism in the region are excessively broad, allowing for the detention of individuals for common religious or cultural practices, such as wearing a headscarf, growing a beard, or possessing religious literature.

Furthermore, the UN has addressed concerns related to workers' and reproductive rights. Reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and various UN rapporteurs have highlighted strong indications of coercive labor transfer programs and state-imposed birth control policies aimed at reducing birth rates among minority populations. While the central government has consistently rejected these findings, dismissing them as disinformation and lies propagated by anti-China forces, the UN maintains its call for a fully independent, technical, and unrestricted mission in the region.

Questions to be Answered

- Where should the line be drawn between counter-terrorism measures and violations of fundamental human rights?
- How can independent and credible monitoring be ensured in regions with restricted international access?
- What practical measures can states take to prevent forced labor in global supply chains?
- When should the international community intervene in a state's internal affairs on human rights grounds?
- How can national integration policies be implemented without leading to cultural or religious assimilation?
- What balance should be maintained between diplomatic engagement and punitive measures such as sanctions?

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