

# ALERT



# THE UYGHURS IN CHINA

“What I hope for my family is to be able to live ... without fear of what they say, what they read, what they believe.”

*Quote attributed to Mamatjan Juma. In 2017 his brothers Abmatjan, a teacher, and Abdukadir, a poet, were arrested by the Chinese government. He does not know whether they are alive.*

**THE UYGHUR COMMUNITY IS A TURKIC MUSLIM MINORITY GROUP** of about 11 million people who live predominantly in the province of Xinjiang, in western China. The Chinese government has persecuted Uyghurs for decades, and has long attempted to assimilate Uyghurs into the country's majority Han identity. **In recent years, the government has escalated this repression.** Today, the Chinese government uses sophisticated social and technological surveillance systems to control everyday aspects of Uyghur life, suppress their identity, and detain approximately one million people.

Beginning in 2016, the Chinese government began constructing a network of detention centers where an estimated one to three million Uyghur civilians have been imprisoned. Chinese authorities have separated children from families, and many Uyghur people living outside China have no contact with or information about detained relatives. Uyghur people face arrest and detention for practicing their religion, for family ties to other detainees, or even for attending a foreign university. Within detention centers, inmates report torture, forced labor, and mandatory teaching to renounce Uyghur culture and the Muslim faith. Chinese authorities have argued that state crackdowns are necessary to contain Islamic extremism and Uyghur separatist movements in Xinjiang. The actions of the Chinese government, however, go far beyond any reasonable objective.

**The Museum is gravely concerned that the Chinese government may be committing genocide against the Uyghurs. There is also reasonable basis to believe that the government of China is committing crimes against humanity,** specifically the crimes of imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty, persecution, torture, sexual violence, forcible transfer, enslavement, and forced sterilization. These crimes are some of the most serious known to mankind. The trauma they cause can endure for generations.

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The Museum's **Simon-Skjeldt Center** is deeply concerned about this alarming situation and calls for increased international pressure on China to halt these crimes.

**Specifically, governments around the world should:**

- Press for independent investigations of China's treatment of the Uyghurs
- Support refugee protection for Uyghurs fleeing persecution
- Prohibit the import of goods created by forced labor in Xinjiang
- Sanction Chinese officials responsible for policies that target the Uyghur population

**LEARN MORE AT** [ushmm.org/china](http://ushmm.org/china)



Rushan Abbas holds a picture of her sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, who was detained by the Chinese government for being Uyghur. Rushan does not know her sister's fate.  
*US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

Previous page: In July 2015, outside the Id Kah Mosque in the ancient Silk Road trade town of Kashgar, Uyghur men and women pray during Eid al-Fitr, a joyous Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. Police vehicles and security line the public square in Xinjiang, China. *Alexandra Williams*

**WHAT YOU DO MATTERS.** We can all play a role in helping prevent genocide. Action takes many forms, and every action counts. You can:

**Stay informed.** Follow the news; visit our website to learn more about places at risk of genocide and other violence, [ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries](http://ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries)

**Join the Museum community.** Sign up to receive email updates and follow us on Twitter @CPG\_USHMM and Facebook @CenterForThePreventionOfGenocide

**Engage with your community.** Spread the word about what you've learned with friends, family, and colleagues

**Support education and relief efforts.** Find out more about humanitarian organizations, what they are doing in response to mass atrocities, and how you can help

**Contact the media.** Tell television, radio, newspaper, and online journalists that you want better coverage of places at risk of genocide and other violence; visit their websites, tag them on social media, call them, and send emails that provide feedback on their coverage

**Contact your elected representatives.** Alert them to the need to provide humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, stop the violence, and promote solutions to crises

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