



Discrimination, Mistreatment and Coercion:

Severe Labor Rights Abuses Faced by
Uyghurs in China and East Turkestan



UYGHUR HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project
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Image credit: Chung, Chien-Min. October 19, 2005 A young girl helps her family pick cotton on in Makit County, Kashgar Prefecture. © Getty Images

1. Executive Summary

Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges facing the Uyghur people in East Turkestan. The primary driver of Uyghur unemployment is ethnic discrimination. This report analyzes the sources and manifestations of ethnic discrimination and other labor rights abuses affecting Uyghurs in East Turkestan and elsewhere in China. In addition to structural disadvantages obtaining and retaining non-agricultural work, the vast majority of Uyghurs who work in agriculture face a unique set of violations to their labor rights. Finally, those in the Chinese government's labor transfer program, redistributing the so-called rural labor surplus to inner Chinese cities to work in factory jobs, also face a host of labor rights challenges. Chinese law and international obligations notwithstanding, the Chinese government is at best complicit and at worst itself a major agent of labor rights abuses against Uyghurs.

The Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti identified unemployment as one of the greatest obstacles between healthy relations between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in East Turkestan. Specifically, he found that only a narrow range of jobs is available to Uyghurs outside of agriculture owing to widespread ethnic hiring discrimination. Numerous sociological studies have demonstrated the lack of Uyghur representation in high status and high paying sectors. One researcher found that in public enterprises, Uyghurs face severe competition from Han locals, and in private enterprises they face greater competition from Han migrants. In all industries, Han workers receive higher wages, including in self-employment. Finally, although the government sector reports greater income parity, Uyghurs are employed in state firms at lower rates. One study in Urumchi found that only in the "redistributive sector" were Uyghurs employed at similar rates to Han. Because of reductions in state employment and growing Han discrimination, young Uyghurs tended to earn less than older Uyghurs compared to Han workers in the same age groups.

Analysis of recruitment announcements in the civil service industry reveals that Uyghurs face high levels of ethnic discrimination in the state sector. According to a government chart of civil service openings which designates ethnic requirements for each open civil service position in 2013, 72 percent of all open positions were earmarked for Han. UHRP has documented discrimination against Uyghurs in every sector of the economy in East Turkestan. Most egregious is the XPCC, which employs 86 percent Han workers, and has frequently posted recruitment announcements reserving the majority for Han. In the education sector, the government's implementation of the "bilingual education" program has resulted in job losses for Uyghurs and recruitment ads frequently reserve positions for Han. State owned industries, including the healthcare, banking and the energy sectors also operate on a Han-only recruitment basis. Finally, private enterprises frequently display ethnic discrimination in job hiring. Foreign brands with operations in East Turkestan have pledged to protect ethnic equality, but rarely provided evidence of doing so, with few exceptions.

UHRP analyzed several job postings which recruited for "Han Only." Among the positions were sales representatives, firefighters, construction workers, banking assistants, welders, accounting clerks, farmers, chefs, supermarket sales, stage and lighting designers, and broadcasters. In addition, UHRP found several positions which separately required Mandarin language ability and HSK scores, including a university teaching position and a security guard post, indicating that language qualifications exist separately and in addition to ethnic specifications. Finally,

whereas most job ads directly list Han ethnicity as a requirement, several positions stated the reason that the jobs would not hire Uyghurs is because they could not offer halal food to Uyghurs or Muslim employees. In a separate search, UHRP identified a low rate of positions that required Uyghur language, indicating the low prestige of Uyghur language for employability.

Uyghur university graduates face staggering rates of unemployment, and Ilham Tohti estimated that Uyghur university graduate employment rates were as low as 15 percent. Employment difficulties pose a major obstacle to repaying student debt from university fees, and also contribute to a pervasive sentiment that a university education has no value for members of the Uyghur ethnic group. A young Uyghur woman wrote in a blog for UHRP about the employment struggles of Uyghur university graduates. She addressed false assumptions underlying the phenomenon, including that Uyghurs are discriminated against because of language skills. Ethnic discrimination exists in parallel to linguistic discrimination, as numerous job postings also illustrate, and even Uyghurs with perfect Mandarin face severe discrimination in the job market. The author also questioned the assumption that Uyghurs refuse positions with low wages, given the kinds of employment she has seen classmates take.

Language discrimination is, in fact, a frequent cause for discrimination against Uyghurs, as several studies have documented. Particularly since the government has reduced services in the Uyghur language, jobs using the Uyghur language have subsequently been reduced, according to an interview for the report. UHRP's job search and government employment statistics confirm this trend. Another major factor restricting Uyghurs' access to employment is a lack of social capital, referred to as connections, or "*guanxi*" in Chinese. In fact, the lack of social capital restricting employment refers specifically to lack of social capital within Han communities, and is thus another facet of ethnic discrimination. Finally, another major impediment to employment equality is the increased administrative cost of hiring Uyghurs that results from government efforts to monitor Uyghurs. This includes special registration procedures and reporting to public security, particularly since the July 5 Incident. These administrative burdens raise the cost of hiring Uyghurs, even for employers who may not otherwise exhibit ethnic bias. As one employer was reported saying, "Chinese employees are safe for us. Uyghur employees are not safe. For my business, it's better to hire Chinese employees."

In addition to discrimination against Uyghurs generally, Uyghur women face targeted discrimination, as reflected in several job postings and recruitment surveys. Civil service recruitment, for example, limited recruitment to women to only 12.3 percent of positions available to Uyghurs, and only 1.4 percent of all open positions. A 2012 research paper identified Uyghur women as the most "disadvantaged" demographic group compared with every other ethnic group in China in terms of employment rates. Wearing a headscarf imposes even further restrictions on Uyghur job applicants, especially in the government sector. Religious discrimination more generally affects the labor rights of all workers, even outside of the employment process. In addition to bans on headscarves, workplaces have instituted inspections of Uyghurs' homes in search of Islamic items, restrictions on religious practice including fasting during Ramadan, and even forbidding Uyghurs from indicating religion on household registration forms.

Formerly convicted Uyghur individuals face some of the largest obstacles to employment. Even Uyghurs who are imprisoned for political reasons find that they cannot find employment after serving prison sentences. In a series of interviews with Uyghurs in Turkey, the World Uyghur Congress documented reports of formerly convicted Uyghurs who could not find employment because of the requirement to report frequently to authorities. In addition, Uyghur scholar Abduweli Ayup told UHRP about extreme harassment after merely reporting mistreatment in his government position to officials. After later being convicted in connection to running a Uyghur language kindergarten, Ayup had to flee the country because employment was no longer feasible.

The government's harsh action against demonstrators more generally was seen in the brave efforts of mothers in Karamay to protest blatant ethnic discrimination in the city. Karamay's economy is dominated by the energy industry owing to rich oil resources, and the state-owned energy sector exhibits severe discrimination in its hiring practices. In addition to hiring discrimination in the state owned PetroChina, Uyghurs also reported discrimination in local government hiring. Uyghur mothers from Karamay protested both in Karamay and in Beijing in 2012-13. Rather than responding to their complaints, the city government and authorities in Beijing harassed and attacked the women and answered the protestors with intimidation and coercion.

Rural Uyghurs face different kinds of labor violations aside from the employment discrimination that prevents them from seeking non-agricultural jobs. For example, in rural southern areas of East Turkestan, forced labor is a common practice through a government program called *hashar* in the Uyghur language. This program requires 4 to 11 hours a day of unpaid labor on public works projects, with strict penalties for non-participation, and represents a major violation of Uyghurs' labor rights. Not only does the *hashar* program eliminate jobs that Uyghurs should be paid for, it also prevents them from performing their own agricultural work. Although the government purported to eliminate the *hashar* in 2017, reports of forced labor continue. Another forced labor practice involves school-aged children, requiring cotton-picking in XPCC school programs. Again, this practice not only eliminates jobs that could employ Uyghurs at a fair wage (and in fact, many Uyghurs also perform this labor), but also interferes with educational opportunities. Finally, a lack of education opportunities for rural Uyghurs is another major factor limiting upward mobility and economic success.

The result of economic exclusion of rural Uyghurs is what China terms a rural labor surplus. The solution has been a labor transfer program to bring Uyghurs both to major cities in East Turkestan and to cities in inner China. The program was launched in 2006 and at that time the prime targets were young women. UHRP reported in 2008 that the women were recruited by coercive means, that they were not paid at the rates they were promised, and that working conditions in the eastern factories were illegal. Nevertheless, the Chinese government continued to expand the program, and reported numbers over ten million in 2012, though these massive numbers are difficult to confirm. Meanwhile, government statistics also described a labor shortage in East Turkestan, encouraging Han to migrate to the region. A number of Uyghurs commented on the contradiction between the surplus Uyghur labor and supposed labor shortage in East Turkestan on Uighurbiz.

Uyghurs experience poor labor conditions in inner China that not only violate Chinese labor laws but also expose them to intense ethnic hatred. On June 29, 2009, at the Xuri toy factory in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province, a mob of Han workers attacked and murdered a number of Uyghur workers. A government cover-up quickly obscured details of the incident, which appeared to result from false accusations that the Uyghur workers had raped a Han woman. Two Uyghurs were reported dead and 118 injured, but other reports indicated a higher death toll of Uyghurs. One of the few concrete pieces of evidence to emerge was video footage of Han Chinese brutally beating unarmed Uyghurs. The incident led to peaceful protests that were violently suppressed by police, triggering the largest ethnic unrest in Chinese history on July 5, 2009 in Urumchi.

The Shaoguan incident took place in the context of serious labor rights abuses of all workers in the toy factory. A China Labor Watch analysis of the incident underscored the extremely poor factory conditions, low wages, and strained labor relations. It also noted that the Uyghurs were isolated from their Han co-workers, as both groups experienced labor rights violations. Academic researcher Steven Hess postulated that this isolation was intentional, and that the entire labor transfer program was motivated by business interests, seeking a scapegoat to create divisions on the factory floor. In Hess's analysis, the Uyghurs were brought to eastern China not only for the goal of assimilation, but also to be exploited and to further exploit Hans. Outside of the labor transfer program, Uyghurs in China face a wide range of labor rights violations, including hiring discrimination.

The severe ethnic discrimination facing Uyghurs in China contravenes both domestic and international laws. Internationally, the ILO's prohibition of racial discrimination and the Convention for the Elimination of All of Racial Discrimination protects both against any form of discrimination on the part of the state as well as rights to equal pay for equal work. Domestically, China's Constitution, Labor Laws, and Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL) clearly state that ethnic minorities should receive equal opportunities in the job market. In fact, article 28 of the implementing provision for the REAL purports to give priority to ethnic minorities for government positions.

China further violates both international and domestic law through its forced labor program. Notably, it violates several ILO conventions banning forced labor, which China has not ratified, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which explicitly bans forced labor. Domestically, China's constitution assures that freedom in the PRC is inviolable, and China's labor laws further guarantee limits on the working day, minimum wages, and prohibitions against deducting or delaying wages.

In recent years, Chinese policies to reduce Uyghur unemployment have only led to inflated employment statistics, including reports of high Uyghur university graduate employment, and near-elimination of "zero employment" households. Analysts have commented on the unreliability of such statistics in the face of the stark reality of Uyghur unemployment in East Turkestan, caused by widespread hiring discrimination. Meanwhile, although municipalities like Beijing have passed legislation imposing high fees on companies that exhibit ethnic discrimination, East Turkestan has no apparent enforcement mechanism for policies that profess to protect ethnic equality. As a result, not only does the government allow widespread abuses of Uyghurs' labor rights, but it also contributes to such abuses by itself in engaging in hiring

discrimination as well as on-the-job discrimination against Uyghurs, particularly targeting Uyghur religious practice.

2. Unemployment and Income Inequality in East Turkestan

Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti focused his scholarship on the labor situation of Uyghur people in East Turkestan as well as more broadly in China. Although much of Tohti's work is unavailable since his arrest in 2014 due to the subsequent removal of his website, Uighurbiz.net, UHRP has accessed archival records of Uighurbiz.net, which contain real time reporting on labor issues affecting Uyghurs.¹ These archives identify the major issues facing Uyghur people in the past decade with regards to labor. China Change also translated a long-form Chinese language essay by Tohti, entitled "Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region" which he wrote in 2011 at the behest of Chinese government officials. In that essay, unemployment was the first of nine problems Tohti described confronting ethnic relations in East Turkestan.²

The majority of Uyghur people work in agriculture, and non-agricultural job opportunities for the Uyghur population are extremely limited. In "Present Day Ethnic Problems," Tohti explains that the rate of urbanization for the Uyghur population is only 10 percent and that an average of only 1/6 of an acre of land per person is available to the rural agrarian Uyghur population. Yet in spite of the immense pressure on Uyghur farmers, Tohti finds that urbanization does not ease Uyghurs' economic woes, and in fact the urban Uyghur population also faces severe economic disadvantages. He writes, "For Uighurs who migrate to the cities in search of work, employment opportunities are markedly limited, confined to a narrow band of service-industry jobs, mostly jobs in restaurants. There is a vast gap in employment opportunities available to different ethnic groups: Uighur and other ethnic-minority job applicants face significant employment discrimination."³

Several sociological studies have focused on income inequality and unemployment affecting Uyghurs in the non-agricultural economy. Political scientist Reza Hasmath based one such study on census data from the year 2003. Hasmath's study found that Han were over-represented in high-status and high-paying occupations: over 35 percent of the Han working population are employed in this sector, in comparison to 13 percent for Uyghurs. Uyghurs in the study fared relatively poorly in the private sector and were far less likely to be self-employed than Han. Han internal migrants fared particularly well in the self-employment sector and in the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). Hasmath found that key strategic resources of the

¹ For more on the arrest of Ilham Tohti, see the China Change documentary:
<https://chinachange.org/2015/10/26/ilham-tohti-documentary/>

² Tohti, Ilham. (2015, April 22). "Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region: Overview and Recommendations (1) – Unemployment." Translated by Cindy Carter. China Change. Retrieved from
<https://chinachange.org/2015/04/22/present-day-ethnic-problems-in-xinjiang-uighur-autonomous-region-overview-and-recommendations-1/>

³ Ibid.

region such as electricity, gas and water are managed by Han Chinese, who are almost 17 times as likely to be employed in these sectors.⁴ The following table illustrates Hasmath's findings.

Table 4. Occupation sector concentration and odds ratios by Uyghur and Han population in Xinjiang, 2000

	Occupational sector	Uyghur %	Han %	Odds ratios (Uyghur/Han)*
High-status, high-paying occupations	Banking, security and insurance	0.06	0.52	0.43
	Scientific research and technical services	3.33	3.80	0.77
	Electricity, gas and water	0.43	1.76	0.06
	Public management and social organization	2.54	4.84	0.28
	Health, social securities and social welfare	0.04	0.46	0.01
	Education and culture, sports and entertainment	2.09	7.38	0.08
	Geologic prospecting and management of water conservation	0.51	6.92	0.01
Low-status, low-paying occupations	Restaurant and retail trade	4.04	12.83	0.10
	Other professions	0.39	1.13	0.12
	Real estate	0.26	1.48	0.03
	Transport, storage and post	1.26	5.51	0.05
	Manufacturing	3.79	12.80	0.09
	Mining	0.39	2.28	0.03
	Construction	0.27	0.97	0.08
	Farming, forestry and animal	80.60	37.32	4.66

Source: Calculated using NBS/EAC (2003).

These odds ratios compare the odds of working in the sector for Uyghur against Han, thus an odds ratio of 1 represents group equity, an odds ratio >1 indicates Uyghurs are more likely to be employed, and an odds ratio of <1 indicates Han are more likely to be employed.⁵

A 2013 study by Hong Kong and US-based population studies researchers Xiaogong Wu and Xi Song analyzed China's 2005 census data and compared ethnic Han Chinese and Uyghurs aged 16 to 59. The study revealed widespread income inequality. Within the agricultural sector, in which the majority of Uyghur people work, Uyghurs' earnings reached only 49.2 percent of Han

⁴ Hasmath, Reza. (2011). "Managing China's Muslim Minorities: Migration, Labour and the Rise of Ethno-Religious Consciousness Among Uyghurs in Urban Xinjiang" in J. Barbalet, A. Possamai and B.S. Turner (eds.) Religion and the State: A Comparative Sociology. New York and London: Anthem Press, pp 121-137, 129.

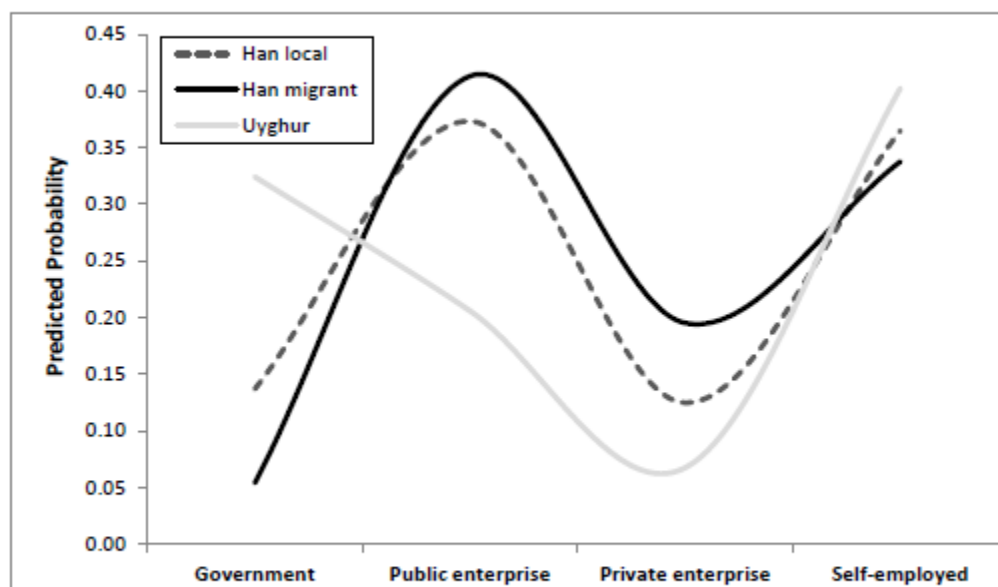
⁵ Ibid at 130.

workers. Overall, Uyghurs earned 59 percent of Han earnings, including 77.6 percent in the non-agricultural sector.⁶

The study found that Han locals were more likely to work in public enterprises and Han migrants were more likely to enter private enterprises than Uyghurs. In all sectors except government and public institutions, the Uyghur face fierce competition from Han Chinese and are largely disadvantaged in earnings. In public enterprises, the Uyghur are competing with Han locals, whereas in the booming private enterprises, their main rivals are Han migrants from other provinces. Even in self-employment, Han earn more than their Uyghur counterparts. Only Uyghurs employed by the government found income parity.⁷

The following tables from Wu and Song's study illustrates Uyghurs' frustrations seeking employment in non-agricultural industries as well as lower levels of income than Han workers. Figure 4 illustrates predicted probabilities of entry into non-agricultural sectors for Uyghurs compared with local and migrant Han workers.⁸

Figure 4. Predicted Probability of Entry into Non-agricultural Sectors, Xingjiang, 2005



* The predicted probability is estimated based on the sample mean of the urban population.

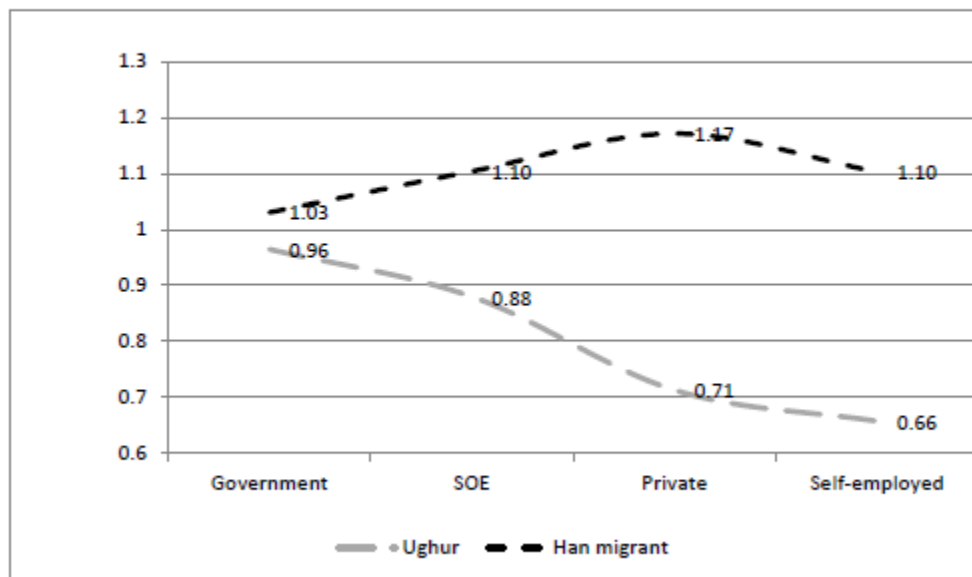
⁶ Wu Xiaogong and Xi Song. November (2013). "Ethnicity, Migration, and Social Stratification in China." Population Studies Center Research Report 13-810. p17. Retrieved from <http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/rr13-810.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid at 29.

Figure 5 shows the relative earnings of Uyghur and Han Migrants compared with local Han in the government, state owned enterprise, private and self employment sectors, and illustrates Uyghurs' relatively lower earning power.⁹

Figure 5. Relative Earnings of Uyghur and Han Migrants Relative to Han Locals among Non-agricultural Workers in Xinjiang, 2005



Other researchers have identified similar trends. In a 1998 article, Emily Hannum and Yu Xie show that minorities are underrepresented in East Turkestan's high-skill service sector, such as technical, administrative, and professional jobs.¹⁰ In a 2006 paper, Clifton Pannell and Phillip Schmidt observed that Uyghurs are typically excluded from the industrial job market and the energy service sector.¹¹ Uyghurs who migrate from the less developed areas of southern East Turkestan to the more developed areas in northern East Turkestan, including Urumchi, tend to be concentrated in low-paying service jobs such as petty vendors and jobs in the informal sector, which further widens the income gap between Han and Uyghur groups.¹²

⁹ Ibid at 30.

¹⁰ Hannum, Emily and Yu Xie. (1998). "Ethnic Stratification in Northwest China: Occupational Differences between Han Chinese and National Minorities in Xinjiang, 1982–1990," *Demography*, 35 (3), pp. 323–333.

¹¹ Pannell, Clifton and Philipp Schmidt. (2006). "Structural Change and Regional Disparities in Xinjiang, China," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 47 (3), pp. 329–352.

¹² Howell, Anthony and Cindy Fan. (2011). "Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52 (1): 119–29.

Hong Kong sociologist Xiaowei Zang conducted a sociological survey of Han and Uyghur employment in East Turkestan in 2005, specifically investigating the government sector. Zang collected a total of 1,600 interviews including 799 from Uyghurs and 801 from Han Chinese. Zang found that Uyghur respondents were less likely than the Han respondents to work in the state sector (59.7 percent vs. 76.3 percent), join the CCP (13 percent vs. 30 percent), or have a father who is a state worker (32.2 percent vs. 49.3 percent). Zang discovered that overall Uyghurs earn 31 percent less than Han Chinese in Urumchi. Although state sector workers made about the same, Zang found that Uyghur workers earn 52 percent less than Han workers in non-state sectors.¹³ Overall income differences between the ethnic groups were also stark. Zang found the monthly average income among Uyghur workers was 892 yuan (\$128.97 USD), as compared with 1,141 yuan (\$164.97 USD) among Han workers, representing a 21.8 percent income difference between the two ethnic groups.¹⁴

Zang investigated differences in employment in the state and private sectors. State sector employment carries a great deal of prestige in China, particularly for its stability and high wages. Zang delineated types of state employment in his study. He noted that state firms in transition to the market economy since the 1990s are oriented to market competition, as opposed government agencies and public organizations whose mission has remained committed to providing social goods and promote justice, even in the post-market economy period. Zang's study bears out a hypothesis that because of discriminatory Han attitudes, market-oriented state firms tend to discriminate against Uyghur jobseekers in the hiring process whereas the redistributive agencies do not display the same discrimination. For Uyghurs, education is critical for success in this sector, owing to the high premium on educational attainment in the redistributive sector.¹⁵

Zang's survey showed that 52.3 percent of the Han work in state firms, compared with only 28.5 percent of the Uyghur. On the other hand, 21 percent of the Han respondents are employed in redistributive agencies, compared with 28.2 percent of the Uyghur respondents. Zang found that Uyghur workers are less likely to enter state firms than Han workers even holding background characteristics constant. On the other hand, Zang found similar probabilities of job attainment in redistributive agencies for the Han and the Uyghur, everything being equal.¹⁶

In another paper, Zang analyzed generational differences among Han and Uyghur workers, shedding further light on ethnic employment disparities in Urumchi. He classified three groups, with average ages around 62, 48 and 37.5 years old and found that state agencies hired Hans at a higher rate for all groups.¹⁷

The following table shows that Han respondents are more likely than the Uyghur respondents to work in the state sector and are more likely to become skilled workers and professionals, at

¹³ Zang, Xiaowei. (2011, January). "Uyghur-Han Earning Differentials in Urumchi." *The China Journal*, 65, pp. 141-155.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Zang, Xiaowei. (2010, June). "Affirmative Action, Economic Reforms, and Han—Uyghur Variation in Job Attainment in the State Sector in Urumchi." *The China Quarterly*, No 202, pp. 344-361.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Zang, Xiaowei. (2012). "Age and the Cost of Being Uyghurs in Urumchi." *China Quarterly*, 210, pp. 419-34

higher proportions for the younger groups than the older ones. The following table shows that for the oldest age group, at pension age, the monthly income for Han Chinese is 702.66 yuan (\$101.59 USD), compared with 641.83 yuan (\$92.80 USD) among Uyghurs, and the Han–Uyghur gap in income is 60.83 yuan per month (\$8.79 USD). The corresponding figures for the middle age group are 1,178.90 yuan (\$170.45 USD) and 791.00 (\$114.36 USD) yuan respectively, and the Han–Uyghur gap is 387.90 yuan (\$56.08 USD) per month. For the youngest age group, the figures are 1,142.03 yuan (\$165.11 USD) and 731.24 yuan (\$105.72 USD) respectively and the Han–Uyghur gap is 410.69 yuan (\$59.38 USD) per month.¹⁸

Table 1: Key Background Characteristics of the Ürümchi Respondents by Ethnicity and Age Groups

Background characteristics	Before 1950		1950–1979		1980–2004	
	Han Chinese	Uyghurs	Han Chinese	Uyghurs	Han Chinese	Uyghurs
Age (mean/s.d.)	62.58/4.53	61.45/4.54	48.29/3.36	48.01/3.34	37.53/3.07	37.61/3.61
Men (%)	49.7 (244)	55.7 (224)	51.5 (233)	50.3 (282)	46.4 (242)	40.0 (208)
Married (%)	92.5 (454)	86.1 (346)	95.4 (431)	92.2 (517)	96.5 (503)	93.8 (488)
Urban (%)	63.1 (310)	80.3 (323)	84.3 (381)	85.7 (487)	86.9 (453)	81.2 (422)
Education (mean/s.d.)	2.87/1.59	3.17/1.88	4.12/1.58	3.50/1.73	4.65/1.45	3.92/1.85
State employment (%)	81.5 (400)	60.7 (244)	77.4 (350)	59.9 (336)	61.6 (321)	51.3 (267)
Skilled worker (%)	14.3 (70)	11.7 (47)	18.6 (84)	10.7 (60)	18.6 (97)	9.2 (48)
Professional (%)	27.1 (133)	23.9 (96)	36.1 (163)	23.4 (131)	34.0 (177)	23.5 (122)
Income (mean/s.d.)	702.66/560.62	641.83/618.56	1178.90/976.03	791.00/718.87	1142.03/891.30	731.34/625.58
N	100.0 (491)	100.0 (402)	100.0 (452)	100.0 (561)	100.0 (521)	100.0 (520)

Note:

Figures in parentheses are the numbers of cases.

It is clear that young Uyghur workers tend to earn more than old Uyghur workers. However, the gap between Uyghur and Han income is larger for the younger, higher earning age groups. For the oldest age group, Uyghurs earn 91 percent of what Han Chinese earn per month; for the middle age group Uyghurs earn 67.1 percent of Han; and for the youngest age group, Uyghurs earn only 64.0 percent of Han workers in the same age group.. In other words, although young Uyghurs tend to earn more than older Uyghur workers, younger Uyghurs are also likely to earn less than Han Chinese in the same age bracket.¹⁹

Zang’s study thus concludes that although young Uyghurs tend to be better educated and to earn more than older Uyghurs, they also are more likely than older Uyghurs to earn less than similarly aged Han workers. According to Zang, “this is partly because of growing Han discrimination against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and partly because young Uyghurs are less likely to work in and be protected by the state sector.” He finds that in general the proportion of state workers is declining for each succeeding age group, which is consistent with the post-1978 market reforms that have reduced the state workforce.²⁰

Uyghurs also face greater income disparity than Han workers in the state and nonstate sectors for each age range. For the middle age group, Uyghur state workers earn 1,028.44 yuan (\$148.69 USD) per month whereas Uyghurs in other sectors earn 436.43 yuan (\$63.10 USD) per month. The corresponding figures for Han Chinese are 1,240.68 yuan (\$179.38 USD) in the state sector

¹⁸ Ibid at 428.

¹⁹ Ibid at 429

²⁰ Ibid at 434

and 966.94 yuan (\$139.80 USD) in other sectors. For the youngest age group, Uyghur state workers earn 985.46 yuan (\$142.48 USD) per month whereas Uyghurs in other sectors earn 463.15 yuan (\$66.96 USD) per month. The corresponding figures for Han Chinese are 1,243.21 yuan (\$179.74 USD) and 979.65 yuan (\$141.64 USD) respectively. Thus, the earnings ratios between Han and Uyghur state workers are 82.9 percent for the middle age group and 79.3 percent for the youngest age group. In comparison, the earnings ratios between Han workers and Uyghur workers in non-state sectors are 45.1 percent for the middle age group and 47.3 percent for the youngest age group.²¹

Zang's findings also challenge the hypothesis that ethnic differences in schooling explain why Han workers earn more than Uyghur workers. Uyghur workers at all levels of education made significantly less than similarly educated Han workers. In fact, Uyghur workers with junior high school education make 522 yuan (\$75.47 USD) per month, whereas their Han counterparts make 761 yuan (\$110.03 USD) per month. The monthly wage is 1,158 yuan (\$167.42 USD) for Han senior high school graduates and only 701 yuan (\$101.35 USD) for Uyghur high school graduates.²²

²¹ Ibid at 433

²² Zang, Xiaowei, (2011, January). "Uyghur-Han Earning Differentials in Urumchi." *The China Journal*, 65, pp. 141-155.

3. Hiring Discrimination Against Uyghurs

A. Reports on Discrimination By Industry

In the 1990s and early 2000s, a number of researchers documented ethnic employment discrimination in East Turkestan.²³ Amnesty International also documented reports of employment discrimination against Uyghurs, noting that many Uyghurs describe frequent ethnic discrimination, and lack equal opportunities in education, health care and employment. Amnesty reported that the majority of workers employed in new oil fields and other enterprises in the north, which are key to the region's development, are Han Chinese, and in the south many privatized enterprises came under Chinese management and hired Han Chinese workers instead of Uyghurs.²⁴

The Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) has regularly analyzed recruitment advertisements in the past decade, and documented discriminatory hiring procedures across industries. Uighurbiz has also documented instances of discrimination as they occurred in a variety of industries during its operation from 2006-2013. The following section breaks down the findings of CECC and Uighurbiz organized by the following sectors: civil service (defined by Zang as “redistributive” industries), the *bingtuan* or XPCC, education, state owned enterprises and the private sector.

Civil Service

Zang's sociological study, based on data collected in Urumchi in 2005, found that redistributive agencies were the only sector in the economy that did not seriously discriminate against Uyghurs. In fact, Urumchi appears to be exceptional within East Turkestan in this respect. In May 2013, Uighurbiz.net published a government issued table outlining detailed ethnic designations for all civil service positions seeking new hires in East Turkestan in 2013. The chart is translated and reprinted in full on the following two pages. Relative to other parts of East Turkestan, Urumchi was the only place where Han did not receive a far greater number of designated positions compared with other ethnic groups. Of 96 total positions there, 26 were reserved for ethnic minorities, and the remaining 70 were open for competition – none specifically earmarked for Han.²⁵ This was hardly the norm overall. Uighurbiz noted that 72 percent of all positions on the 2013 chart were reserved for Han, which was up from 70 percent in the previous year.²⁶

²³ For example, see Bovingdon, Gardner. (2002). The not-so-silent majority. *Modern China*, 28 (1), p. 45; Smith, Joanne. (2002). Making culture matter. *Asian Ethnicity*, 3 (2), p. 157; Becquelin, Nicolas. (2000). “Xinjiang in the nineties.” *The China Journal*, 44, pp. 85–86.

²⁴ Amnesty International. (1999). “People’s Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.” P. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/31-March-1999-Amnesty-International.pdf>

²⁵ Nijatkar. (2013, May 15). 2013年维吾尔自治区公务员职位表—按族别分类 [2013 Uyghur Autonomous Region Civil Service Job List – Classification by Ethnicity]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130803131849/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/13713>

²⁶ Anostaf. (2013, May 26). 维吾尔自治区公务员考试：机要岗位拒绝维吾尔人 [Uyghur Autonomous Region Civil Service Test: Posts Confidentially Refused to Uyghurs]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14212>

2013 Civil Service Position Chart (Page 1 of 2) – from Uighurbiz, translated by UHRP

Page 1	Total	Open	Minority	Uighur	Han	Kazakh	Hui	Kirgiz	Mongol	Tajik	Xibo	Others
XUAR District Level Party reference management units	20	1		1	18							
Party reference management	230	87	29	18	84	6	4		1			1 (Han or Hui)
Court system	697	117	3	154	332	45	5	7	7		2	22 (Han or Hui); 2 (Uyghur or Kazakh) 1 (Uyghur or Han)
Procuratorate system	453	80	1	105	232	24	3		3		1	3 (Han or Hui) 1(Xibo Han)
On-site registration	23				23							
Election transfer students	210	210										
Yili Prefecture Administration	196	144		2	31	7	2	2	1		7	
Yili reference units	19	16			2						1	
Qoqek area administrative organs	52	Gt;	5									
Qoqek area reference units	11	9	2									
Altay regional admin organs	100	66	4		11	18			1			
Altay region reference units	27	16			2	9						
Bortala administrative organs	46	14	3		27				2			
Bortala reference units	14	11	1		2							
Karamay Administrative organs	48	10	3	1	34							
Karamay reference unit	8	2	2		4							
Qumul region administrative organs	40	30	1	5		4						
Qumul region reference units	15	11	1	1	1	1						
Turpan region Administrative organs	21	16		4	1							
Turpan region reference units	8	6			2							
Urumchi	74	52	19				3					

admin organ												
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2013 Civil Service Position Chart (Page 2 of 2)

Page 2	Total	Open	Minority	Uighur	Han	Kazakh	Hui	Kirgiz	Mongol	Tajik	Xibe	Others
Urumchi reference unit	22	15	7									
Sanji admin. Organs	60	40	6		6	1	3					4 (Hui, Mongol) Manchu or
Sanji state reference units	18	13	4		1							
Bayingolin administrative organs	37	19		3	8		1		6			
Bayingolin Reference Unit	14	6		1	3				4			
Aksu regional administrative organs	611	200	158	81	169			3				
Aksu region reference units	20	8	2	1	9							
Hotan district administrative organs	755	404	289		62							
Hotan region reference unit	6	1	3		2							
Kashgar Administrative organs	874	167	121	214	350			2		20		
Kashgar region reference units	29	18	1	1	9							
XUAR public security organs	1200	371	160	221	390	36	2	2	9		1	3 (Han/ Hui); 3(Uyghur/Kazakh/ Uzbek/ Tajik); 2(Uyghur/Kazakh)
XUAR forest public security organs	98	26	10	16	31	11	1		1	1		1 Uyghur/ Kyrgyz
4 Southern Township special recruiting positions	706		120	70	506			5		5		
XUAR administrative organs	31	17	7	1	6							
XUAR Prison System	300	216	77			7						
Quality Supervision System	109	47	20	8	30	4						
XUAR Land Tax System	256	84	77		95							
Reeducation through Labor	90	44	27	1	18							
Dept. of Transportation	209	130	60	7	6	2	1		3			
Total	7757	2771	1223	917	250	175	25	21	38	26	12	43

For over 40 positions throughout East Turkestan, the list delineates the total number of available positions, the number reserved for each ethnicity, those for ethnic minorities specifically, and the number of unspecified open positions. Of 7,757 total openings, 2,507 were reserved for Han, 2,771 were unreserved, 1,223 were reserved for minorities generally, and 917 were reserved for Uyghur. The top position tended to be limited to Han. For example, of 20 Regional management positions, 18 were earmarked of Han, one for Uyghur, and one was open. Of 230 Party management positions, 84 spots were reserved for Han, 18 for Uyghurs, 87 were open, and 41 were earmarked for other groups. All 23 “on site registration” positions were reserved for Han. In Karamay, 38 of 56 positions in were reserved for Han and only one for Uyghurs; 12 were left open and five were available to any minority applicants.²⁷

In response to the table, Ilham Tohti commented: “The numbers reflected on the civil service ethnic designation chart prove the nature of ethnic discrimination over the years. The Xinjiang authorities have set various restrictions and Uighur candidates face an increasingly hostile environment. This not only violates the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, but also the laws of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which has become a region dominated by the Han. This is unacceptable and should be investigated in accordance with relevant domestic and international law.”²⁸

Discrimination was especially pronounced in the southern region, notably in the four southern prefectures of Kashgar, Aksu, Hotan and Kizilsu, where 506 of 706 township administrator positions were reserved for Han.²⁹ A 2013 New York Times report further broke down the discriminatory hiring within Kashgar, finding that about half of the 161 posts listed on the Civil Service Examination information online indicate that they only consider Han Chinese or native speakers of the Chinese language.³⁰

CECC’s annual analysis of job postings has similarly identified numerous examples of ethnic discrimination in the civil service sector. In 2005 CECC reported that an announcement on the government website, Tianshan Net, reserved 500 of 700 civil service positions for Han. In the same announcement, the government declared that it would not assign successful civil service examinees to their hometowns, even though a 1993 prohibition against county-level cadres serving in their hometowns specifically exempted minority areas. Instead, the government pledged that mostly Han examinees with the highest scores would serve six-year terms in county and village-level government positions in the southern region of East Turkestan, where Uyghurs make up more than 95 percent of the population.³¹

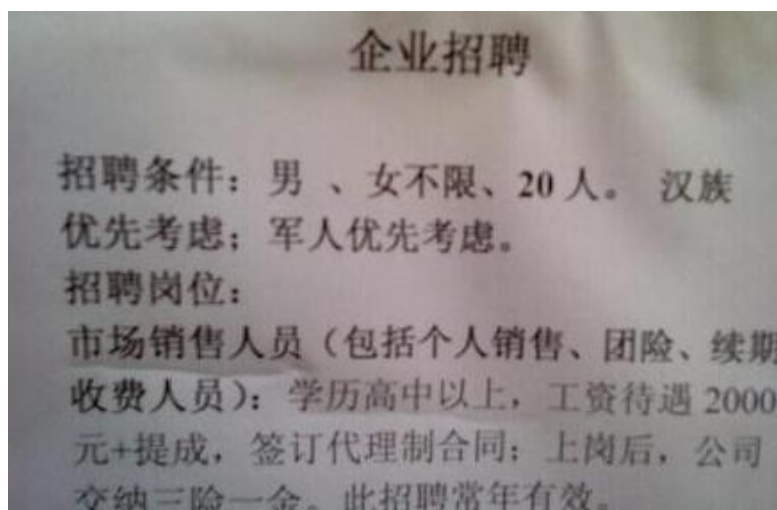
²⁷ Nijatkar. (2013, May 15). 2013年维吾尔自治区公务员职位表-按族别分类[2013 Uyghur Autonomous Region Civil Service Job List – Classification by Ethnicity]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130803131849/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/13713>

²⁸ Anostaf. (2013, May 13). 新疆当局限制多数职位汉人专用 被指种族歧视 [Xinjiang authorities limit most positions to Han and engage in ethnic discrimination] Uighurbiz. Archive online: http://newsabeta.blogspot.com/2013/05/blog-post_3743.html

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jie An Di. (2013, October 14). 维族人在新疆日益成为弱势群体[Uyghurs in Xinjiang Become An Increasingly Vulnerable Group]. New York Times Chinese. Retrieved from <http://cn.nytimes.com/china/20131014/c14uighurs/>

CECC has reported on similar examples of discrimination on the civil service examination spanning the past decade. In 2010, civil servant recruitment for county-level discipline inspection and supervision offices reserved 93 of 224 open positions for Han Chinese, leaving 93 positions unrestricted by ethnicity and reserving the remaining 38 positions for Kazakhs, Uyghurs, Hui, Kyrgyz, and unspecified “ethnic minorities,” according to a job announcement posted September 16, 2010, on the Xinjiang Personnel Testing Center website.³² In May 2010, CECC reported on a series of civil service positions which explicitly excluded ethnic minorities. 28 percent of the positions were reserved for Han, including 500 of 698 positions in the south. Roughly 38 percent of the remaining positions were unrestricted by ethnicity, 17 percent designated for unspecified ethnic minorities, and 17 percent of specified ethnic minority groups.³³



County Recruitment Notice from an unspecified county ©Uighurbiz.

Translation:

Employment Qualifications: Male or Female, 20 people. Han ethnicity

Preference: Preference for military personnel

Recruitment position:

Market sales personnel (including personal sales, group insurance, renewals, toll collector): Educational degree of high school or higher, salary 2,000 yuan (\$289.47 USD) + a percentage, sign the agency contract: upon commencement, the company provides three types of insurance. Hiring for this year.

CECC has reported on government positions not included in the civil service examination that also discriminate against Uyghurs. For example in 2009, Jing (Jinghe) township, in Jing (Jinghe)

³¹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2005, April 7). Xinjiang Government Says Ethnic Han Chinese Will Get 500 of 700 New Civil Service Appointments. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/xinjiang-government-says-ethnic-han-chinese-will-get-500-of-700-new>

³² Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, March 31). Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang>

³³ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 20). Discriminatory Job Hiring Practices Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/discriminatory-job-hiring-practices-continue-in-xinjiang>

county, Bayingol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture advertised 11 open community public welfare positions, six of which were reserved for Han Chinese, one for an ethnic Uyghur, two for ethnic Kazakhs, and two for ethnic Mongols, according to a January 2009 announcement on the government website. The announcement specifies that ethnic groups including Hui, Manchu, Xibo, and Zhuang may apply for the positions open to Han Chinese.³⁴

Other government jobs, such as the regional fire safety brigade, have also discriminated against Uyghurs. Uighurbiz reported on a fire safety brigade recruitment announcement in 2010 which recruited 110 people but would hire only five ethnic minority firefighters.³⁵

Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps operates as a quasi-military entity in East Turkestan, providing its own government functions such as police and schools. Uyghur employment in the XPCC is notoriously scarce. UHRP's recent report, "Without Land, There is No Life" notes that, "One of the primary drivers of compressive forces in East Turkestan is the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) or *bingtuan*, an entity under the purview of the central government and tasked with encouraging Han Chinese settlement of East Turkestan as well as paramilitary support for Chinese security forces."³⁶ Given its purpose to resettle Han migrants, it is unsurprising that the XPCC has often posted discriminatory recruitment advertisements.

In 2006, CECC reported on an XPCC announcement to hire 840 positions, only 38 of which would be ethnic minorities, including 26 Uyghur, and the rest Han. These included 197 jobs with the public security police, 480 with the prison police, 37 in the court system, and 41 in the justice bureau, as well as positions at other offices within the XPCC.³⁷ In 2009, CECC reported the XPCC announced plans to recruit for 894 positions, of which 744 were reserved for Han Chinese, according to rosters of available job openings. Of the remaining positions, 137 were unrestricted by ethnicity and thus are open to applicants of all ethnic groups including Han, while only 11 positions were reserved for Uyghurs and two positions for Kazakhs. CECC noted that all candidates must take the job recruitment exam in Mandarin Chinese.³⁸

³⁴ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, February 9). Governments in Xinjiang Continue to Sponsor, Sanction Job Recruitment That Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/governments-in-xinjiang-continue-to-sponsor-sanction-job>

³⁵ Anostaf. (2013, May 15). 公安消防总队歧视新疆少数民族，维吾尔人称不排除任何可能的途径. [Public Security Fire Brigade discriminates against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, Uyghurs do not rule out any possible way]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/2164>

³⁶ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2016, July 20). Without land, there is no life: Chinese state suppression of Uyghur environmental activism. Retrieved from <http://docs.uighuramerican.org/pdf/Without-land-there-is-no-life.pdf>

³⁷ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2006, July 25). Civil Servant Recruitment in Xinjiang Favors Han Chinese. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/civil-servant-recruitment-in-xinjiang-favors-han-chinese>

³⁸ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, July 2). Recruitment for State Jobs in Xinjiang Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/recruitment-for-state-jobs-in-xinjiang-discriminates-against-ethnic>

In 2010, CECC reported that XPCC would hire 1,131 civil servants, consisting of 53 positions in the XPCC, 497 in several agricultural divisions, 177 public security positions, and 404 positions in the prison system. Based on CECC analysis of the roster of open positions, 882 positions total were reserved for Han (78 percent of open positions), 45 for Uyghurs (four percent), two for Kazakhs (0.27 percent), one for an unspecified “ethnic minority” (0.09 percent) and 200 were unrestricted by ethnicity (18 percent), leaving them open to all groups including Han. Adding in positions unrestricted by ethnicity or open to an unspecified “ethnic minority,” 96 percent of the positions were available to Han, 22 percent to Uyghurs, and 18 percent to Kazakhs, while 18 percent remained open to other ethnic minorities. The announcement of the positions noted that all 404 positions in the prison system were reserved for Han, and that members of the Hui and Manchu ethnic groups could apply for jobs designated for Han, but other groups could not.³⁹

CECC reported that the XPCC demonstrated a shift in 2011, in which almost all of its positions were unreserved by ethnicity—marking a change from past practice of formally reserving a majority of positions for Han, though CECC also noted that the XPCC continued restrictions based on sex.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, according to an article published in *The Economist* on May 23, 2013, 86 percent of the 2.6 million bingtuan population was Han Chinese, therefore the change in the 2011 recruitment announcement did not signal any large shift in the XPCC’s demographics.⁴¹ Ilham Tohti referred to the bingtuan settlements as “apartheid immigrant cities” and his online forum Uighurbiz frequently reported on the building of XPCC cities in the southern part of East Turkestan.⁴²

Education

UHRP has reported about widespread discrimination against teachers in East Turkestan. This discrimination is largely a result of an official government shift away from teaching schoolchildren in the Uyghur language, which is officially termed “bilingual education.” Bilingual education policies have resulted in widespread layoffs of Uyghur teachers and a marked increase in employment discrimination in the education sector. In the 2015 report “Uyghur Voices on Education,” UHRP wrote:

What is termed “bilingual education” is nearly a monolingual education in Mandarin, eliminating Uyghur language from the academic sphere of young Uyghurs’ lives and assimilating Uyghurs into the Chinese culture. Implementation of the government’s bilingual education policy has resulted in reduction in the availability of Uyghur instruction, closing of Uyghurs schools, poor conditions in

³⁹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 20). Discriminatory Job Hiring Practices Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/discriminatory-job-hiring-practices-continue-in-xinjiang>

⁴⁰ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, October 10). 2011 Annual Report. P. 203. Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2011%20CECC%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁴¹ *The Economist*. (2013, May 25). Settlers in Xinjiang: Circling the wagons. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21578433-region-plagued-ethnic-strife-growth-immigrant-dominated-settlements-adding/>

⁴² Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2016, July 20). Without land, there is no life: Chinese state suppression of Uyghur environmental activism. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Without-land-there-is-no-life.pdf>

schools serving Uyghur communities, and unemployment difficulties for Uyghur teachers not capable of teaching in Mandarin. A shortage of bilingual teachers has led to the hiring of unqualified Han instructors to fill the gap.

The vast majority of Han Chinese teachers in the bilingual education system can only speak Mandarin, not Uyghur. In fact, they are not bilingual teachers at all. It is highly unlikely that Han teachers will lose their jobs due to a lack of proficiency in Uyghur. For Uyghur teachers, on the other hand, fluency in both Uyghur and Mandarin is required, and Uyghur teachers whose Mandarin is insufficient face unemployment. The “bilingual” policy therefore demonstrates an ethnic inequality in the labor conditions for teachers in East Turkestan in that Uyghur teachers face requirements that Han teachers do not face. This approach is another manifestation of the discrimination Uyghurs face in the job market in East Turkestan, as well as the need for Uyghurs to be more qualified than their Han counterparts when applying for jobs of the same grade.

RFA reported that at least 1,000 primary school teachers lost their jobs from 2010-2011 because of their Mandarin level. One teacher of 20 years at Nogayto primary school who lost her job, with 30 other teachers from her village, told RFA: “We are good educators who love the students, but now the government will only allow people who speak perfect Mandarin to teach them.” A professor at the Xinjiang Early Childhood Training College also reported that 20 Uyghur professors at his school had no lessons to teach because the government required that their classes be taught in Mandarin.⁴³

UHRP’s research has indicated that even as Uyghur teachers have lost their jobs, new hiring has discriminated against Uyghurs. Uighurbiz and Radio Free Asia reported in 2013 that in order to apply for primary and secondary school teaching positions, the Department of Education required that all candidates be fluent in Mandarin and indicate that their ethnicity was Han, prompting an online backlash. In total that year, the Department of Education planned to hire 11,316 primary and secondary school teachers as well as 2,134 bilingual kindergarten teachers.⁴⁴ Uighurbiz also reported in 2012 on a hiring announcement posted by the Keriya County, Hotan Prefecture school board for 36 teachers, for which the ethnicity of all was specified as Han. 98.1 percent of the prefecture is Uyghur.⁴⁵

⁴³ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2015, May 7). Uyghur Voices on Education: China’s Assimilative 'Bilingual Educations Policy in East Turkestan. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Uyghur-Voices-on-Education.pdf>

⁴⁴ Radio Free Asia Cantonese. (2013, May 24). 歧视政策 少数民族考汉语教师要填写汉族. [Discriminatory Policy: Ethnic Minority Chinese Language Teachers Must Write Ethnicity as Han]. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/uyghur-05242013101138.html>; See also: Anostaf. (2013, May 23). 新疆少数民族报考汉族教师岗位需先“变身”汉族. [Ethnic Minorities in Xinjiang Applying for Chinese Teacher Positions Should “Switch Identities” to Han]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14125>

⁴⁵ Alip. (2012, December 21). 于田招聘教师只要汉族 县教育局出面解释.[Yu Tian Teacher Recruitment Only for Han, County Education Bureau Provides Explanation]. Uighurbiz. Archive Online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20131221234626/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/6690>

CECC has also reported on widespread employment discrimination in education. In 2009, CECC reported that in Aksu district, 347 of 436 open positions in district schools were reserved for Han Chinese, while the remaining 89 positions for Uyghurs, according to a roster of open positions. CECC noted that in addition to the restrictions based on ethnicity, candidates must not believe in a religion or participate in religious activities, according to the government announcement. In the Bayingol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, 413 of almost 500 jobs in local schools were reserved exclusively for Han Chinese, according to a list of open positions. In addition, 37 positions are specified as unrestricted by ethnicity and thus are open to applicants of all ethnic groups including Han, 26 positions for Uyghurs and 10 for Mongols. In addition, five posts were open either for Han or Mongol candidates.⁴⁶

CECC also noted that ethnicity-based categories were not proxies for language skills, as the announcements contained separate stipulations regarding language capability, in addition to ethnicity-based restrictions. For example, according to the recruiting announcement from Aksu, ethnic minority candidates must meet a minimum requirement on a national Mandarin Chinese exam. Moreover, 56 of the 89 positions for Uyghurs were reserved for Uyghurs who received their schooling in Mandarin-language schools (*minkaohan* students). The announcement on job recruitment in the Bayingol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture specifies that ethnic minorities whose native language is Mandarin may apply for positions reserved for Han Chinese, thereby appearing to exclude ethnic minority candidates who are fluent in Mandarin (such as *minkaohan* students who learned Mandarin in school), but do not speak it as their native language.⁴⁷

In May 2010, CECC reported that the XUAR Education Department announced a recruitment drive for more than 10,000 elementary and secondary school teachers. Of the 10,643 jobs listed in a roster of available positions, 3,052 (29 percent) were reserved for Han, 5,665 (53 percent) were unrestricted by ethnicity, 1,767 (17 percent) were reserved specifically for Uyghurs, 130 (1.22 percent) for Kazakhs, 18 (0.17 percent) for Kyrgyz, five (.05 percent) for Hui, one for a Russian (0.01 percent), and five (0.05 percent) for Mongols. As in the previous year, many of the positions for non-Han groups required knowledge of Mandarin, indicating separate requirements for language and ethnicity.⁴⁸

CECC reported in 2011 that a middle school in Hotan, which according to the announcement is 96.3 percent Uyghur and 3.5 percent Han, advertised all 20 open positions for Han. Again, the announcement separately specifies Mandarin as the language used in the teaching positions.⁴⁹ CECC also reported on discrimination at the university level in 2012.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, July 2). Recruitment for State Jobs in Xinjiang Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/recruitment-for-state-jobs-in-xinjiang-discriminates-against-ethnic>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 20). Discriminatory Job Hiring Practices Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/discriminatory-job-hiring-practices-continue-in-xinjiang>

⁴⁹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, March 31). Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang>

In an interview with UHRP, Uyghur linguist Abduweli Ayup described his own experience of discrimination in the education sector. He explained that the Education Department had an official policy that the local government would provide a position to graduates from an overseas university with a master's degree. In 2010 after obtaining a master's degree in linguistics from an American university, he inquired about a position at the foreign language department at Kashgar Teacher's College, which at the time had no staff who had a linguistics degree. The school's Han staff told him there was no position. When he asked again, the staff offered him to take the employment exam. When he arrived to take it, he was told his name was not on the exam list and in the end, no employment was offered in spite of the policy. As this anecdote illustrates, even when an official policy dictates that a Uyghur employee should be hired, implementation of the policy by a mostly Han staff may still resort to discriminatory policies in practice.⁵¹

State Owned Enterprises

Outside of civil service, Uyghur people experience greater levels of discrimination in state industries according to Zang's sociological research. CECC has highlighted a number of instances of such discrimination. For example, in 2009 the Turpan District Tobacco Monopoly Branch Office recruited for two positions, both reserved for Han Chinese, according to an announcement posted on the XUAR Personnel Department website.⁵² In 2011, all 109 open positions at the Nilka County Shenda Industries in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture were reserved for Han men, according to a February 16, 2011, announcement posted on the Nilka county Labor and Social Security Office website.⁵³

The health care industry is another category of state owned enterprise in which Uyghur people face severe discrimination. Uighurbiz reported in 2010 that the Shihezi Nurses School limited their teacher recruitment to Han. The job announcement also required the Han recruits to speak Uyghur language, to be women and be "good looking." The author of the Uighurbiz post asks, "Why not Uyghur graduates fluent in Chinese? Why does an educational institution take the lead in ethnic discrimination?"⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See Footnote 82: "Xinjiang Changji Vocational and Technical College 2012 Personnel Recruitment Notice" [Xinjiang changji zhiye jishu xueyuan 2012 nian rencai zhaopin qishi]. From Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2012, October 10). 2012 Annual Report. P. 265. Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2012%20CECC%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁵¹ UHRP Interview with Abduweli Ayup. (2016, December 14).

⁵² Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, February 9). Governments in Xinjiang Continue to Sponsor, Sanction Job Recruitment That Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/governments-in-xinjiang-continue-to-sponsor-sanction-job>

⁵³ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, March 31). Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang>

⁵⁴ Anonymous University Student. Uighurbiz. (2010, April 15). 石河子大学护士学校2010年辅导员招聘, 涉嫌歧视维吾尔人 [Shihezi University Nursing School 2010 counselor recruitment, Suspected Discrimination Against Uighurs]. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20121221085459/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/2099>

In an interview with Abduweli Ayup, UHRP also learned of discrimination in the health care industry. Ayup's wife studied at the Xinjiang Medical College. After graduating with a medical degree she applied to work at the Kashgar No. 1 People's Hospital. The hospital administrators first inquired about her qualifications, then called and informed her that they would hire her if she possessed a degree from any medical college. In fact, her degree from Xinjiang Medical College was more prestigious than most of the hospital's other employees. She took and passed the hospital's exam and attended a three-day work training. At the end, the hospital administrators notified her that they would not hire her because they did not have an appropriate place for her to work. Ayup attributed the experience to ethnic discrimination.⁵⁵

CECC reported in 2009 that the Aksu District Human Resources Department visited the Xi'an Jiaotong University in Shaanxi province to recruit personnel for jobs in Aksu hospitals and an agricultural technology center, reserving 18 of 43 positions for Han Chinese, according to an April 16 posting on the Xi'an Jiaotong University website. The Aksu District Human Resources Department job announcement specified the remaining slots as unrestricted by ethnicity, thereby leaving them open to applicants of all ethnic groups including Han.⁵⁶ CECC later reported on a job announcement for a hospital in Urumchi that advertised in late 2010 for 28 positions, all of which were reserved for Han.⁵⁷

Another industry with a high level of discrimination is state-owned banks. A 2011 Uighurbiz report described high levels of discrimination in East Turkestan branches of the Bank of China and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. The reporter found that ethnic minorities are hired at a rate of ten percent and interviewed at an even lower rate for new positions. For example, in 2009, the Bank of China interviewed 13 minorities out of a total 653 people interviewed, or two percent; the Agricultural Bank interviewed 18 Uyghurs of 312 total people, or six percent; and the Industrial and Commercial Bank interviewed 44 Uyghurs of 154 people, or 29 percent, and other banks interviewed 16 of 634 people, or two percent.⁵⁸

The energy industry is one of the most notorious for its discrimination against Uyghurs, and CECC has documented numerous instances of recruitment discrimination. In 2011, CECC reported on a job recruitment announcement for the Xinjiang Youpai Energy Company, posted on the website of the Fukang municipal government, Sanji Hui Autonomous Prefecture. It specified that all 56 openings for engineers and other skilled workers were reserved for Han, of which 55 were designated for Han men 45 years old or below.⁵⁹ In 2011, CECC reported that of

⁵⁵ UHRP Interview with Abduweli Ayup. (2016, December 14).

⁵⁶ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, February 9). Governments in Xinjiang Continue to Sponsor, Sanction Job Recruitment That Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/governments-in-xinjiang-continue-to-sponsor-sanction-job>

⁵⁷ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, March 31). Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang>

⁵⁸ Nadiye. (2011, January 30). 维吾尔青年：你的天堂不是少数民族就业的地方.[Uyghur Youth: Your Heaven is not a place of ethnic minority employment]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20121231014815/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/3896>

72 positions available at the Xinjiang Nanfang Mining Industries, the 12 positions requiring higher education were all reserved for Han men, according to a job announcement posted on the Nilka county Labor and Social Security Office website.⁶⁰ In 2010, an August announcement for jobs with the Xinjiang PetroChina Pipe Engineering Co., a subsidiary of the state-owned enterprise China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), all 50 open positions were reserved for Han.⁶¹ Finally, CECC reported that in September 2008 a mining company advertising on the website of the Koktoqay (Fuyun) county government in Altay district, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, recruited only Han for 18 open positions.⁶²

Uighurbiz also reported on hiring discrimination in the energy sector. The Balikun Yinxin Mine Investment company in 2010 limited ethnic minority hiring to ten percent for a total of 300 positions.⁶³ Uighurbiz also reported ethnic discrimination in the energy industry in Karamay in depth after an incident in which a number of community members launched a petition to protest the industry's blatant unfairness.

Private Industry

Private industry has been especially noted for its discrimination of Uyghurs who do not find employment in the public sector. CECC has documented numerous instances of private sector discrimination against Uyghurs, for example:

- In 2012 CECC recorded Han-only recruitment of cashiers in Kashgar.⁶⁴
- CECC recorded a September 2010 announcement posted on the Jing county government website recruiting 30 employees for a new store, specifying that 20 positions were for Han Chinese and 10 for ethnic minorities.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, March 31). Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 20). Discriminatory Job Hiring Practices Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/discriminatory-job-hiring-practices-continue-in-xinjiang>

⁶² Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, February 9). Governments in Xinjiang Continue to Sponsor, Sanction Job Recruitment That Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/governments-in-xinjiang-continue-to-sponsor-sanction-job>

⁶³ Nadiya. (2010, December 2). 新疆：承诺企业承担学费，学生100%就业少数民族学生限招生计划总数的10%。 [Xinjiang: Industry Promise to Assume Tuition Responsibility: Of 100% of Student Recruitment Ethnic Minorities Are Limited to only 10%]. Uighurbiz. Previously Online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/2106>

⁶⁴ See Footnote 82: "Kashgar Minxin Supermarket/Cashiers" and "Xinjiang Meizhoutuo Investment Company Seeks Cashiers (Urgent)." From Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2012, October 10). 2012 Annual Report. P. 265. Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2012%20CECC%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁶⁵ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2009, February 9). Governments in Xinjiang Continue to Sponsor, Sanction Job Recruitment That Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/governments-in-xinjiang-continue-to-sponsor-sanction-job>

- In 2016 CECC recorded Han-only postings for freight drivers, car accessory salespeople, broadcasters, and bookstore clerks.⁶⁶

In 2009, the *Atlantic* magazine published an advertisement photographed outside the Kashgar Postal Hotel which states, “The hotel is hiring cooks, servers and supervisors. This offer is for Han Chinese (汉族) only, ages 18-30.” The user who submitted the sign noted, “The sign is enormous and impossible to miss.”⁶⁷



Recruitment sign for Postal Hotel in Kashgar, photo taken July 2009. The last line reads, “This offer is for Han Chinese only, ages 18-30.” © The Atlantic

Private overseas employers such as Volkswagen, which opened a plant in East Turkestan in 2013, pledged to hire ethnic minorities. Little has been reported about the extent to which they have satisfied this pledge.⁶⁸ In 2011, Amy Reger of the Uyghur Human Rights Project wrote on

⁶⁶ See Footnote 149. “Freight Drivers,” “Sincerely Recruiting High Salary Career Car Accessory Sales Associate With a Base Salary of 2,500 Yuan,” “2015 Xinjiang Altay City Broadcasting Station Recruitment Notice,” and “Xinjiang Hotan Prefecture Xinhua Bookstore 2015 Recruitment of 5 Staff Members.” From Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2016, October 6). 2016 Annual Report. P. 297. Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2016%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁶⁷ Fallows, James. (2009, July 10). “No Uighurs Need Apply.” *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2009/07/no-uyghurs-need-apply/21071/>

⁶⁸ Xie Fei. (2013, April 27). 大众在新疆建厂 面临诸多挑战. [Volkswagen construction in Xinjiang is facing many challenges]. *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.com/zh/大众在新疆建厂-面临诸多挑战/a-17046560>

the UHRP blog that the American energy company Peabody would establish new operations in East Turkestan. Reger quoted a Chinese Academy of Social Sciences researcher stating that the project “will also bring many employment opportunities for local people.” She challenged this statement, however, stating: “there is no evidence to suggest that policies have been put in place together with the new development push in East Turkestan to address existing inequalities in hiring practices.”⁶⁹ As with Volkswagen, there has been no subsequent reporting on the Peabody’s follow-up to honor its pledge.

Perhaps the only overseas company that has attested to follow through to corporate pledges to hire Uyghurs is Esquel, a Hong Kong shirtmaker which produces for brands like Ralph Lauren. Esquel maintains cotton farming, spinning and ginning operations in East Turkestan. The company makes a concerted effort not only to hire Uyghur graduates in its local operation, but also maintains a foundation to support Uyghur schools, according to a 2012 Forbes report.⁷⁰

B. UHRP Analysis of Discriminatory Job Postings

A Reuters report from May 2014 stated that “Where some ads might once have openly discouraged Uighurs from applying, now it is not uncommon for them to make more subtle demands for native Chinese language skills, or to remind applicants that onsite lunch options do not include halal fare.”⁷¹ Yet as the CECC analysis of education postings illustrated, often language requirements exist alongside ethnic quotas. Even Uyghur people who speak Chinese as their mother tongue are not eligible for positions that are reserved for Han Chinese.

UHRP conducted an analysis of online job postings in October 2016, and found a wide variety of strategies to exclude Uyghurs, ranging from subtle to more outright forms. UHRP’s search included job openings across East Turkestan and in a wide variety of industries, including both the state and private sector.

By far the most common means of excluding Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities was to simply state the required ethnicity, often in the context of a list of required job qualifications. For example, a number of private sector jobs listed limitations on ethnicity alongside gender restrictions, physical descriptions and even mental descriptions:

- Urumchi - Sales representative at Dai Qin Industrial Co., Ltd.: either gender, any education degree, unmarried, 19-28 years old and Han
- Urumchi - Oilfield firefighter: male only, 18-28 years old, at least 1.65 meters tall, and Han
- Urumchi - Bank of China Insurance Department, administrative assistant: technical school or higher degree, Han only

⁶⁹ Reger, Amy. (2011, July 22). Western companies profit from state development in East Turkestan. UHRP Blog. Retrieved from <http://weblog.uhrp.org/western-companies-profit-from-state-development-in-east-turkestan/>

⁷⁰ Olsen, Robert. (2012, July 9). To Reduce Poverty And Pollution, China Needs More Billionaires Like This. Forbes. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/robertolsen/2012/07/09/to-reduce-poverty-and-pollution-china-needs-more-billionaires-like-this/#7f3a43b750be>

⁷¹ Martina, Michael. May 6, 2014. In China's Xinjiang, economic divide seen fuelling ethnic unrest. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-insight-idUSBREA450X520140506>

- Urumchi – Administrative assistant at Urumchi Tianshan District Shengyin Security Co.: requirements include good writing, good energy, able to drive, either gender and Han
- Urumchi – Welder at Xinjiang Ad Construction Advertising Co.: 18 and up, no degree requirement, Han only
- Ghulja – wholesale fast moving consumer goods sales: high school education or higher, Han, fast moving consumer goods experience preferred
- Ghulja – accounting clerk: female, Han, 22-35 years old, computer proficiency preferred
- Ghulja – rural farmer, possibly two positions, also a nanny: hard working, experience driving a 4-wheeled cart, Han, 45-55 years old
- Ghulja – tofu factory, sales staff: Han, male 25-40 years old,
- Ghulja – chef: Han, 50-60 years old, male, healthy
- Ghulja – West bridge fire safety maintenance head: male, Han, around 50, high school education or higher, minimum 2 years experience
- Ghulja - supermarket sales: Han, 40 years old or younger, can work hard and patiently, food industry experience preferred, male or female
- Kashgar - Kashgar Song and Dance troupe, stage light design: male, Han, technical degree or higher
- Kashgar – Kashgar Song and Dance troupe, stage design: male, Han, technical degree or higher.
- Altai – City People’s Government Radio: 2 editors, 1 Han and 1 Kazakh; 2 segment writers, 1 Han, 1 Kazakh; 4 broadcast announcers, 2 Han, 1 male, 1 female; and 2 Kazakh, 1 male, 1 female; website maintenance, 1 Han; 4 technical crew, 2 Han, 2 Kazakh; and 3 reporters, all Han.
- Aksu – 19 Han high school instructors: Applicants under 30, undergraduate degree required and specialized degree in of fields including math, science and other subjects.
- Hotan - 10 construction positions: Han only

Other job advertisements specified HSK mandarin language test skills. For example, a job at the Agriculture University required a passing HSK level of 3 or more and a position at Xinjiang University required 5 or higher HSK level. Outside of education, a position at the Center for Disease Control also required 5 or higher HSK level. The highest level of HSK is 6.

Some job advertisements limited by language ability without mention to the HSK. For example, the Urumchi Tianshan District Shengyin Security Company posted an advertisement for a security guard, and although it did not list the ethnicity requirement, the post specified that Mandarin must be excellent. The word “Mandarin” was written as “Han language”, *Hanyu*, per the convention in East Turkestan, though elsewhere in China and the world Mandarin is more commonly referred to as “putonghua” or “guoyu.” The same company separately listed its administrative assistant position with a specific ethnicity requirement, for Han only.

Finally, the use of “*halal* food” was mentioned in two posts UHRP identified in the online search. A welder position at the Xinjiang Yiju Xuan Integrated Housing Engineering Co specified that room and board were provided but “Han” food only, meaning non-halal food. Presumably, this was a veiled way of stating Uyghurs need not apply. A driver position in Yili Prefecture at Xinjiang Hengtong Yuan Car Sale Services Ltd Yili branch stated more explicitly, “because the work location does not have *halal* food, we will only hire Han.”

Jobs Requiring Uyghur – Online Recruitment Sites

In a 2014 paper, UHRP's Greg Fay attempted to document jobs that required Uyghur language skills. Although none of these positions specified ethnicity, they show the very few job opportunities in East Turkestan that speaking Uyghur opens up either for Han jobseekers who learn Uyghur, or Uyghurs themselves. He writes:

[I searched] 58.com, which listed 16 cities in East Turkestan on its roll: Urumqi, Changji, Korla/Bayingol, Yili, Aksu, Kashgar, Hami, Karamay, Bortala, Turpan, Hotan, Shihezi, Kizilsu, Aral, Wujjachu and Tuyshuk. Of these, only 6 included jobs containing the phrase "Uyghur language," which were: Urumqi (18), Kashgar (7), Aksu (6), Korla/Bayingol (4), Hami (1), and Karamay (1). There was a total of 37 job listings requiring Uyghur, and only 1 required an undergraduate degree: a customer service manager at a real estate company in Urumqi.

To get a sense of the job listings, I read through the jobs in Kashgar and Korla. In Kashgar, 7 jobs among a total of over 1,000 total postings included: a translator at a car sales company, a sales manager, print media designer, phone operator, sales translator, accountant, and car engineering salesperson. 3 require technical degrees, and the rest only high school. In Korla/Bayingol, 4 jobs requiring "Uyghur language" among over 3,000 listings included: customer service for car repair, cosmetic sales telemarketing, cashier, and pharmacy sales. One required a technical degree, and the others had no educational requirement.⁷²

⁷² Search was conducted on March 20, 2014, and reflects postings as of that date. From Fay, Greg. (2014, April 14). Impact on Ethnic Relations of Han Chinese Studying Uyghur Language. Presentation at Association for the Study of Nationalities Annual Conference. Columbia University, New York, NY.

4. Uyghur Experiences of Labor Rights Abuses

A. University Graduates

The effect of widespread employment discrimination takes a unique toll on Uyghur university graduates. Ilham Tohti writes: “According to official government data, only 17 percent of ethnic Uyghur university students in Xinjiang manage to secure a full-time job by the time they graduate. This is far below the rate for ethnic Han Chinese university students. My own research reveals that the actual job-placement rate for Uyghur university students approaching graduation is even lower, at less than 15 percent. The difficulty of finding work after graduation not only impoverishes ethnic-minority families who have sacrificed to send their children to university, it also contributes to the notion, widespread among Uyghurs, that education is useless.”⁷³

Tohti wrote: “Given the absence or non-enforcement of national ethnic policies, the primary cause of employment difficulties among minority university students is blatant ethnic discrimination in hiring. Ethnic minorities are severely under-recruited for jobs in the civil service and in state-owned enterprises.”⁷⁴ Sociological studies affirm these trends, particularly in state owned enterprises, education and the private sector.

Rahile, a young Uyghur university graduate living overseas, wrote a Chinese language blog for the Uyghur Human Rights Project about Uyghur university graduates’ struggle to find employment. In the blog post, titled “Uyghur university graduates’ difficulties finding employment sends the message that ‘schooling is worthless,’” she reflected on the idea that regardless of their educational attainment, Uyghur university graduates face a hopeless job market. Rahile explains that in her class of 45 students who graduated from a top tier bilingual education program in East Turkestan, “Among us basically about ten could find work, and basically it was temporary employment, and work obtained through relying on connections for hire, and many of us elected to continue and take the graduate exam in hopes that after obtaining a graduate degree it would then be possible to find work.” She explains that one classmate decided to sell clothes in a night market because he could not find more formal employment. She also referenced the 2013 civil service chart as a proof of discrimination facing Uyghurs.⁷⁵

Uighurbiz published a blog by a Uyghur university graduate who expressed a dream, quite similar to Rahile’s: she wanted only to obtain a passport and employment. The author, Atikem Rozi, was imprisoned for her writing on Uighurbiz in 2014, along with Ilham Tohti. Prior to this arrest, she was previously imprisoned for blogging about being denied a passport for no reason. For Rozi, limitations on Uyghur mobility and particularly restrictions on overseas travel were part and parcel of employment success. Like Rahile, she bemoaned the widespread

⁷³ Tohti, Ilham. (2015, April 22). “Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: Overview and Recommendations (1) – Unemployment.” Translated by Cindy Carter. China Change. Retrieved from <https://chinachange.org/2015/04/22/present-day-ethnic-problems-in-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-overview-and-recommendations-1/>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2015, May 7). Uyghur Voices on Education: China’s Assimilative 'Bilingual Educations Policy in East Turkestan. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Uyghur-Voices-on-Education.pdf>

discrimination against Uyghurs, and discussed the widespread social media reaction to the 2013 civil service recruitment ethnic chart.⁷⁶

Uighurbiz also reposted an article from a Sichuan-based Han Chinese Earth Science professor's blog, He Xindong. In it he recounted the story of two of his Uyghur students. He writes: They told me that they had found a work unit in eastern China and I congratulated them. It was a very respected unit. After the local units in Xinjiang rejected these Uyghur students for various reasons, this unit accepted them." Professor He was shocked that the students had such high levels of achievement that they had been accepted in the prestigious units in eastern China, but the local units had rejected them. He strongly advised the XUAR government to "strictly investigate and deal with the behavior of ethnic-based refusals to recruit Uyghur students, and impose legal and economic penalties."⁷⁷

In Rahile's blog, she questions a number of assumptions about Uyghur university graduates' inability to find work. One assumption is that Uyghurs' work requirements are too high and that they won't perform difficult, strenuous work or work with low wages. She writes, "But I want to ask, would you only be satisfied if these university graduates used their labor to pull a rickshaw? Are Uyghur university graduates selling clothes in the night market because their requirements are too high?" Rahile cites a Uyghur university graduate who told her: "Now, I do not have high expectation of high wages, just enough for food and warm clothes. I spent nearly 60,000 yuan to go to college and after there was no work, and I do not have the nerve to return home and be idle, so I have left for migrant work. That's why I'm doing this work, but how will I make up my original investment and go back? When will I no longer force my parents to worry about my employment? When will I be able to buy a house? Even if I don't eat or drink it will be decades."⁷⁸

Rahile also confronts a government official's misperception that the primary reason why Uyghur university graduates have difficulty seeking employment is because of a low level of Mandarin. She writes, "Well I'd like to ask, why do even the students raised in the so-called 'bilingual' education program also not find work? Is their Mandarin level also insufficient? Even after they capably use Mandarin to take the *gaokao* college entrance exam and compete equally with Han students from interior China, still their Mandarin levels are too low? And if you feel the students coming out of the 'bilingual' program have a low level of Mandarin, then what about Uyghurs students who were taken to interior China at the start of middle school, is their level of Mandarin also insufficient? If so, then the Mandarin levels of regular Uyghur school graduates' is definitely insufficient, and finding employment is out of the question."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Uyghuray. (2013, May 28). 一个维吾尔大学生的中国梦：护照和就业 [A Uyghur University Student's Chinese Dream: A Passport and Employment]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130529180934/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14396>

⁷⁷ He Xin Dong. (2012, October 27). 从一群维族学生的抱怨说起 [Speaking on the Complaints of a Group of Uyghur Students]. Personal Blog. Retrieved from <http://blog.sciencenet.cn/blog-99337-626525.html>

⁷⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2015, May 7). Uyghur Voices on Education: China's Assimilative 'Bilingual' Education Policy in East Turkestan. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Uyghur-Voices-on-Education.pdf>

⁷⁹ Ibid.

B. Basis for Discrimination of Uyghurs

As UHRP's study of discriminatory job postings indicated, most job postings separately limited language requirements and ethnicity requirements, and both were commonly included in job announcements. At times, the same company would list one advertisement specifying ethnicity and another specifying a language requirement (such as the Urumchi Tianshan District Shengyin Security Company). Thus, discrimination based on language appears to take place separately and in addition to language discrimination.

Uyghurs' proficiency in Mandarin has been linked to employment. A 2012 paper by a French researcher analyzed data from China's Household Ethnic Survey (CHES) for the reference year 2011 comparing socioeconomic experiences among different ethnic groups in seven sampling areas that have a large proportion of minorities. She found that language proficiency strongly impacts Uyghurs' employment probability: having strong ability to communicate in local Han dialect or Mandarin significantly and strongly increases their employment probability, by 12.8 percentage points.⁸⁰ Uighurbiz reported that in Karamay, Uyghurs who did not study in Chinese were prohibited from even taking a test to qualify for work in the local government in 2013.⁸¹

In an interview with Abduweli Ayup, UHRP learned that jobs that were once available to Uyghurs translating for Han Chinese people have been eliminated since Uyghur is no longer an official language. Ayup stated that upon his graduation from university in 1997, local government positions required a certain number of Uyghur staff in order to translate. He explained that today, every bureau doesn't need a Uyghur clerk due to demographic changes. These positions, however, were not necessarily good jobs. For example, after graduating from Minzu University in Beijing, a prestigious university, the government assigned Ayup to work as the translator for a bus driver with an army background. Ayup found the work did not utilize his education, and moreover, working for army personnel was especially difficult because of the militaristic management style.

The reduction of even poor quality jobs such as the one assigned to Ayup has a great impact in the context of a dearth of opportunities for Uyghur jobseekers. In surveys undertaken by sociological researcher Zang, one Uyghur woman told him that her son had paid an employment agency to find a job for him. The agency had secured him a job interview, "but the Han boss asked my son to go away since he did not want to hire minority workers."⁸² Another form of discrimination that targeted Uyghurs recorded by Uighurbiz was used by the Aksu City government in 2013. The government would not hire anyone who had graduated from a

⁸⁰ Démurger, Sylvie. (2015, April 30). Labour market outcomes of ethnic minorities in urban China. China Household Ethnic Survey Project. Retrieved from https://www.gate.cnrs.fr/IMG/pdf/Demurger_CHESProject_April2015.pdf

⁸¹ Nijatkar. (2013, March 13). 新疆多地招聘现歧视性条款[Job Recruitment in Many Places in Xinjiang Display Discriminatory Terms]. Uighurbiz. Archive available: <http://tibet.woeser.com/?p=35711>

⁸² Zang, Xiaowei. (2011, January). "Uyghur-Han Earning Differentials in Urumchi." *The China Journal*, 65, pp. 141-155.

university in East Turkestan, and instead recruited only graduates from inner Chinese universities.⁸³

Ayup's assessment aligns with Rahile's account of classmates only finding work through connections. Ayup attributed Uyghurs' low employment rates to a lack of social connections. He said: "In China, everything is related to *"guangxi"* (connections), you must have relationships to do something easily. As second-class citizens, Uyghurs don't have *guangxi*, we are at the bottom. To climb up, you have to have a Chinese to hold you." He further explained that this same lack of social capital discouraged Uyghur people from opening their own businesses. He said: "In my observation, Chinese businesses are controlled by the government. If you want to make money, you need to cooperate with the government, especially in East Turkestan. For example, if you want to have a construction company, because the land belongs to the Chinese government, if you cooperate with the government, you will do better. But the government is controlled by Han Chinese, and it is hard to communicate."

Ilham Tohti also described the role of social connections in the success stories of university graduates who attained employment. He wrote: "Even the privileged classes are not immune to employment difficulties: one child of a high-ranking Xinjiang Uighur government official graduated from a prestigious mainland university and spent a year searching fruitlessly for work. It was only after securing a personal letter of introduction from Wang Lequan [then Communist Party Secretary of Xinjiang] that the young graduate was finally able to secure a job."⁸⁴

Sociologist Reza Hasmath also attributed unemployment to a "demonstrable deficit of social network capital requisite in the hiring and promotion process." He found that less than 10 percent of minorities interviewed for his study found a work placement utilizing their social network connections. By contrast, an estimated two-thirds of Hans in other studies found work placements via social network connections. Uyghurs do not lack social capital within their ethnic community; but, because Han Chinese control nearly every facet of the economy in East Turkestan, Uyghurs suffer because of a lack of social capital within Han society.⁸⁵

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the employment of Uyghurs is an increased administrative cost associated with their employment owing to government efforts to monitor and control the Uyghur population. In a 2014, Reuters reported that a 24-year-old Uyghur man from Urumchi told them he had been rejected for a marketing position by an electronics company that cited the extra administrative burden of hiring Uyghurs, which he said included special registration procedures and filing monthly reports to the public security bureau. "They said if they wanted to hire me they would have a lot of extra work and they were worried about the hassle," he stated in

⁸³ Nijatkar. March 13, 2013. 新疆多地招聘现歧视性条款[Job Recruitment in Many Places in Xinjiang Display Discriminatory Terms]. Uighurbiz. Archive available: <http://tibet.woeser.com/?p=35711>

⁸⁴ Tohti, Ilham. (2015, April 22). "Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region: Overview and Recommendations (1) – Unemployment." Translated by Cindy Carter. China Change. Retrieved from <https://chinachange.org/2015/04/22/present-day-ethnic-problems-in-xinjiang-uighur-autonomous-region-overview-and-recommendations-1/>

⁸⁵ Hasmath, Reza. (2012). The Ethnic Penalty: Immigration, Education and the Labour Market. Ashgate: Burlington, VT. P. 106.

fluent Chinese. “It's not like this thing has only happened once or twice. It's happened to me before and my girlfriend has had this problem before.”⁸⁶

Ilham Tohti also writes that since July 5, 2009 ethnic unrest, increased measures to monitor Uyghurs further raises the cost of hiring Uyghur workers. “Since the ethnic unrest of July 2009, nearly all of Xinjiang's Uighur enclaves have been subject to the constant pressure of “stability maintenance” policies.”⁸⁷

C. Discrimination Against Women

For Uyghur women, employment discrimination is even more severe. As UHRP's research on job posting reflects, many jobs specify not only ethnicity, but gender as well. CECC has documented recruitment posts each year that discriminate not only against Uyghurs, but more specifically against Uyghur women. In 2016, CECC reported on twin gender and ethnic discrimination in the following agencies: the Aksu Vocational and Technical Institute, Aksu Prefecture Wensu County No. 5 Middle School, Charklik County Agriculture Bureau and the recruitment website zhaopinwang.⁸⁸ In 2015, CECC documented gender discrimination in the 2015 Xinjiang Bortala Prefecture Jinghe County PSB Police Personnel Recruitment, Kashgar City Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, Kashgar Prefecture Broadcasting Industry, Xinjiang Aerospace Information Company Ltd. Turpan City Branch, and Shule County Administrative Recruitment in Kashgar Prefecture.⁸⁹

Uighurbiz also reported that women face double discrimination in the civil service recruitment process. For example in the 2013 civil service job list, a Uighurbiz analysis found that of 917 positions recruiting Uyghurs, only 236 were available to women, and only 113 positions specifically were reserved for Uyghur women, or only 12.3 percent of those open to women, or only 1.4 percent of all open positions.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Martina, Michael. (2014, May 6). In China's Xinjiang, economic divide seen fuelling ethnic unrest. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-insight-idUSBREA450X520140506>

⁸⁷ Tohti, Ilham. (2015, April 22). “Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region: Overview and Recommendations (1) – Unemployment.” Translated by Cindy Carter. China Change. Retrieved from <https://chinachange.org/2015/04/22/present-day-ethnic-problems-in-xinjiang-uighur-autonomous-region-overview-and-recommendations-1/>

⁸⁸ See Footnote 150. Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2016, October 6). 2016 Annual Report. P. 297. Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2016%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁸⁹ See Footnote 152. Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2015, October 8). 2015 Annual Report. P. 297. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2015%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁹⁰ Nijatkar. (2013, May 2017). 维吾尔女性报考公务员面临双重歧视 [Uyghur Women Testing for Civil Service Positions Face Double Discrimination]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20140111020407/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/13768>

graduated from a prestigious university. First she was rejected from government employment for being a woman. Then private enterprises rejected her because she had no overseas experience. Finally, the private sector rejected her because of her headscarf. Only a Uyghur business would hire her.⁹⁴

D. Religious Discrimination

Religious restrictions do not only affect jobseekers; Uyghurs who are fortunate enough to find work experience tremendous pressure not to openly practice Islam, particularly in the government sector. In 2013, Uighurbiz reported on a special meeting held in Qaraqash County in Hotan. At the meeting, female instructors were informed that any of them who wore a headscarf would face dismissal.⁹⁵ That same year, in Kashgar's Yengisheher county, at a "bilingual" training for government cadres, women were forced to remove headscarves, and told not to wear them in the future. ⁹⁶ Uighurbiz reported that a blanket ban exists against headscarves for all women employed as cadres.⁹⁷

Teachers face heightened restrictions on religious expression. On the UHRP Chinese Blog, UHRP's Chinese research consultant Ilshat Hassan wrote that the Aksu City Board of Education organized special house-to-house inspections of Uyghur teachers' homes to guarantee they did not possess Islamic items.⁹⁸

In an interview, Abduweli Ayup also described severe restrictions on religious practice in the workplace. He said that during his time working for the government, you could not even say the word "halal" in front of a Chinese boss. During Ramadan, he explained that the work unit prepared lunch for Uyghur workers even though his employers knew that due to religious practice, Uyghurs fast during daylight during Ramadan. To keep their jobs, no one objected. After five years of university in Beijing, Ayup said he hadn't realized how intensely religion was restricted in East Turkestan compared to the rest of China. His Han boss said, "This is Xinjiang, not Beijing."

⁹⁴ Osman, A. (2016, October 27). 谁让你成为维吾尔族的? [Who made you Uyghur?]. Uyghur Human Rights Project Chinese Blog. Retrieved from <http://chineseblog.uhrp.org/?p=306>

⁹⁵ Uighurbiz. (2013, October 9). 在线调查: 93.4%的投票者支持维吾尔妇女戴头巾 [Online Survey: 93.4% of Voters Support Uyghur Women Wearing Headscarves]. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/20028> See also: Uighurbiz. (2013, September 29). 墨玉县芒来乡中学禁止维吾尔女教师戴头巾 [Moyu County Manglai Township High School Bans Female Uyghur Teachers From Wearing Headscarves]. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/19344>. And see: Radio Free Asia Cantonese. September 26, 2013. 新疆乡校禁维吾尔族教师戴头巾[Xinjiang township school forbids Uyghur teachers from wearing headscarves]. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/Uyghurs-09262013092638.html>

⁹⁶ Anostaf. (2013, April 4). 新疆疏勒县禁止维吾尔女干部戴头巾 [Xinjiang Shule County Prohibits Female Uyghur Cadres from Wearing Headscarves]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/11711>

⁹⁷ Uighurbiz. (2013, October 9). 在线调查: 93.4%的投票者支持维吾尔妇女戴头巾 [Online Survey: 93.4% of Voters Support Uyghur Women Wearing Headscarves]. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/20028>

⁹⁸ Hassan, Ilshat. (2016, August 29). 失去了公民权的维吾尔教师 Uyghur teachers Lose Their Civil Rights]. Uyghur Human Rights Project Chinese Blog. Retrieved from <http://chineseblog.uhrp.org/?p=277>

Most recently, RFA reported in January 2017 that Uyghurs who are employed as government workers were forbidden from even indicating their religion on their household registration forms.⁹⁹

E. Discrimination against convicted people

For Uyghurs who have spent any amount of time in prison, employment is nearly impossible. It is not uncommon for Uyghurs to face prison time for religious practices, including teaching religion to any children under the age of 18, possession of religious materials, or reading literature discouraged by the government. For former prisoners, the administrative obstacles that prohibit employment of all Uyghurs are amplified. For these individuals, finding a job after the conviction is nearly impossible.

In a series of interviews conducted by the World Uyghur Congress with Uyghur people who fled East Turkestan and found asylum in Turkey, a number of formerly imprisoned Uyghurs described extreme difficulties finding work after their prison sentences. A young man who was imprisoned at 22 while in university for reciting a poem by Abdurehim Otkur was sentenced to three years in prison for “separatism.” He said: “After I came out from jail, I suffered all kinds of discrimination, on employment or normal activity. I was asked to come to the police station every week to make a report. I couldn’t leave the city without their permission. The oppression of China was not only physical, but also mental. I had no chance to live my life as a free man. So, I began thinking I would leave the country.”¹⁰⁰

Another interviewee told the WUC that he was arrested for possession of a religious book. Although he was not sentenced to prison, he was monitored by the police after the incident. He explained that the police isolated him, and he could neither find a place to rent nor to work.

In UHRP’s interview with Abduweli Ayup, he reported that every administrative unit in the XUAR maintains records on their employees and the local government makes it nearly impossible for employers to hire someone who has a record with the police. Ayup recounted the story of a widow in Kashgar whose son had such a record and was thus unable to find a job. Abduweli asked a friend with a construction company to help the widow’s son. His friend said, “If I hire him, if he has any problem with the government, I cannot have a normal business. Chinese employees are safe for us. Uyghur employees are not safe. For my business, it’s better to hire Chinese employees.”

Ayup himself described facing discrimination after he wrote a letter of complaint about his Han boss in June 2008. At that time, Ayup was employed in a small town in southern East Turkestan as a translator for a bus driver with a military background whose management style was causing major problems for their work. Ayup decided to write the party secretary to request an

⁹⁹ Hoja, Gulchehra. (2017, January 4). Uyghur Government Workers Ordered Not to Identify on Forms as Muslim. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/identify-01042017162826.html>

¹⁰⁰ World Uyghur Congress Interview, (2015, September). For more information on the interview, see: World Uyghur Congress. (2016, June). Seeking a Place to Breathe Freely: Current Challenges Faced by Uyghur Refugees & Asylum Seekers. Retrieved from: http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/WUC-Seeking-a-Place-to-Breathe-Freely-June-2016.pdf

investigation into the issues affecting their workplace. Because of this action, Ayup was expelled from the position. But the repercussions of the letter did not end there. When Ayup subsequently took the national examination to get a master's degree, although he passed the exam, the authorities decided to punish him yet again for his letter by preventing his entry. By controlling his personnel file, Ayup was at the mercy of the bureaucracy of the small town. Fortunately, Ayup was able to transfer his file to his hometown and escape the punishment. He subsequently went to Xinjiang University and brought his archive. He was able to find a job at that time. This experience with his file foreshadowed future problems Ayup would face at the hands of vindictive authorities. Ten years later, after he served a prison sentence in reprisal for operating a Uyghur language kindergarten in 2015, it became impossible to find work. Ayup and his family left East Turkestan altogether.

F. Suppression of Petitions Against Discrimination

A rare instance of Uyghur protest against discriminatory labor practices occurred in 2012 in Karamay, a prosperous oil town in the northern Tarim Basin of East Turkestan. Karamay's population consists of 80 percent Han due to high rates of migration to the town. Rich oil resources in Karamay have brought huge profits. As the town has prospered, Uyghurs have been largely left behind. On Uyghurbiz, Ilham Tohti commented, "PetroChina has a monopoly and decides everything in Karamay, including government decisions and control of various resources. Karamay seems to have become a colonial city of oil." In addition to the state-owned oil companies, nearly every area of local government also hires mostly Han Chinese. An anonymous Uyghur writer wrote on Uyghurbiz that in all of East Turkestan, "Karamay has long been the city with the worst ethnic discrimination."¹⁰¹

In December 2012, the Karamay Oil system, a state-run industry, set limits on recruitment according to national proportions of ethnicity, thus limiting Uyghurs and other ethnic groups to fractional percentages of the workforce. In December 2012, Uyghur parents organized demonstrations in front of the local oil companies, requesting the local government resolve discriminatory recruitment policies in the oil industry. These protests lasted over six months and were covered closely by Uyghurbiz.¹⁰²

The protesters complained of the effects of discrimination on Uyghur youth in Karamay who face especially difficult circumstances finding employment. In an interview with Uyghurbiz, one parent commented, "The racist hiring discrimination policies have caused our children to lose motivation and hope." A host of social problems developed as a result of widespread unemployment including high rates of crime, drug addiction and of divorce. The mothers' petition described incredible difficulties for their children who were unable to find work, pay off student loans, or live a normal life in Karamay owing to ethnic discrimination policies.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Nijatkar and Anostaf. (2013, May 27). 克拉玛依少数民族母亲集体上访 反对子女面临就业民族歧视 [Ethnic Minority Mothers in Karamay Collectively Petition Against Ethnic Employment Discrimination Facing Their Children]. Uyghurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926185405/http://www.uyghurbiz.net/archives/14299>

¹⁰² Ibid.

The protestors called for equal pay and equality in recruitment practices.

Uighurbiz reported that for over six months, three or four dozen protesters came every day to sit-in at the oil company in protest and were met only with intimidation and coercive means of silencing their demonstration.¹⁰⁴ For example, in June 2013, the Municipal Public Security Bureau attacked two of the prisoners, Zulfiya and Azi Gul. Police grabbed their hair, and shoved them, leaving bruises on their bodies.¹⁰⁵

In May 2013, seven Uyghurs and one Kazakh mother went to Beijing to raise the issue with the central government, in spite of limited means. Uighurbiz reported that this effort was a failure, and the China Gas Corporation petition office asked them to contact their local labor and social welfare agency.¹⁰⁶ In efforts to get them to return home, the petitioners in Beijing were wiretapped¹⁰⁷ and followed.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Nijatkar. (2013, June 2). 克拉玛依奉行就业歧视 少数民族成低等民族[Karamay Pursues Employment Discrimination, Ethnic Minorities Become Ethnically Inferior]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130927051836/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14627>

¹⁰⁴ Nijatkar and Anostaf. (2013, May 27). 克拉玛依少数民族母亲集体上访 反对子女面临就业民族歧视 [Ethnic Minority Mothers in Karamay Collectively Petition Against Ethnic Employment Discrimination Facing Their Children]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926185405/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14299>

¹⁰⁵ Nijatkar. (2013, June 10). 克拉玛依警方野蛮对待上访母亲[Karamay Police Treat Petitioners Brutally]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926184358/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/15251>

¹⁰⁶ Nijatkar and Anostaf. (2013, May 27). 克拉玛依少数民族母亲集体上访 反对子女面临就业民族歧视 [Ethnic Minority Mothers in Karamay Collectively Petition Against Ethnic Employment Discrimination Facing Their Children]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926185405/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14299>

¹⁰⁷ Nijatkar. (2013, May 28). 克拉玛依当局威胁上访者家人 上访母亲电话疑遭窃听[Karamay Authorities Threaten Petitioners' Families, Petitioner Mothers' Phones are Wiretapped]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926172831/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14377>

¹⁰⁸ Nijatkar. (2013, May 28). 克拉玛依上访母亲行踪遭监视 [Karamay Mother Petitioner's Whereabouts Tracked]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130926184347/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14420>

5. Rural Uyghurs' Labor Rights and Labor Transfers

A. Labor Abuses Targeting Rural Uyghurs

As the trend in non-agricultural employment illustrates, rural Uyghurs face heavy discrimination if they attempt to leave the field of agriculture and seek employment in an urban industry. At the same time, Han cities have expanded and occupy increasingly more arable land in the region, and the percentage of land that Uyghur farmers occupy has been reduced. In an April 2016 report, Radio Free Asia writes, “The Chinese government appropriates arable land and gives it to Han Chinese who move to Xinjiang from the eastern provinces as part of its official western development program.”¹⁰⁹ In addition, UHRP has documented growing pollution of water sources and air pollution, which adversely affects Uyghur agriculture, even as Chinese government land grabs reduce available arable land.¹¹⁰ A number of other labor rights violations occur in rural East Turkestan, including forced labor.

Government-mandated forced labor and political study sessions pose a major obstacle to Uyghurs' agricultural success.¹¹¹ The World Uyghur Congress issued a report in November 2016 extensively documenting forced labor in rural southern East Turkestan, called the “*hashar*” system. The report was produced with material compiled through investigations conducted by RFA's Uyghur Service. The report demonstrates that Uyghurs living in the southern prefectures of East Turkestan, including Aksu, Bayingolin, Hotan and Kashgar have been forced into unpaid labor. The government states that its reason for this blatant denial of Uyghurs rights is “stability maintenance.”¹¹² Nevertheless, the forced labor program has exactly the opposite effect of stability on the Uyghur people, as it exacerbates income inequality and economic opportunity, creating a barrier to rural Uyghur advancement.

According to the World Uyghur Congress report, subjects of the *hashar* system must provide between 4 and 11 hours of labor per day on public works projects including sand encroachment control, waterway maintenance and road improvement projects. The report finds that in addition to the unpaid work, Uyghurs must pay for their own meals, transportation and medical costs, and must send a family member to cover any missed hours. Penalties for missing work are typically

¹⁰⁹ Ghoja, Gulchehre. (2016, April 1). Chinese Policy Leaves Uyghurs Impoverished in Xinjiang's Hotan Prefecture, Farmers Say. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/chinese-policy-leaves-uyghurs-impoverished-in-xinjiangs-hotan-prefecture-farmers-say-04012016143146.html>

¹¹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2016, July 20). Without land, there is no life: Chinese state suppression of Uyghur environmental activism. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Without-land-there-is-no-life.pdf>

¹¹¹ Ghoja, Gulchehre. (2016, April 1). Chinese Policy Leaves Uyghurs Impoverished in Xinjiang's Hotan Prefecture, Farmers Say. Radio Free Asia. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/chinese-policy-leaves-uyghurs-impoverished-in-xinjiangs-hotan-prefecture-farmers-say-04012016143146.html>

¹¹² World Uyghur Congress. (2016, November). Forced Labor in East Turkestan: State-Sanctioned Hashar System. Retrieved from http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Forced_Labour_in_East_Turkestan-WUC.pdf; See also: Irade and Jilil Kashgary. (2016, November 16). The ‘Hashar’ Continues in China's Xinjiang. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/the-hashar-continues-11162016154003.html>

100 yuan (\$14.46 USD) per day, and those who fail to show up to work have been subject to police investigations and detentions that have lasted up to 30 days.¹¹³ In addition to hard manual labor, the *hashar* consists of political education sessions that take up to three days a week, according to one source who spoke to RFA.¹¹⁴ An RFA report on the *hashar* system from 2007 described approximately 100,000 people forced to take part in an almond growing program as unpaid labor, and each family was required to provide not only labor but also a donkey.¹¹⁵

In early 2017, Radio Free Asia reported that although the *hashar* system had been nominally ended by the Chinese government in East Turkestan, it continued in practice. RFA Uyghur service reported: “While Chinese officials in the Xinjiang region insist that they no longer compel Uyghurs to supply free labor for public works projects, in reality they have only changed the name of the practice.” UHRP’s Zubayra Shamseden commented: “The Chinese government’s announcement abolishing the policy looks like a duplicitous act. Forcing Uyghur farmers to do this or that type of work is likely to continue in different forms.”¹¹⁶

The cotton industry poses significant problems to Uyghurs’ labor rights because of unequal subsidies provided to Uyghurs and Han farmers. UHRP has reported that the cotton industry is dominated by the XPCC, which receives subsidies from the central government to support unsustainable cotton-farming practices.¹¹⁷ Uyghur people receive no similar subsidy, allowing them to export their cotton at the same high price as the XPCC. Uyghurs must deal with the challenges of cotton farming including paying for expensive fertilizer and water, at the same time as they participate in the *hashar* system. In an RFA report, Uyghur farmers explained that the *hashar* requirements rendered them unable to harvest their own cotton, resulting in significant financial losses.¹¹⁸

Both Uyghurs and Han face further labor rights violations in the form of forced child labor through a program of mandatory cotton-picking for schoolchildren, employed by the XPCC, according to CECC reports. In 2006, CECC reported that secondary school and university students were forced to pick cotton, beginning in the second year of junior high, for a total of 14 days a year. Parents and students complained about the requirements.¹¹⁹ In 2008, CECC reported

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Keyum, Guljekre. (2007, March 29). Uyghurs in Forced Labor To Grow China’s Almonds. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_labor-20070329.html

¹¹⁶ Radio Free Asia. (2017, February 16). For Xinjiang’s Uyghurs, ‘Hashar’ by Any Other Name Still Means Forced Labor Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/for-xinjiangs-uyghurs-hashar-02162017112652.html>

¹¹⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2016, July 20). Without land, there is no life: Chinese state suppression of Uyghur environmental activism. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Without-land-there-is-no-life.pdf>

¹¹⁸ Hoja, Gulchehre. (2015, November 2). Xinjiang Cotton Production Falls as Uyghur Farmers Are Diverted From Their Work. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/cotton-11022015150508.html>

that children as young as third graders were forced to participate in the program, following a 2006 directive that students in the second grade or younger would not be conscripted. State media reported that over a million students participated in 2008, a reduction from previous years.¹²⁰ In 2011, CECC again reported on the practice of mandatory cotton picking for students, sometimes in excess of official limits on hours students were supposed to spend picking cotton due to a labor shortage for cotton picking.¹²¹

The ethnic breakdown of students enrolled in the mandatory cotton picking program is not reflected in CECC's reports on the practice. However, because the practice is employed by the XPCC, which discriminates against Uyghurs in its recruitment, it is likely a majority of Han and minority of Uyghur students are enlisted. Nevertheless, this program has implications for Uyghurs, because the children's unpaid labor represents jobs that Uyghur farmers might voluntarily work, if given the choice, to supplement farming wages.

In a 2016 news article, RFA reported that, outside of the program forcing school children to pick cotton, cotton-picking employs many Uyghur people who cannot earn sufficient income in primary agriculture. A police officer, speaking anonymously, told RFA: "The local labor force is forced to move to other regions such as Aksu and Korla and even to the [XPCC]'s cotton fields in the northern part of Xinjiang because the local farmers have no other income aside from being able sell their physical labor." Evidence that this practice is widespread comes from Guma county's Mokuyla township, which RFA found loses about half its population of 21,000 people to the XPCC's cotton fields each year as farmers travel to sell their labor picking cotton.¹²²

RFA explains that the practice of migrant farm work has drawbacks for Uyghur children's education. For example, RFA's report quotes a teacher who tells the story of a first grade student in the local elementary school who did not have an opportunity to study until she was in her mid-teens. The teacher said: "You never imagine a 16-year-old girl studying at the first grade of an elementary school." The teacher explained the girl spent her childhood in the cotton fields of Aksu following her parents, so she never had an opportunity to attend a school, until her parents tragically passed away.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2006, November 3). Xinjiang Government Continues Controversial "Work-Study" Program. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/xinjiang-government-continues-controversial-work-study-program>

¹²⁰ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2008, January 11). Work-Study Programs Using Child Labor Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/work-study-programs-using-child-labor-continue-in-xinjiang>

¹²¹ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2011, November 14). Xinjiang Students Continue to Harvest Cotton, Directive Allows Child Labor. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/xinjiang-students-continue-to-harvest-cotton-directive-allows-child>

¹²² Suleiman, Eset. (2016, November 22). In China's Xinjiang, Some Uyghurs are Forced Into a Sharecropper's Life. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/in-chinas-xinjian-some-uyghurs-11222016151601.html>

¹²³ Ibid.

To create high quality jobs linked to the cotton industry, the government has stated that it intends to develop the textile industry in East Turkestan. Reuters relates in a 2015 article that the government specifically hopes to create 1 million textile jobs in the region by 2023. Yet environmental limitations and particularly water scarcity pose an obstacle to the growth of the industry, with some companies expressing doubts. “We are not sure whether the capacity of the facility could meet all the demand and protect the environment from damage,” said Zhao Yang, general manager of three East Turkestan spinning factories owned by Hong Kong-based shirt maker Esquel, which makes men’s shirts for brands like Lacoste, Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren. Esquel has no plans to produce its garments in East Turkestan, according to Zhao.¹²⁴

In addition to these practical concerns, the widespread practice of employment discrimination creates serious concern as to whether new jobs will be given to Uyghurs or instead will continue to show preference for Han migrants to the region.

Structurally, the biggest barrier to the economic success of rural Uyghurs is education. UHRP has documented unequal allocation of resources for Uyghur communities, particularly in the south.¹²⁵ The *hashar* system further interrupts studies for young people. Ilham Tohti explains that underinvestment in education is crippling for Uyghurs’ economic success. He writes: “Average educational levels in Uighur communities in southern Xinjiang are extremely low, causing workers to be inadequately equipped for careers in modern agriculture or industry. The surplus rural labor supply spills into the cities, where migrants face severely limited job prospects, forcing them further afield into the interior to look for better opportunities.”

B. Labor Transfer of the “Rural Labor Surplus”

One solution that the Chinese government has employed with regard to the rural labor surplus in southern East Turkestan is a labor transfer program bringing Uyghurs to inner China for work. The labor transfer program is rife with issues, including coercion, the use of underage workers and exploitative working conditions, according to annual reports from the CECC. CECC reports that the labor transfer program is massive. In 2013, for example, it reported on a government announcement stating that more than 2.7 million people had been transferred out of their home areas or out of East Turkestan as part of its rural labor transfer program.¹²⁶ UHRP has not been able to confirm these massive numbers.

In 2008, UHRP released a report discussing the forced transfer of young Uyghur women through the labor transfer program. The report stated that the policy began in 2006. “Less than two years after the initiation of the policy, it has already left a history of broken promises and shattered families,” UHRP wrote. “Local leaders, who are subject to intense pressure from higher levels of

¹²⁴ Patton, Dominique. (2016 January 11). Xinjiang cotton at crossroads of China's new Silk Road. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-cotton-insight-idUSKCN0UQ00320160112>

¹²⁵ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2015, May 7). Uyghur Voices on Education: China’s Assimilative ‘Bilingual Educations Policy in East Turkestan. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/pdf/Uyghur-Voices-on-Education.pdf>

¹²⁶ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2013, October 10). 2013 Annual Report. P. 167. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/AR13DJ.PDF>

the PRC government, have used deception, pressure and threats in order to recruit women to participate in the program. Under the policy, thousands of women have been removed from their families and placed into substandard working conditions thousands of miles from home.”¹²⁷

UHRP’s report documents labor transfers involving thousands of Uyghur women in 2006-2008, in all counties of Kashgar Prefecture, including from Payzawat, Yengisheher, Kargilik, Kona Sheher and Yarkand counties. UHRP also documented government strategies of coercion to recruit the women, including using threats of force. In Yarkand County, the government threatened farmers with confiscation of land and destruction of their housing, and young women in the village were threatened with confiscation of their residency permits and denial of marriage certificates. UHRP also cited an RFA report on a protest against the program in Aksu prefecture that was forcibly dispersed.¹²⁸ A separate RFA report has tied the coercive means of labor transfer recruitment to the *hashar* program. According to the 2007 report, local government offered families of Uyghur girls who participated in the labor transfer program explicit relief from the *hashar* forced labor requirements.¹²⁹

UHRP conducted interviews with women documenting various aspects of labor abuse in their experience with the program. For example, women in Tianjin told them that they were told there would be paid wages that were not forthcoming, wages withheld as a deposit, and money deducted for expenses of others. One interviewee stated: “When they brought us here they said we would receive a fixed payment of 500 yuan (\$72.29 USD) per month. But after we came they said we would be paid according to our work. We had to finish the work they gave us to receive that payment. But it was impossible to finish it on time.”¹³⁰

As for workplace conditions, UHRP reported that workers found “work hours in violation of their contracts, harsh conditions and severe limitations on their freedom.” One woman stated: “We worked over ten hours every day and most days we had to work extra. Usually we got off work at 5:00 and then at 6:00 we went back to work again for another shift and worked until 2 or 3 in the morning.” UHRP reported: “On some occasions the women are made to work 24 hours straight with no overtime,” citing an RFA report.¹³¹

Finally, food and housing, which were both promised in the recruitment process, were substandard. Food was, according to one worker UHRP interviewed, “very dirty, with insects showing up in the food, making it impossible to eat.” The dormitory, according to another worker, had, “no roof, no door, anyone can enter at any time. There is no safety, and it is difficult for us to change clothes because everywhere it is open.” The heavy workload and unsanitary

¹²⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2008, February). Deception, Pressure, and Threats: The Transfer of Young Uyghur Women to Eastern China. Retrieved from http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Transfer_uyghur_woman.pdf

¹²⁸ Ibid at 5.

¹²⁹ Keyum, Guljekre. (2007, March 29). Uyghurs in Forced Labor To Grow China’s Almonds. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_labor-20070329.html

¹³⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2008, February 8). “Deception, Pressure, and Threats: The Transfer of Young Uyghur Women to Eastern China.” P. 4. Retrieved from http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Transfer_uyghur_woman.pdf

¹³¹ Ibid at 6.

conditions caused kidney problems, skin disease and other health problems for the young women. Finally, the local government fined women who left the work contracts anywhere between 3,000 to 5,000 yuan (\$433.74-\$722.90 USD).¹³²

Uighurbiz focused reports on the ironies of the government's labor transfer program of the rural labor surplus, which existed alongside official promulgations decrying a labor shortage and encouraging Han migration to East Turkestan. One of the website's most effective posts consisted of two state media reports, reposted side by side. The first, from Xinhua on February 12, 2011, was titled "During the 12th Five-Year Plan, Xinjiang will realize the transfer of 10 million surplus agricultural labor force."¹³³ It stated that as of 2010, East Turkestan's agricultural surplus labor force consisted of over 2 million people, of which minorities accounted for 83.77 percent, mainly in Kashgar, Hotan, Aksu and Gulja. The article explained that Xinjiang had already transferred over 8 million people by 2011, with plans to boost this number to 11 million by the end of the year. UHRP notes that these numbers appear to be exaggerated; Uighurbiz similarly may have intended to point out the exaggeration by reprinting the state media report.

The second article, published by state media website Tianshan Net on February 19, 2011, was titled, "Xinjiang Shows Signs of Labor Shortage, With Over 10,000 Jobs and Only 8,000 Applicants."¹³⁴ The second article discussed a recruitment fair in Urumchi, which would provide a total of 11,860 jobs. The article quoted employers who stated that as industrial growth had led to more job openings in East Turkestan, less labor was coming to the region from other parts of China, because laborers had instead opted to travel elsewhere or remain in their hometowns. Uighurbiz provided a very brief commentary, asking: "If Xinjiang has so much surplus labor, why is there a labor shortage?"¹³⁵

Uighurbiz provided a forum on which a number of Uyghurs questioned the seeming contradiction between East Turkestan's labor shortage and excess labor surplus. In a separate Uighurbiz post analyzing similar 2011 statistics, the author stated: "If industries [that are experiencing a labor shortage] could abandon their prejudice and discrimination to open their labor market for Uyghurs, the local labor force would not have to leave the region to find employment for local jobseekers."¹³⁶ Uighurbiz also reposted a 2011 article from state media

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Liu Bin. (2011, February 11). 新疆十二五期间将实现千万人农业富余劳动力转移就业 [During the 12th Five-Year Plan, Xinjiang will realize the transfer of 10 million surplus agricultural labor force]. Xinhua. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2011-02/11/c_121066794.htm

¹³⁴ Han Li Qun. (2011, February 21). 新疆“用工荒”初现 万余岗位应聘者仅8000余 [Xinjiang Shows Signs of Labor Shortage, With Over 10,000 Jobs and Only 8,000 Applicants]. Tianshan Net. Retrieved from http://news.ts.cn/content/2011-02/21/content_5605383.htm

¹³⁵ Uighurbiz. (2011, February 21). 新疆富余劳动力转移就业 VS 新疆初现“用工荒”. [Xinjiang Labor Surplus Employment Transfer vs Xinjiang Early "Labor Shortage."]. Archive online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20130515054104/http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/4287>

¹³⁶ Ablikim. (2010, November 12). 新疆向内地省市转移维吾尔族劳动力, 学者指本可以实现本土就业 [Xinjiang Transfers Its Uyghur Labor Force to Cities in Inner Chinese Provinces, Scholar Notes That It Could Be Employed Locally]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/7710>

which outlined official rhetoric encouraging Uyghur college graduates to seek work in the mainland.¹³⁷ Another writer on Uighurbiz asked: “Why are the overwhelming majority of workers who are transferred to work in inner China part of the Uyghur minority?” The author goes on to suggest: “All of this has compelled Uyghurs to believe that the government is purposely forcing the inward migration of the Uyghur workforce, including college graduates.” The author drew a parallel between this policy and Soviet policies of labor transfer for ethnic minorities.¹³⁸

A 2014 New York Times article reported on the government’s rhetoric for its constantly expanding labor transfer program. It cited a state media report in which President Xi Jinping at a two-day work forum on Xinjiang expressed support for sending more Uighurs to work and be educated in Han areas in order “to enhance mutual understanding among different ethnic groups and boost ties between them.” Following the President’s statement, the Times reported that Guangdong province had announced plans to import 5,000 workers from 2014-2017.¹³⁹ The figure of only 5,000 Uyghur workers in Guangdong draws further skepticism regarding government statistics that place the number of Uyghur labor transferees in the millions.

C. Labor Rights Abuse in Inner China and the Shaoguan Incident

Just as the women transferred in the early years of the labor transfer program discovered, Uyghur participants in the labor transfer program frequently experience extreme labor rights violations in the working environments of southeastern China. On June 29, 2009, Han workers at a toy factory in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province, murdered a number of Uyghur workers in an ethnic riot, provoked by false accusations that the Uyghur workers had participated in a sexual assault against a Han woman. The incident, which has become known as the Shaoguan Incident, led to the organization of peaceful protests in East Turkestan on July 5, 2009. These demonstrations were violently put down by police, and led to the biggest instance of ethnic unrest in modern China’s history, the July 5 incident.¹⁴⁰ After the July 5 incident, the Chinese government instituted a communications blackout in East Turkestan, deleting Uyghur-language websites, blocking all Internet access in the region, and restricting international calls.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷Xiaokan Magazine. (2011, March 10). 田文：让有愿望的未就业大学生到内地去[Tian Wen: Send Willing Unemployed College Graduates to the Mainland]. Sina News. Retrieved from <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-03-10/130322088251.shtml>

¹³⁸ Anostaf. (2011, April 22). 促进少数民族毕业生在内地就业与维吾尔自治区内的用工荒[Promote employment of ethnic minorities in inner China and the employment shortage in the Uygur Autonomous Region]. Archive online: <http://www.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2011/04/201104240343.shtml>

¹³⁹ Wong, Edward. (2014, November 6). To Quell Unrest, Beijing Moves to Scatter Uighurs Across China. New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/07/world/asia/labor-program-in-china-moves-to-scatter-uighurs-across-han-territory.html>

¹⁴⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2010, July 1). Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From The 2009 Unrest In Urumchi. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Can-Anyone-Hear-Us.pdf>

¹⁴¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2014, July 16). Trapped in a Virtual Cage: Chinese State Repression of Uyghurs. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Trapped-in-A-Virtual-Cage.pdf>

An RFA Asia report from June 29, 2009 outlined the media's initial impressions of the Shaoguan Incident. A Han worker at the Xuri Toy Factory (also known as "Early Light") in Shaoguan had allegedly posted an article titled, "Six Xinjiang boys raped two innocent girls at the Xuri Toy Factory." The worker was arrested soon after for faking the information, and state media reported that in fact, no rape had occurred. Nevertheless, the rumor triggered reprisal attacks against the Uyghur workers at Xuri Factory, in which at least two Uyghurs workers were killed and 118 injured, according to RFA's report.

RFA offered additional information – including a government report to the Associated Press that the fight started after a Han woman entered a Uyghur male dormitory, triggering the incident, as well as contradicting reports from a Uyghur in Kashgar that it was prompted by Uyghur men who refused to tolerate sexual harassment of Uyghur women by the Chinese. RFA concluded that because the Uyghur workers from the factory were cut off from communication after the incident, it was difficult to know what had happened.¹⁴² In a Uyghur American Association statement condemning the killings, Uyghur democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer noted, "Due to a lack of transparency in China, we may never know the true details of what transpired."¹⁴³

Subsequent reports added details, and additional confusion, to the incident. The Guardian reported for instance that the Uyghurs at the Xuri Factory were among 818 workers transferred as part of the labor program within two months of the incident. The Guardian interviewed a Han worker who was part of the fighting, and claimed to kill at least seven or eight Uyghurs in the incident; he estimated at least 30 people were killed. The Guardian's report also repeated the detail that a Han woman wandered into the Uyghur dormitory after 11pm. After calling for help, the Guardian reported, dozens of Han workers armed themselves with iron pipes, wooden staves and started fighting the Uyghurs, eventually growing to hundreds of attackers. Perhaps the only concrete information was video footage shot on a mobile phone and posted online, which shows a "savagely one-sided assault on Uyghurs being severely beaten."¹⁴⁴ Months later, the government prosecuted only 11 Han for participation in the incident on the charges of intentional injury and group affray.¹⁴⁵

The Shaoguan incident occurred within a context of labor rights abuses, not only due to the coercive nature of the labor transfer program, but also because of the treatment of the Uyghur workers as well as the Han workers in the Xuri factory. Labor watchdog group China Labor Watch issued a press release after the incident. It noted:

Factory conditions in this region are extremely poor, wages are low and labor relations are intensely strained. The different lifestyles and cultural backgrounds

¹⁴² Lak-tong Lam, Tang Qiwei and Mamatjan Juma. (2009, June 29). 'No Rapes' in Riot Town. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ethnic-clash-06292009102144.html>

¹⁴³ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2009, June 29). UAA condemns killing of Uyghur workers at Guangdong factory. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-releases/uaa-condemns-killing-uyghur-workers-guangdong-factory>

¹⁴⁴ Watts, Jonathan. (2009, July 10). Old suspicions magnified mistrust into ethnic riots in Urumqi. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/10/china-riots-uyghurs-han-urumqi>

¹⁴⁵ Uyghur American Association. (2009, September 24). UAA expresses concern over Shaoguan indictments. Retrieved from <https://uyghuramerican.org/article/uaa-expresses-concern-over-shaoguan-indictments.html>

of Han and Uyghur workers may lead to conflict. Additionally, language barriers exacerbate the situation, and Uyghurs may believe that discrimination targets them alone and not their Han co-workers. In reality, Han and Uyghur workers alike are subject to a number of labor rights violations.¹⁴⁶

China Labor Watch also investigated another Xuri toy factory in Guangdong province located in Shenzhen, which had apparently transferred many of its orders to the Shaoguan factory which had lower wages. In the report, CLW identified a number of labor violations including unpaid overtime, poor dormitory conditions and illegal labor contracts.¹⁴⁷ These labor violations would have presumably have been even worse at the Shaoguan Early Light facility, given that the Shenzhen was transferring orders to Shaoguan to lower its pricing. Thus, the labor conditions endured by the Uyghur people even before the tragic Shaoguan incident were likely harsh and in violation of China's labor laws.

One theory regarding the labor transfer program was that it represented a collusive attempt between business interests and the government to deepen exploitation of factory workers of all ethnicities by creating divisions between them. In a December 2009 research paper, political scientist Steven Hess advanced the theory that the labor export program was implemented in order to prevent Han workers from organizing and protesting against exploitative working conditions. Hess writes: "This may be the true inspiration for Xinjiang's labour export programme: a business-class desire to increase the diversification of China's factory workforce by importing one of China's most ethnically distinct minorities, the Uyghurs, into a predominantly Han industrial workforce. This might divide worker solidarity, redirect workers' frustrations into ethnic tension and subsequently divide the increasingly rebellious workers of China's eastern industrial heartland into manageable fragments."

Hess demonstrated that the Early Light factory was an ideal location for such collusion. He showed that the factory owner, Hong Kong billionaire Frances Choi, was well connected with the CCP and advised the government on many policies. Choi, in fact, owned one of two factories involved in a 2007 lead-painted toy scandal, and was allowed to continue operations in toy manufacturing, even after the other factory owner was imprisoned. Hess argues that Choi's connections to CCP officials enabled him to access the Uyghur labor for exploitative purposes. He explains that the Uyghurs were seen as a "convenient supply of cultural outsiders with which to diversify the east coast industrial work force." He notes that strong linguistic differences and Uyghurs' sense of ethnic identity made Uyghur workers uniquely well-suited among China's minorities to serve as ethnic outsiders, convenient targets for Han workers' work-related hostility, and 'union-busters' that might fragment emerging labour movements within China's factories."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ China Labor Watch. (2009, July 6). Labor Violations Exacerbate Ethnic Tensions in South China. Retrieved from <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/labor-violations-exacerbate-ethnic-tensions-in-south-china-62124487.html>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Hess, Steven. (2009). Dividing and conquering the shop floor: Uyghur labour export and labour segmentation in China's industrial east. *Central Asian Survey*, 28:4, pp. 403-416.

Regardless of the extent to which the Uyghur labor transfer program was an initiative of eastern Chinese factory owners to create divisions on the factory floor in order to exploit the workforce more effectively, an initiative of the Chinese government to assimilate Uyghurs, or both, the implementation of the program has resulted in gross abuses of Uyghurs' labor rights in China. Uyghurs in China who are not part of the labor transfer program also face a myriad of labor rights violations, particularly hiring discrimination. China Labor Watch identified a sign at the Pegatron Shanghai factory, an Apple supplier, that stated, "Ethnic groups including the Hui, Dongxiang, Salar, Yi, Tibetan and Xinjiang Uyghur, with special lifestyles are refused admission."¹⁴⁹ The sign, entitled "Recruitment Standards," greets jobseekers applying to the factory. Other rules specify that no applicants be shorter than 150cm and only between ages 16-35.



Recruitment Poster at Pegatron Shanghai, © China Labor Watch

A 2009 article entitled "The Pain of a Nation: The Invisibility of Uyghurs in China Proper" by a Uyghur researcher working for the Aizhixing Institute, a Beijing-based HIV service group, discussed access to employment, housing, and healthcare as major issues facing the Uyghur community in inner China. The report documented discrimination facing Uyghurs who seek a job in Chinese cities. It stated: "Given the difficulties which many Floating Uyghurs have with

¹⁴⁹ A UHRP blog highlighting the sign is here: Fay, Greg. (2013, August 7). Uyghurs, Other Ethnic Groups Need Not Apply. Uyghur Human Rights Project Blog. Retrieved from <http://weblog.uhrp.org/uyghurs-other-ethnic-groups-need-not-apply/> The full CLW report is here: China Labor Watch. (2013, July 29). Apple's supplier Pegatron Group violates workers' rights. Retrieved from <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/newscast/211>

speaking the Chinese language, it has become extremely hard for Uyghurs, especially those who have received limited education, to find employment in China Proper. No solid estimates of unemployment rates among the Floating Uyghurs are available. However, when interviewed in 2009, a Uyghur man in a Uyghur restaurant in Weigongcun told Beijing Aizhixing Institute: ‘I can be a security guard, or I can start my own small business, but they never will hire us. And to get a license is not easy. You need to know some people in related agencies.’”¹⁵⁰

The Chinese authorities instituted a crackdown on Uyghur kebab sellers in Beijing in 2014, under the guise of “pollution control.”¹⁵¹ “It’s an effective way of sending all the Uighur vendors on the street back to East Turkestan,” said then-UHRP Executive Director Alim Seytoff to Al Jazeera. In an interview with *Vice*, a Uyghur restaurateur seemed to avoid the interviewer’s question regarding discrimination facing the Uyghur community in Beijing. The author concluded, “Getting a real answer in China isn’t only difficult, but all too often impossible.”

The Shaoguan incident brought to the fore the high stakes of the large scale transfer of Uyghur workers to eastern Chinese cities, as well as the difficult and illegal circumstances in which these Uyghurs worked. The labor transfer program is rife with abuse, from coercive recruiting practices to mistreatment on the factory floor. The poor working conditions in these factories mirror labor rights abuses that occur throughout China, but for Uyghur workers, their unique ethnic identity as well as barriers to communication with Han co-workers leads to uniquely poor treatment by management and colleagues alike. For workers in Chinese cities who are not part of these government transfer programs, hiring discrimination and other ethnically focused labor rights abuses are not uncommon.

¹⁵⁰ Rayile, M. (2011). The Pain of a Nation: The Invisibility of Uyghurs in China Proper. The Equal Rights Review, 6. Retrieved from http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/ERR06_Rayila_article.pdf

¹⁵¹ Hayoun, Massoud. (2014, April 30). Beijing cracks down on kebabs amid push against alleged Uighur attacks. Al Jazeera America. Retrieved from <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/4/30/beijing-kebab.html>

6. China's Labor Law and Policies

International human rights norms protect against ethnic discrimination. For example, Article 1 of the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation adopted by the International Labour Organisation in 1958 and ratified by China in 2006 prohibits any form of discrimination “based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.”¹⁵²

Article 2 of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by China in 1981, contains provisions stating “Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation.” Article 5 also contains provisions that, “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of...the rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration.”¹⁵³

Job announcements that discriminate against Uyghurs or reserve positions for Han violate China's Constitution and employment laws. UHRP has outlined a number of provisions protecting Uyghurs' employment rights in China's Constitution, Labor laws, and Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law. For example, Article 4 of the Chinese Constitution, Articles 9 and 22 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, Articles 12 and 14 of the Labor Law and Articles 3 and 28 of the Employment Promotion Law all clearly state that ethnic minorities should receive equal opportunity in the job market.¹⁵⁴

CECC has also analyzed these labor laws. In a 2009 analysis, CECC wrote:

See, for example, Article 4 of the Constitution and Article 9 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL), both of which forbid discrimination based on ethnicity. Article 12 of the Labor Law and Article 3 of the Employment Promotion Law state that job applicants shall not face discrimination in job hiring based on factors including ethnicity, and Article 28 of the Employment Promotion Law states that all ethnicities enjoy equal labor rights. Within this framework of non-discrimination, several provisions in Chinese law permit separate measures to promote the hiring of groups designated as ethnic minorities. Article 14 of the

¹⁵² International Labour Organization. (1958). Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention. (No. 111). Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C111

¹⁵³ United Nations General Assembly. (1965, December 21). International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

¹⁵⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2012, June 27). Uyghur Homeland, Chinese Frontier: The Xinjiang Work Forum and Centrally Led Development. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/new-report-uhrp-uyghur-homeland-chinese-frontier-xinjiang-work-forum-and-centrally-led>

Labor Law allows for separate legal stipulations to govern the hiring of ethnic minorities, and Article 28 of the Employment Promotion Law says that employing units shall give appropriate consideration to ethnic minority workers in job hiring. In addition, Article 22 of the REAL provides that ethnic autonomous government agencies shall give appropriate consideration to ethnic minorities in job hiring. Article 28 of the Implementing Provisions for the REAL also provides that ethnic autonomous areas give appropriate consideration to ethnic minorities in the job hiring process for government positions and includes provisions for their participation in higher levels of government.

CECC also analyzed a 2009 “Opinion on employment promotion” implemented by the XUAR government and Party Committee in October 2009, which contained a number stipulation. CECC writes:

[It] calls for enterprises registered in the XUAR and other enterprises contracted to work there to recruit no fewer than 50 percent of workers from among the local population (Part 2.2). The opinion also promotes "recruiting more ethnic minorities to the extent possible" (Part 2.2) and providing equal opportunities for employment (Part 3). In addition, employers are instructed to guarantee a fixed proportion of positions for ethnic minorities as part of work to increase recruitment of college graduates and prioritize graduates from the XUAR (Part 1.5). The opinion does not specify whether the guidance applies to civil servant positions.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, none of these laws have any teeth, particularly in their implementation in East Turkestan. In Beijing, the Municipal Legislative Affairs Office announced draft legislation in 2013 that forbid job advertisements from containing any discriminatory content with regard to ethnicity or gender. Violations of the article’s provisions carried a fine of 10,000 to 30,000 yuan (\$1,445.80-\$4,337.39 USD) as well as revocation of business licensing. In scrutinizing the legislation, Uighurbiz noted that in East Turkestan discrimination against Uyghurs is a major problem. “I do not know when the XUAR will introduce such regulations to eliminate ethnic discrimination in recruitment and guarantee equal employment opportunities for Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities according to the law.”¹⁵⁶

Forced labor in the *hashar* program is also expressly prohibited by international law, as well as China’s laws. WUC cites two primary ILO conventions banning forced labor, neither of which has been ratified by China: the ILO Forced Labour Conventions, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) aimed to abolish the compulsory mobilization and use of labor for economic purposes and as a means to political coercion or punishment in various circumstances.¹⁵⁷ In addition, Article 8 of the International Covenant on

¹⁵⁵ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 20). Discriminatory Job Hiring Practices Continue in Xinjiang. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/discriminatory-job-hiring-practices-continue-in-xinjiang>

¹⁵⁶ Anostaf. (2013, February 23). 北京拟颁布条例杜绝就业歧视 新疆就业歧视歧视仍严重[Beijing to enact regulations to eliminate employment discrimination, employment discrimination in Xinjiang is still serious]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/9531>

Civil and Political Rights, which China has signed but not ratified, provides that “no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labor.”¹⁵⁸

The WUC has also identified a number of domestic laws prohibiting *hashar*, including the constitution and labor law. Constitutional provisions include Article 37, which states, “Freedom of the person of citizens of the People’s Republic of China is inviolable.” In addition, the World Uyghur Congress cites the following Articles of the PRC Labor Law:

- Article 36, Chapter 4 – “The State shall practice a working hour system wherein laborers shall work for no more than eight hours a day and no more than 44 hours a week on the average.”
- Article 38, Chapter 4 – “The employer shall guarantee that its laborers have at least one day off a week.”
- Article 46, Chapter 5 – “Distribution of wages shall follow the principle of distribution according to work and equal pay for equal work.”
- Article 48, Chapter 5 – “The State shall implement a system of guaranteed minimum wages...the employer shall pay laborers wages no lower than local standards on minimum wages.”
- Article 50, Chapter 5 – “Wages shall be paid to laborers themselves in the form of currency on a monthly basis. The wages payable to laborers shall not be deducted or delayed without reason.”

In sum, China’s legal system utterly fails to protect Uyghurs from labor rights abuses. Not only does the government ignore prohibitions against discrimination in its own civil service recruitment, but it also fails to enforce restrictions on ethnic discrimination in private industry. The government engages in widespread forced labor through the *hashar* program, in spite of prohibitions against forced labor. In spite of these myriad shortcomings in enforcement of its own policies to protect labor rights, China has undertaken policy initiatives to address labor inequality in East Turkestan. In reporting on such initiatives, the government has used false or trumped up statistics to declare progress on achieving ethnic equality in employment in East Turkestan. In reality, the situation of ethnic discrimination has not improved, as UHRP’s analysis has shown.

One policy initiative that emerged after 2010 was the elimination of “zero employment” families or households in which no family members were unemployed. In 2013, the XUAR government announced that 44,000 “zero employment” households had been eliminated between May 2010 and June 2013. Uighurbiz analyzed these statistics and found that the government had created “public-welfare posts” concentrated in the low-skill sectors, which delivered low wages, no benefits, and were short-term contracts that could be revoked at any time. In other words, the

¹⁵⁷ World Uyghur Congress. (2016, November). Forced Labor in East Turkestan: State-Sanctioned Hashar System. Retrieved from http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Forced_Labour_in_East_Turkestan-WUC.pdf

¹⁵⁸ United Nations General Assembly. (1966, December 16). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

official statistics artificially inflated employment statistics to mask the employment crisis still plaguing Uyghurs in East Turkestan.¹⁵⁹

The government released several statistics in 2013 similarly aimed at concealing high rates of unemployment in the Uyghur community. In 2013, Uighurbiz analyzed a government announcement that the employment rate of ethnic minority college graduates had reached 80 percent, a 10-year high, and called this number “fraudulent.” For example, the government stated that since 2010, 70 percent of 51,000 teachers hired were ethnic minorities. Ilham Tohti questioned the veracity of these figures, in light of the scarcity of Uyghur language high schools in places like Yarkand (population 373,000) and Kucha (population 450,000), each of which had only one Uyghur language high school.¹⁶⁰

Finally, in a 2013 post, Uighurbiz pointed out an obvious disjunction between official media, which announced in one article that XUAR had its highest employment rate for ethnic minority university graduates in 2012, while in another article called 2012 the “toughest year for employment” in national history.¹⁶¹ Another state media article published national statistics which revealed that the total number of college graduates had grown to nearly 7 million in 2013, an increase of 190,000 over 2012; job recruitment was down 15 percent and starting salaries also reduced.¹⁶² Among the strategies employed to inflate the data on Uyghur employment, a Uyghur university graduate noted that his internship was counted toward “employment.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Uighurbiz. (2013, August 12). 维吾尔自治区就业清零还要重质量[Uyghur Autonomous Region Employment Reset Should Still Attach Importance to Quality]. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/18146>

¹⁶⁰ Anostaf. (2013, May 28). 官方称新疆少数民族大学生就业率创新高 被指造假[Officials say that the employment rate of minority students in Xinjiang is high]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14363>

¹⁶¹ Nijatkar. (2013 May 25). 2012年维吾尔自治区少数民族大学生就业率低于平均水平[In 2012 Uyghur Autonomous Region Ethnic Minority University Students Employment Rates Lower Than Average]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/14183>

¹⁶² Nijatkar. (2013, May 19). 国家迎来最难就业年 新疆官媒宣扬高就业[The country ushers in the most difficult year for employment, Xinjiang government media claim high employment]. Uighurbiz. Previously online: <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/13820>

¹⁶³ Nijatkar. (2013, April 9). 新疆官方再度造假少数民族毕业生就业率[Xinjiang Authorities Once Again Falsify Ethnic Minority Graduates' Employment Rate]. Uighurbiz. Archive online: <http://www.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2013/04/201304140346.shtml#.WMX6ffnyvIU>

7. Recommendations

For the Chinese government:

- Release Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti and all other Uighurbiz contributors. Restore the “Uighurbiz” website and allow a full and free discussion of labor practices, economic conditions and other topics related to Uyghurs’ labor rights online.
- Fully consider and implement the recommendations provided by Ilham Tohti with regards to Uyghur unemployment, included as Appendix One.
- Address labor abuses specifically affecting Uyghur women, who face extreme employment discrimination in both private and public sectors, and particular obstacles to employment for women who wear headscarves in accordance with their religious beliefs.
- Conduct a thorough review of civil service examination hiring quotas and eliminate restrictions on ethnic minority hiring. Fully implement article 23 of the REAL which gives preference to minorities in hiring for government institutions and state-owned enterprises.
- Impose a strictly implemented system of economic punishment for state owned enterprises, the XPCC and private enterprises which practice employment discrimination and offer unequal pay for Uyghur workers. Implement regulations stipulating fines and loss of business licenses similar to those in the Beijing municipality.
- Restrict migration to East Turkestan for Han Chinese for job positions that could be filled by local Uyghurs. Cease subsidies for migration of Han Chinese from inner China and provide access to these jobs, including relevant training, to Uyghurs.
- Increase the use of Uyghur language in schools, government and all state-owned enterprises. Hire more Uyghur language instructors. Guarantee equal educational opportunities including job training programs for Uyghurs in East Turkestan.
- Abolish the forced labor program as well as compulsory cotton-picking for students. Guarantee that the abolishment of the *hashar* program is not in name alone, but that forced labor practices for Uyghurs are ended altogether. Ensure that all work conducted in East Turkestan is fully paid at standards guaranteed in China’s labor laws and that child labor laws are also respect.
- Cease coercive practices in recruitment for the inner Chinese labor transfer program. Carefully monitor the working conditions and labor practices of any government sanctioned labor transfer program.
- Carefully monitor employment statistics in East Turkestan, and accurately report on unemployment. Do not discourage reports of employment difficulties and do not prohibit petitioners from reporting discrimination.

For International Corporations:

- For corporations like Volkswagen, Peabody International and Esquivel seeking to implement operations in East Turkestan, include Uyghur consultants throughout the development phase of such projects to include a Uyghur voice. Incorporate ethnic minorities in all levels of management and hiring in order to guarantee equal access to ethnic minorities in the hiring process. Invest in education and training opportunities within the local communities to nurture local talent. Share best practices among corporations engaged in similar business disciplines and geographic areas.
- For corporations in inner China who employ Uyghur recruits as part of labor transfer programs, monitor the hiring practices of these programs, and carefully observe equal treatment for Uyghurs. Institute programming to improve the conditions for Uyghur workers, including job training opportunities, language classes for both Han and Uyghur workers to encourage communication. Create a Uyghur language labor hotline staffed with Uyghur speaking representatives to offer workers an opportunity to report labor violations. Share best practices among corporations regarding management of a multiethnic workforce.

For Concerned Governments:

- Call upon the Chinese government to ensure the consultation and participation of Uyghurs in development processes and urge Chinese officials to implement procedures ensuring that Uyghurs enjoy a fair share of the benefits of development.
- Urge Chinese counterparts in meetings to abide by agreed international obligations that protect Uyghur human rights and to release unconditionally political prisoners jailed for expressing peaceful dissent, particularly Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti.
- Urge China to ratify the ILO standards for compulsory labor, and to honor its commitments to the ILO's Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.
- Implement rules requiring corporations to monitor their Chinese supply chains for ethnic discrimination.
- Open consulates in the East Turkestan regional capital of Urumchi that will permit a closer monitoring of human rights conditions in the region, establish a "Special Coordinator for Uyghur Affairs" in national foreign ministries and pass a "Uyghur Policy Act" that incorporates protection of Uyghurs' basic human rights.

8. Appendix I: Ilham Tohti Recommendations for Resolving Unemployment – Translated by China Change ¹⁶⁴

1. Article 23 of the “Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of the People’s Republic of China” expressly stipulates that ethnic minorities be given priority in hiring by government institutions and state-owned enterprises. Even taking into consideration the practical difficulties of immediately implementing such a policy, steps should be taken to gradually expand Uighur employment opportunities and to phase in quotas for the hiring of ethnic minorities in the civil service and state-owned enterprises. At present, public services in Xinjiang suffer from a serious dearth of Uighur and other ethnic minority employees. Hospitals, post offices, banks, insurance companies, notaries, courts, municipal bureaus and other social service organizations are staffed mainly by Han Chinese who cannot speak Uighur, causing tremendous inconvenience to Uighur citizens in their daily lives.

2. The government should take an active role in promoting internal population migration in Xinjiang as a means of alleviating unemployment in the south and preventing further damage to the fragile southern ecosystem. For example, it could oversee a controlled and systematic transfer of a certain proportion of southern Xinjiang’s population to the northern industrial belt, or to farms managed by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). Instead of spending vast sums of labor and capital to organize rural migrant workers to culturally unfamiliar coastal cities thousands of kilometers away, the regional government should encourage rural-to-urban population shifts within Xinjiang’s borders. The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), currently suffering from severe manpower shortages due to population drain, has tried all manner of methods to attract labor from other areas of mainland China, but it has done nothing to absorb the surplus rural labor force that exists in southern Xinjiang.

By taking an active role in organizing and guiding population shifts within Xinjiang, the government can alleviate unemployment in the south, while also reducing ethnic segregation and helping to dispel the notion, prevalent within the Uighur community, that the XPCC and the northern cities are being used by Han Chinese to deal with the Uighur population.

3. Provide more assistance to ethnic minority entrepreneurs. This is the most fundamental, long-term solution to Xinjiang’s unemployment problem, and it relies on market-based mechanisms rather than governmental supervision. Since Secretary Zhang Chunxian assumed office, there has been a noticeable improvement in Xinjiang’s level of assistance to ethnic minority entrepreneurs. I recommend broadening this approach to establish a long-term plan aimed at improving the modern management skills of ethnic minority entrepreneurs via exchanges with highly developed coastal regions and prestigious mainland Chinese universities, thus creating a long-term mechanism for the systematic training of minority entrepreneurs. Furthermore, we should foster closer cooperation between Han Chinese and ethnic minority entrepreneurs, encouraging them to bond together in their mutual interest. Having the government train and support a large contingent of minority entrepreneurs is the most convenient way to promote ethnic unity and harmony in Xinjiang.

¹⁶⁴ Excerpt from Tohti, Ilham. (2015, April 22). “Present-Day Ethnic Problems in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region: Overview and Recommendations (1) – Unemployment.” Translated by Cindy Carter. China Change. Retrieved from <https://chinachange.org/2015/04/22/present-day-ethnic-problems-in-xinjiang-uighur-autonomous-region-overview-and-recommendations-1/>

One detail worth noting: the practice of prominently featuring minority entrepreneurs as speakers at government-organized ethnic unity rallies may not have the desired propaganda effect. Minority entrepreneurs should not be leveraged for government publicity: they have a far more important and effective role to play off the political stage.

4. Increase investment in basic education in minority-populated areas. The government has many long years of unfulfilled promises in this regard, but expanding access to basic education will transform minority peoples' ability to adapt to industrialization and urbanization. In a mere five to ten years, we will begin to see a marked improvement. At the very least, better access to education will significantly reduce the barriers that ethnic minority migrants face when trying to enter the urban labor force. Now that the government has substantially increased investment in basic education in southern Xinjiang, there remain two problems that need to be addressed: countering the preconception that education is useless, and correcting misapprehensions and assuaging people's fears about bilingual education.

5. Establish systematic professional and technical training for ethnic minority workers. Xinjiang suffers from a serious lack of ethnic minority professional and technical personnel, which makes it difficult for ethnic minorities to enter the technical and industrial workforce. Entrepreneurial skill is also in short supply to start businesses. I propose increasing training for early-career and mid-career specialists in fields suited to the unique economy of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, in which resource-oriented and state-owned enterprises predominate. For example, the government could work with vocational and technical schools to increase employment opportunities for ethnic minorities in the mining, textile, and agricultural-processing sectors. In fact, work on this has already begun, to positive feedback from Xinjiang's Uighur community.

I also recommend that the Xinjiang Autonomous Region cooperate with localities in China's more economically developed coastal regions to systematically train up a cohort of technically-proficient ethnic minority youth who will form Xinjiang's future technological and entrepreneurial talent pool.

6. Establish brigades of ethnic minority industrial workers. Industrial workers are an essential component and driving force of industrial and economic development. They play a fundamental role in accelerating industrial transformation, promoting technological innovation, improving corporate competitiveness, and so on. Employers in Xinjiang are currently in need of a large number of industrial workers, but they face widespread difficulties in recruiting qualified personnel.

Training up and establishing brigades of ethnic minority industrial workers will help to expand employment opportunities and widen career horizons for minority university and polytechnic graduates. This, in turn, will increase the employment rate among ethnic minorities and help facilitate their adjustment to modern industrial society.

7. Leverage local and regional advantages to support the development of Xinjiang's own cultural and creative industries. This would both raise employment and allow Xinjiang's cultural influence to radiate across the Central Asian region. Targeted training and practical support would help creative entrepreneurs and small- and medium-size enterprises to expand into the broader Central Asian market. China's information technology, animation, advertising and other creative sectors enjoy a distinct advantage in the Central Asia market region, but Han Chinese enterprises attempting to enter this market face tremendous cultural and linguistic barriers,

whereas Uighur enterprises possess a natural advantage. By leveraging the technological strength of China's other regions, it is entirely possible for Xinjiang to cultivate local cultural and creative industries with a strong competitive edge in Central Asia. This would allow Xinjiang's ethnic minority populations to transform themselves from cultural importers to cultural exporters, an achievement of immeasurable importance.

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The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) was founded by the Uyghur American Association (UAA) in 2004 with a supporting grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). UHRP's mission is to promote human rights and democracy for the Uyghur people. In 2016, UHRP became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

UHRP works to raise the profile of the Uyghur people by:

Researching, writing and publishing commentary and reports
in English and Chinese covering a broad range human rights issues
involving civil and political rights, through to social cultural and economic rights;
Preparing briefings – either written or in person – for journalists,
academics, diplomats and legislators on the human rights situation
faced by the Uyghur people.

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