

TWENTY YEARS FOR LEARNING THE QURAN

Uyghur Women and Religious Persecution

February 2024

Twenty Years for Learning the Quran: Uyghur Women and Religious Persecution sheds light on the systematic oppression faced by Uyghur women, revealing a stark denial of their freedom of religious belief.

Key Takeaways

- The report provides evidence that overturns the perception that criminal prosecutions and long prison sentences in the Uyghur Region have been mainly handed down against men.
- 91 women from a single county were detained because they were officially registered by the state as *büwi* (female religious leaders).
- Uyghur women are denied freedom of religion and belief. Women's religious learning and religious gatherings, daily prayer, wearing the hijab, have all been explicitly criminalized.
- State narratives about Uyghur women have consistently denied them agency. Their religious practice has historically been overlooked by the CCP since it was not tied to the mosque. Under the "anti-extremism" campaigns, women who acted as religious teachers and leaders in the community have been portrayed as the dupes of religious extremism.
- The detention and imprisonment of female religious leaders and the criminalization of children's religious socialization hastens the destruction of Uyghur communities.

Recommendations

- Parliamentarians should call for the release of *büwi* and other Uyghur women in detention and request information about their health and whereabouts.
- Civil society, governments, and multilateral bodies, in statements, petitions, and international forums, should include findings on the detention, imprisonment, and persecution of Uyghur and other Turkic women as a core element of the crimes.
- Women's rights campaigns should call for accountability and an end to torture, forcible disappearance, imprisonment inflicted on Uyghur women.
- The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls and the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls should immediately send a request to China for a country visit to investigate the detention of Uyghur women religious figures.

Full report:
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