

Separate and Unequal: The Status of Development in East Turkestan



**A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project
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October 1, 2009 will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and officials from Beijing to East Turkestan are pulling out all the stops to ensure that no discord mars the scripted celebrations that will take place. The year 2009 in East Turkestan marks one of the most turbulent periods in the region in modern history, with unrest, state brutality and ethnic violence exposing deep social rifts and grossly flawed government policies. More than 130,000 troops have been specially deployed to East Turkestan from other regions of China in a bid to restore order and crack down on the Uyghur population, following an untold number of deaths and injuries that began on July 5, 2009. Against this backdrop, the Chinese government has issued a "White Paper on Development and Progress in Xinjiang"¹, declaring that ethnic harmony in East Turkestan has made great strides, and the only factor inhibiting social harmony and economic prosperity in the region is that of "East Turkestan terrorist forces" supported by "hostile foreign forces".² The Uyghur American Association (UAA) fears that the Chinese government's complete lack of introspection into the failures of its own policies, combined with its reliance on brute force to maintain order, represents a dangerous combination. Without an examination of the shortcomings in official policy that are at the root of social discontent and inequality among Uyghurs, Han Chinese, and others in East Turkestan, true peace and stability will exist only in government propaganda.

As asserted by the opening section of the White Paper, there has indeed been tremendous economic progress in East Turkestan, led by the state. There has been substantial growth in East Turkestan in the areas of infrastructure, telecommunications and the exploitation of natural resources- largely, in recent years, under the auspices of the Great Western Development Drive (GWDD). However, such progress has been unequal, disproportionately benefitting Han Chinese settlers over Uyghurs and other "ethnic minorities", and urban over rural residents. The unequal allocation of wealth and benefits from development programs in East Turkestan appear to indicate that government officials seek to deliver these benefits to Han Chinese and to divert much of the profits from development to eastern China, rather than to the indigenous, Uyghur population.

¹ White Paper on Development and Progress in Xinjiang, available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/ethnic/2009-09/21/content_8717461.htm

² *Ibid*, Section VII. "Safeguarding National Unity and Social Stability"

The development of basic infrastructure facilitates the in-migration of Chinese migrants into East Turkestan while transporting natural resources out of the region, exemplifying the traits of a colonial relationship between East Turkestan and the rest of the PRC.

No voice in the allocation of resources

The autonomous framework established by China's constitution is frustrated by a lack of autonomy in practice, and exacerbated by the unequal distribution of power and wealth. Moreover, as a non-democratic society, no forum exists for Uyghur or Han citizens to express their disagreement with government policies, and no mechanism exists to promote public participation or consultation in policy decision-making processes.

The GWDD is centrally mandated, and Uyghurs have had no voice in the implementation of the campaign or the exploitation of resources that the campaign entails. In theory, the GWDD refers to a systematic policy of developing western China by improving its economic infrastructure and enhancing education, the environment and the development of technology in western regions. However, in practice, it represents an escalation of the long-standing government policy of extracting the wealth of natural resources in East Turkestan to fuel the demands of a growing economy in eastern China. The benefits of such development to the Uyghurs are at best marginal, and development does not justify the institutionalized, systematic and widespread violations of Uyghur human rights that take place in East Turkestan.

Official employment policy has reflected the central management of the GWDD by importing human capital from eastern China to augment a perceived lack of skilled workers in the local labor market.³ A report publicized just following the issuance of the White Paper touts a new government policy requiring businesses in East Turkestan to hire at least half of their new employees from among "local residents", but the policy does not include requirements regarding the ethnicity of those hired. A statement by Xinhua News Agency that the new policy "urged businesses to recruit more people from the ethnic minorities"⁴ is likely to ring hollow in the absence of any formal mechanisms to ensure equal opportunity for minority job applicants.

Uyghurs are very rarely hired in the industries participating in the GWDD's economic boom, and the benefits of oil and infrastructure projects launched under the rubric of the campaign largely bypass the Uyghur people, while extracting the natural resources abundant in the region. The poverty of the Uyghur population stands in stark contrast to East Turkestan's wealth in raw materials. It is estimated that East Turkestan's coal reserves comprise about 38 percent of the national total, and petroleum and natural gas reserves are estimated at 30 billion tons, accounting for more than 25 percent of the

³ Henryk Szadziewski, *How the West Was Won: China's Expansion into Central Asia*, *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Frankfurt, Volume 3, Issue 2, March 2009, p. 213.

⁴ China's Xinjiang orders businesses to recruit more locals, Xinhua, September 23, 2009, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/23/content_12103400.htm.

national total.⁵ There are also an estimated 207.48 tons of gold⁶, as well as uranium deposits estimated at a value of hundreds of billions of yuan⁷.

The nearly 140 billion barrels of oil reserves and 11 trillion cubic meters of gas in East Turkestan help to make the region one of the main sources of energy for the PRC.⁸ In addition, pipelines running through East Turkestan transport oil and gas from Russia and Central Asian nations, which help fuel growth in the metropolises on China's eastern seaboard.⁹ According to residents in the city of Korla, a major center for oil production, no Uyghurs are given management positions in the local oil industry.¹⁰ This is consistent with other reports citing a lack of Uyghur representation in upper-level positions in the oil industry throughout East Turkestan, as well as a corresponding economic marginalization of Uyghurs in a job market heavily skewed toward Han Chinese.¹¹

Pervading joblessness

Earlier this year, prominent Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti cited joblessness as the single greatest problem facing Uyghurs¹². Tohti called upon authorities in East Turkestan to promote equal development between Han migrants and native Uyghurs in East Turkestan. Tohti also called upon the Chinese government to implement democratic improvements in East Turkestan, to address the severe unemployment situation among the Uyghur population, and to fully implement China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law¹³. Tohti founded a website, Uyghur Online¹⁴, dedicated to promoting dialogue and discussion between Uyghurs, Chinese and others in the PRC. The initiatives put forth by Tohti represent sensible, progressive moves toward prosperity and stability in East Turkestan. However, instead of supporting Tohti and being receptive to his ideas, the government

⁵ True Xinjiang, Global Times, July 21, 2009, available at:

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/www/english/truexinjiang/basic-facts/2009-07/449404.html>.

⁶ Xinjiang: China's mountain of gold deposits, CommodityOnline, February 25, 2009, available at:

<http://www.commodityonline.com/news/Xinjiang-Chinas-mountain-of-gold-deposits-15487-3-1.html>.

⁷ Geologists make uranium, coal find in Xinjiang, China.org.cn, February 21, 2008, available at:

<http://china.org.cn/english/China/243357.htm>.

⁸ China extends influence into Central Asia, The Telegraph (UK) October 18, 2008, available at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/3217150/China-extends-influence-into-Central-Asia.html>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Xinjiang oil boom fuels Uighur resentment, Financial Times (UK), August 29, 2008, available at:

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/163dec1c-7518-11dd-ab30-0000779fd18c.html?nclink_check=1.

¹¹ See, for example, Gardner Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*, East-West Center, 2004, p. 37 and p. 39; and BBC News, *China's Uighurs lose out to development*, December 19, 2003.

¹² Uyghur Scholar Calls for Jobs, Radio Free Asia, March 6, 2009, available at:

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/tohti-03062009130647.html?searchterm=None>.

¹³ Chinese government officials have failed to implement the guarantees contained in the PRC's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, enacted in 1984, in East Turkestan, as they have failed to implement guarantees regarding the autonomous status of the region since the founding of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955.

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.uighuronline.cn/>; however, the website is inaccessible at the time of writing, and has been shut down by government authorities at politically-sensitive periods.

recently detained him, accusing him of having been a catalyst for the demonstrations and violence in East Turkestan.¹⁵

One of the problems facing Uyghurs in East Turkestan that is most illustrative of unequal policies in the region is that of ethnic and gender discrimination in hiring practices. China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law encourages the hiring of Uyghurs, and according to Chinese law regarding the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region's autonomous status, the region is entitled to independence of finance, independence of economic planning, use of local language and other rights. Despite guarantees in Chinese law forbidding discrimination based on ethnicity, and Chinese legal provisions stipulating measures to promote the hiring of ethnic minorities, systematic discrimination against Uyghurs and women remains widespread in the recruitment process for state jobs in East Turkestan. Hiring notices posted on the Internet for civil service and university jobs in East Turkestan reveal blatant discrimination against Uyghurs and other non-Han ethnic groups, as well as against women of any ethnicity.¹⁶

As noted by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), there is an overwhelming preference for the recruitment of Han Chinese for jobs in the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a paramilitary organization¹⁷. Moreover, online notices for state jobs accessed by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) put forth explicit requirements in terms of ethnicity, as well as gender, and display a clear bias in favor of Han Chinese applicants¹⁸. As evidenced by hiring notices publicized by state employers, Uyghurs who have undergone a Uyghur-language education face blatant and near-universal denial of employment opportunities in the state sector in East Turkestan. Online notices also reveal that Chinese authorities are actively seeking to recruit applicants from areas other areas of the PRC to work in the state sector in East Turkestan.

The 2003 research of Peking University scholar Ma Rong¹⁹ into economic development in western China addressed the employment inequalities engendered by the GWDD, and the need for measures to create more job opportunities for ethnic minorities in the region. While the author parrots much of the standard official bias regarding the perceived deficiencies of receiving an education in an "ethnic minority" language, it presents a rare

¹⁵ Chinese Economist Missing, Apparently Detained, Associated Press, July 9, 2009, available at: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=8039214>.

¹⁶ See "Uyghurs, women need not apply for government jobs in East Turkestan", Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), June 25, 2009, available at: <http://www.uhrp.org/articles/2339/1/Uyghurs-women-need-not-apply-for-government-jobs-in-East-Turkestan/index.html>.

¹⁷ Recruitment for State Jobs in Xinjiang Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities, Congressional Executive-Commission on China, July 2, 2009, available at: <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsing=122703>.

¹⁸ Uyghurs, women need not apply for government jobs in East Turkestan, Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), June 25, 2009, available at: <http://www.uhrp.org/articles/2339/1/Uyghurs-women-need-not-apply-for-government-jobs-in-East-Turkestan/index.html>.

¹⁹ Economic Development, Labor Transference, and Minority Education in the West of China, Development and Society, Seoul, Volume 32, Number 2, December 2003, pp. 125-145. [http://sociology.snu.ac.kr/isdpr/publication/journal/32-2/1%20Rong%20Ma\(사\).pdf](http://sociology.snu.ac.kr/isdpr/publication/journal/32-2/1%20Rong%20Ma(사).pdf).

acknowledgment of the ethnic tensions that have arisen due to the lopsided rates of employment among Han Chinese and “minority” populations. Ma includes government census data from 2003 displaying disproportionate rates of employment among the Uyghur and Han populations, with higher rates of Han Chinese holding white collar and government jobs, and higher rates of Uyghurs holding blue-collar jobs.

Official statistics on GDP in East Turkestan’s cities from 2003 reveal that the per capita GDP in Urumchi, where Han Chinese comprised more than 73 percent of the population, was almost nine times higher than the per capita GDP in Hotan, where nearly 97 percent of the population was Uyghur.²⁰

A monolingual language policy

While the Chinese government asserts that “bilingual education” will provide ethnic Uyghurs with the Mandarin language skills necessary to succeed in China’s competitive job market, many Uyghur graduates who are fluent in Mandarin Chinese report facing employment challenges due to rampant ethnic discrimination among employers. As one former Uyghur teacher recalled, when he traveled with his Chinese-speaking Uyghur students to job fairs, they observed signs flatly stating ‘we don’t want minority people’.²¹

It is difficult to reconcile the White Paper’s claims regarding the promotion and preservation of Uyghur and other “minority” languages in light of comments made in June by Nur Bekri, chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, that associate peaceful Uyghurs with terrorists and indicate an intensification in the Chinese authorities’ campaign to marginalize the Uyghur language. In a report issued on June 5, 2009 by the China Daily²², the Chinese government’s English language newspaper, Mr. Bekri is quoted as saying that “[t]errorists from neighboring countries mainly target Uygurs [Uyghurs] that are relatively isolated from mainstream society as they cannot speak Mandarin. They are then tricked into terrorist activities”.

The China Daily article also reported an acceleration in the implementation of the “bilingual” education policy in East Turkestan. UAA believes Mr. Bekri was attempting to justify a language planning policy aimed at eliminating the use of the Uyghur language in the education system.

The PRC is removing Uyghur language instruction from schools in East Turkestan in violation of its domestic law and international agreements. In the past two decades, and with increasing intensity since 2002, China has pursued assimilationist policies aimed at eliminating Uyghur as a language of instruction in East Turkestan. Employing the term “bilingual” education for propaganda purposes, the PRC is, in reality, implementing a

²⁰ Debasish Chaudhuri, A Survey of the Economic Situation in Xinjiang and its Role in the Twenty-first Century, China Study Centre, New Delhi, Volume 41, Issue 1, 2005, p. 6.

²¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project interview with Uyghur Teacher, May 23, 2007.

²² Mandarin lessons 'help fight terrorism', China Daily, June 5, 2009, available at: http://www.china.org.cn/government/local_governments/2009-06/05/content_17893578.htm.

monolingual Chinese language education system that undermines the linguistic basis of Uyghur culture.

The erosion of Uyghur culture

While the Chinese government's White Paper trumpets the preservation of "rich and vibrant" cultures in East Turkestan, a long-standing campaign to dilute Uyghur culture and identity has only intensified in the past year. In February 2009, the Chinese government launched the demolition of traditional Uyghur buildings in the Old City of Kashgar, an initiative that has begun to eradicate an ancient, irreplaceable center of Uyghur culture. While the Paper states that the government will spend three billion yuan on the "renovation" of Kashgar's Old City, the only work that has been carried out thus far is the destruction, and not the renovation, of a large portion of the Old City. Reports from official Chinese media indicate that authorities are implementing a "residents resettlement project", which aims to relocate 65,000 Uyghur households (220,000 people) from Kashgar's Old City.²³

As Kashgar Old City is one of the few remaining centers of traditional Uyghur culture and religion, many Uyghurs consider protection of Kashgar Old City as vital to maintaining a separate Uyghur identity. Prior to the start of demolition, Kashgar Old City contained over eight square kilometers of traditional Uyghur homes, bazaars and centers of worship, such as the six hundred-year-old Id Kah Mosque.

Chinese government authorities have stated that the demolition was initiated by the need to protect Old City residents from homes prone to earthquake damage and poor drainage.²⁴ However, the demolition is consistent with ongoing official moves to restrict and manage Uyghur cultural traditions. Measures put forth by cultural preservationists to enhance safety in the Old City without carrying out wholesale demolition²⁵ were ignored by government officials. In addition, local sources have reported that residents of the Old City have been given no voice in the decision-making process, and that compensation given to resettled Uyghurs for their property is grossly below market value.²⁶ Moreover, international news reports have noted the sub-standard quality of the buildings into which Old City residents have been moved, on the outskirts of town.²⁷

²³ Central and provincial governments invest three billion yuan to transform Kashgar's Old City [中央和新疆共投放30亿元巨资改造喀什老城区], Xinjiang News Net, February 27, 2009, available at www.xj.chinanews.com.cn, accessed on April 10, 2009.

²⁴ *Ibid*; also see, for instance, China contributes three billion to the transformation of Kashgar's Old City, an important spot on the ancient Silk Road [中国斥资三十亿改造古丝绸之路重镇喀什老城区], Chinese News Net, February 28, 2009, available at www.chinanews.com.cn, accessed on April 10, 2009; and Central and provincial governments invest three billion yuan toward the good fortune of 220,000 Kashgar people [国家和新疆投入 30 亿元福泽 22 万喀什老城百姓], Xinjiang News Net, February 27, 2009, available at www.xj.chinanews.com.cn, accessed on April 10, 2009.

²⁵ See "Showdown at the crossroads of the world", *The Independent* (UK), June 6, 2009, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/showdown-at-the-crossroads-of-the-world-1698167.html>.

²⁶ UHRP correspondence with residents of Kashgar who wish to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

²⁷ See, for instance, "The Uighur Dilemma", *ABC News* (Australia), July 28, 2009, available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2009/s2639008.htm>.

Unequal access to health care

Another important aspect of the unequal effects of development in East Turkestan on Uyghurs and other “minority” groups is that of improvements in health care. Province-wide advances in key areas, such as the number of hospital beds per person, have been substantial over the past six decades.²⁸ However, as is the case with income inequality throughout the PRC, rural dwellers in China suffer disproportionately from inadequate health care compared to people living in urban areas, and since Uyghurs predominantly live in rural areas, they experience, on the whole, a level of health care that is much lower in quality than the Han Chinese who dominate urban areas of East Turkestan. In addition, a law requiring medical students to be fluent in Mandarin Chinese curtails the medical aspirations of would-be ethnic Uyghur physicians, leading to a smaller proportion of Uyghur doctors who can serve the rural Uyghur population.²⁹ In contrast, ethnic Han medical school graduates tend to gain employment in wealthier, Han-dominated areas of the region.³⁰ Medical facilities in rural areas of East Turkestan are often unregistered medical clinics that, due to a lack of resources and qualified personnel, fail to meet even the most basic standards of hygiene.

The repression of Uyghurs’ religious beliefs

While China’s White Paper declares that all citizens of the PRC enjoy the freedom of religious belief, in line with the PRC Constitution, the Uyghur experience in the area of religion once again differs sharply from official rhetoric.

Since the September 11 attacks on the United States, and in the years since Beijing was awarded the Olympics, Chinese government officials have increasingly used Uyghurs’ belief in Islam to portray them as fundamentalists and terrorists. “Religious extremism” has been placed alongside “separatism” and “terrorism” as one of the so-called “three evil forces”. Chinese authorities have demonized Uyghur Muslims in order to place them within the context of the global war on terror and justify the intensified persecution carried out against them. Uyghurs are almost exclusively executed for nonviolent political and religious offenses.

However, the vast majority of Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Sunni Islam, which over the centuries has been influenced by folklore and traditional Uyghur social and familial customs.

Uyghur imams have long been required to attend annual “political education” classes, to ensure that they adhere to official government policy in their proselytizing. Imams are selected by the government and are closely monitored. All of their sermons are censored

²⁸ White Paper on Development and Progress in Xinjiang, available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/ethnic/2009-09/21/content_8717461.htm

²⁹ Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst, HEALTH IN XINJIANG, August 1, 2001, available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/451>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

by the authorities, and they are only allowed half an hour's time to preach sermons on Fridays, which must be approved by government officials. Any outward expression of faith in government workplaces, such as men wearing beards or women wearing headscarves, is forbidden; no one under the age of 18 can enter a mosque; university and school students are forbidden from praying on campus; and students are prohibited from fasting during Ramadan.

A number of restrictions were placed on Uyghurs during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which just drew to a close. UAA believes that the restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities have only exacerbated tensions in East Turkestan. The restrictions³¹ include restaurants forced to open during the daylight fasting period, pressure exerted on government workers of Uyghur ethnicity to sign "letters of responsibility" promising to avoid fasting, and a state-led campaign to offer free food to government employees during the hours of the fast.

The imposition of restrictions on religious activity during Ramadan is a recurring source of tension among Uyghurs. UHRP reported³² that 2008 saw "an unprecedented tightening of religious control throughout East Turkestan. Students and government employees were not permitted to fast during Ramadan or attend mosques in general. Restaurants were also forced to open during fasting hours."

Historical propaganda

China's White Paper claims that "Xinjiang" has been "an important part of China... since the first century B.C.". However, as scholars such as Millward and Perdue have stated, "it is clear that until the eighteenth century no Chinese dynasty had continuously controlled for any length of time or governed in any thoroughgoing way the entire territory that is modern Xinjiang."³³ Moreover, the term "Xinjiang", meaning "New Territory" or "New Dominion," was not used until at least the mid- to late-1700s.³⁴ It is also important to note that all of the cities established in East Turkestan prior to the military takeover in 1949 were established by Uyghurs and other non-Chinese ethnic groups.

In the PRC, official government perspectives on Uyghur historiography have been propagated in order to support the political goals of the state. But proclamations such as those in the White Paper on East Turkestan regarding the success of China's policies on "ethnic minorities", made to illustrate the presence of ethnic harmony and the beneficent

³¹ China's Muslim Uyghurs Forbidden to Fast During Ramadan, Epoch Times, September 1, 2009, available at: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/21899/>.

³² Karamay city government mandates tighter Party oversight of mosques and practitioners, Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), November 21, 2008, available at: <http://www.uhrp.org/articles/1595/1/Karamay-city-government-mandates-tighter-Party-oversight-of-mosques-and-practitioners-/index.html>.

³³ James A. Millward and Peter C. Perdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* ed. S. Fredrick Starr (M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, NY, 2004): p.48.

³⁴ According to Dillon the term was "probably used for the first time in 1768" (see Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Far Northwest*, New York: Routledge, 2004, p.17).

nature of Chinese rule in East Turkestan, do not ring true. On the eve of the PRC's 60th National Day, hundreds of soldiers with automatic rifles and riot shields are patrolling the streets of Urumchi and all major cities in East Turkestan, and propaganda promoting "ethnic unity" slogans is being aggressively promoted throughout the city.³⁵

Official promotion of ethnic discord

Against this barrage of "ethnic unity" propaganda, key government officials have actively worked to exacerbate disharmony between Han Chinese and Uyghurs. Xinhua reported on July 7 Urumchi Communist Party Secretary Li Zhi's inflammatory chanting of "Down with Rebiya"³⁶, at the scene of the unrest, fanning the flames of Han Chinese nationalism and dividing Uyghurs and Han Chinese. State media reports, meanwhile, have lauded the efforts of nationalist hackers posting inflammatory messages regarding Uyghur democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer on overseas websites.³⁷

Ethnic relations between Han Chinese and Uyghurs are at their lowest point in decades, and the first step toward creating peace and stability in the region is to acknowledge that serious problems exist. The Chinese government must take active steps to address these problems, by creating space for dialogue, and putting in place a mechanism through which both Uyghurs and Han Chinese may express their legitimate grievances. The Chinese Communist Party can only create a harmonious society in East Turkestan through a genuine respect for and adherence to China's constitution and Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, not through denials, half-truths and propaganda such as those contained in the most recent White Paper. The path forward involves an introspective look at the Chinese government's policies regarding "ethnic minorities", employment opportunities, and the preservation of cultural and religious traditions in East Turkestan. Without such introspection, it will be impossible to achieve progress, prosperity and peace for all people living in the region.

³⁵ 60 years after revolution, ethnic tension still plagues China, McClatchy Newspapers, September 22, 2009, available at: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/581/story/908180.html>.

³⁶ Fresh chaos erupts in Urumqi, Xinhua, July 7, 2009, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11666941.htm.

³⁷ See, for instance, "Hacker attacks website over Kadeer film", China Daily, September 22, available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/22/content_8719448.htm.



The Uyghur American Association (UAA) works to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future in East Turkestan.



The UAA launched the UHRP in 2004 to promote improved human rights conditions for Uyghurs and other indigenous groups in East Turkestan, on the premise that the assurance of basic human rights will facilitate the realization of the community's democratic aspirations.

UHRP also works to raise the profile of the Uyghur people and the plight of all “minority” peoples in East Turkestan by:

Researching, writing and publishing news stories and longer reports 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 politicians on the human rights situation faced by the Uyghur people and others in East Turkestan.

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