



Sacred Right Defiled:

China's Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom

A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Methodology.....	5
Background	6
Features of Uyghur Islam	6
Religious History	7
History of Religious Persecution under the CCP since 1949	9
Religious Administration and Regulations.....	13
Religious Administration in the People’s Republic of China.....	13
National and Regional Regulations to 2005	14
National Regulations since 2005	16
Regional Regulations since 2005	19
Crackdown on “Three Evil Forces”—Terrorism, Separatism and Religious Extremism.....	23
Violations of the Right to Religious Freedom among Uyghurs in East Turkestan ...	29
Imams and <i>Büwi</i>	29
Hajj	35
Religious Education.....	42
Religious Publications	48
Ramadan	54
Mosque Attendance	63
Islamic Dress	66
Religious Sites	76
Uyghur Christians.....	79
International and Domestic Laws	82
International Instruments	82
Domestic Law	84
Recommendations.....	88
Appendix: Photographs Depicting Religious Restrictions.....	91
Acknowledgements	98

Executive Summary

In 2005, new Religious Affairs Regulations took effect across the People's Republic of China (PRC). The regulations are the most comprehensive attempt by the Chinese government to regulate religious practice in history. Rather than protect the provisions set out in Chinese law guaranteeing religious freedom for China's citizens, the new policy regulates religious activities in a way that allows local and central Chinese authorities to significantly restrict the religious lives of ordinary people in China. The regulations draw many of their articles from existing regulations passed by the State Council in 1994 and regional regulations particularly in non-Han Chinese regions of China, such as East Turkestan and Tibet. Not only were the 2005 national regulations the culmination of a government policy to control and monitor religion, but they were also a platform for an unrelenting drive by the Chinese state to enact ever-repressive measures with strict implementation of their provisions.

In East Turkestan, also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), the intensifying number of national and regional regulations, as well as official rhetoric, aimed at religious belief and practice especially since 2005 mean the Uyghur people are subjected to the harshest conditions governing religious life in the PRC. Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Islam and many perceive their faith as a statement of their cultural identity, as well as an assertion of their difference from the Han Chinese. For many Uyghurs the incursion of the state into their private and public expressions of religious belief is viewed as part of an assimilative process the Chinese government is undertaking that includes other aspects of their cultural identity, such as the demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods, phasing out of Uyghur language in the education system and curbs on artistic freedom.

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) has documented the evolution of religious regulation before and after the 2005 national regulations, as well as the role of the rhetoric of Chinese officials targeting religion. UHRP believes the regulations documented have had the effect of criminalizing peaceful religious practices among Uyghurs on par with illicit and violent activity. Rather than simply forbid religious practices, Chinese local and central authorities have implemented policies that have progressively narrowed the definition of lawful activity. As a result, many Uyghurs find that traditional religious customs are not permitted. Regulations have also made it more difficult for religious bodies to exist without state approval, and increased oversight of such approved organizations. Chinese state rhetoric has justified many of its restrictions through claims that it faces an organized threat to security in the form of the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism. The Chinese government has yet to put to rest reasonable doubt over these claims.

China's highly politicized criminal-legal system, as well as the state apparatus governing and monitoring religion, have ensured a strict interpretation and implementation of often vaguely worded religious regulation in East Turkestan. In effect, the bodies established by the Chinese state to oversee religious affairs and administration in China do little to

protect religious believers, but assist the government's repression of religious freedom by helping to formulate and promote restrictive regulations.

The tight constraints placed on religious practice among Uyghurs are widespread. UHRP interviewed a number of Uyghurs who had experienced restrictions on their right to religious freedom, as well as conducted extensive research in English, Chinese and Uyghur on official and non-state material. Strict implementation of religious regulations was found across the entire region and those Uyghurs found to have contravened religious regulations were punished severely. State repression of religion among Uyghurs is not delineated between different faiths, as the Chinese authorities target Uyghurs whether they are Muslim or Christian.

In a disturbing number of cases, Uyghurs were given long prison sentences for “illegal” religious activities, actions deemed unlawful by the Chinese government but considered normal by international human rights standards, and handed down after judicial procedures also lacking international standards. Individual case studies throughout the report document these Uyghurs’ plight. An area of considerable concern is the knowledge many Uyghurs are unsure as to what constitutes lawful religious activity given the increasing number of regulations. A further area of concern is the open discrimination against Uyghurs, especially women, who choose to lead religious lives in East Turkestan. The number of documented public signs barring entry to Uyghurs dressed in “Islamic” fashion and reports of withholding state assistance unless pledges are signed guaranteeing non-participation in “illegal” religious activities should alarm the international community.

In the report, UHRP records restrictions on a number of aspects of Uyghur religious activity. Religious leaders, such as imams, are required to attend political education classes to ensure compliance with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regulations and policies; only state-approved versions of the Koran and sermons are permitted, with all unapproved religious texts treated as “illegal” publications liable to confiscation and criminal charges against whoever was found in possession of them; any outward expression of faith in government workplaces, hospitals and some private businesses, such as men wearing beards or women wearing headscarves, is forbidden; no state employees and no one under the age of 18 can enter a mosque, a measure not in force in the rest of China; organized private religious education is proscribed and facilitators of private classes in Islam are frequently charged with conducting “illegal” religious activities; and students, teachers and government workers are prohibited from fasting during Ramadan. In addition, Uyghurs are not permitted to undertake Hajj, unless it is with an expensive official tour, in which state officials carefully vet applicants.

Universal religious freedom is protected under Article 18 of the normative human rights standards outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other international instruments whose standards China is obliged to meet also ensure the right of religious freedom, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. China’s domestic laws, such as the Constitution and the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, have strong provisions on

freedom of religious belief. Despite this international and domestic legal framework, restrictions on religious freedom are deemed “lawful” by Chinese authorities through the strict implementation of regulations that contradict China’s own laws and international obligations. UHRP urges multilateral organizations and concerned governments to act on China’s repression of Uyghur religious rights and more vehemently remind China of the necessity to act as a responsible member of the international community, especially given its growing economic and political influence. Furthermore, UHRP believes pressure should be applied on China to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Methodology

The information for this report was gathered using a variety of primary and secondary sources. UHRP researchers conducted interviews in Uyghur and English with Uyghur witnesses to repression of religious freedom in East Turkestan. Interview subjects were selected randomly through existing networks and through a willingness to speak.

Finding eyewitnesses prepared to relate accounts of their experiences in East Turkestan did not prove an easy task. The long reach of Chinese government repression in East Turkestan extends beyond the region to Uyghur exiles, even those in democratic nations. For this reason, UHRP offered complete anonymity to interviewees. In order to protect interview subjects, UHRP changed identifying details.

UHRP was able to confirm much of the information contained in secondary sources used in this report through the interviews conducted with Uyghur witnesses. Secondary materials accessed included media from inside and outside of China in Mandarin and English, reports from human rights groups, government documents and academic research papers. UHRP is particularly indebted to the excellent coverage of Radio Free Asia and the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC).

Background

Features of Uyghur Islam

Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Islam. The word “Uyghur” literally means “united” or “coming together,” and this meaning is evident in the religious practice of the Uyghurs. Uyghurs practice Sunni Islam with some Sufi practices and local traditions. While most Uyghurs consider Islam as an integral part of their cultural identity, some lead more religious lives and others lead more secular ones. East Turkestan’s geographically isolated oases also have unique local Islamic and folk religious practices.¹

Uyghur villages and neighborhoods traditionally have a local mosque. Imams, trained religious leaders, lead five daily prayers and also deliver sermons. As one scholar noted from his own observations, older men participate most consistently in the call to prayer, and outside the city centers it is also common to see young men taking breaks from work, alone or in small groups, to pray at the proper times.² Women who participate generally pray in private. Due to strict government restriction, children under 18 are not allowed to participate in religious activities.

The most common religious observance among Uyghurs is refusal to eat foods that are non-halal, forbidden by Islam, like pork. Restaurants in East Turkestan indicate clearly whether the fare is halal, and Uyghur people typically eat only at restaurants that serve halal food.

Uyghur celebrations feature practices that are led by an imam. They preside at weddings, circumcision ceremonies or *sunnat toy*, and funerary meals or *nazir chiraq*. The celebrations entail prayer, oil sacrifice, animal sacrifice and a communal meal and may be large-scale events with many celebrants.³ Uyghurs also celebrate a mix of holidays that reflects Islamic, Turkic and Persian influences: Ramadan and Roza Heyt (Eid Al-Fitr), Kurban (Eid al-Adha), Nowruz (Persian New Year), and Barat, a holiday involving a prayer vigil in the month before Ramadan.

Mazars are Sufi shrines to Muslim saints, which blend Islam with non-Islamic elements, and are another part of many Uyghurs’ religious practice. One scholar writes, “Mazar combines religious elements of Islam—by being ideologically based on worshiping Muslim saints—and elements rooted in popular beliefs with their orientation on pursuing “this-world-benefits,” such as related to curing and fertility. Serving as objects of

¹ Rudelson, Justin. *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China’s Silk Road*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). p. 80.

² Fuller, Graham and Jonathan Lipman. “Islam in Xinjiang.” In *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*. By S. Frederick Starr. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2004).

³ Waite, Edmund. “The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Xinjiang.” In *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. By Ildikó Bellér-Hann; et al. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

pilgrimage, *mazars* have also played an important social role as hubs of wide-area human exchange.”⁴ Shrines host annual festivals (*mazar saylisi*), often based on seasonal changes, which attract pilgrims. Some shrines have non-Islamic origins, like the Tuyuq Mazar near Turpan, a former Buddhist site, or the Ujma Mazar, whose name indicates pre-Buddhist roots.⁵

Similarly straddling the line between religious and cultural traditions is the *Muqam* musical tradition. This suite of 12 pieces including song, dance and poetry pre-dates Islam, and has evolved over the centuries. The lively dance or *mashrap* section for example was originally connected with Sufi dervish practice. *Mashrap* is also the term for gatherings, sometimes male-only and sometimes mixed, which involve prayer, discussion, and performance of the *muqam*.⁶

Edmund Waite describes recent efforts to reform local practices that do not have a strong basis in Islamic scripture, especially as more religious literature is translated into Uyghur. Specific practices in question include *nazir* mourning rituals and other large-scale and expensive ceremonies, payment for Koranic recitals, placement of elders at the front of the mosque to express veneration, and wearing of headgear (*shepke* or *doppa*).

Abdulhamid, an influential reformist leader who studied in Saudi Arabia, even challenged the use of traditional Hanafī prayer forms in favor of Saudi Arabian Hanbali forms. He was dismissed from his post in November 1997 after upsetting the local authorities due to his popularity and message of religious piety and educational development. In the absence of his strong leadership, reformist ideas have spread informally.⁷

Religious History

The people of East Turkestan have a rich religious history including Buddhism, shamanism, Manichaeism, and Nestorian Christianity, prior to converting to Islam between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. The world’s first Central Asian Turkic people to convert to Islam was the Uyghur Qarakhanid dynasty in the tenth century under Satuq Bughra Khan, who established a capital in Kashgar after conquering it in the mid-tenth century. Soon, the Qarakhanids conquered the Buddhist kingdom of Hotan as well. These

⁴ Sugawara Jun; et al. *Mazar Documents from Xinjiang and Ferghana (Facsimile)*. (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2006).

⁵ Dawut, Rahile. “Shrine Pilgrimage and Sustainable Tourism.” In *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. By Ildikó Bellér-Hann; et al. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

⁶ For more on *muqam*, see Rachel Harris, “Situating the Twelve Muqam.” In *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. By Ildikó Bellér-Hann; et al. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

⁷ Waite, Edmund. “The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Xinjiang.” In *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. By Ildikó Bellér-Hann; et al. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

earliest Muslims in East Turkestan produced important religious figures like the Islamic Uyghur scholars Mahmud Kashgari and Yusuf Khass Hajib. Shrines to these historic figures are pilgrim sites today— Satuq Bughra Khan's *mazar* is near present-day Atush, and Kashgari and Hajib's in Kashgar.

The people of East Turkestan did not convert to Islam all at once. In present-day Turpan, the Uyghur Idikut Kingdom never fell to the Qarakhanids. It played host to a diversity of religions from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, including Buddhism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity, and these religions flourished throughout the region. In the 13th century the whole of East Turkestan was united under Mongol rule, and by the end of the 15th century, the Mansur Khan converted the former Idikut people and other nonbelievers to Islam. They spread the Hanafi form of Sunni Islam that Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples predominately practice today.

Under the Mongols, Sufi Islam also spread throughout the settled Uyghur peoples of the Tarim as well as among nomads, and Sufis were treated as shamans reputed to have healing abilities. One Sufi order that gained popularity in particular was the Naqshibandi. The Naqshibandi leaders Apaqa Khoja and Ishaq Wali became leaders of opposing groups, termed the Apaqqis and Ishaqis, who vied for power under the successive rule of various Mongol groups, as well as invaders from Khoqand to the west.⁸ Today, the *mazars* of Khoja rulers including the Apaqa Khoja are in Kashgar.

By the late nineteenth century, Islamic education was available to boys between the ages of six to sixteen (and in some places to girls under 12) via the traditional institution of the *maktap*, informal schools at the mosque, teacher's homes, or wealthy community member's homes. The curriculum, taught by an imam, was primarily religious and included instruction on religious festivals, Koranic verses and some poetry. The larger oases of southern East Turkestan also supported *madrasas*, colleges attached to shrines and run as charitable foundations, of which there were dozens through the early 20th century.⁹ *Shari'ah* or Islamic law was enforced with varying degrees of support from shifting regional powers.

The early 20th century was a dynamic period for religion in East Turkestan. The Jadidist movement was an attempt to incorporate secular education with Muslim learning, with a special consideration for teachings coming from the Ottoman Empire. This Jadidist movement produced many of the political leaders who came to power during the turbulent political era following the fall of the Manchu Qing Dynasty in 1912 and leading up to the founding of the PRC in 1949. Christian missionaries from Sweden were also active in East Turkestan at this time.

⁸ Millward, James. *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). pp. 80-88.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.

History of Religious Persecution Under the CCP Since 1949

In 1949, there were tens of thousands of mosques and *mazars* in East Turkestan, and clergy were supported by rents from Islamic lands and alms, as well as serving as judges, or *qazi*, in local courts. The PRC's first moves were to prohibit this source of revenue and enforce Chinese law instead of the local legal system. The main source of Islam's wealth was in land holdings, or *waqfiya*, which were redistributed under China's land reform from 1950-2, dealing the greatest blow to Islam. Sufism, which was not tied to the *waqfiya* lands, experienced growth at this time.¹⁰ In 1953, the Islamic Association of China was established to manage Islam within the organizational structure of the CCP, with the authority to recruit, train and appoint officially sanctioned religious clergy who would disseminate CCP party guidelines.¹¹

In 1956, the Hundred Flower Movement invited criticism of the party, and many Uyghurs spoke out against the unfair treatment by the CCP in the first few years of party rule. In the anti-Rightist campaign that followed in 1957, those who had voiced complaints were targeted, especially Islamic leaders.¹² Islamic education in *maktaps* and *madrasas* continued until the late 1950s, when the government replaced traditional Islamic schooling with secular schools.¹³ The Great Leap Forward of 1958-62 marked a radical shift. Mosques were closed and the Islamic Association of China was formally abolished throughout the duration of the campaign. Mosque lands were seized in collectivization, never to be returned, *mazar* festivals were banned and communes interrupted daily Islamic practices.¹⁴

The greatest blow to Islamic practice came in the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976. James Millward writes, "There are many reports of Qur'ans burnt; mosques, *mazars*, *madrasas* and Muslim cemeteries shut down and desecrated; non-Han intellectual and religious elders humiliated in parades and struggle meetings; native dress prohibited; long hair on young women cut off in the street." The Islamic Association of China was once again abolished and Red Guards targeted anyone practicing religion. Scholar Edmund Waite explains that during this time many Muslims adapted Islamic rituals so that laymen in the household might perform them hidden from the gaze of outsiders, which shifted

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 246-251.

¹¹ Hess, Stephen. *Islam, Local Elites, and China's Missteps in Integrating the Uyghur Nation*. Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies, 4:7 (July 2009). p. 85.

¹² Millward, James and Nabijan Tursun. "Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978." In *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. By S. Frederick Starr. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2004). pp. 92-93.

¹³ Benson, Linda. "Education and Social Mobility Among Minority Populations in Xinjiang. 194-195. In *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. By S. Frederick Starr. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2004).

¹⁴ Hess, Stephen. *Islam, Local Elites, and China's Missteps in Integrating the Uyghur Nation*. Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies 4:7 (July 2009). pp. 85-86.

religious practice into a less formal household role and made later CCP policy aimed at controlling formal Islamic practice in the public sphere less effective.¹⁵

Compared to the horrors of the previous decades, in which religious structures were systematically taken apart and individuals targeted, the 1980s witnessed a resurgence of religious belief in East Turkestan. The Islamic Association of China was reestablished in 1980. Mosques were reopened and repaired, and new mosques were built. *Mazar* festivals were allowed once again, and travel to Islamic countries was reinstated, particularly for the Hajj. The Koran was translated into Uyghur. Even party members were allowed some flexibility with daily prayers and Friday mosque attendance.¹⁶

This freedom was short lived. Beginning in 1989, a number of incidents related to Islam triggered violent responses from the government:

- In 1989 after the publication of a book called *Sexual Customs*, which described Islam in overtly sexual tones, Uyghurs and other Muslim groups throughout China protested. As a result, the book was banned, however, many protesters were jailed and some were held for years.¹⁷
- In 1990, authorities closed down the privately run Koranic schools in Yarkand, which led to a demonstration of *madrassa* students calling to protect Islam.¹⁸
- In 1995, a protest took place in Hotan after two imams from Baytulla Mosque were detained for discussing current events, followed by the detainment of his replacement, Abdul Kayum, for advocating women's rights. According to unofficial sources cited in an Amnesty International report, several hundred people were detained on the spot and in the aftermath of the event, and 20 people were sentenced to multiple years of imprisonment for involvement.¹⁹
- The most severe crackdown took place in Ghulja in 1997. Uyghurs there had adapted the traditional *mashrap* as all-male gatherings to discuss both religious and social issues like alcoholism and drug use in the Uyghur community. In February 1997, following the arrest of two Uyghur religious students, peaceful protests led to arrests in the thousands and the use of violence against the protestors was reportedly widespread. Unofficial sources estimate that 30-100

¹⁵ Ibid p. 87.

¹⁶ Millward, James. *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). p. 278.

¹⁷ Gladney, Dru. (1992). *Constructing A Contemporary Uighur National Identity: Transnationalism, Islamicization and State Representation*. Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien, no. 13. pp. 165-184.

¹⁸ Millward, James. (2004). *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*. East-West Center Washington. Retrieved online: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/PS006.pdf>

¹⁹ Amnesty International. (1999) *Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from: <http://www.amnesty.org/fr/library/asset/ASA17/018/1999/fr/75880894-e285-11dd-abce-695d390ccea/asa170181999en.pdf>. p. 14.

people died in the protest, including bystanders shot by security forces. According to Amnesty International, unofficial reports describe 3,000 to 5,000 Uyghurs arrested without judicial process after the event, and at least ten Uyghurs were subsequently executed for participating.²⁰

- In 1997, the government banned the Ordam Mazar festival, the largest *mazar* festival, which had attracted thousands of participants in previous years.²¹ The banning of the Ordam festival negatively impacted the local economy and has also had an “immeasurable” effect on Uyghurs social and religious lives.²²



Chinese flag flies over a mosque in East Turkestan. © Anonymous

Restrictions against Uyghurs’ religious practice were codified in a series of legislation and internal documents beginning in 1994, which are discussed in greater detail in the next section, and which serve as the foundation for restrictions against Uyghurs that are in place today. Beginning in 1996, annual “Strike hard” campaigns were carried out in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dawut, Rahile and Rachel Harris. *Mazar festivals of the Uyghurs: Music, Islam and the Chinese State*. British Journal of Ethnomusicology, 11: 1 (2002). pp. 101-108.

²² Dawut, Rahile. “Shrine Pilgrimage and Sustainable Tourism.” In *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. By Ildikó Bellér-Hann; et al. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

East Turkestan. Whereas “Strike hard” campaigns were enacted to target violent criminals elsewhere in China, the campaign in East Turkestan aimed to tighten control on religion, and hundreds of religious activists were reportedly jailed as a result.²³ Finally, a major discursive shift took place after the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.

The radical discursive shift from singular separatism to the “three evil forces” of terrorism, religious extremism and ethnic separatism occurred just after the September 11 attacks. Immediately, China’s government made two moves: first to publish a list of terrorist organizations in November, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, and second to adopt amendments to the Criminal Law to “punish terrorist crimes, ensure national security and the safety of people’s lives and property and uphold social order.” In early 2002, the State Council issued a report called “East Turkestan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity,” attributing a number of violent incidents from the previous decade to terrorist groups.²⁴

In 2002, authorities waged a “Strike hard” campaign against the “three evil forces” of separatism, religious extremism and terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. Whereas the existing two-year “Strike hard” campaign of 2001 aimed at eliminating “separatism and illegal religious activities,” the newly announced “Strike hard” campaign reflected the government’s new rhetorical focus on the “three evil forces.” Official media reported in January 2004 that over the previous year, a number of terrorist and separatist gangs were suppressed.²⁵ Little evidence accompanied this and subsequent reports, which served to legitimize China’s mounting crackdown on Uyghur religious practice post- 2005.

²³ Human Rights Watch. (2005, April). *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>. p. 68.

²⁴ Kanat, Kilic. (2012, December 12). “War on Terror” as a Diversionary Strategy: Personifying Minorities as Terrorists in the People’s Republic of China. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. p. 516.

²⁵ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2006, April 28). *Uighurs Face Extreme Security Measures; Official Statements on Terrorism Conflict*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=4582>.

Religious Administration and Regulations

Religious Administration in the People's Republic of China

Control of religious affairs in the PRC is maintained through the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA),²⁶ a department under the State Council of the People's Republic of China. The current Director is Wang Zuo'an. The functions of the SARA cover many aspects of religious practice in China, such as the drafting of laws and regulations and their consequent implementation.

The SARA also works: "To prevent and curb illegal elements from irregular and illegitimate activities by taking advantage of religions," which indicates the department is responsible for identifying perceived threats to the CCP by religious believers. The definition of "taking advantage of religions" is not specified in its list of functions.²⁷

The Chinese state maintains close control of religious affairs through a hierarchical administration that has a presence in provinces and smaller tiers of local government. In East Turkestan, the Xinjiang Religious Affairs Bureau is responsible for regional work, while religious affairs bureaus exist in government bureaucracies at prefecture and county level. The extensive official administration not only permits the implementation of religious regulations, but also ensures tight monitoring of religious practice and behavior at the grassroots.

The PRC recognizes five official religions—Islam among them—and their corresponding state sanctioned organizations. Effectively, faiths outside of the officially permissible religions are deemed unlawful. The SARA oversees the operations of the Islamic Association of China, which oversees aspects of religious life for over 21 million



Top: Prayer is forbidden inside the hospital. Bottom: Entry is forbidden for women wearing long headscarves, men with facial hair, and women wearing veils. Note: Chinese specifies these rules apply to workers. ©Uighurbiz

²⁶ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.) Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/index.htm>.

²⁷ Gov.cn. *State Administration for Religious Affairs*. (2009, December 22). Retrieved from http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content_75331.htm.

Muslims in China.²⁸ Part of its work as a state organization is to “train Islamic teachers” and to “establish and improve the management of Islam within Chinese law.”²⁹ These stated functions illustrate the extent to which the CCP maintains control over the clergy in order to manage the messages given to believers, and how the Chinese state calibrates religious practice to its own laws.

National and Regional Regulations to 2005

The Religious Affairs Regulations passed on July 7, 2004 at the 57th session of the State Council took effect on March 1, 2005 and was the most comprehensive attempt to broadly codify the practice of religion in the PRC.³⁰ The 2005 national regulations were preceded by national rules and regulations including religious affairs regulations passed by the State Council in 1994, as well as provincial regulations governing religious practice. According to scholar Eric Carlson, East Turkestan was one of the first places in China to be regulated in this way with the 1988 XUAR: *Temporary Rules for the Management of Venues of Religious Activities*. Carlson adds these efforts aimed to maintain “tight control and supervision over religious groups and individuals.”³¹

The XUAR Religious Affairs Regulations effective from October 1994 were succeeded by the 1996 *Document 7*, the October 1998 Instructions and the 2000 *Interim Provisions on Disciplinary Punishments for Party Members and Organs that Violate Political Discipline in Fighting Separatism and Safeguarding Unity* (2000 Interim Provisions).³² *Document 7* mandated the strengthening of state “leadership and control over religion,” while the October 1998 Instructions “called for a tightening of regulations governing the management of religious personnel, religious places, the content of religious teachings, and the ‘fight’ against all non-governmental religious activities.” In a further restrictive measure, the 2000 *Interim Provisions* regulated private worship among Party members, especially in regard to attending mosques, observing Ramadan and Islamic studies.³³

²⁸ The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. (2009, October). *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Muslim Population*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Topics/Demographics/Muslimpopulation.pdf>.

²⁹ 中国伊斯兰教协会 (China Islamic Association). 协会简介 (*Association Introduction*). Retrieved from <http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/about/xhgz/about132.html#>.

³⁰ *Religious Affairs Regulations* (2004, November 30). State Council of the People’s Republic of China. Retrieved from http://www.orthodox.cn/contemporary/zjshwtli_en.htm.

³¹ Carlson, Eric, R. Brigham Young University Law Review. (2005, September 13). *China’s New Regulations on Religion: A Small Step, Not a Great Leap, Forward*. Retrieved from <http://lawreview.byu.edu/archives/2005/3/8CARLSON.FIN.pdf>.

³² Human Rights Watch. (2005, April). *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

³³ Ibid.

Amendments to the 1994 regional regulations continued the process to criminalize religious practice among Uyghurs in East Turkestan. The Chairmen's Committee of the Xinjiang People's Regional Congress adopted the Amendments in July 2001 and the document was circulated internally to the state religious administration within East Turkestan. According to Human Rights Watch, the 2001 amendments aimed at "narrowing the scope of normal religious activities; the extension of the 'anti-separatist' clause, previously applied only to the clergy, to *all* citizens who profess a religion; increased control over registration and operations of religious organizations; tightened control over religious publications; and heavier sanctions and penalties."³⁴

According to the Chinese government, the 48 articles contained in the 2005 national regulations were "a significant step forward in the protection of Chinese citizens' religious freedoms,"³⁵ however, as with previous legal instruments governing religion in China, the regulations were criticized for vague categorization of what constitutes legal practice. Commenting on the publication of a report on the regulations by his organization, Human Rights Watch Asia Director Brad Adams said, "Chinese officials claim the new regulations safeguard religious freedom through the rule of law, but the intentional vagueness of the regulations allows for continued repression of disfavored individuals or groups."³⁶

PRC officials claim that the regulations are a "paradigm shift" in the governance of religious affairs wherein state oversight of religion has been delegated to religious groups.³⁷ However, even a cursory read of the regulations' articles reveals the Chinese government's "give and take" approach towards religious administration. For example, Article 7 permits the publication of religious texts by religious entities as long as they comply with government regulations. Articles 8 and 9 outline religious groups' freedom to open religious education institutes, as long as they complete an approval process through the state-run Religious Affairs Bureau. Article 22 similarly requires state approval for large-scale religious activities.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ China Daily. (2004, December 20). *Religious affairs rules promulgated*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-12/20/content_401612.htm.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch. (2006, March 2). *China: A Year After New Regulations, Religious Rights Still Restricted*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2006/02/28/china-year-after-new-regulations-religious-rights-still-restricted>.

³⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2012 March 14). *China's New Regulation on Religious Affairs: A Paradigm Shift?* Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/031405/index.php>.

³⁸ Carlson Brigham Young University Law Review. (2005, September 13). *China's New Regulations on Religion: A Small Step, Not a Great Leap, Forward*. Retrieved from <http://lawreview.byu.edu/archives/2005/3/8CARLSON.FIN.pdf>.

The vagaries surrounding permissible religious activity is also evident in the procedures that aggrieved religious communities can take when pursuing claims of unfair practice by officials:

The aggrieved citizen or group must first apply for ‘administrative reconsideration,’ implying that the administrative body must review its own decision. If an individual bureaucrat made the decision, it is unclear who undertakes the review—the original bureaucrat, an internal review board, the head of the agency, or the equivalent agency at a higher level (i.e., provincial instead of local, or national instead of provincial).³⁹

Instead of freeing religious administration from the state, the regulations have been effective in tightening CCP oversight of individual and collective religious belief. According to Human Rights in China, an analysis of the regulations “clearly indicates that there has been no paradigm shift in the administration of religion, but rather a continuation of the classic pattern of state-controlled religion.”⁴⁰ Eric Carlson concludes that, “The unfortunate reality is that the new regulations retain strong state control over religion and do not provide for true religious freedom.”⁴¹

National Regulations since 2005

According to Human Rights Watch, the 2005 Religious Affairs Regulations set out the Chinese government’s agenda on religious affairs which was primarily “to make it more difficult than ever for a religious body or a church, mosque, temple, monastery, or congregation to exist without State approval; and to solidify oversight of the personnel, finances, and activities of every approved religious body or site.” The report added, “Because of certain similarities between the new national regulations and the pre-existing regulatory structure in Xinjiang (stricter than elsewhere in China with the exception of Tibet), it appears that policies in place in Xinjiang may have influenced the new national standards.”⁴²

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2005 March 14). *Roundtable: New Regulation on Religious Affairs: A Paradigm Shift? Statement by Human Rights in China*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/031405/HRIC.php>.

⁴¹ Carlson, Eric, R. (2005, September 13). *China’s New Regulations on Religion: A Small Step, Not a Great Leap, Forward*. Brigham Young University Law Review. Retrieved from <http://lawreview.byu.edu/archives/2005/3/8CARLSON.FIN.pdf>.

⁴² Human Rights Watch. (2005, April). *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>, pp. 47-57.



Prayer is prohibited in public places. © Anonymous

In subsequent years, the national SARA continued to revise its legal code for religious affairs, specifically governing the process of registration for religious bodies and venues and oversight of personnel, finance and activities. After the 2005 legislation made it more difficult for such bodies to exist without state approval and solidified oversight, these new laws created even more specific and onerous procedures.

- In April 2005, the SARA issued the *Measures for the Examination, Approval and Registration of Religious Activity Venues*, based on the new national Religious Affairs Regulations, with explicit provisions for setting up a management organization to interface with the county- level government.⁴³
- In December 2006, the SARA also amended the *Measures for Filing Particulars of Religious Personnel*, effective in March 2007, and the new provisions codified a requirement to register all religious personnel annually.⁴⁴
- In December 2006, the SARA released new *Measures for Putting on File the Main Religious Personnel of Venues for Religious Activities*, also effective in March 2007, with stringent standards for management of religious venues.⁴⁵

⁴³ State Bureau of Religious Affairs. (2005). *Measures for the Examination, Approval, and Registration of the Establishment of Religious Activity Venues*. (English Translation). Retrieved from <http://www.lapres.net/2005measuresenglish.html>.

⁴⁴ 国家宗教事务局令 (State Bureau of Religious Affairs). (2006, December 29). 宗教教职人员备案办法 (*Measures for Filing Particulars of Religious Personnel*). Retrieved from http://www.xiangjisi.com/article/2011/0705/article_151.html.

- In December 2006, the SARA passed the *Measures for the Establishment of Religious Institutes*, effective in September 2007, with new requirements for establishing religious education institutions.⁴⁶
- In December 2007, the SARA passed the *Religious Affairs Licensing Rules and Procedures*.⁴⁷
- In December 2010, the SARA passed amendments to the *Regulations on the Activities of Aliens in the PRC*, effective in 2011, which forbids foreign religious publications from entering China, and forbids foreigners from setting up religious institutions or providing any training to religious figures.⁴⁸

China's central government renewed its call for strengthened religious management in 2010. In January 2010, China's Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu asked government departments to strengthen management of religious affairs. Jia Qinglin, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference also called on the departments of United Front Work and Religious Affairs to earnestly study and implement the CCP's policies on religion.⁴⁹

CASE STUDY: On May 10, 2009, the police, without legal documents or arrest warrants, detained seven Uyghur university students at Xinjiang University in Urumchi. Authorities sentenced them to fifteen days detention and fined them 5,000 Yuan (USD 730) for "holding an illegal gathering" to discuss religious issues. Five of the students were released after fifteen days, but two Xinjiang University students – Yusufjan (27) and Memetjan (24) – have remained in detention as of June 12, 2009 and were threatened with more severe punishment. There is no information on their current legal status or whereabouts.

⁴⁵ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2006, December 29). *宗教活动场所主要教职任职备案办法 (Measures for Putting on File the Main Religious Personnel of Venues for Religious Activities)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/bmgz/2187.htm>.

⁴⁶ 国家宗教事务局令 (State Bureau of Religious Affairs). (2007, August 1). *宗教院校设立办法 (Measures for the Establishment of Religious Institute)*. Retrieved from http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2007-08/29/content_8763496.htm.

⁴⁷ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2010, December 20). *宗教事务方面部分行政许可项目实施细则 (Religious Affairs Licensing Rules and Procedures)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/bmgz/6587.htm>.

⁴⁸ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2010, December 2008). *关于修订<中华人民共和国境内外国人宗教活动管理规定实施细则>的决定 (Amendments to the "People's Republic of China's Regulations on the Activities of Aliens in the PRC)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/bmgz/7369.htm>.

⁴⁹ Ed. Zhaoqian. (2010, January 27). *Hui Liangyu stresses importance of religious affairs management*. Tianshan Net. Retrieved from http://english.ts.cn/Culture_History/content/2010-01/27/content_5052066.htm.

Regional Regulations since 2005

When the national Religious Affairs Regulations were first unveiled in 2005, Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences expert Ma Pinyan commented that the XUAR already had more religious regulations than any province, a “powerful legal weapon” to control religion. Nevertheless, Xinjiang leaders saw the new national regulations as an opportunity to further increase religious management.⁵⁰

Religious practice for children in East Turkestan is specifically regulated far more strictly than elsewhere in China. In June 2009, the XUAR government introduced but did not pass a draft regulation that strictly restricted the participation of children in religious activities, a policy already in force across the region. The draft regulation would replace 1993 legal measures in the XUAR that were already the harshest in China. The rejected draft proposed that parents or guardians “may not permit minors to be engaged in religious activities” and “no organization or individual may lure or force minors to participate in religious activities or use religion to obstruct minors’ compulsory education.”⁵¹



Children under 18 and women are not permitted to enter the mosque to pray. © 穆斯林在线

⁵⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2005, October 11). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/CECCannRpt2005.pdf>. pp. 51-52.

⁵¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, January 7). *Draft Regulation in Xinjiang Could Strengthen Legal Prohibitions Over Children’s Freedom of Religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingel=125058>.

The version of the regulation that was adopted, effective December 2009, removed the clause prohibiting parents from permitting children from engaging in religious activities, but includes an article stating that minors may not be “lured” into religion by individuals or organizations, leaving the definition of what constitutes “luring” purposefully vague. The legislation also includes obligations for schools, neighborhood committees, village committees and public security organs to aid children lured into religious activities. Finally it specifies punishments for those who lure children, an addition to the 1993 regulations.

After 2005, regional religious management was governed by the XUAR government’s fifth five-year plan which began in 2006, and which included among its provisions priorities for the regional XUAR branch of the SARA. According to a 2011 accounting of progress toward the plan, priority was assigned to earnest implementation of a number of laws passed by the national branch of the SARA which strengthened religious administration, including the April 2005 *Measures for the Examination, Approval and Registration of the Establishment of Religious Activity Venues*, the December 2006 *Measures for Filing Particulars of Religious Personnel* and *Measures for Putting on File the Main Religious Personnel of Venues for Religious Activities*, and August 2007 *Measures for the Establishment of Religious Institutes*.

Other priorities included raising awareness of regulations and strengthening management and leadership. In order to educate citizens about the laws, educational materials were developed including Chinese and Uyghur versions of a *Legal Religious Affairs Management Reader*, *Legal System for Religious Work Textbook* and *Minority Religious Issues and Law Reader*. Copies of relevant regulations were also distributed. In addition, the regional government organized activities around an annual legal awareness month, as well as a “preventative” awareness month in June, including a visit for cadres to the Urumchi Number 3 Prison. Finally, the review proclaimed success toward standardization of law enforcement, strengthening of cadres, and wide-scale legal seminars.⁵² Given the emphasis on publicizing religious legislation, it is ironic that the 2001 amendments to the regional Religious Affairs Regulations were not made public on XUAR government websites.

In July of 2012, authorities announced that the regional SARA would carry out research to revise the regional Religious Affairs Regulations yet again. According to an official announcement, the regional SARA conducted research in 20 counties in Yili, Kashgar and Hotan prefectures, as well as interior provinces and Tibet. It found the need to revise the laws in order to address five issues summarized here:

- 1- Strengthen leadership of religious work for cadres as well as law enforcers.
- 2- Strengthen publicity to increase legal knowledge for both clergy and believers.

⁵² 自治区民委宗教局 (Committee of the Autonomous Region People). 加强法制宣传教育 努力提升民族宗教工作水平(Strengthening Legal Propaganda and Education to Promote Ethnic Religious Work Level). 法治新疆 (Xinjiang Legislature). Retrieved from <http://www.fzxj.cn/pufa/zcnr.asp?id=342&type=0>.

- 3- Guarantee freedom of religion. Strengthen ties between party cadres and religious personnel, and systematize stipends for religious personnel.
- 4- Strengthen the ranks of religious personnel and improve their legal training. Large-scale political training is needed to improve their awareness of the law, stimulate patriotism, encourage socialism, oppose ethnic separatism, and to resist religious extremism and the ideological bases of illegal religious activities.
- 5- Clean up the legal system, raise the level of religious administration.⁵³

The 34th Regional People's Congress adopted the law in 2012, effective in 2013, according to Chinese news sources.⁵⁴ Much like the 2001 amendments, the full text of the 2012 amendments is not available on public websites. To confuse the picture further, one analysis states that the new legislation modifies 70 percent of the original 1994 legislation, with no reference to the 2001 amendments.⁵⁵

In November 2012, the regional SARA also announced that it would refine its administrative procedures, in line with an August 2012 government notice, with the main goals to establish clearer work processes, organize documentation, strengthen legal training for personnel and strengthen publicity about religious management regulations, such as the month of legal awareness sponsored in June.⁵⁶ Although officials continue to underscore the need to make legislation more clear and accessible, the latest Religious Affairs Regulations remain difficult to find on government sites in 2013. Chinese news sources did provide information on some provisions of the 2012 amendments to the XUAR Religious Affairs Regulations. The full text of one provision is listed:

⁵³ 自治区民委宗教局 (Committee of the Autonomous Region People). (2012, July 19). 开展《自治区宗教事务条例》立法调研 (Begin "Autonomous Region Religious Work Regulations" Legislation Research). 法治新疆 (Xinjiang Legislature). Retrieved from <http://www.fzxj.cn/view.asp?id=188231>.

⁵⁴ 地方立法网 (Local Law). (2012, December 20). 新疆: 人民政府常务会议审议通过《自治区宗教事务条例(修订草案)》 (Xinjiang: Executive meeting to consider the adoption of "Regulation on Religious Affairs of the Autonomous Region of the CCP Government" (Amendment Draft). Retrieved from http://www.locallaw.gov.cn/dflfw/Desktop.aspx?PATH=dfllw/sy/xxll&Gid=cbce07a7-e73f-4fff-9970-3cccaef69e94&Tid=Cms_Info.

⁵⁵ 维吾尔在城 (Uighurbiz). (2012, September 28). 新疆拟修订宗教事务条例 不得复制传播非法宗教出版物 (Proposed Amendments of Regulations on Religious Affairs of Xinjiang Deny Copying Illegal Religious Publications). Retrieved from <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/5778>.

⁵⁶ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2012, November 28). 新疆自治区宗教局大力规范依法行政工作 (Xinjiang Religious Authority Bureau Vigorously Standardize Administrative Work Laws). Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx../dfgz/18027.htm>; The original announcement can be found here: 新疆维吾尔自治区人民政府办公厅 (Office of the People's Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region). (2012, August 13). 关于开展自治区机关2012年度依法行政考核的通知 (Administration According to Law on State Organs in 2012 – Examination Notification). 自治区依法行政年度考核 (Annual Examination of State Administration According to Law). <http://law.xinjiang.gov.cn/fzbgs/xzkh/zzqgzdt/2012/209799.htm>.

- “No organization or individual may use the Internet, mobile phones, or mobile storage devices to produce, reproduce or disseminate illegal religious publications, nor copy, sell or distribute illegal printing or publications.”

Others are summarized:

- Publications and multimedia that incite hatred or discrimination, undermine unity, preach separatism, extremism or terrorism, impact harmony or contradict the law are forbidden.
- Citizens of different religions, non-religious citizens, and citizens of the same religion should live in harmony.
- No individual or organization should create conflicts between religions, within a religion, or between religious and non-religious citizens.
- No organization or individual should use religion to disrupt social order, impair people’s health, obstruct national education, marriage, population planning or inheritance regulations, or conduct activities which otherwise damage national interests, public benefit or citizens’ legal rights.⁵⁷



From top left to bottom right. Panel 1: The mosque raises the nation’s flag

Panel 2: Safety equipment comes to the mosque

Panel 3: Legal publications come to the mosque

Panels 4/5: Laws and regulations come to the mosque

Panel 6: Science and technology come to the mosque

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⁵⁷ 法制网 (Legal Daily). (2012, September 25). 新疆拟修订宗教事务条例 不得复制传播非法宗教出版物 (Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Religious Affairs of Xinjiang – Do Not Copy Illegal Religious Publications). Retrieved from http://www.legaldaily.com.cn/index/content/2012-09/25/content_3868027.htm?node=20908.

The implications of this legislation serve to take previous legislation, including the 2001 amendments, into a digital sphere—extending existing legislation targeting illegal publications to the Internet, mobile phones and mobile storage devices. Otherwise, the emphasis on harmony between different communities of believers, the fight against the “three evil forces,” and the overarching goal to maintain national laws and interests are lifted directly from the 2001 amendments.

Crackdown on “Three Evil Forces”—Terrorism, Separatism and Religious Extremism

As regulations for religious management have increased and grown more complex since 2005, the government has also intensified its rhetoric and policy against illegal religious activities. The post-9/11 discursive shift referring to illegal activity as part of “three evil forces” has linked Uyghurs’ religion to terrorism and separatism, and been accompanied by “Strike hard” campaigns of growing intensity. These campaigns have connected Uyghurs’ religious practice to the threat of terrorism in national propaganda and discourse, often with little or no evidence to back up government claims.

Beginning in May of 2005, the XUAR government announced an intensification of the “Strike hard” campaign against the “three evil forces.” In September it declared East Turkestan forces as China’s primary terrorist threat and acknowledged an increase in police surveillance and political controls.⁵⁸

The Propaganda Department has also played up the terrorist threat in official media. In 2006, the XUAR government reported a month-long investigation aimed at “the masterminds of religious extremist forces.”⁵⁹ As part of its propaganda, the XUAR government released a series of films including *On the Spot Report: The Crimes of Eastern Turkestan Terrorist Terrorism* and a movie series entitled *Tengritagh Jiddi Herikette* or *Extreme Activities in the Tianshan Mountains* to strengthen its rhetoric. Scholars argue that in the media, the religious dimension of Uyghur dissent has been highly pronounced, to the extent that all Uyghurs have been vilified as one of China’s internal enemies.⁶⁰

An incident in early 2007 created the justification for the harshest crackdown yet. On January 5, 2007, Chinese authorities announced that they had conducted a raid on a terrorist facility. Both scholars and rights activists abroad publicly doubted the details of the raid and the alleged terrorist connection, calling it a possible excuse to increase

⁵⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2005, October 11). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/CECCannRpt2005.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, April 25). *Uighurs Face Extreme Security Measures; Official Statements on Terrorism Conflict*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=45823>.

⁶⁰ Kanat, Kilic. (2012, December 12). “War on Terror” as a Diversionary Strategy: Personifying Minorities as Terrorists in the People’s Republic of China. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. p. 519.

religious repression in the fight against the “three evil forces.”⁶¹ In March 2007, a renewed “Strike hard” campaign was announced against the “three evil forces.”⁶² In July, the Ministry of Public Security called for “greatly” strengthening intelligence gathering in the region and in August, then-XUAR Party Chief Wang Lequan called for further measures to fight separatism. In August, the Supreme People’s Court announced it had launched a work program to have judicial institutions nationwide aid XUAR courts. Jiang Xingchang, Supreme People’s Court Vice President, said that “religious extremism” and “international terrorism” remain “fully active” in the XUAR.⁶³

As China prepared for the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, it focused media coverage on two new alleged terrorist incidents in which the actual details of the situations were unclear. Chinese media reported there was an incident in January in which a terrorist cell conspiring to attack the Olympics had been dismantled by security forces in Urumchi, and yet again, overseas media found the reports impossible to verify. Then in March, XUAR government officials held a press conference and announced that on March 7, an airplane bound for Urumqi was forced to land, and two weeks later the government denounced the incident as another act of terrorism. Few details were released about the incident, except that the perpetrators carried Pakistani passports and that one was an ethnically Uyghur woman. Once again, the report was impossible to verify.

CASE STUDY: On December 20, 2008, Miradil Yasin (20) and Mutellip Táyip (19) distributed leaflets at Xinjiang University’s campus calling on students to hold a peaceful demonstration against tobacco and alcohol sellers in conjunction with two other Urumchi universities. University staff notified public security offices, who took the two students into detention for the “reactionary” and “malicious” leaflets that threaten “stability.” In the aftermath, “the three universities reported taking measures to strengthen propaganda campaigns and oversight of students.” The current whereabouts of Miradil and Mutellip are unknown. Xinjiang Medical University referred to the incident as “illegal religion” and said the incident proves that the “fight against separatism” remained “complex and severe.”

After these incidents in the months prior to the Olympics, XUAR officials announced they would intensify the crackdown on the “three evil forces” even further. Wang Lequan was quoted in the Xinjiang Daily saying “leaders at all levels must deeply understand that

⁶¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2007, January 9). *Chinese government’s claims of Uyghur terrorism still lack substance*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-releases/chinese-governments-claims-uyghur-terrorism-still-lack-substance>.

⁶² Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, March 17). *Xinjiang Authorities Pledge Crackdown Against “Three Forces,”* Retrieved from <http://cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=103454>.

⁶³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCannRpt2007.pdf>. p. 106.

the struggle against the ‘three forces’ is one of life or death.”⁶⁴ In August 2008, Chinese media reported that XUAR courts would “regard ensuring [state] security and social stability [as] their primary task.”⁶⁵ In September 2008, Regional Chairman Nur Bekri called for “increasing the strength of punishment for illegal religious activities and curbing, in accordance with law, underground activities to teach religion and sermonize.” He added that “we must never allow fanatic religious ideas to gain ground, nor must we allow religious extremist forces to flourish and see success.” In October 2008, a region-wide anti-separatist education campaign, which included religious personnel among others, was launched.⁶⁶

On July 5, 2009, a major outbreak of deadly unrest in the East Turkestan regional capital of Urumqi was violently suppressed by Chinese security forces. The Uyghur protestors were demonstrating the unlawful deaths of Uyghur toy factory workers in Guangdong province by a Han Chinese mob. On the days following the July 5 unrest, Han Chinese civilians targeted Uyghur residents of Urumqi in revenge attacks.

⁶⁴ Beck, Lindsay. (2008, August 14). *China warns of "life and death" battle with terror*. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/08/14/us-olympics-china-xinjiang-idUSPEK5443320080814>.

⁶⁵ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCannRpt2007.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 247.

Even before the unrest, the Uyghur threat in the form of the “three evil forces” was already high on the official agenda in East Turkestan. In March 2009, Nur Bekri attributed security threats to “Western hostile forces” and to the “three evil forces” of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. In June, a XUAR party official reported to Chinese media that authorities had rooted out several terrorist cells in Kashgar city in the first few months of 2009, providing no further details.⁶⁷ The unrest of July 5 did not break this momentum, but rather, served as a new opportunity for crackdown on religion.

Religious repression was a feature of the government policy after the unrest. On July 11, 2009, a report from the regional SARA indicated that religious activities were disrupted. Although some mosques remained open in the tense days after the unrest, other did not according to the report, which stated: “Some imams proposed that religious believers need not collectively gather and worship in mosques during sensitive periods and could worship at home.”⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the unrest, authorities made major moves to restrict information in East Turkestan, notably limiting Internet access as well as international calls for an unprecedented ten months. XUAR authorities passed a new regulation on information promotion in September, effective in December which one official claimed would address the role of the Internet in allowing the “three evil forces” to influence the July unrest.⁶⁹

New legislation passed at the end of 2009 further increased the government’s power to criminalize religious activity. The XUAR People’s Congress passed a revision to the XUAR Regulation on the Comprehensive Management of Social Order on December 29, 2009, effective on February 1, 2010. In Article V, the newly revised regulation places “striking hard” and preventing the “criminal activities of ethnic separatist forces, violent terrorist forces, and religious extremist forces that endanger state security” as the first of twelve main tasks.⁷⁰ This call to strengthen XUAR courts gained national momentum when in 2010 the Supreme People’s Court issued an opinion on nationwide work to assist the XUAR court system, such as strengthening “guidance” for trying cases connected to the “three evil forces.” At a training for lawyers in December 2010, XUAR Justice

⁶⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>. pp. 128, 246.

⁶⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, August 6). *Authorities Pledge Crackdown Following Xinjiang Demonstration and Clashes*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=125931>.

⁶⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCannRpt2010.pdf>. p. 205.

⁷⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, February 26). *Revised Social Order Regulation in Xinjiang Places New Emphasis on State Security*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=135388&PHPSESSID=71d2779ef7fc93839ff672f5fd58d2d4>.

Department head Abliz Hoshur called on ethnic minority lawyers to “fully utilize the weapon of the law” to battle the “three evil forces.”⁷¹

In July 2011, another alleged terrorist clash occurred in Hotan, and in August XUAR Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian reiterated a pledge to curb illegal religious activities, part of a new “Strike hard” campaign. The XUAR CCP annual report in October 2011 called for continuing measures to strike hard against the “three evil forces.” This was followed shortly by an official media report of another terrorist incident with very little details, and which official media claimed was a clash between police and terrorists but which rights groups claimed was actually between police and men, women and children fleeing curbs on their religion. RFA reported that among the extrajudicial killings of seven Uyghurs in the incident may have been a 6-year-old boy who went missing at that time.⁷²



Resist illegal religious activities, protect religious harmony and stability. © Anonymous

⁷¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>. p. 198.

⁷² Radio Free Asia. (2012, January 8). *Six-year-old Missing After 'Terror' Incident*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/pishan-01082012183247.html>

State media reported in January 2012 that XUAR authorities would deploy public security officers to rural areas, and among their main tasks would be to crack down on illegal religious activities.⁷³ Following another disputed terrorist incident in June, three Uyghurs were sentenced to death in November for an alleged attempt to hijack a plane in Hotan. Xinhua reported that the men shouted religious slogans before attacking the plane's cockpit with a crutch as their weapon, however human rights organizations including UHRP noted that the incident was not a terrorist attack but instead was precipitated by an argument over a seat.⁷⁴ In November 2012, Nur Bekri commented at the 18th China National People's Congress that he sees a long-term, complicated and fierce battle against the "three evil forces."⁷⁵

⁷³ China.org. (2012, January 30). *Xinjiang to recruit 8,000 police officers*. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/china/2012-01/30/content_24507884.htm.

⁷⁴ UHRP. (2012, December 12). *UAA condemns harsh sentences handed down to four Uyghurs and the vilification of Uyghur democracy leader Ms. Rebiya Kadeer*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/uaa-condemns-harsh-sentences-handed-down-four-uyghurs-and-vilification-uyghur>.

⁷⁵ Global Times. (2012, November 11). *Xinjiang governor sees "long-term, complicated, fierce" battle against separatism*. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/743507.shtml>.

Violations of the Right to Religious Freedom among Uyghurs in East Turkestan

UHRP has recorded a series of egregious violations to freedoms of religious belief and practice in East Turkestan despite guarantees in Chinese and international law. The documentation presented in this section leads to the conclusion that the Chinese state is strictly implementing a series of restrictive regulations at various levels of government to narrow the freedom of Uyghurs to express their religious beliefs and practices. In a number of concerning cases, Uyghurs have been punished for “illegal” activities mainly because they were unclear as to what constituted a criminal offense under Chinese law governing religion. These Uyghurs simply believed they were practicing their religion either as they had always individually done or according to collective Uyghur cultural norms.

In compiling this section, UHRP interviewed Uyghur witnesses to repression of religious freedom in East Turkestan who have left China in the last seven years. In addition, UHRP collected online material from Chinese official sources detailing the government’s systemic and repressive apparatus in putting into operation increasing religious restrictions. UHRP gathered evidence on violations of religious freedom among Uyghurs from the western media, academic papers, non-Chinese government sources, as well as human rights NGOs from the past seven years.

Imams and Büwi

A White Paper issued by the Chinese State Council Information Office in 2003 entitled *History and Development of Xinjiang* claims “religious personages... take the initiative in...exercising supervision over the government in respect to the implementation of the policy of freedom of religious belief.”⁷⁶ Evidence indicates the very opposite occurs in East Turkestan and imams and female religious figures, called *büwi* in Uyghur, are subjected to ever-tighter state imposed controls.

Oversight for the training of imams in East Turkestan is the responsibility of the state-run Islamic Association of China. Education of imams is primarily aimed at ensuring loyalty to the state and managing the relationship between clergy and worshippers. According to the SARA, the primary qualification for state recognition is that imams “love the motherland, support the socialist system and the leadership of the Communist Party of China, comply with national laws, [and] safeguard national unity, ethnic unity, and social stability.”⁷⁷

A middle-aged Uyghur interviewee who had recently returned from East Turkestan revealed to UHRP that many young Uyghurs with a desire to join the religious clergy do

⁷⁶ Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. (2003, May). *History and Development of Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/index.htm>.

⁷⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2012, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2012*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112shrg76190/pdf/CHRG-112shrg76190.pdf>.

not do so because of government restrictions regulating who can serve as an imam. The interviewee added that a young Uyghur known to him declined a government appointed position in the state religious administration because of his opposition to government restrictions. According to the interviewee, the government intimidated him into taking the post at a state-run Islamic institute in Kashgar Prefecture although the means of coercion were not revealed.⁷⁸



Imams at the Olympic torch relay in Kashgar on June 18, 2008. © Associated Press

The government dismisses imams who exhibit weak displays of loyalty to the state version of Islam once in post, as in the case of Kashgari imam Abdulhamid who was removed from his post because he “had simply become too popular and that his stress on religious knowledge and the development of the Uyghur people was seen as subversive.”⁷⁹ In a December 2011 speech delivered to “patriotic religious personages,” XUAR Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian highlighted the importance of state-led training for imams to include instruction on their role in promoting state policies.⁸⁰

UHRP interviewed a former imam of a mosque near Kumul. The interviewee underwent training at a local Islamic institute from October 1998 to October 2001 with 30 other students. There were three conditions for entry into the institute: the candidate was a

⁷⁸ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

⁷⁹ Waite, Edmund. (2006, September). *The impact of the state on Islam amongst the Uyghurs: religious knowledge and authority in the Kashgar Oasis*. Central Asian Survey. (London: Routledge). pp. 251-265.

⁸⁰ China Xinjiang. (2011, December 26). *Training for Religious Personages*. Retrieved from http://en.chinaxinjiang.cn/01/01/201112/t20111226_211515.htm.

graduate from high school, did not have a record of anti-government views and had a clean family history regarding political activity. The interviewee related how half of the trainees' day was spent in political study. The content of the political study included the compatibility of Islam with socialist principles and the necessity for religious preaching to be acceptable to the Chinese government. Scholar Kevin Newton writes that imams in training in East Turkestan are regularly "forced to take mandatory classes such as 'Marxism against Religion' or 'The Works of Deng Xiaoping.'"⁸¹

The former imam told UHRP that students at the institute were keen to learn about Islam, and in order to do so they paid lip service to the political study instructors. However, if the trainees did not cooperate with the government in political instruction, they were dismissed from the institute. Trainees did learn how to recite the Koran and to speak some Arabic according to the former imam, but the meaning of the Koranic verses they recited and the Hadith, a cornerstone of Islamic education, were not taught. According to the interviewee, Koranic education lasted just one year of the three spent in training and the Chinese government published all books provided to the students.⁸²

State control of sermons through the Islamic Association of China has been long documented. As far back as 1993-4, scholar Edmund Waite recorded once-a-month additions of "government influenced statements" into sermons at one village mosque. Waite's informant told him that these statements included Muslim respect and loyalty towards "political authorities."⁸³ Between 2007 and 2011, the CECC documented persistent state interference in the sermons of imams through the Islamic Association of China's Islamic Affairs Steering Committee, which was established in 2001.⁸⁴ The committee undertook a project to write suggested sermons for imams that reflect "party values." Confirmation of new imams became conditional on familiarity with these sermons.⁸⁵ In 2008, the Islamic Association of China issued a new policy to establish a

⁸¹ Newton, Kevin. (2011). *Requirements of Religion in Xinjiang NAR*. The Monitor 2011 Special Edition. Retrieved from <http://web.wm.edu/so/monitor/issues/16-SE/5-newton.pdf>.

⁸² Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

⁸³ Waite, Edmund. (2006, September). *The impact of the state on Islam amongst the Uyghurs: religious knowledge and authority in the Kashgar Oasis*. Central Asian Survey. (London: Routledge). 251-265.

⁸⁴ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCAnnRpt2007.pdf>; Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, October 31). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg45233/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg45233.pdf>; Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCAnnRpt2010.pdf>; Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCAnnRpt2007.pdf>.

corps of liaisons within each province to deal with matters involving the interpretation of religious texts.⁸⁶ In 2010, it published its fourth collection of sermons, one of which called on Muslims to “unite love of country with love of Islam” and “believe in the Communist Party and government” instead of “rumors” deemed to spark unrest.⁸⁷ In 2013, the Islamic Association of China announced it would release its fifth collection of sermons.⁸⁸

In April 2011, SARA Director Wang Zuo’an praised the scripture interpretation work for raising the “political caliber” of religious leaders and for promoting “positive positions within Islam that suit social progress.” He also described the work as beneficial for “rallying the Muslim masses even more tightly around the Party and government” and called for future work to “even better conform to the needs of our country’s social development.” In its work plan for 2011, SARA said it would “help” the Islamic Association of China in its scripture interpretation work and change of leadership.⁸⁹

The former imam interviewed by UHRP confirmed political manipulation of sermons by the government. The interviewee told UHRP: “In my sermons, I had to explain national law, local law, party rules and religious law to the people who came to the mosque to worship. Sometimes they asked questions about what was permissible and I didn’t always know how to answer. When I did discuss religion in my sermons, it had to be kept short. If any of the people in the mosque asked detailed questions about religious doctrine, a party observer would stop the questioner.”⁹⁰ Scholar Xiaowei Zang also records the presence of informers at small neighborhood mosques specifically charged with listening to imam’s sermons.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, October 31). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg45233/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg45233.pdf>; Chinese Religions (Online). (2009, June 8). *Islamic Association of China Proposes Launching ‘Establishing Harmonious Mosques’ Activity [Zhongguo yixie changyi kaizhan ‘chuangjian hexie qingzhensi’ huodong]*. Retrieved from http://www.xjass.com/mzwh/content/2009-07/01/content_87945.htm

⁸⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCannRpt2010.pdf>.

⁸⁸ 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2013, January 18). *国家宗教事务局2013年工作要点 (State Administration for Religious Affairs 2013 Points)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xwjj/18853.htm>.

⁸⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>. pp. 101-2.

⁹⁰ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

⁹¹ Zang Xiaowei. (Summer 2012). *Uyghur Islamic Piety in Ürümqi, Xinjiang*. Chinese Sociological Review: Vol. 44, No. 4. pp. 88-100.

On-going state training and monitoring of imams maintains the government's ability to control the message that religious leaders relay to worshippers. The former imam explained how he had to go to the village authorities every week to receive instructions on which religious regulations to announce in the mosque at Friday prayers. These included regulations on illegal religious activities, speech, study and gatherings. The former imam was also told to tell the worshippers in the mosque that if anyone of them had witnessed any "unusual" religious activities, these had to be reported to the police. The interviewee added this included those people who held "different ideas," even though this term was never fully explained to him.⁹²

In April 2006, XUAR Party Secretary, Wang Lequan said that the XUAR government would intensify its work on religion and strengthening the "ideological and political consciousness" of religious figures. This campaign was intensified in advance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics with specific training goals. Xinjiang Daily announced in February 2008 that the government would carry out training for 29,000 religious figures from 2009-2012, and the article noted that 43,700 participants had already been trained since 2001.⁹³

Nur Bekri echoed the plan to increase training in a September 2008 speech: "We should always step up the ideological development of patriotic religious personages and the building of their ranks as the key link to be grasped in our religious work."⁹⁴ In October, XUAR CCP Standing Committee member Shawket Imin also called on CCP cadres from the United Front Work Department to strengthen "leadership" and "education" of religious people, as well as strengthen "cultivation and training of religious leaders." Furthermore, CECC reported that in February 2009 officials in Yarkand threatened to dismiss any imams who missed three political study sessions.⁹⁵

CASE STUDY: Authorities arrested imam Adil Qarim during a "security sweep" at a mosque in Kucha County in the aftermath of a reported series of bomb attacks in the county on August 10, 2008. An individual accused of being involved in the August 10 incident attended the mosque where Qarim served. Qarim denied having any links to the attack. However, he was sentenced in August 22, 2008 to life-long imprisonment and his current whereabouts is unknown.

⁹² Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

⁹³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, September 20). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2006*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt06/CECCannRpt2006.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, March 12). *Xinjiang Authorities Strengthen Controls Over Religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=118959>; Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

Control of imams by the state is especially acute during times of tension in East Turkestan. In the aftermath of ethnic unrest in Urumchi in July 2009, Nur Bekri increased his call for strengthening management of religion and “bringing into full play the special role of patriotic religious figures in maintaining ethnic unity.” The training aimed to raise religious leaders’ “consciousness and firmness” in the “battle against extremism.”⁹⁶ Shawket Imin also “called on religious leaders to strengthen their political consciousness and outlined restrictions on their behavior and activities,” in the post-2009 unrest period.⁹⁷ The measures were a continuation of previous policies towards imams post-unrest. Scholar Stephen Hess writes that as a response to the 1990 unrest in the southern township of Baren, authorities required all registered imams to sign pledges of loyalty to the Chinese government.”⁹⁸

Chinese government restrictions have also been reported on *büwi*. According to research by scholars Rachel Harris and Yasin Muhpul, *büwi* “sing at shrine (*mazar*) festivals, they may serve as mourners at funerals, and they conduct healing...rituals...in people’s homes,”⁹⁹ as well as recite the Koran at religious gatherings. *Büwi* were targeted in 2009 by a proposal to the tenth XUAR People’s Political Consultative Conference to draw them under government and Party management, with the stated purpose to educate them on lawful religious activities, and encourage them to report to Party authorities. It recommended that *büwi* apply for training, be vetted for political reliability by the local Islamic Association of China, and outlined training content. The proposal advocated a new bureau to manage *büwi*. CECC notes that while the proposal was not passed, it does reflect a regional trend.¹⁰⁰

In 2009, Radio Free Asia reported that in Peyziwat County, authorities assembled *büwi* from ten surrounding villages in order to train them in state religious policies. Pledges were extracted from the women preventing them “from wearing veils or long dresses, teaching religious texts, and forcing others to participate in religious activities.”¹⁰¹ In the

⁹⁶ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCannRpt2010.pdf>. p. 106.

⁹⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Hess, Stephen E. (2009). *Islam, Local Elites, and China’s Missteps in Integrating the Uyghur Nation*. Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies, 4:7 (July 2009).

⁹⁹ Harris, Rachel and Yasin Muhpul. (2002). *Music of the Uyghurs*. London Uyghur Ensemble. Retrieved from <http://www.uyghurensemble.co.uk/en-html/nf-research-article1.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, June 30). *Xinjiang Authorities Train, Seek to Regulate Muslim Women Religious Figures*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingl=125102>.

¹⁰¹ Vandenbrink, Rachel. (2009, August 21). *Asking for Justice*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/women/uyghur-women-08202009140517.html>; Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2009, August 20). *Xinjiang Authorities Train, Seek to Regulate Muslim Women*

same report, Radio Free Asia described similar training given to 100 *büwi* in Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture in June 2009. In 2010, CECC reported further regulation over *büwi* activities in the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture and in Kashgar.¹⁰²

Trainings for *büwi* occurred once again in Kashgar in 2011. *Büwi* were instructed in the importance of their role for “safeguarding social stability” and “national unity”, as well their obligations to “obey state laws and regulations.”¹⁰³ In August 2012, the Kumul Prefecture government reported that the XUAR Women’s Federation conducted training for *büwi* in July 2012. *Büwi* were instructed in “opposing illegal religious activities,” “correctly guiding the words and deeds of women in religion,” and “love of the motherland.”¹⁰⁴ In an increasing sign of the politicization of the *büwi*’s role, in September 2012, 95 handpicked *büwi* from across East Turkestan were trained in Beijing for 11 days on subjects such as the 12th Five Year Plan and providing “guidance” to rural woman in East Turkestan.¹⁰⁵

Hajj

There is no absolute freedom among Uyghurs to complete the Hajj pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam that each Muslim is expected to undertake. Uyghurs are generally not permitted to undertake Hajj, or Umrah (the pilgrimage to Mecca that can be completed at any time of the year), unless it is with an expensive and chaperoned tour organized by the state Islamic Association of China. The few Uyghur applicants chosen are carefully vetted and provided with “patriotic education” before their departure.¹⁰⁶

Religious Figures. Retrieved from

<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/newsletterListing.phpd?mode=print&NLdate=20090730&show=RLGN&PHPSESSID=d099ac53dbf0a48211d9f338cb1a73a4>.

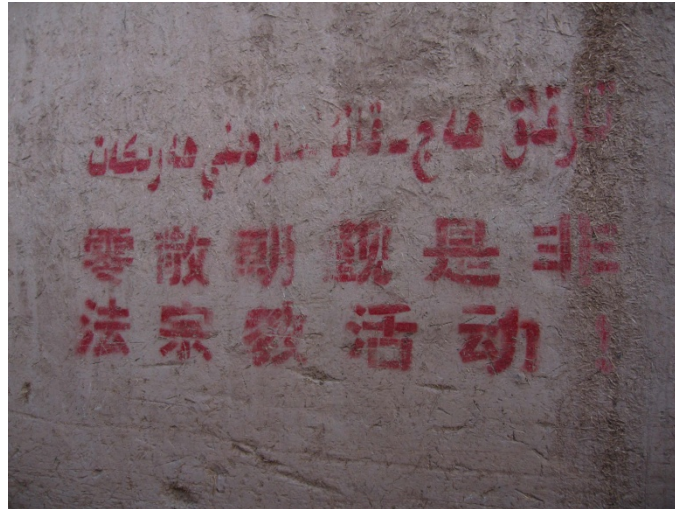
¹⁰² Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2007, April 27). *Xinjiang Authorities Tighten Controls Over Muslim Women*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=139388>.

¹⁰³ 中国喀什市 (Kashgar City). (2011, October 24). 喀什市举办 “女布维” 培训班 (*Kashgar City to Conduct Female Bouvet Training Class*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjks.gov.cn/Item/19052.aspx>.

¹⁰⁴ 哈密市政府网 (Kumul City Government Website). 教育和引导 “布维” 女性，发挥妇女在经济社会中的作用 (*Education and Guidance: “Büwi” Women Show Women Roles in Social-Economy*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjblk.gov.cn/10038/10038/12594/12596/2012/245005.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ 天山网 (Tianshan Net). (2012 September 27). 新疆优秀村妇代会主任赴京考察学习收获颇丰 (*Xinjiang’s Outstanding Village Women Substitute Director Hui for a Fruitful Beijing Visit to Observe and Study*). Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com/news/content/2012-09/27/content_7287387.htm.

¹⁰⁶ Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uighur Muslims yearn for liberal Hajj regime*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>; U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. (2007). *International Religious Freedom Report 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90133.htm>.



Unofficial individual hajj is an illegal religious activity! © Glenn Mott / The New Yorker

On September 14, 2006, UHRP reported the case of as many as 6,000 Uyghurs in Rawalpindi awaiting Saudi visas to travel for Umrah. Prior to 2006, Uyghurs had circumvented the “official tours only” policy by traveling to Pakistan and applying for Saudi visas in Islamabad. According to Uyghurs in Pakistan, the Saudi embassy in Islamabad stopped issuing visas to Uyghurs after a request from the Chinese government. During a meeting between the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan and Uyghur representatives from the group awaiting Saudi visas, the Uyghurs were told to return to China. UHRP reported in September 2006 that “people who did not immediately return to East Turkistan would be suspended from their government posts,...any retirees would lose their pensions, and...people who were neither government employees or retirees could expect punishments to be leveled against members of their families.”¹⁰⁷

In a September 17, 2006 news article, Saudi foreign ministry officials in Jeddah stated: “According to Saudi rules, non-Saudis are only issued Umrah and Hajj visas in their countries of origin.”¹⁰⁸ However, a second news article, published on October 4, reported that the Saudi embassy had granted visas to “hundreds” of Uyghurs in Pakistan on “humanitarian grounds.”¹⁰⁹ The reversal of policy did not prevent Chinese government reprisals against Uyghurs involved in the incident. On July 9, 2007, UHRP reported on the detention of businessman and Uyghur activist Osman Alihan. Alihan was one of the

¹⁰⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2006, September 14). *Press Release: Uyghur pilgrims denied Saudi visas in Pakistan*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-releases/uyghur-pilgrims-denied-saudi-visas-pakistan>.

¹⁰⁸ Zeenews.com. (2006, September 17). *Chinese not given Haj visas in Pak: Deccan Herald*. Retrieved from http://zeenews.india.com/news/newspapers/chinese-not-given-haj-visas-in-pak-deccan-herald_323173.html.

¹⁰⁹ The Uyghur American Association. (2006, October 5). *Saudi Arabia: Chinese Muslims to get Haj Visas in Pakistan*. Retrieved from <http://uyghuramerican.org/old/articles/577/1/SAUDI-ARABIA-CHINESE-MUSLIMS-TO-GET-HAJ-VISAS-IN-PAKISTAN/info@uyghuramerican.org>.

organizers of peaceful demonstrations held in front of the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad in August 2006 that protested the denial of Saudi entry visas to Uyghurs. Alihan was one of around 20 Uyghurs named on a “wanted list” given to the Pakistani authorities by the Chinese government.¹¹⁰

Since 2006, the Chinese government has made successive moves to tighten restrictions on Hajj participation by Uyghurs. In 2006, the Islamic Association of China instituted two measures. The first was to create a section to oversee Umrah and Hajj pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia.¹¹¹ The second was to broker an agreement with the Saudi Ministry of Pilgrimage whereby pilgrims from China could only receive visas if applications were made in Beijing and applicants had a confirmed place on an official tour.¹¹²

In July 2007, the XUAR government announced that the Public Security Bureau would strengthen passport controls as part of its campaign to curb unauthorized pilgrimages.¹¹³ Chinese authorities moved to increase the confiscation of passports issued to Uyghurs, as well as limit issuance of passports.¹¹⁴ On June 27, 2007, Radio Free Asia quoted officials from Urumchi and Kashgar who confirmed the confiscation of passports in their jurisdictions. One official from Kashgar stated that only Muslims with passports, “especially the Uyghurs,” were targets of the campaign. The official added that the measure to register passports with police or risk their invalidation was aimed at “preventing people from going on the Hajj pilgrimage.”¹¹⁵ An Urumchi official said: “The authorities will keep the passports for the public. If they want to go to other countries, they can come to fetch their passports. The authorities will give the passports

¹¹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2007, July 9). *Uyghur detained in Pakistan, at risk of extradition to China*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/old/articles/368/1/Uyghur-detained-in-Pakistan-at-risk-of-extradition-to-China/index.html>.

¹¹¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, May 30). *Islamic Congress Establishes Hajj Office, Issues New Rules*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=53393>.

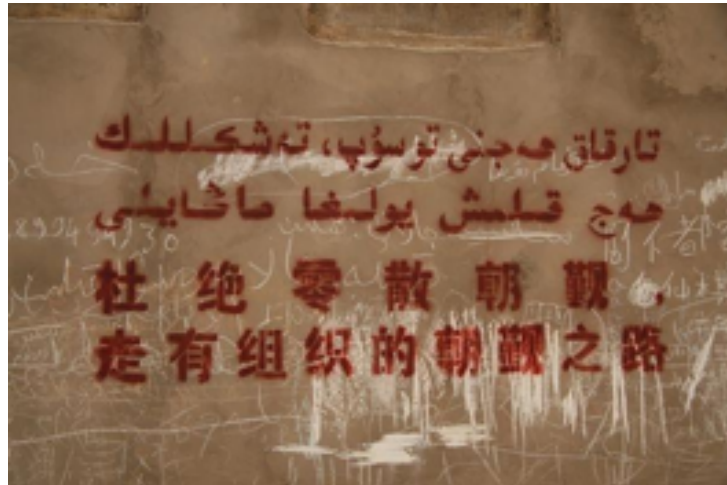
¹¹² Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, December 8). *Government increases Controls Over Muslim Pilgrimages*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=77037>.

¹¹³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. (p. 91). Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCannRpt2007.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. (2004 February 25, 2004). *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27768.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Guljekre and Mudie, Luisetta. (2007, June 27). *China Confiscates Muslims Passports*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_passports-20070627.html; See also Clarke, Michael. *Widening the net: China's anti-terror laws and human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. (2010 July 19). *The International Journal of Human Rights*: 14:4. (Australia: Griffith University). 542-558.

back to them accordingly.”¹¹⁶ However, on July 20, 2007 citing a World Uyghur Congress spokesman the Associated Press reported: “Uighurs who wanted to leave China could do so only after being officially invited by a formal organization, and in some cases would have to put down a deposit of 50,000 yuan (US\$6,600; €4,780) to retrieve their passports.”¹¹⁷ The deposit represents double the per capita GDP of East Turkestan and over five times the per capita GDP of Kashgar.



Prevent unofficial individual Hajj, let's take the path of organized Hajj
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The 2007 confiscation drive came a few days after a June 18 speech by then-XUAR Party Chief, Wang Lequan warning against “illegal” pilgrimages. Citing a June 19 Tengritagh News article on the speech entitled *Tightening the Pilgrimage Policy and Protecting the Public*, Radio Free Asia reported, “Wang called on the government to tighten its pilgrimage policy and to harshly punish ‘illegal’ pilgrimage organizers. He said the government should halt underground pilgrimage activities and either restructure the current pilgrimage policy or make new pilgrimage policy.”¹¹⁸

According to official reports, 10,000 Muslims were allowed to take the Hajj in 2007, but they faced extra restrictions including patriotic education prior to departure and restrictions on activities within Mecca.¹¹⁹ In the same year, the government confiscated

¹¹⁶ Guljekre and Mudie, Luisetta. (2007, June 27). *China Confiscates Muslims Passports*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_passports-20070627.html

¹¹⁷ Associated Press. (2007, July 20). *China prevents Muslim minority from traveling for Hajj*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/articles/25722/?&place=china-taiwan§ion=islam>.

¹¹⁸ Guljekre and Mudie, Luisetta. (2007, June 27). *China Confiscates Muslims Passports*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_passports-20070627.html

¹¹⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, October 31). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg45233/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg45233.pdf>.

more than 2,000 passports from Uyghurs and arbitrarily detained men between the ages of 50-70 for participating “illegally” in the Hajj.¹²⁰

The policy of passport confiscations in advance of the Hajj remained in place for the 2012 pilgrimage. UHRP received unconfirmed reports of confiscations by police in Urumchi and Ghulja. According to Uyghur informants, police conducted targeted searches if Uyghurs known to have passports did not hand them in to police.¹²¹ Uyghur residents of Urumchi told The Hindu newspaper in interviews published in an article dated October 29, 2011 that the “IAC [Islamic Association of China] rarely accepted [Uyghur Hajj] applications, and police stations across Xinjiang had, in recent months, completely stopped issuing passports. Without ‘connections’, they said, it was impossible to obtain a passport and travel to Makkah.”¹²²

The National reported in 2010 on China’s government restrictions on pilgrimage to Mecca, including the prohibitively high cost of official tours. According to the report, the price of an official tour to Mecca is approximately 30,000 yuan.¹²³ Notwithstanding inequalities in income between Uyghur and Han Chinese, the 2010 per capita GDP of East Turkestan is 25,057 yuan.¹²⁴ Per capita GDP in 2010 in the majority Uyghur cities of Kashgar and Hotan were 8,569 yuan¹²⁵ and 5,035 yuan¹²⁶ respectively. A Uyghur interviewed by The National related how even if Uyghurs had enough money, this did not guarantee a place on a tour, “I have enough money to afford the trip, but it’s hard to get

¹²⁰ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). (2009, May). *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.uscifr.gov/images/AR2009/china.pdf>.

¹²¹ Szadziwski, Henryk. (2012, October 28). *Xinjiang ready for the Party’s Party*. Uyghurnomics. Retrieved from <http://uyghurnomics.blogspot.com/2012/10/xinjiang-ready-for-partys-party.html#more>.

¹²² Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uighur Muslims yearn for liberal Hajj regime*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>.

¹²³ Bardsley, Daniel. (2010, November 12). *China’s Muslims join the Haj, at a high cost*. The National. Retrieved from <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/asia-pacific/chinas-muslims-join-the-haj-at-a-high-cost?pageCount=0>.

¹²⁴ HKTDC Research. (2013, January 3). *Xinjiang: Market Profile*. Retrieved from <http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Fast-Facts/XINJIANG-UYGUR-AUTONOMOUS-REGION/ff/en/1/1X000000/1X06BVVK.htm>.

¹²⁵ HKTDC Research. (2011, September 5). *Kashgar (Kashi) (Xinjiang) City Information*. Retrieved from <http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Fast-Facts/Kashgar-Kashi-Xinjiang-City-Information/ff/en/1/1X000000/1X07329L.htm>.

¹²⁶ HKTDC Research. (2011, September 5). *Hetian (Xinjiang) City Information*. Retrieved from <http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Fast-Facts/Hetian-Xinjiang-City-Information/ff/en/1/1X000000/1X0732L9.htm>.

the visa because we are Uyghur.”¹²⁷ A second Uyghur told The National restrictions in the past five years had “increased.”¹²⁸ Another Uyghur told a reporter from The Hindu, “‘If we want to go on a government trip, we will have to pay 70,000 yuan...Even [if] we can afford it, it’s difficult to get the approval.’ ‘The government,’ he added, ‘does not want Uyghurs to travel on their own. So we can never go to Makkah.’”¹²⁹

Uyghurs interviewed by UHRP in 2012 confirmed the obstacles facing Uyghurs who wish to undertake Hajj. A Uyghur man who left East Turkestan in 2012, said, “Hajj is difficult for Uyghurs,”¹³⁰ while the former imam interviewed by UHRP said he was not able to go to Mecca, even in his role as an imam, because he did not meet the state’s criteria. According to the imam, from his area only two to three people were allowed to go and those people had to be over 70 years of age thereby contradicting official regulations stating pilgrims should be aged between 50 and 70. The same age restriction applied to him despite his position and because he was in his thirties, he could not go to Mecca. The former imam explained: “Some imams with knowledge of Arabic can go before they reach 70 years old as translators for the official tour groups.” He added that elderly people in his community had registered with the state for a place on an official tour, but some had passed away before they were picked to go because of the long wait.¹³¹ According to The Hindu, “age restrictions applied only to pilgrims from Xinjiang,” and Muslims from other parts of China, such as the Hui in Yunnan or Ningxia were not subject to these constraints.¹³²

UHRP and other entities have recorded the implementation of stricter restrictions on Hajj and Umrah since 2010 at national and local levels. In 2010, Deputy Director of the SARA signaled a second wave of crackdowns on illegal pilgrimages.¹³³ The Hindu article outlined how in October 2010, the XUAR government had “‘investigated, prosecuted and curbed’ activities of ‘illegal organisations’ that organised independent pilgrimages. In Uyghur neighborhoods in Urumqi and in Kashgar, the government has put up signs

¹²⁷ Bardsley, Daniel. (2010, November 12). *China’s Muslims join the Haj, at a high cost*. The National. Retrieved from <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/asia-pacific/chinas-muslims-join-the-haj-at-a-high-cost?pageCount=0>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uyghur Muslims yearn for liberal Hajj regime*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>.

¹³⁰ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

¹³¹ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

¹³² Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uyghur Muslims yearn for liberal Hajj regime*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>.

¹³³ Chinaislam.net.cn. (2010 October 10). *2010年度朝觐带队人员、带队伊玛目培训班在兰州举行 (In 2010, Hajj led people with an Imam training course held in Lanzhou)*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/news/xhwx/201208/31-4841.html>.

warning locals to avoid going on ‘illegal’ pilgrimages.”¹³⁴ In October 2010, a SARA official reported that authorities had strengthened control over Hajj participants, which specified that participants would be “subject to ‘patriotic education’ prior to departure and to restrictions on activities within Mecca in a stated effort to guard against contact with ‘East Turkistan forces’...and other ‘enemy forces.’” He also said the government was moving to prevent unauthorized Hajj.¹³⁵ According to scholar Michael Clarke, Uyghur applicants may have to also provide the relevant authorities with a “fee” of up to 20,000 yuan to circumvent such requirements.¹³⁶ A 2012 outline of the SARA’s annual activities includes measures on “strengthening the management of Hajj affairs.”¹³⁷

Local government websites accessed in 2012 confirm the tight restrictions placed on Hajj pilgrims. A list of conditions for Hajj applicants was posted on August 27, 2012 including one on “patriotism” and another requiring a 25,000 yuan deposit.¹³⁸ On September 21, 2012, the Atush City government website detailed training of local party cadres and police conducted by the People’s Court of Atush City on enforcing regulations regarding “unauthorized pilgrimages.”¹³⁹ On May 7, 2012, the China Ethnic Minority Religion website announced trainings of the general public in Urumchi on regulations concerning unauthorized pilgrimages as part of “strengthening the management of religious affairs.” According to the article, not only would the trainings help maintain “unity and stability” and guide Muslims from “religious extremism,” but they would also educate the public that organized tours protect “pilgrim’s economic security and political security.”¹⁴⁰ On February 22, 2012, the Hoboksar Mongol Autonomous County published

¹³⁴ Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uighur Muslims yearn for liberal Hajj regime*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>.

¹³⁵ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>. pp. 101-2.

¹³⁶ Clarke, Michael. *Widening the net: China’s anti-terror laws and human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. (2010 July 19). The International Journal of Human Rights: 14:4. (Australia: Griffith University). 542-558.

¹³⁷ State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C. (2012, January 16). 国家宗教事务局2012年工作要点 (*State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C. 2012 Work Importance*). Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/jqgk/ndgzzyd/bs/12100.htm>.

¹³⁸ 穆斯林在线 (Muslims Online). (2012, August 27). 克拉玛依区：中国穆斯林出国朝觐报名排队指南 (*Qaramay District: Chinese Muslims Go Abroad to Register, Line Up, and Guide Hajj*). Retrieved from http://www.muslimwww.com/html/2012/zhengce_0827/11150.html.

¹³⁹ 新疆阿图什市人民法院 (Xinjiang Atush City People’s Court). (2012, September 21). 阿图什市人民法院召开制止零散朝觐宣传教育活动 (*Atush People’s Court to Convene to Stop Scattered Hajj and Enable Propaganda and Education*). Retrieved from <http://kzats.xjcourt.org/public/detail.php?id=90>.

¹⁴⁰ 中国民族宗教网 (Chinese People’s Religion Online). (2012, may 7). 乌鲁木齐市民宗委组织朝觐政策宣讲活动 (*People in Urumqi City Committee Organizing Hajj Policy Advocacy Activities*). Retrieved from <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/node/300186-1.htm>. For more on this subject see: (China Zhengxie News Agency). (2012, October 25). 有組織朝觐：讓中國穆斯林的朝觐之路更便利 (*Organizing the Hajj*:

details of a local government strategy to counteract unauthorized pilgrimages. After a description of 2011 activities including in-person education and the distribution of printed materials, the statement includes three recommendations for 2012: “strengthening the management of Hajj” by strictly enforcing regulations, increasing education about the dangers of “unauthorized Hajj” and working with religious leaders, organizations and patriotic religious figures to ensure the “correct” interpretation of Hajj customs, conditions and requirements.¹⁴¹ As recently as its 2013 work plan, the SARA listed creating new legislation for governing Hajj as a top priority.¹⁴²

Religious Education

In a 2012 paper, British scholar Xiaowei Zang writes, “The Chinese government has controlled the education system and actively promoted atheism among students as an alternative to the Islamic religion. All the students in the formal education system in Xinjiang are instructed that atheism is a scientific and progressive ideology: science is the truth, and religions, including Islam, are superstitions.”¹⁴³ Quoting Fuller and Lipman, Zang adds that as a result of the Chinese government’s approach, “Some Uyghur parents have worried that ‘their children and grandchildren would not be able to practice Islam in what they regard as the traditional way. Most of them worried that their descendants would be drawn away from their ancestral faith by the materialism of Chinese civilization, embodied in its lack of true religion.’”¹⁴⁴

Promotion of atheism in the state education system does not mean that Chinese authorities permit religious education activities outside of schools. UHRP and other human rights groups have documented the open and widespread suppression of Islamic teaching to Uyghur youths in any structured manner outside of state agencies, as well as serious violations of human rights through punitive measures taken against teachers and students of Islam who operate outside the purview of Chinese authorities.

A middle-aged Uyghur man interviewed by UHRP claimed that to his knowledge the existence of structured private religious classes for Uyghur children had all but disappeared in Kashgar because of the pervasive nature of state surveillance. He added

Permit Chinese Muslim to Conveniently Travel for Hajj). Retrieved from <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/BIG5/n/2012/1025/c34948-19377609.html>.

¹⁴¹ XJHBK. (2012, February 22). 和布克赛尔县民宗委2011年制止零散朝觐工作总结及2012年工作安排 (*In 2011, Hoboksar County Commission Stop Sporadic Hajj by Summarizing Work in Time for 2012 Work Arrangements*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjhbkgov.cn/Article/ShowArticle.aspx?ArticleID=40492>.

¹⁴² 国家宗教事务局 (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C.). (2013, January 18). 国家宗教事务局2013年工作要点 (*State Administration for Religious Affairs 2013 Points*). Retrieved from <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xwj/18853.htm>.

¹⁴³ Zang Xiaowei. (Summer 2012). *Uyghur Islamic Piety in Ürümqi, Xinjiang*. Chinese Sociological Review: Vol. 44, No. 4. 88-100.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

that despite the restrictions on religious education of Uyghur youths, teachers of Islam go house-to-house clandestinely to provide classes to individuals or small groups.¹⁴⁵ In Kumul, the former imam interviewed by UHRP confirmed the existence of underground teaching of Islam to children. In an interview he said he had taught eight to ten children individually in their homes without the state's permission during his tenure as a local imam from 2003 to 2008. Local authorities had informed him that he could not provide religious education to the children in his community.¹⁴⁶

A Uyghur woman told UHRP researchers in 2011 of the continual harassment she received at the hands of the police on account of her teaching of Islam. Originally from Hotan, she had moved to Urumchi. In 2008, she began teaching among her friends and neighbors, including children. She predominately taught lessons on the Koran in a

CASE STUDY: On July 15, 2009, authorities detained Setiwalidi Hashim (40), his son Qasimjan Setiwalidi, son-in-law Tursunjan, and nephew Abdurahman Osmanjan in Dadamtu Township, Ghulja County for allegedly studying and teaching religious activities without government approval. However, the Yining Municipal People's Court did not specify Setiwalidi Hashim's crime during his trial and local authorities would not disclose information.

friend's house. In August 2009, police in Urumchi detained her for conducting "illegal" religious activities, and she was kept in the basement of a detention facility for three days. Her family paid an undisclosed amount of money to the police to secure her release. Once released from detention, she did not feel safe in Urumchi and moved temporarily back to Hotan, where she experienced further harassment from the police. She returned to Urumchi in September 2009, but was arrested again in the security crackdown prior to the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC on October 1 of that year. She was interrogated for seven days and frequently beaten with wooden sticks by police officers. On this occasion her parents paid Urumchi police 50,000 to 60,000 yuan (USD 7,813 to 9,375) to secure her release. Conditions were attached to her release; she was told that she could not

wear her headscarf and that she should not attend gatherings of more than two people. In April 2010, she attended a secret religious meeting that was raided by secret police. All six participants were arrested, separated and questioned overnight. The interviewee declined to disclose information on this latter detention and how she obtained her release for the third time.¹⁴⁷

On June 7, 2010, Radio Free Asia reported that 30 women in Maralbeshi County were fined between 500 and 5,000 yuan (USD 80 to 800) for their involvement in an "illegal" Koranic study group. The women were also forced to sign a pledge that they would not undertake similar activities again. Two women involved with the group were jailed.¹⁴⁸ A

¹⁴⁵ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2011.

¹⁴⁸ He Ping. (2010, June 8). *Police Rain Quran Group*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raid-06082010112725.html>.

month earlier, Radio Free Asia also reported the detention of the daughter of Turghun Polat from the Bulaqdadamtu village near the city of Ghulja. His daughter had organized gatherings for women in the village to discuss religion. She was detained in September 2009 and moved to a facility in Urumchi. The formal charges against her remain unknown.¹⁴⁹

In May 2012, nine Uyghur men were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in Kashgar for their involvement with “illegal” religious schools or religious instruction. According to the official Kashgar Daily newspaper, Sadik Kurban received the heaviest sentence of 15 years in prison for inciting separatism by spreading “extremist religious thought and inciting others to wage a holy war.” *Kashgar Daily* reported that he oversaw the operation of illegal, home-based religious schools throughout East Turkestan over the past decade that provided instruction for 86 students, including young children.¹⁵⁰

UHRP was informed in a 2012 interview of the 1995 beating to death of a religious teacher in the Koghan Village of Kona Sheher Township. The teacher, named Umer Kari, taught young Uyghurs about the Koran and Islamic doctrine. He was arrested for these activities and UHRP’s informant revealed he had witnessed Umer Kari’s beating to death in detention. The interviewee alleged the involvement of a policeman from Kashgar called Ashim, who now serves in a management capacity at the Xinjiang regional police administration. The interviewee added that a second police officer from Kashgar, named Shaman, was also involved in the beating.¹⁵¹

CASE STUDY: On August 1, 2005, XUAR authorities arrested Aminan Momixi (56), a religious instructor, along with 37 of her students. Momixi was teaching the Koran to students between the ages of 7 and 20 in her home in Tuoyipu when police rushed in. They accused Momixi of “illegally possessing religious materials and subversive historical information” and reportedly denied her access to a lawyer. Some children were freed after paying fines ranging from USD 800 to 1,200. Momixi’s whereabouts and sentence remains unknown.

In addition to teachers and organizers of religious education, the Chinese government has consistently targeted students of religious classes. According to information obtained by UHRP in 2008, following attacks in Kucha and Kashgar, 160 Uyghur youths who were living and studying religion in a Hui Muslim area in Yunnan Province were arrested by police dispatched by the XUAR Public Security Bureau. The youths, ranging in age from eight to fourteen years old, were brought to Urumchi and held in Bajiahu Prison. When the parents of these children asked authorities for their release, ten of the children were released after their parents paid 20,000 yuan each. Police told the parents of the 150

¹⁴⁹ Radio Free Asia. (2010, May 13). *Bulaqdadamtu kentidiki turghan polatning 4 perzenti tutqun qilinghan*. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/uyghur/xewerler/tepsili_xewer/ghuljida-tutqun-05132010202025.html/story_main?encoding=latin.

¹⁵⁰ Olesen, Alexa. (2010, June 6). *Chinese Police Raid Religious School; 12 Kids Hurt*. Associated Press. Retrieved from <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/chinese-police-raid-religious-school-12-kids-hurt>.

¹⁵¹ Interviewee 6 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

children who remained in detention their children would be brought to court and sentenced for the crime of participating in “illegal” religious activities.¹⁵²

Six Uyghur boys aged between 14 and 17 from Keriya were arrested in April 2010 for undertaking Koranic studies after school hours according to report published by Radio Free Asia on November 20, 2012. A Uyghur informant told Radio Free Asia reporters in November 2012 that since their arrest the Uyghur boys had been sentenced to eight to fourteen years in prison to be served in Aksu and Yarkand.¹⁵³

According to overseas media reports, 11-year-old Mirzahid Amanullah Shahyari died in police custody in the city of Korla after being detained on May 20, 2012 for studying Islamic prayer and the Koran. Two other students and their teacher were also detained. Mirzahid’s mother, Rizwangul, observed clear signs of torture on his body that contradicted official Chinese claims that he had committed suicide. Police forbade Rizwangul from speaking to other people about his death, and ordered that he be buried immediately. Mirzahid’s father, who lives abroad, had recently obtained permission for Rizwangul, Mirzahid and another son to reside in Turkey, but Chinese authorities had prevented the three from leaving China by confiscating their identity cards and forbidding them from obtaining passports.¹⁵⁴

Chinese police subsequently detained Urumchi resident Pamir Yasin for tweeting information on his Sina Weibo account about Mirzahid’s death. Chinese authorities placed him under 15 days of administrative detention for circulating “distorted information,” under Article 47 of China’s Public Security Administration Punishment Law. The law allows authorities to detain citizens without trial for up to 15 days for “inciting ethnic hatred or ethnic discrimination or publishing ethnically discriminatory or insulting content in printed materials or online.” Police also reportedly detained Mirzahid’s uncle for allegedly giving information to the foreign media.¹⁵⁵

A raid by Chinese police on a religious school in Hotan in June 2012 that led to the injury of 12 Uyghur children reflects the severity with which the Chinese state cracks down on religious activities outside of government control. According to official Chinese media,

¹⁵² Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2008, September 4). *A “Life or Death Struggle” in East Turkestan: Uyghurs face unprecedented persecution in post-Olympic period*; Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012 (confirmed the details of the Yunnan students).

¹⁵³ Turdush, Rukiye. (2012, November 30). *A Muslim Divide in China*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/hui-11302012172354.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Lipes, Joshua. (2012, June 4). *Death in Detention Draws Denigration*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/death-06042012180843.html>.

¹⁵⁵ Abdilim, Mihray and Mamatjan Juma. (2012, June 5). *Uyghur Detained Over Tweets*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/pamir-yasin-06052012181049.html>.

three suspects were seized during the raid on the “illegal religious preaching venue,” a number of staff at the school was injured, and three police officers were also wounded.¹⁵⁶

According to information from the World Uyghur Congress, the school where the raid took place was located on the fifth floor of a six-story building next to the Hotan Communist Party School on Beijing Road. The World Uyghur Congress spoke to local sources that said when police commenced their raid, they first fired tear gas into the religious school, causing panic among the school’s students and teachers. Police then fired shots, but it is unclear what, if any, firearms were used and where they were aimed. Police subsequently entered the school and began beating and kicking the students, prompting witnesses to protest their actions. Local Uyghurs believe police concocted later claims that staff at the school set off an explosive device in order to cover up their actions during the raid.¹⁵⁷

CASE STUDY: Authorities detained twelve Uyghur men from Ghulja and Nelka Counties in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture between March and June 2008 for teaching Islam. The Ili Intermediate People’s Court handed down sentences ranging from three years to life based on their roles as instigators, organizers, or followers of “splitting the state” under Article 103 of the Criminal Law. The men are: Merdan Seyitakhun (sentenced to life imprisonment), Ahmetjan Emet (15 years), Seydehmet Awut (10 years), Erkin Emet (10 years), Abdujilil Abdughupur (6 years), Abdulitip Ablimit (6 years), Mewlanjan Ahmet (10 years), Kurbanjan Semet (10 years), Dolkun Erkin (10 years), Omerjan Memet (10 years), Mutelip Rozi (6 years), and Ubulkasim (3 years).

According to Uyghur sources interviewed by the World Uyghur Congress, 47 individuals, including 11 women, were arrested following the operation, and were accused of owning illegal publications and disturbing social stability. Official Chinese accounts stated that 54 children at the school were “rescued from illegal preachers.”¹⁵⁸ It should be noted there is no indication that any of the children were at the school without the consent of their parents. Many Uyghur parents choose to send their children to underground schools, since there is no other alternative for them to receive instruction in the Islamic faith.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2012, June 6). *Raid on Hotan religious school reflects brutality of official Chinese policies amid crackdown on religion in East Turkestan*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/raid-hotan-religious-school-reflects-brutality-official-chinese-policies-amid>.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Shao Wei. (2012, June 6). *Kids in illegal Xinjiang missionary spot rescued*. China Daily. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/06/content_15480602.htm.

¹⁵⁹ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2012, June 6). *Raid on Hotan religious school reflects brutality of official Chinese policies amid crackdown on religion in East Turkestan*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/raid-hotan-religious-school-reflects-brutality-official-chinese-policies-amid>;

Chinese authorities regularly undertake educational campaigns against teaching of religion in East Turkestan, especially in the state school system. In 2009 CECC cited examples of state activity against “illegal” religious education in Ghulja city and Maralbeshi near Kashgar.¹⁶⁰ In Ghulja, the aim of the training was to “weaken religious consciousness and uphold a civilized and healthy life’ among ethnic minority women, young adults, and juveniles.”¹⁶¹ On December 15, 2011, Deutsche Welle reported on how understanding of “illegal” expressions of religion among these social groups in Ghulja city had been reinforced in a second education campaign.¹⁶²

Scholar Stephen Hess states that educational campaigns that extol the benefits of atheism, as well as the dangers of religious education have been widely implemented in East Turkestan, especially among school-aged children:

...the Xinjiang CCP [Chinese Communist Party] has carried out lectures promoting atheism and distributed anti-religious ‘educational materials,’ distributed books and TV programs highlighting ‘heroic’ CCP cadres who had stopped illegal Islamic leaders from preaching and illegal mosques from being built, and taken members on trips to local sites and Beijing as alternatives to pilgrimages to local Sufi shrines or the hajj...In addition to forbidding Islamic belief among CCP party members, the PRC [People’s Republic of China] official policies have implemented the teaching of anti-religious lectures and lessons taught in public schools and universities and banned religious instruction and observance for minors, including activities carried out by registered religious organizations...Antireligious education in schools is standard. An examination of school textbooks used in Xinjiang revealed that they specifically stated that students were not free to believe in religion and ‘teenagers must become atheists.’ The aim of these efforts among the youth is to develop a secular, ‘modern’ way of thinking among the younger generations and develop a class of future leaders who reject religious ideas.¹⁶³

Olesen, Alexa. (2010, June 6). *Chinese Police Raid Religious School; 12 Kids Hurt*. Associated Press (AP). Retrieved from <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/chinese-police-raid-religious-school-12-kids-hurt>.

¹⁶⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² 皮埃尔 (Pierre). (2011, December 15). 伊宁市一街道发起“淡化宗教意识”运动 (*Ghulja City Streets Launch “Play Down Religious Awareness” Campaign*). Retrieved from <http://www.dw.de/伊宁市一街道发起淡化宗教意识运动/a-15604322>.

¹⁶³ Hess, Stephen E. (2009). *Islam, Local Elites, and China’s Missteps in Integrating the Uyghur Nation*. *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies*, 4:7 (July 2009).

In 2012, educational activities aimed at rooting out “illegal” religious teaching were recorded across the region: in Urumchi conducted by the Women’s Federation,¹⁶⁴ in Būgūr County in Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture by the County Youth League, Education and Science and Technology Bureau,¹⁶⁵ in the XUAR School of Forestry located in Urumchi,¹⁶⁶ in Hotan initiated by the prefectural party committee and planned by the Communist Youth League¹⁶⁷ and again in Urumchi for tertiary education institutions.¹⁶⁸ See *Appendix Image 1* (p. 91) for information about a case in Ghulja.

Religious Publications

Chinese authorities have also moved to ban “illegal” religious publications in East Turkestan as part of its the campaign against the “three evil forces” of separatism, terrorism and extremism. The ban on religious books printed outside of the state’s purview indicates not only how the Chinese government attempts to control the message contained in religious writing, but also to control any private individual study of Islam that may be conducted by Uyghurs in the face of restrictions on communal religious education.¹⁶⁹

In July and August 2005, the government arrested more than 200 Muslims for possessing “illegal religious texts” as part of a campaign against extremism.¹⁷⁰ This included a

¹⁶⁴ 徐洁(Xu Jie). (2012, June 28). 地窝堡乡司法所举行“反对非法宗教”教育讲座(*Dewobaopu Town Judicial Administration Held a “Oppose Illegal Religion” Education Meeting. Xinjiang Peace*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjpeace.cn/html/wlmqpaw/20120628/20120628190999.html>.

¹⁶⁵ HLJ. (2012, September 11). 新疆轮台县一小开展抵御非法宗教教育宣讲活动 (*Luntai County, Xinjiang Against Illegal Religious Education Activities*). Retrieved from http://hlj.wm616.cn/s_hdzs.asp?id=79661.

¹⁶⁶ 新疆维吾尔自治区林业学校(Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Forestry School). (2012, November 22). 我校举行抵御和防范宗教向校园渗透主题教育报告会 (*Our School Campus Report on Resisting and Preventing Religious Topics Education*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjlyxx.com/list.asp?id=583>.

¹⁶⁷ 新疆共青团 (China Communist Youth League Xinjiang Committee). (2012, September 23). 和田地区“六项举措”开展制止非法宗教宣讲教育工作” In *Hetian Prefecture Uses “Six Steps” to Suppress Unlawful Preaching of Religious Education*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjgqt.org/hm/xintuankuaixun/20120923/38971.html>.

¹⁶⁸ 新疆维吾尔自治区粮食局 (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Grain Bureau). (2012, October 25). 学校师生参加抵御宗教渗透校园专题宣讲报告(*Campus Report on School Teachers and Students Resisting Religious Preaching and Infiltration*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjgrain.gov.cn/info/news/neirong/5307.htm>.

¹⁶⁹ 中国网 (China Org). (2001, April 24). *Committee to Spread True Koran*. Retrieved from <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Apr/11716.htm>.

¹⁷⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2005, October 11). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/CECCannRpt2005.pdf>.

religious instructor and her students for “illegally possessing religious materials and subversive historical information” and a group of people for possessing an unauthorized religious book.¹⁷¹

In the first 11 months of 2006, the XUAR government took possession of “6,999 copies of ‘illegal political publications’ and 11,580 copies of ‘illegal religious propaganda materials’ out of a total of 1.73 million copies of illegal publications”¹⁷² seized across East Turkestan. In February 2006, officials in Urumchi confiscated 350 “illegally printed” posters with religious content.¹⁷³ During the same month, official news media reported in 2005 XUAR authorities had confiscated 9,860 illegal publications with content on religion, Falun Gong, or “feudal superstitions.”¹⁷⁴

Chinese authorities often include crackdowns against “illegal” religious publications with campaigns against pornography.¹⁷⁵ The crackdown on publications was formalized nationally in 2006 under the auspices of the “Sweep Away Pornography and Strike Down Illegal Publications” campaign. The inclusion of such materials in campaigns against religious publications indicates a severe lack of sensitivity on the part of Chinese officials, as equating the two in one campaign is liable to interpretation that religion is as detrimental to society in East Turkestan as pornography.¹⁷⁶

Throughout 2007-2008, the government continued its crackdown on illegal religious publications as part of the “Sweep Away Pornography and Strike Down Publications” campaign. In addition, XUAR authorities announced a new system of oversight for

¹⁷¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2007, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*. (p. 98). Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt07/CECCannRpt2007.pdf>.

¹⁷² Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, February 19). *Xinjiang Government Strengthens Campaign Against Political and Religious Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=102232>.

¹⁷³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, September 20). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2006*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt06/CECCannRpt2006.pdf>; See also: 李琴 (Li Qin). (2008, February 15). 乌鲁木齐市打击民族语言出版物市场非法活动 (*Combat Illegal Activities Such as Ethnic Language Publications Market in Urumqi*). 天山网 (Tianshan Net). <http://www.ts.cn/GB/channel3/98/200602/15/227487.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2006, March 28). *Xinjiang Cracks Down on “Illegal” Religious Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=42738>.

¹⁷⁵ China Intellectual Property Rights Protection Website (IPR in China). (2007, June 4). *Xinjiang: Workshop on anti-pornography and illegal publications held*. Retrieved from http://www.chinaipr.gov.cn/newsarticle/news/local/200706/232782_1.html.

¹⁷⁶ RFA Unplugged. (2008, April 1). *Uyghurs: China’s anti-porn campaign in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfaunplugged.org/2008/04/01/uyghurs-chinas-anti-porn-campaign-in-xinjiang/>.

bookstores, newspaper stands, audio and video suppliers and similar vendors within close proximity to schools.¹⁷⁷

Although official statistics did not disaggregate the number of illegal religious publications collected in 2007, the total number was even higher than 2006 at 1.82 million copies.¹⁷⁸ The total number of items confiscated was 877,193 in 2008, and once again no disaggregated figure for religious publications was provided. In 2007, local authorities in Urumchi destroyed approximately 25,000 religious publications deemed “illegal.” Furthermore, 135 illegal publications in Changji and 32 illegal publications in Kumul city were seized by local officials in 2007.¹⁷⁹ Chinese authorities in Atush city seized “illegal” pictures with religious content in 2008,¹⁸⁰ while in the same year, in Karamay, the city government banned books with Islamic content, including, *The Truth About the Holy Teachings* and *The Call to Orthodoxy*. Local vendors were investigated to discover whether these publications were in their inventory.¹⁸¹

The announcement of a region-wide 100-day campaign against pornography by Li Yi, chief of the propaganda committee of the CCP’s XUAR branch was reported by Radio Free Asia in an article dated March 17, 2008. In the meeting announcing the campaign, Li Yi is quoted as stating that efforts should be intensified “towards cracking down on illegal publications containing religious and political material.”¹⁸²

In 2009, central government authorities initiated a new special multi-province operation headed by the XUAR government and Party, aimed at stopping “three evil forces” publications. An official media report said the XUAR government and Party had made “striking hard” against “reactionary” materials and other “illegal” political and religious publications distributed by the “three evil forces” the focus of the region’s censorship

¹⁷⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, March 30). *Xinjiang Authorities Block, Punish Free Expression*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=119624>.

¹⁷⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, February 19). *Xinjiang Government Strengthens Campaign Against Political and Religious Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/newsletterListing.phpd?mode=print&NLdate=20080229&show=XINJ&PHPSESSID=2597524ebf2d7524799cfccaffb7f4c>.

¹⁷⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, February 19). *Xinjiang Government Strengthens Campaign Against Political and Religious Publications*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=102232>.

¹⁸⁰ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2008, October 31). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg45233/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg45233.pdf>.

¹⁸¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>.

¹⁸² Ibid.

campaign since 2009.¹⁸³ In 2009, the Urumchi and Hotan governments seized “illegal” religious publications as part of campaigns targeting “illegal” religious activity and “cultural markets.”¹⁸⁴

In July 2010, the XUAR Press and Publications Bureau offered to further deepen its implementation of censorship work in the latter half of the year and focus on striking hard against “illegal” political and religious publications publicized and disseminated by the “three evil forces.” Radio Free Asia documented arrests resulting from campaigns against “illegal” religious publications and the seizure of materials. A report dated December 3, 2010 details the arrest of five Uyghurs in Akchi for the “recording, and distribution of religious education videos.” The arrests occurred against a backdrop of

CASE STUDY: On October 1, 2010, authorities in Shihezi Municipality detained father-and-son Muslim leaders Qahar Mensur and Muhemmed Tursun. The Shihezi Intermediate People’s Court sentenced them to 3 years’ imprisonment on April 12, 2011 for storing and distributing “illegal religious publications.” However, the publication in question was a government-approved annotated edition of the Koran. Local residents claim that they were punished because Mensur refused to comply with government demands, such as bringing government documents into a mosque where he served as muezzin. It is unknown where the men are currently serving their sentences.

tightening restrictions across the region that witnessed the closure of Uyghur language bookshops in Kashgar and printing houses in the nearby city of Yarkand. A World Uyghur Congress spokesman added that police in Kashgar compelled printing houses and video production houses to sign “responsibility agreements” stating the proprietors were liable to punitive measures if the materials their businesses made were deemed “illegal.”¹⁸⁵

Radio Free Asia reported on February 28, 2011 about a crackdown on “illegal” publications and DVDs in Urumchi’s Döng Körük [Ch. Erdaoqiao] Market, which is predominately frequented by

Uyghurs. A 23-year-old man was detained in connection with possession of “illegal” DVDs.¹⁸⁶ Radio Free Asia also reported the sentencing to 10 years in prison of a Uyghur in Hotan for distribution of “illegal” religious publications. The sentencing was confirmed in an interview conducted by UHRP with a Uyghur involved in the case and a Global Times article dated January 4, 2013.¹⁸⁷ Radio Free Asia reported on August 8,

¹⁸³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. (p. 206). Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCAnnRpt2010.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Qiao Long. (2012, December 3). *Crackdown Launched in Xinjiang*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/separatism-12032010123747.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Qiao Long. (2011, February 28). *Uyghurs Targeted Amidst Reform Call*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/reform-02282011114853.html>. See also UCATV. (2012, February 21). 2011年乌鲁木齐“扫黄打非”十大案件 (In 2011, Ten Anti-Pornography Cases in Urumqi). Retrieved from <http://www.ucatv.com.cn/html/news/9/201202/21-160829.html>.

2012 that authorities in Kucha, “had reported four cases of ‘illegal religious activities’ linked to 187 illegal religious publications and 35 media disks on official websites.”¹⁸⁸ The Kashgar Prefecture website reported on June 18, 2012 the sentencing of Sadik Kurban to 15 years in jail by the Kashgar Prefecture Intermediate People’s Court in Yarkand County on a number of charges related to “illegal” religious activity, including the distribution of illegal publications.¹⁸⁹

This intensification of arrests related to “illegal” publications and the onset of a renewed anti-pornography campaign appear to follow a May 2010 statement made to the regions’ armed police by newly appointed XUAR party chief, Zhang Chunxian. In the statement, Zhang said: “We must clearly recognise the serious and extremely complex nature of the struggle between separatism and anti-separatism...Maintaining stability must come before all else... we must strike hard at all the separatist and destructive activities brought on by the three forces of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism.”¹⁹⁰

In 2011, as part of the “Sweep Away Pornography and Strike Down Illegal Publications” campaign the XUAR Transport Department “investigated and prosecuted 20 cases of ‘illegal publications,’ including cases involving 4,386 copies of ‘illegal religious publications.’”¹⁹¹ Aksu prefecture destroyed approximately 13,000 “illegal” publications

CASE STUDY: On March 29, 2011, Radio Free Asia reported that state security officers in Shihezi municipality detained father-and-son religious leaders Memet Réhim and Memet Sidiq in March 2011 on suspicion of distributing “illegal religious materials.” These “illegal religious materials” were electronic Korans made in Ningxia stored in their home as gifts to acquaintances. Authorities also reportedly denied family members’ request for information on the men’s status. Rehim and Sidiq’s whereabouts and status are currently unknown.

¹⁸⁷ Radio Free Asia. (2012, June 19). 维族人售宗教刊物判十年 世维会批评当局镇压 (*Uyghur Sold Religious Publications and Sentenced to Ten Years, World Uyghur Congress Criticize Repressive Authorities*). Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/w-06192012101735.html>; Interviewee 5; Global Times. (2013, January 4). 45 mln illegal publications confiscated in China. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/753677.shtml>.

¹⁸⁸ Hai Nan. (2012, August 8). *No Respite in Ramadan Controls*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/uyghur-08082012140933.html>

¹⁸⁹ 喀什地区中级人民法院 (Kashgar People’s Court). (2012, June 8). 我区两级人民法院公开宣判一批涉非法宗教活动和非法宣传品案件 (*Two District-Level People’s Court Publicly Pronounced a Number of Cases Involving Illegal Religious Activities and Illegal Advertisements*). Retrieved from <http://kszy.xjcourt.org/public/detail.php?id=240>.

¹⁹⁰ Agence France-Presse (AFP). (2010, May 10). *New Xinjiang boss vows crackdown on separatism*. Retrieved from http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hWbKHi0FMzwdH7xM_ONEflnyT58A.

¹⁹¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, December 16). *Local Officials in Xinjiang Continue Curbs Over Religious Practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=166663>.

including Korans and other religious materials in 2012. 1,600 students and teachers from Aksu were mobilized to observe the destruction.

Chinese sources indicate the depth and breadth of the crackdown on “illegal” publications in East Turkestan. UHRP research into initiatives reported by Chinese language websites in 2012 alone reveals an overabundance of examples that demonstrate the pervasive nature in implementing restrictions against “illegal” publications. The following cities all recorded campaigns of some kind in 2012: Turpan,¹⁹² Kumul,¹⁹³ Usu,¹⁹⁴ Aksu,¹⁹⁵ Shayar,¹⁹⁶ Bortala,¹⁹⁷ Chapchal,¹⁹⁸ Peyziwat,¹⁹⁹ Kizilsu,²⁰⁰ Kashgar,²⁰¹ Urumchi,²⁰²

¹⁹² 吐鲁番工商行政管理局 (Turpan City Industry and Commerce Bureau). (2012, June 28). 吐鲁番市工商局大河沿工商所积极做好反对非法宗教活动抵制非法宗教极端宣讲活动 (*Turpan City Industry and Commerce Bureau, Specifically Daheyan Industry and Commerce, Actively Fight Against Preaching Illegal Extremist Religious Activities*). Retrieved from <http://tlf.xjaic.gov.cn/gsd/201206/7722.html>.

¹⁹³ 哈密市人民政府网站(Hami City People's Government Website). (2012, October 16). 市文体广新局召开“两查一打”专项行动动员部署大会 (*Xinjiang Literary Market Commission to Convene “Two Dozen Investigation” Special Operation to Mobilize and Deploy General Meeting*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjhm.gov.cn/10038/10038/12594/12596/2012/252731.htm>.

¹⁹⁴ 中国文明网 (Chinese Culture Website). (2012, November 29). [新疆] 乌苏市思想道德教育和精神文明建设深入推进([*Xinjiang*] *Wusu City Teach Ideology, Morality, and Spiritual Culture to Build a Thorough Drive*). Retrieved from http://xj.wenming.cn/wmbb/201211/t20121129_959896.shtml.

¹⁹⁵ 阿克苏市交通局 (Aksu Traffic and Communication Bureau). (2012, March 21). 关于成立阿克苏市交通运输局打击政治性、宗教类非法出版物和反动宣传品专项行动领导小组的通知 (*Aksu City Establishes a Traffic and Communications Bureau to Combat Political and Religious Illegal Publications and React to Special Propaganda Operation Lead Group's Notification*). Retrieved from http://www.akss.gov.cn/childdsite/KA049/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=937:2012-03-21-02-31-55&catid=62:2009-04-21-04-45-53&Itemid=59; 阿克苏市交通局 (Aksu City Education Bureau). (2012, June 25). 阿克苏地区教育系统七举措抵制宗教向校园渗透 (*Aksu Prefecture Education System has Seven Initiatives to Resist Religious Infiltration on Campus*). Retrieved from <http://jyj.aks.gov.cn/page.asp?id=889>.

¹⁹⁶ 阿克苏党建网 (Aksu City Party Construction Website). (2012, August 31). 沙雅县以现代文化为引领加强意识形态工作打牢长治久安基础 (*Shaya County Modern Culture Meant for Reinforcing Work Ideology and Build Long-Term Peace and Stability*). Retrieved from <http://aks.xjkunlun.cn/aks.xjkunlun.cn/zt/aksdj/2012/3281920.htm>.

¹⁹⁷ 俞莉霞 (Yu Lixia). (2012, October 10). 博州多举措加强“扫黄打非”监管工作 (*Bozhou Initiatives Strengthen “Anti-Pornography” Supervision Work*). Xinjiang Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.xjpeace.cn/html/bzpaw/20121010/20121010161655.html>.

¹⁹⁸ 李鹏 (Li Peng). (2012, July 5). 察布查尔县坚持先行先试强化宗教事务管理 (*Qapqal County Persevere with First Try to Strengthen the Management of Religious Affairs*). 新疆党建网 (Xinjiang Party Construction Website). Retrieved from <http://www.xjkunlun.cn/fwqz/2012/2453484.htm>.

¹⁹⁹ 徐洁 (Xu Jie). (2012, July 13). 伽师县法院党组深入开展创先争优活动 (*Peyziwat County Court Party Leadership Thoroughly Began Early Excellent Activities*). Xinjiang Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.xjpeace.cn/html/kspaw/20120713/20120713182537.html>.

Ghulja,²⁰³ Kucha,²⁰⁴ and Kalpin (Keping)²⁰⁵ among many other locations in the region. Radio Free Asia dated March 7, 2013 related first hand accounts from Uyghurs across the region of constant raids by police looking for illegal religious publications.²⁰⁶

Ramadan

Restrictions on the observance of Ramadan are some of the most widespread in East Turkestan. Restrictions on who can fast, closure of restaurants during fasting hours and who can attend mosques during the holy month were some of the most blatant of religious rights abuses committed by the Chinese state in 2012, and were some of the most egregious documented so far by human rights groups.²⁰⁷ According to Uyghur

²⁰⁰ 陈楠 (Chen Nan). (2012, July 24). 克州部署近期维稳工作(*Kezhou will Soon Deploy Stable Uyghur Work*). Xinjiang Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.xjpeace.cn/html/kzpaw/20120724/20120724183631.html>.

²⁰¹ 许国良 (Xu Guoliang). (2012, may 29). 喀什地区中院严打涉“三非”案件 (*Kashgar Prefecture Central Institution to Crack Down on the “Three Non” Case*). 人民法院频道 (People’s Court Channel). Retrieved from <http://court.gmw.cn/html/article/201205/29/90969.shtml>.

²⁰² 穆尧 (Mu Yao). (2012, March 16). 乌鲁木齐严查非法政治宗教出版物 (*Urumqi Against Illicit Political and religious Publications*). 多维新闻 (Duowei News). Retrieved from <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2012-03-16/58659440.html>; 徐洁 (Xu Jie). 迎宾桥社区多措并举切实做好打击“两非”工作 (*Yingbinqiao Community Develop Many Feasible Crack Down “Two Non” Work*). 乌鲁木齐平安网 (Urumqi Peace Website). Retrieved from <http://www.xjpeace.cn/html/wlmqpaw/20120831/20120831194370.html>; 张芸芸 (Zhang Yiyun). (2012, June 11). 乌鲁木齐市召开稳定工作会议 (*Urumqi to Convene a Steady Work Conference*). 天山网 (Tianshan Net). Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com/news/content/2012-06/11/content_6917189.htm.

²⁰³ 中国以宁县 (China, Yining). (2012, April 1). 伊宁县集中销毁非法音像制品及出版物 (*Yining County Set to Destroy Illegal Audio-Visual Products and Publications*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjyn.gov.cn/a/xinwenpindao/shipinxinwen/2012/0401/2082.html>; 伊犁州工商行政管理局反对非法宗教活动抵制宗教极端思想专项宣讲活动工作简报

²⁰⁴ 龟兹新闻网 (Qiuci News). (2012, January 8). 关于大力开展“长治久安大宣教活动”的实施意见 (*Vigorously Beginning “Long-Term Peace and Stability Missionary Activity” Implementation*). Retrieved from http://www.qiucineews.com/zhuanli/changzhijuan/2012-01/08/content_219144.htm.

²⁰⁵ 李鹏 (Li Peng). (2012, July 20). 柯坪县采取“五项措施”严查维稳隐患 (*Kalpin County Adopt “Five Steps” to Strictly Investigate Hidden Uyghur Stability Danger*). 新疆党建网 (Xinjiang Party Construction Website). Retrieved from <http://www.xjkunlun.cn/fwqz/2012/2475629.htm>.

²⁰⁶ Turdush, Rukiye. (2013, March 7). *Xinjiang Raids Point to Religious Controls*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raids-03072013184301.html>.

²⁰⁷ Reporting on Ramadan restrictions by the western media was among the most extensive seen in recent years. Articles appeared in the following publications and news agencies among many: The Economist. (2012, August 12). *The party’s interference in the observance of Ramadan stokes grievances in China’s north-west*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/21560600>; Evans, Alexandra. (2012, August 2). *China cracks down on Ramadan in Xinjiang*. Foreign Policy. Retrieved from

economist Ilham Tohti, the Uyghurs in East Turkestan were the target for these measures.²⁰⁸ In an editorial published on August 6, 2012 regarding the exceptional heavy handedness during 2012, the Globe and Mail stated “the forbidding of peaceable, normal Muslim religious practices among groups that are comparatively easily to control – school students and party members – suggests a religious intolerance in the government and the Communist Party.”²⁰⁹ On July 25, 2012, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) stated, “Religious freedom conditions in the XUAR have declined rapidly since the ethnic violence of June 2009...Restrictions on Uighur Muslim religious activities have caused deep resentment with Beijing’s oversight of the XUAR.”²¹⁰

Nevertheless, in a statement delivered on August 2, 2012, Hou Hanmin, spokesperson of the XUAR government, said “the authorities do encourage residents to eat properly for study and work purposes, but do not force people to eat during Ramadan,” and that the general restrictions on Islam were only aimed at “those who conduct terrorist activities, not the Uyghur people.”²¹¹ There is extensive evidence that indicates ordinary Uyghurs and their legally protected religious practices are the targets of state restrictions. The Financial Times reported on August 2, 2012 that “Municipal areas across the region are implementing special ‘security and stability work plans’ for the Muslim holy month, under which local governments and schools are required to make sure students and officials do not fast or attend mosque.”²¹² Radio Free Asia also reported on the use of “Ramadan Stability Groups” in an article dated July 23, 2012. In the article, a World Uyghur Congress spokesman stated that Chinese authorities would “carry out both

http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/08/02/chinas_ramadan_crackdown_risks_violence; Al Jazeera. (2012, August 1). *China curbs Ramadan fasting in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/08/201281113456325751.html>; Voice of America. (2012, August 7). *Xinjiang Muslims Irked by Government Restrictions*. Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/content/xinjiang-muslims-complain-about-government-restrictions/1474875.html>.

²⁰⁸ The Guardian UK. (2012, August 3). *China steps up campaign against Ramadan in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/03/china-restriction-ramadan-xinjiang-uyghurs>.

²⁰⁹ The Globe and Mail. (2012, August 6). *Rights, Ramadan and China’s religious intolerance*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/editorials/rights-ramadan-and-chinas-religious-intolerance/article4461940/>.

²¹⁰ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). (2012, July 25). *USCIRF Urges China to End Restrictions and Violence during Ramadan*. Retrieved from <http://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/press-releases/3780-uscifr-urges-china-to-end-restrictions-and-violence-during-ramadan.html>.

²¹¹ Yan Shuang and Liang Chen. (2012, August 3). *Xinjiang denies suppressing Islam*. Global Times. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/724955.shtml>.

²¹² Hille, Kathrin. (2012, August 2). *China bans religious activities in Xinjiang*. Financial Times. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/602b650e-dc69-11e1-a304-00144feab49a.html#axzz2FQ0xrsJb>.

technological surveillance and personal surveillance.”²¹³ The same Radio Free Asia report noted, “mosques would be required to hold ideological meetings every Friday with Party officials, so as to monitor the mood of local Uyghurs.”²¹⁴ Further reports detailed the presence of state security forces in mosques. According to the World Uyghur Congress spokesman, “mosques in Urumqi were being guarded inside and out by armed security personnel, and that Muslims attending Friday prayers had to show identity cards on entering and leaving the mosques, as well as submit to searches by armed guards.” Other reports indicated the presence of armed police in mosques on the pretext of “fire safety training” during Ramadan, as well as the forced opening of restaurants in the region and searches for “illegal” materials.²¹⁵

On August 8, 2012, Arch Puddington of Freedom House wrote: “We observed that the restrictions on Uighur religious practices are not being imposed in secret. The authorities are very open about their intention to control Ramadan observance, with many of the directives and instructions to local officials placed on the Internet for the world to see.”²¹⁶ Chinese authorities have openly published violations of individual rights to freedom of religion and Ramadan restrictions are some of the most persistent and widely available on the Internet from official sources.²¹⁷ UHRP has documented, from 2012 alone, a series of reports that limit the activities of Uyghurs during Ramadan. Across the region, government websites detailed various restrictions on behavior during Ramadan. The sampling below is a small representation:

Shayar County: The government forbade participation in the fast among retired workers at the Land Resources Bureau²¹⁸ and the Industrial and Commercial Bureau.²¹⁹

²¹³ Hai Nan. (2012, August 23). *China Steps Up Curbs on Muslims*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ramadan-07232012132958.html>.

²¹⁴ Ibid.; See also: Radio Free Asia (2012, August 23). 新疆斋月当局“禁斋”餐厅若歇业一天将被封一年 (Authorities in Xinjiang during Ramadan “Ban Fast” in Restaurants and Close Down for One Day, will become One Year). Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/xj-07232012113710.html>.

²¹⁵ 博讯新闻网 (Boxun News). (2012, August 7). 新疆武警斋月走入清真寺 矛盾或激化(Armed Police in Mosques during Ramadan Intensifies Xinjiang Conflict). Retrieved from <http://www.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2012/08/201208070423.shtml#.UNCYw80WSp>.

²¹⁶ Puddington, Arch. (2012, August 8). *The China Exception: Keeping Uighurs Well Fed for Ramadan*. Freedom House. Retrieved from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/blog/china-exception-keeping-uyghurs-well-fed-ramadan>.

²¹⁷ Radio Free Asia. (2012, August 4). 新疆限制穆斯林在斋月期间参加斋戒活动 (Xinjiang Muslims Restricted from Participating in Fasting During Ramadan). Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/yl-08042012001444.html>.

²¹⁸ 沙雅县国土资源局(Shaya County Land and Resources Bureau). (2012, August 8). 沙雅县国土资源局扎实做好斋月期间宣传教育工作 (Shaya County Land and Resources Bureau do well during the Month of Ramadan through Publicity and Education Work). Retrieved from <http://syx.xjgtzy.gov.cn/10093/11194/2012/37403.htm>.

Kizilsu: The Women's Federation conducted ideological trainings aimed at women in Kizilsu during Ramadan, including education on "illegal" religious activity and ethnic separatism.²²⁰

Qaraqash County: Officials from the Agricultural Machinery Bureau stressed the need to strengthen security during Ramadan. Staff signed responsibility agreements to not participate in religious activities.²²¹

Yarkand County Industrial and Commercial Bureau: Employees and their families were prohibited from fasting and officials from the bureau were to ensure that restaurant owners in Yarkand County maintained normal business hours and signed responsibility agreements.²²²

Karasheher County Industrial and Commercial Bureau: Employees were instructed to ensure normal food-related activities were being undertaken at urban and rural markets, shops, supermarkets, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and educational campuses. In addition, efforts were required to "maintain stability" through face-to-face education with food vendors.²²³

Yengi Sheher County Youth League: The Youth League conducted educational activities in 15 towns employing an "early detection and early intervention" method to combat "illegal" religious activities during Ramadan.²²⁴

²¹⁹Shaya County Government. (July 27, 2012). 沙雅县工商局召开斋月期间退休老干部座谈会 (*Shaya County Industrial and Commercial Bureau holds symposium for retired cadres during the holy month of Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjsy.gov.cn/nry.jsp?urltype=news.NewsContentUrl&wbnewsid=169020&wbtreeid=11192>

²²⁰ 闫妍 (Yan Yan) and段欣毅(Duan Xinyi). (2012, August 14). 新疆克州妇联做好斋月期间妇女思想工作 (*Kezhou, Xinjiang Women's Association during Ramadan Educate Women's Ideological and Political Work*). 人民网 (People's News). Retrieved from <http://acwf.people.com.cn/n/2012/0814/c99013-18738089.html>.

²²¹ Yangzhi Wang. (August 16, 2012). 新疆墨玉多举措做好斋月安全稳定工作 (*Stability and Security Work in Moyu County during the Month of Ramadan*). Retrieved from: http://www.yangzhi.com/news/201208/2012_08_16_516674.html

²²² 莎车县工商局 (Yarkand Industry and Commerce Bureau). (2012, August 18). 莎车县工商局召开斋月期间依法履职、安保维稳工作会议 (*Yarkand Industry and Commerce Bureau to Convene during Ramadan, have Laws to Maintain Security for Uyghur Work Meetings*). Retrieved from <http://www.shache.gov.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=7464>.

²²³ 天山网 (Tianshan Net). (2012, July 24). 新疆焉耆县工商局开展斋月期间市场检查行动(*Xinjiang's Yanqi Industry and Commerce Bureau Begin to Inspect Market Operation during Ramadan*). Retrieved from http://law.ts.cn/content/2012-07/24/content_7059727.htm.

²²⁴ 新疆共青团 (China Communist Youth League Xinjiang Committee). (2012, July 18). 疏勒县团委加强斋月期间维稳工作力度 (*Shule County Youth League Committee to Enhance Stability during Ramadan*). Retrieved from http://www.xjqqt.org/htm/jicengdongtai/quxian/quxian_kashi/2012/0718/35393.html.

Akchi: Students were prevented from fasting, attending mosque and studying Islam.²²⁵

Akto County: Party education committee officials agreed to undertake “security and stability” work during Ramadan. Students were to be monitored and lunch “must be provided during Ramadan.” Teachers and students must eat lunch. Work during Ramadan should also focus on taking precautions against ethnic separatists using religion to infiltrate schools.²²⁶

Kanas: The Politics and Law Committee made plans for cadres and staff to undertake “safety checks” on mosques and to patrol surrounding areas.²²⁷

Yengisar County Business Council: Held a meeting with restaurant owners reminding them to maintain normal business activities during Ramadan and to sign pledges to ensure “social stability and promote national unity.”²²⁸

Kashgar Prefecture: Officials were instructed to strengthen the internal management of mosques during Ramadan and ensure students receive “ideological education.”²²⁹

Charqilik: Local authorities conducted supervision of religious activities in and outside of mosques and visited mosques to ensure patriotism and to understand the “atmosphere” there.²³⁰

²²⁵ 中国特克斯 (Tekesi County, China). (2012, August 3). 阿克奇社区扎实做好斋月期间宣传教育工作 (*Akchi Community Publicity and Education Work do well during the Month of Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://www.zgtks.gov.cn/jtbd/chuangxianzhengyou/sqdt/2012-08-03/9495.html>.

²²⁶ 阿克陶县 (Akto County). (2012, August 23). 阿克陶县教育系统部署斋月期间安全稳定工作 (*Akto County Education System Deploys Security and Stability during Ramadan*). Retrieved from http://www.aktedu.gov.cn/ch/EC_ShowArticle.asp?EC_ArticleID=287.

²²⁷ 喀纳斯 (Kanas). (2012, August 10). 阿克陶县教育系统部署斋月期间安全稳定工作 (*Akto County Education System Deploys Security and Stability during Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://www.kns.gov.cn/sy/bmdt/2012/14626.htm>.

²²⁸ 喀什工商行政管理局 (Kashi Industry and Commerce Management Bureau). 英吉沙县工商局召开“2012年斋月期间清真餐厅规范管理”工作会议 (*Yengisar County Industry and Commerce Bureau to Convene “in 2012 during the Month of Ramadan Halal Restaurant Management” Workshop*). Retrieved from <http://ks.xjaic.gov.cn/gsd/201207/7809.html>.

²²⁹ 喀什地区国家税务局 (Kashi Tax Bureau). (2012, September 12). 岳普湖国税“八个强化”确保斋月期间维稳措施落实 (税务信息第四十五期) (*Yuepuhu to Implement Taxing “Eight Strengthening” Measures to Ensure Stability during Ramadan (the 45th Issue of Tax Information)*). Retrieved from http://ks.xj-n-tax.gov.cn/ssxc/gsxw/201209/t20120912_205630.html.

²³⁰ 若羌县若羌镇 (Ruoqiang County, Ruoqiang Town). (2012, July 25). 若羌镇扎实开展斋月期间维稳工作 (*Ruoqiang Town Strongly Launch Uyghur Work Stability during Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://rqz.loulan.gov.cn/xinxidongtai/2012-07-25/34431.html>.

Karghilik: The Trade and Industry Bureau issued curbs on the closure of restaurants during Ramadan for “social stability” reasons and conducted door-to-door educational activities on religious regulations, as well as elicited pledges of adherence to the regulations.²³¹

Aksu Prefecture: Teachers were made responsible for their students’ whereabouts and “ideological trends” during Ramadan.²³²

Awat County: Government personnel were ordered to conduct educational activities during Ramadan among households and to monitor the activities of retired staff during the fast.²³³

Karamay: The Trade and Industry Bureau informed owners of halal restaurants to undertake normal business activities at a meeting. 54 restaurant owners signed a pledge to follow the regulations.²³⁴

Interviews with Uyghurs conducted in 2012 confirmed many of the restrictions reported by western media and Chinese government websites. The former imam interviewed by UHRP said that during his tenure:

Some people in the community, such as farmers, could fast during Ramadan, but students, teachers and government workers were not allowed. They were given food during the day to eat, especially at lunchtime. Some people said they had already eaten, but were pressured into eating. If they persisted in saying they had eaten, their names were put on a list. The government also monitored if lights were switched on in houses before sunrise to see which families were observing Ramadan. If people who were forbidden to fast did so, their salaries were cut.²³⁵

²³¹ 生活服务网 (Life and Service Website). (2012, July 11). 叶城县工商局积极做好在斋月期间餐饮业正常营业宣传教育工作 *Kargilik County Secretary for Commerce and Industry to Step Up its Publicity and Education Work for Normal Restaurant Business during Ramadan*. Retrieved from http://www.ycshfw.com.cn/article/article_37575.html.

²³² 阿克苏市交通局 (Aksu City Education Bureau). (2012, July 10). 地区四措并举确保斋月期间校园和谐稳定 (*Combination of Four Measures to Ensure harmony and Stability on Campus during Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://jyj.aks.gov.cn/page.asp?id=902>.

²³³ 郑倩倩 (Zheng Qianqian). (2012, August 24). 阿瓦提县“三股绳拧成一股力”在“斋月”期间创先争优 (*Awat County Begin to Strive for Excellent “Three-Strand Rope Twisted into a Surge of Forces” Strategy during Ramadan*). 阿克苏党建网 (Aksu City Party Construction Website). Retrieved from <http://aks.xjkunlun.cn/aks.xjkunlun.cn/zt/cxzy/2012/3215122.htm>.

²³⁴ 克拉玛依市食品和药物管理局 (Karamay City Food and Drug Administration). (2012, July 30). 白碱滩区召开清真餐饮业主斋月经营会议 (*Baijiantan District to Convene Halal Restaurant Owners to Operate during Ramadan*). Retrieved from <http://syjj.klmy.gov.cn/spaq/Pages/白碱滩区召开清真餐饮业主斋月经营会议.aspx>.

²³⁵ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

An interviewee UHRP spoke to in 2011 stated that at his university in Urumchi fasting at Ramadan was forbidden for students. Uyghur students at the university had to prove that they were not fasting by eating meals during the daytime in public canteens on campus. The interviewee said college authorities checked if students' dormitory lights were on in the early morning to see if students were getting up early to eat before the daylight fast. He added he could not pray in the dormitory at any time or go to the mosque on the Muslim holy day of Friday.²³⁶ Another 2011 interviewee told UHRP Chinese authorities routinely locked the doors to mosques so that people were unable to pray at the onset of the festival marking the end of Ramadan.²³⁷

A Uyghur man in his early forties, who had left East Turkestan in 2009, detailed how in Korla during Ramadan, the government monitored which restaurants were closed during the day and issued orders for those restaurants that were closed to cease business permanently. In addition, regulations stated people were not permitted to worship at mosques other than the one in their locality. The interviewee related how some people from Toqsun and Kucha attempted to worship in a local mosque in Korla and were arrested and jailed for doing so. After five days of questioning, they were released.

See Image 2 of the Appendix (p. 94-5) for an online post from a Uyghur restaurant owner in Keriya Hotan regarding Ramadan restrictions.

Overseas media has documented other violations during Ramadan, particularly in 2008 and 2011. Documentation on 2009 and 2010 restrictions is not as readily available due to a ten month Internet shutdown enacted after the July 5, 2009 unrest in Urumchi; however, CECC documented a number of violations of religious freedom across the region during Ramadan in 2010, including bans on fasting, restaurants forced to open during fasting hours and increased surveillance of individuals and mosques.²³⁸

Prior to 2008, CECC reported that in 2006 the Kashgar Finance and Trade School ensured students did not fast during Ramadan and should “submit to an appraisal of their demeanor by local Communist Party groups in their hometowns.” In addition, measures documented in 2006 included communal lunches for students ordered by Karghilik County education officials with cooperation expected from cadres, parents and religious leaders. Furthermore, authorities in Aksu, Urumchi and Yarkand County issued regulations forbidding students and teachers from observing Ramadan.²³⁹

²³⁶ Interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2011.

²³⁷ Interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2011.

²³⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, October 20). *Authorities Continue to Restrict Ramadan Observance in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=146539>.

²³⁹ The Uyghur American Association. (2006, December 15). *Local Governments in Xinjiang Continue Religious Repression During Ramadan*. Retrieved from <http://uyghuramerican.org/article/local-governments-xinjiang-continue-religious-repression-during-ramadan.html>.

Regulations on Ramadan observance among Uyghurs in 2008 were tightened according to an article published by the Associated Press.²⁴⁰ On October 18, 2008, the New York Times reported, “Many of the rules have been on the books for years, but some local governments in Xinjiang have publicly highlighted them in the past seven weeks [during Ramadan in 2008] by posting the laws on Web sites or hanging banners in towns.”²⁴¹ The Guardian also reported on September 9, 2008 “Religious controls are usually stricter during Ramadan but experts say this year’s are noticeably stronger and believe it is the first time they have been published rather than passed on orally.”²⁴²

The New York Times described restrictions publicized by local authorities in Payziwat County that “include barring teachers and students from observing Ramadan, prohibiting retired government officials from entering mosques and requiring men to shave off beards and women to doff veils. Mosques cannot let people from outside of town stay overnight and restaurants must maintain normal hours of business.”²⁴³ Similar restrictions in Toqsu County for retired officials and civil servants regarding the fast and entering mosques were recorded in the same article.²⁴⁴ AFP described the Toqsu government as stating: “We must timely warn and stop religious believers from organising and planning large scale prayer groups and prevent any large crowd incidents that could harm social stability” during Ramadan.²⁴⁵ In the same year, Radio Free Asia detailed measures during Ramadan across the region to provide lunches to government employees in Hotan, as well as forcing pledges from restaurant owners in Lop County, Atush city²⁴⁶ and Keriya to stay open during daylight.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁰ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). (2008, September 30). *Ramadan – A Time of repression for Uyghur Muslims*. Retrieved from <http://www.unpo.org/article/8725>.

²⁴¹ Wong, Edward. (2008, October 18). *Wary of Islam, China Tightens a Vise of Rules*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/19/world/asia/19xinjiang.html>.

²⁴² Branigan, Tania. (2008, September 9). *China officials tighten restrictions on Muslim practices*. The Guardian UK. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/09/china1>.

²⁴³ Wong, Edward. (2008, September 8). *Curbs Imposed on Muslims in Western China During Ramadan*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/09/world/asia/09china.html>; A similar restriction on teachers and students was recorded in Huocheng county: Tan, Kenneth. (2011, September 11). *Ramadan restrictions in Xinjiang*. Shanghaiist. Retrieved from http://shanghaiist.com/2008/09/11/ramadan_restrictions_in_xinjiang.php.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Agence France-Presse (AFP). (2008, September 5). *China imposes Ramadan security crackdown in Muslim northwest*. Retrieved from <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hdEdZru3e81VgdC0jbXbfR0mKfhg>.

²⁴⁶ Guljekre. (2008, September 24). *Ramadan Lunches For China’s Muslims*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ramadan-09242008063029.html>.

²⁴⁷ Gulchire. (2008, September 6). *Ramadan Curbs on China’s Muslims*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/Ramadan-09062008195750.html>.

2011 witnessed another round of heavy-handed restrictions during Ramadan in East Turkestan.²⁴⁸ The U.S. State Department's 2011 Religious Freedom Report²⁴⁹ declared repression of Muslim Uyghurs during the year as "severe" and recorded that religious freedom in China as a whole had declined "markedly."²⁵⁰ An article in The Hindu published on August 31 described how Ramadan passed largely peacefully in Kashgar, but "more than two dozen soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), armed with rifles and baton shields, kept watch over the Id Kah mosque at the city centre, which is Xinjiang's most important religious centre."²⁵¹ On September 11, 2011, the Los Angeles Times described how students from Kashgar Teachers College were escorted to lunch by their professors to make sure that students did not observe the Ramadan fast. A Radio Free Asia report from August 19, 2011 quoted a student in Kashgar who confirmed the imposition of restrictions on students.²⁵²

The Los Angeles Times also detailed how restaurants were subjected to fines of up to USD 780 if they closed during the fast hours and that Chinese authorities in Aksu issued a warning over the Internet to restaurant owners in the city detailing how those who "close without reason during the 'Ramadan period' will be severely dealt with according to the relevant regulations."²⁵³ Radio Free Asia reported on August 4, 2011 that employees at a mosque in Urumchi described how people from out of town were forbidden to attend Urumchi mosques. Anyone wanting to pray at the mosque had to register using a national identity card.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 11). *Xinjiang Authorities Implement Ramadan Curbs Amid Renewed Pledges for Tight Controls*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=163260>.

²⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. (2011). *International Religious Freedom Report for 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.

²⁵⁰ Vandenbrink, Rachel. (2012, July 30). *Religious Freedom 'Declines Markedly' in China*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/religious-freedom-07302012183122.html>.

²⁵¹ Krishnan, Ananth. (2011, August 31). *A quiet Ramadan in China's far west*. The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2415340.ece>.

²⁵² Qiao Long. (2011, August 19). *Tensions Amid Xinjiang Clampdown*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/clampdown-08192011154948.html>.

²⁵³ Demick, Barbara. (2011, September 11). *How China kept lid on Ramadan*. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/sep/11/world/la-fg-china-muslims-20110912>.

²⁵⁴ Hai Nan. (2011, August 4). *Ramadan Curbs Follow Violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ramadan-08042011113617.html>.

Mosque Attendance

Restrictions on attending mosques for Uyghurs in East Turkestan are stringent and different from regulations placed on Muslims elsewhere in the PRC.²⁵⁵ In general, children under 18, government employees and women are not permitted to enter mosques in East Turkestan. However, CECC reported, “Central government officials assured the foreign press in March 2005 that minors are allowed to worship freely in China.”²⁵⁶ Despite such assurances, reports indicate that some state officials have implemented restrictions on mosque entry with fastidious vigor.²⁵⁷

Uyghurs interviewed by UHRP discussed the restrictions in place in East Turkestan with research staff. One interviewee, who had left East Turkestan after the 2012 Korban celebrations, told UHRP that in Kashgar the atmosphere was tense during the celebrations and he had seen signs outside mosques forbidding school-aged children from entering. The interviewee also visited Urumchi on the trip and was told by a teacher it was part of a teacher’s work to prevent students from going to the mosque. The teacher added that if teachers do not carry out the task to the satisfaction of school authorities, part of their salary would be permanently deducted.²⁵⁸

The former imam interviewed by UHRP described how regulations state that no one under 18 could attend his mosque. Chinese authorities told him it was his responsibility to remove anyone under 18 and if he failed to do so, he risked arrest. He added that employees from regulating authorities attended his mosque impersonating worshippers to check whether this regulation and others were being adhered to.²⁵⁹

Since 2005, UHRP has documented the implementation of regulations restricting access to mosques. In 2006, Radio Free Asia reported on broader restrictions on mosque attendance that included Communist Party members and Communist Youth members, state employees, workers and retirees, youth under the age of 18, prefecture employees

²⁵⁵ Rotar, Igor. (2006, August 15). *Xinjiang: Strict control of China’s Uighur Muslims continues*. Forum 18 News Service. Retrieved from http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=829; Turdush, Rukiye. (2011, November 30). *A Muslim Divide in China*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/hui-11302012172354.html>.

²⁵⁶ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2005, October 11). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/CECCannRpt2005.pdf>.

²⁵⁷ Abdilim, Mihray. (2013, March 1) *Ghulja Official Tightens Religious Restrictions*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ghulja-03012013152220.html>.

²⁵⁸ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012. Also see: <http://dwxcb.ylsy.edu.cn/index.php?ac=article&at=read&did=160> for an outline by Yili Normal University’s restrictions on teacher and student religious activities.

²⁵⁹ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

and women.²⁶⁰ The restrictions were documented from a picture of a sign posted outside a mosque.



Those listed are prohibited to enter the Mosque and participate in religious activities:
 1) Party and Union of Communist Youth members. 2) Public servants and retired public servants.
 3) Young people under the age of 18. 4) Village cadres. 5) Women
 © Radio Free Asia/Erkin Tarim

An imam from the Id Kah mosque in Kashgar interviewed by Radio Free Asia confirmed that the restrictions were in place at his mosque. In the same report, a farmer from the Kashgar area told Radio Free Asia that the regulation forbidding those under 18 from attending mosques had been discussed at all village meetings. The report added:

The farmer also confirmed that government officials kept tight guard over mosques, noting who came and left and issuing fines of 1,000-5,000 yuan (U.S.\$124-620) to those who broke the ban.

²⁶⁰ Guljekre. (2006, February 6). *China Bans Officials, State Employees, Children from Mosques*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur_religion-20060206.html.

“From small units of countryside headmans to the students, they are all banned from mosque...Even for the Eid prayer, they are not allowed,” he said.

He cited the case of a schoolteacher jailed for two years and fired after 20 years’ service for persisting in her religious faith.

If an imam does not do what the government says, the government will appoint a new one who will.²⁶¹

From observations made in the region, Norway-based religious freedom advocates Forum 18 reported in August 15, 2006, “in Hotan the ban on children attending the mosque is applied very strictly. For example, during the Friday prayers police guard the mosques to ensure that children do not attend.”²⁶² However, the report also indicated that rule for people under 18 may not have been as strictly enforced in the northern part of East Turkestan where there are fewer Uyghurs and a higher proportion of Han Chinese.

In 2009, Radio Free Asia reported on a crackdown against “cross-village worship,” which refers to believers attending religious sites other than the one closest to where they live. Individuals found to be engaged in “cross-village worship” are detained and fined according to sources in East Turkestan. A group of Uyghurs who had traveled to worship at a shrine near Hotan was detained and authorities brought them to government buildings in their respective villages. A group from the village of Ilchi was held for 12 hours. Authorities from Ilchi claimed “cross-village worship” is a “social crime” and “illegal.” The Ilchi villagers were fined 500 yuan each, which represents one-sixth of their annual income. In an indication that regulations on religious worship are unclear and seemingly arbitrary, one of the Uyghurs who was detained told RFA: “Since my childhood, we have had a custom of worshiping at that shrine, so I thought there was nothing wrong with worshiping there.”²⁶³ Also recorded in 2009 were restrictions on mosque attendance, such as outright closures for Friday prayers, after deadly unrest in the regional capital of Urumchi.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Ibid

²⁶² Rotar, Igor. (2006, August 15). *Xinjiang: Strict control of China’s Uighur Muslims continues*. Forum 18 News Service. Retrieved from http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=829.

²⁶³ Hoshur, Shohret. (2009, April 2). *Uyghurs Targeted Over Desert Prayers*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/uyghurstargeted-04022009162642.html>.

²⁶⁴ BBC News. (2009, July 10). *China bans Urumqi mosque prayers*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8143602.stm>; see also Schluessel, Eric. (2009, July 14). *Islam in Xinjiang: an ancient rival for a young China*. The Guardian UK. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/jul/14/uighur-china-islam>.

On July 13, 2011, Radio Free Asia reported that two Uyghur students attending a school in Zhejiang were expelled for attending a mosque.²⁶⁵ The action illustrates how the more relaxed regulations in parts of China outside of East Turkestan do not apply to Uyghurs. In a statement, a World Uyghur Congress spokesman said, “Every year in Urumqi there are high school students who are expelled from school and their parents given steep fines. The reason is that they have attended religious activities at the mosque, or especially fasted during [the Muslim holy month of] Ramadan.”²⁶⁶

UHRP received reports in 2012 that indicate that regulations have not relented on mosque attendance for restricted groups. Retired teachers and civil servants were asked to sign pledges to not engage in “illegal” religious activities in 2012 including mosque attendance. The regulations were confirmed with education bureau officials in Korla and at the Ili Prefecture Inland Revenue Bureau. Those who disobeyed would be committing a “political mistake” and be fired.²⁶⁷ A Radio Free Asia report dated November 15, 2012 described how mosques in East Turkestan were under tight surveillance during the 18th Party Congress that ushered in a new political leadership in Beijing. Measures included the deployment of armed personnel and the installation of CCTV at mosques.²⁶⁸

Islamic Dress

Several Uyghurs told UHRP researchers about strictly enforced regulations on clothing and appearance that Chinese officials deemed “Islamic.” Government restrictions on clothing and appearance are mostly aimed at men who wore beards and veiled women. In many cases, these kinds of appearances were deemed a security threat or enough to warrant suspicion on the part of Chinese authorities. Uyghurs who do not maintain such an appearance do not attract as much attention from the Chinese authorities. UHRP believes that the restrictions indicate not only an attempt to curb religious practice, but also Uyghur traditions.

²⁶⁵ Hai Nan. (2011, July 2013). *Uyghur Students ‘Caught Praying.’* Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/praying-07132011134554.html?searchterm=None>.

²⁶⁶ HRH Bergen. (2011, July 17). *Uyghur students expelled for religion, difficult life for relatives of political prisoners.* Human Rights House Network (HRHN). Retrieved from <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/16718.html>.

²⁶⁷ 美国之音(Voice of America, VOA). (2012, March 20). 不信教不进清真寺，新疆公职人员要签保证书(*No Religion, No going into Mosques, Public Officials in Xinjiang to Check Warranty*). Retrieved from <http://www.voachinese.com/content/article-20120321-xinjiang-civil-servants-143638466/948278.html>;
Radio Free Asia. (2012, March 21). 维族教师要签承诺书不参加宗教活动 (*Uyghur Teacher to Sign an Agreement to Not Participate in Religious Activities*). Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/xinjiang-03212012102558.html>.

²⁶⁸ Radio Free Asia. (2012, November 15). 新疆清真寺遭严密监控 (*Mosques in Xinjiang Closely Monitored*). Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/xinjiang_mosque-11152012112129.html?encoding=simplified.

In an article dated November 8, 2012, a foreign resident of East Turkestan wrote in The Diplomat of restrictions on appearance targeting students, as well as the significance of traditional dress as a cultural symbol:

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government also forbids students and teachers from wearing headscarves or traditional hats on school campuses. One Uyghur professor with whom I spoke argued that these head coverings are a cultural marker, rather than strictly a religious marker. In fact, many Uyghurs have remarked that the July 2009 riots acted as a major turning point in their society. Since that time, the number of Uyghur women wearing headscarves has increased dramatically. They argue that they wear them to stand in solidarity with other Uyghurs as well as identify themselves as Muslim.

One day, I encountered a handful of students on a college campus wearing traditional hats and headscarves. I asked one of the young women why she chose to cover her head in spite of the ban. 'It's part of our culture,' she responded. When I subsequently inquired what might happen if she continued to defy the ban, the student said that the school could choose to expel her. Such acts of resistance, albeit on a small scale, seemingly indicate the desire of Uyghurs and other Central Asian ethnic groups to assert their own identity as well as their rights.²⁶⁹



*Left: Keriya County Joint Township Central Primary School
Right: Uyghur: Remove any headwear when entering the school
Chinese: No entering the school wearing headwear or headscarves. © Uighurbiz*

²⁶⁹ Adams, Graham. (2012, November 8). *The Xinjiang Perspective: Part III*. The Diplomat. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/china-power/the-xinjiang-perspective-part-iii/>.

Nevertheless, in a November 14, 2012 South China Morning Post article, CCP official Kuresh Kanjir denied any existence of a ban on “traditional ethnic dress” despite compelling evidence presented in this section to the contrary. In a revealing statement on government attitudes, Kanjir added, “But we are now in a civilised society and we hope to use modern culture to guide a somehow backward culture.”²⁷⁰

In interviews with UHRP, Uyghurs described how state officials had removed “Islamic” clothing from Uyghurs at airports. A Uyghur man witnessed a women stripped to her underclothes at a security checkpoint in Urumchi in order to satisfy security personnel that she was safe to travel before boarding the plane.²⁷¹ A Uyghur woman recalled an incident of a Uyghur man and wife who were at a security checkpoint in Kashgar airport in August 2012. The wife was forced to remove her veil before she could board the plane.²⁷² Other interviewees reported removal of clothing in other public locations. A Uyghur man who recently came from East Turkestan saw an incident of a person being forced to remove their clothes in front of the Id Kah Bazaar in Kashgar during Ramadan 2012,²⁷³ and a Uyghur man saw the beating of a man by police who had complained to them about the forced removal of her veil.²⁷⁴ The former imam said that since he fled China, the local police have harassed his wife, who is still in China, for wearing a headscarf.²⁷⁵



*Notice:
Show your beautiful face,
Let your beautiful hair flow.
Remove your veil, change primitive customs
Make Kashgar harmonious, establish pleasant
traditions.
©Uighurbiz*

²⁷⁰ Li Jing. (2012, November 14). *There is no ban on Uyghur dress, police deputy says at congress*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1081896/there-no-ban-uyghur-dress-police-deputy-says-congress?page=all>.

²⁷¹ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

²⁷² Interviewee 3 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

²⁷³ Interviewee 1 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

²⁷⁴ Interviewee 2 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

²⁷⁵ Interviewee 4 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

Furthermore, a Uyghur man in his forties recalled from his travels in East Turkestan in 2012 that Uyghurs with beards and *doppa* hats had been stopped for extra questioning at security checkpoints.²⁷⁶ Reports of harassment of Uyghurs with this kind of appearance were confirmed in an August 19, 2010 report from Radio Free Asia that described similar searches in Aksu.²⁷⁷ The Uyghur in his forties added that during the 2008 Olympics a man from Karamay named Obul Kasim, who had a beard, had visited Korla. The police were doing house-to-house searches in the name of Olympic security to check if there were Uyghurs in Korla from other cities. When the police saw Obul Kasim had a beard and was from out of town, they arrested him. Obul Kasim told police that a beard was not against the law, but he was detained for 68 days and paid 20,000 yuan to police for his release. He was directly jailed with no legal procedure. The police shaved his beard while he was in detention.²⁷⁸

Official sources also indicate curbs on the practice of wearing beards or headscarves among Uyghurs. A report issued by the City of Kashgar People's Court Party Committee on July 5, 2012 discusses the "religious atmosphere" in the city. The report relates how the wearing of beards is not a custom among young Uyghurs and officials should promote the concept of "beautiful women," referring to unveiled Uyghur women.²⁷⁹ Deutsche Welle reported on December 15, 2011 on restrictions in Ghulja that formed part of a campaign to dilute religious consciousness. Individuals with headscarves or beards were labeled as "not normal" and campaigns against such appearances were equated with a "healthy" and "civilized" life.²⁸⁰ Associated Press cited the Ghulja government website in a December 15, 2011 report stating that the campaign aimed "to completely get rid of the abnormal phenomenon in the entire community of minority ethnic women and youth wearing Arabian dress, growing beards and covering their faces in veils."²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Interviewee 6 interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2012.

²⁷⁷ Hoshur, Shohret. (2010, August 19). *Slain patrolmen 'Checked' Uyghurs*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/Uyghur-policemen-killed-in-attack-08192010163454.html>.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ 新疆阿图什市人民法院 (Xinjiang Atush City People's Court). (2012, July 5). 喀什市人民法院机关党委召开淡化宗教氛围退休党员座谈会 (*Kashgar People's Court Party Committee Play Down Religious Atmosphere and Retire Political Party Member Conference*). Retrieved from <http://kss.xjcourt.org/public/detail.php?id=7>.

²⁸⁰ 宋如鑫 (Song Ruxin) 编辑 (Bian Ji). (2011, December 15). 新疆伊宁推动“淡化宗教意识” (*Yining, Xinjiang to Promote "Play Down Religious Consciousness."*) 多维新闻 (Duowei News). Retrieved from <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2011-12-15/58411055.html>; 皮埃尔 (Pierre). (2011, December 15). 伊宁市一街道发起“淡化宗教意识”运动 (*Yining City Streets Launch "Play Down Religious Consciousness" Campaign*). 博讯新闻网 (Boxun News). Retrieved from <http://www.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2011/12/201112152037.shtml>.

²⁸¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2011, December 15). *Neighborhood in far west China tries veil ban*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/news/neighborhood-far-west-china-tries-veil-ban>.

A June 11, 2010 report described restrictions in Kucha County that included bans on headscarves and beards and equated non-Islamic appearance with civility.²⁸² In 2011, CECC reported that campaigns in East Turkestan connected religious clothing to “religious extremism” and “backwardness.”²⁸³ Uighurbiz published a post on August 11, 2012 which shows a public sign exhorting women to promote modern civilization and culture by not wearing the veil.



Women and girls, open your veil, don't disturb modern civilized society. © Uighurbiz

The report also contains a number of other signs captured across the region.²⁸⁴ The popularization of unveiling Muslim women was captured in a dance that was first spread throughout the region in 2009.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Radio Free Asia. (2010, June 9). 新疆库车县清查非法宣传品 销毁维族妇女服饰 (In Kuche County, Xinjiang Inventory of Illegal Propaganda Materials and Uyghur Women Apparel Destroyed). Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/xinjiang-06092010163117.html>.

²⁸³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>.

²⁸⁴ 维吾尔在线 (Uighurbiz). (2012, August 11). 新疆：“请揭开面纱，不要影响现代文明社会” (Xinjiang: “Please Unveil, Do Not Affect Modern Society”). Retrieved from <http://www.uighurbiz.net/archives/4802>.



Women with headscarves and veils cannot conduct social insurance business. © Uighurbiz

Extensive overseas reporting on clothing restrictions in the region indicates the lengths to which the government goes to control Uyghur behavior. In 2008, Radio Free Asia reported a police officer in Charbagh in Hotan Prefecture as saying: “We are...checking the identities of those who have beards or mustaches, and women who cover their faces,”

²⁸⁵ Lingbodancer. (2012, February 24). 掀起你的盖头来 (维吾尔族男女双人舞, 表演: 苟婵婵、玉米提) (*Lift Your Veil (Uyghur Male and Female Two-Person Dance, Performance: Gou Chan, YuMi Ti)*). YouTube. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5-0sCP5uTo>; Xieyangfa. (2009). 视频: 舞蹈教练 09掀起你的盖头来 维吾尔族 (Video: Dance Coaches 09 Uyghurs Lift Your Veil). Youku. Retrieved from http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjM2NTQzMg==.html; 王洛宾 (Wang Luobin). 掀起你的盖头来 (*Lift Your Veil*). Baidu. Retrieved from <http://baike.baidu.com/view/3250796.htm>.

According to a Uyghur informant, *Lift Your Veil* is a popular Uyghur folk song about love and its meaning in this context has been changed from the original intention. The song in actuality depicted typical Uyghur girls as reserved, shy and honest in relationships. The words to the song in Uyghur are:

*Qashimni qara didiler,
qara qash iken yari-yar
ashqin qashingni bir koriwalay,
Janim ukijan yari-yar*

*Chechimni uzun didiler,
Chachi uzun yari-yar,
Achqin chachingni bir koriwalay,
qara chach ukijan yari-yar.*

In translation: All said she has a black eyebrow, Please open your eyebrow my love, I wish to see it once.
All said she has a long hair, Please open your long hair my love, I wish to see it once.

during Ramadan. The official added, “We uncover the faces of veiled women by force if necessary.”²⁸⁶ Radio Free Asia reported in 2009 that state employees in Kashgar had been submitted to a campaign forcing anyone with facial hair to shave. Propaganda employee Omerjan Tohti at Kashgar Prefecture government stated: “State employees should be clean and neat at all times, and they should be models for other people...That’s why we’re doing this...Kashgar’s situation is very complicated...There are some radical elements politicizing beards and mustaches to incite separatism.”²⁸⁷ The report added, “In an online posting, one teacher reported that, as part of the campaign against facial hair, officials at his school had even removed from the auditorium and classrooms portraits of mustachioed Communist icons Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin.”²⁸⁸ Radio Free Asia indicated Kashgar authorities were enforcing a 2007 regulation stating government employees should be secular in appearance.²⁸⁹



Women wearing veils or headscarves and men under 45-years-old with long beards may not enter the hospital. Prayer is prohibited in the hospital. © Bilimkuqi Blog

²⁸⁶ Gulchire. (2008, September 6). *Ramadan Curbs on China's Muslims*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/Ramadan-09062008195750.html>.

²⁸⁷ Shohret. (2008, February 20). *Kashgar Uyghurs Pressured To Shave*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/hair-02202009174717.html>.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

In 2009, Radio Free Asia interviewed two Uyghur women who described how police broke up a gathering of Uyghur women near Ghulja on suspicion that they were holding an “illegal” religious gathering. The women believed that the authorities’ suspicions had been heightened because the women at the gathering were wearing headscarves; however, the police did not give any indication as to why the women were being detained. According to the interviewees, “Eighteen of the women were freed after eight hours of interrogation, seven were sent for forced labor for 10 days, and five were sentenced to a month in jail.”²⁹⁰

Radio Free Asia reported on region-wide restrictions on women wearing long dresses and covering their faces and men wearing beards in 2010, citing examples from Kucha, Ghulja and Hotan. A report published on September 24, 2010 stated, according to an anonymous source, that fines from between USD 30 to USD 100 were being levied on people who did not comply. The source added, “When I used to live in Kucha, my friend was taken to jail because he was a mosque imam who spoke out about the way the government was treating people wearing religious clothing. He was sentenced to 12 years in jail.”²⁹¹ Another source in Ghulja added, “All summer this year, the local government worked towards changing the dress of the women and cutting the men’s beards...Right now, women can no longer have covered faces in



Notice

Respected readers:

Starting today, anyone wearing full-body scarves, veils, or headscarves will be strictly prohibited from entering the library.

Kashgar City Library

March 8, 2013

²⁹⁰ Hoshur, Shohret. (2009, June 5). *Women Held Over Party*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/party-06052009144059.html>.

²⁹¹ Abdilim, Mihray. (2010, September 24). *Ban on 'Religious' Clothing*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/clothing-09232010170017.html>.

my area. All young men must have clean-shaven faces. Only the older men can keep beards.”²⁹² In 2009, CECC said officials believed there were “outstanding problems” in “Toqsu county, Aqsu district... in ‘bizarre’ women’s apparel.” CECC added, “an expert invited by the Party-controlled XUAR Women’s Federation provided a ‘correct interpretation’ of the Quran’s views toward women’s clothes.”²⁹³ CECC also described that in 2011, “Under the direction of the Party-controlled women’s federation in the XUAR, multiple localities reported continuing a campaign aimed at dissuading women from veiling their hair and faces.”²⁹⁴

Radio Free Asia reported in December 16, 2010 that village authorities were enforcing agreements among villagers in the Hotan area to not participate in “illegal” religious practices. The official Hotan municipal website stated that 98.6 percent of households in the area had signed. However, according to a World Uyghur Congress spokesman, “29 men had so far been fined as much as 500 yuan (U.S. \$75) each for wearing beards, while 38 women had been fined between 200 yuan and 1,000 yuan (U.S. \$30 to \$150) for wearing headscarves.”²⁹⁵

In a sign that restrictions on clothing were causing tension, the South China Morning Post cited the restrictions as possible cause for an alleged attack on a local police station in Hotan in a July 22, 2011 report.²⁹⁶ The Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy alleged clothing restrictions were the cause of unrest that occurred among Uyghurs in Henan Province in November 2012.²⁹⁷

In 2012, UHRP reported on clothing restrictions occurring in private businesses in the Hotan area. A local company that leases property to businesses in the city banned women wearing veils from entering its shops and markets, and restricted the sale of clothing with “religious characteristics” as well as the sale of “illegal audiovisual materials” from its property. The Hotan Prefecture Jinxing Trading Co., Ltd. posted a notice regarding the new restrictions on June 11, 2012 in front of an entrance to one of the shops on its property, stating that the restrictions were in accordance with the demands of prefectural

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2009, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt09/CECCannRpt2009.pdf>.

²⁹⁴ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>.

²⁹⁵ Qiao Long. (2010, December 16). *Campaigns Target Uyghur Muslims*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/campaigns-12162010111933.html>.

²⁹⁶ Choi Chi-yuk. (2011, July 22). *Ban on Islamic dress sparked Uyghur attack*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/article/974132/ban-islamic-dress-sparked-uyghur-attack>.

²⁹⁷ He Shan. (2012, November 29). *Veil-Lifting Sparks Unrest*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/veil-11292012194210.html>.

and municipal Party and government authorities. (*A full-size version of the sign is included as Image 3 of the Appendix I, page 96*) The notice informs readers that the regulations are being instituted “in order to dilute the religious atmosphere, purify the religious environment, and maintain order in the marketplace.” It states patrons are required to open their bags for a security check upon entering the company’s shops and marketplaces. In addition, it states that individuals may not use the new restrictions on the wearing of “religious clothing” as an excuse to stop selling their products at the company’s properties.²⁹⁸

A June 26, 2012 report from Radio Free Asia cited an employee at a shopping mall in Hotan as saying, “It’s fine if they are just wearing ethnic minority clothing, but no one is allowed in if their face is covered...Some shops allow them in, while others don’t; it depends which one you go to.”²⁹⁹ Officials targeted Hotan in particular in 2012 with an official website stating raids on illegal religious activity discovered 1,498 people had worn “traditional Muslim dress.”³⁰⁰

Officials also targeted students and teachers in 2012 with campaigns against Islamic dress. Citing a Uighurbiz report, the Autonomous Region blog described how male teachers in Kalpin County were penalized for not complying with orders to shave. The school’s party secretary fined a senior teacher his USD 680 annual bonus. If the behavior continued the Party Secretary would ensure the teacher would, “fail all future evaluations and be dispatched to remote places.”³⁰¹

Furthermore, in a similar strategy employed to dissuade Uyghurs from traditional dress, CECC reported:

In Hejing county, BMAP [Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture], an official reported at a September 2011 meeting of 550 households receiving minimum social welfare guarantees (*dibao jiating*) that women wearing veils, men with ‘large beards,’ and guardians of minors who illegally enter mosques would be cut off from this social welfare support.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2012, June 22). *New rules issued by Hotan company discriminate against Uyghur women*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/new-rules-issued-hotan-company-discriminate-against-uyghur-women.html>.

²⁹⁹ Qiao Long. (2012, June 26). *Two Uyghurs Detained Over Leaflets*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/leaflets-06262012124859.html>.

³⁰⁰ Qiao Long. (2012, February 21). *Uyghurs Detained in Hotan*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/detained-02212012105215.html>.

³⁰¹ Autonomous Region: Uyghur Notes and Journal. (2012, February 2). *Shave or No Bonus*. Retrieved from <http://autonomousregion.wordpress.com/2012/02/02/nobonus/>.

³⁰² Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2012, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2012*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112shrg76190/pdf/CHRG-112shrg76190.pdf>.

On July 27, 2012, Radio Free Asia reported that officials in areas with high densities of Uyghurs, such as Hotan, Aksu, and Kashgar required Uyghurs to sign agreements to refrain from “illegal” religious activities in exchange for monthly government stipends for impoverished families. The report states, “Applicants must promise that neither they nor their family members will cover their faces in public for religious reasons and that they will refuse to host guests who cover their faces.”³⁰³ *A full-size image of one such pledge is included as Image 4 of the Appendix, page 96. It is followed on page 97 by two other images of signs targeting Uyghurs’ Islamic dress.*

Religious Sites

There have been a number of descriptions of the destruction of religious sites in East Turkestan since 2005. On August 18, 2006, Forum 18 published an article that detailed the demolition of a mosque in Urumchi, which was reconstructed as part of the Grand Bazaar shopping complex that included a Kentucky Fried Chicken and a Carrefour supermarket. Citing a BBC report, the Forum 18 article quoted a Uyghur worshipper at the new mosque as stating, “It really isn’t appropriate. We come here to worship - but sometimes we can’t hear our prayers because of the music and singing from the bazaar.”³⁰⁴

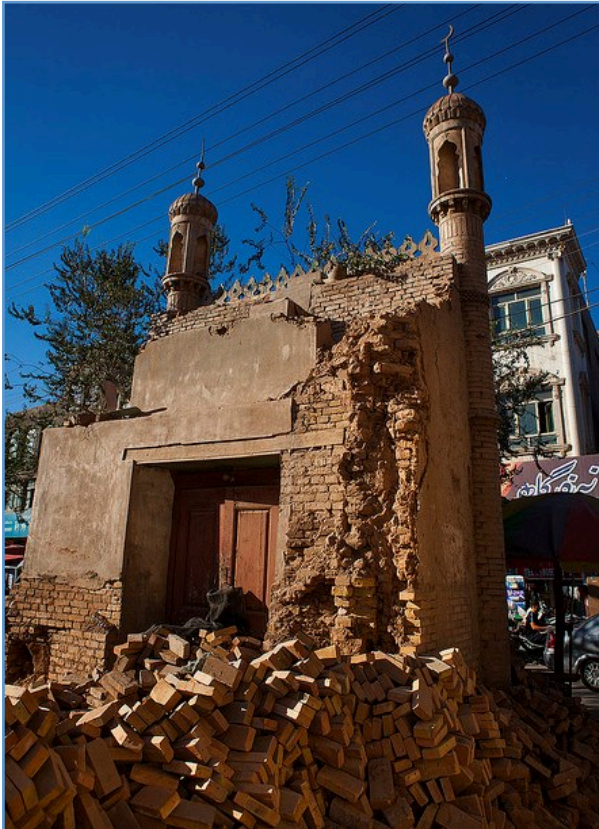


Carrefour, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Dong Koruk Mosque © TravBuddy Blog

³⁰³ Hoshur, Shohret. (2012, July 27). *Restrictions Imposed on Aid Recipients*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/restrictions-07272012155718.html>.

³⁰⁴ Rotar, Igor. (2006, August 15). *Xinjiang: Strict control of China’s Uighur Muslims continues*. Forum 18. Retrieved from http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=829.

In June 23, 2008, Radio Free Asia reported on the destruction of a mosque, which was built in 1999, in Kalpin City near Aksu. The reasoning behind the demolition was unclear and Radio Free Asia cited a village elder stating young Uyghurs had been secretly praying at the mosque on Fridays, an action that had upset local authorities. The World Uyghur Congress, citing local sources, claimed the demolition was also due to the mosque's refusal to publicize the upcoming Beijing Olympics.³⁰⁵ Chinese Foreign Ministry officials refuted the World Uyghur Congress claims, but acknowledged the



Mosque in Old City Kashgar © Eric Lafforgue

destruction of buildings saying that the cause for the action was that it had been built “illegally.”³⁰⁶ Two AFP reporters who traveled to Kalpin to investigate the demolition were barred from entry by local police.³⁰⁷

According to reports, an Islamic college in Kashgar, known as the Khanlik Madrasa, was demolished around June 2009 and may have been torn down to make room for an athletic field. One of the school's most famous students is said to have been celebrated historical figure Mahmud Kashgari. The Khanlik Madrasa was the first in East Turkestan to combine Islamic and “scientific” curricula, introducing a trend of similar schools with modern teaching methods in the region and, later, reformist social and political movements.³⁰⁸

Ceremonies raising the flag of the PRC at Uyghur mosques in East Turkestan are another source of contention with Chinese authorities. A report dated September 7, 2011 stated five Uyghurs were detained on charges of “inciting separatism” for refusing to observe a flag-raising ceremony at a

³⁰⁵ Ding Xiao. (2008, June 23). *Uyghur Mosque Demolished*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/uyghurmosque-06232008163925.html>.

³⁰⁶ China Daily. (2008, July 8). *China refutes report on Xinjiang mosque demolition*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-07/08/content_6829044.htm.

³⁰⁷ Taipei Times. (2008, August 1). *Reporters barred from Olympic-averse village*. Retrieved from <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/sport/archives/2008/08/01/2003419052>.

³⁰⁸ The New Dominion. (2009, June 18). *Xanliq Madrasa Demolished – Played Important Role in Kashgar's History*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewdominion.net/?p=765>.

mosque in the Kucha area.³⁰⁹ A Chinese Legal Daily article on May 3, 2012 praised a mosque in Awat Village near Aksu for its observance of national flag raising ceremonies.³¹⁰ Furthermore, an August 3, 2010 report from Radio Free Asia detailed how party officials had held a meeting on July 24, 2010 in a mosque in Peyziwat County. As part of the meeting, the Unity and Friendship Department of the Party held a speech contest with the theme, “Love the Country, Promote the Homeland.” A local religious scholar quoted in the report said:

To hold communist activities in a mosque is a kind of ridicule to our religion and our humanity...So far, within a week I have received at least 100 calls from the public, all of them complaining about the issue. I understand that they cannot express their opinions to officials because of the political situation in our homeland...We did not say anything to the government about the issue, because we know what the cost of expression on this topic would be, especially these days. But officials should know that our silence does not mean we agree.³¹¹



*On left, flag raising ceremony at mosque. Headline: 5-starred red flag flutters inside a mosque.
On right, the PRC flag flies above a mosque ©Uighurbiz*

³⁰⁹ Tsering, Tendar. (2011, September 7). *Protest against Chinese flags in mosques, 5 Uyghurs detained*. Phayul.com. Retrieved from <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=29970&t=1>.

³¹⁰ 法制网 (Legal Daily). (2012, May 3). 新疆阿克苏英阿瓦提乡: 清真寺里升起了五星红旗 (Awat County Town in Aqsu, Xinjiang: A Mosque Raises a Five-Star Flag). Retrieved from http://www.legaldaily.com.cn/police_and_frontier-defence/content/2012-05/03/content_3543123.htm?node=23301.

³¹¹ Hoshur, Shohret. (2010, August 3). *Politics Intrude in Mosque*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/party-08032010162324.html>.

Uyghur Christians

There are a small number of Uyghurs in East Turkestan who are Christians. In the contemporary era, no accurate number of Uyghur Christians exists due to the out-of-necessity clandestine nature of their religious worship. An anecdotal account of one Uyghur Christian's conversion from Islam to Christianity provides details on the secrecy of Christian worship in East Turkestan and the pressures faced by Uyghur Christians from the Chinese government.³¹²

Most emblematic of the persecution of Uyghur Christians are the cases of Alimjan Yimit and Osman Imin. Alimjan was detained in Kashgar on January 12, 2008, when he was arrested and accused of "endangering national security." On May 27, 2008, Alimjan's case was tried in court, but the case was returned to local prosecutors because of "insufficient evidence" against him. According to China Aid, witnesses saw Alimjan escorted to Nongsanshi hospital in Kashgar Hospital on March 1, 2009, where it is claimed he was "crying out to onlookers that he had been beaten in the detention center."³¹³ He was formally charged with providing state secrets to overseas organizations on July 11 of the same year and after a closed trial was sentenced to a 15-year jail term on August 6, 2009 by the Kashgar Intermediate People's Court. His wife was informed that a verdict had been delivered in the case and this had been relayed to Alimjan in detention; however, she was not told the outcome. Alimjan's lawyer learnt of the verdict and sentencing in December of 2009 and Alimjan's "family members were barred from seeing the verdict paper."³¹⁴

According to Alimjan's lawyer, an appeal was denied by the People's High Court of the XUAR on March 16, 2010.³¹⁵ A petition to further appeal the sentencing was denied on December 27, 2010.³¹⁶ Throughout Alimjan's case there have been reports that his family and lawyers have been denied access to visit him in detention. For example, his lawyers were denied access on February 25, 2008³¹⁷ and August 12, 2012.³¹⁸ A July 19, 2010

³¹² Open Doors. *Testimony of Uyghur Christian in China*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendoors.org.au/odau/persecutedchristians/testimonyuyghu-christian>.

³¹³ ChinaAid News. (2009, December 23). *Uyghur Christian Alimujiang Persecuted for Religious Conversion*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/12/uyghur-christian-alimujiang-persecuted.html>.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Zhang Min. (2010, April 8). *Uyghur Christian's Appeal Denied*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/uyghur-christian-04082010150756.html>.

³¹⁶ Free Alim. (2011, March 3). *Xinjiang's Higher People's Court Rejects Christian Prisoner Alimujiang's Appeal*. Retrieved from <http://freealim.com/free-news/news-articles/item/168-xinjiang%E2%80%99s-higher-people%E2%80%99s-court-rejects-christian-prisoner-alimujiang%E2%80%99s-appeal.html>.

³¹⁷ ChinaAid News. (2009, December 23). *Uyghur Christian Alimujiang Persecuted for Religious Conversion*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/12/uyghur-christian-alimujiang-persecuted.html>.

press release from China Aid details how Alimjan's family was denied visiting rights after a few initial short visits.³¹⁹ In January 2013, Alimjan's wife told reporters that she had been denied a visit to see her husband.³²⁰



Alimjan Yimit pictured with his family.

Osman is a Uyghur Christian who was first arrested in 2004. He was allegedly tortured severely by police, chained to a metal bed and beaten repeatedly during the period he spent in detention after this initial arrest. He was eventually released on bail in the same year.³²¹ Osman was rearrested in 2007 by the Hotan Branch of the China State Security

³¹⁸ Free Alim. (2012, August 24). *Beijing Christian Attorney went to Urumqi, and Applied to Meet with Alimujiang but was Rejected by the Prison*. Retrieved from <http://freealim.com/free-news/news-articles/item/178-beijing-christian-attorney-went-to-urumqi-and-applied-to-meet-with-alimujiang-but-was-rejected-by-the-prison.html>.

³¹⁹ Free Alim. (2010, July 19). *Family of Imprisoned Uyghur Christian Alimujiang Denied Visiting Rights*. Retrieved from <http://freealim.com/free-news/news-articles/item/155-family-of-imprisoned-uyghur-christian-alimujiang-denied-visiting-rights.html>.

³²⁰ Qiao Long. (2013, January 23). *Jailed Uyghur Pastor Denied Visit*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/pastor-01232013161425.html>.

³²¹ Compass Direct News. (2004, February 11). *Uyghur Christians Arrested, Jailed in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/china/2008/newsarticle_5232.html.

Bureau and subsequently sentenced to two years of re-education through labor in November 2007 for “revealing state secrets” and “illegal proselytizing.”³²² Officials had planned to sentence him for 10 to 15 years, but after international media attention was directed toward Osman’s case, they instead sentenced him to two years in a labor camp near Kashgar.³²³ In the labor camp, Osman was forced to work 12 to 15 hours a day and an overseas Christian news service reported that he suffered from malnutrition while in the labor camp and his health deteriorated due to the harsh conditions.³²⁴ When Osman’s lawyer appealed his sentence in June 2008, court authorities insisted on a closed hearing, then turned down the appeal and refused to explain the reason for this decision.³²⁵ The courts also denied Osman proper access to his lawyer, which violated normal procedures. Osman was released on November 18, 2009 after serving his two-year sentence.³²⁶

³²² ChinaAid News. (2009, December 23). *Uyghur Christian Alimujiang Persecuted for Religious Conversion*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/12/uyghur-christian-alimujiang-persecuted.html>.

³²³ Open Doors. *Osman Imin*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/campaign/osman.php>.

³²⁴ Compass Direct News. (2004, February 11). *Uyghur Christians Arrested, Jailed in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/china/2008/newsarticle_5232.html.

³²⁵ Open Doors. *Osman Imin*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/campaign/osman.php>.

³²⁶ Ibid.

International and Domestic Laws

The fundamental individual and collective right to religious freedom is protected by the multilateral human rights system through binding and guiding legal instruments. In principle, the PRC's own laws sanction freedom of religious belief to all citizens. Besides the recognition of the individual right to religious freedom, international and domestic law safeguards the religious rights of ethnic minorities and children from coercive and discriminatory measures. Furthermore, an individual's right to determine how to practice and teach their faith, worship in private and in community is guaranteed under international law.

The CCP is sensitive to external measures that undermine its ability to control religious practice within its borders. As a result, the PRC's commitment to international human rights instruments that protect PRC citizens from repressive measures is tentative at best. The PRC has taken very few steps in the United Nations system that obligates it to religious rights under international law. The cautious approach to internationally recognized standards puts religious communities, especially ethnic minority believers, at risk, as the only recourse to accountability is the PRC government's own laws.

While the PRC does codify religious rights, the laws covering what religious activities are permissible under law are unclear. The non-committal position toward international standards and the vagaries of domestic legal instruments ensures CCP supremacy over religious practice in the PRC. The maintenance of Party power is essential in dealing with perceived threats to the regime that stem from communities of religious believers. If the state decides that its control is challenged, legal ambiguities permit the repression of religious groups.

International Instruments

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, clearly outlines the individual right to freedom of religious belief:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.³²⁷

Individual and collective religious freedom is restated in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),³²⁸ Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or

³²⁷ United Nations (UN). (1948, December 10). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>.

³²⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1976, March 23). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>.

Belief³²⁹ and Article 2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Declaration on Minorities), which states:

Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion.³³⁰

The protections in Article 2 of the Declaration on Minorities collectively define individual minority religious rights as set out in Article 27 of the ICCPR. In addition, Article 30 of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees the religious rights of minority children:

...a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.³³¹

The ICCPR (Article 18.1), the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (Article 1) and the Declaration on Minorities (Article 2.1) all contain articles that protect public and private worship, observance, practice and teaching of religion. The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief states that coercive measures and discrimination on the basis of religion are violations of human rights:

No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice. (Article 1)

No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on grounds of religion or other beliefs. (Article 2)³³²

While the PRC ratified the CRC on March 2 1992, it has not ratified the ICCPR, which it signed on October 5, 1998. Under the United Nations system, Covenants constitute hard law and states are bound by the provisions contained within once ratified. As it stands,

³²⁹ United Nations (UN) General Assembly. (1981, November 25). *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r055.htm>.

³³⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1992, December 18). *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/minorities.htm>.

³³¹ United Nations (UN) General Assembly. (1989, November 20). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b38f0.html>.

³³² United Nations (UN) General Assembly. (1981, November 25). *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r055.htm>.

citizens of the PRC are not protected by individual religious rights as outlined in the ICCPR until the Chinese government acknowledges its consent to be bound by the treaty through ratification.

Declarations do not constitute hard law and are not legally binding upon member states of the United Nations; however, instruments such as the UDHR are part of customary international law and carry significant moral obligations. According to Steiner and Alston, “although the Declaration in itself may not be a legal document involving legal obligations, it is of legal value inasmuch as it contains an authoritative interpretation of the ‘human rights and fundamental freedoms’ which do constitute an obligation, however imperfect, binding upon the Members of the United Nations.”³³³

According to one scholar, among some states, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief is regarded “as normative in nature and part of customary international law.”³³⁴ Although there is no monitoring mechanism for the Declaration, a Special Rapporteur oversees tasks that include, “examining incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world which are inconsistent with the provisions of the 1981 Declaration and submitting on a yearly basis, reports on his activities regarding questions involving implementation of the 1981 Declaration together with his conclusions and recommendations.”

Similar issues of legal status are apparent in the Declaration on Minorities, which according to human rights lawyer Lâm, “is not per se enforceable...[but]... initiates a normative, but not yet legal, change in the human rights domain.”³³⁵ Lâm concludes that the “The CERD (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which the PRC acceded on December 29, 1981, but has yet to ratify) and the Human Rights Committee, then, remain the prime mechanism available to minority and indigenous persons who wish to legally assert human rights claims.”³³⁶

Domestic Law

Freedom of religious belief is in theory permitted under the laws of the PRC. Although provisions protect religious believers from discrimination, the laws are clear that the Chinese state is the arbiter of permissible religious practice. Nevertheless, no definition is given as to what constitutes “normal religious activities.” This leaves Chinese citizens unsure as to what is legal in displaying their faith and vulnerable to swift changes in government policy as to the legality of their actions.

³³³ Henry J. Steiner, Philip Alston, and Ryan Goodman. *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*. 3rd Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). p. 151.

³³⁴ Bahiyyih G. Tahzib. *Freedom of Religion Or Belief: Ensuring Effective International Legal Protection*. (Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 1996). p. 165.

³³⁵ Maivan Clech Lâm. “Minorities and Indigenous People.” In *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*. By Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). p. 531.

³³⁶ Ibid.

Article 36 of The Constitution of the People's Republic of China states:

Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.

Article 11 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL) codifies the religious rights of ethnic minorities in the PRC and restates the supremacy of the Chinese state:

Autonomous agencies in ethnic autonomous areas guarantee the freedom of religious belief to citizens of the various nationalities.

No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion, nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion.

The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state.

Religious bodies and religious affairs shall not be subject to any foreign domination.

According to the Chinese government, the principle of non-discrimination against believers in religion is embedded in "Civil Law, Education Law, Labor Law, Compulsory Education Law, Electoral Law of the National People's Congress and Local People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Organic Law of Villagers Committees, and Advertisement Law."³³⁷

Professor of Law at Beijing University, Zhang Qianfan, and Professor of Politics and Law at East China University, Zhu Yingping write of the Chinese Constitution's limitations to protect religious freedom in China. Professors Zhang and Zhu argue that China's domestic laws and regulations curb the efficacy of the provisions set out in the Constitution, "even those 'normal' and lawful religious activities are not effectively protected, given the absence of legal remedies for official violations of religious freedom; administrative litigations, for example, are rather strictly limited to

³³⁷ 人民网 (People.com). *China's Policy on Religion*. Retrieved from <http://english.people.com.cn/92824/92845/92875/6442436.html>.

the scope of ‘legal interests’ -- interests defined explicitly in laws, not including the Constitution.”³³⁸

Writing in *The Monitor: Journal of International Affairs*, scholar Kevin Newton illustrates how Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution specifically restricts, rather than protects, Uyghur religious freedom:

Article 36 prohibits any religious observance that would ‘impair the health of citizens,’ a statement directed at the practice of fasting during Ramadan. Yet the most alarming clause in Article 36 for those who would desire to profess a religious faith pertains to ‘activities that disrupt public order.’ This often-cited clause has been used to implicate Muslims in Xinjiang for a variety of offenses, most notably not removing traditional clothing, especially the woman’s veil, while in public. While the debate rages around the world about the nature of veiling, the denial of education or employment effectively forces one to choose between religion and livelihood, effectively restricting the free practice of religion under Article 36 within the narrow guidelines set out by the state-appointed religious leaders.³³⁹

The provisions regarding religious freedom in the REAL are also subject to restrictions imposed by the Chinese state. Scholar Matthew Moneyhon calls the seeming openness embodied in the REAL a system of “give and take.” While the REAL offers a number of freedoms to ethnic minorities in autonomous regions, many of those freedoms are restricted by caveats that allow central authorities to have the final say in regional affairs—in essence the State remains in firm control of the lives of ethnic minorities at the same time as offering the veneer of autonomy. In his paper, *Controlling Xinjiang: Autonomy on China’s “New Frontier,”* he asserts, “Although the LRNA [REAL] is the most far-reaching legislation to date addressing the system of regional autonomy, autonomous areas are still subject to the ‘despotism and arbitrary will of authorities and functionaries [of the central government].”³⁴⁰

Scholar Gardner Bovingdon adds that even if Uyghurs feel that their interests under REAL have not been adequately protected by local officials, the law does not offer any recourse of action. Quoting Chinese legal scholar Yu Xingzhong, Bovingdon writes, “The enforcement of this law... rests entirely on the conscience and awareness of the departments concerned. If a state organ fails to implement such a law, there is no legal basis to hold such an organ responsible and hence no remedy can be

³³⁸ Zhang Qianfan and Zhu Yingping. *Religious Freedom and Its Legal Restrictions in China*. J. Reuben Clark Law School: International Center for Law and Religion Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.iclrs.org/content/blurb/files/Zhang%20Qianfan,%20%20China%2020100930.pdf>.

³³⁹ Newton, Kevin. (2011). *Requirements of Religion in Xinjiang NAR*. The Monitor 2011 Special Edition. Retrieved from <http://web.wm.edu/so/monitor/issues/16-SE/5-newton.pdf>.

³⁴⁰ Moneyhon, Matthew. (Winter 2002). *Controlling Xinjiang: Autonomy on China’s “New Frontier.”* Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal: Vol. 3 Issue 1. Retrieved from http://blog.hawaii.edu/aplpj/files/2011/11/APLPJ_03.1_moneyhon.pdf.

sought....Past experience has shown that the Regional Autonomy Law has rarely been cited to decide court cases.”³⁴¹



Flag hangs in mosque interior © Anonymous

³⁴¹ Bovingdon, Gardner (2005, April 11). Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). *China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law: Does it Protect Minority Rights?* Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/041105/Bovingdon.php>.

Recommendations

For the Chinese government

- Assure state bodies governing religion in the People's Republic of China, especially the Islamic Association of China and the State Administration for Religious Affairs, include independent representatives from the Uyghur people.
- Bring religious regulations into line with guarantees of religious freedom and non-state interference in public and private religious beliefs and practices, as contained in China's international and domestic obligations.
- Permit independent international investigations into Chinese government allegations of violence attributed to Islamic extremism and terrorism.
- Establish an independent judiciary free of political influence from Chinese Communist Party officials in order to conduct free and fair trials of alleged Islamic extremism and terrorism among Uyghurs.
- Cease the conflation of peaceful and ordinary Islamic belief and practice with criminal acts and terrorism in order to justify crackdowns on the Uyghur people.
- Clarify the body of regulations governing religion according to international human rights standards so as to give a transparent account of the permissible aspects of religious life in East Turkestan.
- Permit the education and development of an independent Islamic clergy free from state interference and refrain from intrusion into the content of sermons delivered by the Islamic clergy.
- Allow Uyghurs to undertake Hajj and Umrah independently and drop all state imposed age and political restrictions on Uyghurs wishing to travel Mecca. Official tours should be made affordable to all Uyghurs.
- Cease immediately the confiscation and denial of passports to Uyghurs. The procedures for Uyghurs should be the same as for any other individual applying for a passport in the People's Republic of China and China should abide by its own 2007 Passport Law.
- Desist from criminalizing the private religious education of Uyghur minors by religious schools and teachers. Religious education should be freely available to all Uyghurs children in accordance with normative human rights standards.
- Release immediately all Uyghur prisoners jailed for conducting "illegal" religious activities that are deemed usual and ordinary by international standards.
- Encourage an atmosphere of freedom of speech on religious affairs and the development of autonomous theological thinking in East Turkestan through the sanctioning of non-state run publications and printing presses.
- Stop the harassment of Uyghurs who observe Ramadan, and permit all Uyghurs to openly express their faith during all religious holidays.
- End restrictions on who can enter mosques. Everyone should be allowed to freely enter mosques in East Turkestan with no restrictions whatsoever in line with international human rights standards.
- Remove all discriminatory state restrictions against "Islamic appearance" that forbid entrance to state facilities and access to state assistance. Private enterprises that forbid entrance to Uyghurs with "Islamic appearance" should be prosecuted according to anti-discrimination laws.

- Respect the sanctity of mosques and the physical spaces they occupy. Before imposing state action on Islamic physical structures, a full and fair consultation process should happen with clergy, worshippers and the local community.
- Halt the harassment of Uyghur Christians and permit freedom of worship. The Chinese government should immediately free Alimjan Yimit to his family and investigate allegations of torture used on Mr. Yimit.
- Sign and ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- Meet obligations as set out in Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and obligations protecting women from discriminatory policies in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Realize Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and Article 2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
- Invite United Nations Special Rapporteurs on Religion or Belief and on Minority Issues to assess the condition of religious freedom among Uyghurs in East Turkestan.
- Abide by Article 11 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law and Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.
- Ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and implement the provisions contained in Articles 18 and 27 through domestic law.
- Realize normative standards outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including Article 18, that protect the right to religious freedom.

For concerned governments

- Raise the issue of religious freedom at bilateral human rights dialogues with the People's Republic of China in such a way that does not devalue egregious human rights abuses in the face of "economic realities," and call upon the Chinese government to ensure the genuine and meaningful consultation and participation of Uyghurs in religious affairs.
- Question the People's Republic of China on the repression of Uyghur religious rights at its forthcoming United Nations Universal Periodic Review in October 2013.
- Insist Chinese officials establish religious regulations that reflect international human rights standards ensuring Uyghurs enjoy the right to religious freedom.
- Arrange high level visits by US and Canadian Ambassadors-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to East Turkestan to investigate religious repression of Uyghurs.
- 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.
- Enact legislation expressing concern about the condition of religious freedom in East Turkestan, specifically condemning violations of Uyghur religious rights in

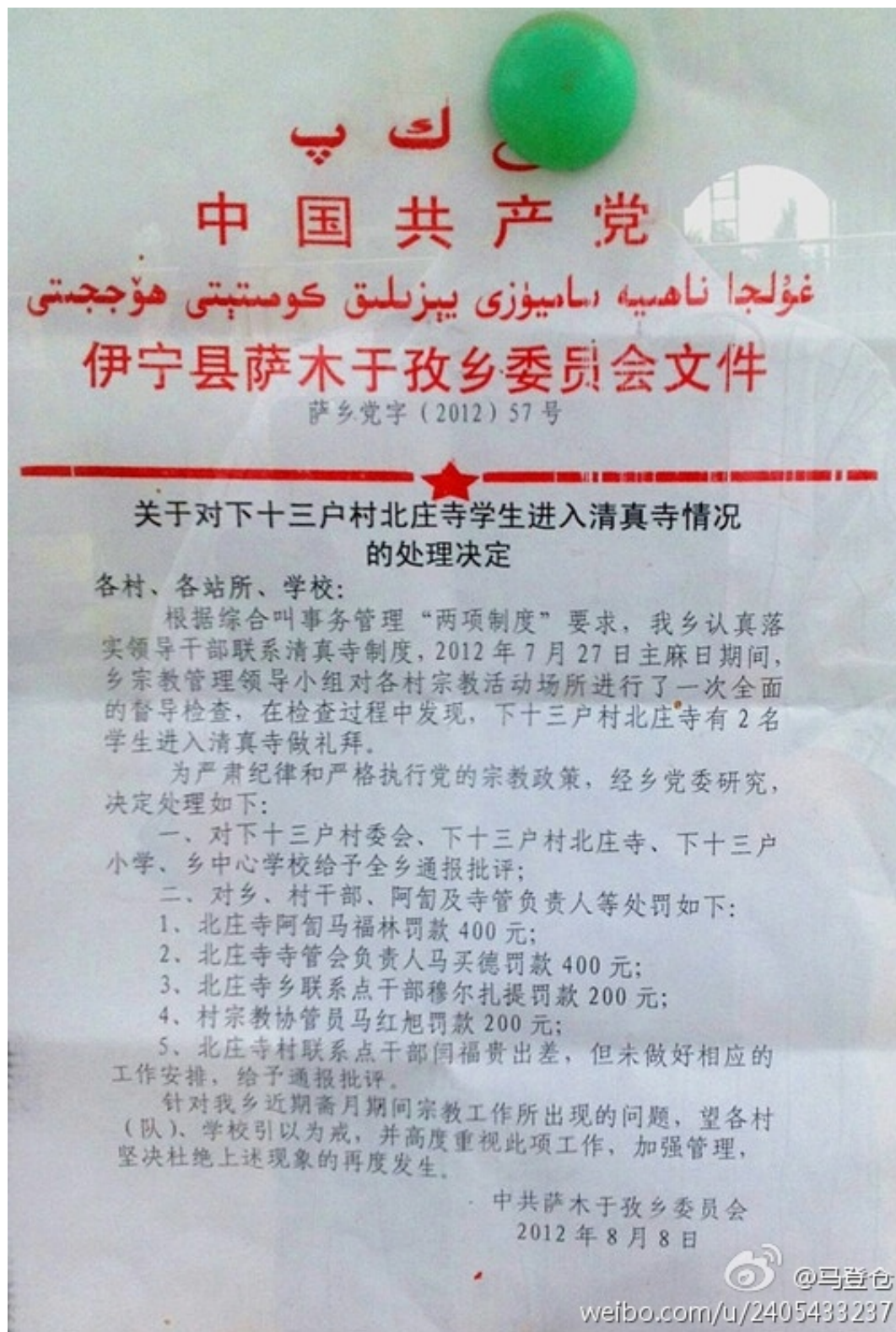
- the strongest terms and asking the Chinese government to immediately stop all abuses.
- Pass a “Uyghur Policy Act” that incorporates protection of Uyghur religious and cultural identity, as well as mandates investigation of violations of Uyghur’s religious rights.
 - Urge Chinese counterparts in meetings to abide by agreed international obligations that protect Uyghur religious and cultural life from assimilation with Chinese culture.

For the international community

- Tighten monitoring mechanisms of the treaty bodies covering international human rights instruments in the United Nations system, especially in regard to the People’s Republic of China’s obligations to meet international standards on religious freedom.
- The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should ask Chinese officials to report on what measures have been taken and what progress has been made on the concerns raised after the 1994 visit to China of the Special Rapporteur on Religion, especially concerns voiced over the religious rights of children under the age of 18.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should publicly express concern over the condition of religious rights among Uyghurs in East Turkestan and urge China to review and reform its body of regulations governing religious life in the People’s Republic of China.
- Send observers, particularly the Special Rapporteurs on Religion or Belief and on Minority Issues, to East Turkestan with unfettered access to Uyghur communities to impartially oversee China’s compliance to its international obligations to protect religious freedom.
- Ensure human rights standards and obligations regarding religion are fully met by the Chinese government before multilateral assistance and projects, through agencies such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, are approved.
- Make clear to Chinese officials in meetings that loss of Uyghur religious and cultural identity is an affront to the principles of global diversity, and that such a loss is borne globally and not just in the People’s Republic of China.

Appendix: Photographs Depicting Religious Restrictions

Image 1: Notice of Action taken against underage students in Ghulja Mosque



Chinese Communist Party

Ghulja County Samiyuzi Township Committee Document

Sa County Party Doc. (2012) No. 57

Regarding the situation of the decision on the Lower 13 Village Bei Zhuang Mosque students who entered the mosque.

All villages, stations, and schools:

According to requirements of the comprehensive management affairs “double system,”³⁴² our township must earnestly implement a system in which cadre leadership connect with mosques, on *jummah* (Friday, Islamic holy day) July 27, 2012, the township leaders’ small group on religious affairs management conducted a one-time, comprehensive inspection of all sites of religious activity in every village, and found in the inspection two students had entered the mosque to pray in Lower 13 Village Bei Zhuang Mosque.

To strictly discipline and strictly implement the Party’s religious policy, the Township Party Committee researched and decided to deal with the matter as follows:

1) Publicly criticize of Lower 13 Village Committee, Lower 13 Village Bei Zhuang Mosque, Lower 13 Village elementary school, and the township central school.

2) Fine the township and village cadres, imam and mosque management personnel as follows:

1. Bei Zhuang Mosque imam Ma Fulin is fined 400 yuan;
2. Bei Zhuang Mosque management officer Ma Mai De (Memet) is fined 400 yuan;
3. Bei Zhuang Mosque’s township cadre Mu Er Zha Ti (Mirzat) is fined 200 yuan;
4. The village religious association administrator Ma Hong Xu is fined 200 yuan;
5. Bei Zhuang Mosque’s village cadre Yan Fu Gui was traveling, but did not properly arrange relevant work well, and will be criticized in an internal government document.

Regarding all the problems with religious work which occurred in the township during the recent Ramadan period, hope that each village, team and school will be ashamed, and will attach a greater degree of importance to this work, strengthen management, and will firmly reject the above mentioned incidents from taking place.

Chinese Communist Party Samuyuzi Township Committee

August 8, 2012

³⁴² The “double system” refers to “the system by which minority leaders serve as contact person between mosques and religious affairs personnel, a unique characteristic of the XUAR religious affairs system, which strengthens legal religious management, and promotes religious and social stability. For more see: <http://www.fzxj.cn/view.asp?id=188454>

Image 2: Online post from restaurant owner regarding Ramadan restrictions

رامزاندا ئاشخانا ئاچماسلىق قانۇنسىزلىقىمۇ ؟

مەن خوتەن كېرىيەدىن ، كەسىپم ئاشپەز .
ئالدىمىزدا رامزان ئېيى يېتىپ كېلىدۇ ، يۇرتۇمىزدىكى ھەر دەرىجىلىك ھۆكۈمەت تارماقلىرى ئۇقتۇرۇش قىلىپ بارلىق يىمەك-ئىچمەك تىجارەتچىلىرىنىڭ رامزان مەزگىلىدە نورمال تىجارەت قىلىش كېرەكلىكىنى ئېيتتى .
ئەلۋەتتە بۇ ئىشقا سەككىز-توققۇز يىل بولاي دېدى . ئەمما يىللىرى بېسىم ئارتىپ كېتىۋاتىدۇ ، بۇرۇن شەكىل ئۇچۇنلا قىلغان بۇ ئىش ئەمدى <<ھەقىقەتتىن ئەمەلىيەتتىن ئىزدەش>> نىڭ جانلىق بىر كارتىسى بولۇپ قالدى . دىيارىمىز كىشىلىرى ئاساسەن دىگۈدەك مۇسۇلمان ئاممىسى . بىز بۇ يەردە نۇرغۇن نەرسىنى ئىسراپ قىلىۋاتىمىز .
بىرىنچىدىن بىزنىڭ ئەقىدە - ئىتىقادىمىز .
ئىككىنچىدىن بىچارە ۋاقىت .
ئۈچۈنچىدىن پۇقرالار بىلەن ھۆكۈمەت ئوتتۇرىسىدىكى ئىشەنچ .
ئەقىدە - ئىتىقادىمىزنى كۆزدى تۇتساق بىز ئەلەمدۇللا مۇسۇلمانىمىز . مۇسۇلمان بولغان كىشى رامزان ئېيىنىڭ مۇقەددەس ئايى ئىكەنلىكىنى بۇ ئايدا تائەت-ئىبادەت بىلەن مەشغۇل بولۇشنىڭ زور ئەھمىيىتىنى چۈشىنىدۇ ۋە شۇنىڭغا ئىشىنىدۇ ، شۇنداق بولغان ئىكەن بىز 11 ئاي ئىشلەپ تاپقىنىمىزنى تۇرمۇشىمىزغا سەرپ قىلىپ ياشاشنى تولۇق قىلىمىز بىزنىڭ ئىتىقادىمىز ھەم شۇنى بەلگىلەيدۇ . ئەپسۇسكى بۇ ئايدا ئاشخانا بىر كۈن تاقالسا 500 يۈەندىن 5000 يۈەنگىچە جەرىمانە ئېلىش ، تائەت ئايىغىچە تىجارەت قىلىش ھوقۇقى بولماسلىق ، قاتارلىق بىرنەچچە تۈرلۈك چارە ئېلان قىلىندى ۋە بۇ توغرىدا <<مەسئۇلىيەتنامە>> ئىمزالاندى .
ھەممىمىزگە ئايان ئاشخانا تىجارىتى ئوچاق ، دۇكاننى زىننەتلەش قاتارلىق ئىشلار بىلەن يىلدا بىر قېتىم چوڭ رېمونتتى بېشىدىن ئۆتكۈزۈپ تۇرىدۇ . رامزان ئېيى بۇنداق ئىشلار ئۈچۈن تولۇق ياخشى پۇرسەت ئىدى ، ئەپسۇسكى بۇ پۇرسەتلەرمۇ يوق بولدى . ئاشخانا ئىچىدە تۈزەشكە تېگىشلىك جايلار بولسا رامزانغىچە ياكى رامزاندىن كىيىن ياساش بولمىسا ئۈستىدىكىدەك چارە كۆرۈش توغرىسىدا بۇيرۇق چۈشۈپ بولدى .
ئەڭ مۇھىمى بۇنداق بۇيرۇقلار تۆۋەن بىلەن يۇقىرىدىكىلەرنى ئايرىۋېتىدىغان ، كىشىلەرنى ھۆكۈمەتتىن خاتا گۇمان قىلىدىغان ھالەت شەكىللەندۈردى . چۈنكى بۇنداق بۇيرۇقنى ھۆكۈمەتنىڭ مەدەنىي ۋاسىتىلىرى تارقىتىۋاتقان بولغاچقا ، يەنە كىلىپ چارىلەرنى ئىجرا قىلغۇچىلارمۇ پۈتۈنلەي ھۆكۈمەت خادىملىرى بولغاچقا بىزدەك كىشىلەر بۇنى ھۆكۈمەتنىڭ ئىشى دەپ ئويلاپ قالىدىكەنمىز . ئەمما مەن سۈرۈشتۈرۈپ باقتىم ھەتتا ئۈرۈمچىدەك مۇسۇلمان ئاممىسى ئاز سانلىقنى ئىگەللەيدىغان ئاپتۇنۇم رايۇنىمىزنىڭ سىياسى ، مەدەنىيەت ، ئىقتىساد مەركىزىدىمۇ بۇنداق بۇيرۇقلار مەۋجۇت ئەمەسكەن . ئۇلارنىڭ دېيىشىچە يۇرتىمىزغا ساياھەتچىلەر كۆپ كېلىدىكەن ، بىز شۇلارغا قولايىسىزلىق ئەكەلمەسلىك ئۈچۈن ئاشخانا ئاچىدىكەنمىز . بۇ بىر كۈلكىلىك گەپتۇ ! مەن ئېسىمنى بىلىپ بىزنىڭكىدەك كىچىك ئاشخانىلارغا ساياھەتچى ئەمەس ھەتتا ناھىيىمىزنىڭ يۇقىرى دەرىجىلىك باشلىقلىرىمۇ كېلىپ باققان ئەمەس . ساياھەتچىلەر كەلسە كۈتۈۋالىدىغان مېھمانسارايلا شۇنچە كۆپ تۇرسا ئۇلار بىزگە ئاشامتى؟؟؟؟ مېھمانساراي دىگەن ھەممە نەرسە بار بىر ئۇنۋېرسال ئورۇن ئۇلارغا يەنە نىمە لازىم بوپقالدى ؟؟؟؟ تورداشلارنىڭ سەمىمى پىكىر قاتناشتۇرىشنى ئۈمۈد قىلىمەن .

مۇمكىن بولسا بۇ تېمىنى ئېنىقلاپ خەنچىگە تەرجىمە قىلىپ شىنجاڭ مىكرو بىلوگىغا يوللاپ قويۇشۇڭلارنى
@faruk-dolkun
weibo.com/u/2573895640

Is Restaurants Not Opening During Ramadan Illegal?

I am from Keriya, Hotan. My job is a cook.

Soon the month of Ramadan approaches us, and in our hometown every level and bureau of government issues notices saying that during Ramadan it is necessary for anyone doing business in food and drink must conduct business as normal, of course this rule has been there for 8 or 9 years, they say. But the pressure has built, this issue was once done only in form, now something closer resembling seeking “truth from reality” has happened. The people of our land are a nearly entirely Muslim population. We are losing a number of things here.

The first among them is our beliefs.

The second is our free time.

The third is trust between the people and the government.

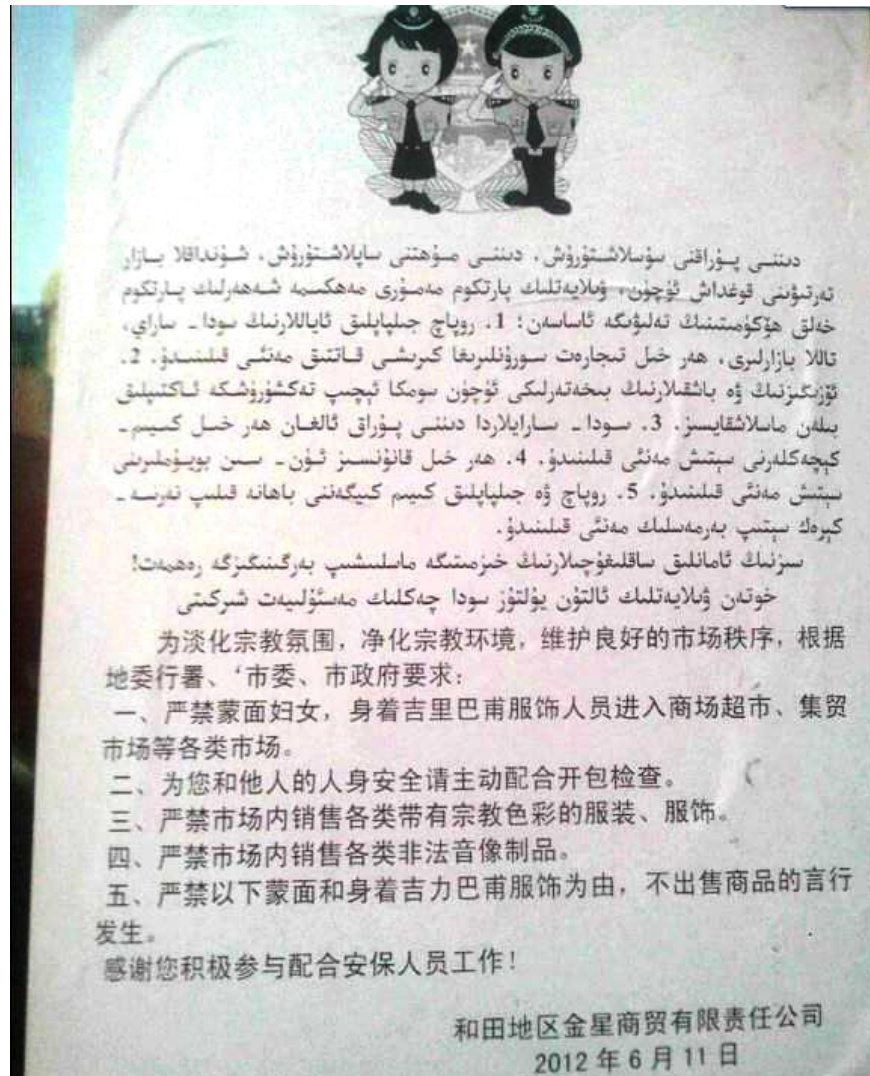
Regarding our beliefs we are Muslim believers. As Muslim people, we understand the great significance of knowing the sacredness of the month of Ramadan and of being busy with prayer to celebrate the month, we believe in this, and therefore we hope even more than during 11 month we can earn an income and support our living consumption, and this designated according to our beliefs. It is a pity that if during this month a restaurant closes for one day they will get a 500 to 5,000 RMB fine, have the right to do business revoked for up to 6 months, etc. several kinds of rules were announced and “commitment pledges” regarding it were signed.

It is clear to all of us that in the restaurant industry ovens, decorations in the store, and other issues must be repaired once a year, and Ramadan has been a good opportunity for these issues, it is a shame that these opportunities have been lost. If repairs are necessary in a restaurant and they have not been handled before or after Ramadan, the penalties above will apply according to these rules.

Most important about these orders is that it separates the people from the higher-ups, and the situation is such that people suspect the government is acting wrongly. Because the government media spreads this kind of regulation and also the regulation is completely implemented by government officials, people like us come to see it as a government issue. But when I did a bit of investigation, I even found that somewhere like Urumqi, where Muslims comprise a minority population, the political, cultural and economic center of our Autonomous Region, this kind of policy did not exist. According to what they said, they thought many tourists come to our hometown, in order not to inconvenience them restaurants remained open. What a funny thing to say! Based on my knowledge, no tourist or even high-level county government official has ever come in to try small restaurants like ours. If tourists come, with so many hotels to greet them, what chance do we have???? A hotel is an all-inclusive place with everything. Other than what they have, what need is there???? I hope that netizens will share their honest opinions.

If possible, I hope this will be translated into Chinese and posted on the Weibo microblog.

Image 3: Sign from Hotan Prefecture Jinxing Trading Co., Ltd.

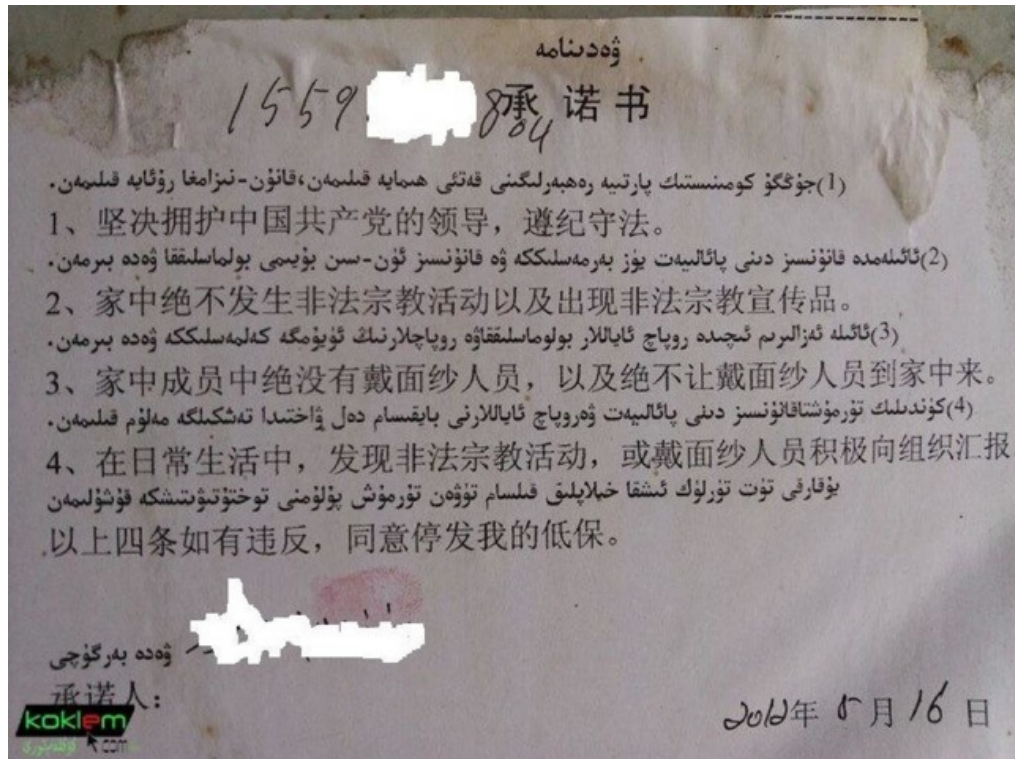


To weaken the religious environment, clean up the religious atmosphere, and protect the order of the bazaar, according to the requirements of the prefectural Party Committee Bureau, Municipal Party Committee and People's Government: 1) Women wearing veils and long headscarves are strictly forbidden from entering the bazaar, grocery or any place of business. 2) For your own and others' safety please cooperate and open your bag for inspection. 3) It is strictly forbidden to sell any religious clothing in the market. 4) It is strictly forbidden to sell illegal multimedia products in the market. 5) It is strictly forbidden not to sell merchandise because of wearing a veil or headscarf.

Thank you for giving your cooperation with the work of the security officers!
Hotan Limited Liability Company

June 11, 2012

Image 4: Pledge



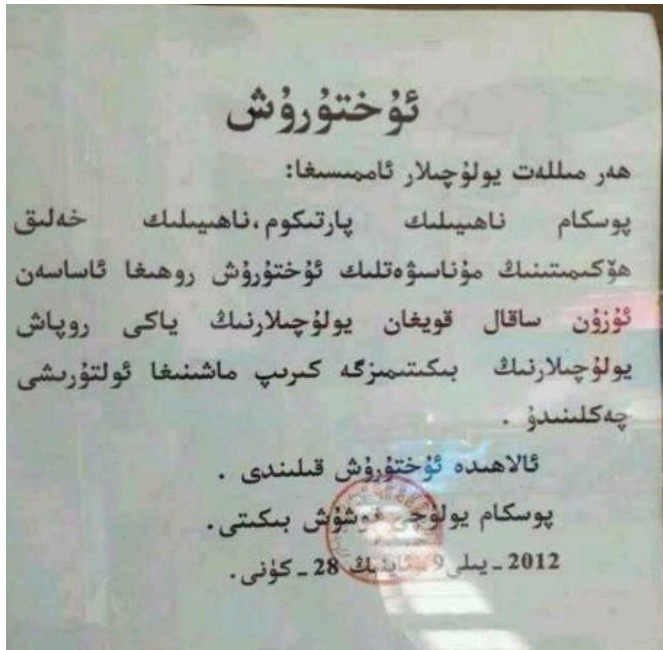
Pledge

1. I will firmly support the Communist Party leadership and abide by its rules and regulations
2. I pledge never to allow illegal religious activities or illegal religious propaganda materials in my home
3. I pledge never to allow my family members to wear a veil or to allow anyone veiled to enter my home
4. If in daily life I find illegal religious activities or a veiled woman, I will report immediately to the authorities

If I violate the four rules above, I agree that my living stipend will be suspended.

August 16, 2012

Image 5: Poskam County Bus Announcement



Announcement

Passengers of all ethnicities:

Based on relevant orders of the Poskam County Party Committee and Poskam County People's Government, passengers with long beards or wearing veils are prohibited from entering our station and boarding our buses.

Special announcement.

Poskam Passenger
Transportation Station

Sept 29, 2012

Image 6: Sign Depicting Rules for Islamic dress



Wear traditional clothing, be a civilized city resident!

Wear traditional Uyghur clothing, do not imitate other Arab country's styles (like long headscarves, veils, growing long beards), be a civilized city resident!

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The Uyghur Human Rights Project would like to thank all the brave individuals who, despite the threat of Chinese government censure, came forward to give their accounts of religious restrictions in East Turkestan. So much of human rights research relies upon this kind of courage and UHRP is fortunate to have been able to work with such people. The help of those Uyghurs who helped facilitate the interviews is also deeply appreciated.

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Information contained in case studies comes from these sources: CECC, USCIRF, Associated Press, Radio Free Asia, Amnesty International, World Uyghur Congress.

Cover photo: © EPA/Diego Azubel



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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