



WHITEWASHING WINTER TOURISM

Global Sports and Leisure Industry Risks in the Uyghur Region

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Whitewashing Winter Tourism: Global Sports and Leisure Industry Risks in the Uyghur Region, documents how international brands have opened retail stores at ski resorts, sponsored sports competitions and events, filmed tourism promotional videos, and supported infrastructure across the region, contributing to state efforts to normalize repression through leisure and consumption.

Key Takeaways

- Since the 2022 Beijing Olympics, China has expanded ski resorts and winter tourism in the Uyghur Region, using “ethnic” branding to project prosperity while suppressing Uyghur culture.
- Global winter and leisure brands have opened stores, some inside ski areas, and others have backed ski competitions, pop-up events, winter tourism expos, and marketing campaigns, actively supporting state efforts to normalize leisure and “ethnic-themed” tourism.
- International firms supply lifts, gondolas, and snowmaking, embedding corporate actors in state-led tourism.
- Few brands show meaningful risk mitigation, exposing a gap between human rights commitments and commercial practice.

Recommendations

- **End Participation in State-Led Tourism:** Companies should immediately stop sponsorships, events, marketing, or partnerships that support “ethnic-themed” tourism or state propaganda, and reassess any ongoing collaborations.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Conduct and publish human rights due diligence to identify suppliers or partners linked to forced labor or other abuses.
- **Recognize Operational Limits:** Firms should acknowledge that meaningful oversight is impossible in the Uyghur Region due to pervasive surveillance and repression, and avoid embedding in state-led tourism projects.
- **Ethical Procurement:** Suppliers of ski and tourism infrastructure must ensure products and services do not facilitate human rights violations and adopt mitigation strategies where risks exist.

Full report
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