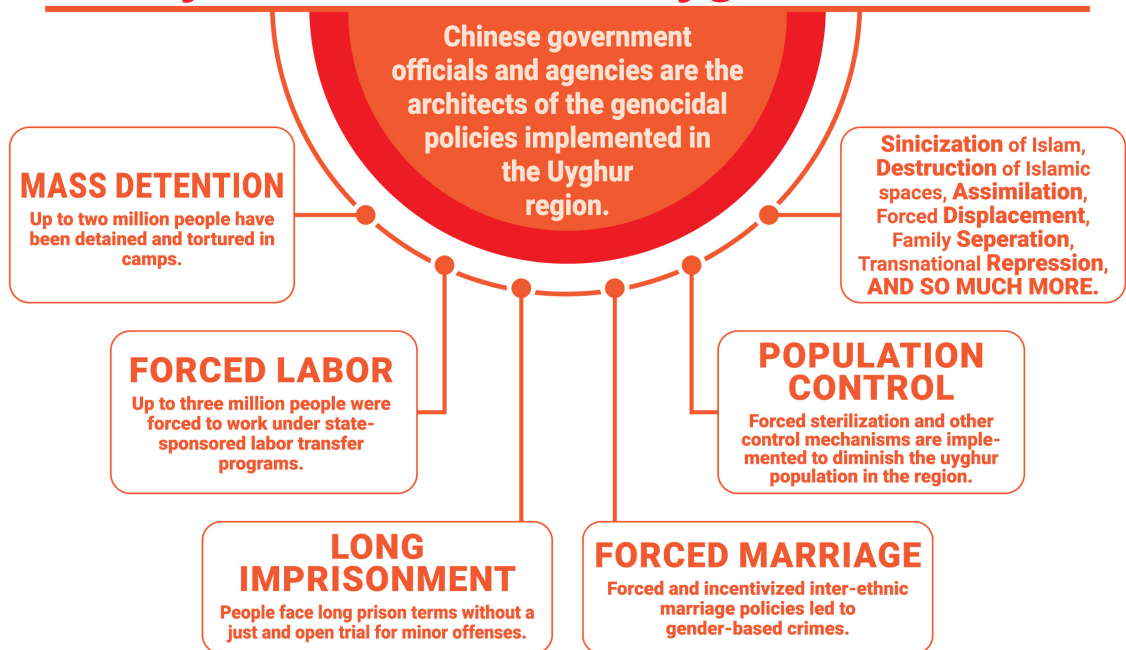


Executive Summary

Most Uyghurs live in a region officially called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which is referred to as East Turkestan by Uyghurs and other Turkic people. The Uyghur region has been subjected to China's most oppressive policies, which have escalated dramatically since 2016, into [genocide](#) and [crimes against humanity](#). The policies that perpetuate the genocide include, but are not limited to, arbitrary mass detention and imprisonment, forced labor, forced sterilization, family separation, cultural assimilation, deliberate cultural destruction, and transnational repression against Uyghurs and other Turkic groups abroad. The repression in the Uyghur region has transformed into a sophisticated set of policies aiming to cleanse the Uyghur people and eradicate their identity, culture, religious beliefs, and heritage.

Policy Architecture of Uyghur Genocide



Policy Architecture of the Uyghur Genocide

The Chinese government policies in the Uyghur region aim to cleanse the Uyghur people and eradicate the Uyghur language, religion, culture, tangible heritage, and dignity. Physical and psychological torture in various detention facilities constitutes [crimes against humanity](#). Experts [conclude](#) that policies implemented in the region since 2014 meet the definition of [genocide](#) offered in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide approved by the United Nations on December 9, 1948. Reports on the atrocities in the Uyghur region widely address dimensions of the genocidal policies. This brief examines the dimensions of the genocide and the systemic rights violations faced by Uyghurs and other communities in the region, including mass detainment, forced labor, long prison terms, cultural assimilation, forced marriage, population control, and forced sterilization.

Mass detention: The Chinese government began to arbitrarily detain Uyghurs and other Turkic groups “[infected by unhealthy thoughts](#)” in extra-legal detention centers on an unprecedentedly large scale in 2016. In the official discourse, these facilities were called “vocational education and training centers” designed to [educate and rehabilitate](#) individuals who have been influenced by “extremism.” However, the government’s definition of “extremism” is vague and primarily punishes forms of ethnic, religious, and cultural identity and expression. The [assessment](#) of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reveals that there are consistent violations of human rights, including the right to health, and credible allegations of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape. Estimates from various sources indicate that about 1.8 million people have been detained in such facilities since 2016.

Forced Labor: Uyghurs and other Turkic groups in the region are subjected to [forced labor schemes](#) implemented as “labor transfers” and “employment of surplus rural labor” under the state-initiated program of “poverty alleviation” and “Aid to Xinjiang.” Up to three million workers have been transferred within the Uyghur region or to production complexes in mainland China since 2016. Those who refused to participate in or tried to leave the labor transfer programs are [perceived](#) as separatists, radicals, terrorists, and religious extremists, and they are at risk of imprisonment or detention.. Workers face retaliation for voicing their grievances, work under militarized discipline, and [receive little or no payment for work](#). Evidence suggests that the state-sponsored labor transfer programs in the Uyghur region [meet](#) the International Labor Organization (ILO)’s definition of forced labor. As forced labor schemes are widespread across the Uyghur region, they affect a [wide range of](#) industries related to the region, ranging from cotton, tomato, solar panels, and automotive sectors.

Long Imprisonments: The Chinese government has developed an “anti-terrorism law system” composed of specific national security and counter-terrorism legislation, general criminal law, and criminal procedure law, as well as formal regulations [pertaining to religion and “de-extremification.”](#) The legal measures appear to conflate matters of personal choice in relation to religious practice with extremism, significantly broadening the [range of conduct](#) that can be targeted under a counter-terrorism objective or pretext. The [rising cases](#) of long imprisonments in the Uyghur region illustrate a shift towards using formal incarcerations as the primary method for large-scale deprivation of liberty. This is worrying because of the broad and imprecise definitions of terrorism, “extremism,” and public security-related offenses in domestic criminal law. These have resulted in criminal charges and lengthy prison sentences, even for minor offenses or actions protected by international human rights law.

Forced Marriage: The Chinese government uses [coercive measures and incentives](#) to force Uyghur women to marry Han Chinese men. Forced marriage is promoted as part of the government’s [“ethnic unity” and “inter-ethnic marriage.”](#) It is being carried out amid an already highly threatening environment for Uyghur women, furthering the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in the region. With many young Uyghur men being interned in “re-education camps” and prisons, Uyghur women are living “[profoundly unfree lives marked by various forms of Party-State intrusion](#),” including into the most intimate spheres of home, marriage, and family. Forced and incentivized

marriages in the region pave the way for [gender-based crimes that violate international human rights standards](#) and deepen the ongoing genocidal policies and crimes against humanity in the region.

Population Control and Sterilization: The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [have urged China](#) to remove sanctions on women who violated the family planning policy. The XUAR Religious Affairs Regulations prohibit “the use of religion to obstruct [...] family planning,” and the XUAR Regulation on De-extremification of 2017 included “deliberately interfering with or undermining the implementation of family planning policies” as one of the [fifteen “primary expressions” of religious extremism](#). These regulations and policies have contributed to the decline in birth rates, with official data indicating an unusually [sharp rise in sterilization and IUD placements](#) in the Uyghur region during 2017 and 2018. The Chinese government’s population control policies aim to [change the region's demographic composition](#), dramatically increasing the proportion of Han Chinese while reducing the dominance of the Uyghurs.

Other Dimensions: The dimensions of genocide extend to the attempts of the Chinese government to eliminate cultural and religious elements from the daily life of Uyghurs, separating Uyghur children from their families, restricting the usage of the Uyghur language, and forcefully displacing Uyghur residents. The Chinese government implemented intrusive religious policing in 2012, which [has accelerated](#) since the appointment of Party Secretary Chen Quanguo in 2016. With the new regulations, the government has interpreted the daily activities of Uyghurs and other Turkic groups as religious extremism. [Such activities include](#) growing a beard, praying regularly, giving children Islamic names, wearing veils or headscarves, attending the mosque, and studying or teaching Islam. Uyghurs have been forced to deny their faith. Furthermore, approximately 16,000 mosques in the region have been [destroyed or damaged](#), with an estimated 8,500 mosques demolished outright and a further 30% of important Islamic sacred sites, including many protected under Chinese law, demolished across the region.

The Chinese government has also been systematically transferring Uyghur children from their families to state-run facilities with the apparent [aim of washing away](#) their Uyghur beliefs and lifestyles. Reports suggest that [involuntary separation](#) is widespread, and the majority of indigenous middle school students are now in residential schools. Additionally, the same report indicates that the Chinese government has enforced the use of the Mandarin language, and individuals who resist this mandate are considered enemies of the people. Overcrowding in orphanages due to the escalation in the internment of Uyghur adults has led to a construction boom of boarding and special residential schools. Uyghur children in “national education” boarding schools are subjected to political indoctrination, and references to Uyghur culture and history have been replaced with Han Chinese cultural references. The systematic attempts of the Chinese government to demolish Uyghur neighborhoods in the name of rural revitalization and public convenience displaced the Uyghur population and resulted in [forced dislocation](#).