

RAPPORT article titled " ' Genocide rages in China ' - More than a million Uighur Muslims and other minority groups detained in camps in China " : published in South African RAPPORT newspaper : 19 July 2020.

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" Shocking video material of a big group of Uighur Muslims with shaved heads, blindfolded and handcuffed sitting on the ground next to a train , placed a renewed spotlight on China ' s actions in the Xinjiang province .

The images , which were taken with drones, have been widely distributed on social media with accusations that this group was also taken to the controversial " re - education " camps in this province in the north west of China .This was apparently filmed last year .

International human rights organisations say that the camps are similar to concentration camps and that more than a million Uighur Muslims and other minority groups are detained there . China maintains that these camps are for " re - education " where people are taught new skills and in order to combat terrorism and extremism.

The American authorities also confiscated 13 tons of hair pieces and wigs made from human hair . They allege that these products which were destined for the American market, were produced from the hair of people in the camps in Xinjiang province.

" The manufacturing of these goods represents a severe violation of human rights . We wish to send a message to everyone that does business with America , that we would not tolerate illegal and inhuman practices , " according to Brenda Smith , the assistant Commissioner of the American Customs and Border Protection Agency.

In the meantime Associated Press ( AP ) and dr Adrian Zenz , who does research on the camps , released a report which according to them shows how Beijing suppresses Uighur population growth through forced sterilisation and contraception . The Chinese authorities denied this .

The report is based on policy documents , interviews with Uighur women and an analysis of population data .According to Zenz , the natural population growth in Xinjiang province has declined drastically. It decreased by 84 percent between 2015 and 2018 in the two areas where the most Uighurs live .

Women who were in the camps, told AP that they received injections to stop or render their menstrual cycles irregular. Others said that they were forced to undergo surgery to sterilize them or to take contraceptives.

Zenz writes in his report that this represents " demographic genocide " of the Uighurs . " The findings represent some of the strongest proof yet , that Beijing ' s policy in Xinjiang province meets one of the criteria of the UN ' s Convention regarding the prevention of and punishment for a crime against humanity" .

Xinjiang province is a relative autonomous part of China .The Uighurs represent approximately half of the population of roughly 26 million people in the province.

The Chinese authorities accuse the Uighur population of secessionist attempts through violent means . Approximately 200 Han Chinese were killed during protests in the capital Urumqi in 2009 and Beijing increasingly intervened after 5 people were knifed to death in 2017 .

Asian human rights groups have already stated in 2018 that more than 3 million people in Xinjiang province, received " re - education " in one form or the other in camps or in their

communities. They allege that people are being forced to forgo their religion and to learn Mandarin and that they are indoctrinated ideologically.

America placed visa restrictions on certain Chinese officials as well as on more than 20 Chinese enterprises which apparently are involved in human rights violations in Xinjiang province. An American travel ban was also introduced last week against 3 senior members of the Chinese Communist party as a result of their alleged involvement in human rights violations.

The decision to refuse them entry into America, is one of the latest in a series of steps which President Trump introduced amidst the deteriorating diplomatic relations with China as a result of the Corona virus, China's handling of the Hong Kong issue and the shaky trade relations.

" America will not stand idly by and watch how the Chinese Communist party, violates the human rights of the Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs and other minority groups in Xinjiang province by subjecting them to forced labour, mass detention and forced population control. This includes attempts to destroy their culture and religion," according to a statement by Mike Pompeo, the American Secretary of State.

Uighur exiles also urged the International Court of Justice in The Hague to investigate the matter. Their legal team submitted a charge to the above mentioned court, but because China does not belong to the Court, the charges focus on allegations that China are arresting or deporting Uighurs in Cambodia and Tadjikistan or deport them from these countries.

Sources : BBC , THE GUARDIAN, REUTERS AND THE WASHINGTON POST .