



ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. MCGOVERN, CHAIRMAN
SENATOR MARCO RUBIO, COCHAIRMAN

August 12, 2020

David R. Malpass
President
World Bank Group
1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433

Dear Mr. Malpass:

We are writing to follow up on our concerns regarding the World Bank's loan of \$50 million made to the Department of Education of China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) for a project titled "Xinjiang Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project."

We were encouraged to learn that in November 2019, the World Bank ended loan funding for "partner schools" in the XUAR. However, we know that the World Bank maintained funding for the five vocational schools that received the majority of the project's funds. In addition, according to a December 2019 Axios report, the five vocational schools had submitted requests for tens of thousands of dollars to purchase surveillance technology, such as facial recognition and night vision cameras, and a system equipped to send images of blacklisted individuals directly to police. We would like to better understand why the World Bank considered it appropriate to work with these five vocational schools when they were seeking to purchase this type of equipment.

Along with many of our House and Senate colleagues, we continue to have serious concerns about the World Bank's continued disbursement of a loan to the XUAR Department of Education after it became aware of the mass internment of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims in the region. In addition to the questions we raised in our August 2019 letter, we request your response to the following questions:

- 1) What steps, if any, did the World Bank take to conduct oversight of its \$50 million loan program after it learned that the five vocational schools had attempted to purchase facial recognition and night vision cameras, and partner schools had attempted to purchase equipment such as body armor, tear gas, and barbed wire? In addition to steps taken in late 2019 to enhance its review of procurement documents and end its relationship with partner schools, did World Bank staff take any steps, initially or at a later date, to raise concerns with the relevant schools about these attempted purchases?

- 2) Risk mitigation, particularly mitigation of operational risk, is a key component of loan disbursement. How were the identified risks of the World Bank program in the XUAR evaluated, and what steps were taken to mitigate them? Who made the final judgment on these risks?
- 3) How did the management and staffing of the World Bank project in the XUAR compare to other World Bank projects in the People's Republic of China in terms of expertise, diversity, relevant language skills, etc.?
- 4) While we appreciate that the World Bank announced an end to funding for partner schools in November 2019, we question the World Bank's decision to end funding only for this component of the loan project and not to investigate the potential risks entailed by continuing to fund the five directly funded vocational schools. Could the World Bank provide more information regarding the "enhanced supervision" it is putting in place to ensure that Bank standards are adhered to, particularly in light of the impossibility of carrying out due diligence in the XUAR?
- 5) Considering recently available information concerning the prevalence of forced labor programs using ethnic minority groups in the XUAR, has the World Bank conducted oversight to ensure that ethnic minority graduates of schools funded by its loan project have not been forced to work in these programs?
- 6) Has the World Bank sought the unconditional release of Kamil Rehim, who previously taught at Urumqi Vocational University — one of the five schools directly funded by the World Bank? Has the World Bank investigated whether or not any other employees or students affiliated with these World Bank-funded schools have been detained?
- 7) All five schools continuing to receive World Bank funding have participated in intrusive *fanghuiju* programs — programs under which officials travel to villages and local communities to gather a range of data on individual families. According to Human Rights Watch, *fanghuiju* teams are instrumental in compiling information that is subsequently used by authorities to arbitrarily detain XUAR residents. Has the World Bank investigated these schools' participation in *fanghuiju* programs? Does the World Bank have any concerns regarding the schools' involvement in these programs, even if the World Bank's loan has not directly funded them?
- 8) Does the World Bank have any mechanisms in place to ensure that students, teachers, and staff at the schools it provides funding to are allowed to pray if they wish to? Is the World Bank aware of whether or not students, teachers, and staff at these schools are allowed to observe Ramadan and other religious holidays? Does the World Bank know whether or not halal food is provided in the cafeterias of these schools?
- 9) Has the World Bank's Inspection Panel looked into the XUAR loan program? Have any other World Bank accountability groups looked into the program? Why or why not?

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Stivers, Staff Director of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China at Jonathan.Stivers@mail.house.gov and Peter Mattis, Deputy Staff Director, at Peter.Mattis@mail.house.gov.

We look forward to your timely response. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
U.S. Representative



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator