



ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY, CHAIRMAN
REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. MCGOVERN, COCHAIRMAN

January 13, 2022

Ms. Michelle Bachelet
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais Wilson - 52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva (Switzerland)

Dear High Commissioner Bachelet,

We write to request that your office publicly release an assessment of human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) before the start of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. You signaled in September 2021 that such a report was being finalized by your office and we believe its publication would send an important reminder that no country can evade international scrutiny for engaging in serious human rights abuses.

More than a year and half ago, 50 independent United Nations human rights experts communicated their alarm regarding the repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms in China including the “collective repression of the population, especially religious and ethnic minorities” in the XUAR. These experts called for the UN Human Rights Council “to act with a sense of urgency to take all appropriate measures to monitor Chinese human rights practices.”

We are disappointed that the UN Human Rights Council failed to undertake any of the recommendations made by this distinguished group while human rights conditions in the XUAR continued to be atrocious. Since the UN experts first issued their call for action, evidence has emerged of a systematic program of forced sterilization and abortion targeting Uyghur, Kazakh, and other individuals in the XUAR, and observers continued to document a system of forced labor in the region.

We believe it is important for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to release the XUAR human rights assessment and to do so before the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics begins. Doing so would provide a global public service as the international community’s attention turns to China while it hosts this international spectacle. It would also reaffirm the fact that no country is beyond scrutiny or above international law. We look forward to working with you on a shared commitment to protect human rights around the world. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley
Chairman

Representative James P. McGovern
Co-Chairman