



**Statement of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio,  
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive  
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “Surveillance,  
Suppression, and Mass Detention:  
Xinjiang’s Human Rights Crisis”**

**Thursday, July 26, 2018**

As prepared for delivery.

Good morning. This is a hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The title of this hearing is “Surveillance, Suppression, and Mass Detention: Xinjiang’s [Pronounced: Sheen-jong] Human Rights Crisis.”

We will have two panels testifying today. The first panel will feature:

- **Ambassador Kelley Currie**, Representative of the United States on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, United States Mission to the United Nations; and
- **Anthony Christino III**, Director of the Foreign Policy Division, Office of Nonproliferation and Treaty Compliance, Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce.
- The second panel will include:
  - **Gulchehra Hoja**, Uyghur Service journalist, Radio Free Asia
  - **Rian Thum**, an Associate Professor at Loyola University New Orleans
  - **Jessica Batke**, Senior Editor at ChinaFile and a former Research Analyst at the U.S. Department of State.

Thank you all for being here.

I want to begin by noting that this hearing is set against the backdrop this week of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback convening the First ever State Department Ministerial to Advance International Religious Freedom, which has brought together senior representatives from more than 70 governments around the world to discuss areas of collaboration and partnership in the cause of religious freedom globally.

Secretary Pompeo penned an op-ed in *USA Today* earlier this week highlighting the Ministerial and the importance of advancing religious freedom globally. He specifically mentioned Ms. Gulchera's family.

While the Chinese government and Communist Party are equal opportunity oppressors—targeting unregistered and registered Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, and others with harassment, detention, imprisonment and more.

The current human rights crisis unfolding in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region targeting Muslim minority groups is arguably among the worst, if not the most severe, instances in the world today of an authoritarian government brutally and systematically targeting a minority faith community.

This is an issue which the Commission has been seized with for some time.

In April, we wrote U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad urging him to prioritize this crackdown in his dealings with the Chinese government and that he begin collecting information to make the case for possible application of Global Magnitsky sanctions against senior government and Party officials in the region including Chen Quanguo, the current Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary.

The Commission's forthcoming Annual Report, set to be released in October, will prominently feature the grave and deteriorating situation in Xinjiang.

While our expert witnesses will discuss the situation in greater detail, I want to take a few minutes to paint a picture of life in Xinjiang.

For months now, there have been credible estimates of between 800,000 to 1 million people from Xinjiang being held at "political reeducation" centers or camps which are fortified with barbed wire, bombproof surfaces, reinforced doors, and guard rooms.

Security personnel have subjected detainees to torture, medical neglect and maltreatment, solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, lack of adequate clothing in cold temperatures, and other forms of abuse resulting in the death of some detainees.

According to one news source, “The internment program aims to rewire the political thinking of detainees, erase their Islamic beliefs and reshape their very identities. The camps have expanded rapidly over the past year, with almost no judicial process or legal paperwork. Detainees who most vigorously criticize the people and things they love are rewarded, and those who refuse to do so are punished with solitary confinement, beatings and food deprivation.”<sup>i</sup>

Some local officials in the region have used chilling political rhetoric to describe the purpose of the arbitrary detentions of Uyghur Muslims and members of other Muslim ethnic minority groups, such as “eradicating tumors” or spraying chemicals on crops to kill the “weeds.” One expert who is testifying today described Xinjiang Uyghur as “a police state to rival North Korea, with a formalized racism on the order of South African apartheid.”

While the Chinese government has repeatedly denied knowledge of the camps, a groundbreaking report by Adrian Zenz, a scholar at the European School of Culture and Theology, published through the Jamestown Foundation in May, found that Chinese authorities were soliciting public bids for the construction of additional camps and the addition of security elements to existing facilities. I submit this report for the Record and would also note the Google Earth footage behind me, which clearly shows the construction of these camps over the span of several months.

Those not subject to “transformation through education” in detention still face daily intrusions in their home life, including compulsory “home stays,” whereby Communist Party officials and government workers are sent to live with local Uyghur and Kazakh families.

The data-driven surveillance in Xinjiang is assisted by iris and body scanners, voice pattern analyzers, DNA sequencers, and facial recognition cameras in neighborhoods, on roads, and in train stations. Two large Chinese firms, Hikvision and Dahua Technology, have profited greatly from the surge in security spending, reportedly winning upwards of \$1.2 billion in government contracts for large-scale surveillance projects. Authorities employ hand-held devices to search smart phones for encrypted chat apps and require residents to install monitoring

applications on their cell phones.<sup>ii</sup> More traditional security measures are also employed, including extensive police checkpoints.

The rise in security personnel is also accompanied by the proliferation of “convenience police stations,” a dense network of street corner, village, or neighborhood police stations that enhance authorities’ ability to closely surveil and police local communities.

Just this month, reports emerged of officials, in a humiliating public act, cutting the skirts and even long shirts of Uyghur women on the spot, as they walked through local streets, as a means of enforcing a ban on ethnic minorities wearing long skirts.

And yesterday there was an analysis released by the NGO Chinese Human Rights Defenders indicating that 21% of arrests in China last years were in Xinjiang, which has only 1.5% of the population. The number of arrests increased 731% over the previous year and does not include the detentions of those in the “political reeducation” centers which are carried out extralegally.

Radio Free Asia has led the way in reporting on this crisis. And it has not come without a cost. Developments in Xinjiang have had a direct impact on U.S. interests, most notably the detention of dozens of family members of U.S.-based Uyghur journalists employed by Radio Free Asia, as well as the detention of dozens of family members of prominent Uyghur rights activist, Rebiya Kadeer, in an apparent attempt by the Chinese government to silence effective reporting and rights advocacy. We are delighted that RFA journalist Gulchehra Hoja is able to join us today to speak to her personal experience in this regard. The Commission has convened a series of hearings focused on the “long arm” of China, and that dimension certainly exists as it relates to the Uyghur diaspora community, including in the United States.

Without objection, we’ll keep the hearing Record open for 48 hours to submit additional relevant materials including a bipartisan letter to Secretary Pompeo that Senators Warner and Gardner are spearheading this week—which I am pleased to sign—regarding the cases of the RFA journalists’ family members. Please join me in welcoming our witnesses, Ambassador Currie and Mr. Christino.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-life-like-in-xinjiang-reeducation-camps-china-2018-5>  
<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/twelve-days-in-xinjiang-how-chinas-surveillance-state-overwhelms-daily-life-1513700355>