



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Witness Name: Darren Byler		
Witness category:	fact <input type="checkbox"/>	expert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of testimony: 6 June 2021		
Link to recording*: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re6kIHVMU6I&amp;t=23691s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re6kIHVMU6I&amp;t=23691s</a>		
Time stamp (start/end): 06:27:50 – 07:17:32		
Report included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Statement included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Transcript included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation included:	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\*Please note that all recordings of the Uyghur Tribunal hearings can be found on You Tube: [Uyghur Tribunal - YouTube](#)



## **Negative Eugenics, Sexual Violence and Involuntary Surveillance: A report prepared for the Uyghur Tribunal**

*Darren Byler, University of Colorado*

Since 2017 the Chinese state has engaged in a heightened campaign to eliminate, or significantly damage, significant aspects of Uyghur society. This report focuses on the effects of this campaign on Uyghur social institutions by considering the effects of intergenerational family planning policies, gendered violence and involuntary surveillance on Uyghur family structure and religious practice.

Since 2011 I have engaged in 24 months of ethnographic research in the Uyghur region (Xinjiang). In conducting this research, I have interviewed approximately 200 Uyghur and Han individuals in Uyghur and Chinese. I have also examined thousands of open access government and technology sector documents, as well as thousands of internal police documents obtained by *The Intercept* and other independent investigators. During a research trip to the Uyghur region in 2018 I observed the absence of individuals which had been reported detained and had numerous conversations with Uyghur individuals about community members who had been taken to the camps. I also interviewed approximately 50 Han, Uyghur and Kazakh residents immediately after they fled China for Kazakhstan, or, in the case of Han individuals, upon their return to the United States.

As an incoming Assistant Professor of International Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia and a post-doctoral research fellow in the China Made Project at the Center for Asian Studies, CU Boulder I have authored two books related to the Uyghur region. The first of these books is an ethnographic monograph titled *Terror Capitalism: Uyghur Dispossession and Masculinity in a Chinese City* and the second is a narrative-driven book titled *In the Camps: China's High-Tech Penal Colony*. I have also authored a number of research articles, policy reports and short essays on the unfolding situation in Northwest China. This memorandum pulls together excerpts from these published or forthcoming publications (see reference list for a full list of this research). In some cases, I have also added additional research and references to these earlier publications.

In a press conference on 29 August 2020, Chinese authorities stated that: ‘Family protection or planning laws of the PRC are applicable to Uyghurs in the same way as for other citizens and in fact, they are more lenient for ethnic groups other than the Han Chinese. The reason for a recent decrease in new-borns was better implementation of voluntary family planning policy and better education; the use of contraceptives has been voluntary and/or otherwise in accordance with the law, and the labour programs are in accordance with the law and/or otherwise voluntary.’ They also stated that ‘The allegations of illegal detentions are fabrications and lies by paid agents and that alleged detention centres are voluntary and provide vocational training as part of a de-radicalization program in Xinjiang.’

This memorandum will draw on Chinese state documents and interviews with Chinese citizens to consider claims related to family planning policies, coercive marriages between Han men and Uyghur women, and sexual violence toward Muslim women both in and outside the ‘concentrated, closed, education and training centers.’ It will then examine the same documents and interview data to consider the claim that detainees ‘voluntarily’ participate in their own surveillance, assessment, and detention.

## ‘Zero Illegal Births’

In order to understand the dynamics of the implementation of the targeted negative eugenics program that confronts Uyghurs and other peoples in contemporary Xinjiang it is worthwhile quoting at length from the directives given by Chinese Civil Ministry officials across the region.

In an April 12, 2019 notice a municipal level government committee in Aksu City in Southern Xinjiang made the following announcement. ‘The People’s government has decided to implement a real-name system of rewards for reporting illegal childbirth behaviors, violations of laws and regulations in family planning work, while at the same time urging those who violated laws and regulations to take the initiative to self-report, and strive to be dealt with lightly.’<sup>1</sup>

The announcement then announces to citizens throughout the municipality of roughly 700,000 people that ‘If the following behaviors are reported, and the relevant departments have not yet discovered and dealt with them, after verification, the citizen who reports their neighbors will be given a one-time reward of 5,000 *yuan*’ (¥550). Included in the listing of rewarded information are ‘violations of having more children than permitted;’ violations concerning falsifying documents to receive ‘special permission’ to have more children; ‘adopting children in violation of regulations;’ ‘*illegal procedures* undertaken to give birth to children again’ (my emphasis). Although not specified the mention of illegal procedures likely refers to the removal of IUDs (or rings) that are mentioned in other reports as subjected to ‘regular inspection.’<sup>2</sup>

The state authorities said they would give a smaller reward of 2000 *yuan* (¥220) for citizens that reported ‘underreported, falsely reported, or concealed births’ even if they were ‘legal.’ They would give the smaller reward to citizens that reported others who had illegal births due to ‘inaccurate grasp of policies’ or ‘due to migration.’ They also promised to give the smaller reward to citizens who reported state workers who were lax implementing the policy or who gave a special permission certificate to people who were not qualified. And finally, they promised to reward reports of all ‘other violations of laws, disciplines and regulations that violate family planning policies and regulations and harm the interests of the masses.’ The report ends with a warning that ‘Those who violate the family planning policy and self-report to the family planning department and the management department can be dealt with lightly. Those who do not take the initiative to self-report, or have been reported and verified by others, shall be dealt with harshly.’<sup>3</sup>

Government documents also note that illegal pregnancies must be ‘disposed of early’—a reference to state-mandated abortion.<sup>4</sup> In order to assure that all illegal pregnancies are detected state workers are tasked with ‘finding the number of women of childbearing age’ within their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup> They must then assess the birth control measures used by each woman. The directive states ‘those who have not taken long-term birth control measures in smaller towns and villages’ must be visited every month and subjected to quarterly pregnancy checks.<sup>6</sup> Nowhere in the document does it state that such checks are done voluntarily, in fact, my interviews suggest that these checks were received as

---

<sup>1</sup> See <https://archive.is/C97TN>; See also here: [https://www.sohu.com/a/313371542\\_100280818](https://www.sohu.com/a/313371542_100280818)

<sup>2</sup> See <https://archive.is/C97TN>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://archive.is/C97TN>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

orders. Refusal could result in the person deemed ‘harming the interests of the masses’ and subjected to detention. The directive also states that ‘married women of childbearing age who have adopted long-term birth control measures should be classified as “trustworthy personnel,” and receive quarterly IUD (or ring) inspection services must be put in place.’<sup>7</sup> That is to say, an incentive to receiving IUDs or sterilization is being placed in the protected category of ‘trustworthy personnel’ and less invasive monthly checks from state workers, but regardless of their status both groups receive involuntary gynecological examinations at least every three months. These checks extend to unmarried women as well. For instance, female students too are also mandated to receive ‘regular physical examinations.’<sup>8</sup>

Further evidence of the involuntary nature of the reproduction monitoring program is demonstrated by unplanned, surprise inspections which women are not permitted to refuse. The implementation of the program rests on an organized system of ‘unannounced visits’ where women would be inspected and households examined for any unregistered children.<sup>9</sup> As part of these and other visits state workers were to ‘put an end to the induction of labour in the final months’—an act that might make it easier for illegal births to go undetected.<sup>10</sup> Again, choice of when labour might be induced on the part of the pregnant woman or her health provider was not considered.

Who exactly was this system meant to target? In other state documents from across the region state authorities lay out that ‘zero illegal births’ program was to target ‘all ethnicities’ with a particular focus on government employees, religious figures, farmers, and herders. The documents say bluntly ‘the rate of investigation and punishment for illegal childbirth by religious figures must reach 100 percent.’<sup>11</sup> In another document from Hejing County in Southern Xinjiang, state authorities say directly that the program should also target ‘farmers and herders’<sup>12</sup>—a demographic in that location, and most locations across Xinjiang, that is disproportionately drawn from Muslim minority populations. In fact, in 2017 the state had increased the number of children Han people were permitted to have by ‘equalizing’ family planning in the region, making it the only place in China where rural Han people were encouraged to have 3 children.<sup>13</sup>

Since the new regulations were introduced in 2017, with the new explicit focus on childbirth among Muslims, the consequences for previous and current ‘illegal births’ has become stark, not just with monetary rewards for informants, but in fines and prosecutions of those deemed illegalized parents. The new regulations targeted parents of ‘illegal’ children as far back as 1992.<sup>14</sup> Out of a sample size of 1518 detainees sent to camps since 2017, 151 were detained due to violating birth policies.<sup>15</sup> If

---

<sup>7</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://archive.fo/7wyhZ>

<sup>11</sup> The term ‘religious figures’ likely refers to state employed imams and other individuals who were authorized to conduct religious ceremonies. See <https://archive.vn/iGaGS>

<sup>12</sup> See <https://bit.ly/2QIn6zm>

<sup>13</sup> Urban Uyghurs and Han are still permitted to have only 2 children; while both rural Han and Uyghurs in Xinjiang are now permitted to have 3. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1058905.shtml>

<sup>14</sup> <https://archive.fo/O4BTp>

<sup>15</sup> This number is derived from individuals listed in state documents, along with their ID numbers and other identifiers, along with the reason for their detention. See <https://shahit.biz/eng/#stats>. For a partial source of these numbers see this verified state document dubbed the ‘Qaraqash List’ which includes reasons for detention: [https://shahit.biz/supp/list\\_008.pdf](https://shahit.biz/supp/list_008.pdf)

this sample was taken as indicative of camp detentions as a whole (between roughly 900,000 and 1.5 million people), approximately 90,000 to 150,000 parents may have been detained due to violations of family planning policy. In 52 gigabytes of police files obtained by *The Intercept*, the terms ‘illegal birth’ and past ‘extra births’ come up dozens of times. In some cases, if it is a single ‘extra birth’ done unintentionally the violator is allowed to simply pay a fine. But in the majority of cases, extra illegal births result in camp and prison sentences ranging from 3 to 5 years.<sup>16</sup>

A key component of ‘zero illegal births’ program was the illegalization of adoption in families that had already met their quota of children.<sup>17</sup> In the state documents it appears as though this policy was simply to prevent parents who already had the prescribed number of children in their households from caring for more—something that on its face does not contribute to an increase in population. My interviews show however that in practice this policy at times prevents relatives from caring for the children of detained relatives. Instead the children of detainees often become wards of the state in residential boarding schools dubbed ‘kindness preschools.’<sup>18</sup> As other research has shown in some Uyghur majority areas as many as 70 percent of all children ages 0-5 have been assigned to a range of schools ranging from week-long ‘full care’ schools to ‘day care’ schools.<sup>19</sup> In both cases, it is clear that as many as 500,000 Uyghur and Kazakh children are being raised in a non-Muslim environment.<sup>20</sup> In 2019, a state spokesperson announced that they had recruited nearly 90,000 politically loyal teachers in the region.<sup>21</sup> Since these new teachers are primarily Han and functioning as parental figures to children who have been removed from their homes, in some sense they are enacting a forcible transfer of the children of one ethnicity to another.

State documents show that since the implementation of this ‘zero illegal births’ program there has been a dramatic decrease in births in Uyghur majority areas of between 50 to 80 percent.<sup>22</sup> As I have shown above there is also clear evidence in government documents of a surge in systematic gynecological exams, IUD insertions, and surgical sterilization. Because these new programs target Uyghur and Kazakh women in particular while at the same time the same measures were being rolled back among Han women, it appears clear that this constitutes a type of a negative eugenics program similar to public health initiatives that targeted Black and Native American women in the United States until the 1960s. The dramatic decrease in new births among Muslims in Xinjiang—as reported in Chinese state statistics—is at least partially a reflection of this system. As other reports submitted to this tribunal will likely note, endemic family separation through the camp and factory system may play an even larger role in the retraction in Uyghur and Kazakh social reproduction.

### **Coercive Han Male Marriage to Uyghur Women**

Based on my interviews, a survey of witness testimonies and examination of state documents between two-thirds and three-fourths of the Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have been detained have

---

<sup>16</sup> See <https://livingotherwise.com/2021/04/19/the-elephant-in-the-xuar-iii-in-accordance-with-the-law/>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://archive.is/C97TN>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7xgj5y/these-uyghur-parents-say-china-is-ripping-their-children-away-and-brainwashing-them>

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.jpolorisk.com/break-their-roots-evidence-for-chinas-parent-child-separation-campaign-in-xinjiang/>

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/world/asia/china-xinjiang-children-boarding-schools.html>

<sup>21</sup> See <https://archive.fo/vGlnq>

<sup>22</sup> See <https://t.co/J7WBkk0usI?amp=1>

been men between the ages of 18 and 55.<sup>23</sup> This means that a significant percentage of the adult male population—the primary farming and wage earner populations—are missing. The police documents from *The Intercept* indicate that the family members of detainees—in the documents detainees are referred to as ‘three categories people’<sup>24</sup>—are also made the target of strict government controls. Because of these controls and the guilt by association that they imply the relatives of detainees are also stigmatized. To understand this more fully it is worth quoting one of the police documents at length:

The relatives of the ‘three categories people’ are primarily concerned with the question ‘When can I see my relatives who have been detained?’ They face obstacles in finding jobs because of the label they now carry, so they have trouble entering the workforce and finding an income. This brings certain risks to our society. Some children of the ‘three categories people’ also face difficulty in the preschool and school. There are frequent complaints and emotional instability among the relatives. Most of the detainees are the providers of their families, so their family members have had financial difficulties since they were detained. Even though the neighborhood watch unit has provided supportive measures, they cannot solve these underlying issues. So this group of people has become a source of instability and potential risk for our society. This is further exacerbated because of the demolition of their ‘shantytowns.’ Although they have lost their homes, the relatives of ‘three category people’ have difficulty renting apartments. Instead entire families now stay together in a single dorm room. This is also difficult to manage and has potential risks.

Concern with the controlled management of the relatives of ‘three categories people’ appears in nearly every report in *The Intercept* data set.<sup>25</sup> In weekly reports from the Shuimoguo District of Urumchi between February 2018 and March 2019 the phrase ‘three categories people’ appears 5467 times. Managing this population along with meeting the constant demand for intelligence gathering quotas form the core of neighborhood level activity in the Urumchi Public Security and Civil Affairs Ministry which jointly manage the camp system.

Some of my interviews indicate that a significant number of partners of detainees have divorced their husbands as a way of escaping stigma and finding a new marriage partner. These divorces were also precipitated by the sexual violence that was permitted by visits from state workers in Muslim homes as part of a “becoming family” homestay assessment program. A Kazakh woman named Sholpan Amerkhan, who fled across the border to Kazakhstan in 2018, told me that during the regular visits in the homes of ethnic minority women whose husbands had been taken to the ‘reeducation’ camps, Han male ‘relatives’ often pressured women to drink liquor and dance with them. She said, ‘The Han men always went to the female’s homes. There were a lot of divorces as a

---

<sup>23</sup> See <https://shahit.biz/eng/#stats>

<sup>24</sup> As outlined in a Chinese government document submitted to the U.N., this term refers to three categories of detainees: people whose extremism did not rise to the level of criminality, those whose extremism was unintentional, and those who had been convicted of past crimes. Below I will describe in more detail how assessments of the ‘untrustworthiness’ of Muslims was established. See ‘Responses of the Government of China on follow-up to the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,’ United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 8 October 2019: 2-3. <https://undocs.org/CERD/C/CHN/FCO/14-17>

<sup>25</sup> For more on this see Darren Byler (2021) ‘Chinese Infrastructures of Population Management on the New Silk Road,’ Wilson International Center for Scholars.

result of this.’ She said she was not sure if the women were raped in these visits, but since this was widely believed to be the case in the village the visits drove many women to feel they had no choice but to leave their husbands. If they severed familial ties and denounced their husbands as religious ‘extremists,’ they were often no longer subjected to mandated state visits by the ‘relatives.’ Sholpan’s own sister-in-law, left her husband for this reason. She told Sholpan, ‘Being part of your husband’s family is just too complicated.’ In my interviews and in unverified social media posts there has also been some limited evidence that women have remarried the Han ‘relatives’ who were sent to live in their homes.

More frequently though it appears as though Uyghur and Kazakh families have been asked to arrange for unmarried daughters to marry non-Muslim Han men. Although historical rates of interethnic marriage between Uyghurs and Han has been a tiny fraction of one percent of Uyghur marriages, since 2018 there has been a notable rise in articles promoting marriage between Han men and Uyghur women.<sup>26</sup> Based on my research and that of others it is unclear what the scale is of such marriages. However, there are reports from numerous communities of the payments given to couples who are married in this manner. It is also unclear how direct the coercion is in such marriages. Yet it remains undeniable that the political atmosphere and pressure from local authorities plays a direct role in these marriages.

A recently published marriage guide titled ‘How to win the heart of a Uyghur girl,’ assumes that the reader is a Han man looking for a Uyghur woman.<sup>27</sup> The author, Yu Longhe, who describes himself as a Han ‘volunteer’ who works for the People’s Production and Construction Corps, begins by describing his impressions of Uyghur women as both stunningly beautiful and exceptionally caring. In doing so, he echoes a long history of Han erotic fantasies of Uyghur women.<sup>28</sup> He notes, however, that it is important to not be so seduced by a Uyghur woman that one ‘forgets to resolutely fight the three evils of ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism.’

To get started, Yu advocates that the Han young man initiate the action by looking for opportunities to select a young Uyghur woman. After establishing a relationship, it is important to get the support of both sets of parents. The way to do this, he suggests, is by involving state social organizations and local neighborhood watch cadres. While Yu notes that a marriage between a Han man and Uyghur woman is not a ‘traditional arranged marriage,’ presumably since Han men maintain their agency in selecting a Uyghur woman, he nevertheless argues, ‘in an “ethnic” love marriage, involving a third party (i.e. the government) is particularly important.’ He suggests that ‘coordinating’ between these local work units and social security workers will produce ‘strong backing and support’ that cannot be defeated by ‘religious extremism.’

In order to better determine the role of coercion in these marriages and their broader effects on Uyghur and Han society in the region I worked with a North America-based Uyghur collaborator

---

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2019/05/22/an-educational-test-for-chinas-uyghur/>; And also <http://archive.fo/oiX4v>

<sup>27</sup> See <https://archive.is/UKSQf#selection-21.1-21.20>

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/china-quarterly/article/abs/from-the-margins-to-the-centre-the-uyghur-challenge-in-beijing/96DE62C327E54353EBCC5CC4F9011209>; and also <https://search.proquest.com/openview/ae812545219d8a24cd7d81939b209a0f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2027633>; and [https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/file\\_store/production/170700/53668064-8E74-407B-A320-7F9A4748BD1A.pdf](https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/file_store/production/170700/53668064-8E74-407B-A320-7F9A4748BD1A.pdf)

who still had many contacts in the region. The research assistant contacted three of his former classmates, all young Uyghur women in southern Xinjiang who he had known for 10 years, to ask them about the way the pressure to marry state approved partners was affecting their life. The text-based responses he received from the young women revealed aspects of how the process works. Since, they represent a small sample, their accounts should be read simply as three perspectives from Uyghur single women who are being confronted with a changing reality in small Uyghur-majority cities in northwest China. Their perspectives are nevertheless powerful statements regarding sexualized pressure that Uyghur women feel from Han men.

One of the first young women we contacted is someone we call Gulmira, who now lives in a small city in southern Xinjiang. She said that, when it came to the lives of young Uyghur women, marriage with Han men was one of their most pressing concerns. She wrote, ‘Recently there are so many people getting married with the relatives.’

‘Relatives?’ we asked. To which Gulmira responded bluntly, using a term that Uyghurs use to refer to Han state workers, ‘Comrades. Do you understand what I mean?’ She was referring to the state-employed civil servants who monitored the relatives of detainees.

Continuing, Gulmira wrote that even though ‘people in the older generation don’t accept (these marriages with ‘comrades’), it has increased a lot. I don’t know if they are (doing it willingly) or not. I’m not in touch very much with those that have gone through with it. I think they must be doing it willingly. It seems like their families wouldn’t force them to do this. There are so many of them (that I personally know).’

Gulmira’s responses confirmed something that we heard from many members of the Uyghur community. Because it was seen as deeply shameful in the Uyghur community, both in Xinjiang and around the world, Uyghurs do not openly discuss why the number of marriages between Uyghur women and Han men have increased. Yet as we pressed her further, she began to reveal some of the ways in which pressure, if not coercion, has been exerted on Uyghur women to consider Han partners.

‘Are you also thinking about (marrying a Han man) too?’ we asked.

Gulmira responded, ‘Not now. I’ll delay it as long as I can by buying some time.’

Sensing that, in her mind, her eventual marriage to a Han man seemed inevitable, we asked, ‘Are there activities to date ‘comrades?’’

Gulmira replied, ‘There are *so* many of these.’ In her message, Gulmira emphasized this by adding an intensifier to the word ‘many’ (Uy: *jikkü*) to make clear that these activities were happening all the time.

Using the common euphemism for the reeducation camps, my research assistant asked, ‘If people say no to dating, will you go to ‘study?’’

Gulmira wrote: ‘Maybe even worse than ‘study.’’ She said that her employer regularly organized ‘dance parties’ on Friday evenings for the Uyghur women and Han ‘comrades’ who worked at her firm. She wrote that she and other young women she knew tried to come up with excuses to not

attend, ranging from feeling sick to having a date with a boyfriend. She said that the excuses had to be convincing or else her boss would become suspicious.

A 2019 statement posted by a Han tour guide from Northern Xinjiang confirmed what Gulmira said regarding the ability of Uyghurs to refuse marriage to a Han man.<sup>29</sup> He stated:

Now the local government is vigorously encouraging the unity and integration of all ethnic groups. Therefore, unlike before, there is no problem with opposition from parents and ethnic groups. The phenomenon of intermarriage between Han and ethnic minorities is now quite common.

Some of these dynamics are also a product of the removal of a significant percentage of young Uyghur men from Uyghur social life and the increasing numbers of unmarried young Han men across China due to selective birth practices that privilege sons over daughters. Another young woman who we will call Bahar pointed out that this absence and Han male desperation adds to the new social pressure to marry Han men. In a series of text messages, she wrote that because so many young Uyghur men have been interned in her small city in southern Xinjiang, it is difficult for her to find a willing Uyghur marriage partner. Bahar noted that nearly all the Uyghur men who remained outside the camps worked as informants or low-level police officers and had low moral character. Many of them, along with the newly arrived Han men, took advantage of the desperation of unmarried Uyghur women.

She wrote, “The cheating is getting worse, because there are fewer and fewer men. Now there are many women who are over 30 who are still not married or who have lost their spouse. This has created a huge imbalance. That is why so many of ‘our’ girls are getting married with these ‘comrades.’”

Bahar’s perspective was confirmed by a statement posted anonymously by a Han state worker who visited the region in support of the reeducation campaign in 2020. He noted:

On July 9th, I flew to Kashgar. My ethnic colleague picked me up (it is customary in Xinjiang to call Uyghurs ethnic). We stayed in southern Xinjiang for 6 days. After staying with him for 6 days, we discovered that they are also very smart. In Zepu County (in Kashgar prefecture), our leader also came, and we went to the night market to drink together. We drank three bottles of liquor. That is when we started talking about this topic. He said that many ethnic girls marry Han people, but Han women rarely marry minority ethnic people. I said that I heard that women of ethnic minorities were under pressure to marry Han men, and relatives and parents did not approve of this sort of thing. He said it was *much better now than before*. No one will say anything now. So I hope the male compatriots who like ethnic girls will come to Xinjiang and help build northwestern China as quickly as possible. There are a large number of (Han) migrants here, most are from Gansu and Henan, and many of them have stayed behind to marry wives and have children. My impression is that as long as you come to Xinjiang, *you are basically always able to do it* (i.e. marry a Uyghur woman) (my emphasis).<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.zhihu.com/question/360621123/answer/942137161>

<sup>30</sup> <https://archive.fo/bnNex>

From this anonymous government worker's perspective the ease with which Han men could select and marry Uyghur women was "much better than before." His impression was that there was a high degree of probability or automatic likelihood that a Han man would be able to marry a Uyghur if he decided to do so. In the government worker discussion of this process there is no consideration of whether or not a Uyghur woman would voluntarily agree to this sexual and civil partnership.

Another one of my research assistant's classmates, Rizwangul, noted that, in her small city, a similar dynamic was happening. But, unlike Bahar, she said she had a prospect that helped stave off her desperation. Rizwangul wrote, "There is a Hui boy chasing after me. He is so nice to me, I think he will cherish me in the future. He is nice to me and has a good personality. I am thinking as long as he does not create sorrows for me and makes me happy, that is good enough."

Rizwangul had consigned herself to a 'good enough' marriage with a man from another minority ethnic group, which, while not Uyghur, was at least Muslim.

Many of the state-approved online testimonials of marriages between Han men and Uyghur women seem to follow the trajectory outlined in the guide 'How to win the heart of a Uyghur girl.' A Han security worker chooses a Uyghur woman, initiates contact, works with local authorities to convince the families to agree. Since there is so much political pressure placed on the parents it is not possible for them to refuse this proposal and the marriage commences with gifts provided by local authorities. In nearly every published wedding narrative, the presence and support of local cadres and the visiting 'relatives' is a major feature. For instance, in a double wedding of twin Uyghur sisters in Yeken to a Han volunteer and local Uyghur young man, the 'county civil affairs bureau, town government cadres, the visiting 'relative' cadres, and the armed police all came to give their blessings.<sup>31</sup>

In another wedding story, a young Han construction worker from Gansu who had recently joined the People's Production and Construction Corps spotted a Uyghur young woman working in the cotton fields.<sup>32</sup> With gifts totaling 2,000 yuan (¥220) and the backing of the township Party committee, the county-level cooperative, the 'relatives' task force, and a religious management committee, the young man successfully married the young woman. In a short speech that repeated the terms 'ethnic solidarity' 10 times, Jiang Tao, deputy secretary of the township party committee, told them they were a 'model' for the township.

The thoughts of the deputy secretary were echoed in an essay published by the Chinese State Religious Network by an anthropologist named Mou Tao, who had 'volunteered' (志愿 *zhiyuàn*) to work in the Uyghur reeducation system in Khotan prefecture. Drawing on her training at Minzu University in Beijing, she argued that 'inter-ethnic marriage was a very important step in achieving national unity' because the marriage was not simply the joining of two people, but a relationship between two families.<sup>33</sup> She posited that the main force keeping Uyghurs apart from Han was the 'three evil forces.' In a line of argument that resonates with an influential study from the retired Peking University professor Ma Rong,<sup>34</sup> one of the academic architects along with Hu Lianhe and

---

<sup>31</sup> See <https://archive.fo/kbQXV#selection-485.198-499.55>

<sup>32</sup> See <https://archive.fo/JMLGU>

<sup>33</sup> See <https://archive.fo/ShbNm>

<sup>34</sup> See <http://archive.fo/L5O2M>

Hu Angang of the state's approach to Uyghur reeducation, Mou argued that marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims should be normalized. She ends the essay with the following policy suggestions:

In the future, we must impose strict punishment on irresponsible remarks regarding marriages between young Uyghur and Han men and women and prevent isolation and threats toward those who intermarry. The government must also introduce relevant policies and measures to ensure the regular communication between young Uyghur and Han men and women. In addition to creating a good social atmosphere, appropriate rewards should also be given to the marriage of Uyghurs and Han; and care and preferential policies should be given to the children that come from Uyghur and Han marriages which face more social pressure.

Mou's essay appears to encourage the institutionalization of the pressures that Uyghur and Kazakh women face to marry Han men. Work units, neighborhood watch cadres, and visiting relatives are creating social situations and career-enhancing rewards for young Han men to pursue Uyghur women, while at the same time punishing those that speak badly or strive to prevent these interethnic marriages. In May 2019, Xinjiang authorities announced that the children of mixed-ethnicity marriages in which one parent is Han would receive 20 extra points on college entrance exams, while children in which both parents are ethnic minorities would only receive 15 (cut down from 50 points, a 70 percent decrease).<sup>35</sup> These incentives and pressures coupled with the stigma that many women whose husbands have been sent to the camps are what is resulting in more of the legalized forms of sexualized violence in the region.

As investigators have documented, inside some camps, tacitly permitted rape and sexualized forms of torture toward Muslim women appear to be widespread.<sup>36</sup> As a male researcher I have not directly examined these horrific and deeply stigmatizing crimes in my interviews with camp survivors, but nothing I have heard from interviewees has contradicted these accounts. The camps exist at least partially outside the rule of law which means that camp workers can act with impunity.

In both circumstances of sexual violence—inside and outside the camps—Uyghur and Kazakh women are unable to provide freely given consent to Han men. Outside the camp refusal of Han men 'relative' visits, just as the refusal of an IUD emplacement, could result in a minimum in being placed on a watchlist of potentially 'untrustworthy' people. Combined with other activities deemed suspicious it could also result in detention. That is to say, that because of the pervasiveness of coercion it is nearly impossible for Uyghurs and Kazakhs to give voluntary consent to state orders of any type.

### **Involuntary Surveillance**

State authorities often describe detention in reeducation camps as voluntary. Internal police documents however demonstrate that very little interaction between Muslims and state workers is voluntary. One of the ways this coercive pressure is built is through surveillance. Over the past two

---

<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-pushes-inter-ethnic-marriage-in-xinjiang-assimilation-drive/ar-AABus1U>

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-55794071>

decades Chinese Public Security Bureaus across China have increasingly begun to build and deploy interlinked systems of surveillance technology through private-public partnerships with technology companies. Since 2010, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has become a limit case for the development of such technologies. Xinjiang now has one of the highest densities of surveillance cameras, face-recognition checkpoints, and digital forensics infrastructures of any location in the world. From cellular towers, mobile devices, to smart ID systems, QR coded housing, neighborhood-level sub-monitoring stations, to centralized command centers, server rooms, and ‘smart’ detention camps, a system of digital enclosure has enveloped the 24 million people who live in the vast Muslim-majority region.<sup>37</sup>

In the early stages of the rollout of this system in 2017 state workers conducted assessments of the population determining who was ‘trustworthy, normal, and untrustworthy.’ In face-to-face interviews, these neighborhood police officers assessed Muslims in the region (at least in Urumchi) using ten or more categories: whether or not the person was Uyghur, of military age, or underemployed; whether they prayed regularly, possessed unauthorized religious knowledge, had a passport, had traveled to one of twenty-six Muslim-majority countries, had overstayed their visa, had an immediate relative living abroad, or had taught their children about Islam in their home. Those who were determined to be “untrustworthy” were then sent to the detention centers where they were interrogated and asked to confess their crimes and name others who were also “untrustworthy.” In this manner, and through follow-up digital scans of their phones and computers for more than 53,000 markers of suspicious activity, the officers determined which individuals should be slotted for the “transformation through education” internment camps.

---

<sup>37</sup> This section drawn from excerpts a recent report I compiled for the Wilson International Center for Scholars titled ‘Chinese Infrastructures of Population Management on the New Silk Road’

# Trustworthiness Assessment Form

This form is used in some urban locations by Neighborhood Watch Units to determine which Turkic Muslim residents should be investigated and detained.

The form lists as column headers: Address, name, age, followed by categories of potential 10-point deductions.

## 10 causes of potential deductions:

- Being between the ages of 15 and 55
- Being ethnic Uighur
- Unemployment
- Possession of a passport
- Praying daily
- Having studied religion
- Visiting one of 26 banned countries
- Belated return to China
- Has association with foreign country
- Teaching children at home

## Possible scoring results for each person

- **80-100:** Trustworthy
- **50-70:** Normal
- **0-40:** Untrustworthy: Results in investigation and potentially in internment

**河北西路社区常住户民语系打分表**

家庭住址	人数	姓名	年龄段 (15-25岁、 26-40岁、 41-55岁)	维吾尔族	无业人员	持有护照	每日礼拜	有宗教学识	去过26国	逾期入境人员	有境外关系人	家有辍学儿童	总分数	放心	一般	不放心
1	1	穆某明			-10		-10	-10	-10				50		√	
2	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
3	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
4	1	穆某明	-10	-10									80	√		
5	1	穆某明	-10	-10									80	√		
6	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
7	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
8	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
9	1	穆某明	-10	-10	-10								70		√	
10	1	穆某明	-10	-10									80	√		
11	1	穆某明	-10	-10									80	√		
12	1	穆某明			-10								90	√		
13	1	穆某明	-10	-10									80	√		

Sources: Ürümchi Hebei West Street Neighborhood Watch Unit, Central Asian Survey, Wall Street Journal

Image: Matters News  
© 2020, Center for Global Policy

Reprinted with Permission

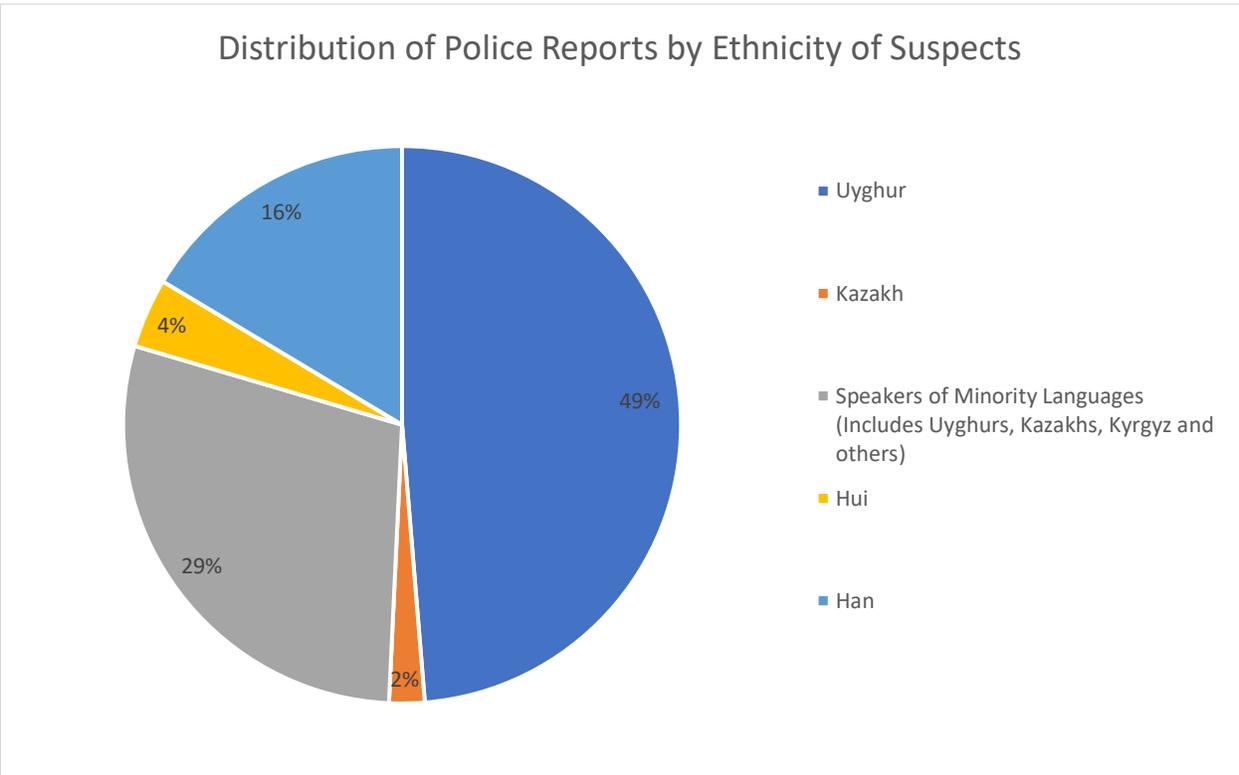
The assessments were iterative. Many Muslims who passed their first assessment were subsequently detained because someone else named them as “untrustworthy” due to their religious background or violations of family planning and so on. In as many as tens of thousands of cases, years of WeChat history was used as evidence of the need for Uyghur suspects to be “transformed.” The state also assigned an additional 1.1 million Han and Uyghur “big brothers and sisters” to conduct week-long assessments on Uyghur families as uninvited guests in Uyghur homes (something I have mentioned above in reference to sexual violence toward Uyghur women). Over the course of these stays, the relatives tested the “trustworthy” qualities of those Uyghurs that remained outside of the camp system by forcing them to participate in activities forbidden by certain forms of Islamic piety such as drinking, smoking, and dancing. As a test, they brought their Uyghur hosts food without telling them whether the meat used in the dishes was halal or not. These “big sisters and brothers” focused

on the families of those who had been taken away by the police over the past decade. They looked for any sign of resentment or any lack of enthusiasm in Chinese patriotic activities. They gave the children candy so that they would tell them the truth about what their parents thought.

The system of surveillance went far beyond these intentional assessments. Instead, it began to target and transform—or eliminate and replace—aspects of Muslim social life itself. Over 2020 I have analyzed parts of a 52 gigabyte internal police dataset obtained by *The Intercept*. The dataset contains close to 250 million rows of data which make up tens of thousands of police files. These files were recovered largely from the Mobile Police System of Urumchi, the standardized mobile policing system nested within the larger Integrated Joint Operations Platform. The majority of these files dated to 2018 and 2019 are short reports of encounters between Public Security Bureau ‘police assistants’ (*xiejing*) and flagged individuals. The reports list the date and time of the encounter, the precinct, name, ID number, gender, ethnicity and phone number of the suspect. They describe the reason why the individual was flagged and if they warrant further investigation. They also list the geolocation of the encounter. Although the data in these ‘social incident’ reports is quite brief, because of the biographical and geographic data they contain they are useful in mapping the spread, regularity, and scale of checkpoints across Urumchi.

The city of Urumchi has an official population of 2.2 million and is over 70 percent Han, according to the 2018 Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook. In the northern districts of the city the Han population makes up more than 85 percent of the population. In the south district of Tian Shan, Uyghurs make up 27 percent of the population. The greatest density of checks archived in the dataset are in the Tian Shan district of the city where the highest proportion of Uyghurs live. The greatest number of flagged individuals recorded in the dataset are Uyghur. The supermajority are Muslim—Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui, Kyrgyz and others.

More detailed weekly intelligence reports filed by local police precincts provide further clues to the effects of the surveillance system, how it is implemented, and its capacities. While there is some variation between precincts the majority of these weekly reports follow a standardized schema. Each weekly report begins with a general section called the ‘situation of the enemy’ – hardly a term that would be used for students who ‘volunteered’ to be detained. It is comprised of a discussion of the prior week’s ‘push clues’ and supervision orders sent by the Integrated Joint Operations Platform—the surveillance platform—regarding people within the precinct’s jurisdiction, cases under investigation, and the management and control of local religious institutions. Then zooming out to the level of the urban district it discusses broader social stability issues such as special Party meetings or changing work patterns. The second major section of each weekly report is called the ‘situation of the neighborhood watch unit’. It considers special unit level campaigns related to the ‘People’s War on Terror’ such as an amorphous ‘three cleansings’ campaign—which focused on involuntary surprise home inspections in search of illegalized religious teachings, materials, and relationships contained in household objects and digital devices. They often discussed the endless search for ‘terrorism’ related videos—ranging from news items to videos of street protests. And they documented the weekly operations of the community’s People’s Convenience Police Stations—the surveillance hubs responsible for involuntary invasive checks of targeted individuals. Finally there is a report about the ‘targeted group’—the relatives of ‘three categories people’—who are being subjected to involuntary monitored within each jurisdiction.



**Figure 3. Reports from the Mobile Police Network of the Urumchi Public Security Bureau from 2018-2019 skewed dramatically toward Uyghurs, despite them comprising only 12.9 percent of Urumchi’s population as of 2018. More than 84 percent of reports focused on Muslim minorities. Only 16 percent focused exclusively on the Han population, which makes up 71 percent of the city’s population.**

Among the regular weekly reports, many of which become repetitive over time, there are also occasional ‘risk analysis reports.’ One such report regarding Ramadan 2018 from the Xiheba Police Station in the Tian Shan District provides some of the most detailed and straightforward assessment of the goals and effects of the Urumchi policing system. It begins by saying ‘As part of the harsh crackdown, two imams from the mosque in Xiheba have been detained and charged.’ This, it explains, has not caused any trouble since the assistant imam has also been transferred to another district and thus all formal religious activities at the Xiheba mosque have thus been suspended. While the mosque remains open, the number of people who entered the mosque to pray during the first 4 months of 2018 had dropped by 96.52% as compared to 2017 when 80,211 people attended the mosque to pray. In total, it continues, ‘there are 167 believers remaining in the precinct jurisdiction. Among those people, 5 of them are the relatives of the ‘three categories people.’’ The remaining attendees are elderly and have residency permits to live in the district.

The next section of the report then discusses the reasons for what it calls a ‘dramatic decrease’ in mosque attendance. First it says that demolition projects, which evicted many Uyghurs from the city, had the effect of relocating the population. Second, it credits the success of the ‘deextremification’ campaign in ‘developing and transforming the consciousness and thoughts’ of the population. The

third factor had to do with ‘strictly implementing’ an involuntary ‘real-name checkpoint system to enter the mosque.’ The fourth factor were a number of policies which were ‘beneficial for the people’ (*buimin*). It explained that these initiatives involuntarily required migrants from Uyghur majority areas in Southern Xinjiang to return to their villages, where they were then assessed by local authorities. Finally, ‘problematic’ people in the Xiheba jurisdiction had been involuntarily detained and subjected to reeducation, this in turn, it notes, has resulted in a further drop in the ‘actual population’ of the district.

The report further specifies that religious people are afraid to pray in the mosque because they ‘have been told that those who enter the mosque more than 200 times will be sent to ‘education’—the widely used euphemism for involuntary detention in the detention camp system. The police also reported that they discovered no instances of people conducting ‘illegal’ prayers at home or in any other unauthorized place—another violation that can result in involuntary detention.

### Human Labor

The primary actors in the Mobile Police System are a category of contracted policing assistants that I refer to elsewhere as ‘data police.’<sup>38</sup> Beginning in late 2016, hundreds of advertisements from Xinjiang Public Security Bureaus for ‘auxiliary police’ and other workers appeared across Xinjiang. The scholars James Leibold and Adrian Zenz show that approximately 90,000 new officers were hired.<sup>39</sup> While some of these officers were formal Public Security Bureau employees who were transferred to Xinjiang from other provinces, the vast majority were low-level contracted employees referred to as assistant police.<sup>40</sup> After a ten-day boot-camp like training, they were assigned to posts in newly built People’s Convenience Police Stations. These stations, which function as surveillance hubs within a policing grid, formed central nodes in a system of surveillance that an Urumchi police chief purported to be ‘seamless’<sup>41</sup> – a response to Xi Jinping’s 2014 call to build ‘walls of steel’ and a ‘net over the sky’ to defend against Muslim terrorism.<sup>42</sup> The tasks of these data police consisted of ‘fixed duty, video patrol, car patrol, foot patrol, and plainclothes patrol.’<sup>43</sup> Based on prior research, it is clear that much of the work of police assistants focused on the first two tasks, sorting populations at fixed checkpoints and watching banks of video monitors.<sup>44</sup> In some areas such as mosques and train stations, face recognition enabled cameras would issue alarms if someone identified by a

---

<sup>38</sup> Darren Byler, ‘The Xinjiang Data Police,’ *Noema Magazine*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.noemamag.com/the-xinjiang-data-police/>

<sup>39</sup> James Leibold and Adrian Zenz, ‘Beijing’s Eyes and Ears Grow Sharper in Xinjiang, The 24-7 Patrols of China’s ‘Convenience Police,’ *Foreign Affairs*, December 23, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-12-23/beijings-eyes-and-ears-grow-sharper-xinjiang>

<sup>40</sup> ‘2018 nian xinjiang kasha diqu zhaopin xian pinshi yebian zhibian min jingwuzhan gongzuo renyuan zhaopin jianzhang [2018 Recruitment Guide for Staff Recruitment of People’s Convenience Police Stations in Xinjiang Kashgar Region],’ *Jiashi County Public Security Bureau*, December 19, 2018 <https://archive.fo/OUfAC>

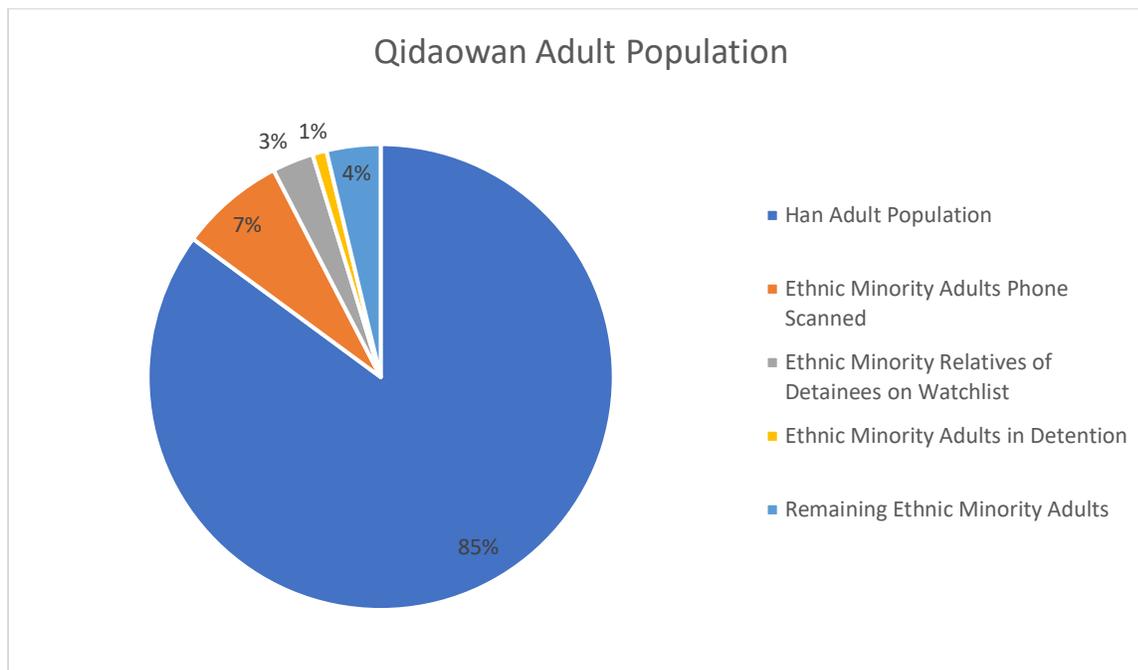
<sup>41</sup> Zhang Xinde, ‘Wulumuqi shi dajie xiao xiang jiang jian 949 ge bianmin jingwuzhan [949 People’s Convenience Police Stations have been built in the streets of Ürümchi],’ *Yaxin Net*, 2016, <https://archive.fo/a9LTE>

<sup>42</sup> ‘Xi urges anti-terrorism ‘nets’ for Xinjiang,’ *Xinhua News*, May 29, 2014, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/29/content\\_17552457.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/29/content_17552457.htm)

<sup>43</sup> Darren Byler, ‘Keyword: fangbian (convenience),’ *ChinaMade*, August 2, 2019, University of Colorado, <https://chinamadeproject.net/%e6%96%b9%e4%be%bf-fangbian/>

<sup>44</sup> Darren Byler, ‘The Xinjiang Data Police,’ *Noema Magazine*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.noemamag.com/the-xinjiang-data-police/>

watchlist walked in front of them.<sup>45</sup> Over time, as police assistants gained experience they were given more tools and more authority to conduct spot checks of pedestrians and drivers.



**Figure 4. Adult population of Qidaowan Precinct, Urumchi, week of April 23, 2018. One out of every 15 Uyghur, Kazakh or Hui adults is in detention. It is likely that as many as 27 percent of the adult ethnic minority population was not assessed during this week. A small number of minority adults may be counted in more than one category. A small number of Han adults may have also had their phones scanned.**

The Urumchi Mobile Police dataset makes clear that actions carried out by police assistants that occurred in People’s Convenience Police stations, at fixed checkpoints and through involuntary spot checks form the bulk of the data recorded in the system. For instance over the week of April 23, 2018 in the Qidaowan precinct of Urumchi’s Shuimogou District, 40 officers scanned the phones of 2057 people using a digital forensics tool called an ‘Anti-Terrorism Sword.’ These devices made by a range of companies use software developed by the company Meiya Pico and the Urumchi Public Security Bureau to search for more than 53,000 unique identifiers of Islamic or political activity. In addition to scanning phones, the police assistants also manually scanned the faces of 935 people using face recognition technology. Throughout 2018 the weekly reports present slight fluctuations in these numbers, some weeks the police assistants scanned slightly more, some weeks slightly less. As of 2018 the total population of Qidaowan was approximately 36,000, of which 6569 were ethnic minorities such as Uyghur, Kazakh and Hui, and around two thirds were adults. As my prior research has shown, police assistants prioritized scanning Muslim adult residents.<sup>46</sup> This means that

<sup>45</sup> Chinese Government Procurement Network, ‘Xinjiang Shawan County Smart (Safe) Project Feasibility Study,’ 2017, <https://www.chinafile.com/library/reports/xinjiang-shawan-county-smart-safe-project-feasibility-study>

<sup>46</sup> Darren Byler, ‘The Xinjiang Data Police,’ *Noema Magazine*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.noemamag.com/the-xinjiang-data-police/>

in an average week perhaps as many as half of the adult Muslim population in the jurisdiction were subjected to involuntary phone scans. In another report, police assistants reported residents complaining that their phones ‘had been scanned no fewer than 10 times.’ Often the scan of either IDs or phones would result in a ‘yellow warning’ which according to another report indicated the person was the relative of a detainee. A ‘red warning’ resulted in immediate detention and investigation.

This data, along with similar reports from precincts across Urumchi, shows that a large percentage of the population was largely untargeted by the surveillance systems. A supermajority of the Muslim population on the other hand was subjected to regular scans, watch lists, and detentions. Only approximately 27 percent of the adult minority population was not targeted. This further demonstrates that a ‘reeducation campaign’ must target entire communities. It also requires a whole of society mobilization which focuses on the minority population. Technology extends the power of this focused mobilization by automating certain actions and applying a numerical calculus—200 mosque visits, 10 phone checks and so on—to evaluations. The technology systems cannot simply be plugged in and work their magic on their own. They require a great deal of labor and ideological focus. State power—the ability to affect the behavior and thinking of those within a state’s sovereign regime—must be mobilized and brought to bear not only on the surveilled, but also those carrying out the surveillance. That is to say, the force of the surveillance platform used in Xinjiang produces overt coercion and manufactures tacit consent from differently positioned members of a surveillant society.

Surveillance platforms allow the work of spying on Muslim community members to be quantified and given a quota. In a city-wide report, leaders in the Urumchi Public Security Bureau admonished low level workers ‘in all departments’ to collect actionable intelligence rather than information about activities unrelated to counter-terrorism or ethnic minority issues. The report notes that much of the intelligence that workers input in the system were ‘fillers created just to meet the intel quota. They cannot be used.’ This form of noise in the system has an effect on the overall usefulness of data assessment tools, the report explains, because it requires manual intervention and a great deal of time to sort through it. In order to streamline data collection which focuses more fully on the People’s War on Terror, they directed low level workers—including police assistants and neighborhood watch unit employees—to avoid reporting on the general social situation in their precinct. For instance, the report notes, resident reports regarding kids urinating in the elevator should not be considered actionable intelligence. It was also important to note the full names and ID numbers of people encountered in ‘social incidents’—indeed some ID numbers included in the dataset are incomplete. They should also not focus on rumors and reports that were unrelated to counter-terrorism and minority policy. For instance, reports of people being scammed while buying mooncakes online should not be included. Social life issues such as Uyghur kids playing soccer noisily next to the road should not be included. Nor should there be reports about the lack of cleaning supplies in the People’s Convenience Police Station. Garbage not being cleaned up or kids fighting should not be reported. Issues related to resolved issues should also not be counted as part of the intel quota. For example, when the police arrived on the scene of an alleged cafeteria fight at a construction site, they found no one had been hurt. There was thus no need to report it.

---

This report is significant for two reasons. First it says directly that low level officers were given quotas to collect intelligence related to the Muslims living in their districts. This is significant because it provides an incentive to profile and manufacture intelligence about Muslims in the community. This is similar to the effect of rewards given to citizens for informing on their neighbors who violate family planning policy. Second, the report shows how essential human intelligence is to the functioning of the system. The algorithms of surveillance platforms are only as good as the data they are trained on. By introducing non-Muslim related noise into the system, the police assistants and neighborhood watch unit employees were making the system less effective. This points to a third issue. In order for these systems to be effective, the technicians who operationalize these systems must be trained themselves in what counts as actionable intelligence. This also means that large segments of social life—all the non-Muslim parts of life—fall outside the purview of the surveillance system. The police work thus comes to serve the needs of the algorithm, producing an unthinking normality in how Public Security Bureau employees encounter the world and consider the human costs of Uyghur, Kazakh and Hui detentions. Rather than seeing urban life as a whole, increasingly social and political life is filtered through the interface of data assessment tools which themselves were trained around ideological imperatives of the involuntary transformation of Muslims.

The reeducation campaign and the Mobile Police System also incorporated the work of employees in Neighborhood Watch Units or *shequ*. In other contexts, these units of civil servants formally employed by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, not the Public Security Bureau, are sometimes described as neighborhood or community committee units.<sup>47</sup> In this context though, their offices function as a ‘watch unit.’ As I have shown in other research, in Xinjiang these units have formal sub-command or monitoring centers with banks of screens. They coordinate extensively with People’s Convenience Police Stations and larger Public Security Bureau precincts. As one former Xinjiang officer told me in an interview for this paper:

Neighborhood watch units are the base of the policing hierarchy in Xinjiang. Everyone knows this. The people who are working in the units aren’t actually police, they are government officials. But their job is to gather information about their residents, such as where do those residents live, where do they work, do they have financial or domestic difficulty in their daily life and are they satisfied with the government. In the past, their job was to help people in need. But now, especially after the violence of 2009, their job has become similar to the job of the police. They directly report the information they gather to the police station in their jurisdiction. Police in the precinct police stations reported that information up to the district police station. Police in the district police station in turn report information up to the municipal Public Security Bureau. So there are four levels in the policing relationship, with the People’s Convenience Police Stations providing extra extensions of both the neighborhood watch units and the precincts.

Much of the data included in the weekly reports in the Mobil Police System focused directly on the Neighborhood Watch Unit management of the ‘targeted population’—in this case, the adult relatives of detainees and the children of detainees. For instance, in Qidaowan 278 ‘three categories people’

---

<sup>47</sup> See James Derleth and Daniel R. Koldyk, ‘The Shequ experiment: grassroots political reform in urban China.’ *Journal of Contemporary China* 13, no. 41 (2004): 747-777.

had been detained and 810 of their relatives were on a watchlist. As a controlled population cadres and other workers in the neighborhood watch unit were required to enter their homes on a daily basis. According to the reports, during visits the cadres were told to ensure that a digital forensics app called ‘Clean Net Guard’ which monitored their movement and communication was installed on their phones.<sup>48</sup> The government workers made sure that an ‘absence of religious atmosphere’ was maintained by ‘thoroughly checking’ the residents and their belongings. They reported on the ‘good attitudes’ of the relatives, made sure they recorded their scheduled phone calls with detainees, and that they attended flag raising ceremonies and political education events. These workers also used an app connected to the larger Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) to assure that each resident had provided their biometric data. ‘If we discovered a suspicious alert through the IJOP, we notified the National Security Team,’ a Qidaowan report noted.

Throughout their lives Uyghurs and Kazakhs live under conditions of control and unfreedom. This moves from their weekly and daily schedules to the places they are allowed to visit. None of these extralegal controls are agreed to voluntarily. Rather they are subjected to systems of control and violation that abrogate their basic freedoms as humans and citizens.

### **Reference List of Texts Excerpted in this Report**

“Ghost World,” *Logic*, May 1, 2019. <https://logicmag.io/china/ghost-world/>

“Uyghur love in a time of interethnic marriage,” *SupChina*, 7 August, 2019.  
<https://supchina.com/2019/08/07/uyghur-love-in-a-time-of-interethnic-marriage/>

“Chinese Infrastructures of Population Management on the New Silk Road,” *Wilson International Center for Scholars* (Forthcoming)

---

<sup>48</sup> This confirms prior investigative reporting. See Megha Rajgopalan, ‘China Is Forcing People To Download An App That Tells Them To Delete ‘Dangerous’ Photos,’ *Buzzfeed*, April 9, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/china-surveillance-app>

## **1. Darren Byler [Negative Eugenics, Sexual Violence and Involuntary Surveillance: A report prepared for the Uyghur Tribunal]**

In this report, researcher Darren Byler considers the effects of intergenerational family planning policies, gendered violence and involuntary surveillance on Uyghur family structure and religious practice. To do this, he analyses Chinese state documents and interviews with Chinese citizens. Drawing on these, he assesses claims related to family planning policies, coercive marriages between Han men and Uyghur women, and sexual violence toward Muslim women both inside and outside the camps.

First, Byler assesses the implementation of targeted negative eugenics program. He demonstrates the involuntary nature of the reproduction monitoring program. Several distinct elements point to this conclusion, including the recent establishment of a system of rewards for reporting illegal childbirth behaviours, and violations of laws and regulations in family planning work. The researcher also mentions the monitoring of women of child-bearing age, notably through frequent birth control measures assessments; unplanned, surprise inspections which women are not permitted to refuse; or the existence of incentives to receive IUDs or undergo sterilisation procedures. The author estimates that tens of thousands of people may have been detained due to violating birth policies. He also notes that certain measures have rendered adoption in families that have met their quota illegal, which prevents relatives from caring for children of detainees. He concludes that the establishment of these programs which target Uyghur and Kazakh women in particular, while similar measures have been rolled back among Han women, constitute a type of negative eugenics.

Secondly, the researcher estimated from his survey of witness testimonies and examination of state documents that between two-thirds and three-quarters of Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have been detained were men between the ages of 18 and 55. This results in the “absence” of a significant percentage of the adult male population, i.e. the primary farming and wage earner populations. This, coupled with the stigma that lies on the wives or female relatives of the male detainees, increases the vulnerability of these women to the pressure of marrying Han male “relatives.” Here, the word “relative” is to be understood under the light of the “Becoming Family” program, which is a state policy that mandated tens of thousands of state workers to come to Xinjiang and stay in Muslim homes to both monitor families and influence them towards renouncing certain aspects of their way of life. This is part of a broader state policy aiming to increase marriage of Uyghur women to non-Muslim Han men, through both incentives and political atmosphere and pressure. The forced “coexistence” between Han men and Uyghur women, along with, among other things, the state’s support to inter-ethnic marriages, have resulted in a type of “institutionalisation” of the pressures that Uyghur and Kazakh women face to marry Han men. All these elements produce a fertile ground for sexualised violence in the region, such that, be it inside or outside of the camps, Uyghur and Kazakh women are unable to provide freely given consent to Han men.

Then, the author reviews the interlinked systems of surveillance that cover Xinjiang. In addition to the development of sophisticated technology that allows a “digital enclosure” to envelop the 24 million people who live in the region, the state has deployed hundreds of thousands of workers to conduct assessments of the population, to determine who is “trustworthy,” “normal,” or “untrustworthy,” with those deemed

“untrustworthy” being sent to “re-education” camps. This was notably the mission of those Han “relatives” sent as part of the “Becoming Family” program, as they were tasked with looking for any sign of resentment or any lack of enthusiasm in Chinese patriotic activities.

Finally, Darren Byler analyses the deployment of tens of thousands of new police officers, the majority of which were low-level contracted employees called “assistant police,” assigned after minimal training and provided with increasing tools and authority to conduct their mission, i.e. to surveil and control the region’s Muslim populations. The author argues that not only do these measures violate Uyghurs and Kazakhs’ basic freedoms as humans, but their very efficiency is dubious, as, for example, these low-level officers are given quotas to collect intelligence about Muslims in their locality, which naturally provides an incentive to profile and manufacture intelligence about Muslims.

Overall, the report provides an overview of extra-legal systems of control and violation to which Muslim minorities in Xinjiang are subjected, and to which they have not agreed voluntarily.

5050 **6 June 2021 (6:27:50 – 7:17:32)**

5051 **Darren Byler**

5052

5053 DB – I just have some short remarks on the three main foci in my report looking at  
5054 involuntary surveillance, family planning policies, and gendered violence and their effects.  
5055 State authorities often describe detention in re-education camps as voluntary but internal  
5056 police documents demonstrate that very little interaction between Muslims and state  
5057 workers is in fact voluntary. One of the ways this coercive pressure is built is through  
5058 surveillance. Xinjiang now has one of the highest densities of surveillance cameras, face-  
5059 recognition checkpoints and digital forensics infrastructures of any location in the world.  
5060 It also has one of the greatest densities when it comes to policing as well. From cellular  
5061 towers to mobile devices to smart ID systems, QR coded housing, neighbourhood level  
5062 sub-monitoring stations, decentralised command centres, server rooms and smart  
5063 detention camps; a system of digital enclosure has enveloped the entire region.

5064 The early stages of a lot of this system in 2017, state workers started to conduct  
5065 assessments of the population to determine who was trustworthy, normal or  
5066 untrustworthy. In face-to-face interviews and in surveys that were sent to people's homes,  
5067 the neighbourhood police officers assessed mostly using ten categories: whether the  
5068 person was Uyghur, whether they were of military age between the ages of 18-55, were

5069 unemployed, whether they prayed regularly, possessed unauthorised religious  
5070 knowledge, had a passport, had travelled to one in 26 Muslim majority countries, had  
5071 overstayed their visa, had an immediate relative living abroad or had taught their children  
5072 about Islam in their home. This is how it is laid out in the form. These ten categories. Each  
5073 category that counted towards them was used to deduct points from a score of 100,  
5074 moving them down a scale, towards an untrustworthy scoring.

5075 Those who were deemed untrustworthy were sent to the detention centres, where they  
5076 were interrogated as to confess their crimes and to name others who were untrustworthy.  
5077 In this manner, the officers determined which individuals should be slated for  
5078 transformation through re-education and who should be formally prosecuted. The state  
5079 documents I reviewed show that since 2017 and up to 2020, 530,000 people in the region  
5080 have been formally prosecuted. This is at a rate that is six times higher than the national  
5081 average and it is not accounted for people that are yet awaiting prosecution and that are  
5082 in the camps themselves.

5083 The system of surveillance has an immediate effect on Uyghur religious institutions. A  
5084 police report from April 2018 provides some of the most detailed and straight forward  
5085 assessments of the goals and effects of the Urumqi policing system on Uyghur religious  
5086 institutions describes 'a dramatic decrease in mosque attendance as a success of the  
5087 system'. While the mosque remains open and in this particular case, the number of people  
5088 who entered the mosque to pray during the first four months of 2018 had dropped by  
5089 96.52% as compared to 2017 when 80,211 people had attended the mosque to pray. The  
5090 report specifies that religious people are now afraid to pray in the mosque because they  
5091 had been 'told that those who enter the mosque more than 200 times will be sent to  
5092 education', which is the widely used euphemism for involuntary detention in the  
5093 camps. The primary actors in the surveillance system are the more deputised citizens.  
5094 Beginning in late 2016, hundreds of advertisements from the Xinjiang Public Security  
5095 Bureau for auxiliary police and other workers across Xinjiang.

5096 As other scholars have shown, approximately 90,000 new officers were hired at this time.  
5097 While some of these officers were formal employees transferred from other places, the  
5098 majority were low-level contracted employees or low-level security guards. After a ten-

5099 day boot camp training they were assigned to post in newly built people's convenience  
5100 police stations which former grit policing throughout the entire station. These stations  
5101 function as surveillance hubs forming centralised nodes of the surveillance system which  
5102 an Urumqi police chief reported to be seamless.

5103 The system is deeply invasive. Over the week of April 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2018, in one present in  
5104 Urumqi 40 state workers scanned the phones of 2,057 people using a digital forensics  
5105 tool called an 'anti-terrorism sword' which looks for more than 53,000 markers of religious  
5106 extremism and political activity. In addition to scanning phones, the police assistants  
5107 manually scanned the faces of 935 people using face-recognition technology. Over 2018  
5108 and 2019, there are slight fluctuations in numbers of people scanned per week but in general  
5109 they are fairly consistent. This is an on-going iterative process. As of 2018, in the present  
5110 that I am speaking of, there is 36,000 people in the total population of which 6,569 were  
5111 ethnic minorities and around 2/3 of which were adults. Because the police assistants  
5112 prioritised scanning Uyghur Muslims, on an average week, it is likely that as many as half  
5113 of the adult population in the jurisdiction were subjected to involuntary phone scans and  
5114 according to government documents, more than 100,000 people were at least initially  
5115 detained due to digital activity from years before the camps were built.

5116 The assessments continue over time, many Muslims were stopped attending the  
5117 mosques and passed their first assessments were subsequently detained because  
5118 someone else named them as untrustworthy due to their religious background. The state  
5119 also assigned additional 1.1 million Han big brother and big sisters, that's how they are  
5120 often referred to, to conduct week long assessments in Uyghur homes. Over the course  
5121 of these visits, the relatives tested the trustworthiness qualities of Uyghurs who remained  
5122 outside of the camp by forcing them to participate in activities forbidden by certain forms  
5123 of Islamic piety such as drinking, smoking and dancing. As a test they brought Uyghur  
5124 hosts food without telling them whether the meat used was used in the dishes was halal  
5125 or not.

5126 These relatives focused on the families that have been taken away and they looked for  
5127 signs of resentment or lack of enthusiasm. They gave the children candy or they were  
5128 told to give the children candy because they said the children would tell them the truth

5129 about what the parents thought. They also made sure that there were no illegal births in  
5130 the family, which brings me to the second focus of my report which is the zero illegal births  
5131 programme.

5132 In order to understand this programme, it is necessary to read the directives given by the  
5133 Chinese Civil Ministry very closely. On April 12<sup>th</sup> 2019, a government committee in Aksu  
5134 city in southern Xinjiang made the following announcement: ‘the people’s government  
5135 has decided to implement a real name system of rewards for reporting illegal child-births  
5136 behaviours, violations of law and family planning work while at the same time urging those  
5137 who violated laws and regulations to take the initiative to self-report and strive to be dealt  
5138 with likely’. The announcement then announces the citizens throughout the municipality  
5139 of around 700,000 people that ‘citizens who report illegal birth activities of their  
5140 neighbours will be given a reward of 5,000 Yuan, which is 550 GBP.

5141 Included in the listing of rewarding information on not only violations of having more  
5142 children than permitted but also adopting children in violation of regulations or illegal  
5143 procedures undertaken to give births to children. Again, my interviews indicate that the  
5144 illegal procedures that are referred to here is the removal of IUDs and other family  
5145 planning devices or birth control devices, which are subjected to regular inspection.  
5146 Nurtures ensure that all illegal pregnancies are detected, state workers are tasked with  
5147 ‘finding women of child-bearing age within their jurisdiction’. They must then assess the  
5148 birth control measures used by each woman. The directive states, and here I am quoting  
5149 again ‘those who have not taken long-term birth control measures in small towns and  
5150 villages must be visited every month and subjected to portable pregnancy checks. Illegal  
5151 pregnancies must be ‘disposed of early in reference of state-mandated abortion’.  
5152 Nowhere is the document does it state that these checks are done voluntarily. In fact, my  
5153 interviews suggested that these checks are received as orders. The directive also states  
5154 that ‘married women of child-bearing age who have adopted long-term birth control  
5155 measures should be classified as trustworthy personnel’, which means that they won’t be  
5156 send to the camps and receive IUD or ring inspection services. That is to say there is an  
5157 incentive to receive an IUD in a way of protecting or insulating yourself from potential  
5158 detention.

5159 These exams extend beyond unmarried women as well. For instance, female students  
5160 are also mandated to receive regular physical examinations. Further evidence of the  
5161 involuntary nature of the reproduction monitoring programme is demonstrated by the  
5162 unplanned and surprise inspections that women are not permitted to refuse. The  
5163 implementation of the programme rests on organised system of 'unannounced visits'  
5164 where women will be inspected, and households examined for unregistered children. Who  
5165 exactly is targeted by this system? In state documents from across the region, state  
5166 authorities lay out that zero illegal births, the programme was to target all ethnicities with  
5167 particular focus on government employees, religious figures, farmers and herders. In  
5168 another document from \*Hochin\* county in southern Xinjiang, state authorities say directly  
5169 that the programme should also target farmers and herders, a demographic in that  
5170 location and most locations across Xinjiang that disproportionately draws from the Muslim  
5171 minority populations.

5172 Since the new regulations were introduced since 2017 with this new explicit focus on  
5173 childbirth amongst Muslims, the consequences for previous and current illegal births have  
5174 become stark. Not just in terms of monetary rewards but also in fines and prosecutions for  
5175 those deemed illegalised parents. The new regulations target parents of illegal children  
5176 as far back as 1992. Out of a sample size of 1,500 detainees that were sent to camps  
5177 since 2017, 151 were detained for violating birth policies and the sample is being taken  
5178 as indicative of camp detentions as a whole, which is an estimated 900 to 1.5 million  
5179 people. Approximately 90 – 150,000 parents may have been detained due to violations  
5180 of family planning. Taken together all of these systems meet standard definitions of  
5181 negative eugenics but they also do something more.

5182 A key component of the zero illegal births programme is the illegalisation of adoption  
5183 amongst Uyghur families. My interviews show that in practice this policy prevents Uyghurs  
5184 from caring for the children of detained relatives. Instead, children of detainees often  
5185 become wards of the state in residential boarding schools dubbed kindness centres. As  
5186 other research has shown, the Uyghur majority areas, as many as 70% of all children of  
5187 zero to five have been assigned to a range of schools ranging from week-long full-care  
5188 schools to day-care schools. According to state documents, as many as 500,000 children,

5189 Uyghur and Kazakh children have been raised in anonymising environments. In 2019, a  
5190 state spokesperson announced that they had recruited nearly 90,000 new politically loyal  
5191 teachers to the region. Since these new teachers are primarily Han and functioning as  
5192 parental figures to Uyghur children that have been removed from their homes in some  
5193 sense, they are enacting enforceable transfer of children from one ethnicity to another.

5194 Now, I move on to my final focus which is on Han male marriage to Uyghur women...

5195 *[Interruption by counsel: Due to limited time, I will ask you some questions. The panel has*  
5196 *read your report in full. Please forgive my interruption.]*

5197 *Counsel – You have estimated that some ten percent camp detentions relate to violations*  
5198 *of birth policies. How many of those related to the Uyghurs or other minorities?*

5199 DB – All of them are Uyghurs or other minorities, based on the limited sample that we  
5200 have. It is a quite common reason for detention as we see in multiple datasets across the  
5201 region.

5202 *Counsel – Would you know what the other 90% of camp detentions relate to?*

5203 DB – There is range of reasons given. One of the most common is violating public order,  
5204 or social order, which means gathering a crowd, conducting religious activities outside of  
5205 a mosque, or going to the mosque too often, more than 200 times. I'd say the majority  
5206 are being sent to the camps for religious practice reason, the evidence often being digital  
5207 activity from the past, or confession during interrogation.

5208 *Counsel – Is it just children of detainees that become “wards of state” or all so-called*  
5209 *“illegal children?”*

5210 DB – This is not fully clear. If both parents are taken it is often the case, but if it is one  
5211 parent the children may remain with the other parent. However, most children are being  
5212 sent to boarding schools regardless of their parents being detained or not. So, in some  
5213 sense children in general are being separated from their parents. Even as early as in  
5214 elementary school. These schools can be 50 to 100 kilometres away from home, so they  
5215 do not have regular visits with their parents.

5216 *Counsel – To clarify, that would be children deemed “illegal,” that are separated from their*  
5217 *parents even if both were still at home?*

5218 DB – Not necessarily: the illegal birth program is really to prevent parents from having  
5219 two or three children depending on where they live. That does not necessarily mean that  
5220 the child will be treated differently than other children of the household. The children that  
5221 become “ward of the state” are just children of families that the state has deemed  
5222 untrustworthy or unfit to care for the children. In addition, the regular school system itself  
5223 is becoming a residential school system so all children can be sent to that type of children.

5224 *Counsel – Is becoming a ward of state permanent?*

5225 I don’t have a lot of information about this but it does appear to be the case in the limited  
5226 cases where I have seen enough evidence, where children have been separated from  
5227 their parents. In some other cases they are allowed to have a visit with the grandparents  
5228 once in a month. But the grandparents report that the children no longer speak Uyghur or  
5229 Kazakh in the home and are withdrawn, they are damaged from the situation.

5230 *Counsel – You have identified Uyghur birth rate declines of between 50% to 80% in*  
5231 *Uyghur-majority areas. Does that bring the Uyghur birth-rate in line with the Han Chinese*  
5232 *birth rate in Xinjiang, in a relative sense?*

5233 DB – No I don’t think so. My sense is that Han birth rates have remained steady in Han-  
5234 majority areas in the region, and Uyghur birth rates have simply dropped dramatically.  
5235 What we are seeing is that Uyghur birth rates are now below Han birth rates across the  
5236 country, at least in some areas.

5237 *Counsel – When you refer to Uyghur-majority areas, would that necessarily mean that*  
5238 *southern-Xinjiang has more majority areas than northern-Xinjiang?*

5239 DB – That is right, I am referring to Kashgar and Hotan prefectures in particular, which is  
5240 home to three to five million Uyghurs. Aksu is also Uyghur-majority but Hotan and  
5241 Kashgar seem to have the highest rate when it comes to the drop in birth rates.

5242 *Counsel – To what extent is it possible for a Uyghur woman to consent to the imposition*  
5243 *of a male “relative?”*

5244 DB – It is not possible at all. They have to consent or be sent to a camp. There are some  
5245 ways to find excuses, like they are not home, they are not feeling well, they can negotiate  
5246 with the “relative,” who might also not want to be part of the program, and they can divorce  
5247 their husbands, which is often the case. This is a way of stopping the visits: once divorced  
5248 you are not on the “families watchlist” and the visits stop. But in general there is no way  
5249 of refusing the “relative.”

5250 *Counsel – To what extent is it possible for a Uyghur woman to consent to a marriage to*  
5251 *a Han Chinese official, or any sexual approach by a Han Chinese male?*

5252 DB – It depends on the situation. I would say in general it is difficult. There is a good deal  
5253 of pressure and political incentives on Uyghur women to consent to a marriage to a Han  
5254 person. I have found that unmarried women will try to find excuses or marry quickly to  
5255 someone else as a way of protecting themselves. Oftentimes the marriages are arranged  
5256 through the parents of the couple, so the pressure is actually placed on the parents of the  
5257 Uyghur woman. The pressure comes from Civil Ministry officials in their community. If the  
5258 family has a bad family background already, like having a relative detained, this would  
5259 make them even more vulnerable than others. But all Uyghurs are vulnerable in these  
5260 kinds of situation because refusal can be seen as untrustworthiness, of being too pious or  
5261 too connected to your Uyghur identity.

5262 *Counsel – Is it correct that the highest organ that receives intelligence information is the*  
5263 *Municipal Public Security bureau?*

5264 DB – It is a complex system, and Urumqi is the capital of the region. The Ministry of State  
5265 Security is higher than the Public Security Bureau. I would say their relation could be  
5266 compared with the relationship between the CIA to the FBI. But it is all interlinked, the  
5267 information gathered in Xinjiang is available throughout the entire region and people that  
5268 have security clearance throughout the country. So, the watchlist that is generated is in  
5269 some ways a national watchlist. This watchlist is widely available to Urumqi police officers  
5270 but also the entire country.

5271 *Counsel – You have referred to the deputisation of Uyghurs for law-enforcement purpose,*  
5272 *is that a voluntary or compulsory program?*

5273 DB – It is deputisation of citizens in general. Many are Han, significant numbers are  
5274 Uyghur and Kazakh. It is voluntary but also a form of protection of these people and their  
5275 family. Often, they did not know what they were signing up for, that they would put people  
5276 in camps. Many were hired before the camps were build. Then they find out that they are  
5277 not permitted to quit or to speak to anyone about what they are doing. There is a coercive  
5278 element built into the system. Some of the police officers have been detained for showing  
5279 weakness on the job, or for protecting people.

5280 *Counsel – How do you account for abuses of Uyghur citizens by Uyghur police officials,*  
5281 *or Uyghur camp guards, or Uyghur intelligence officers?*

5282 DB – There is a great deal of pressure that you could be called “two-faced” if you are  
5283 Kazakh or Uyghur. This is someone who pretends to follow party doctrine but is secretly  
5284 working to support other Muslims. I think initially they may start to resist and try to help  
5285 Uyghurs if they can, but overtime it becomes normalized. They may have to prove to their  
5286 hierarchy that they are “brutal” enough to be in their position. Others may gain some  
5287 power and privilege through their positions of authority, and that has its own enticement.

5288 *Panel – You wrote that a key component of China’s “Zero Illegal Births” program is the*  
5289 *illegalisation of adoption and the transfer of children into care as “ward of state”. With your*  
5290 *experience, could you briefly summarise for us the conditions that lead children to being*  
5291 *sent to these residential institutions?*

5292 DB – There is an account of parents losing contact with children after they were taken by  
5293 local authorities on the grounds that they are children of extremists and that they must be  
5294 re-educated. This is a fairly extreme example; it is not necessarily normative across the  
5295 region. I know of examples where the children are able to visit with family members  
5296 occasionally but they exhibit, in their visits, forms of trauma. In addition, there is normative  
5297 separation because the entire system is becoming a boarding school system.

5298 *Panel – So in some cases at least, the guardians or parents are not notified about the*  
5299 *location of the children?*

5300 DB – That is right, the children disappear and the family loses contact.

5301 *Panel – Regarding the teachers in these residential schools, can you give us a sense of*  
5302 *how the teachers are recruited and whether they can be likened to the recruitments of*  
5303 *minor functionaries who don't know what they are going to be doing as you mentioned*  
5304 *earlier?*

5305 DB – I have seen thousands of advertisements for teachers, these are publicly available.  
5306 They typically look for native Chinese speakers, with clean political background,  
5307 resoluteness in the fight against extremism and terrorism, etc. So, in some sense they do  
5308 know that they're engaging in part of the war against terror, which is what the camp  
5309 system is framed as being a part of. My sense is that they often do not know what they  
5310 are getting into when they are sent. The salaries are relatively high, and there are terms  
5311 in the contracts preventing people from leaving early if they are dissatisfied with the  
5312 employment. In that way the state brings people in and doesn't let them leave easily.

5313 *Counsel – Do you have any knowledge of the different experiences of, for example a boy*  
5314 *child and a girl child in these institutions? Do you know of any examples of sexual abuses*  
5315 *towards girls in these institutions?*

5316 DB – I do not have enough evidence to speak of the gender components of this. It is  
5317 possible. The deeper concern is probably neglect, children being crowded, held in  
5318 inadequate structures, with inadequate care, etc. There is potential for sexual violence  
5319 but I have no evidence pointing to it.

5320 *Counsel – Do you know of any occasion where party officials have either visited these*  
5321 *schools or spoken about them?*

5322 DB – Yes, there are numerous documents you can find that speak to the love and care  
5323 provided in these “kindness centres,” which is how they are referred to. There are official  
5324 visits, but the presentation is quite a bit different from what I have heard from witness  
5325 statements, so I would see these visits as staged.

5326 *Counsel – Regarding the “Becoming Family” program, what evidence do you have that*  
5327 *these visits are not entirely innocuous and friendly?*

5328 DB – The manuals provided to the “relatives” speak explicitly about the goals, which are  
5329 surveillance-oriented. It provides guidance like: first creating some conversation before  
5330 starting to interrogate, or befriending the children because they’ll be honest, etc. It talks  
5331 about what you should be looking for in your inspection. There is evidence pointing to the  
5332 testing of people’s willingness to participate in secular or non-religious practices, like  
5333 drinking and smoking. There are forms of elimination and replacement of Uyghur cultural  
5334 traditions and practices inside the home. For instance, the relatives will bring new  
5335 equipment to modernise the home. I interviewed a “relative” who said “We don’t know  
5336 why they are not using the new washing machine we gave them, they just put it in the  
5337 corner.” So, there is a real disconnect at times, from the “relative’s” viewpoint of being  
5338 benevolent, giving gifts to these people, and the way it is received. The families are often  
5339 under a lot of pressure and have relatives detained. Some of the coercion is explicit but  
5340 some is implicit.

5341 *Counsel – Do you know who bears the cost of the visits? Who underwrites the cost of*  
5342 *living together, travelling together, etc.?*

5343 DB – The relatives are often formally regarded as volunteers from certain organisations,  
5344 like civil ministries, companies, etc. These companies bear at least a portion of the cost,  
5345 it is not entirely clear where the money comes from, but it is not much. The relatives are  
5346 supposed to bring gifts of 200 Yuan or so, for the host. In some cases they bring some  
5347 daily necessities, that are supposed to supplement their income, because of their lack of  
5348 income due to one of them being detained in a camp for example. It seems the funding  
5349 comes from the companies or organisations that these relatives are coming from.

5350 *Counsel – Regarding marriages between Han men and Uyghur women, can you tell us,*  
5351 *historically, what the proportions of these marriages have been? And when, and how that*  
5352 *has changed?*

5353 DB – Historically, Uyghurs have not married Han men to a large extent at all. I would say  
5354 it is probably less than one percent. That is due to religious difference, and social pressure  
5355 from both communities. We are seeing a dramatic increase in these marriages now and  
5356 it points to a new dynamic that is coming from this campaign.

5357 *Counsel – How do we know these marriages are not the result of women exercising their*  
5358 *personal preference or choice?*

5359 DB – The women could be exercising their freedom, for example to protect themselves.  
5360 From interviews, my sense is that this is often not the case, they seem to try not to interact  
5361 with Han men out of fear of being forced to marry them. It appears to be coercive in many  
5362 cases. Also, from the perspective of Han men, there is a power being exercised, like when  
5363 they say “if you are interested in Uyghur girls, come to Xinjiang because you can marry  
5364 them now.” There are also advertisements that speak to matching Han men to Uyghur  
5365 women, etc.

5366 *Counsel – If there is an incentive, is it also possible that there could be any suggestions*  
5367 *of sex tourism into the region in order to access Uyghur women?*

5368 DB – That is a potential. I don’t know if it tourism as much as it is an additional incentive  
5369 to come. People put in these positions are not tourists but rather volunteers, or working  
5370 as “relatives”, or they are government workers in the camp system. This is more about a  
5371 government’s settlement policy that is bringing people into the region.

5372 *Counsel – Has it ever been reported that a Uyghur male married a Han Chinese woman?*

5373 DB – That has happened at times, and typically it is Uyghur men working in the police or  
5374 camp system, but it is quite rare. I would say 95% or 98% of marriages are between  
5375 Uyghur women and Han men.