



August 2022



“LIKE WE WERE ENEMIES IN A WAR”

China’s Mass Internment, Torture and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang.

Since 2017, the government of China has carried out massive and systematic abuses against Muslims living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). From late 2019 to mid 2021, Amnesty International has been investigating these abuses. Amnesty has published a report based on new first-hand testimonies gathered from former detainees of the internment camps and other people who were present in Xinjiang after 2017, as well as from an analysis of satellite imagery and data. The report provides the most comprehensive account ever of life inside the internment camps.

Read the report here:
<https://xinjiang.amnesty.org>

Urgent Action: Missing and Arbitrarily Detained in Xinjiang

Forty Eight individuals from predominantly Muslim ethnic groups have been allegedly interned in camps or sentenced without a fair trial and sent to prison in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). They have been included in the Free Xinjiang Detainees campaign bringing the total to 120 individuals. These cases are representative of the perhaps 1 million or more men and women estimated to have been detained in the region since 2017. The Chinese government has knowingly and purposefully targeted mostly Uyghurs, Kazakhs and those from other predominantly Muslim ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang, including by conducting a campaign of mass detention and torture and other ill-treatment. The Chinese authorities must immediately release all people arbitrarily detained in internment camps and in prisons in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in China. More than half of the region’s population of 22 million people belong to mostly Turkic and predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, including Uyghurs (around 11.3 million), Kazakhs (around 1.6 million) and other populations whose languages, cultures and ways of life vary distinctly from those of the Han who are the majority in “interior” China.

Since 2017, under the guise of a campaign against “terrorism” and “religious extremism”, the government of China has carried out massive and systematic abuses against Muslims living in Xinjiang. It is estimated that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained in internment camps throughout Xinjiang since 2017.

The report “Like We Were Enemies in a War”: China’s Mass Internment, Torture, and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang is the most comprehensive account to date of the crushing repression faced by Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The evidence Amnesty International has gathered provides a factual basis for the conclusion that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture, and persecution.

The Chinese authorities had denied the existence of internment camps until October 2018, when they began describing them as voluntary, free “vocational training” centres. China’s explanation, however, fails to account for the numerous reports of beatings, food deprivation and solitary confinement that have been collected from former detainees.

In 2019 the Chinese government claimed that they had closed the camps but did not provide any proof or unfettered access to journalists, human rights investigators, and diplomats. Instead, the Chinese government has made efforts to silence criticism by inviting delegations from different countries to visit Xinjiang for carefully orchestrated and closely monitored tours. The latest example is the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ visit to China in May 2022.

As one of the people whose relatives are in arbitrary detention said to Amnesty: “they [Chinese authorities] want to show the happy

Uyghur, the dancing Uyghur. I think the [UN] investigation group they have to do their best to investigate the real thing...the real situation.”

Amnesty International launched the international campaign Free Xinjiang Detainees, and in less than four months collected more than 320,000 signatures on a petition calling for the closure of the internment camps and the release of everyone arbitrarily detained in internment camps and in prison in Xinjiang.

The government of China must immediately close all the remaining internment camps and release all persons held in internment camps or other detention facilities – including prisons – in Xinjiang, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognized offence.

Amnesty International is also calling on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to release her long-awaited report on Xinjiang and to publicly acknowledge the scale and severity of human rights violations in Xinjiang before her term concludes in August 2022.

Last but not least, the Human Rights Council must establish an independent international mechanism to investigate crimes under international law in Xinjiang, with a view to ensuring accountability, including through the identification of perpetrators.

Sample Letter

Dear President Xi Jinping:

I am distressed to learn that 120 people from predominantly Muslim ethnic groups have been allegedly interned in camps or sentenced without a fair trial and sent to prison in Xinjiang. These cases are representative of the perhaps 1 million or more men and women estimated to have been detained by the Chinese government in Xinjiang since 2017.

Based on the evidence collected by Amnesty International in the report “Like We Were Enemies in a War”, the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture and persecution in Xinjiang. Lawful activities many of us take for granted such as living, travelling, studying abroad, communicating with people abroad, reciting the Qur’an, or wearing religious clothing can be considered a reason to be sent to an internment camp or a prison, where detainees are subjected to a relentless forced indoctrination campaign, physical and psychological torture and other forms of ill-treatment.



Family members living overseas are desperate to get in touch with their loved ones, many of whom they have not heard from in years. Further to their desperation is the fact that, without any access to a lawyer of their choice, the detained individuals are at even further risk of torture or ill-treatment.

I therefore urge you to:

- Immediately release all people detained in internment camps and in prisons in Xinjiang, unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognized offence.*
- Pending their release, disclose their whereabouts, allow them access to their family and a lawyer of their choice, and ensure they are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.*

Yours sincerely,

Take Action

Write an Appeal in your own words or use the model letter.

President of the People’s Republic of China

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Please take action as soon as possible until September 23rd, 2022

AIUSA Group 48

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Israel/OPT: End solitary confinement of Palestinian prisoner jailed as a child

August 3, 2022 Responding to today's decision by the Israeli Prison Service to renew the solitary confinement of Ahmad Manasra, a Palestinian prisoner who has developed serious mental health problems since his arrest as a child seven years ago, Heba Morayef, Amnesty International's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said:

"It is outrageous that the Israeli authorities have renewed Ahmad Manasra's spell in solitary confinement. Continuing to detain Ahmad Manasra in such inhumane conditions is a callous act of injustice. Ahmad has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and is severely depressed.

"Ahmad Manasra was just 13 years old when he was arrested. The decision to detain him should always have been a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time. Now, he is said to be a shadow of his former self and has threatened to take his own life. The Israeli authorities must immediately revoke their decision to renew his solitary confinement, and urgently release him from detention."

On Wednesday the Israeli Prison Service rejected a request to move Manasra out of solitary confinement at Eshel prison. There will be a further hearing regarding his solitary conditions at Beersheba District Court on 16 August. His lawyer Khaled Zabarqa told Amnesty International: "He is in danger for his life, actual danger, and the repeated extensions of his solitary confinement are destroying him."

Background

Manasra has been held in prolonged solitary confinement since November 2021, aside from a two month stay in hospital, after Israeli authorities claimed he is a danger to other prisoners. This is in breach of the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Manasra was arrested in October 2015 over the stabbing of two Israelis in Pisgat Zeev, an illegal Israeli settlement in occupied East Jerusalem. He was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to nine years and five months in prison despite being only 13 years old at the time of his arrest and the court finding that he did not take part in the stabbings. He was also questioned with no lawyer or a parent present and subjected to alleged torture or other ill-treatment during the interrogation. Amnesty International is not aware of any investigations into the conduct of security officers.

A request from Manasra's family calling for his early release was rejected, even though he has already served two-thirds of his sentence. Under Israeli law, those convicted of murder, rape and child abuse are eligible for their sentences to be commuted by a third. Prosecutors say he is ineligible for early release because he was convicted of "terrorist acts"—under a law enacted after he was first detained.

Urgent Action: Tanzania Stop Violent Forced Eviction of the Maasai

NAME AND PRONOUN: Members of the Maasai community in Loliondo

Loliondo is a division in Tanzania's northern Ngorongoro district, in the Arusha region. It borders Serengeti National Park to the west, Ngorongoro Conservation Area to the south, and Kenya to the north. More than 70,000 Indigenous Maasai people are at risk of being displaced from their ancestral grazing lands to make way for a tourism operation. People are being evicted from their communal land as demarcation is ongoing despite a pending case at the East Africa Court of Justice. In 1992 the Tanzanian government leased the whole of the Loliondo division as a hunting block to a company from the United Arab Emirates.

The recent security forces operation is the fourth attempt to evict the Indigenous Maasai people who are pastoralists from their grazing site at Loliondo, in a dispute that has lasted more than a decade. Security forces were previously deployed in 2009, 2013 and 2017, when they evicted community members from four villages: Ololosokwan, Oloirien, Kirtalo and Arash. On September 25, 2018, the East African Court of Justice issued orders which included explicit directions that the state ceases from evicting the Maasai Indigenous people until the determination of a case that the community had filed against the state was completed. Nearly two weeks after the demarcation operation had already begun and the security forces were deployed to Loliondo, the court issued a notice of adjournment and postponed the delivery of its judgment to the September 2022 session.

The arrested persons include: Molongo Daniel Paschal, Albert Kiseya Selembo, Simeli Parmwati, Lekayoko Parmwati, Sapati Parmwati Sirikoti, Ingoi Olkedenyi Kanjwel, Sangau Morongeti Ngiminiso, Morijoi Ngoisa Parmati, Morongeti Meeki Masako, Kamabatai Lulu, Moloimeti Yohana Saing'EU, Ndirango Senge Laisier, Joel Clemes Lessonu, Simon Naiam Orosikiria, Damiani Rago Laiza, Mathew Kuras Njausi, Taleng'o Twambei Leshoko, Kijoolu Kakenya Olojiloji, Shengena Joseph Killel, Kelvin Shaso Nairoti, Lekerenga, Fred Victor, Wilson Tiuwa Kilong, James Memusi Taki and 5 others.

More than 70,000 Indigenous Maasai people are at risk of being evicted from their ancestral grazing lands to make way for a tourism operation after a paramili-

tary group arrived on June 7, 2022, in the Maasai town of Loliondo, in Arusha Region of Northern Tanzania, to implement the authorities' plans to seize the ancestral and registered land of the Maasai people. On June 9, 2022, community members began to protest the demarcation but were met with force by security officers, who used tear gas and firearms against the protestors. 25 community members were arrested and have since been charged with conspiracy to commit the murder of a police officer. The authorities must end the security operation in Loliondo, immediately release the arrested persons and suspend any ongoing land acquisition plans.

Sample letter

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about the ongoing security operation in the town of Loliondo, in the Arusha Region of Northern Tanzania, and the arbitrary arrests and detention of 25 members of the Maasai community for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

On June 7, 2022, a security operation consisting of around 700 people, mostly police, park rangers, military and other security forces, arrived at Loliondo to implement the authorities' plans to seize 1500 kilometres squared of the communal land of the Maasai people. On June 9, 2022, soldiers used force to disperse community members in four villages (Ololosokwan, Oloirien, Kirtalo and Arash) who had gathered to protest the demarcation exercise by removing the beacons that the security had placed marking the boundaries of the land that the Maasai lay claim to. According to two eyewitnesses, security forces started shooting at the protesters with firearms and also used tear gas. Many sustained injuries, some bullet wounds.

Before the day of the protest, around 20 members of the Maasai community, some village elders, were arbitrarily arrested; 10 of them as they were meeting to discuss state plans to demarcate the parcel of land. On June 16, 2022, they were falsely charged with the murder of a policeman. They were arrested even before the policeman was killed. The statement of offence has since been amended four times to be conspiracy to murder, while also adding five persons to the list of accused persons.

The demarcation of the Maasai's land happened

contrary to the court orders by the East African Court of Justice. Furthermore, eviction from their ancestral lands in the absence of their free prior and informed consent will violate their human rights and will take away their livelihoods and impact their traditional way of life.

I urge you to suspend the proposals for the development of the Maasai lands until the Maasai community has given their free, prior, and informed consent through a meaningful consultation process and to ensure an effective investigation into the use of force against protesters. I also call on you to order the immediate release of 25 Maasai community members detained for their peaceful participation in the anti-eviction protests and drop the charges against them.

Sincerely,

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.

2. Click [here](#) to let us know the actions you took on Urgent Action 35.22. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

President Suluhu Samia Hassan

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Salutation: Your Excellency,

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Please take action until September 7th, 2022.

Statement on publication of press release on Ukrainian fighting tactics

August 7, 2022 Amnesty International deeply regrets the distress and anger that our press release on the Ukrainian military's fighting tactics has caused. Since Russian's invasion began in February 2022, Amnesty International has been rigorously documenting and reporting on war crimes and violations committed in Ukraine, speaking to hundreds of victims and survivors whose stories illuminate the brutal reality of Russia's war of aggression. We have challenged the world to demonstrate its solidarity with Ukrainians through concrete action, and we will continue to do so.

Amnesty International's priority in this and in any conflict is ensuring that civilians are protected; indeed, this was our sole objective when releasing this latest piece of research. While we fully stand by our findings, we regret the pain caused and wish to clarify a few crucial points.

In our press release, we documented how in all 19 of the towns and villages we visited, we found instances where Ukrainian forces had located themselves right next to where civilians were living, thereby potentially putting them at risk from incoming Russian fire. We made this assessment based on the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL), which require all parties to a conflict to avoid locating, to the maximum extent feasible, military objectives within or near densely populated areas. The laws of war exist in part to protect civilians, and it is for this reason that Amnesty International urges governments to comply with them.

This does not mean that Amnesty International holds Ukrainian forces responsible for violations committed by Russian forces, nor that the Ukrainian military is not taking adequate precautions elsewhere in the country.

We must be very clear: Nothing we documented Ukrainian forces doing in any way justifies Russian violations. Russia alone is responsible for the violations it has committed against Ukrainian civilians. Amnesty's work over the last six months and our multiple briefings and reports on Russia's violations and war crimes reflect their scale and the gravity of their impact on civilians.

Amnesty International wrote to the Ukrainian government detailing our findings on 29 July. In our letter, we included GPS coordinates and other sensi-

tive information about the locations, including schools and hospitals, where we had documented Ukrainian forces basing themselves among civilians. We did not make this information public in our press release due to the security risks it would pose to both Ukrainian forces and to the civilians we interviewed.

Amnesty International is not attempting to give the Ukrainian military detailed instructions regarding how they should operate – but we call on the relevant

authorities to abide by their international humanitarian obligations in full.

Amnesty International's priority will always be ensuring that civilians' lives and human rights are protected during conflict.

The original press release:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/08/ukraine-ukrainian-fighting-tactics-endanger-civilians/>

NYPD Ordered to Hand Over Documents Detailing Surveillance of Black Lives Matter Protests Following Suit

August 1, 2022 The New York Police Department (NYPD) has been ordered to disclose thousands of records of how the force procured and used facial recognition technology against Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters, after the New York Supreme Court ruled in favor of Amnesty International and the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.) on their joint Article 78 lawsuit.

“New Yorkers demanding racial justice have a right to know the full details of NYPD’s use of facial recognition technology during the BLM protests. This ruling recognizes that the NYPD broke the law in withholding this information and is a significant step in holding the NYPD accountable for its use of discriminatory surveillance. It is a damning indictment of the NYPD’s lack of transparency and accountability to the public that it took a lawsuit to achieve this,” said Matt Mahmoudi, Amnesty International’s Researcher on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights.

“A ban on facial recognition for mass surveillance is a much-needed first step towards dismantling racist policing in New York. We all have a right to peacefully protest without fear of surveillance.”

New York Supreme Court Judge, Justice Laurence Love, declared on Friday that the NYPD’s withholding of documents and argument that the volume of information would impart a burden on the police department had been “utterly refuted” by Amnesty International.

Justice Love ordered the NYPD to share 2,700 of documents and emails between March 1, 2020, to September 1, 2020, related to procurement and usage of facial recognition surveillance at the BLM protests, upon resubmission of Amnesty’s original FOIL request. This will enable Amnesty International and S.T.O.P. to thoroughly investigate the NYPD’s pro-

curement and usage of facial recognition technology throughout New York City.

“It was wrong for the NYPD to surveil BLM protesters, and it was wrong to hide the evidence,” said Surveillance Technology Oversight Project Executive Director Albert Fox Cahn.

In September 2020, Amnesty International USA filed a public records request under New York’s Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) to obtain NYPD records on its surveillance of the historic Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020. The request was rejected by the NYPD along with a subsequent appeal. In July 2021, Amnesty International and S.T.O.P., a privacy and civil rights group, announced the lawsuit against the NYPD for refusing to disclose its records.

Facial recognition exacerbates discriminatory policing and prevents the free and safe exercise of peaceful assembly, by acting as a tool of mass surveillance. Black and minority communities are at far greater risk of being targeted.

In February 2022, new research by Amnesty International and partners revealed New Yorkers living in areas at greater risk of stop-and-frisk by police are also more exposed to invasive facial recognition technology. The analysis, part of the global Ban The Scan campaign, showed how the NYPD’s vast surveillance operation particularly affects people already targeted for stop-and-frisk across all five boroughs of New York City. In the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, the research also shows that the higher the proportion of non-white residents, the higher the concentration of facial recognition compatible CCTV cameras.

Amnesty International is calling for a total ban on the use, development, production, sales, and export of FRT for mass surveillance purposes by both states and the private sector.