

November 16, 2020

António Guterres  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
New York, NY 10017

CC:  
Volkan Bozkir  
President of the General Assembly of the United Nations  
New York, NY 10017

Mr. Secretary General:

We write today to urge you to use your authority as Secretary General to take immediate actions to address the growing human rights crisis in Xinjiang. Specifically, we echo calls for you to appoint a Special Envoy or other investigative mechanism and for you to publicly support calls for the UNHRC to hold a special session on the crisis.

As you are intimately aware, millions of Uyghurs and other minorities have been taken from their homes and arbitrarily detained in “re-education centers” where innocent citizens have been reportedly subjected to political indoctrination, torture, rape, and forced injections. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, there are at least 380 identified mass detention facilities—including “re-education camps,” prisons, and other facilities in Xinjiang. Despite claims by the Chinese government of slowed expansion, 61 of these detention facilities show signs of expansion in the past year alone.<sup>1</sup> As reported by The Guardian, a recent Chinese Communist Party white paper openly claims that “an average of 1.29 million workers [...] had gone through ‘vocational training’ every year between 2014 and 2019.”<sup>2</sup>

Victims of the ethnic persecution in Xinjiang have also testified to our respective legislative bodies on widespread government-led efforts to suppress religious identity and expression. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute estimated that approximately 8,500 mosques have been destroyed in Xinjiang since 2017.<sup>3</sup> Further evidence indicates that Uyghur women have been sterilized under threat of punishment, which could include being sent to the camps.

Independent reporting has also confirmed that the Chinese government uses diplomats, officials, and other proxies in our member nations to spy on and track down Uyghurs residing abroad.<sup>4</sup> We

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<sup>1</sup> Buckley, Chris, and Austin Ramzy. “Night Images Reveal Many New Detention Sites in China’s Xinjiang Region.” *The New York Times*, 24 Sept. 2020, [www.nytimes.com/2020/09/24/world/asia/china-muslims-xinjiang-detention.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/24/world/asia/china-muslims-xinjiang-detention.html).

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, Helen. “Clues to Scale of Xinjiang Labour Operation Emerge as China Defends Camps.” *The Guardian*, 18 Sept. 2020, [www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/18/clues-to-scale-of-xinjiang-labour-operation-emerge-as-china-defends-camps](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/18/clues-to-scale-of-xinjiang-labour-operation-emerge-as-china-defends-camps).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/25/world/asia/xinjiang-china-religious-site.html>

<sup>4</sup> Dou, Eva. “China’s Muslim Crackdown Extends to Those Living Abroad.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 Aug. 2018, [www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-muslim-crackdown-extends-to-those-living-abroad-1535718957](http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-muslim-crackdown-extends-to-those-living-abroad-1535718957).

are also concerned by a consistent pattern of the Chinese government refusing to renew passports or travel documents for Uyghur citizens, forcing them to choose between returning to China and likely detention or facing potential deportation due to invalidated or expired documents.<sup>5</sup> In addition, we are deeply concerned that Chinese authorities seek to silence protected speech of Uyghurs in our own countries by harassing and detaining their family members in China.

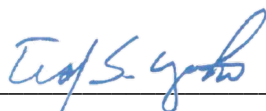
As a result of these widespread and well-documented reports, 50 human rights experts issued a call<sup>6</sup> for key actions by the United Nations. Making note of the alarming attack on fundamental freedoms in Xinjiang and the unwillingness of the Chinese government to allow independent investigations, these experts urged several key actions—including some under your direct authority. Notably, the UN Human Rights experts urged:

1. An urgent debate and/or special session of the UN Human Rights Council
2. The establishment of an independent UN monitoring mechanism on rights in China, which could include a UN Special Rapporteur, an HRC Panel of Experts, or a Special Envoy appointed by the Secretary General

As you know, this call for meaningful action by UN human rights experts was reiterated by over 400 global NGOs.<sup>7</sup> We write to join this call for action. The time for strong and unequivocal condemnation is not over.<sup>8</sup> However, the circumstances today call for you to take unilateral action to the full measure allowed under your authorities to bring to bear the full power of UN investigative and political pressure on the crisis in Xinjiang.

We would welcome a conversation with you on the steps your office will pursue and encourage within the United Nations system to investigate the reported ethnic and religious persecution in Xinjiang.

Sincerely,



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Ted S. Yoho, DVM  
Member of U.S. Congress



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Tom Malinowski  
Member of U.S. Congress

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<sup>5</sup> “Uyghurs in Saudi Arabia Flee to Turkey As Chinese Embassy Ends Passport Renewals.” *Radio Free Asia*, 3 Feb. 2020, [www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/turkey-01312020165513.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/turkey-01312020165513.html).

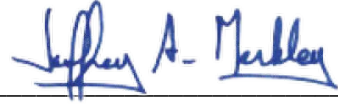
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26006&LangID=E>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/09/global-coalition-urges-un-address-chinas-human-rights-abuses#>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ici.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/China-Letter-Xinjiang-Advocacy-open-letters-2019-ENG.pdf>



Rick Scott  
United States Senator



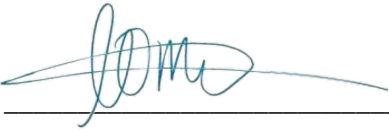
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



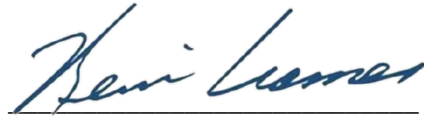
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of U.S. Congress



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



Ilhan Omar  
Member of U.S. Congress



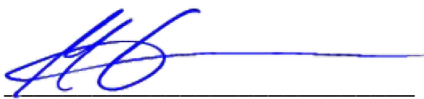
Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



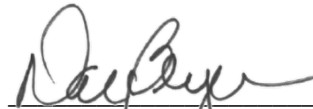
Steve Chabot  
Member of U.S. Congress



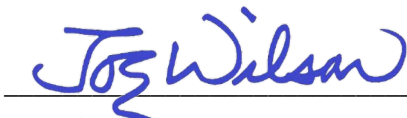
Steve Cohen  
Member of U.S. Congress



Mike Gallagher  
Member of U.S. Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of U.S. Congress



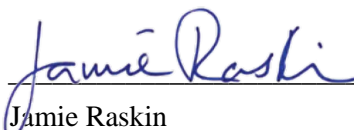
Joe Wilson  
Member of U.S. Congress




James P. McGovern  
Member of U.S. Congress



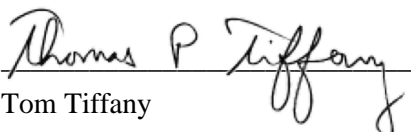
Brian Mast  
Member of U.S. Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of U.S. Congress



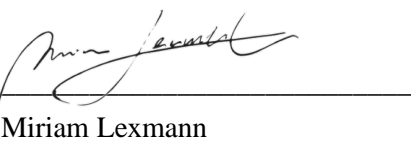
Guy Reschenthaler  
Member of U.S. Congress



Tom Tiffany  
Member of U.S. Congress



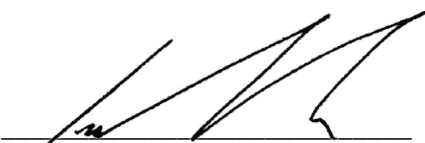
Eric Abetz  
Senator, Australia



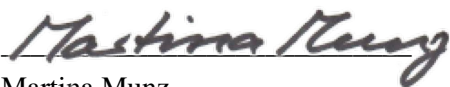
Miriam Lexmann  
MEP, European Union

Sandro Gozi

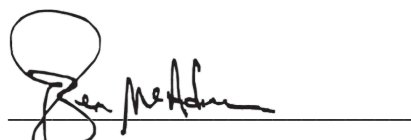
Sandro Gozi  
MEP, European Union



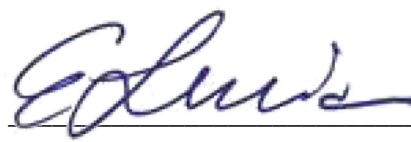
Nicolas Walder  
National Council Member, Switzerland



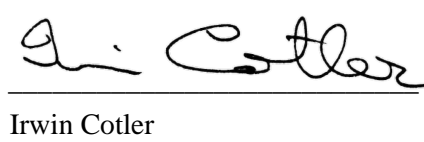
Martina Munz  
National Council Member, Switzerland



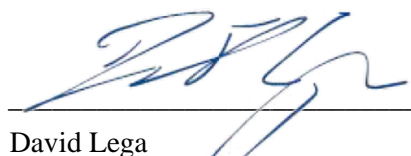
Ben McAdams  
Member of U.S. Congress



Elaine G. Luria  
Member of U.S. Congress



Irwin Cotler  
MP (retired), Canada



David Lega  
MEP, European Union



Fabian Molina  
National Council Member, Switzerland



Franziska Ryser  
National Council Member, Switzerland

Roberto Rampi

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Senator, Italy



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Lucio Malan  
Senator, Italy



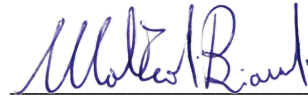
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Paolo Formentini  
MP, Italy

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Frederico Mollicone

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MP, Italy



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Matteo Luigi Bianchi  
MP, Italy

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Enrico Borghi

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MP, Italy