



Introduction

This timeline shows the steps Chinese authorities took to present the internment camp system as 'vocational training centres'. Under international pressure, state spokespersons have announced the camps as "closed" but in fact, the detainees have either been transferred into long-term prisons or have become forced labourers.

2003

To alleviate rural poverty and unemployment, local CCP officials in Xinjiang create programs that transfer rural Uyghurs (<https://xinjiangdocumentation.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/12/Darren-Byler-Spirit-Breaking-Uyghur-Dispossession-Culture-Work-and-Terror-Capitalism-in-a-Chinese-Global-City.pdf>) to perform agricultural work throughout the province or in factories throughout Eastern China. The authorities offer "cash incentives" and rely on coercion to recruit participants.

June 2006

CCP authorities launch a policy that targets young and unmarried Uyghur women (http://www.david-kilgour.com/2008/Jun_20_2008_01.htm) for labour transfer. The policy aims to relocate approximately 400,000 women to positions in Eastern China. Those transferred to these jobs report inconsistent wages, cultural discrimination, and restriction of movement, and some attempt to return home.

2010

Labour policies that began relocating Uyghurs in 2003 continue. By 2010, one county in Kashgar prefecture has witnessed approximately 21 percent of its population (<https://xinjiangdocumentation.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/12/Darren-Byler-Spirit-Breaking-Uyghur-Dispossession-Culture-Work-and-Terror-Capitalism-in-a-Chinese-Global-City.pdf>) transferred to positions away from their villages. Other counties throughout the province see a similar percentage of their populations relocated.

April 2010 – August 2016

Zhang Chunxian

(<https://www.twreporter.org/a/xinjiang-re-education-camps-history>), becomes Party Secretary of Xinjiang and adopts an approach that combines employment and economic policies with a concerted effort to combat terrorism and violence. Zhang holds the position until 2016.

2014

In a report published by the Xinhua News Agency (<https://archive.is/gr1Hp#selection-723.1-723.26>), 2014 marks the beginning of increased Xinjiang government efforts to satisfy the growing demands of the cotton industry by transferring surplus labourers throughout the province. Over the course of five years, the article claims, authorities have dispatched over 350,000 cadres to rural communities to oversee this kind of “poverty alleviation” (群众脱贫) work

January 2017

The Human Resources and Social Security Department of Xinjiang announce a Three Year Plan for the transfer of 100,000 workers (<http://archive.ph/qBXmu>) to jobs throughout Eastern China. In the same year, 1,259,000 people received vocational training in preparation for the policy. Moreover, approximately 40,000 jobs will also be transferred throughout southern Xinjiang.

April 2017

Development of internment camp network in Xinjiang begins. Approximately 1.8 million people (<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/transfers-03192020163257.html>) are believed to have been held in the vast network of camps.

August 2018

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Officials **deny**

the existence

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200913195042/http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1115202.shtml>)

of internment camps, or alternatively **justify them**

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200307015258/http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1115382.shtml>)

as poverty alleviation and stability maintenance efforts. ▶

October 2018

Beijing recasts the internment camps as a form of “**aid and education**” ([https://www.ft.com/content/721192f4-a1fa-](https://www.ft.com/content/721192f4-a1fa-11e8-85da-eeb7a9ce36e4)

◀ [11e8-85da-eeb7a9ce36e4](https://www.ft.com/content/721192f4-a1fa-11e8-85da-eeb7a9ce36e4)).”

December 2018–Late 2019

Under increasing international pressure, authorities begin

“**releasing**

([https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/18/detainees-are-](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/18/detainees-are-trickling-out-of-xinjiangs-camps/)

[trickling-out-of-xinjiangs-camps/](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/18/detainees-are-trickling-out-of-xinjiangs-camps/))” select prisoners into

house arrest. ▶

July 2019

XUAR officials announce that its vocational and educational centres are “**closed**

([https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/world/asia/china-](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/world/asia/china-xinjiang-muslim-detention.html)

[xinjiang-muslim-detention.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/world/asia/china-xinjiang-muslim-detention.html))” and the “re-education

trainees” **have graduated**

([https://web.archive.org/web/20201014212531/http://www.xinhuanet.com/](https://web.archive.org/web/20201014212531/http://www.xinhuanet.com/12/09/c_138617314.htm)

◀ [12/09/c_138617314.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20201014212531/http://www.xinhuanet.com/12/09/c_138617314.htm)).”

End of 2018–2019

To fend off international condemnation, Chinese authorities

transfer **camp detainees to prisons**

([https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-](https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-by-gene-a-bunin/)

[prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-](https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-by-gene-a-bunin/)

[by-gene-a-bunin/](https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-by-gene-a-bunin/)) after handing them long sentences. ▶

From 2017–2019

Muslim minorities are transferred into factories within

Xinjiang and other Inner China provinces. Between 2017

and 2019, an estimated 80,000 Uyghurs have been

transferred out of Xinjiang and assigned to factories

(<https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>) across

China under a central government policy known as Xinjiang

◀ Aid (援疆).

March 2020

The labour transfer

(<https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-by-gene-a-bunin/>) of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities continue within Western China as the government proclaims that there are “no new cases of COVID-19.”

July 2020

New evidence uncovered by the **New York Times** (**(<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000007226041/china-coronavirus-masks-ughur-labor-ppe.html>)**) reveals that Uyghur labourers, many who are interned forcibly, are involved in making personal protective equipment that are shipped all around the world.

September 2020

China's State Council Information Office released a white paper entitled **Employment and Labor Rights in Xinjiang**. This paper demonstrates the increased presence of labourers and the scale of vocational training centers in Xinjiang.

September 2020

At the Third Central Xinjiang Work Forum, **Xi Jinping reaffirmed the correctness of the policies** (**(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201014212817/http%3A%2F%2Fcpc.people.com.cn%2Fcontent%2F5092922.html>)**) that China's leadership has been implementing in Xinjiang to ensure social stability and long-term peace. The current policy recommendations include the continuation of consolidating unity among all of China's ethnic groups, making the form of Islam practiced by Xinjiang's Muslims more Chinese, improving people's livelihoods, maintaining the financial and psychological well-being of cadres, and promoting the region's economic development as a critical point in the Belt and Road Initiative.

September 2020

A report from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute finds **the creation or expansion of over 380 detention centres** (**(<https://xjdp.aspi.org.au/explainers/exploring-xinjiangs-detention-facilities/>)**) in Xinjiang since 2017. This equates to “**at least one new or expanded detention facility for every 37,000 people of non-Han**” (**(https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/24/china-imprisoning-ughurs-satellite-images-xinjiang?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)**) descent.

June 2022

On June 21, 2022, the U.S. Department of State began to **implement its ban on goods produced using forced Uyghur labour in Xinjiang** (<https://www.state.gov/implementation-of-the-uyghur-forced-labor-prevention-act/>) under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's announcement also included measures such as **visa restrictions, sanctions, and export controls** (<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/law-banning-goods-produced-uyghur-162432667.html>).

References:

- Anthony J. Blinken. "Implementation of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act" (<https://www.state.gov/implementation-of-the-uyghur-forced-labor-prevention-act/>). U.S. Department of State. 21 June 2022.
- Darren Byler, "Spirit Breaking: Uyghur Dispossession, Culture Work and Terror Capitalism in a Chinese Global City" (<https://xinjiangdocumentation.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/12/Darren-Byler-Spirit-Breaking-Uyghur-Dispossession-Culture-Work-and-Terror-Capitalism-in-a-Chinese-Global-City.pdf>). Phd diss. University of Washington, 2018.
- Gene Bunin, "Detainees Are Trickling Out of Xinjiang's Camps," (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/18/detainees-are-trickling-out-of-xinjiangs-camps/>). *Foreign Policy*, 18 January 2019.
- Gene Bunin, "From camps to prisons: Xinjiang's next great human rights catastrophe" (<https://livingotherwise.com/2019/10/05/from-camps-to-prisons-xinjiangs-next-great-human-rights-catastrophe-by-gene-a-bunin/>), (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/18/detainees-are-trickling-out-of-xinjiangs-camps/>). *Art of Life in Chinese Central Asia*, 5 October 2019.
- "CHINA: Transfer of 400,000 young Uyghur women into Eastern China" (http://www.david-kilgour.com/2008/Jun_20_2008_01.htm). *Uyghur Human Rights Project*, 19 June 2008.
- Chris Buckley and Steven Lee Myers, "China Said It Closed Muslim Detention Camps. There's Reason to Doubt That," (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/world/asia/china-xinjiang-muslim-detention.html>). *The New York Times*, 9 August 2019.
- Emily Feng, "China recasts Uighur internment policy as 'vocational education," (<https://www.ft.com/content/721192f4-a1fa-11e8-85da-eeb7a9ce36e4>). *Financial Times*, 15 October 2018.
- "Full transcript: Interview with Xinjiang government chief on counterterrorism, vocational education and training in Xinjiang," (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-10/16/c_137535821.htm). *Xinhuanet*, 16 October 2018.
- Jared Gans. "Law banning goods produced by Uyghur forced labor takes effect" (<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/law-banning-goods-produced-uyghur-162432667.html>). *Yahoo! Finance*. 21 June 2022.
- Shohret Hoshur, "Xinjiang County Sends Uyghur Camp Detainees to Prison, Interior of China," (<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/transfers-03192020163257.html>). *Radio Free Asia*, 19 March 2020.
- Liu Xin, "Xinjiang policies justified," (<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1115202.shtml>). *Global Times*, 13 August 2018.
- Liu Xin, "Counter-terror effort a must," (<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1115382.shtml>). *Radio Free Asia*, 19 March 2020.
- Austin Ramzy, "Xinjiang Returns to Work, but Coronavirus Worries Linger in China" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/asia/china-coronavirus-xinjiang.html>). *The New York Times*, 30 March 2020.
- "Trainees in Xinjiang education, training program have all graduated: official," (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/09/c_138617314.htm). *Xinhuanet*, 9 December 2019.

Xiao Mui et al., “[Wearing a Mask? It May Come From China's Controversial Labor Program](https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000007226041/china-coronavirus-masks-uyghur-labor-ppe.html) (https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000007226041/china-coronavirus-masks-uyghur-labor-ppe.html),” *The New York Times*, 19 July 2020.

Vicky Xiuzhong Xu et al., “[Uyghurs for sale](https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale) (https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale),” Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 1 March 2020.

Nathan Ruser, “[There is now more evidence than ever that China is imprisoning Uyghurs](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/24/china-imprisoning-uyghurs-satellite-images-xinjiang?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other) (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/24/china-imprisoning-uyghurs-satellite-images-xinjiang?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other),” *The Guardian*, 24 September 2020.

Nathan Ruser, “[Exploring Xinjiang's detention system](https://xjdp.aspi.org.au/explainers/exploring-xinjiangs-detention-facilities/) (https://xjdp.aspi.org.au/explainers/exploring-xinjiangs-detention-facilities/),” Australian Strategic Policy Institute, September 2020.

《[记者手记：在我国棉花主产区作别行将离身的内地拾花工](https://archive.is/qr1Hp#selection-723.1-723.26) (https://archive.is/qr1Hp#selection-723.1-723.26)》。新华网, November 18, 2018.

《[新疆聚焦22个深度贫困县\(市\)计划3年转移就业10万人](http://archive.ph/qBXmu) (http://archive.ph/qBXmu)》。中华人民共和国中央人民政府, 10 January 2018.


《[再教育營,為何誕生?新疆維穩政策10年大事記: 一張圖了解中國對新疆的控制軌跡](https://www.twreporter.org/a/xinjiang-re-education-camps-history) (https://www.twreporter.org/a/xinjiang-re-education-camps-history)》。報導者, 25 July 2019.

Institute of Asian Research, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs

1855, C.K. Choi Building, West Mall

West Mall

Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1

 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

.

Find us on



(https://twitter.com/ProjectXinjiang)

(javascript:;)_ (javascript:;)_ (javascript:;)