



Introduction

This timeline gives an overview of major events since the turn of the century, that preceded the establishment of “re-education camps” in Xinjiang. Human rights watchdogs have categorized these camps as mass prisons and internment camps.

29 November 2001

Two months after the September 11th attacks on the United States, the PRC Government **releases a document** (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201014211618/https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/c>) titled “Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by ‘Eastern Turkistan’ Organizations and their ties with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.”

September 2002

The US and UN recognize East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a “terrorist organization,” **subjecting it to international sanctions** (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14672715.2018.1454111?journalCode=rcra20>).

2008

Beijing hosts the 2008 Summer Olympics. **1,300 Uyghurs are arrested** (<https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2018.1454111>) for “state security crimes,” including charges of terrorism, substantially more than in previous years.

5 July 2009

The Ürümqi Riots which first started off as protests, escalate into riots that kill over 197 and injure over 1721 according to official government figures. More than 1,000 people are arrested, mosques are temporarily closed with internet and telephone communications **severely restricted** (<https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2018.1454111>). ▶

2010

In the year after the Ürümqi riots, **XUAR officials report** (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/25/china-urumqi-under-full-surveillance>), that "40,000 high-definition surveillance cameras with riot-proof protective shells had been installed throughout the region." ◀

30 April 2013

New government policy **mandates all SIM card buyers** (<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/register-04302013134824.html>), to provide proof of identity and to register the card using their own name ▶

26 June 2013

A series of **stabbing attacks** (<https://thediplomat.com/2013/08/xinjiang-reassessing-the-recent-violence/>) in the city of Lukqun kill 35. Chinese and international sources hold different perspectives on the attacks, as Chinese sources state the attacks were connected with other radical organizations, while international sources state that the attacks are due to unrest ◀ due to systematic injustice in China.

February 2014

In February the *fanghuiju* (访惠聚) campaign is announced.

The initial plan (https://www.prcleader.org/leibold?fbclid=IwAR38OsGVP3ZYJwSUXy80gct52ywNid3RZjl0Q3BhOfSDx_OruGW-2K7L3mA) involves rotating 200,000 mid-level party cadres into rural villages over the following three years. ▶

1 March 2014

A major knife attack

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-26404566>) takes place inside the mainway railway station of Kunming in Yunnan Province, killing 31 and injuring over 140 more. ◀

April-May 2014

A bombing and knife attack

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27225308>) in the Xinjiang capital of Ürümqi on 30 April 2014 leaves three people dead and 79 others injured. Another attack (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/24/world/asia/residents-try-to-move-on-after-terrorist-attack-in-china.html>) occurs on 22 May 2014, where colliding SUVs with explosives crash into each other, killing 43 and wounding more than 90. Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang promise to initiate a “strike-first” strategy against the perpetrators. ▶

1 May 2014

The campaign of re-education begins when the Xinjiang regional government demands that Uyghur migrants in Ürümqi return to their hometowns to obtain a new ID card (<https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2019.1586348>). The introduction of the People's Convenience Card or *bianminka* (便民卡) from mid-2014 effectively restricts the mobility (<https://thediplomat.com/2017/12/uyghur-biodata-collection-in-china/>) of most rural-born Uyghur migrants, who are not eligible for the card. ◀

29 January 2015

New government policy mandates even tighter measures on telecommunications and electronic devices, where all vendors of mobile phones, computers and related electronic products must implement a real-name registration system (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/30/china-to-force-buyers-of-computers-and-phones-in-xinjiang->

to-register-names) for sales information. The same regulations also apply for second-hand products. ▶

1 February 2015

XUAR authorities begin outlawing Islamic veils (<https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/why-china-banning-islamic-veils>) in all public spaces in the capital of Ürümqi. Officials justify this decision as part of an effort to defeat 'Islamic extremism.' ◀

29 May 2015

World Bank approves funding (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/27/the-world-bank-was-warned-about-funding-repression-in-xinjiang/>) for the Xinjiang Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project. The project name is similar to the one used by the Chinese government for detention centres. ▶

2016

The Chinese government begins collecting biometric data (<https://thediplomat.com/2017/12/uyghur-biodata-collection-in-china/>), such as DNA, voice recordings, and facial scans from the entire population of Xinjiang to track daily activities on WeChat through messages, calls, photos, and videos. ◀

1 January 2016

Alongside periodic shutdowns of social media platforms, the Chinese government increases the frequency (<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/police-increase-checks-of-smartphone-users-in-xinjiang-01082016133532.html>) of smartphone checks and other devices for content related to extremism. ▶

September 2016

The Chinese government begins advertising over 30,000 policing positions

(<https://jamestown.org/program/xinjiangs-rapidly-evolving-security-state/>) in Xinjiang in an effort to increase surveillance capabilities in the region. A majority of the new hires are associated with convenience police stations or *bianmin jing wu zhan* (便民警务站).

14 February 2017

Five civilians are killed in a **knife attack** (https://www.prcleader.org/leibold?fbclid=IwAR38OsGVP3ZYJwSUXy80gct52ywNid3RZjl0Q3BhOfSDx_OruG2K7L3mA) by three Uyghur perpetrators.

27 February 2017

Chen Quanguo tells a rally of 10,000 security personnel in Ürümqi to, “**load one's gun and unsheathe one's sword** (<https://www.prcleader.org/leibold>).”

4 March 2017

XUAR Department of Justice issues a directive ordering the **establishment of transformation centres** (https://www.prcleader.org/leibold?fbclid=IwAR38OsGVP3ZYJwSUXy80gct52ywNid3RZjl0Q3BhOfSDx_OruG2K7L3mA) throughout southern Xinjiang.

July 2017

Following the discontinuation of the *bianminka* in May 2016, Xinjiang authorities under Chen Quanguo introduce even more invasive security measures by ordering the construction of over 7,500 convenience police stations.

Authorities state (https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/chinas-surveillance-laboratory) that the “zero-distance proximity” of stations ensure 24-hour surveillance and swift responses in the event of emergencies.

13 August 2018

Hu Lianhe, China's leading counter-terror expert, **confirms the existence** (https://www.prcleader.org/leibold?fbclid=IwAR38OsGVP3ZYJwSUXy80gct52ywNid3RZjl0Q3BhOfSDx_OruG2K7L3mA) of the internment program at the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

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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

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