

## Open Letter to OIC

In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

We, the undersigned organizations, express our deep concern over China's unprecedented persecution of Uyghur and other Turkic groups and the silence of Muslim-majority nations to the crimes against humanity and genocide in the Uyghur homeland.

Last March, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers adopted a [resolution](#) that "commends the efforts of the People's Republic of China in providing care to its Muslim citizens; and looks forward to further cooperation between the OIC and the People's Republic of China." We are appalled by OIC's commendation of China on its treatment of Muslims despite overwhelming evidence of its inhumane treatment of Uyghurs and other ethnic Turkics.

By no means are the Uyghurs and other Turkic groups treated with "care" by the Chinese government. There is instead a growing [body of evidence](#)—including [witness accounts](#), [satellite imagery](#) and [leaked government documents](#)—of the Chinese government's efforts to destroy the Uyghurs' [ethnic](#) and [religious identity](#) through [mass detention](#), [forced labor](#) and [forced sterilization](#) among other [grave human rights abuses](#).

Despite evidence of China's widespread repression of Muslims, just several months after its Council of Foreign Ministers' resolution, more than a dozen OIC states signed a [Chinese government-promoted letter](#) supporting China's policies in the Uyghur homeland. The letter—issued in response to a joint statement by [22 States](#) in the United Nations Human Rights Council expressing concerns about massive rights violations and calling for investigations—applauds China's "remarkable achievements in the field of human rights."

The letter parrots Chinese government propaganda, stating "faced with the grave challenges of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a series of counter-terrorism and de-radicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers." The Chinese government, in legislation and in practice, purposefully conflates extremism and terrorism with quotidian religious practices and expression, and has detained Uyghurs en masse for such expression. The [2017 Regulation on "De-extremification"](#) explicitly criminalises basic tenets of Islam practiced by Uyghurs and other Turkic groups. It is extremely unfortunate that OIC states would condone China for the detention of millions of Muslims in "vocational education and training centers"—euphemisms for mass concentration camps—as counterterrorism measures. Moreover, any claims that China is engaged in counter-terrorism operations are pure propaganda by the Chinese government and debunked by the [United States' government's removal](#) of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement from the list of terrorist organizations. Notably, Chinese authorities were and continue to use the defunct East Turkestan

Islamic Movement, which scholars state such an organization [never existed](#), as their primary basis for their genocide and crimes against the Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims.

As the international body that asserts itself as the “collective voice of the Muslim world” and “endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world,” the OIC has a religious and moral obligation to condemn atrocities, not support them, and to advocate for the rights of Muslims all over the world, including the millions of Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims suffering grave abuses in their own homeland.

Here is a highlight of some of those abuses:

### **Mass arbitrary detention**

At least 1.8 million and as many as 3 million Uyghur and Turkic Muslims have been detained in concentration camps—referred to by Chinese government as “vocational education facilities”—where they are forced to [renounce their faith](#), [demonstrate loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party](#), and face [torture](#) and [other abuses](#) according to reports by [human rights monitors](#) and [international media](#).

### **Forced labor and displacement**

Camp detainees and many young residents of rural communities across the Uyghur homeland have been subject to forced labor. A [report](#) published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) earlier this year estimates that nearly 80,000 Uyghurs were forcibly transferred out of their homeland and into mainland China to work in factories that are part of the supply chains of more than 80 well-known global brands, including Apple, Amazon, Nike, and Volkswagen.

### **Intergenerational family separation**

By the end of 2019, at least [half a million Uyghur children](#) had been separated from their families and placed in state facilities where they, like those in the detention camps, are subject to CCP indoctrination.

### **Destruction of mosques and attack on religious expression**

ASPI have used satellite imagery to estimate that approximately [16,000 mosques](#) have been destroyed or damaged in the Uyghur homeland as a result of the Chinese government's policies. [Important sacred sites](#), including [shrines, cemeteries, and pilgrimage routes](#), have also been demolished since 2017. The destructions compound other efforts to destroy the Uyghur people's religious identity, including a [nearly complete ban on religious expression](#) with [headscarves](#), [sporting of beards](#), [observance of Ramadan](#), [praying](#), and [reading of the Quran](#)—all punishable by detention. Even in their homes, Uyghur families are subject to [surveillance by CCP cadres](#) who live and sleep with them to [monitor their religious and cultural activities](#). The Chinese government has been replacing the minarets of mosques by [Chinese flags](#), [replacing Qurans](#) with

CCP official propaganda books. This is part of the “[sinicization](#)” policy of the Chinese government, with the aim to purge these religious sites from any “foreign” elements.

### **Criminalisation of Religious Practice**

The right to religious education has also been severely curtailed, including parental liberties on education of children. Uyghurs are not permitted to [hold religious gatherings privately](#) in their homes or [instruct their children in the spirit of Islam](#). Parents are [prohibited](#) from choosing Muslim names for their children. Anyone who enters mosques is [carefully monitored](#) through security checkpoints. In addition, imams and other religious leaders are appointed by the state and their teachings are closely [scrutinized](#).

Restrictions on Uyghurs fasting during Ramadan have become [more systematic](#) since 2012. Restaurants are [required to stay open](#), police must monitor homes where the [lights are turned on before dawn](#), students are [forced to eat in front of their teachers](#), and opportunities to attend prayers are [limited](#). In some cases, Uyghurs are [forced](#) to eat pork and drink alcohol during the month of Ramadan.

### **Widespread forced birth control and genocide**

While many human rights monitors and policymakers condemned China’s mass detention and forced labor policies as crimes against humanity, recent reports of mass forced sterilizations, birth control and abortions has help catalyzed serious discussions of China’s unprecedented persecution of the Uyghur people as genocide. [Independent investigations](#) based on Chinese government data suggests a draconian policy to curb the Uyghur population with forced steralization, abortions, and contraception. Between 2015 and 2018, birth rates in Hotan and Kashgar—two of the most dense Uyghur prefectures—[dropped by more than 60 percent](#) while birth rates plunged by [nearly 24 percent](#) last year across the entire Uyghur homeland. In comparison, birth rates declined by 4.2 percent in China.

We strongly urge the OIC and its member states to join the international community in condemning China and demanding accountability for the abuses highlighted in this statement.

### **Specifically, we call on the OIC to:**

- 1) Uphold its the Charter which states, in part that Members will “preserve and promote the lofty Islamic values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice and human dignity” and “to enhance and strengthen the bond of unity and solidarity among the Muslim peoples;”
- 2) Publicly and unequivocally condemn China for its crimes against humanity and genocide of the Uyghur and Turkic Muslims;
- 3) Cease engagement of the Chinese government’s propaganda that is meant to whitewash its human rights violations against Uyghurs;
- 4) Provide refuge and protection for Uyghur refugees; and

- 5) Support UN and other independent international investigative efforts to force China to comply with international human rights obligations;

Muslims are called on to stand for justice—even if it is upon ourselves—and to support those who are oppressed regardless of how rich and mighty their oppressors may be. We urge the OIC to stand firm on these Islamic principles.

*"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both."* -Quran, Surah An-Nisa 4:135

Inquiries and replies should be directed to **Oussama Jammal** of the **United States Council of Muslim Organizations** at [ojammal@uscmo.org](mailto:ojammal@uscmo.org) **Zumretay Arkin** of **World Uyghur Congress** at [zumretay@uyghurcongress.org](mailto:zumretay@uyghurcongress.org) and **Rushan Abbas** of **Campaign for Uyghurs** at [rushan@campaignforuyghurs.org](mailto:rushan@campaignforuyghurs.org)

Letter co-writers

Free Uyghur Now, US Council of Muslim Organizations and Save Uighur by Justice for All

### **Signatories: 140 organizations**

#### **Uyghur Organization (American or international): 27**

1. Alberta Uyghur Association, Canada
2. Australian Uyghur Association, Australia
3. Australian Uyghur Association, Australia
4. Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association, Australia
5. Belfast for Uyghurs and Foundation for Uyghur Freedom, Ireland
6. Campaign for Uyghurs, USA
7. Doğu Türkistan İli Meşrep Uygur Vakfı, Turkey
8. East Turkistan Association of Canada, Canada
9. East Türkistan imigrsnts Assosiation, Turkey
10. Foundation for Uyghur Freedom
11. İsa Yusuf Alptekin Foundation, Turkey
12. Japan Uyghur Association, Japan
13. Justice for Uyghurs, Switzerland
14. Justice4Uyghurs, USA
15. Malaysia4Uyghur, Malaysia
16. QUYB, Kazakhstan
17. SoCal Students for Uyghur Justice, USA

18. Uyghur Academy of Australia, Australia
19. Uyghur Academy, Turkey
20. Uyghur Association of Victoria, Australia
21. Uyghur Forum, Germany
22. Uyghur Human Rights Project, USA
23. Uyghur Projects Foundation, USA
24. Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, Canada
25. Uyghur Transitional Justice Database, Norway
26. Uyghur Academy USA, USA
27. World Uyghur Congress, Germany

### **US Muslim Organizations: 24**

1. American Muslim Bar Association, USA
2. American Muslim Empowerment Network, USA
3. Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), USA
4. Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC), USA
5. Islamic Association of North America (IANA), USA
6. Islamic Association of Sweden, Sweden
7. Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD)
8. Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), USA
9. Islamic Leadership Institute of America, USA
10. Islamic Shura Council of Southern California (ISCSC), USA
11. Islamophobia Studies Center, USA
12. Isuroon, USA
13. Justice for All US
14. Mosque Foundation, USA
15. Muslim American Society MAS, USA
16. Muslim Doctors Association & Allied Health Professionals
17. Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA), USA
18. Muslim Public Affairs Council, USA
19. Muslim Youth for Positive Impact, USA
20. National Muslim Youth Activists, USA
21. New York Majlis Ash-Shura, USA
22. TMC (Ministry of Imam W. Deen Mohammed), USA
23. Yemeni Alliance Committee NY chapter, USA
24. Young Muslims, USA

### **International Muslim Organizations 22**

1. Ashraf Chehata Orthopaedic Surgeon, Australia

2. Australian Malayalee Islamic Association, Australia
3. CAGE, UK
4. Council of European Muslims, Belgium
5. European Muslim Forum, Russia and Belgium
6. Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO), Belgium
7. Global Peace Mission (GPM) Malaysia, Malaysia
8. Islamic Association of Sweden, Sweden
9. International Women's Alliance for Family Institution and Quality Education (WAFIQ), Malaysia
10. International Association for Women's Advocacy and Human Rights Malaysia, Malaysia
11. Islamic Council of Victoria, Australia
12. Islamic Information & Services Foundation, Malaysia
13. Islamic Society of South Australia, Australia
14. Justice for All Canada
15. Kelab Inspirasi Muslimah Cakna Antarabangsa (INSPIRE), Malaysia
16. Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), Malaysia
17. NATRAH, Malaysia
18. Pokolan setia, Malaysia
19. The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Australia
20. The Global Imams Council, Iraq
21. Yaseen Youth Development, UK
22. Yayasan Kasih Tauhid, Shah Alam Selangor, Malaysia

**Student Groups: 77**

1. Amnesty International at Rhodes College, USA
2. Atlanta Ahlul Bayt Student Association, USA
3. Apex High Muslim Student Association, USA
4. Borough of Manhattan Community College Muslim Student Association, USA
5. Brown Muslim Students' Association, USA
6. Burst the Bubble, UK
7. Central Connecticut State University Muslim Student Association, USA
8. Central Washington University Muslim Student Association, USA
9. City College of New York Ahlul Bayt Student Association, USA
10. Colorado State University Muslim Student Association, USA
11. Columbia University Muslim Students Association, USA
12. Dalhousie Muslim Student Association, USA
13. Duke University Muslim Students Association, USA
14. Dulles Muslim Student Association, USA
15. Emory University Muslim Student Association, USA
16. Endield Muslim Student Association, USA

17. Farmington High School Muslim Student Association, USA
18. Foster Muslim Student Association, USA
19. Fregit srl, Italy
20. George Mason University Muslim Student Association, USA
21. Georgetown University Muslim Students Association, USA
22. Georgia State University Muslim Students Association, USA
23. Georgia Tech Muslim Student Association, USA
24. Harvard Islamic Society, USA
25. Illinois Institute of Technology Muslim Student Association, USA
26. Indonesian Muslim Society, Australia
27. Islam on Campus, USA
28. Islamic Society of Boston University, USA
29. John Jay Muslim Student Association, USA
30. La Salle University Muslim Student Association, USA
31. Leaders as Workers Institute at University of Maryland, USA
32. Long Island University Muslim Student Association, USA
33. McGill Muslim Students Association, Canada
34. Midwest Muslim United Student Association, USA
35. Model Youth League, Germany
36. Muslim Student Association West, USA
37. National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students, Malaysia
38. New York Law School Muslim Law Students Organization, USA
39. North Central College Muslim Student Association, USA
40. Ontario College Art and Design University Muslim Student Association, Canada
41. Oregon State University Muslim Student Association, USA
42. Palestinian Medical Forum - Student Branch, Palestine
43. Pennstate Abington Muslim Student Association, USA
44. Plano Senior Muslim Student Association, USA
45. Pleasant Grove Muslim Student Association, USA
46. Rhodes College Muslim Students Organization, USA
47. Rutgers University Muslim Public Relations Council, USA
48. St. John's University Muslim Students Association, USA
49. Students for Justice in Palestine City College of New York, USA
50. Temple Muslim Students Association, USA
51. Tufts Muslim Students Association, USA
52. UCLA Muslim Student Association, USA
53. University of California, Berkeley Muslim Student Association, USA
54. University of Cincinnati Muslim Student Association, USA
55. University of Colorado Boulder, Muslim Student Association, USA
56. University of Connecticut, Hartford Muslim Student Association, USA

57. University of Connecticut, Stamford Muslim Student Association, USA
58. University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Muslim Student Association, USA
59. University of Illinois Muslim Student Association, USA
60. University of Manitoba Muslim' Student Association, Canada
61. University of Maryland Muslim Student Association, USA
62. University of Massachusetts, Boston Muslim Student Association, USA
63. University of Nevada, Las Vegas Muslim Student Association, USA
64. University of Ottawa Muslim Student Association, Canada
65. University of Pennsylvania Muslim Student Association, USA
66. University of Rhode Island Muslim Student Association, USA
67. University of San Diego Muslim Student Association, USA
68. University of Toronto, Mississauga Muslim Student Association, Canada
69. University of Toronto, St. George Muslim Student Association, Canada
70. University of Virginia Muslim Student Association, USA
71. University of Washington Tacoma, Muslim Student Association, USA
72. University of Windsor, Muslim Student Association, Canada
73. Washington State Muslim Student Association, USA
74. Wilfrid Laurier University Muslim Student Association, Canada
75. William and Mary Muslim Student Association, USA
76. Xavier University Muslim Student Association, USA
77. Yale University Muslim Student Association, USA