



### Briefing Paper: The question of the Uighur Muslims

For those following the news, this is a story that I am sure will have shocked many of you. The UN, founded in 1945, very soon after the end of the mass extermination of Jews at the hands of Nazi Germany, is now having to deal with another issue of extreme religious prejudice, this time in China against those of the Islamic faith.

The secular Oriental nation has been detaining thousands of Kazakh Muslims in their re-education camps since 2017, with survivors reporting that during their time in incarceration they were tortured, beaten and received unknown injections. China seems keen on clamping down on Islam and its Kazakh neighbours.

China has denied the claims that they have locked up hundreds of thousands of Muslims without trial in Xinjiang, with their government stating that those who attend willingly go to these 'vocational schools' which combat 'terrorism and religious extremism'. Chinese TV reports appear to show these Kazakhs stating 'I have deeply understood my mistakes'. However, a BBC investigation found much evidence to the contrary. Arriving in China, they noted the 'prison-like structures' of these camps and how 'heavily guarded' they were. There appears to be a dress code in these camps, no women were wearing a head-scarf.

Across China, harsh new legal penalties have been introduced to curtail Islamic identity and practice – banning, among other things, long beards and headscarves, the religious instruction of children and even Islamic-sounding names. Ethnic profiling is now commonplace for Uighurs are thousands of pedestrian and vehicle checkpoints. They also face severe travel restrictions, both within Xinjiang and beyond, with an edict forcing residents to surrender all passports to the police for safekeeping.

With various UN charters, not least the Human Rights Charter, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion, one must question the morals behind such 're-education camps'.

Points to consider:

What is your nation's view on the Uighur Muslims?

What is your nation's relation with China?

To what extent is your nation interested in preserving human rights?

If your nation is against this, how will it combat the policy (economic sanctions etc.)?

If your nation is for this, how will it defend the policy in the Human Rights Committee?

How can religious prejudice as a whole be eradicated?

To what extent can the UN meddle in nations' internal affairs?