

(Translated from Chinese)

Receipt is hereby acknowledged of communication No. AL CH N 14/2020 from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Chinese Government should like to reiterate that the questions relating to Xinjiang are in substance a matter of maintaining Chinese national sovereignty, security and unity and of defending the right of the people of all ethnic groups to live and work in peace; it is fundamentally not a question of human rights. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China has adopted a series of measures to counter terrorism and extremism, including the establishment of vocational education and training centres, which has done a great deal to turn the security situation around. For nearly four years now there have been no cases of terrorism in Xinjiang and people of all ethnic groups have enjoyed all their human rights in safety. By the end of 2019, all trainees who took part in the “study three, rid one” training in Xinjiang education and training centres had completed their studies and achieved stable employment, and they were living peaceful lives. The experts of the special procedures have ignored the facts. In their letter they use mistaken titles such as “political education camps” or “re-education camps” and distort and discredit the work to counter terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang. China resolutely opposes and completely rejects this. China urges the relevant experts of the special procedures to abide by the Charter of the United Nations, comply with the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council, act fairly and objectively and refrain from acting as a mouthpiece for anti-China separatist forces, spreading the lies that they fabricate. The experts of the special procedures should immediately correct the misrepresentations in the letter and stop interfering in the internal affairs of China. To some specific questions mentioned in the letter, the Chinese Government should like to reply as follows:

1. In order to improve the level of governance in society and effectively prevent and combat crime, the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China has, in accordance with the law, installed cameras in communal areas such as public places, major roads and thoroughfares and transportation hubs. These measures have improved the sense of public safety and earned general support from all ethnic groups. This measure does not target any specific ethnic group; the monitoring equipment cannot automatically identify or target a specific ethnic group. It is malefactors who are intimidated by it and good people who are protected by it. Certain forces have recently falsely claimed that Xinjiang’s measures to strengthen governance by using modern science and technology are specifically for the monitoring of certain ethnic minorities. This is purely a malicious smear, a pretext used to undermine Xinjiang’s prosperity and stability and interfere in the internal affairs of China. It is common practice in the international community to use modern technology and big data to improve the level of governance.

Regarding citizens’ personal freedom and freedom of communication, Xinjiang, China, in strict accordance with the Constitution, has never restricted the freedom of movement of any ethnic groups. Any persons, of any nationality or religious belief, can move about freely as long as their personal freedom is not restricted because they are suspected of committing a crime. Xinjiang has never restricted the freedom of communication of any ethnic groups. According to the Chinese Constitution, no organization or individual may violate citizens’ freedom of communication for any reason, except for needs related to national security or a criminal investigation, in which case communications are inspected by public security bodies or procuratorial bodies, in accordance with legal procedures. There is no such situation whereby “over 300 individuals belonging to minorities” have been monitored and their personal information and correspondence subjected to surveillance and their movements tracked.



2. China is a country ruled by law. In suppressing illegal and criminal activities, it always adheres to the basic principle whereby the facts serve as the basis and the law is the criterion. Chinese law clearly establishes the various judicial subjects and procedures for the administration of justice. Before the relevant judicial bodies hand down decisions on how to deal with criminals in accordance with the law, they strictly examine the facts of the crimes that have been committed and insist on dealing only with the problems at hand. Any discriminatory practices based on geography, nationality and religion are prohibited.

The affirmation that “Xinjiang arbitrarily locks up, detains, and arrests ethnic minorities without judicial procedures” is a completely unfounded lie. According to the revelations of a journalist who carried out a fair investigation in the United States, many of the astounding lies reported by the Western media about the so-called detention of millions of Uyghurs in Xinjiang emanated from an anti-Chinese non-governmental organization funded by the United States Government, and “the source does not stand up to scrutiny”.

3. It is the long-term, basic policy of China to respect and protect freedom of religious belief. In Xinjiang, it is entirely up to citizens to choose whether they believe in religion or not. No organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in a religion or not, nor may they discriminate against citizens for believing or not believing in a religion. All normal religious activities such as worship, fasting and religious festivals that are carried out by citizens in places of religious practice or in their own homes in accordance with religious customs are organized by religious groups or citizens; they are protected by law and no organization or individual may interfere. Xinjiang has never restricted ethnic customs that are religious in nature such as weddings and funerals. It has never prohibited ethnic minorities from holding traditional funerals.

In order to fully respect and guarantee the freedoms and rights of religious believers, Xinjiang has adopted a series of effective measures, which have been particularly well received by people in the religious community and believers. It has continuously improved the conditions of mosques, which has greatly facilitated worship by believers; the Xinjiang Islamic Qur’anic Study Centre and eight branches were opened to train and ensure that there are Islamic clerics in sufficient numbers and provide for the healthy and orderly inheritance of Islam; it has translated and published the Qur’an, the Essence of the Prayer of Bukhari and other religious classics in four languages, Chinese, Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz, constantly providing more channels for religious believers to acquire religious knowledge. Since 1996, the Government has organized charter flights every year to allow religious believers to go to the hajj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; it has provided medical and translation assistance for pilgrims and ensured other services for the groups carrying out the pilgrimage. So far over 50,000 Muslims have gone to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage. Today, no one who respects the facts would deny that there is freedom of religious belief in Xinjiang. Xinjiang’s policy of respecting and protecting freedom of religious belief has been positively evaluated by the international community, including Muslim countries. In March 2019, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation adopted a resolution commending Xinjiang for its efforts in providing care for the Muslim people. Many foreign tourists who have visited Xinjiang have said that they have seen with their own eyes that people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang live in equality and harmony, that freedom of religious belief is guaranteed and that minority cultures can be seen everywhere; they call for an accurate understanding of Xinjiang.

Some forces have stigmatized Xinjiang’s combating of terrorism and extremism, in accordance with the law, as “depriving ethnic minorities of the right to freedom of religion, and persecuting religious people”. It should be pointed out that the fight against terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang has always been carried out fully on the basis of the legal system and has never targeted any particular ethnic group or religion. Those who have received punishment, in accordance with the law, for violating the law and committing crimes are criminals; under the banner of religion and bearing the garments of religion, they propagate religious extremist thoughts and carry out secessionist and violent terrorist activities. In accordance with the law, Xinjiang strictly punishes illegal and criminal activities that make use of religion, prohibits any organization or individual from using religion to carry out illegal and criminal activities and prohibits any organization or individual from using religion to divide the country, spread religious extremist thoughts, incite ethnic hatred, undermine

national unity, disrupt the social order, or damage the physical and mental health of the people. It is forbidden to use religion to obstruct implementation of the country's administrative, judicial, educational, cultural, marriage, family planning, inheritance and other systems, and it is forbidden to use religion for other activities that endanger national security and interests or jeopardize public interests or the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

4. The vocational education and training centres established, in accordance with the law, in Xinjiang are essentially no different from "community corrections" in the United States, the DDP (Desistance and Disengagement Programme) established by the United Kingdom and the deradicalization centre set up by France, all of which have been useful attempts to actively explore preventive action to counter terrorism and extremism.

The Xinjiang vocational education and training centres are counter-extremism schools and are in no way so-called "political education camps". The Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China has issued a white paper entitled "Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang", which comprehensively describes the actual background, legal basis, content and management of the education and training activity and describes its outstanding results. On 24 August this year, the Chinese-language international channel of China Central Television broadcast a televised documentary film entitled "Lies and Truth - Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang", which presented the actual situation of the vocational education and training work, featuring real stories and actual footage, and reflecting the profound changes brought about by the vocational education and training in the thoughts and lives of the students. Anyone interested in the education and training can watch it online.

What needs to be emphasized again is that Xinjiang has a complete judicial procedure for implementation of the vocational education and training work, which is carried out in strict accordance with the law. The nature and circumstances of the relevant acts are identified in accordance with the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China, the Counter-terrorism Law of the People's Republic of China and the Regulations of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Deradicalization, and other laws and regulations. There are three types of students entering the education and training centres. The first group consists of those who have been incited, coerced or compelled to participate in terrorist or extremist activities or whose participation in terrorist or extremist activities has been minor and whose actions do not constitute crimes. The second type consists of persons who have been incited, coerced or compelled to participate in terrorist or extremist activities that have posed an actual danger but have not caused any actual harm, when such actions have not been committed with particularly vicious intent; they can plead guilty and repent, and in accordance with the law, they do not need to be sentenced or to be exempted from punishment; they can receive training on a voluntary basis. The third type consists of persons who have been convicted of terrorist or extremist activities and sentenced and who, before ending their sentences, have been evaluated as still posing a danger to society. After their sentence has been served and they have been released, the people's courts decide, in accordance with the law, to arrange for their training.

The only criterion used by the Xinjiang vocational education and training centres to determine whether someone should be the subject of redemption through education is whether they have been involved in illegal or criminal acts presenting dangers of terrorism or religious extremism. It has nothing to do with the so-called "religious atmosphere" in the family. The Chinese Constitution and Chinese law guarantee freedom of religion of Chinese citizens. The vocational education and training work in Xinjiang never interferes with the freedom of belief of the students and never involves teaching activities aimed at changing their religious belief. The aim of the Xinjiang vocational education and training centres is to address problems such as the low level of use of the national common language, lack of awareness of the rule of law and lack of employment skills among students, and their infection with religious extremist thoughts to varying degrees. The main content of the vocational education and training includes the national common language, legal knowledge, vocational skills and training to counter extremism, with the aim of eliminating terrorism and

extremism at the source. There is no such thing as “political education” or mistreatment of students.

In the education and training process, we strictly adhere to the Chinese Constitution and laws, fully guarantee the inviolability of students’ personal dignity and prohibit insults or abuse of students in any form; we fully guarantee students’ personal freedom and manage accommodations so that students can return to their homes and request leave if they need it; we fully guarantee the students’ right to use their own national language, and all rules and regulations, curriculum schedules and descriptions of meals, etc., appear at the same time in the national common language and minority language; we fully respect and protect the customs and habits of students from the various ethnic groups and provide a wide variety of nutritious halal food for students from ethnic minorities, free of charge; we fully respect and protect the freedom of religion of students, and those who are religious can decide whether to participate in normal religious activities after returning home. The living quarters at the vocational education and training centres provide full accommodation, with dormitories equipped with radio, television and air conditioning. Infirmaries are available to provide students with timely diagnosis and treatment services. There are sports facilities including for basketball, volleyball and table tennis, cultural facilities such as reading rooms, computer rooms and film projection rooms, as well as performance areas such as small auditoriums and open-air stages. Extracurricular activities such as folk songs and dances and sports competitions are often held. All of this is done to meet the study, living and entertainment needs of students to the greatest extent possible.

The lie according to which the students at the Xinjiang vocational education and training centres are forcibly subjected to politically education and abuse has long been exposed by people of insight in the international community. Many journalists who have visited the vocational education and training centres have filed objective and fair reports. They have said that the vocational education and training centres provide humane management and services for the students and that the students enjoy their studies and living conditions there. What they have seen and felt during their visits differs greatly from the negative propaganda of the Western media and they have expressed a deep-seated view that the double standards of the Western media are beyond reason.



中华人民共和国常驻联合国日内瓦办事处和瑞士其他国际组织代表团

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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No.GJ/69/2020

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the joint urgent appeal [UA CHN 19/2020] dated 27 October 2020, has the honour to transmit herewith the reply by the Chinese Government.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 23 November 2020



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA

联合国人权理事会任意拘留工作组、朝鲜人权状况特别报告员和酷刑问题特别报告员 2020 年 10 月 27 日来函[UA CHN 19/2020]收悉。中国政府对来函答复如下：

作为《难民地位的公约》缔约国，中国政府一直高度重视难民问题，认真履行《公约》规定的义务。因经济原因来华的非法入境朝鲜人不是难民，其非法入境行为违反了我国出入境管理法规，“不推回”原则不适用于对非法入境朝鲜人的处理。中方始终依照国际法、国内法，本着人道主义原则妥善处置非法入境朝鲜人问题，特别是对非法入境朝鲜妇女及其未成年子女，积极采取各种措施，最大限度保障其合法权益。