

Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (103rd session, Pre-Sessional Working Group)

Network for Uyghur Rights, August 2026

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About the Submitter: The Network for Uyghur Rights (NUR) is a US-based non-profit that works to end human rights abuses against Uyghurs and build diaspora resilience through community-driven research and advocacy. NUR documents human rights abuses to hold perpetrators accountable, so that Uyghurs can live free and equal in dignity and rights.

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Summary:

This submission documents a coordinated set of practices carried out by the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) that deliberately aim to sever Uyghur and other Turkic, majority-Muslim children from the religious, linguistic, and cultural transmission that Articles 9, 14, 28, 29, and 30 of the Convention protect. **If unaddressed, these practices will complete the intergenerational severing of Uyghur religious, linguistic, and cultural identity within a single generation.** Other practices that contravene Convention Articles 7, 11, and 16 are also analyzed.

- **Name selection (Cluster 3, Art. 7):** Restrictions on religiously-connoted names deny affected children a *hukou* (household registration), blocking access to education for children and preventing families from applying for identification documents.
- **Religious and cultural rights (Cluster 3, Arts. 14, 30):** Religious teaching to children, including by parents, is criminalized, and their participation in religious activities is prohibited in practice, leaving no lawful venue for a child’s religious education.
- **State surveillance of family life (Cluster 3, Art. 16):** Mandatory cadre home-stays intrude directly into the home, while school-based questionnaires turn children into unwitting surveillance sources against their own families.
- **Boarding schools and separation from parents (Cluster 5, Art. 9):** Children of detained parents are institutionalized in boarding schools and “care centers” without consent.
- **Passport confiscation and blocked family reunification (Cluster 5, Art. 11):** Passport denial and confiscation prevent children from reuniting with or joining parents living abroad.
- **Minority-language education suppression (Cluster 10, Arts. 28, 29, 30):** Uyghur- and Kazakh-language instruction has been systematically eliminated from schools in favor of Mandarin-only education.
- **2026 Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress (Cluster 10, Arts. 29, 30):** This new law mandates Mandarin-only instruction and risks penalizing parents who teach children their own language, culture, or religion.

Cluster 1. General Measures of Implementation

Data collection

1. China does not provide detailed, disaggregated child-specific data by ethnicity, which is essential for identifying and addressing patterns of discrimination affecting children.

Cluster 2. General Principles

Non-discrimination (Article 2)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: “China has adopted legislative, administrative, judicial and all other appropriate measures to ensure equal rights and non-discrimination for [...] children separated from their parents and children belonging to ethnic minorities.” (para. 17)

2. Multiple UN treaty bodies have found that Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim children face compounded discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and religion. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) Concluding Observations in 2018 called on China to undertake “prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all allegations of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious profiling,” findings with direct

implications for children who are equally subject to this profiling and its downstream effects on their access to household registration, education, and family life.¹

Cluster 3. Civil and Political Rights

Birth registration, name and nationality (Article 7)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: “China guarantees the right of every child to be registered immediately after birth and the rights to a name and to acquire a nationality.” (para. 26)

3. A 2016 Xinjiang government directive instructs health authorities to bar “words with strong religious connotations” from birth certificates.² This directive appears to be the basis of at least one publicized list of 29 banned names, including Muhammad, Islam, Jihad, Saddam, and Medina.³ This restriction was subsequently codified at the regional level in Article 9(8) of the 2017 XUAR Regulation on De-extremification, which lists “spreading religious fanaticism through irregular beards or name selection” as a prohibited “expression of extremism,” formally folding religiously-inflected naming practices into the region’s counter-extremism legal framework.⁴ Children given a banned name are denied a *hukou* (household registration), without which they cannot access public school or other social services, a direct violation of Article 7 of the Convention.

Suggested question: What is the legal and administrative basis for restricting the use of names with “religious connotations” for newborns, and does this restriction affect a child’s ability to obtain household registration?

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: “The right of the child to freedom of religion and conscience is respected and protected by law. The principle that freedom of religion and conscience must be respected and protected is enshrined in the Constitution and in laws and regulations at all levels. In 2017 the Regulations on Religious Affairs were revised to further strengthen legal safeguards for citizens’ freedom of religion and belief.” (para. 29)

4. Uyghur and other Turkic minors in Xinjiang are categorically barred from receiving a religious education, and their participation in any religious activities is effectively

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations on the Combined Fourteenth to Seventeenth Periodic Reports of China, CERD/C/CHN/CO/14-17, September 19, 2018.

² Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region People’s Government, “Notice on Further Improving the Standardization of Ethnic Minority Certificates and the Norms for the Use of Names in the Region” [关于进一步做好规范少数民族证照和名字使用工作的通知], Xingzhengfa [2016] No. 66, issued May 19, 2016, published June 8, 2016. Online: <https://archive.ph/Bqg0y>.

³ Human Rights Watch, “China Bans Many Muslim Baby Names in Xinjiang: Absurd Edict Part of Growing Restrictions on Uyghurs,” April 25, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/25/china-bans-many-muslim-baby-names-xinjiang>.

⁴ Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification (新疆维吾尔自治区去极端化条例), adopted at the 28th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth People’s Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, March 29, 2017. Unofficial translation by China Law Translate: <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-regulation-on-de-extremification>.

prohibited in practice.⁵ They are prohibited from entering mosques,⁶ and parents and other individuals who attempt to teach children about their faith outside these settings face detention or imprisonment.⁷

5. The 2024 revision of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) removed a clause from its 2014 version, which banned minors from participating in religious activities, replacing it with a narrower prohibition on “organizing, inducing, or coercing minors into religious participation.”⁸ Although this may suggest liberalization on paper, the underlying environment for religious expression and practice in Xinjiang has significantly worsened, amid mass detention and the expansion of the region’s anti-extremism framework to criminalize many forms of religious practice for Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.⁹ Scholars have noted that “While the new version [of the RRA] appears less restrictive and seemingly aligns better with China’s obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it may be more of a semantic shift than a substantive change [...]” while also noting that “while forcing and inducing minors to participate in religious activities is illegal, banning them from participating is not.”¹⁰
6. A 2014 Xinjiang government training document listing 75 indicators of “religious extremism” instructs community members to report a parent’s encouragement of a child’s prayer, fasting, or religious study, as grounds for police investigation.¹¹ The same document separately flags a family’s discouragement of a child’s Chinese-language education as an extremism indicator, extending state scrutiny of children’s religious upbringing into the domain of language and schooling as well.
7. A dataset of over 1,000 Turkic religious figures detained or imprisoned in Xinjiang from 2014 to 2020 found that “teaching religion to children” was the single most common charge leading to detention or imprisonment, accounting for 30 percent of cases with an

⁵ Martin Lavička (2021). Changes in Chinese legal narratives about religious affairs in Xinjiang. *Asian Ethnicity*, 22(1), 61–76, at 67–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2020.1793100>.

⁶ Henryk Szadziwski and Greg Fay, “Sacred Right Defiled: China’s Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom,” Uyghur Human Rights Project, April 30, 2013, 19, <https://docs.uhrp.org/Sacred-Right-Defiled-Chinas-Iron-Fisted-Repression-of-Uyghur-Religious-Freedom.pdf>; Radio Free Asia, “Uyghurs Under 65 Now Banned From Daily Prayers Required by Their Faith,” September 24, 2020, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/prayers-09242020194025.html>; and Lavička, M. (2021), Changes in Chinese legal narratives about religious affairs in Xinjiang. *Asian Ethnicity*, 22(1), 69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2020.1793100>.

⁷ Rachel Harris and Abduweli Ayup, “Twenty Years for Learning the Quran: Uyghur Women and Religious Persecution,” Uyghur Human Rights Project, February 1, 2024, <https://uhrp.org/report/twenty-years-for-learning-the-quran-uyghur-women-and-religious-persecution>.

⁸ Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region People’s Congress, “Regulations on Religious Affairs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” (2014 version), online: <https://archive.ph/6h34m>; Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region People’s Congress, “Regulations on Religious Affairs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” (2024 revision), online: <https://archive.ph/HHoFH>.

⁹ UN Special Procedures, “UN experts urge China to end repression of Uyghur and cultural expression of minorities,” OHCHR, October 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/un-experts-urge-china-end-repression-uyghur-and-cultural-expression>.

¹⁰ Martin Lavička (2026). Nibbling like a silkworm – narrating the Chinese government’s strategy towards religions, *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 27:1, 92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2026.2640341>.

¹¹ Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Committee of the Communist Party of China, “Recognize Religious Extremist Activities (75 Specific Manifestations): Basic Knowledge” [识别宗教极端活动(75种具体表现)基础知识] (2014), trans. by Darren Byler, <https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/chinese-sources/online-sources/identifying-religious-extremism>.

identifiable basis for detention, with sentences reaching as high as 20 years in some cases.¹² This demonstrates that severing the intergenerational transmission of religious knowledge is a central, deliberate target of the detention system itself.

8. Research in 2024 from the Uyghur Human Rights Project found that women who served as informal religious teachers to children (known as *büwi*) received lengthy prison sentences specifically for passing on basic religious knowledge to minors.¹³ The same records show that most listed women were themselves sentenced for having studied the Quran as children, in some cases as young as five or six, with sentences applied retrospectively under the XUAR Regulation on De-extremification. A smaller number of women received sentences of seven years or more specifically for teaching Quranic verses to their own children. A group of 15 UN Special Procedures mandate holders called for the regulation's repeal in a December 2022 joint communication to the Chinese government on the grounds that it "impermissibly infringes on the rights to freedom of religion or belief, expression, peaceful assembly, and cultural life."¹⁴
9. The 2026 Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress requires religious groups, schools, and activity sites to "persist in the direction of Sinicization," which UN Special Rapporteurs found conditions religious practice on state-mandated ideological alignment.¹⁵
10. A parent teaching their own child about their faith may itself constitute "inducing" a minor into religious activity under current law, and all minors are barred from receiving religious instruction.¹⁶ As a result, children are excluded from religious education altogether, while parents remain at serious risk of imprisonment for providing it informally. In effect, criminalizing religious teaching outside the mosque, while simultaneously barring children under 18 from entering the mosque at all,¹⁷ leaves no lawful venue whatsoever for a child to receive a religious education.

Suggested question(s): What is the legal basis for prohibiting minors from entering mosques, and in light of this prohibition together with the criminalization of informal religious instruction, what venue, if any, is available for a child to lawfully receive religious education?

Right to privacy (Article 16)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: "In terms of legislative protection, article 4 of the Law on the Protection of Minors establishes the principle of protecting minors' privacy and personal information [...]" (para. 33).

¹² Peter Irwin, "Islam Dispossessed: China's Persecution of Uyghur Imams and Religious Figures," Uyghur Human Rights Project, May 13, 2021, https://uhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Islam-Dispossessed_2021-05-15.pdf.

¹³ Harris and Ayup, "Twenty Years for Learning the Quran."

¹⁴ AL CHN 12/2022, December 19, 2022, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27725>.

¹⁵ Levrat et al., Joint Communication OL CHN 5/2026, 5.

¹⁶ Gulchehra Hoja et al., "China's New Law Targets Muslim Children For 'Correction,'" *Radio Free Asia*, October 21, 2016, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/law-10212016153555.html>.

¹⁷ Szadziewski and Fay, "Sacred Right Defiled," 63.

11. State intrusion into family life in Xinjiang has been institutionalized through mandatory home-stay programs which families appear unable to refuse. Police guidance documents list “persuading others to refuse home visits” as a basis for detention, indicating that declining to host cadres is itself treated as a punishable offense.¹⁸ Under the “Becoming Family” campaign, hundreds of thousands of cadres have lodged in Uyghur households in 2016 and 2017, collecting information on residents’ religious beliefs and political views, conducting political indoctrination, and directing family life down to language use and required participation in flag-raising ceremonies.¹⁹ Officials have photographed and circulated images of these stays, cadres sharing beds, meals, and childcare with host families, apparently without residents’ consent. OHCHR corroborates this, finding the programs involuntary and noting their “significant implications on the privacy of family life,” including testimony of children being made to speak against a detained father amid constant surveillance during visits. State and local media continued to report on home-stay visits as recently as 2023, and in February 2025, the program was described as still in operation.²⁰ These practices amount to arbitrary interference with the family under CRC Article 16, compounded by the displacement of parental authority over language and value transmission otherwise protected under Articles 5 and 18, where the state is substituting Party-directed content for parental guidance within the home itself.
12. Children have also been directly conscripted as instruments of this surveillance. Since at least 2016, authorities in Aksu and Hotan prefectures have required middle and high school students to complete annual questionnaires disclosing whether family members pray, wear a hijab, or have a beard, alongside details of religious books kept in the home, with completed forms bearing police and government stamps collected through the school system.²¹ A Uyghur student interviewed in 2018 recalled being questioned by visiting officials as an elementary school student in Xinjiang about whether his family kept a Quran at home and whether his parents engaged in religious activities.²²

Suggested questions: (1) What is the legal and administrative basis for the “Becoming Family” home-stay program, and can families decline to host visiting officials without facing penalty or reprisal? (2) What is the legal basis for requiring children to disclose their family members’ religious beliefs and practices, and what safeguards exist to prevent this information from being used against their parents?

Cluster 5. Family Environment and Alternative Care

¹⁸ Rian Thum, “Eight Years On, China’s Repression of the Uyghurs Remains Dire: How China’s Policies in the Uyghur Region Have and Have Not Changed,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, February 2025, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/reports-and-resources>.

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, “China: Visiting Officials Occupy Homes in Muslim Region,” May 14, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/14/china-visiting-officials-occupy-homes-muslim-region>.

²⁰ Thum, Eight Years On, China’s Repression of the Uyghurs Remains Dire, 17.

²¹ Radio Free Asia, “Chinese Authorities Question Students in Xinjiang about Religious Habits,” August 15, 2016, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/students-08152016132314.html>.

²² Sigal Samuel, “China’s Jaw-Dropping Family Separation Policy,” *The Atlantic*, September 4, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/china-internment-camps-uyghur-muslim-children/569062>.

Forced separation of children from parents (Article 9)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: “The separation of a child from his or her parents is regulated by law and is subject to the principle of the best interests of the child.” (para. 51)

13. From 2017 to 2021, Chinese authorities arbitrarily detained over one million Turkic Muslims, predominantly Uyghurs, in internment camps, and a further number in prisons and pretrial detention centers.²³ Estimates in 2024 and 2025 from human rights groups and researchers put the number of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples incarcerated in prisons or pre-trial detention facilities at between 400,000 and 500,000. If the Uyghur region were a country, it would have the highest prison rate in the world.²⁴
14. A 2017 internal directive distributed by Xinjiang authorities instructs local officials on scripted responses to children asking about detained parents, framing detention as “treatment” for a mental “infection” and stating that in-person visits are generally not permitted.²⁵ The directive instructed officials to tell children that their own behavior, including school attendance and refraining from expressing “incorrect opinions” on social media, directly affected their parent’s ability to accumulate enough “points” for release, using children as a mechanism to enforce parental compliance. A companion directive orders officials to search returning students’ devices and maintain sealed files tracking each child’s “ideological development.”
15. A July 2019 analysis of Chinese government documents found that local authorities in Xinjiang maintained registries listing children classified as “left-behind” or “in need of care,” meaning one or both parents were in prison, internment camps, or other forms of detention.²⁶ In one documented township, over 400 children had both parents interned simultaneously in 2018. These children have been routed into state boarding preschools, primary schools, or dedicated “care and protection centers,” with placement and classification driven directly by their parents’ detention status rather than any assessment of the child’s individual circumstances, constituting the kind of status-based discrimination against children that Article 2(2) prohibits.
16. A follow-up analysis published in October 2020, based on leaked local-government spreadsheets from a single county (Yarkand, Kashgar Prefecture), identified more than

²³ Adrian Zenz, “‘Thoroughly Reforming Them towards a Healthy Heart Attitude’: China’s Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang,” *Central Asian Survey* 38, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 102–28; and Patrick deHahn, “How Researchers Estimate 1 Million Uyghurs are Detained in Xinjiang,” *Quartz*, July 4, 2019, <https://qz.com/1599393/how-researchers-estimate-1-million-uyghurs-are-detained-in-xinjiang>.

²⁴ Ben Carrdus and Peter Irwin, “UHRP Analysis Finds 1 in 26 Uyghurs Imprisoned in Region With World’s Highest Prison Rate,” Uyghur Human Rights Project, April 25, 2024, <https://uhrp.org/insights/uhrp-analysis-finds-1-in-26-uyghurs-imprisoned-in-region-with-worlds-highest-prison-rate>; Rian Thum, “Eight Years On, China’s Repression of the Uyghurs Remains Dire: How China’s Policies in the Uyghur Region Have and Have Not Changed,” Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, February 2025, www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/china/report-eight-years-on-chinas-repression-of-the-uyghurs-remains-dire.

²⁵ The New York Times, “Document: What Chinese Officials Told Children Whose Families Were Put in Camps,” November 16, 2019, part of the leaked “Xinjiang Papers” collection; see also Austin Ramzy and Chris Buckley, “‘Absolutely No Mercy’: Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims,” *The New York Times*, November 16, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>.

²⁶ Adrian Zenz, “Break Their Roots: Evidence for China’s Parent-Child Separation Campaign in Xinjiang,” *Journal of Political Risk*, 7:7, July 2019, www.jpolarisk.com/break-their-roots-evidence-for-chinas-parent-child-separation-campaign-in-xinjiang/.

10,000 mostly Uyghur children officially classified as being in “difficult circumstances” due to parental detention, including nearly 1,000 with both parents interned simultaneously, and found that Xinjiang’s boarding school population grew by roughly 380,000 students, from about 500,000 to nearly 900,000, between 2017 and 2019 to absorb this influx, with some children housed in orphanages built directly adjacent to their school.²⁷

17. Research by Human Rights Watch in 2019 found that Xinjiang authorities received specific quotas from higher-level authorities for institutionalizing children, with no documented procedure for determining consent or the child’s best interests, and no legal basis for removal under China’s Law on the Protection of Minors.²⁸
18. A 2021 report by Amnesty International documents that Chinese authorities have placed Uyghur children whose parents are detained, in exile, or otherwise unavailable into state-run institutions without any individualized best-interests determination or judicial review.²⁹
19. A November 2016 directive from then-Xinjiang Party Secretary Chen Quanguo ordered all Xinjiang “orphans” to be placed in state institutions by 2020, defining “orphan” broadly to include children with one or both parents detained, with no requirement of parental or child consent.³⁰ As of September 2018, the government had budgeted over US\$30 million to build or expand at least 45 “rescue, care, and protection centres,” creating capacity for 5,000 children.³¹
20. Research by scholar Adrian Zenz found that Xinjiang kindergarten enrollment increased by more than half a million children in 2017 alone, with Uyghur and other Muslim minority children accounting for over 90 percent of that increase, alongside a construction boom in boarding-school dormitory capacity.³² Human Rights Watch interviewed families who lost all contact with children after relatives caring for them were themselves detained, and found that localities received specific institutionalization quotas from higher authorities, with no documented legal procedure, consent requirement, or avenue for challenge under China’s own Law on the Protection of Minors, Article 43.³³
21. Amnesty International documented six detailed cases of parents living abroad in Australia, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey who have lost contact with their children in Xinjiang for periods ranging from months to years, including one case in which four teenagers who had obtained valid Italian family-reunification visas were

²⁷ Adrian Zenz, “Parent-Child Separation in Yarkand County, Kashgar,” *Medium*, October 13, 2020. Online: <https://adrianzenz.medium.com/story-45d07b25bcad>.

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, “China: Xinjiang Children Separated from Families: Return Minors Housed in State-Run Institutions to Relatives” September 15, 2019. Online: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/15/china-xinjiang-children-separated-families>.

²⁹ Amnesty International, “‘Hearts and Lives Broken’: The Nightmare of Uyghur Families Separated by Repression,” March 19, 2021. Online: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2021/03/the-nightmare-of-uyghur-families-separated-by-repression>.

³⁰ Human Rights Watch and Stanford Clinic, “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots,” “Separation of Families” section.

³¹ Human Rights Watch and Stanford Clinic, “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots.”

³² John Sudworth, “China Muslims: Xinjiang Schools Used to Separate Children from Families,” BBC News, July 4, 2019.

³³ Human Rights Watch, “China: Xinjiang Children Separated from Families.”

seized by police in Shanghai and returned to an orphanage and boarding school in Kashgar.³⁴

Suggested question: What is the legal basis for classifying and placing children into centralized state care on the basis of their parents' detention or internment status, and what individualized assessment, if any, is conducted before such placement?

Illicit transfer and non-return / cross-border family reunification (Article 11)

22. Since late 2016, Chinese authorities have systematically confiscated passports from Uyghurs in Xinjiang and refused to issue or renew passports for children whose parents reside abroad, preventing family reunification and, in some documented cases, resulting in the forced return of children already living overseas.³⁵ In one such case, relatives in Xinjiang, fearing their own detention, pressured a family abroad to send their 13-year-old daughter back to China to renew her passport; authorities then confiscated it, leaving her unable to depart as it neared expiration.³⁶

Suggested question(s): What is the legal basis for denying or confiscating passports of Uyghur children with parents residing abroad, and what measures ensure such children are not separated from their parents as a result?

Cluster 10. Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities

Suppression of minority-language education (Articles 28, 29, 30)

China 2023 State party report to CRC: "The law establishes the national common spoken and written language as the basic language of instruction in schools and other educational institutions, while fully respecting and safeguarding the freedom of ethnic minority children to learn and use the spoken and written languages of their ethnic groups." (para. 90)

23. In 2018, four UN Special Rapporteurs sent a joint communication to China regarding a June 2017 Hotan Prefecture Education Department directive banning Uyghur-language instruction "at all education levels up to, and including secondary school," expressing concern over its "disproportionate and hence discriminatory" effect.³⁷
24. BBC reporting found a systematic drive to eliminate Uyghur- and other minority-language use from Xinjiang school premises, with points-based punishment systems for students and teachers who speak languages other than Mandarin, and government statements claiming full Chinese-language instruction has already been achieved in all Xinjiang schools.³⁸

³⁴ Amnesty International, "Hearts and Lives Broken," 4–5.

³⁵ Henryk Szadziwski, "Weaponized Passports: The Crisis of Uyghur Statelessness," April 1, 2020, Uyghur Human Rights Project, <https://uhrp.org/report/weaponized-passports-crisis-uyghur-statelessness>.

³⁶ Amnesty International, "Hearts and Lives Broken," 4–6, 13.

³⁷ De Varennes et al., Joint Communication OL CHN 1/2018, 1–4.

³⁸ Sudworth, "China Muslims: Xinjiang Schools."

25. Human Rights Watch documented that many local schools providing minority-language instruction have been closed even as boarding-school capacity has expanded, and that authorities have banned Uyghur- and Kazakh-language teaching materials, with state employees using these languages labeled “unpatriotic.”³⁹
26. The 2017 XUAR Regulation on De-extremification classifies “not allowing children to receive public education” as a form of “extremification” under Article 9(10), placing parents under continued legal pressure to keep children within the state schooling system. Article 9(10) also includes language prohibiting “obstructing the implementation of the national education system,” an undefined phrase broad enough to be applied against parents who supplement or replace their children’s Mandarin-medium schooling with Uyghur-language instruction at home or in the community.
27. Research from 2021 by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) found that Uyghur-language history and literature textbooks for primary and middle schools, some passed by censors when first published in 2003 and 2009, were retrospectively branded as “extremist” or “separatist” after 2017 for including references to prominent Uyghur historical figures. Officials responsible for producing them have since been prosecuted, including Sattar Sawut and Shirzat Bawudun, former senior Xinjiang education officials who received a two-year suspended death sentence.⁴⁰ UHRP’s dataset includes 56 staff from Xinjiang Education Press, Kashgar Uyghur Press, and from related textbook editing roles who have been detained, imprisoned, or disappeared from 2017 to 2021.
28. The 2026 Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, read together with the December 2025 revision of the Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language (which deleted a prior exception permitting non-Mandarin languages of instruction), requires schools to use “the nation’s common language and script as the basic language and script for education and teaching.” Article 20 of the Law also prohibits parents or guardians from sharing with minors ideas “not conducive to improving ethnic unity and progress,” a vague passage which may be broadly interpreted to sanction parents who educate their children in their own language, culture, or religion. An April 2026 joint communication from eight UN Special Rapporteurs noted that the Law places at risk China’s obligations under CRC articles 29(1)(c) and 30.⁴¹

Suggested questions: (1) What proportion of instructional time in Xinjiang primary and secondary schools is currently delivered in Uyghur, Kazakh, or other minority languages, and what proportion of instructional materials are published in these languages? (2) What is the proportion of teaching staff in Xinjiang whose first language is Uyghur, Kazakh, or another minority language?

³⁹ Human Rights Watch and Stanford Clinic, “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots,” “Cultural and Religious Erasure” section.

⁴⁰ Abdullah Qazanchi and Abduweli Ayup, “The Disappearance of Uyghur Intellectual and Cultural Elites: A New Form of Eliticide,” Uyghur Human Rights Project, December 8, 2021. Online: <https://uhrp.org/report/the-disappearance-of-uyghur-intellectual-and-cultural-elites-a-new-form-of-eliticide>. See also: Helen Davidson, “China gave Uyghur education officials suspended death sentences over textbooks,” *The Guardian*, April 9, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/09/china-uyghur-death-sentences-xinjiang-education-directors>.

⁴¹ Levrat et al., Joint Communication OL CHN 5/2026, 4, 6–7.