

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1252

To support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic groups residing primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct civilization and identity, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 20, 2023

Mr. RUBIO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic groups residing primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct civilization and identity, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Uyghur Policy Act of
5 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Chinese Communist Party continues to
2 repress the distinct Turkic identity of Uyghurs and
3 members of other predominantly Muslim ethnic
4 groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
5 and in other areas where they have habitually re-
6 sided.

7 (2) Uyghurs, and other predominantly Muslim
8 ethnic groups make up the majority of the indige-
9 nous population in the area that the Chinese Com-
10 munist Party has designated as the Xinjiang
11 Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Throughout
12 their history, Uyghurs and other predominately
13 Muslim ethnic groups have maintained a civilization
14 that was distinct from the Chinese. For centuries,
15 these Turkic groups were not under Chinese rule.

16 (3) Human rights, including freedom of religion
17 or belief, and the preservation of and respect for the
18 Uyghurs' unique Turkic and Islamic civilization and
19 identity are legitimate interests of the international
20 community.

21 (4) The People's Republic of China (PRC) has
22 ratified the International Covenant on Economic,
23 Social, and Cultural Rights, done at New York De-
24 cember 16, 1966, and is thereby bound by its provi-
25 sions. China has also signed the International Cov-

1 enant on Civil and Political Rights. Article One of
2 both covenants state that all peoples have the right
3 to self-determination.

4 (5) An official campaign to encourage Chinese
5 migration into the XUAR has placed immense pres-
6 sure on those who seek to preserve the ethnic, cul-
7 tural, religious, and linguistic traditions of the
8 Uyghurs people. Chinese authorities have supported
9 an influx of Chinese economic immigrants into the
10 XUAR, discriminated against Uyghurs in hiring
11 practices, and provided unequal access to healthcare
12 services.

13 (6) The Chinese Communist Party has manipu-
14 lated the strategic objectives of the international war
15 on terror to mask their increasing cultural and reli-
16 gious oppression of the predominantly Muslim popu-
17 lation residing in the XUAR.

18 (7) Following unrest in the region, in 2014, the
19 Chinese Communist Party launched its “Strike Hard
20 against Violent Extremism” campaign, in which du-
21 bious allegations of widespread extremist activity
22 were used as justification for gross human rights
23 violations committed against members of the Uyghur
24 community.

1 (8) Chinese Communist Party officials have
2 made use of the legal system as a tool of repression,
3 including for the imposition of arbitrary detentions
4 and for torture against members of the Uyghur and
5 other populations.

6 (9) Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have secured
7 citizenship or permanent residency outside of the
8 PRC have attested to repeated threats, harassment,
9 and surveillance by PRC officials.

10 (10) Reporting from international news organi-
11 zations has found that over the past decade, family
12 members of Uyghurs living outside of the PRC who
13 remain in the PRC have gone missing or have been
14 detained to force Uyghur expatriates to return to
15 the PRC or silence their dissent.

16 (11) Credible evidence from human rights orga-
17 nizations, think tanks, and journalists confirms that
18 more than 1,000,000 Uyghurs and members of other
19 ethnic groups have been imprisoned in extrajudicial
20 “political reeducation” centers.

21 (12) Independent accounts from former detain-
22 ees of “political reeducation” centers describe inhu-
23 mane conditions and treatment, including forced po-
24 litical indoctrination, torture, beatings, rape, forced
25 sterilization, and food deprivation. Former detainees

1 also confirmed that they were told by guards that
2 the only way to secure release was to demonstrate
3 sufficient political loyalty to the Chinese Communist
4 Party.

5 (13) Popular discourse surrounding the ongoing
6 atrocities in the XUAR and advocacy efforts to as-
7 sist Uyghurs remains muted in most Muslim major-
8 ity nations around the world.

9 (14) Both Secretary of State Antony Blinken
10 and Former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo
11 have stated that the Chinese Communist Party has
12 committed genocide and crimes against humanity
13 against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious
14 groups in the XUAR.

15 (15) Government bodies of multiple nations
16 have also declared that Chinese Communist Party
17 atrocities against such populations in the XUAR
18 constitute genocide, including the parliaments of the
19 United Kingdom, Belgium, Czechia, Lithuania, the
20 Netherlands, and Canada.

21 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

22 It is the policy of the United States—

23 (1) to press for authorities in China to open the
24 XUAR to regular, transparent, and unmanipulated
25 visits by members of the press, Members of Con-

1 gress, congressional staff delegations, and members
2 and staff of the Congressional-Executive Commis-
3 sion on the People's Republic of China and the U.S.-
4 China Economic and Security Review Commission;

5 (2) to strive to ensure the preservation of the
6 distinct ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic
7 identity of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic
8 and religious groups in the XUAR;

9 (3) to urge other nations to call for the ces-
10 sation of all government-sponsored crackdowns,
11 imprisonments, and detentions of people throughout
12 the XUAR aimed at those involved in the peaceful
13 expression of their ethnic, cultural, political, or reli-
14 gious identity;

15 (4) to commend countries that have provided
16 shelter and hospitality to Uyghurs in exile, including
17 Turkey, Albania, and Germany; and

18 (5) to urge countries with sizeable Muslim pop-
19 ulations, given commonalities in their religious and
20 cultural identities, to demonstrate concern over the
21 plight of Uyghurs.

22 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD WITH**
23 **RESPECT TO THE UYGHUR SITUATION.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, working
25 through the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational

1 and Cultural Affairs, shall support, through the United
2 States Speaker Program, human rights advocates rep-
3 resenting Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and reli-
4 gious groups persecuted in the PRC to speak at public
5 diplomacy forums in Muslim-majority countries and other
6 regions about issues regarding the human rights and reli-
7 gious freedom of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic
8 and religious groups that are being persecuted in the PRC.

9 (b) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—The Assistant
10 Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs
11 shall consult with representatives of the global Uyghur
12 community when selecting participants for the activity de-
13 scribed in subsection (a).

14 (c) MEDIA ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of State, in
15 consultation with the Chief Executive Officer of the
16 United States Agency for Global Media, should facilitate
17 the unhindered dissemination of information to Muslim-
18 majority countries about issues regarding the human
19 rights and religious freedom of Uyghurs and members of
20 other groups in the XUAR.

21 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO DETENTION**
22 **FACILITIES AND PRISONS AND SECURE THE**
23 **RELEASE OF PRISONERS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
25 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State

1 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO DETENTION**
2 **FACILITIES AND PRISONS AND SECURE THE**
3 **RELEASE OF PRISONERS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
6 shall develop and submit to Congress a strategy to support
7 and secure the release of political prisoners detained in
8 the PRC.

9 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
10 section (a) shall include—

11 (1) a detailed description of how the United
12 States Government can pressure the PRC to imme-
13 diately close all detention facilities and “political re-
14 education” camps housing Uyghurs and members of
15 other ethnic minority groups in the XUAR;

16 (2) a detailed assessment of how the United
17 States can leverage its contributions to the United
18 Nations to support the United Nations Commis-
19 sioner for Human Rights and numerous United Na-
20 tions Special Rapporteurs’ urgent calls for imme-
21 diate and unhindered access to detention facilities
22 and “political reeducation” camps in the XUAR by
23 independent international organizations and the Of-
24 fice of the United Nations High Commissioner for
25 Human Rights for a comprehensive assessment of
26 the human rights situation;

1 (3) a detailed description of how the United
2 States Government will work with other like-minded
3 countries to pressure the PRC to immediately stop
4 the genocide of Uyghurs and other ethnic groups in
5 the XUAR; and

6 (4) a detailed plan for how United States Gov-
7 ernment officials can use meetings with representa-
8 tives of the Chinese Communist Party to demand
9 the immediate and unconditional release of all pris-
10 oners detained for their ethnic, cultural, religious,
11 and linguistic identities, or for expressing their polit-
12 ical or religious beliefs in the XUAR.

13 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
14 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

15 **SEC. 6. REQUIREMENT FOR UYGHUR LANGUAGE TRAINING.**

16 The Secretary of State shall ensure that—

17 (1) Uyghur language training is available to
18 Foreign Service officers, as appropriate; and

19 (2) every effort is being made to ensure that a
20 Uyghur-speaking member of the Foreign Service (as
21 described in section 103 of the Foreign Service Act
22 of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3903)) is assigned to United
23 States diplomatic and consular missions in the PRC,
24 Turkey, and other nations hosting Uyghur popu-
25 lations.

1 **SEC. 7. UYGHUR CONSIDERATIONS AT THE UNITED NA-**
2 **TIONS.**

3 The Secretary of State and the United States Perma-
4 nent Representative to the United Nations shall use the
5 voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the
6 United Nations—

7 (1) to oppose any efforts—

8 (A) to prevent consideration of the issues
9 related to the XUAR in any body of the United
10 Nations; and

11 (B) to prevent the participation of any
12 Uyghur human rights advocates in nongovern-
13 mental fora hosted by or otherwise organized
14 under the auspices of any body of the United
15 Nations; and

16 (2) to support the appointment of a special
17 rapporteur or working group for the XUAR for the
18 purposes of—

19 (A) monitoring human rights violations
20 and abuses in the XUAR; and

21 (B) making reports available to the High
22 Commissioner for Refugees, the High Commis-
23 sioner for Human Rights, the General Assem-
24 bly, and other United Nations bodies.

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