



**Statement of Rep. James P. McGovern,
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive
Commission on China (CECC)**

**Hearing on “Forced Labor, Mass Internment,
and Social Control in Xinjiang”**

**Thursday, October 17, 2019, 10 a.m.
419 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

As prepared for delivery.

Good morning and welcome to today’s Congressional-Executive Commission on China hearing on “Forced Labor, Mass Internment, and Social Control in Xinjiang.”

In the last year, Chinese authorities have expanded their network of mass internment camps, where one million or more Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been detained and subjected to torture, extended solitary confinement and political indoctrination, and deprived of food.

Children of detainees are reportedly often placed in orphanages, welfare centers, and boarding schools.

Some scholars and human rights groups argue that these practices may amount to “crimes against humanity.”

Outside the camps, the Chinese government has become more efficient in the use of technology to control and suppress. Some observers have described this surveillance system as an “open air prison.”

Recent reports indicate that Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are increasingly sentenced to lengthy prison sentences on vague charges.

One case is that of Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti who is serving a life sentence in spite of his dedication to nonviolence and reconciliation.

He is a “Defending Freedoms Project” prisoner of conscience and his Congressional advocate is Rep. Jim Langevin of Rhode Island.

Meanwhile, the practice of Islam has also been criminalized. Mosques have been destroyed, Islamic dress has been forbidden, and fasting for Ramadan has been disallowed.

It is in this context that new information has come to light detailing the widespread use of a government-subsidized and large-scale system of forced labor in both mass internment camps and in factories throughout the Xinjiang region.

Satellite imagery, personal testimonies, and official documents indicate that detainees in camps and some who have been released are forced to work in food, textile, and other manufacturing jobs.

Products reportedly produced with forced labor include:

- Textiles, such as yarn, clothing, gloves, bedding, and carpet;
- Electronics, including cell phones and computers;
- Food products, shoes, tea, and handicrafts.

In January 2019, the U.S. company Badger Sportswear stopped importing clothing following reports that it was made with forced labor by internment camp detainees.

In May 2019, the *Wall Street Journal* linked the supply chains of Adidas, Campbell Soup, H&M, Kraft Heinz, Coca-Cola, and Gap Inc. to forced labor.

On October 1st, U.S. Customs and Border Protection issued a “Withhold Release Order” on garments produced with prison or forced labor by Hetian Taida Apparel, which has exported products to Costco.

Current U.S. law prohibits the import of any product made with forced labor.

Any U.S. or international company that produces or has a supply chain in Xinjiang may be complicit with forced labor and human rights violations.

In 2002 China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICESCR affirms the rights of all peoples to self-determination and non-discrimination, to freely choose and accept work, to enjoy just and favorable conditions of work, including the right to remuneration, and to take part in cultural life.

All of the policies and practices I have just described violate the ICESCR as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. China is failing to comply with international human rights obligations it freely assumed.

There is no question the U.S. should be doing more to help the Uyghur people.

In April, Senator Rubio and I, and over 40 members called for Global Magnitsky sanctions against Chen Quanguo, the Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary, as well as Chinese officials and companies complicit in gross violations of human rights.

And last week, we expressed support when the Administration added 28 Chinese companies to the “entity list” and applied visa restrictions on some Chinese officials.

Right now, there are important bills Congress should pass including:

- The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act by Sen. Rubio and Rep. Suozzi and Rep. Chris Smith; and
- The Uighur Intervention and Global Humanitarian Unified Response Act by Chairman Brad Sherman.

I look forward to hearing any and all recommendations about what more can and should be done – including whether it is feasible for companies to conduct reliable inspections and audits of supply chains in the region.

Congress stands in solidarity with the Uyghur people and we want to do all we can to support the full exercise of their human rights.

Finally, before we begin, I would like to recognize Nury Teyip, who is here with us today. His brother, Tashpolat Teyip was the president of Xinjiang University and is a renowned scholar.

Tashpolat Teyip was disappeared in March 2017 and was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve.

Last month, we learned from Amnesty International that he may be executed. I condemn his detention in the strongest possible terms and call on the Chinese government to release him immediately.

Thank you.

