

## FURTHER STUDY ON THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE:

### **Uyghur Genocide Denial, Centering Uyghur Diaspora Testimony, and Connections to the Holocaust**

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**FURTHER STUDY ON THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE:**  
**Uyghur Genocide Denial, Centering Uyghur Diaspora Testimony, and  
Connections to the Holocaust**

*This curriculum is a project of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JFCS Holocaust Center, with support from the California Department of Education, Marin County Office of Education, and the State of California.*

**RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS:** Middle School (grades 7-8)

**INSTRUCTIONAL TIME:** Three 90-minute class periods (can be divided for shorter class periods) + class period for presentations, reflection, and appreciation

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF LESSONS:** The Uyghur genocide is an ongoing genocide happening in our time which remains grossly underreported. These lessons are intended to build upon, extend, and make connections to the material provided in the [Three Lessons on the Uyghur Genocide](#) (Three Lessons). The initial Three Lessons introduce students to Uyghurs as an ethnic group, situate the Uyghur genocide in a cultural and historical context, and explain the different dimensions of the ongoing genocide. These new lessons explore different aspects of the Uyghur genocide more closely. One of the lessons focuses on genocide denial with the Uyghur genocide as a case study, while another lesson centers the testimony of Uyghurs of the diaspora. Furthermore, during this time of increased Holocaust minimization and denial, the third lesson explores connections between the Uyghur genocide and the Holocaust. This may also be a useful entry point for teachers who are not certain how they might otherwise incorporate the Uyghur genocide into their curriculum. Throughout the lessons, students are called to action as upstanders by considering what their individual and collective responsibilities are. Students should have a basic understanding of the Uyghur genocide before engaging in these lessons, and teachers should use their discretion in deciding what degree of detail students will be exposed to when learning about this difficult topic.

**CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)**

The Uyghur genocide lesson plans align with the following CCSS for **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS** in grades 6-8, which can be adapted for grades 9-12:

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events)

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

CCSS.ELA.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA.W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA.W.7.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

CCSS.ELA.SL.7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA.SL.7.2: Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

The Uyghur genocide lesson plans also align with the following CCSS for **LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES** in grades 6-8, which can be adapted for grades 9-12:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** Preliminary lessons on genocide, including the Genocide Convention, stages of genocide, examples of historical genocides, and specific knowledge about the Uyghur genocide will be very useful in helping students to fully understand and engage in these lessons.

Resources on teaching genocide:

- Facing History:  
<https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/9-classroom-resources-on-genocide>
- Choices: <https://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/confronting-genocide-never/>
- HRE USA: <https://hreusa.org/hre-library/topics/genocide/lesson-plans/>
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, DC:  
<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/what-is-genocide>
- C-SPAN: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18096>
- AFT: <https://www.teachhumanrights.com/genocide.html>
- Genocide Ed. Project:  
[https://genocideeducation.org/teaching\\_guides/new-stages-of-genocide-a-toolkit-for-educators/](https://genocideeducation.org/teaching_guides/new-stages-of-genocide-a-toolkit-for-educators/)
- Human Rights Watch student task force:  
<https://www.hrwtf.org/wordpress/genocide-awareness-toolkit-new/>

## **VOCABULARY**

1. genocide: the deliberate, targeted destruction of a specific group of people
2. Uyghurs: ethnic group in China Indigenous to Xinjiang/East Turkestan
3. Muslim: person who observes the beliefs and traditions of Islam
4. Islam: one of the major (Abrahamic) world religions
5. Han Chinese: majority ethnic group in China (~92%)
6. marginalize: to treat a person, group, or concept as insignificant
7. prejudice: preconceived opinion or bias that is not based on reason or experience



8. dispossess: to deprive someone of land, property, or other possessions
9. oppress: to crush or burden by abuse of power or authority
10. sterilization: making someone unable to reproduce
11. internment: the state of being confined as a prisoner
12. indoctrination: teaching someone to accept beliefs or ideas without questioning them
13. surveillance: keeping a close watch over someone or something
14. atrocities: cruel and harmful acts, typically involving violence
15. ratify: to sign or give formal consent to something, making it officially valid

## LESSON ONE: UYGHUR GENOCIDE DENIAL

### LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to analyze different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide as they align with the Genocide Convention
- Students will examine different reports about the Uyghur genocide and will make connections to the Genocide Convention as an instrument of international human rights law
- Students will be able to analyze and debunk claims of denial of the Uyghur genocide
- Students will be able to explain how Uyghurs of the diaspora, human rights organizations, and governments have responded to the Uyghur genocide and will describe what has been/is being done to stop the genocide
- Students will reflect upon what it means to be an upstander and will articulate what they believe their individual and collective responsibilities are in the face of genocide and genocide denial

### LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- Optional: Uyghur Culture Information Sheet (handout)
- The Genocide Convention (handout)
- Reports (linked below):
  1. [Newlines Institute](#)
  2. [US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
  3. [Human Rights Watch: “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots”](#)
  4. [United Nations](#) (OHCHR)

Optional Extension: [The Uyghur Tribunal](#), recommended for high school students
- Uyghur Genocide Report Questions (assessment)
- Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity (handout)
- Uyghur genocide denial (handout)
- What is being done to stop the Uyghur genocide? (notes for teachers)

### LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review who Uyghurs are.  
Share **Uyghur Culture Information Sheet** with students (if not previously shared).

In small groups (3-4 students), have students read the info sheet and discuss among themselves. Then ask students to share what they know about Uyghur culture with the whole class (*formative assessment*).

2. Essential question: What is genocide? There are different definitions, but the world generally agrees on the list of criteria contained in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention).

Go over **The Genocide Convention** handout (full text [here](#)) with students (read together as a class). Explain that there is an internationally accepted definition of genocide based on the criteria listed in Article II of the Convention.

Optional: Link to graphic for closer examination:

[https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Convention%20on%20Genocide%20Prevention%204586%20R1%20Jan19\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Convention%20on%20Genocide%20Prevention%204586%20R1%20Jan19_ENG.pdf)

3. Discuss different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide:
  - Deaths, and crematoria near camps (Killing members of the group)
  - Torture (Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group)
  - In-house “guests”, internment, forced labor, long-term prison sentences (Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part)
  - Forced birth control and sterilization (Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group)
  - Separation of children and families (Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group)

Also note that Uyghur culture and identity are in the process of being systematically destroyed. (**Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity** handout)

*If not already completed previously, have students review different reports on the Uyghur genocide and fill out “Uyghur Genocide Report Questions” in small groups (assessment).*

- a. [Newlines Institute](#)
- b. [US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- c. [Human Rights Watch: “Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots”](#)
- d. [United Nations](#) (OHCHR)

- e. Optional Extension: [The Uyghur Tribunal](#), recommended for high school students
- 4. Review the 10 stages of genocide, and note that denial is the last stage.  
<https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>

10 Stages of Genocide handout for printing:

[https://www.hmd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Genocide-poster-A3-landscape\\_updated-July-2020.pdf](https://www.hmd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Genocide-poster-A3-landscape_updated-July-2020.pdf)

- 5. Discuss the issue of genocide denial.

Optional: Examples of other genocides that have been and/or are currently being denied:

Holocaust:

<https://www.auschwitz.org/en/history/holocaust-denial/holocaust-and-genocide-denial-after-the-war/>

<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion>

Armenian genocide: <https://genocideeducation.org/background/denial/>

Uyghur genocide denial: Students will explore some of the causes and suggest consequences of denying the Uyghur Genocide.

Share information with students about China's ongoing denial.

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/12/muslim-majority-countries-complicity-in-the-uyghur-genocide/> (written by Uyghur community member)

<https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-big-business-of-uyghur-genocide-denial/>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/5/14/the-faux-anti-imperialism-of-denying-anti-uighur>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56311759>

- 6. Small group reflection and discussion:

In groups of 3-4 students, discuss the following questions, then share with the whole group:

- What are the consequences of genocide denial?
  - How does denying a genocide impact the people affected?
7. Wrap up and summarize interactively with students: “Today we’ve learned about who Uyghurs are and the ongoing genocide they are experiencing in East Turkestan. We have also learned that China and others continue to deny the Uyghur genocide. Who can tell me..” (review based on today’s content—*formative assessment*)

### ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 3, and 7, assign the written, summative assessment below.

Written Assessment (*summative assessment*): During class, if time permits, or as homework, have students respond to the following prompts:

1. How do claims of Uyghur genocide denial intentionally obscure the realities of Uyghurs in East Turkestan?
2. Using evidence from the reports provided, write a paragraph making a case for recognition of the Uyghur genocide, countering claims of denial. Include connections to the Genocide Convention.

Differentiation: Written responses can range from one paragraph to one page per prompt, depending on the students.

### Project:

Essential question: How do we counter denial and tell accurate histories?

Resource:

Remembering the Holocaust

<https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/survival-and-legacy/legacy-and-memory/remembering-the-holocaust/>

Give students an opportunity to design a public art work or advocacy piece about the Uyghur genocide. Work together in small groups. Consider having an event to educate your school community about the Uyghur genocide and feature the students’ work.



## Uyghur Culture Information Sheet

**Uyghurs** are one of China's 56 officially recognized ethnic groups.

Uyghurs are **Muslim** and speak a **Turkic language**, which uses an Arabic-derived writing system.

The majority of people in China—about 92%—are **Han Chinese**.

Uyghurs are **Indigenous to East Turkestan** and maintain traditions which are very different from Han Chinese.



There are about 12 million Uyghurs in East Turkestan.

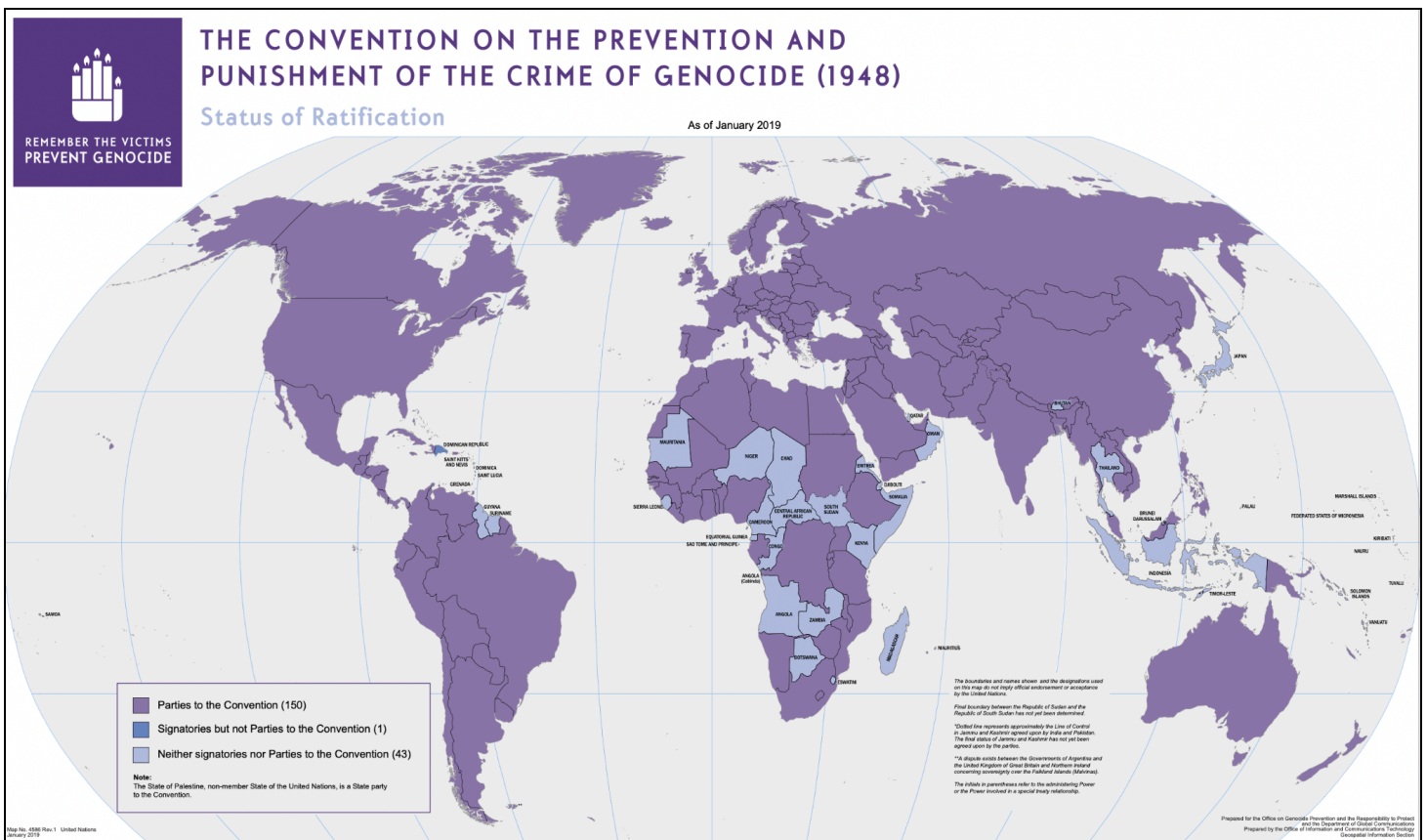
They are known for their **music, dancing, poetry, calligraphy** (see the work of Niyaz Kerim Şärqiy below), and **delicious food**.



## Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Genocide Convention)

The United Nations created the Genocide Convention in 1948 after the horrors of the Holocaust during World War II, vowing to never again allow such atrocities to take place.

It is an instrument of international human rights law used to hold governments accountable. Most countries in the world (in purple below) have ratified the Convention.



**Article II of the Convention** states that “genocide means *any* of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:”

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Uyghur Genocide Report Questions**

1. What is the title of your report? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is/are the author(s) of your report? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What year was your report published? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which aspects of the Uyghur genocide does your report discuss? Complete the table below, naming aspects of the Uyghur genocide covered in your article and connecting them to the corresponding criteria listed in the Genocide Convention.

You may use the criteria in the Genocide Convention more than once.

<b>Aspect of Genocide</b>	<b>Genocide Convention</b>
<u>Example</u> : forced sterilization of Uyghur women	Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group



## **Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity**

In 2015, **a ban on children's names** associated with “extremism” was issued, and this was followed by an additional list of banned names in 2017. These names include “Fatima,” “Aishe,” and “Mohammed.”

In 2017, China also imposed a ban on growing “abnormal” beards and wearing veils and burqas throughout East Turkestan.

Since at least 2016, **mosques, shrines, and cemeteries have been desecrated and destroyed** throughout East Turkestan.



A Chinese flag flies over a mosque closed by authorities in the old town of Kashgar. Photograph: Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



The Keriya Grand Mosque, 2014, seen here with many visitors. **This building no longer exists.** Photo Courtesy of Ruth Ingram and Bitter Winter.

Cemeteries are sacred places for Uyghurs where they connect with generations of their ancestors who have been buried there. They can no longer do this.

Also, **since 2017, the Uyghur language has been banned in schools** and from public and professional life. Shops have had to clear their shelves of anything written in Uyghur, and the Uyghur language has been removed from street signs and signboards (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2019).

### **Questions for consideration:**

1. How are these actions an assault on Uyghur culture?
2. What impact do these actions have on Uyghur identity?
3. What is your opinion on the role governments should play in controlling children's names, dress codes, languages spoken, and cultural and religious practices?

## Uyghur Genocide Denial by China: Quotes From Chinese News Sources

# Uyghur Genocide Denial by China

*“Genocide” in Xinjiang a Complete “Lie of the Century”—Reality Check: Falsehoods in US Perceptions of China* (Chinese Embassy, Indonesia, June 2022)

“Reality Check: The human rights of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang are fully protected. There is no “genocide” or “crimes against humanity” in Xinjiang. The US has been spreading disinformation about Xinjiang simply to create an excuse for discrediting and attacking China.”

*How blood-stained West orchestrated ‘genocide’ defamation against Xinjiang step by step* (Global Times, June 2021)

*Update: ‘Final ruling’ by so-called tribunal is extremely vile, despicable and dirty: Xinjiang regional spokesperson* (Global Times, December 2021)

*Testimony in ‘Uygur court’ given by actors* (People’s Daily, June 2021)

*China denounces OHCHR report on Xinjiang – ‘a patchwork of disinformation, political tool for US, some Western forces’* (Global Times, September 2022)

Common Chinese news sources include the following:

Xinhua: <https://english.news.cn/> (The official state news agency of the PRC.)

China Global Television Network (CGTN): <https://www.cgtn.com/>  
(English-language news channel)

The Global Times: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/>

People’s Daily: <http://en.people.cn/>

## **What is Being Done to Stop the Uyghur Genocide?**

### **(Notes for Teachers)**

See Uyghur Genocide Online Resource Center: <https://enduyghurgenocide.net/>

Declarations of genocide by world governments:

The United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Belgium, and the Netherlands have all declared genocide in Xinjiang/East Turkestan

Advocacy work by Uyghur diaspora organizations

- [Uyghur Human Rights Project](#)
- [Campaign for Uyghurs](#)
- [Uyghur American Association](#)
- [World Uyghur Congress](#)

Advocacy work by human rights organizations

including [Amnesty International](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#)

Legislation in the United States:

- [Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 \(Law\)](#)
- [Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act \(Law\)](#)
- [Uyghur Human Rights Protection Act \(Introduced March 2021\)](#)
- [Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act of 2023 \(Passed House\)](#)
- [Uyghur Genocide Intelligence Review Act \(Introduced May 2023\)](#)

Work of the [Uyghur Tribunal](#), including the [final judgment](#)

Books

- [The War on the Uyghurs](#) by Sean R. Roberts
- [No Escape](#) by Nury Turkel
- [In the Camps](#) by Darren Byler
- [Eurasian Crossroads](#) by James Millward
- [The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land](#) by Gardner Bovingdon
- [Daddy? Daddy. When Are You Coming Home?](#) By Leila Uyghur
- [How I Survived a Chinese "Reeducation" Camp](#) by Gulbahar Haitiwaji

Additional Resources

- [Smithsonian Magazine: Is China Committing Genocide Against the Uyghurs?](#)
- [New York Times: The Xinjiang Papers](#)
- [BBC: Uyghurs](#)
- [US Institute of Peace: Don't Look Away from China's Atrocities Against the Uyghurs](#)
- [US Holocaust Memorial Museum: Chinese Persecution of the Uyghurs](#)
- [International Consortium of Investigative Journalists: Xinjiang Police Files](#)

## **LESSON TWO: CENTERING UYGHUR DIASPORA TESTIMONY**

### **LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES**

- Students will reflect on the significance of hearing/witnessing testimony as a primary source of information
- Students will articulate how stories of survivors of genocides and their descendants are relevant in our world today
- Students will consider how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the world today
- Students will be able to identify and describe components of the Uyghur Genocide based on testimony
- Using testimony, students will provide evidence to counter claims of genocide denial with the Uyghur genocide as a case study
- Students will explore how to use their own voices to empower others

#### **Resources on Teaching with Testimony**

Using Visual History Testimony in the Classroom (Shoah Foundation):

<https://iWitness.usc.edu/SFI/Data/EducatorData/Using-Testimony-in-Classroom.pdf>

Guidelines for Teaching with Testimony (USHMM):

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/USHMM-Guidelines-Teaching-with-Survivor-Testimony.pdf>

Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony (USHMM):

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/holocaust-lesson-plans/teaching-with-holocaust-survivor-testimony>

Survivor Testimony and the Legacy of Memory (Facing History):

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/survivor-testimony-legacy-memory>

Impacts of Holocaust Education and Survivor Testimony

<https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2020/09/28761-survey-shows-holocaust-education-and-survivor-testimony-has-profound-impacts>

## LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- Initial Reflection Sheet: **The Significance of Testimony** (assessment below)
- Access to the internet to explore various Uyghur testimonies:

Elfidar Iltebir:

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/Elfidar%20Iltebir%27s%20statement-CECC%20Hearing%20on%20Forced%20labor.pdf>

Tursunay Ziyawudun:

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/CECC%20Hearing%20Testimony%20-%20Tursunay%20Ziyawudun.pdf>

For High School Students: Tursunay Ziyawudun Video (26:30-37:30)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5q2MwCOQow&ab\\_channel=HMTTC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5q2MwCOQow&ab_channel=HMTTC)

Rahima Mahmut:

<https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/interpreting-witness-statements-from-the-uyghur-genocide>

<https://time.com/5467628/china-uyghur-congress-torture/>

Multimedia resource:

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/02/asia/xinjiang-china-karakax-document-interactive-hnk/>

VOA journalist Kasim Kashgar (video):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKfmF8GLuc&ab\\_channel=VoiceofAmerica](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKfmF8GLuc&ab_channel=VoiceofAmerica)

Uyghur Tribunal:

<https://uyghurtribunal.com/news/witness-after-witness-hundreds-reveal-the-atrocities-of-chinas-concentration-camps/>

<https://uyghurtribunal.com/statements/>

## LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review previous lesson interactively with students:



“What do we know about Uyghurs? Where do they live? What is happening to them right now in East Turkestan (be specific)? How is China continuing to deny that there is a genocide of Uyghurs taking place?

*(formative assessment)*

2. “Today we are going to discuss how testimony can be used to learn about genocides and provide evidence to counter claims of genocide denial with the Uyghur genocide as a case study.”

Initial Reflection: The Significance of Testimony (handout below)

Students may do this individually, discuss with a partner, or in small groups.

*(formative assessment)*

Discuss as a whole class:

- What is testimony?
  - What can we learn from testimony?
  - How are the stories of survivors of genocides and mass atrocities and their descendants relevant in our world today?
  - How is learning from testimony different from other forms of learning history?
  - What can we learn from survivors about our responsibilities to one another?
3. Explain that testimony comes in different forms, and we will be exploring both written and video recorded testimony.

**Warning:** Much of this material is very intense and some includes graphic descriptions of torture. Please screen before sharing with students and determine what is best for your classes.

Have students read this initial article on Uyghur genocide testimony from the Uyghur Tribunal:

<https://uyghurtribunal.com/news/witness-after-witness-hundreds-reveal-the-atrocities-of-chinas-concentration-camps/>

Review dimensions of the Uyghur genocide and remind students that China continues to deny the genocide.

Select a few different Uyghur diaspora testimonies for students to explore individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

After selecting a few of the following options for students, have them read and/or watch the testimony and take notes on what they think is important to remember. Circulate around the room and check in with students regularly throughout.

VOA journalist Kasim Kashgar (video):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKfmF8GLuc&ab\\_channel=VoiceofAmerica](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKfmF8GLuc&ab_channel=VoiceofAmerica)

Both written and video:

<https://time.com/5467628/china-uyghur-congress-torture/>

Multimedia resource:

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/02/asia/xinjiang-china-karakax-document-intl-hnk/>

Written Testimony:

Elfidar Iltebir:

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/Elfidar%20Iltebir%27s%20statement-CECC%20Hearing%20on%20Forced%20labor.pdf>

Rahima Mahmut:

<https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/interpreting-witness-statements-from-the-uyghur-genocide>

Tursunay Ziyawudun

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/CECC%20Hearing%20Testimony%20-%20Tursunay%20Ziyawudun.pdf>

After reading and/or watching for the first time and taking notes, have students go back and read/watch again, this time taking notes specifically on the different components of the Uyghur genocide that are described in the testimony.

4. Summative Assessment: Individual Work: **Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide** (have students create a doc or use the handout below)

Using their notes from their engagement with the selected Uyghur diaspora testimonies, have students write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony.

Then, write a paragraph connecting the ideas and experiences to specific aspects of genocide. (Refer to [Genocide Convention](#) if necessary.) In other words, use the information provided in the testimonies as evidence to make a case for the Uyghur genocide.

Finally, have students write a third paragraph as a reflection on the importance of testimony as a primary source of information, how stories of survivors of genocides are relevant in our world today, and how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the present time.

5. Summarize and review: “Today we have discussed the significance of testimony, and you have engaged with different testimonies from Uyghur diaspora members. What are some of the aspects of the Uyghur genocide revealed in their testimonies? How can testimony be used to counter claims of genocide denial?” (*formative assessment*)

## ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 2, and 5, assign the written, summative assessment below (step 4 above).

Summative Assessment: Individual Work: **Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide** (have students create a doc or use the handout below)

Paragraph 1: Using their notes from their engagement with the selected Uyghur diaspora testimonies, have students write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony.

Paragraph 2: Then, write a paragraph connecting the ideas and experiences to specific aspects of genocide. (Refer to [Genocide Convention](#) if necessary.) In other words, use the information provided in the testimonies as evidence to make a case for the Uyghur genocide.

Paragraph 3: Reflect on the importance of testimony as a primary source of information, how stories of survivors are relevant in our world today, and how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the present time. Why is it important to bear witness to history?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Significance of Testimony**

1. What is testimony? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What can we learn from testimony? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How are the stories of survivors of genocides and mass atrocities and their descendants relevant in our world today?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How is learning from testimony different from other forms of learning history?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What can we learn from survivors about our responsibilities to one another?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide**

Paragraph 1: Using your notes from your Uyghur diaspora testimony, write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony.

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Paragraph 2: Using your notes from the second reading of your Uyghur diaspora testimony, write a paragraph connecting the shared ideas and experiences to specific aspects of the Uyghur genocide. (Refer to the Genocide Convention if necessary.)

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Paragraph 3: Reflect on the importance of testimony, and explain its significance in the following ways:

- as a primary source of information
- how stories of survivors are relevant in our world today
- how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the present time
- why it is important to bear witness to history

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Possible Additional Lesson on risks associated with Uyghur transnational repression.  
Resources listed below:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/seas/research/we-know-you-better-you-know-yourself-chinas-transnational-repression-uyghur-diaspora>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/china-ramping-up-transnational-repression-uyghur-exiles-in-us-say-/7781143.html>

<https://uhrp.org/transnational-repression/>

<https://hrf.org/latest/beyond-borders-chinas-transnational-repression-of-uyghurs/>

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/china>

Final project idea: teach about [oral history](#); students conduct oral history project with family or community member

### **Additional Resources on Uyghur Testimony**

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/hearing-testimony-the-chinese-communist-partys-ongoing-uyghur-genocide>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/30/uyghur-tribunal-testimony-surveillance-china>

<https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/witness-testimony/hearing-chinese-communist-partys-ongoing-uyghur-genocide-witness-testimony>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/china-families-of-xinjiang-detainees-speak-out-as-they-await-long-overdue-un-report/>

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/ZS/ZS00/20230323/115543/HHRG-118-ZS00-W-state-SidikQ-20230323.pdf>

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/genocide-select-committee-03242023125434.html>

### **LESSON THREE: CONNECTIONS TO THE HOLOCAUST**

Note for teachers: While comparisons between genocides are not always helpful and can even be harmful by running the risk of diminishing the suffering of victims, the Holocaust remains a quintessential example of the systematic horrors that can occur when a group is targeted and mechanisms in society, which are enacted to otherize, delegitimize, villainize, and destroy this group, go unchecked. In the case of the Uyghur genocide, which remains unknown to many people and is largely underreported in mainstream media, comparisons to the Holocaust have served to raise awareness of the ongoing atrocities in East Turkestan and call people to action. When teaching about the Holocaust, this lesson may provide an additional resource or entry point to connect to the Uyghur genocide.

*This lesson does not include detailed information about the Holocaust, but rather draws comparisons between the Uyghur genocide and the Holocaust.  
See below for resources on teaching the Holocaust.*

#### **Resources on Teaching the Holocaust**

USHMM Holocaust Teaching Guide: Getting Started

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/getting-started-guide-for-teachers>

USHMM: Teaching Materials on the Holocaust

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/teaching-materials/holocaust>

Facing History and Ourselves: Teaching Holocaust and Human Behavior

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-human-behavior>

Echoes & Reflections: Pedagogical Principles for effective Holocaust Instruction

<https://echoesandreflections.org/pedagogical-principles/>

Echoes & Reflections: Holocaust Unit and Lesson Plans

<https://echoesandreflections.org/teach/?src=glss>

PBS: 10 Tips for Teaching About the Holocaust

<https://www.pbs.org/education/blogs/pbs-in-the-classroom/10-tips-for-teaching-about-the-holocaust/>

## LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to identify similarities between the experiences of victims during the Holocaust and the Uyghur Genocide, respectively, thereby better understanding both atrocities
- Students will be able to describe how tactics employed by the Nazi Party during WWII and those of the Chinese Communist Party in the present day are alike in enabling genocide
- Students will be able to describe how mechanisms in society contributed to the eventual genocides in both contexts
- Students will explore how comparisons to the Holocaust have served to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide
- Students will reflect on and articulate the differences between being a bystander and an upstander and will propose how to be an upstander for the Uyghur Genocide

## LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- Optional: **The Camps** (handout)
- Optional: **Issues Pertaining to Women and Children** (handout)
- Optional: **Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity** (handout)
- Optional: **From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor** (handout)
- Paper and pencil/pen or computer access to create a document
- 
- Construction paper and markers or colored pencils

## LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide interactively with students. Use provided handouts if not already used in previous lesson(s). (*formative assessment*)
2. Review elements of the Holocaust that align with dimensions of the Uyghur genocide: concentration camps, crematoria near camps, genocide tourism and genocide denial, forced labor.
3. Using their existing knowledge, individually or in pairs, ask students to identify and write down similarities between aspects of the Holocaust and the Uyghur genocide. (*summative assessment*)

These should include the following:

- The experiences of victims during the Holocaust and the Uyghur Genocide, respectively
- The tactics employed by the Nazi Party during WWII and those of the Chinese Communist Party in the present day
- How the world was/is reluctant to respond
- Genocide denial

4. Share the reading on **The Uyghur Genocide and Echoes of the Holocaust** (below)

Have students read this independently, or read together as a class with students taking turns reading aloud. Students should annotate as they read.

Time permitting, have students explore the following Uyghur organizations:

Uyghur Human Rights Project: <https://uhrp.org/>

Campaign for Uyghurs: <https://campaignforuyghurs.org/>

Uyghur American Association: <https://www.uyghuraa.org/>

World Uyghur Congress: <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/>

As a whole class, discuss how Uyghur diaspora members and allies have engaged in raising awareness of the Uyghur genocide and how connections between the Uyghur genocide and the Holocaust have served to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. (*formative assessment*)

Have them go back to their written assessment from step 3 and add any additional information after reading **The Uyghur Genocide and Echoes of the Holocaust**.

(Optional: include a lesson on propaganda, highlighting both Nazi propaganda and CCP propaganda)

5. Review what it means to be a bystander versus an upstander interactively with students, and revisit how mechanisms in society—particularly people's inaction and complicity—contributed to the eventual genocides in both contexts. (*formative assessment*)

Tell students they will have the opportunity to be upstanders for the Uyghur genocide today.

Assignment: Create an advocacy piece to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. Either digitally or using construction paper and markers or colored pencils, have students create a flier or art piece calling attention to the Uyghur genocide.

6. Summarize and review: “Today we have discussed some of the mechanisms of genocide in the contexts of both the Holocaust and the Uyghur genocide, and we have seen that there are multiple similarities between these two catastrophies. We have also learned that making connections to the Holocaust can serve to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. You have created beautiful advocacy pieces to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide with the understanding that everyone has a responsibility to speak out against such atrocities.”
7. Question for reflection: (either written or discussed in small groups or whole class)

How can learning about the choices people made during past incidents of injustice, mass violence, or genocide help guide our choices today?

### ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

Formative assessments are included in the lesson in steps 1, 4, and 5.

A summative assessment is described in step 3 of the lesson.

Assignment: Create an advocacy piece to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. Either digitally or using construction paper and markers or colored pencils, have students create a flier or art piece calling attention to the Uyghur genocide.

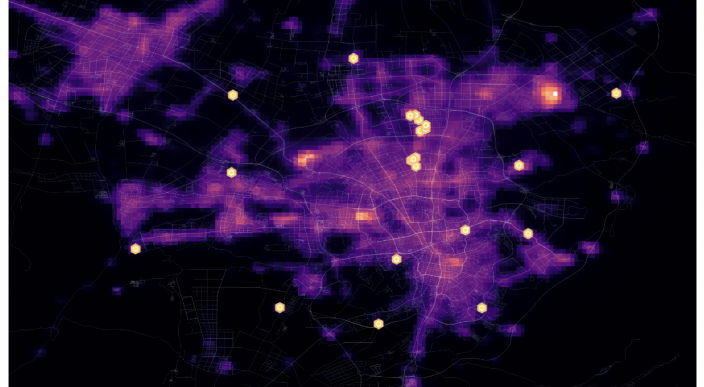
Optional Extension: Students may also work together on an advocacy project related to prejudiced attitudes and combating hate, which they could share with the class or larger school community.



## The Camps



A guard tower and barbed wire fences are seen around a facility in the Kunshan Industrial Park in Artux, Xinjiang, December 3, 2018. Photo by Ng Han Guan/AP



This nighttime satellite view shows the location of each detention and re-education camp in Urumqi, Xinjiang province, China, January 2021. Image by NOAA VIIRS and OpenStreetMap

In 2017, news began to emerge about the mass **internment** of Uyghurs in “re-education” camps.

These facilities have since been called **concentration camps**.

It is estimated that up to **three million people** have been interned in these camps.

### Conditions in the Camps

- Uyghurs have been forced to eat pork and drink alcohol, which they avoid
- Very crowded rooms: people have to take turns sleeping
- Limited access to toilets and showers; sometimes just a bucket in the room for everyone to share
- Constant surveillance
- Forced indoctrination to Chinese Communist Party ideology

### Atrocities in the Camps

- Torture: Numerous accounts of torture exist
- Sexual Assault: Both men and women have been subjected to sexual assault.
- Organ Harvesting: China has a well-documented history of using executed prisoners as organ donors.
- Suicide: Many attempts at suicide have been reported.

**Deaths and Crematoria**: In 2018, it was reported that crematoria were rapidly being constructed throughout East Turkestan. This is not only disturbing, but also violates Uyghur funerary traditions.

## Issues Pertaining to Women and Children

Women have had to deal with a number of issues both inside and outside of the camps. These include the following:

- **sexual assault**
- **forced abortions**
- **imposed birth control**
- **sterilization**

Not only are these affronts and violations to the women themselves, but these actions also have an impact on the Uyghur population and culture as a whole.

Question for consideration: How do these actions against women affect the Uyghur population as a whole?

### **Issues affecting children:**

In 2017, laws were passed which demanded that children receive a national state education in Mandarin.  
(The Uyghur language was banned in schools.)



The entrance to the No. 4 High School with a sign that reads "Entering school grounds, please speak Mandarin," in Peyzawat, Xinjiang region.  
© 2018 AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

Also in 2017, reports revealed that children were being placed in state care after both of their parents were detained in the camps, even if grandparents were available to care for them.

These state care facilities include **orphanages, children's shelters, and boarding schools.**

These places are all **highly secured compounds** with **armed police, barred windows, and barbed wire fences, and people are not allowed to come and go.**

## **Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity**

In 2015, a **ban on children's names** associated with “extremism” was issued, and this was followed by an additional list of banned names in 2017. These names include “Fatima,” “Aishe,” and “Mohammed.”

In 2017, China also imposed a ban on growing “abnormal” beards and wearing veils and burqas throughout East Turkestan.

Since at least 2016, **mosques, shrines, and cemeteries have been desecrated and destroyed** throughout East Turkestan.



A Chinese flag flies over a mosque closed by authorities in the old town of Kashgar. Photograph: Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



The Keriya Grand Mosque, 2014, seen here with many visitors. **This building no longer exists.** Photo Courtesy of Ruth Ingram and Bitter Winter.

Cemeteries are sacred places for Uyghurs where they connect with generations of their ancestors who have been buried there. They can no longer do this.

Also, **since 2017, the Uyghur language has been banned in schools** and from public and professional life. Shops have had to clear their shelves of anything written in Uyghur, and the Uyghur language has been removed from street signs and signboards (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2019).

### Questions for consideration:

1. How are these actions an assault on Uyghur culture?
2. What impact do these actions have on Uyghur identity?
3. What is your opinion on the role governments should play in controlling children's names, dress codes, languages spoken, and cultural and religious practices?

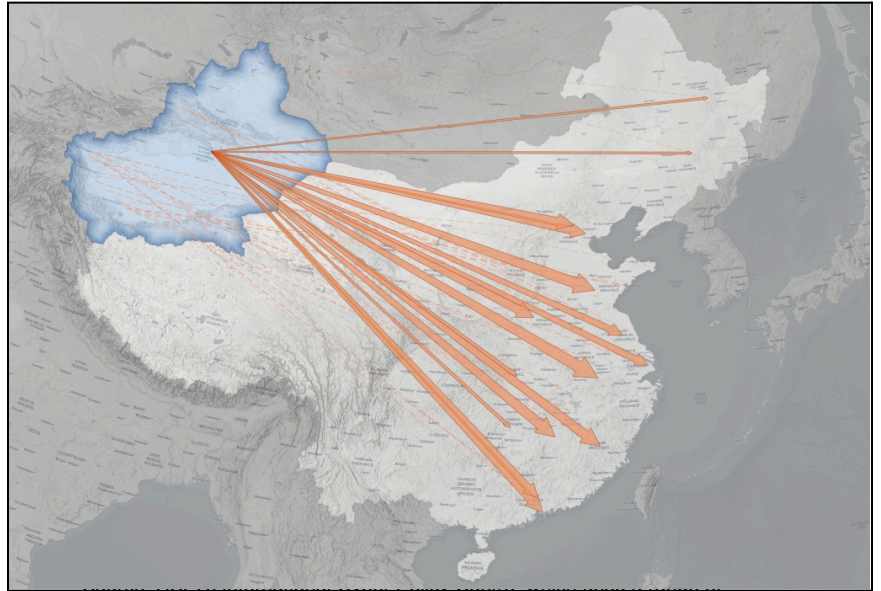


## From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor

Many Uyghurs have been transferred directly from the camps to highly secured prisons and factories in XUAR and elsewhere in China.

Uyghurs have been placed in factories with boarding facilities since at least 2017.

Conditions for factory workers are reportedly very similar to the camps, including “ideological training” outside of work hours.



data sources, including local media reports and official government sources. <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>

**1 in 5**

cotton garments in the global apparel market are tainted by forced labour from the Uyghur Region

**45%**

of the world's solar-grade polysilicon (used in solar panels) supply comes from the Uyghur Region

**17+**

global industries – from agriculture to toys – are implicated in Uyghur forced labour

<https://enduyghurforcedlabour.org>

The [list of goods produced by forced labor](#) in China includes electronics, cotton, hair products, solar cells, thread and textiles, gloves, and bricks.

In 2020, a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) revealed that 83 major brands have been using forced labor by ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

These brands include the following:

Abercrombie & Fitch, Adidas, Amazon, Apple, BMW, Calvin Klein, Cisco, Dell, Fila, Gap, General Electric, General Motors, Google, H&M, Hitachi, Jaguar, L.L.Bean, Lacoste, Lenovo, Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Nike, Nintendo, Nokia, The North Face, Panasonic, Polo Ralph Lauren, Puma, Samsung, Siemens, Skechers, Sony, Tommy Hilfiger, Toshiba, Uniqlo, Victoria's Secret, Volkswagen, Zara.

Question for consideration: How can you make an impact by shopping responsibly?

## **The Uyghur Genocide and Echoes of the Holocaust**

### **Boarded onto Trains**

In 2019, drone video footage from a train station near Korla, which is the second largest city in Xinjiang, showed hundreds of blindfolded, restrained Uyghur prisoners with freshly shaven heads being transferred from trains (Handley, 2019; Kuo, 2019; Rivers, Foster, & Griffiths, 2019). These prisoners were being moved from a detention center in Kashgar nearly 1,000 kilometers away to a larger facility in Korla (Handley, 2019). Not long after this video was leaked, Jewish groups and others voiced their concerns. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy posted the following quote on social media: “As a Jew, knowing our history, the sight of people being shaven headed, lined up, boarded onto trains, and sent to concentration camps is particularly harrowing” (The Rabbi Sacks Legacy, 2020, July 22, Facebook Post).

### **Forced Labor**

The system of Uyghur forced labor in China has been well documented. It is known that Uyghurs have been placed in highly secured factories with boarding facilities since 2017 (Fifield, 2020; Xu, 2020). Many Uyghurs have been transferred directly from the camps to these factories in Xinjiang and other locations in China, including the far east. Government documents openly “boast about the fact that the labor supply from the vast internment camp network has been attracting many Chinese companies to set up production in Xinjiang” (Zenz, 2019, p. 2). These factory settings are similar to the camps in that the workers are constantly surveilled, are not allowed to go home, and cannot express or participate in religious observances, including praying. The workers are also required to take part in military-style drills, Mandarin classes, and political indoctrination, including “ideological training”, outside of work hours (Buckley & Ramzy, 2020; Xu, 2020; Zenz, 2019). Just as forced laborers died from the brutality of their conditions during World War II, it is widely thought that many Uyghurs have also died from ill-treatment, malnutrition, and disease in the forced labor facilities in China.

### **Concentration Camps**

News of “large internment facilities” in Xinjiang began to emerge in English in 2017, although an understanding of the extent of the network of camps and the scale of the numbers of prisoners didn’t start until almost a year later. By November 2018, the camps in Xinjiang started being referred to as “concentration camps” (*Washington Post* Editorial Board, 2018). This garnered more widespread attention to the Uyghur genocide, and this term continues to be used today by Uyghurs and activists to emphasize the horrors of the camps by association with the concentration camps of the Holocaust (Abbas, 2019; Human Rights Foundation, 2023; Nazarian, 2020; Werleman, 2019).

### **“Largest Detention Since the Holocaust”**

The word “Holocaust” itself gets people’s attention and evokes a powerful and serious emotional engagement. In 2019, open comparisons started to be made between the extent of the detention of Uyghurs in China to the scale of people rounded up during the Holocaust. Initially, a U.S. Commission on China stated that the detention campaign across Xinjiang is creating “the largest mass incarceration of a minority population in the world” (Shih, 2018, para. 4). In June 2019, *The New Statesman* reported that “China’s Uyghur detention camps may be the largest mass incarceration since the Holocaust” (Apps, 2019). Since then, news sources ranging from *The Irish Times* to *PBS Frontline* to the *Toronto Star* have made explicit connections to the Holocaust, reiterating that the detention of Uyghurs in Xinjiang is “the largest mass incarceration of an ethnic group since the Holocaust” (Boghani, 2020; Keena, 2019; Teich, Eisen, & Tohti, 2022).

### **Crematoria**

In June 2018, *Radio Free Asia* reported that crematoria were rapidly being constructed throughout Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR): “Between March 2017 and February 2018, the XUAR government listed 5-10 million yuan (U.S. \$760,000 to \$1.52 million) contracts to build nine ‘burial management centers’ that include crematoria in mostly Uyghur-populated areas throughout the region” (Hoja, 2018, para. 2). The timing of the building of these crematoria coincides with the ramping up of the crackdown on Uyghurs. Disturbing genocidal conclusions may be drawn from the rapid creation of the crematoria themselves, the presence of security at the crematoria, and the local common knowledge that people don’t return from the camps. In October 2018, a scholar and historian of East Asia published a piece entitled “China’s Final Solution In Xinjiang,” specifically referencing the horrors of the Holocaust (Yu, 2018). The presence of crematoria near concentration camps continues to evoke associations with the Holocaust, which, in turn, raises concerns about the Uyghur genocide.

### **Genocide Tourism and Genocide Denial**

China has been actively promoting tourism to “Beautiful Xinjiang,” which highlights Uyghur culture while simultaneously obscuring the realities of Uyghur people in East Turkestan (Szadziwski, 2023). Photographs online show Uyghur men and women lined up in their traditional clothing, holding textiles and instruments, being photographed by Chinese tourists. This genocide tourism is directly related to the denial of the Uyghur genocide, as it enables the Chinese government to present a sanitized view and obscure what is actually happening in East Turkestan through propaganda tours for both domestic and foreign visitors. This is another direct comparison to the tactics of the Nazis, who used propaganda to shape public opinion and cultivate a climate of indifference—or even justification—for the horrors inflicted upon their victims while the atrocities were happening.

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