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FORCED LABOR IN XINJIANG

New Evidence, Current State, and Proposed Countermeasures

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Executive Summary

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region operates two main systems of forced labor that together create one of the world's largest systems of state-imposed coercive work, with over two million ethnic minorities at direct risk of forced labor. New research shows that Xinjiang's forced labor has recently further expanded in scale, scope, and become more deeply embedded in society. As a result, foreign exports of goods made in southern Xinjiang's Uyghur heartland—the epicenter of Beijing's mass internment campaign—have soared by over 100 percent this year. These regions at high risk of forced labor now make up nearly one-third of Xinjiang's foreign trade.

Scholars, activists and policymakers seeking to evaluate and counter forced labor have to contend with three challenges. First, the complexities and insidiousness of Xinjiang's forced labor. Second, ongoing changes on the ground that are significantly affecting the dynamics of forced labor. Third, a lack of global research into this specific form of state-imposed forced labor, leading to significant gaps in our ability to conceptualize and capture it. New research summarized in this report seeks to address these three challenges.

Xinjiang's better-known system of forced labor is linked to the re-education camps, and actively processed new victims between early 2018 and most likely the end of 2019. It likely created hundreds of thousands of forced labor victims, most of which probably remain in forced labor (hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities have been shifted from camps to other forms of arbitrary detention in detention centers and prisons). Xinjiang also operates a much larger yet more clandestine system of forced labor, called Poverty Alleviation Through Labor Transfer, that affects a much wider range of sectors and industries, including cotton, textiles, tomatoes, peppers, seafood, polysilicon, lithium, batteries, and aluminum. This system is easier for the state to conceal and portray as beneficial. Having evolved from rural-urban labor migration in the early 2000s, it can provide increased income-earning potential to farmers, but in recent years has become acutely coercive. New research shows that Uyghurs who refuse labor transfers were detained in re-education camps. From 2021, labor transfer policies further intensified. Xinjiang's new "Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning" system effectively prevents workers from leaving their jobs. Research presented in this report proves that coercive labor transfers continued in 2023 with existing and new efforts targeting Uyghur regions.

The labor transfer system is state-imposed forced labor that is not based on internment or imprisonment, and is more difficult to measure than company-based or prison-based forced labor. The International Labor Organization (ILO)





Mark Schiefelbein/Associated Press via New York Times

has not yet developed an effective approach for measuring this type of forced labor. Labor transfers are not easily captured through the ILO's widely-known II indicators of forced labor, but they can be assessed through a modified version of the ILO's 2012 Survey Guidelines. Since Uyghurs and other ethnic groups cannot speak freely without facing severe repercussions, external audits into work conditions are unreliable. Because of the lack of unfettered access to the region by independent investigators, forced labor in Xinjiang can only be measured through remote policy analysis and witness interviews conducted outside of China.

Xinjiang's prominent role in crucial global supply chains requires that countries enact legislation against the import of goods and inputs made in whole or in part from the region. To be effective, this requires a reversal of the burden of proof, requiring importing companies to prove that goods are free of forced labor. While such a reversal can lead to overenforcement (banning some goods not linked to forced labor), the alternative would be severe underenforcement that implicates the citizens and companies of rights-respecting countries in human rights atrocities, often unwittingly. The very nature of state-imposed forced labor requires such a measure, as this form of forced work creates endemic coercive risks throughout targeted regions, populations, and economic sectors.

To design effective countermeasures, policymakers need to understand Xinjiang's forced labor systems and how non-internment state-imposed forced labor systems operate.





China Daily via Reuters

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“Measuring Non-Internment State-Imposed Forced Labor in Xinjiang and Central Asia: An Assessment of ILO Measurement Guidelines.” *Journal of Human Trafficking* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2023.2270366>.

“Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning: New Trends in Xinjiang’s Coercive Labor Placement Systems.” *The Jamestown Foundation* (June 2022). <https://jamestown.org/program/unemployment-monitoring-and-early-warning-new-trends-in-xinjiangs-coercive-labor-placement-systems/>



“Innovating Penal Labour: Reeducation, Forced Labour, and Coercive Social Integration in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” *The China Journal*. Vol. 90 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1086/725494> or free access: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4468500.

“Coercive Labor and Forced Displacement in Xinjiang’s Cross-Regional Labor Transfer Program.” *The Jamestown Foundation* (March 2021). <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>.



“Coercive Labor in the Cotton Harvest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan: A Comparative Analysis of State-Sponsored Forced Labor.” *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1822939> or free access: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4439694.

“Beyond the Camps: Beijing’s Long-Term Scheme of Coercive Labor, Poverty Alleviation and Social Control in Xinjiang.” *The Journal of Political Risk*, 7, no.12. (December 2019). <https://www.jpolrisk.com/beyond-the-camps-beijings-long-term-scheme-of-coercive-labor-poverty-alleviation-and-social-control-in-xinjiang/>.



“The conceptual evolution of poverty alleviation through labour transfer in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” *Central Asian Survey* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2023.2227225>.

“Coercive Labor in Xinjiang: Labor Transfer and the Mobilization of Ethnic Minorities to Pick Cotton.” *Newlines Institute* (December 2020). <https://newlinesinstitute.org/china/coercive-labor-in-xinjiang-labor-transfer-and-the-mobilization-of-ethnic-minorities-to-pick-cotton/>



1. Introduction: Xinjiang's Two Systems of Forced Labor¹

In early 2017, the so-called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China (PRC) embarked on a campaign of interning 1-2 million Uyghurs and other predominantly Turkic ethnic groups into re-education camps, euphemistically termed “Vocational Skills Education and Training Centres” or VSETCs.²

Xinjiang operates two distinct systems of forced labor: (1) work placements of VSETC detainees; and (2) labor transfers of (non-detained) rural surplus laborers into non-agricultural work (Zenz 2019; cf. Lehr and Bechrakis 2019). This led to the important “rebuttable presumption” that Xinjiang's products are tainted with forced labor, legislated in the U.S. as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). Subsequent research on coercive labor transfers into cotton-picking led to the US import ban on all Xinjiang cotton in January 2021.³

This conceptual framing of Xinjiang's two labor systems, first outlined in a 2019 study on forced labor,⁴ has been adopted in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' report on Xinjiang, and by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery:⁵

Two distinct State-mandated systems [of forced labor] exist: (a) the vocational skills education and training centre system, under which minorities are detained and subjected to work placements; and (b) the poverty alleviation through labour transfer system, where surplus rural labourers are transferred into secondary or

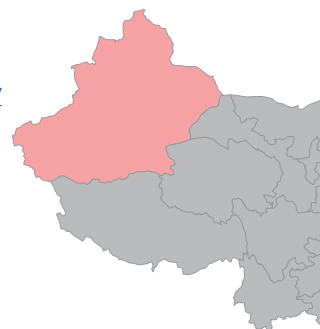
¹ For a concise discussion of recent developments related to Xinjiang's forced labor, see “How Beijing Forces Uyghurs to Pick Cotton: Coercive labor is getting less visible, but more intense.” *Foreign Policy* (May 2023). <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/16/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-cotton-forced-labor/>.

² Zenz, A. (2018). “‘Thoroughly Reforming Them Towards a Healthy Heart Attitude’: China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang.” *Central Asian Survey* 38 (1): 102–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2018.1507997>. Zenz, A. (2022). “Public Security Minister's speech describes Xi Jinping's direction of mass detentions in Xinjiang.” *ChinaFile*, 24 May. <https://www.chinafile.com/node/53986>

³ Sudworth, J. (2020). “China's ‘tainted’ cotton.” *BBC News*, December.: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/nz0g3o6v8c/china-tainted-cotton>. Zenz, A. (2020). “Coercive Labor in Xinjiang: Labor Transfer and the Mobilization of Ethnic Minorities to Pick Cotton.” *New Lines Institute*. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/china/coercive-labor-in-xinjiang-labor-transfer-and-the-mobilization-of-ethnic-minorities-to-pick-cotton/>.

⁴ Zenz, A. (2019). “Beyond the Camps: Beijing's Long-Term Scheme of Coercive Labor, Poverty Alleviation and Social Control in Xinjiang.” *The Journal of Political Risk* 7 (12), <https://www.jpolarisk.com/beyond-the-camps-beijings-long-term-scheme-of-coercive-labor-poverty-alleviation-and-social-control-in-xinjiang/>.

⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2022). “OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the XUAR.” <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assesment.pdf>. Obokata, T. (2022) “Contemporary forms of slavery affecting persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minority communities.” *United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3984430?ln=en>



tertiary sector work. Similar arrangements have also been identified in the Tibet Autonomous Region, where an extensive labour transfer programme has shifted mainly farmers, herders and other rural workers into low-skilled and low-paid employment.

Based on Xinjiang’s intensification of employment and vocational training policies after 2020, I increased my estimate of ethnic persons at risk of coercion through labor transfers from “up to 1.6 million” to “up to 2.0 million”.⁶ Adding a conservative estimate of at least several hundred thousand persons affected by camp-linked labor results in a total coercive labor estimate of up to 2.5 million.

Xinjiang’s two forced labor systems evolved at different times from different precursors, operate under different policy and implementation schemes, and achieve different (although complementary and partially overlapping) aims. Both forced labor systems engage in at times severe economic exploitation, but are chiefly designed to achieve Beijing’s long-term political and national security goals in Xinjiang.

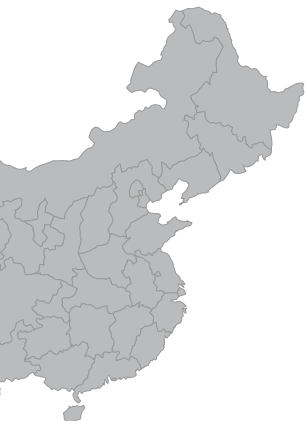
Inaccurate conceptual framings can cause policy responses that the Chinese state could rightly challenge. They could also lead to highly misleading conclusions about the continued existence of forced labor if China credibly demonstrated camp-linked labor policies had ended, a scenario that is most likely already reality. The camp-to-labor policy likely ended in late 2019 when many lower-security camps were closed, though most released detainees likely remain in forced labor. Large-scale state investments in VSETC-linked factories meanwhile suggest that the resulting changes in employment patterns are intended to be permanent.⁷ By contrast, labor transfers have further intensified from 2021 and now constitute Xinjiang’s primary active coercive labor system.⁸

Labor transfers target non-detained rural populations and involve a wide range of sectors, including cotton-picking, tomato-picking, seafood processing,

⁶ Zenz, A. (2022). “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning: New Trends in Xinjiang’s Coercive Labor Placement Systems.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/program/unemployment-monitoring-and-early-warning-new-trends-in-xinjiangs-coercive-labor-placement-systems/>. Zenz, A. (2021). “Coercive Labor and Forced Displacement in Xinjiang’s Cross-Regional Labor Transfer Program.” The Jamestown Foundation, March. <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>

⁷ Zenz, A. (2023). “Innovating Penal Labor: Reeducation, Forced Labor, and Coercive Social Integration In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” The China Journal 90. [doi:10.1086/725494](https://doi.org/10.1086/725494).

⁸ Zenz, A. (2022). “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning: New Trends in Xinjiang’s Coercive Labor Placement Systems.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/program/unemployment-monitoring-and-early-warning-new-trends-in-xinjiangs-coercive-labor-placement-systems/>. Zenz, A. (2023). “Innovating Penal Labour: Reeducation, Forced Labour, and Coercive Social Integration in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” The China Journal 90. <https://doi.org/10.1086/725494>



polysilicon production for solar panels, lithium for electric vehicle batteries, and aluminum for batteries, vehicle bodies, and wheels.⁹ By contrast, camp-linked labor placements began in 2018 to effect a controlled release of detainees into a narrower range of low-skilled manufacturing or other workplaces, with no established links to agricultural harvesting or polysilicon production.¹⁰

2. Poverty Alleviation Through Labor Transfer

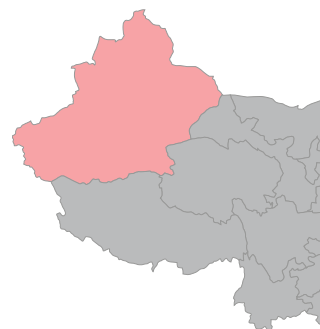
This section is based on the article “The conceptual evolution of poverty alleviation through labour transfer in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” Central Asian Survey (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2023.2227225>.

Summary: Labor transfers evolved from a legitimate socio-economic policy that has now become part of a multi-faceted atrocity through a large system of state-imposed forced labor. Since its inception in the early 2000s this policy has become much more coercive and pervasive due to (1) Beijing’s shifting political priorities for Xinjiang after 2014 prioritizing full (off-farm) employment for targeted ethnic groups, (2) mass internments from early 2017, and (3) Xi Jinping’s national campaign to eradicate absolute poverty by 2020, prompting an intense poverty alleviation work rectification campaign in 2019. Since 2020/2021, Xinjiang has been implementing intensified labor transfer and employment policies coupled with a new “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning System” to ensure achievement of employment targets, further preventing targeted populations from leaving state-assigned work placements.

The Chinese state defines rural surplus laborers, also referred to as rural migrant workers, as persons engaged in forms of subsistence agriculture who are

⁹ Swanson, A., and C. Buckley. (2021). “Chinese Solar Companies Tied to Use of Forced Labor.” January. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230424180048/>. Murphy, L., and N. Elimä. (2021). “In Broad Daylight: Uyghur Forced Labour and Global Solar Supply Chains.” Sheffield Hallam University <https://www.shu.ac.uk/-/media/home/research/helena-kennedy-centre/projects/pdfs>. Zenz, A. (2020). “Coercive Labor in Xinjiang: Labor Transfer and the Mobilization of Ethnic Minorities to Pick Cotton.” New Lines Institute. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/china/coercive-labor-in-xinjiang-labor-transfer>. Zenz, A. (2023). “Coercive Labor in the Cotton Harvest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan: A Comparative Conceptual Analysis of State-Sponsored Forced Labor.” Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1822939>. Halper, E. (2023). “EV Makers’ Use of Chinese Suppliers Raises Concerns about Forced Labor.” The Washington Post. 18 September. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2023/electric-vehicles-forced-labor-china/>. Murphy, L., et al. “Driving Force.” Sheffield Hallam University. <https://www.shu.ac.uk/helena-kennedy-centre-international-justice/research-and-projects/all-projects/>. Urbina, I. (2023). “The Uyghurs forced to process the world’s fish.” The New Yorker. 9 October. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-uyghurs-forced-to-process-the-worlds-fish>

¹⁰ Zenz, A. (2023). “Innovating Penal Labor: Reeducation, Forced Labor, and Coercive Social Integration In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.” The China Journal 90. [doi:10.1086/725494](https://doi.org/10.1086/725494).





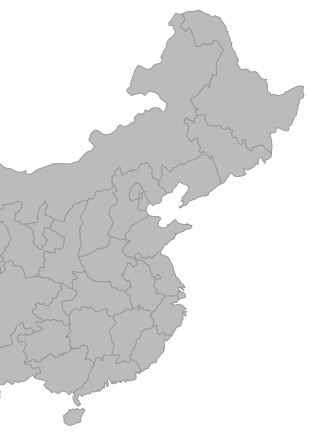
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considered labor assets superfluous to modernizing agricultural production.¹¹ In economics, surplus labor is defined as labor that can be transferred out of the agricultural sector without reducing agricultural output.¹² State policies and statistics on these laborer's transfer from primary into secondary or tertiary economic sectors include forms of self-initiated labor migration ("self-transfer"), transfers facilitated by private intermediaries (often incentivized by the state), and transfers directly supervised by state agencies.

According to official figures, Xinjiang had 2.59 million rural surplus laborers in 2019, of which 1.65 million were in the four southern Uyghur-majority prefectures

¹¹ Chen, Z., J. Zhang, and L. Shi. (2019). "Xinjiang hetian diqu weizu laodongli zhuan yi jiu ye fupingongzuo baogao." Nankai University, No. 2019001 (1009). <https://web.archive.org/web/20200507161938/https://ciwe.nankai.edu.cn/2019/1223/c18571a259225/page.htm>. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2005). "Zhuan yi non gcun laodong li." 31 August. https://web.archive.org/web/20210216002615/http://www.stats.gov.cn/ztjc/ztfx/fxbg/200508/t20050830_15728.html. PRC Ministry of Agriculture. (2003). "2003-2010 nian quanguo nongmin gong peixun gui hua." 8 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20220822153311/http://www.moa.gov.cn/ztzl/zjnmsr/zcs/200402/t20040216_164832.htm. Xinhua. (2020). "Xinjiang de laodong jiu ye baozhang baipishu." 17 September. https://web.archive.org/web/20200917031303/http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-09/17/c_1126503119.htm

¹² Cook, S. (1999). "Surplus Labour and Productivity in Chinese Agriculture." *The Journal of Development Studies* 35 (3): 16-44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220389908422572>



(Aksu, Kashgar, Hotan and Kizilsu).¹³ Most are transferred into jobs near their homes. In the first 10 months of 2018, 364,000 or 13% of all labor transfers in Xinjiang were outside people's home prefectures, and only 1% were to other provinces.¹⁴ However, labor transfers disproportionately target the southern Uyghur heartlands and poor households for displacement. In 2018, the share of labor transfers from Xinjiang to other provinces was 1%, compared to 11% that targeted poor ethnic households.¹⁵ Even so, over 90% of transferred ethnic workers remain in Xinjiang.

Mao Zedong imitated Stalin's development strategy of promoting industrialization by forcing rural populations to subsidize urban and industrial development¹⁶. Peasants were not allowed to leave the countryside to seek urban employment. This artificially maintained large numbers of underemployed surplus laborers.¹⁷ By the late 1990s, China's socio-economic inequality had increased significantly.¹⁸ As part of inequality reduction, the government began to systematically promote the labor transfer of this rural surplus workforce.¹⁹

¹³ Lawinfochina. (2020). "Employment and labor rights in Xinjiang." September 1. <https://archive.is/ua3MW>. The 2021 and 2022 U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons reports wrongly state that 2.6 million ethnic persons in Xinjiang are subjected to labor transfers. This figure is based on the English version of the 2020 white paper on Employment Rights. It refers only to the first half of 2020, whereas the full-year figure was 3.15 million person-times (Lawinfochina 2020; NEAC 2021). The English translation incorrectly states "persons" instead of "person-times" (人次), meaning fewer persons were transferred as laborers can be transferred multiple times per year (in 2019, the difference between "person-times" and "persons" amounted to 283,000 or 11%). Also, transfer figures include Han. In 2019 Xinjiang reported surplus labor transfer figures by person (not person-times) at 2.59 million, of which only 1.65 million were from the four southern Uyghur-majority prefectures of Aqsu, Kashgar, Khotan, Kizilsu (Lawinfochina 2020). Generally, it should be noted that labor transfer statistics are not equivalent to coercive labor estimates. Sources: Lawinfochina, 2020, and NEAC (National Ethnic Affairs Commission). 2021. "2020 nian guomin jingji." August 13. <http://web.archive.org/web/20220812152601/https://www.neac.gov.cn/seac/xxgk/202108/1150387.shtml>.

¹⁴ Xinjiang Daily. (2018). "Qian shi yue Xinjiang nongcun fuyu laodongli zhuan yi jiu ye 272.9 wan ren cu." 13 November. <http://www.mzb.com.cn/>

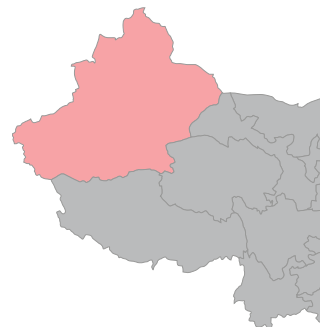
¹⁵ Guangming Daily. (2018) "Xinjiang Kashgar Hotan nongcun fuyu laodongli zhuan yi jiu ye gongcheng shishi liang nian lai." 15 November. http://www.nxnews.net/sh/shwx/201811/t20181115_6100655.html

¹⁶ Chan, K. W., and Y. Wei. (2019). "Two Systems in One Country: The Origin, Functions, and Mechanisms Of the Rural-Urban Dual System in China." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 60 (4): 422-454. doi:[10.1080/15387216.2019.166920320A](https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2019.166920320A). ZENZ

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Heilmann, S. (2017). *China's Political System*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

¹⁹ PRC Ministry of Agriculture. (2003). "2003-2010 nian quanguo nongmin gong peixun gui hua." 8 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20220822153311/http://www.moa.gov.cn/ztzl/zjnmsr/zccs/200402/t20040216_164832.htm



Xinjiang's labor transfer programs began in the early 2000s.²⁰ While some rural laborers likely welcomed state policies enabling them to earn wage incomes in cities and industrial sectors, the transfers already showed evidence of coercion. In 2007, a township leader in Kashgar's Konasheher county openly admitted that while some farmers "go voluntarily," compulsion was also required: "...it is impossible to [implement surplus labor transfer policies] without any force".²¹

In 2014, central government priorities for Xinjiang shifted from economic development to a focus on securitization.²² Xi Jinping stated that the unemployed will "provoke trouble," whereas factory employment facilitates assimilation, leading ethnic groups to "imperceptibly study Chinese culture".²³ Premier Li Keqiang noted that southern Xinjiang's three million surplus laborers posed a "particularly prominent" problem, arguing that "people without land, employment or a fixed income have nothing to do and wander all day" and will "be easily exploited by evildoers".²⁴

A decisive turn towards more coercive approaches followed Chen Quanguo's appointment as Xinjiang's party secretary in 2016 and the mass internments from early 2017. Xinjiang's 13th Five-Year Poverty Alleviation Plan from May 2017 argued that poor people's "labor and employment willingness and abilities are insufficient" and must be "stimulated." People's outdated mindset of "waiting, relying, wanting" must be "eradicated." Ethnic groups in particular needed to change their attitudes from "'I am wanted to get rid of poverty' to 'I want to get rid of poverty'".²⁵ Chinese academic research had found that substantial numbers of Uyghurs resisted such transfers even when offered adequate financial remuneration and free housing, pointing to a need for increased state coercion.²⁶

²⁰ Sohu. (2006). "Xinjiang nongcun laodongli kaishi xiang neidi zhuan yi." 6 June. <https://web.archive.org/web/20060615070620/https://business.sohu.com/20060606/n243578555.shtml>.

²¹ Ma, R. (2007). "Nanjiang Weiwu'er nongmin gong zouxiang yanhai chengshi." Chinese Journal of Population Science 5 (23-35): 95

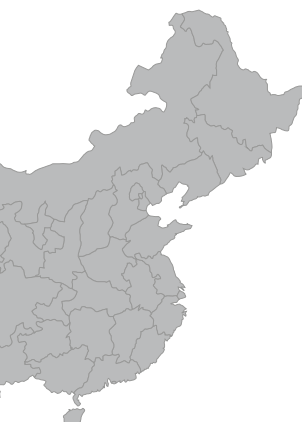
²² Zenz, A. (2021). "The Xinjiang Papers: An Introduction." The Uyghur Tribunal, November 27. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Xinjiang-Papers-An-Introduction-1.pdf>

²³ Central Office Bulletin. (2014). "Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Yu Zhengsheng tongzhi zai di'erci zhongyang Xinjiang gongzuo zuotan huishangde jianghua." Central Office Bulletin no. 25, April. Transcript of original published as Zenz, Adrian. 2021. "The Xinjiang Papers Document No.2." The Uyghur Tribunal. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Transcript-Introduction-02.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Alashankou Government. (2017). "Guanyu yinfa Xinjiang." 10 May. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220513144040/>

²⁶ Deng, K., A. Mamati, and Q. Wang. (2016). "Nanjiang nongcun fuyu laodongli zhuan yi de zhiyue yin su." Xinjiang State Farms Economy 12.



In concrete terms, cadres in village-based work teams “deeply penetrate” households and perform “thought work” until they “cause a transformation in the way farmers think about choosing their employment”.²⁷ An internal work summary from a work team in Khotan County described how they entered each home, subjecting poor families to strengthened “motivational education.” Households considered poor because of “laziness” were sent to dedicated “education” activities. An internal June 2019 poverty alleviation report describes the public shaming of “lazy people”.²⁸

In January 2018, Xinjiang initiated a special plan that transferred over 221,000 laborers from 22 poor counties in southern Xinjiang to other regions. It mandated officials to “train all who should be trained,” emphasizing intensive political indoctrination, “gratitude to the party,” Chinese language skills, work discipline, and military drilling.²⁹ Centralized state-led transfers involved accompanying officials and police guards.³⁰ Internal documents show how amid an apparent absence of men, the leadership of one minority village was ordered to round up “all women and other surplus laborers” – a total of 500 persons from only 391 households – to work in neighboring cities.³¹

Since 2020, Xinjiang has been shifting from Chen Quanguo’s campaign-style labor transfers to a more institutionalized strategy that emphasizes maintaining labor placements through intensified monitoring. Xinjiang established an “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning System” to ensure achievement of employment targets. The region now mandates that not just one person per

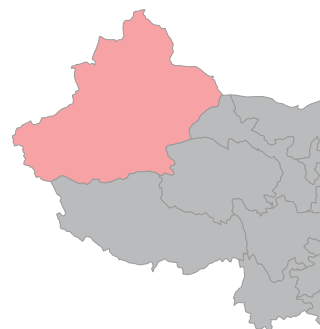
²⁷ Nilka County. (2020). “Kelingxiang laowu shuchu.” 27 March. <https://archive.ph/cCGDp>

²⁸ Shache County. (2019). “Shachexian tuopin gongjian.” 18 June. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/yarkand-county-poverty-alleviation-no-9-develop-the-pigeon-meat-industry-and-open-doors-to-building-wealth>

²⁹ Lawinfochina. (2020). “Employment and labor rights in Xinjiang.” 1 September. <https://archive.is/ua3MW>. Xuehua. (2018). “Xinjiang zizhiqiu rensheting zhiding.” 28 June. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220919215745>

³⁰ Chen, Z., J. Zhang, and L. Shi. (2019). “Xinjiang Hotan diqu weizu laodongli zhuan yi jiuye fupingongzuo baogao.” Nankai University, No. 2019001 (1009). <https://web.archive.org/web/20200507161938/https://ciwe.nankai.edu.cn/2019/1223/c18571a259225/page.htm>. Zenz, A. (2021). “Coercive Labor and Forced Displacement in Xinjiang’s Cross-Regional Labor Transfer Program.” The Jamestown Foundation, March. <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>

³¹ Qiaolake. 2018. “Chipartopluk Village (Cholaq Terek Township) 2018 Work Summary and 2019 Work Ideas” “Qiaolake tiereke zhen qiba’ er tuobuleige cun 2018nian gongzuo zongjie ji 2019nian gongzuo silu.” Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/chipartopluk-village-cholaqu-terek-township-2018-work-summary-and2019-work-ideas/>



household but “every single person who is able to work is to realize employment”.³² Governments at county and township levels must “comprehensively analyze the specific reasons for the decline in [a particular household’s] income,” and the first listed countermeasure is labor transfer. Through this intensification, labor transfers reached a record 3.17 million persons in 2021.³³



These policies result in extreme and involuntary worker retention. A report about transferring 51,154 southern Xinjiang laborers specified a 95% retention target through close monitoring by state agencies in both home and work regions.³⁴ Only 61 of these workers left their work, resulting in a stable employment rate of 99.9%. In 2021, Xinjiang sent 400,000 cadres to monitor the income situations of 12 million rural households through an “early prevention, early intervention, early assistance” campaign that identified 774,000 households for “real-time monitoring”.³⁵ Coercive labor transfers continue in 2023. That year, the state announced a new “Southern Xinjiang Employment Promotion Project” designed to “broaden employment channels outside the home” as part of “strengthening the poor masses’ inner development motivation”.³⁶

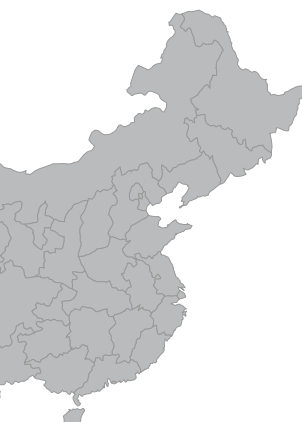
³² XUAR Government. (2021). “Guanyu yinfa xinjiang weiwu’er zizhi qu’shisiwu’jiuye zujin guihua detongzhi.” December 14.

³³ Literally “person-times”. This refers to 3.17 million transfer instances as one person can be transferred more than one time in a given year (3.17 million person-times means that approx. 2.8 million individual persons were transferred one or more times that year). Transfer figures are not cumulative as surplus laborers are transferred annually.

³⁴ National Rural Revitalization Administration (NRRRA). (2020). “Kua qu cheng zuzhi jingzhunhua duijie.” September 14. https://web.archive.org/web/20220912155919/http://www.nrra.gov.cn/art/2020/9/14/art_304_183315.html.

³⁵ Zenz, A. (2022). “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning: New Trends in Xinjiang’s Coercive Labor Placement Systems.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/program/unemployment-monitoring-and-early-warning>

³⁶ Xinyuan Government. 2023. “Zizhiqu dangwei”. March 2. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230529151135/https://www.xinyuan.gov.cn/xinyuan/c113897/202303/d4d8e442c1654a49a2edd7962d7720b4.shtml>.



The ILO defines forced labor as work that is both involuntary (without free and informed consent) and enforced through a menace of penalty.³⁷ While in Xinjiang the menace of penalty through internment or other punitive measures is pervasive, the opportunity to leave the countryside and increase incomes may in theory attract some voluntary participants. In practice, however, Xinjiang’s systemically coercive environment means that such choices are not “free”, transferred laborers cannot voluntarily leave employment, and that none of these dynamics can be objectively evaluated through local audits or interviews, since Uyghurs cannot speak freely. The resulting pervasive risk of state-imposed forced labor can only be effectively addressed by presuming that all products made in the region, in whole or in part, are tainted with forced labor, and reversing the burden of proof to require importing entities to demonstrate absence of forced labor.

3. Re-Education Camps and the Camp-to-Labor Pipeline

This section is based on the article “*Innovating Penal Labour: Re-education, Forced Labour, and Coercive Social Integration in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.*” *The China Journal*. Vol. 90 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1086/725494> or free access: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4468500.

Summary: Xinjiang’s camp-linked forced labor system began in 2018 and likely stopped actively processing new victims at the end of 2019, with an estimated several hundred thousand former detainees remaining in forced labor. Because this system separates camps from forced labor, coerced work likely continues even after camps are closed. This forced labor system affects a narrower range of economic sectors than poverty alleviation through labor transfers. New evidence from the Xinjiang Police Files and from a new witness shows when this system started, how it operated, and its effect on its victims. The state’s large-scale investments in camp-linked factories suggest that the resulting changes in employment patterns are intended to be permanent. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities have been shifted from camps to detention centers and prisons, and therefore continue to experience arbitrary detention.

Camp-linked labor placements in Xinjiang began in 2018, having evolved from China’s Re-Education Through Labor system under Mao Zedong, to effect a controlled release of detainees into a narrower range of low-skilled manufacturing or other workplaces, with no established links to cotton harvesting or polysilicon production.

³⁷ ILO. (2012). *Hard to see, Harder to Count*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO. https://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm



Xinjiang’s re-education camp or “Vocational Skills Education and Training Center” (VSETC) system represents an improved version of Mao’s system, which combined re-education with forced labor but failed to achieve effective psychological transformation or profitable production. Per-worker production in China’s prison labor camps was less than one-third that of civilian industry.³⁸ Around the 2000s, Chinese officials and scholars therefore proposed to separate re-education internment from subsequent coerced labor. This is precisely what the VSETC system does.



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VSETCs create a securitized camp-to-labor pipeline whereby camps focus on re-education internment (without labor), followed by gradual release into short-term camp-based skills training, job training in nearby factories alongside evening re-education, then coerced work placements in factory parks or further afield. By separating camps from forced labor, this form of coerced work likely continues even after camps are closed. While

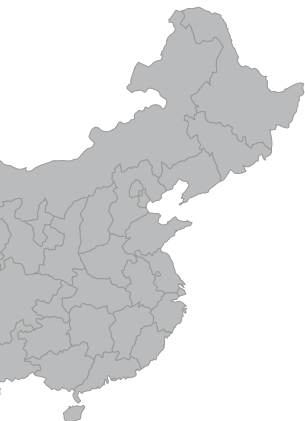
forced labor placements of released detainees are often highly exploitative, their main purpose appears to be a coerced social integration of ethnic group members.

The first known policy implementation document for the camp-linked work policy was published in April 2018, a timing confirmed by witness accounts and satellite imagery analysis.³⁹ Labor-intensive factories built in the “periphery” of “Education and Training Centers” received special state subsidies. Participating public or private companies received a 1,800 RMB subsidy per detainee and could enjoy lower electricity prices and, for a time, free use of manufacturing facilities. Policy documents indicate that the state sought to attract especially companies assembling electronics or producing light goods such as footwear, toys, or wigs.⁴⁰

³⁸ Seymour, J.D. (2016). “Profit and Loss in China’s Contemporary Prison System,” in *Remolding and Resistance Among Writers of the Chinese Prison Camp*, ed. Philip Williams and Yenna Wu. Routledge 166.

³⁹ Hotan City Investment Promotion directory, *Hotan City*. (2020). “Hotan shi zhaoshang yinzi gongzuo mulu” <http://web.archive.org/web/20210123200225/https://www.hts.gov.cn/zhaoshangyinzi/show.php?itemid=233>. 11 September.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*



The clearest account of the specific processes linking VSETCs, skills training, and labor placements comes from a new internal state document contained in the Xinjiang Police Files, a cache of files published in 2022 that had been obtained by an anonymous third party by hacking into Xinjiang police computers.⁴¹ This 2018 document mandates VSETCs to set up skills training classes for detainees “under the premise of ensuring absolute security”.⁴² They were also to attract private and public companies to set up “training bases” in the centers.⁴³ Companies would invest in the equipment, and training could be provided either through the companies or government-arranged vocational skills trainers. According to a new witness testimony, “Gulzia” (pseudonym), a Uyghur woman, was detained in a large VSETC in southern Xinjiang between the fall of 2017 and spring 2019.⁴⁴ Her VSETC set up its first textile factory in March 2018. Detainees on good behavior were forced to work 11-hour days. By October 2018, she observed many detainees working day and night shifts in multiple VSETC factories, with nearly all female detainees (aged 18 to over 60) forced to work in a multi-level garment factory.

The internal Xinjiang Police Files document further states that VSETCs were to cooperate with companies to set up “employment bases” focused on labor-intensive manufacturing. These factories were probably located in nearby factory parks.⁴⁵ The document stipulates that detainees are paid based on their work “performance,” a fact corroborated by victims who report extremely low pay-per-piece rates.⁴⁶ To work in employment bases, they had to achieve minimum standards in re-education and Chinese language study, a fact confirmed by a Kashgar prefecture spreadsheet noting that detainees working in factory park enterprises outside VSETCs must be on “excellent behavior.”⁴⁷

⁴¹ Zenz, A. (2022). “The Xinjiang Police Files: Re-Education Camp Security and Political Paranoia in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region”, *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 3: 1–56, <https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2022.3.zenz>. Zenz, A. (2022) Public Security Minister’s speech describes Xi Jinping’s direction of mass detentions in Xinjiang. *ChinaFile*, 24. <https://www.chinafile.com/node/53986>

⁴² File “方案3 (教培中心) 改.docx” (Revised plan 3 [VSETCs]), part of the “Xinjiang Police Files”, <http://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/implement-the-five-prevents-promote-transformation/>, p.8.

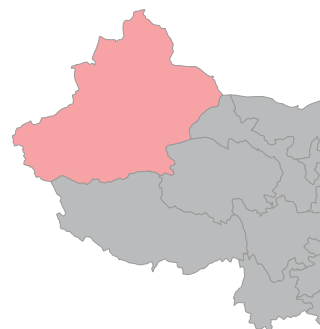
⁴³ *Ibid*, 8-9.

⁴⁴ Communication between 16 September and 7 October 2022.

⁴⁵ Kashgar Government. (2018). “Guanyu yinfa <kashi diqu kunnan qunti jiuye peixun gongzuo shishifangan>.” 10 August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20181204024839/http://kashi.gov.cn/Government/PublicInfoShow.aspx?ID=2963>

⁴⁶ For example Byler, Darren. (2021). *In the Camps: China’s High-Tech Penal Colony*. Columbia Global Reports, 113-4.

⁴⁷ File “16.喀什市教培局卫星工厂改造项目.xlsx,” downloaded in February 2020 from the Kashgar government website at old.xjks.gov.cn.



To summarize the camp-to-labor process, VSETC detainees:

- (a) initially receive theoretical vocational skills classes alongside re-education efforts;
- (b) receive hands-on training and work in “training bases” inside VSETCs while still attending evening re-education;
- (c) are then assigned more permanent labor placements in “employment bases” in industrial parks or work settings further afield.

According to an August 2019 white paper on Vocational Education and Training, camp detainees face three pathways: factory employment, self-employment, or further study.⁴⁸ (An unmentioned fourth category is imprisonment, which has been used to arbitrarily incarcerate hundreds of thousands of VSETC detainees.)⁴⁹

Gulzia’s camp party secretary told detainees in July 2018 that factory parks were being built for them to work in after “graduating.” She later heard that many others were sent to work in other prefectures in state-arranged menial jobs such as cleaning, perhaps intentionally separating many from spouses and children. In her camp, she observed that laboring detainees were closely supervised by cadres and security guards, and punished for production-related mistakes. In the summer, several suffered heat strokes as VSETC factories lacked air conditioning and bathroom usage was restricted to fixed times, forcing workers to curtail fluid intake. Detainees failing to complete assigned quotas had to work overtime, and were scolded for fainting. Other witness accounts demonstrate that victims are paid negligible wages, suffer from restricted freedom of movement, and frequently labor for long hours under close surveillance.⁵⁰

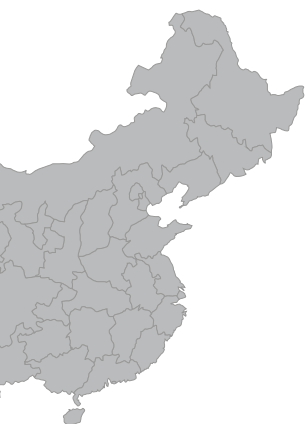
Witnesses have stated that if they refused to work, they were threatened with being sent back to “study” at the VSETC.⁵¹ This is now for the first time

⁴⁸ Xinhua. (2019). “Xinjiang de zhiye jineng jiaoyu peixun gongzuo” 16 August. https://web.archive.org/web/20190816040518/http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-08/16/c_1124883270.htm

⁴⁹ Bunin, G. (2021). “The Elephant in the XUAR: II.” Art of Life, 4 January. <https://livingotherwise.com/2021/01/04/the-elephant-in-the-xuar-ii-brand-new-prisons-expanding-old-prisons-and-hundreds-of-thousands-new-inmates/>.

⁵⁰ Amnesty International. (2021). “Like we were enemies.” 10 June. 126-29. https://web.archive.org/web/20221123003554/https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASA_17_4137-2021_Full_report_ENG.pdf. Byler, D. (2021). “In the Camps.” Columbia Global Reports, 113-15; VanderKlippe, N. (2019). “I Felt like a Slave’: Inside China’s Complex System of Incarceration and Control of Minorities.” Globe and Mail, 31 March. <https://web.archive.org/web/20221006195230/https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-i-felt-like-a-slave-inside-chinas-complex-system-of-incarceration/>.

⁵¹ Deutsche Welle. (2020). Segment 5:25 - 5:35 on “Xinjiang: New reports on detention and forced labor.” 15 December. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q-GVUCdAWA>; Xinjiang Victims Database #120.



independently confirmed by Uyghur witness Anar Sabit, who spoke with two fellow detainees assigned to work at a Kuytun City textile factory. As former detainees, they were constantly monitored, even when using bathrooms. Work was hard and abuse was common. Another detainee who could not physically bear these conditions and frequently missed work was declared “unsuccessful” in his re-education and sent back to the camp. After his second release, he reportedly attempted to commit suicide.⁵²

It appears that VSETC re-education was largely phased out from late 2019, and that coercive labor programs processing new victims are now linked to either prisons or rural surplus labor transfers.⁵³ Even so, the state’s large-scale investments in VSETC-linked factories suggest that the changes in employment patterns are intended to be permanent. A December 2018 statement issued by Xinjiang’s Development and Reform Commission (XJDRC) noted that “VSETCs... have attracted large numbers of [eastern Chinese] enterprises to invest and build factories in Xinjiang, which powerfully expanded employment...”.⁵⁴ The scale of this shift is further confirmed by the August 2018 Kashgar Notice, mandating a transfer of 100,000 VSETC “trainees” to “training and employment bases” by the end of that year, a policy consistent with satellite imagery showing expansion of related factory floor space.⁵⁵ As this quota for 2018 comes from only one prefecture, the entire Xinjiang figure for 2018-19 could amount to several hundred thousand people. Due to the separation of camps and coerced workplaces, former detainees most likely remain in forced labor even after their camps have been closed.

4. Ethnic Minorities Who Refuse Government Work Orders Face Detention

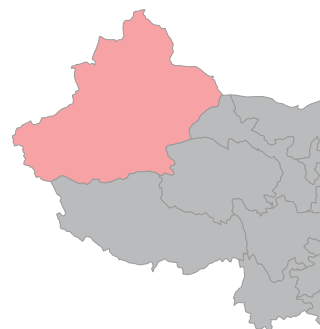
This section is based on the article “The conceptual evolution of poverty alleviation through labour transfer in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.”

⁵² Written communication, 25 September 2022.

⁵³ Zenz, A. (2022). “Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning: New Trends in Xinjiang’s Coercive Labor Placement Systems.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/program/unemployment-monitoring-and-early-warning>

⁵⁴ XUAR Development and Reform Commission. (2018). “Zizhiqu jinji jiegou wenzhong youhuo fazhan lianghao.” 5 December. <https://web.archive.org/web/20190520143306/http://www.xjdr.gov.cn/info/9923/23516.htm>.

⁵⁵ Kashgar Government. (2018). “Guanyu yinfa <kashi diqu kunnan qunti jiuye peixun gongzuo shishifangan>.” 10 August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20181204024839/http://kashi.gov.cn/Government/PublicInfoShow.aspx?ID=2963>. File “16.喀什市教培局卫星工厂改造项目.xlsx,” downloaded in February 2020 from the Kashgar government website at old.xjks.gov.cn. Killing, A. and Rajagopalan, M. “The Factories in the Camps.” https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alison_killing/xinjiang-camps-china-factories-forced-labor. Hubei Daily. (2021). “Xinjiang shige hao difang.” 23 October. <https://archive.is/D9iOS>





Wikimedia

Central Asian Survey (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2023.2227225>.

Summary: For the first time, we now have conclusive evidence that refusal to participate in state-mandated employment such as labor transfers renders Uyghurs liable for internment.

A classified internal directive from February 2017, immediately before the mass internments began, targeted persons showing 21 types of behaviors for detention. These included persons who (1) “without reason are unwilling to receive

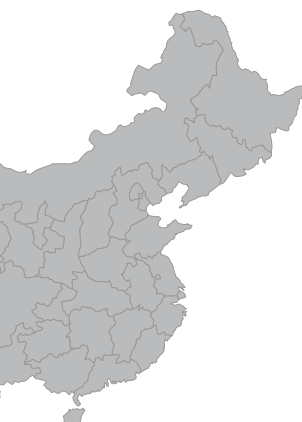
various types of welfare-related policies” (this would include most poverty alleviation measures); (2) “do not participate in grassroots organizational arrangements” (these broadly include labor transfer programs); or (3) “repeatedly refused employment opportunities provided by resettlement assistance institutions” (resettling former prisoners).⁵⁶ These criteria are consistent with Xinjiang’s De-Extremification Regulation, which defines “extremism” vaguely as “speech and behavior [that]...rejects or interferes with normal production and life”.⁵⁷

Failure to participate in state employment programs also directly increased a person’s internment risk. An internal directive to ensure full implementation of mass internments exhorted officials to “resolutely round up all who should be rounded up.” Everyone’s personal information was to be closely examined so that prospective detainees are “sifted out” and “every single untrustworthy person is detained.” Among the filtering criteria for “untrustworthy persons” were people’s “occupation and living conditions,” meaning those without stable or state-designated employment faced higher risk of detention.

Documented instances show local authorities wielding the internment threat in the context of poverty alleviation programs. A 2018 work inspection in Konasheher county revealed that 659 poor households were accidentally

⁵⁶ Kashgar Stability Maintenance Group. (2017). Guanyu yinfa “yifa shouya 21lei yanda zhongdian duixiang gongzuo zhinan” tongzhi. Xinjiang Police Files. 7 February. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/notice-on-printing-and-distributing->

⁵⁷ Xinjiang People’s Congress. (2018). “Xinjiang weiwu’er zizhiq di shisan jie renmin dai-biao dahuichangwu weiyuanhui gonggao.” 9 October. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210403024757/http://www.xjpcsc.gov.cn/article/216/lfgz.html>



given excessive resettlement benefits.⁵⁸ To conceal their error, local authorities “demanded immediate repayment of subsidies by threatening [beneficiaries] with being sent to the re-education center,” a tactic that “caused panic” among affected households.

This internment threat is confirmed through direct local testimony. According to Gulzia, two of her cellmates were detained for refusing to accept state-mandated work assignments.⁵⁹ One of them, a woman from a rural township in Kashgar City, had two small children, a husband who worked in a factory all day, and was helping elderly in-laws with farming. When she refused a city factory job arranged by the local government, authorities detained her for harboring “extreme religious thoughts.” Another woman in Gulzia’s cell was told by camp staff upon arrival that she had been detained due to “non-cooperation with [government] arrangements” (likewise a factory work assignment).

5. Forced Labor in Xinjiang’s Cotton Production

This section is based on the article “Coercive Labor in the Cotton Harvest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan: A Comparative Analysis of State-Sponsored Forced Labor.” *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1822939> or free access: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4439694.

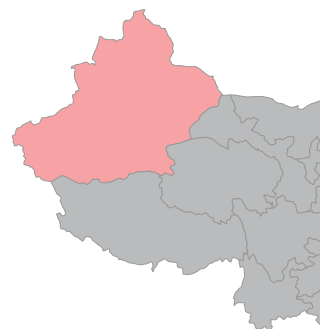
Summary: While recruitment for the arduous work of picking cotton has long involved various abuses and forms of child and bonded labor, from late 2016 Xinjiang began to greatly increase the scope and coerciveness of transfers targeting especially Uyghurs for cotton-picking. New evidence indicates (a) further intensification of this policy in 2019, forcing even elderly Uyghurs to pick cotton or else face “repeated... thought education”; (b) continued state mobilization tactics coercing Uyghurs to pick cotton in 2021 and 2022; (c) mechanized harvesting does not necessarily reduce coercion, as mechanization often means Uyghur farmers are removed from their land and subjected to labor transfers into other industries. Government claims about mechanized harvesting are contradictory and misleading.

Between 1990 and 2007, Beijing invested heavily in Xinjiang cotton production. Its cotton-growing area quadrupled, and by 2008, the region needed over 1 million pickers annually.⁶⁰ Finding labor for this grueling and comparatively poorly paid work

⁵⁸ Shufu County. n.d. “Shufuxian luoshi zizhiq dangwei di ba xunshi zu fankui yijian de zeren fenjiefang’an.” Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/shufu-county-plan-for-the-division-of-roles-to-implement-the-feedback>

⁵⁹ Interviews, September-October 2022.

⁶⁰ Bao, R. and Li, K. (2008). “Bai wan caimian dajun jin xinjiang.” *China Economic Weekly*. (42), 14–21



remained a persistent problem despite rural underemployment. In 2003, Xinjiang mobilized 130,000 local peasants (mostly ethnic minorities) into cotton-picking⁶¹, though Han migrants continued to predominate until 2016.

In September 2016, Xinjiang prescribed closer state management of seasonal workers, including cotton-pickers, involving close supervision and intensified indoctrination of these workers in collaboration with public security agencies, including “thought education”.⁶² Ethnic regions were charged with proactively inquiring about labor needs from cotton-planting regions and then mobilizing the required workers. In December 2016, Xinjiang announced plans to intensify employment cooperation between the region’s north and south, expanding the scale



Washington International Trade Association

of government-organized labor transfers, including for seasonal work.⁶³ This significantly accelerated transfers of southern Uyghur laborers to northern cotton fields operated by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a paramilitary entity established in 1954 as a military-agricultural colony to facilitate large-scale Han in-migration and greater state control.

In early 2017, the state began to systematically replace Han migrant pickers with transferred non-Han laborers. In 2018 Aqsu and Khotän (Hotan) prefectures alone sent 210,000 pickers to XPCC regions.⁶⁴

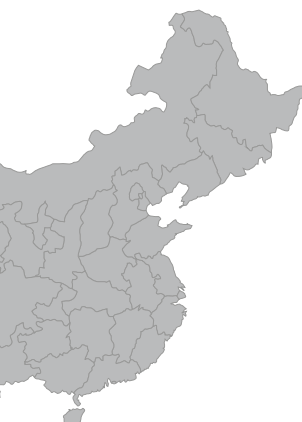
Internal state documents show that state efforts to compel Uyghurs into poverty alleviation measures, including labor transfers and seasonal labor, intensified after 2018. Yarkand’s July 2019 document on “Recent Key Work in Poverty Alleviation”

⁶¹ People’s Net. (2003). “Xinjiang laodongli zhuanyi bufa jiakuai.” 13 August. <http://web.archive.org/web/20040716152658/http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2003-08-13/2004559956s.shtml>.

⁶² Shangye xinzhi. (2016). “Guanyu zuo hao shi hua deng jijixing laowu gongzuo de tongzhi.” 1 September. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220816183109/https://www.shangyexinzhi.com/article/1656034.html>

⁶³ PRC government. (2016). “Xinjiang weiwu’er zizhiqu mingnian jiang shixian nongcun fuyu laodongli zhuanyi jiuye 260wan ren.” 24 December. https://web.archive.org/web/20220817143830/http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-12/24/content_5152324.htm

⁶⁴ PRC Ministry of Agriculture. (2018). “Qian san jidu xinjiang nongcun fuyu laodongli zhuanyi jiuye 251.2wan ren.” 12 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20201014101625/http://www.moa.gov.cn/xw/qg/201810/t20181012_6160671.htm



warned officials to “prevent the problem of insufficient inner motivation among cadres and masses”.⁶⁵ It mandated that “lazy persons, drunkards, and other persons with insufficient inner motivation” would need to be subjected to “repeated... thought education” (p.3). If this failed to produce “obvious results,” they were to be dealt with “according to the document” (the exact meaning of this is unclear, but the context suggests coercive measures). Persons over 60 years old and students were to pick crops including cotton, vegetables, tomatoes, and peppers. Those who “have not realized stable employment [and therefore] must [engage] in seasonal labor” were to be listed by the Poverty Alleviation Employment Office and subjected to centralized, organized transfers into seasonal labor such as cotton-picking (p.5). By late 2019, Yarkand county was compiling lists of “lazy persons,” “drunkards,” and persons “without sufficient inner motivation”⁶⁶. One list labeled individuals as old as 77 years as “lazy,” and of five individuals with listed solutions for their “laziness,” two were sent to another county to pick cotton.

As with all labor transfers, the coercive pressures in Xinjiang’s cotton harvest are primarily found at the recruitment stage. Village-based work teams go door-to-door collecting information on each household’s employment status and coercing villagers into labor transfers:

The factors that once prevented the local workforce from entering the cotton-picking market no longer exist. This is thanks to the continuous advancement of the work of transferring surplus labor performed by all levels of the Xinjiang government. Especially since 2014, Xinjiang has sent a total of 350,000 cadres to villages for five consecutive years to help the masses out of poverty and misery...⁶⁷

In a village in Kashgar prefecture where the state found that Uyghurs were “unwilling to go out to work,” officials entered every home for a second time and undertook “thought education work” to mobilize Uyghurs into picking cotton.⁶⁸ A 2017 account from Kashgar Prefecture notes that pickers are accompanied by officials, and “work-team cadres and police station guards regularly visit them”.⁶⁹

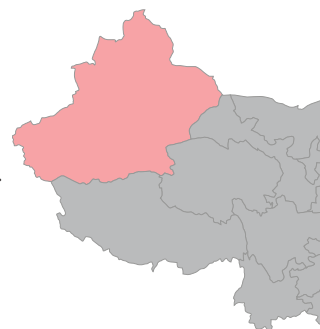
⁶⁵ “Jinqi tuopin gongjian zhongdian gongzuo.” (2019). 9 July. Internal state document obtained as part of the Xinjiang QQ Files (Arslanbagh Township Poverty Alleviation Work Group). <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/recent-key-poverty-alleviation-work/>

⁶⁶ “Qi cun shachexian pai ke qi lanren jiugui huizong – fuben (1).” (n.d.) Internal state document obtained as part of the Xinjiang QQ Files (Arslanbagh Township Poverty Alleviation Work Group). <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/list-of-lazy-persons-and-drunkards-fromvillage-no-7-in-yarkand-county/>.

⁶⁷ Li, Z. and Hu, H. (2018). “Zai woguo mianhua zhuchanqu.” Xinhua. 18 November. http://web.archive.org/web/20200809083140/http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-11/18/c_1123731240.htm

⁶⁸ Jiashi county government. (2017). “Laowu shuchu zhuli cunmin tuopin zhifu.” 25 September. <https://archive.ph/8T3l4>.

⁶⁹ Chen, C. (2017). “Yecheng shi hua gong gei jiashi bagetuogelakecun song jinqi.” Jiashi County Government. 14 November. <https://archive.ph/bmF1z>



Over the past decade, the state has promoted mechanized harvesting, especially in northern Xinjiang and XPCC regions, which are better suited for this than the south due to larger-scale farming and more contiguous fields. After evidence of systematic forced labor in Xinjiang’s cotton harvest was first published in December 2020.⁷⁰ China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson claimed that “the mechanization rate for cotton-picking in Xinjiang reached 70% in 2020.”⁷¹ However, the figures underlying this claim pertain to only two-thirds of Xinjiang’s total cotton-planted area.⁷² On December 6, 2021, the government then claimed a mechanization rate of 80% for 2021, but without disclosing southern Xinjiang’s much lower mechanization rate.⁷³ Less than six weeks later, Beijing suddenly claimed a mechanization share of “over 85%” without providing any substantiation.⁷⁴

By contrast, an October 2020 government report published before the December 2020 revelations cited a mechanization share for southern Xinjiang of only 35%, noting that “operating conditions of large-scale machinery and equipment are poor” and “land fragmentation is high,” all factors that “seriously affect the application of agricultural mechanization.”⁷⁵ In 2019, 45% of Xinjiang’s cotton fields were in these southern regions. Satellite imagery analysis by German media from spring 2022 used a proxy indicator of harvesting speed to estimate that in southern Xinjiang’s Kashgar region, about 96% of cotton fields appeared to be harvested by hand.⁷⁶

Xinjiang’s transfers of ethnic surplus laborers for cotton-picking continued in 2021 and 2022 despite Beijing’s claims. In October 2021, Kashgar prefecture

⁷⁰ Zenz, A. (2020). “Coercive labor in Xinjiang: Labor transfer and the mobilization of ethnic minorities to pick cotton.” New Lines Institute. 14 December. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/china/coercive-labor-in-xinjiang-labor-transfer-and-the-mobilization-of-ethnic-minorities-to-pick-cotton/>

⁷¹ Zenz, A. (2022). “Public Security Minister’s speech describes Xi Jinping’s direction of mass detentions in Xinjiang.” ChinaFile, 24. <https://www.chinafile.com/node/53986>

⁷² China Daily. (2021). “Zui wenuan de mianhua, chan zi xinjiang.” 26 March. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220804185428/https://xj.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202103/25/WS605c6eb3a310e7ce9745e25.html>. China Statistics Network. (2021). “Xinjiang weiwu’er zizhiq 2020 nian guomin jingji he shehui fazhan tongji gongbao.” 13 August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220816234607/http://www.tjcn.org/tjgb/31xi/36869.html>

⁷³ PRC government. (2021). “Xinjiang mianhua zai huo fengshou.” 6 December. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220428070024>

⁷⁴ PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2022). “Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin’s regular press conference.” 14 January. https://web.archive.org/web/20220817005657/https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399

⁷⁵ XUAR Finance Department. (2020). “Xinjiang weiwu’er zizhiq mianhua shengchan xianzhuang touru fenxi.” 19 October. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220817013216>

⁷⁶ Daubenberger, M. and Guckelsberger F. (2022). “Das Geschäft mit der blutigen Baumwolle.” Zenith. 5 May. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230302191614/https://magazin.zenith.me/de/wirtschaft>



boasted that “the entire region’s counties, townships, and villages have done a good job in mobilizing cotton-pickers, and the relevant departments have also organized the masses of the townships and villages to work for large cotton farmers...solving large-scale cotton planters’ urgent worries”.⁷⁷ An October 2022 report about a village work team in a Kashgar township describes how the team strove to “encourage and drive more villagers to join the ‘cotton-picking army’”.⁷⁸ Likewise in October 2022, state-affiliated media reported the use of manual cotton-pickers in Hotan prefecture.⁷⁹

These examples across multiple ethnic regions are part of a continued systematic policy of transferring Uyghurs and other non-Han into seasonal labor assignments. Xinjiang’s 14th Five-Year Plan (2021 to 2025) mandates closer cooperation between XPCC and other regions for an “enlarged” promotion of seasonal (harvest-related) agricultural labor transfers.⁸⁰ An April 2022 report on Xinjiang’s employment programs and labor transfers confirms that the “vast scale” of cotton, tomato, and other plantations in southern Xinjiang continues to “provide an abundance of short-term employment avenues”.⁸¹

Increased mechanization does not necessarily reduce the risk of forced labor. To promote mechanization, the state aggressively promotes land transfer schemes whereby local farmers transfer their land usage rights to large-scale operators in exchange for lease payments. Displaced Uyghur farmers are then often forcibly transferred into labor-intensive manufacturing work. Xinjiang’s state media has described land transfer as a crucial measure for reducing land fragmentation and promoting mechanized cotton farming.⁸² For example, by 2019, Awat county in Aqsu planned to transfer 66,667 hectares from smallholders to state cooperatives, XPCC state farms, and large corporations in order to

⁷⁷ Sohu. (2021). “Xinjiang kashen: zengjia jiuye gangwei.” 22 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20220817020237/https://www.sohu.com/a/496579227_362042

⁷⁸ Kashgar District. (2022). “Kashen zhongxin xiachen ganbu.” <https://web.archive.org/web/20230310213703/>

⁷⁹ Tianshan. (2022). “Xinjiang Moyu.” 7 October. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230310205254/https://www.ts.cn/xwzx>

⁸⁰ XUAR government. (2021). “Guanyu yinfa xinjiang weiwu’er zizhiqu “shisiwu” jiuye cujin guihua de tongzhi.” 14 December. <https://archive.ph/PFzsb>

⁸¹ Tianshan. (2022). “Shi ‘fupin chuangju’ haishi ‘qiangpo laodong?’” 7 April. https://web.archive.org/web/20220409180753/https://www.ts.cn/xwzx/szxw/202204/t20220407_6339712.shtml

⁸² Xinhua. (2018). “Xinjiang mianhua ji cai lu kuaisu tisheng.” 14 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20220808160544/http://m.xinhuanet.com/xj/2018-10/14/c_1123556119.htm



“fully implement mechanized cotton-picking” and simultaneously “liberate the peasants from [their] land” through labor transfers.⁸³ While transfers of land usage rights can theoretically be reversed, Xinjiang’s policy context makes it clear that transfers form an integral part of a long-term strategy to promote large-scale modern, mechanized agriculture, and permanently convert smallholder farmers into industrial workers.⁸⁴ Transferred laborers who were “liberated” from their land often become cheap labor for Xinjiang’s textile and garment industries.

In sum, despite increased mechanization, forced labor continues to permeate Xinjiang’s cotton harvest, and state reports show that the state still sends Uyghurs and other ethnic groups to manually pick cotton through seasonal labor transfer programs.

6. Labor Transfers Constitute the Crime Against Humanity of Forcible Transfer

This section is based on the article “Coercive Labor and Forced Displacement in Xinjiang’s Cross-Regional Labor Transfer Program.” The Jamestown Foundation, March 2021. <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>.

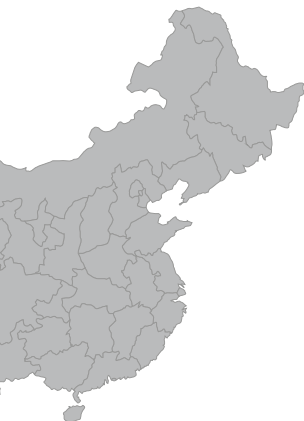
Summary: Expert legal analysis suggests that Xinjiang’s labor transfers constitute the Crime Against Humanity of Forcible Transfer under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Forced labor and labor transfer policies are linked to other aspects of the atrocity and are designed to effect permanent forced assimilation of ethnic minorities, including through parent-child separation, forcible population transfers, religious persecution, and “optimizing” the population structure through forced sterilization and other attacks on reproductive capacity.

International criminal law expert Erin Rosenberg authored a peer-reviewed legal analysis of evidence on labor transfers.⁸⁵ Using the level of evidence required by the International Criminal Court’s (ICC’s) definition of the Crime Against Humanity of Forcible Transfer, she argues that:

⁸³ China Cotton Network. (2018). “Nan jiang mianhua zhengzai fasheng de jubian.” 22 January. <https://web.archive.org/web/20220808152923/>

⁸⁴ Zenz, A. (2021). “Coercive labor and forced displacement in Xinjiang’s cross-regional labor transfer program.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/program/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross>

⁸⁵ Ibid



Even when consent is given, the overall coercive climate facing the individual must be considered in order to determine the genuineness of that consent. In this respect, “a climate of terror and violence obviates any and all value arising from the consent”.⁸⁶



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Rosenberg notes that the term “forcibly” in ICC documents is not restricted to physical force, but may include “threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment.”⁸⁷ She suggests that there are “credible grounds to conclude” that Xinjiang’s labor transfer program meets the criteria of two Crimes Against Humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute: Article 7

(1)(d) related to safeguarding the “protected interests and rights of persons to ‘live in their communities and homes’”; and Article 7 (1)(h) related to persecution.

Cross-regional labor transfers are part of Beijing’s plans to “optimize the population structure of southern Xinjiang.”⁸⁸ This was to be achieved through a large-scale plan to settle 300,000 Chinese, mostly from outside Xinjiang, in southern Xinjiang by 2022.⁸⁹ The so-called Nankai Report, a Chinese research report on labor transfers from Xinjiang to other parts of China, noted that such transfers are an ideal method to “reduce Uyghur population density in Xinjiang”.⁹⁰ Other Chinese research studies have argued that labor transfers

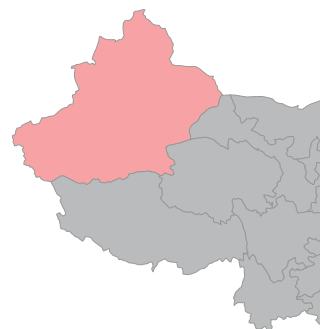
⁸⁶ Ibid, 44

⁸⁷ Ibid, 45.

⁸⁸ Zenz, Adrian. 2021b. ‘End the Dominance of the Uyghur Ethnic Group’: An Analysis of Beijing’s Population Optimization Strategy in Southern Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey* 40 (3): 291-312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2021.1946483>.

⁸⁹ XPCC. (2020). “Xinjiang shengchan jianshe bingtuan 2019 nian guomin jingji he shehui fazhan tonji gongbao.” 26 April. <http://web.archive.org/web/20200508151239/http://www.xjbt.gov.cn/c/2020-04-26/7346732.shtml>

⁹⁰ Chen, Z., J. Zhang, and L. Shi. (2019). “Xinjiang Hotan diqu weizu laodongli zhuan yi jiuye fupingongzuo baogao.” Nankai University, No. 2019001 (1009). <https://web.archive.org/web/20200507161938/https://ciwe.nankai.edu.cn/2019/1223/c18571a259225/page.htm>. Zenz, A. (2021). “Coercive Labor and Forced Displacement in Xinjiang’s Cross-Regional Labor Transfer Program.” The Jamestown Foundation, March. <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiangs-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>



represent a means to “crack open the solidified society in southern Xinjiang” and to “push [people] out of their closed state [of mind]”.⁹¹

Labor transfers are also directly linked to a large-scale scheme whereby hundreds of thousands of ethnic farmers and pastoralists are forced to transfer usage rights to their land or herds to state-run collectives for the purpose of “liberating” them to become industrial workers. For example, following “vigorous promotion,” 58,000 households in Aqsu had transferred 154,500 hectares of land, resulting in labor transfer of 73,300 persons.⁹² This led to unprecedented transfer shares: in September 2018 a village in Altay prefecture reported a labor transfer rate of “over 95%,” boasting that it had “realized a village without idlers”.⁹³ In 2022, labor transfers through transfers of land usage rights continued, with state organs citing examples of rural Uyghur couples in Kashgar being sent to factory parks while their land and herds were managed by state cooperatives.⁹⁴

Coercive state employment programs promote parent-child separation and break apart organic family and community structures. Xinjiang has actively promoted the construction of satellite factories (small workshops) in Uyghur villages to “send work to people’s doorstep.” Satellite factories especially target rural women for factory work, and include nurseries for infants, while toddlers are placed in full-time or boarding preschools. In 2017, one Uyghur county planned to establish a satellite factory in every other village.⁹⁵ These entities were to be supervised by “at least” one government official to ensure worker attendance.⁹⁶

In sum, labor transfers not only promote forced labor, but are also implicated in multiple aspects of the atrocities in the region, and form part of the Crimes Against Humanity perpetrated by the Chinese state.

⁹¹ Lu, X. and Guo, J. (2017). Tuidong nanjiang laodongli xiangwai zhuanyi de caizheng zhengce tanxi. *Enterprise Reform and Management*. 1, 194–196. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13768/j.cnki.cn11-3793/f.2017.0920>.

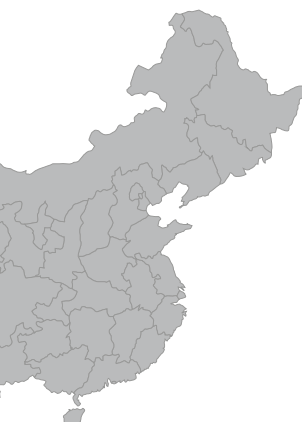
⁹² Aqsu Propaganda Committee. (2020). “Tudi liuzhuan’zhuanchuhao’qianjing.” 24 November. http://web.archive.org/web/20210210160442/http://www.aksxw.com/aksxw/content/2020-11/24/content_1140150.htm

⁹³ China News. 2018. “Xinjiang aleitai ‘miandui mian’ yindao cunmin jiuye.” September 25. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210212200622/http://www.xj.chinanews.com/shipin/2018-09-25/detail-iwrvimra3970637.shtml>.

⁹⁴ NDRC. 2022. “Jiuye tuoqi zhifu meng.” May 20. https://web.archive.org/web/20230529145427/https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fggz/jyysr/dfjx/202205/t20220520_1324916.html.

⁹⁵ United Front Work Department. (2017). “Luli tongxin jingzhun shice.” 20 November. <https://web.archive.org/web/20190710130051/http://www.zytzb.gov.cn/tzb2010/jjsh/201711/7ced55a64689491e8fbec3e06202ee47.shtml>.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 90. Shache County. (2019). “Shachexian tuopin gongjian.” Xinjiang QQ Files. 18 June. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/yarkand-county-poverty-alleviation-no-9-develop-the-pigeon-meat-industry-and-open-doors-to-building-wealth/>.



7. Understanding and Measuring Non-Internment State-Imposed Forced Labor Mobilization

This section is based on the article “Measuring Non-Internment State-Imposed Forced Labor in Xinjiang and Central Asia: An Assessment of ILO Measurement Guidelines.” *Journal of Human Trafficking* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2023.2270366>.

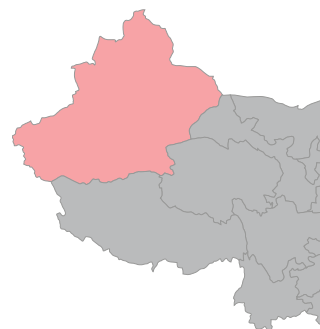
Summary: State-imposed forced labor is more difficult to measure and to conceptualize than other (private) forms. In addition, non-internment forms of state-imposed forced labor are more difficult to measure and to conceptualize than internment (prison)-based forms. Unfortunately, the ILO’s best-known set of 11 forced labor indicators is unsuited to capture this form of forced labor, and hardly any academic research has been conducted into non-internment state-imposed forced labor. However, the ILO developed a lesser-known framework, designed for private forced labor, that can be adapted to effectively evaluate non-internment state-imposed forced labor. Given that many existing indicators of coerced work relate to economic exploitation, measurement frameworks for Xinjiang, where forced labor is imposed mainly for political reasons and may not be as exploitative, require significant adaptation. Overall, policymakers should urgently deepen their understanding of the unique properties of non-internment state-imposed forced labor.

Unlike most forms of forced labor, state-imposed forced labor operates through a pervasively coercive social context marked by a general lack of civic freedoms and a state that generates powerful coercive pressures through an extensive grassroots bureaucracy. Non-cooperation entails a systemic risk that is often more implicit than overt. Failure to comply with government work assignments may not only endanger household income through dismissal, salary reductions, or loss of land usage rights. It can also drastically affect access to essential services and benefits and incur a wide range of state repression.

Coercive transfers of targeted populations into state-mandated work (including seasonal harvesting) represent a dynamic system, akin to human trafficking, that cannot easily be measured in a particular location.

A review of forced labor across several Central Asian regions (see section 8) shows that non-internment state-imposed forced labor systems exhibit five core features:⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Zenz, A. (2023). “Coercive Labor in the Cotton Harvest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan: A Comparative Conceptual Analysis of State-Sponsored Forced Labor.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. *Communist and Post Communist Studies* 56(2), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1822939>



1. a centralized authoritarian state with a strong bureaucratic apparatus and a powerful, coercive domestic security apparatus, that
2. steers economic policy, imposes production quotas, and incentivizes or commandeers relevant economic actors, including state-owned and private companies and farmers;
3. creates a coercive social environment, especially among targeted populations;
4. leverages this environment in tandem with substantial grassroots-based human resources and local institutions to
5. develop top-down mobilization pressures at the grassroots level.

State-imposed forced labor has long been associated with prisons or internment camps. Because these restrict movement and free will, they are easier to conceptualize, even when they use ILO-permitted forms of prison labor, such as court-ordered community service for convicted criminals.⁹⁸ By contrast, non-internment state-imposed forced labor is harder to assess than both internment-based and private forced labor.

Rather than constituting a static fact that can be measured using a “snapshot” approach, labor mobilization processes are dynamic in nature, akin to human trafficking.⁹⁹ The U.N.’s Palermo Protocol defines trafficking thus:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability..., for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include...forced labour...¹⁰⁰

In 2012, the ILO published a set of 11 indicators for measuring forced labor, including abuse of vulnerability, restriction of movement, isolation, intimidation, abusive work conditions, violence, debt bondage, and withholding of wages.¹⁰¹ These 11 indicators were never designed to formally measure forced labor, but merely to train front-line staff to visually recognize potential forced

⁹⁸ International Labour Office. (2005). “A global alliance against forced labour - Global report under the follow-up to the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work”. <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>

⁹⁹ Ibid, 94

¹⁰⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2000). “Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime.” <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ProtocolonTrafficking.pdf>

¹⁰¹ International Labour Office. (2012). “ILO global estimate of forced labour- Results and methodology.” https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf



labor in work-related settings. They are especially unsuited to evaluate state-imposed forced labor mobilization, because they ignore the dynamic nature of labor mobilization processes by focusing only on workplaces, omitting the crucial dimensions of coercive recruitment, transfer to work destinations, and the inability to leave work.

Strategies for evaluating non-internment state-imposed forced labor should take into account four key factors:

- It is often more readily assessed as a systemic risk than a specific instance, because it creates an environment where its victims are less likely to speak freely, rendering assessment of individual cases difficult or impossible, as the ILO found in Uzbekistan.¹⁰²
- Its assessment must consider its fundamental preconditions, such as an overall coercive environment, a comprehensive mechanism for pressure-driven grassroots mobilization, and a state policy mandating work or production quotas for targeted populations.
- Due to its dynamic nature, it is often best assessed during labor mobilization stages including recruitment, training, and transfer, rather than merely at the workplace itself.
- While it leverages people's vulnerabilities such as lack of alternative livelihood, it is not always equally economically exploitative, especially when the primary aims are political, as in Xinjiang. This reduces the effectiveness of indicators focused on exploitative work conditions, and requires a stronger focus on indicators measuring the policy and institutional basis of state-imposed forced labor.

Compared to the 11 indicators, the ILO's 2012 Survey Guidelines are better suited to evaluate non-internment forms of state-imposed forced labor in Central Asian regions¹⁰³ because they view mobilization into coercive work as a dynamic rather than static process, involving recruitment, work conditions, and (in-)ability to leave.

¹⁰² International Labour Office. (2017). "Recruitment practices and seasonal employment in agriculture in Uzbekistan, 2014-15." https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_561537.pdf

¹⁰³ International Labour Office. (2012). "Hard to see, harder to count - Survey guidelines to estimate forced labour of adults and children." https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182096.pdf



Phase	Dimension of forced labor	
	Involuntariness	Menace of penalty
1. Unfree recruitment	For example, deception about the true nature of work	For example, threat of denunciation to authorities
2. Work and life under duress	For example, forced overtime or degrading living conditions	For example, isolation or violence
3. Inability to leave work	For example, no freedom to resign in accordance with legal requirements	For example, confiscation of identity papers or travel documents

Table: the 2012 ILO Survey Guidelines for forced labor. Created by the author based on ILO (2012a, p.23-25).

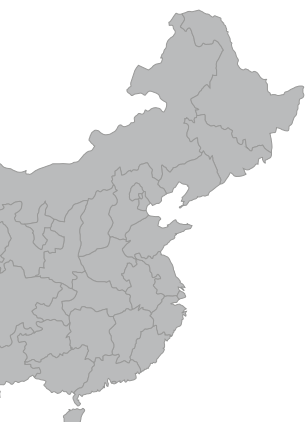
However, the indicators provided by the ILO in its 2012 Survey Guidelines, themselves also designed for private forced labor, should be adapted to assess state-imposed forced labor, following three steps:

1. Assess presence of an employment policy targeting population groups for potentially coercive/involuntary work.
2. Assess presence of a state mobilizational apparatus able to enforce this policy.
3. Assess presence of specific risk indicators by matching evidence with the adapted ILO Survey Guidelines.

Application of the Survey Guidelines to Xinjiang reveals another challenge. Most of the ILO’s measurement frameworks, including the 11 Indicators and Survey Guidelines, assume that forced labor serves the primary purpose of economic exploitation, hence are designed to capture poor or exploitative work conditions. However, economic exploitation is not always the only or even the primary factor in state-imposed forced labor, which can also serve important other purposes, including forced cultural assimilation or strengthening state control.

Turkmenistan’s president orders workers to be sent into the fields even when there is no cotton to pick, as a demonstration of state power.¹⁰⁴ In Xinjiang, state labor mobilization policies are linked to strategies of forced assimilation and questions of national security. Transferred ethnic minorities are exploited as cheap labor, with Chinese academics recommending that eastern Chinese regions create “mandatory annual quotas of arranged Xinjiang laborers” to “reduce labor

¹⁰⁴ Cotton Campaign. (2022). “Review of the use of forced labor during the 2021 cotton harvest in Turkmenistan.” https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61855050f9b0e0ff3428860/t/62de40eed70ff144dd891c4/1658732787144/CC_TKM_2021_HARVEST_REPORT.pdf. Cotton Campaign. (2023). “Leading the fight against state-imposed forced labor in the cotton fields of Turkmenistan.” <https://www.cottoncampaign.org/turkmenistan/#2022cottonharvest>



costs”.¹⁰⁵ The potential economic benefits of exploiting Uyghur labor are, however, complemented by equally if not more important political considerations. This is reflected in internal speeches held in 2014 by Chinese leaders Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, and in statements by implicated Chinese companies such as Huafu.¹⁰⁶

In sum, to counter state-imposed forced labor, policymakers should adapt and use the Survey Guidelines instead of the more widely-known II indicators (see table). They should further take into account whether, in a particular context, state-imposed forced labor is implemented primarily for economic or for political reasons. Such measurement must capture all phases of coercive labor mobilization and assess the existence of targeted state employment policies or production mandates. For areas and products where risk of state-imposed forced labor has been identified, the burden of proof should be reversed: companies must prove that products from such regions are free from any form of coerced labor. The ILO’s evaluation in Uzbekistan provides precedent for such a step as it assessed a systemic regionwide “risk of forced labour”.¹⁰⁷

While reversing the burden of proof can lead to overenforcement (banning imports of some goods not linked to forced labor), the alternative would be severe underenforcement. By nature, state-imposed forced labor creates systemic coercive risks throughout the entirety of targeted regions, populations, and economic sectors. Policy measures designed to effectively combat all forced labor cannot limit their focus to specific supply chains or companies, or rely on indicators designed to detect private forced labor evaluated at workplaces. They must also engage with the primary design features of state-imposed forced labor.

¹⁰⁵ Chen, Z., Zhang, J., and Letao, S. (2019). “Xinjiang hetian diqu weizu laodongli zhuan yi jiu ye fupin gongzuo baogao.” Nankai University, No. 2019001 (1009). <https://web.archive.org/web/20200507161938/https://ciwe.nankai.edu.cn/2019/1223/c18571a259225/page.htm>.

Zenz, A. (2021, March). “Coercive labor and forced displacement in Xinjiang’s cross-regional labor transfer program.” The Jamestown Foundation. <https://jamestown.org/product/coercive-labor-and-forced-displacement-in-xinjiang-cross-regional-labor-transfer-program/>

¹⁰⁶ Huafu (2017). “Akesu huafu juxing jindong ming chun.” 5 December. <https://archive.ph/pRkKc>

¹⁰⁷ International Labour Office. (2017). “Recruitment practices and seasonal employment in agriculture in Uzbekistan, 2014-15.” https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_561537.pdf. Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676

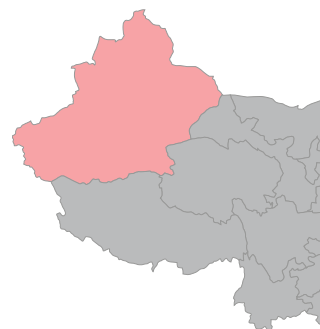


Table: Applying the ILO’s Survey Guidelines to Xinjiang’s labor transfer program.

Phase / Dimension	Involuntariness	Menace of penalty
1. Unfree recruitment	Adjusted indicators of ethnocultural and religious assimilation and persecution: While labor transfers can lead to increased incomes and allow agriculturalists to become factory workers, targeted groups have multiple reasons to resist such transfers. This is because of ethnocultural assimilation, separation from family and community, long work hours and limited leave, and restricted freedoms at workplaces (including an inability to practice religion). Coercive recruitment: state pressures and various forms of isolation and confinement during recruitment, training and collective (supervised) transfer.	Denunciation to (and retribution from) authorities, other forms of punishment (including detention): ethnic group members who refuse to participate in government programs are liable to be labeled “extremist,” and face various forms of retribution, including internment in re-education camps.
2. Work and life under duress	Limited freedom of movement and communication. In some instances, evidence of excessive work hours. Multiple dependencies on employers (for income and for housing, food, etc.). Under the influence of employers for non-work life (e.g. mandatory evening classes in Chinese language, political education, at times mandatory morning exercises or military-style drills).	Constant surveillance, restricted movement: In at least some reported instances workers were locked into living quarters at night. Isolation at workplaces, especially in factory parks, is common. Denunciation to (retribution from) authorities, other forms of punishment (including detention): ethnic group members who refuse to participate in government programs are liable to be labeled “extremist,” and face various forms of retribution, including internment in re-education camps. Potential retribution against family members by state authorities.
3. Impossibility of leaving	Adjusted indicator of inability to leave work temporarily or permanently without permissions of employer and state authorities. Ability to exit work is further constrained by the state’s new and expanding Unemployment Monitoring and Early Warning System unless workers secure permission to change work.	Constant surveillance, restricted movement: In at least some reported instances workers were locked in living quarters at night. Isolation at workplaces, especially in factory parks, is common. Denunciation to (retribution from) authorities, other forms of punishment (including detention): ethnic group members who refuse to participate in government programs are liable to be labeled “extremist,” and face various forms of retribution, including internment in re-education camps. Potential retribution against family members by state authorities.



8. Understanding State-Imposed Forced Labor and Forced Agricultural Production Through the Cases of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan

This section is based on the article “Measuring Non-Internment State-Imposed Forced Labor in Xinjiang and Central Asia: An Assessment of ILO Measurement Guidelines.” *Journal of Human Trafficking* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2023.2270366>.

Summary: Multiple Central Asian regions perpetuate forms of state-imposed forced labor through coercive labor mobilization for agricultural harvesting (Xinjiang, Turkmenistan), and through the coerced enforcement of state-mandated crop production (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan). Research shows that these practices operate in similar ways across these regions. A detailed analysis shows that labor mobilization practices and crop production mandates constitute non-internment, state-imposed forced labor, in line with ILO definitions.

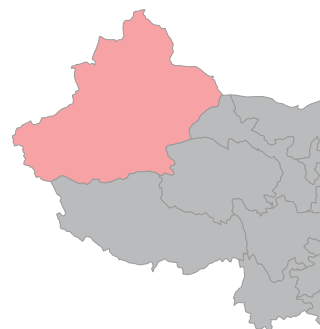
In multiple Central Asian regions, state-imposed forced labor occurs in both agricultural harvesting and in the production of state-mandated crops.¹⁰⁸ So far, the coerced production of state-mandated crops has not been sufficiently conceptualized as a systematic form of state-imposed work. The analyses of forced labor across several Central Asian regions shows that non-internment state-imposed forced labor mobilization is based on very similar principles. From this, we can discern several key indicators that apply to all of these contexts:

- Securitized social context (surveillance, curtailed mobility, police state characteristics)
- Grassroots mobilizational capabilities (local officials or teams of officials or state-affiliated entities, door-to-door mobilization campaigns)
- Presence of employment policy targeting group(s) for coercive mobilization
- Indications of execution of such policy throughout the six stages, from recruitment to retention

Uzbekistan coercively mobilized several million adults to pick cotton until gradually dismantling its system of state-imposed forced labor by 2021.¹⁰⁹ President Karimov maintained Soviet-era centralized state control over cotton

¹⁰⁸ Hierman, B., and Nekbakhtshoev, N. (2018). “Land reform by default: Uncovering patterns of agricultural decollectivization in Tajikistan. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(2), 409–430.” <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1249366>. Le, K. (2020). “Land use restrictions, misallocation in agriculture, and aggregate productivity in Vietnam.” *Journal of Development Economics*, 145, 102465. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2020.102465>

¹⁰⁹ Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676



production.¹¹⁰ National production quotas were handed down to regional governors, who then used community associations for the grassroots work of pressuring people to pick cotton.¹¹¹ To do so, the mahallas leveraged their role as providers of social benefits and other important community functions.¹¹² In 2021, following an evaluation mission by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and a decade-long global boycott of Uzbek cotton, Uzbekistan was declared to be free of state-imposed forced labor in its cotton harvest, while related concerns in Turkmenistan are persisting.¹¹³

Like Xinjiang and Uzbekistan, coercive recruitment for cotton harvesting in Turkmenistan is driven by state-mandated production targets that are passed from the center to local levels for enforcement.¹¹⁴ Recruitment especially targets public-sector workers, over whom the state exercises significant control. They are told to either pick themselves, or pay for replacement workers, a practice that often results in child labor and is also found in some districts in Tajikistan.¹¹⁵ A 2022 ILO publication describes



1Stockphoto, Ozbalci

¹¹⁰ Schmitz, A. (2020). “Uzbekistan’s transformation: Strategies and perspectives.” Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. SWP Research Paper 12. September. http://web.archive.org/web/20210901150223/https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/research_papers/2020RP12_Uzbekistan.pdf

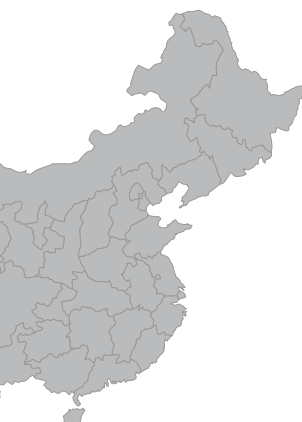
¹¹¹ McGuire, D., and Laaser, K. (2021). “‘You have to pick’: Cotton and state-organized forced labour in Uzbekistan.” *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 42(3), 552–572. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X18789786>. Ibid, 106

¹¹² Uzbek-German Forum. (2018, May). “We pick cotton out of fear: Systemic forced labor and the accountability gap in Uzbekistan.” <http://web.archive.org/web/20231116225404/https://labourcentralasia.org/upload/iblock/712/71214415f14871f217fe04863d115c36.pdf>

¹¹³ Cotton Campaign. (2023). “Leading the fight against state-imposed forced labor in the cotton fields of Turkmenistan.” https://www.cottoncampaign.org/turkmenistan/#2022_cottonharvest. Ibid, 106

¹¹⁴ Cotton Campaign. (2022). “Review of the use of forced labor during the 2021 cotton harvest in Turkmenistan.” https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61850501fe9be0ff3428860/t/62de40eed701ff144dd891c4/1658732787144/CC_TKM_2021_HARVEST_REPORT.pdf. U.S. Department of State. (2022). “2022 trafficking in persons report: Uzbekistan.” <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-070trafficking-in-persons-report/uzbekistan/>

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Ramos, R. D. (2021). “State-imposed forced labour: Outlining the situation in Central Asia.” *International Center for Trade Union Rights*, 28(3–4), 26–29. <https://doi.org/10.1353/iur.2021.a845097>. Hofman, I. (2023). Interview [Interview]. 12 June.



such “pick or pay” practices as “forced labor once removed”.¹¹⁶ The ILO’s 2022 report on modern slavery describes the state forcing Turkmen public servants, private sector workers, and students to pick cotton for little or no compensation, to advance national economic development.¹¹⁷ Public employees are coerced into affirming “voluntary” participation under threat of dismissal or reduced pay.¹¹⁸ Turkmenistan’s police also coerce persons who committed “minor offenses” to pick cotton as arbitrary punishment.¹¹⁹ In some instances, those who failed to comply were beaten with rubber truncheons. Work and living conditions in the fields are routinely very poor.¹²⁰

While forced recruitment and transfer of targeted populations into state-mandated work placements was largely abolished in Uzbekistan by 2021, all of these Central Asian regions (including Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) have another form of forced labor. Under socialism, all land was owned by the state, and agricultural production targets were determined by the authorities. To date, all these regions leverage ongoing state land ownership to coerce a subset of farmers into meeting agricultural production quotas. In a later section, this article will use ILO definitions to demonstrate how this practice constitutes a form of state-imposed forced labor.

Despite decollectivization, Uzbekistan maintained state ownership over land,

¹¹⁶ Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO, 35. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676.

¹¹⁷ International Labour Organization. (2022, August 12). “China ratifies the two ILO fundamental conventions on forced labour [Press Release].” https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_853575/lang-en/index.htm

¹¹⁸ Cotton Campaign. (2023). “Leading the Fight Against State-Imposed Forced Labor in the Cotton Fields of Turkmenistan.” 17. <https://www.cottoncampaign.org/turkmenistan/#2022cottonharvest>. US Department of State. (2022). 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkmenistan/>.

¹¹⁹ Cotton Campaign. (2022). “Review of the use of Forced Labor During the 2021 Cotton Harvest in Turkmenistan.” 9. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61855050fe9be0ff3428860/t/62de40eed701ff144dd891c4/1658732787144/CC_TKM_2021_HARVEST_REPORT.pdf. US Department of State. (2022). “2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan.” <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkmenistan/>.

¹²⁰ Cotton Campaign. (2023). “Leading the fight against state-imposed forced labor in the cotton fields of Turkmenistan.” <https://www.cottoncampaign.org/turkmenistan/#2022cottonharvest>



privatizing only non-agricultural land in 2021.¹²¹ After independence, about 5-10% of rural households became large landholders who continued producing state-mandated crops such as cotton and wheat, as in Soviet times.¹²² They must meet state-assigned production quotas or risk losing their time-limited land use rights.¹²³ An ILO report notes that they are caught in the “same straitjacket” as those forced by the state to harvest in their fields.¹²⁴ Conversely, most of the rural population became smallholders growing mostly food crops of their choice.¹²⁵

Despite the end of systematic state-imposed forced labor for cotton-picking, the Uzbek Ministry of Agriculture continues to mandate agricultural production for large landholders. Local authorities enforce cotton and wheat production quotas, often involving police officers and prosecutors.¹²⁶ Large landholders must

¹²¹ Veldwisch, G., and Bock, B. (2011). “Dehkans, diversification and dependencies: Rural transformation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4), 591. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00327.x>. Kinstellar. (2022, January). “Uzbekistan reinforces the legal framework for privatization of land.” <https://www.kinstellar.com/news-and-insights/detail/1596/uzbekistan-reinforces-legal-framework-for-privatization-of-land>. Melniková, L., and Havrland, B. (2016). “State ownership of land in Uzbekistan—An impediment to further agricultural growth?” *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica*, 49(1–4), 6–8. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ats-2016-0001>. Trevisani, T. (2010). “Land and power in Khorezm. Farmers, communities, and the state in Uzbekistan’s decollectivisation.” Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. https://www.eth.mpg.de/3319421/book_138

¹²² Veldwisch, G., and Bock, B. (2011). “Dehkans, diversification and dependencies: Rural transformation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4), 591. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00327.x>. Trevisani, T. (2010). Land and Power in Khorezm. Farmers, communities, and the state in Uzbekistan’s decollectivisation. Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. https://www.eth.mpg.de/3319421/book_138

¹²³ Veldwisch, G., and Bock, B. (2011). “Dehkans, diversification and dependencies: Rural transformation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4), 591. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00327.x>. Melniková, L., and Havrland, B. (2016). “State ownership of land in Uzbekistan—An impediment to further agricultural growth?” *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica*, 49(1–4), 6–8. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ats-2016-0001>. Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676

¹²⁴ Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676

¹²⁵ Veldwisch, G., and Bock, B. (2011). “Dehkans, diversification and dependencies: Rural transformation in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4), 591. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00327.x>.

¹²⁶ Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. (2021). “A turning point in Uzbekistan’s cotton harvest: No central government-imposed forced labor freedom of association needed to sustain reforms.” https://www.uzbekforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UZBEK-FORUM_harvest_reportpdf?fbclid=IwAR3DT3Nkj8XH2LzK4lWuXwnzltVmnAWA2qoTtWcBWS4pXZF3zUlx6uyXT



hand over all cotton at predetermined low prices.¹²⁷ From the late 2010s, cotton production along the value chain was increasingly privatized, creating vertically-integrated “cotton-textile clusters.”¹²⁸ However, this did not significantly improve farmers’ rights or incomes, as it did not create a free market for state-controlled crops such as cotton.¹²⁹ Like state-run entities, clusters constitute local monopolies with the power to impose contractual production quotas on farmers and purchase agricultural outputs at agreed prices, in line with quotas determined by the authorities, who often force large landholders to work with clusters.¹³⁰

In Turkmenistan, state-owned agricultural land is leased to (mostly smallholder tenant) farmers through state-run peasant associations, the successors of Soviet collective farms. State-determined produce, especially cotton, must be sold to the state at fixed prices, leaving farmers with very little profit.¹³¹ Since tenant farming is one of few ways to earn an income in rural regions, and with national unemployment rates of up to 50%, farmers are forced to abide by state-imposed lease conditions or lose land use rights.¹³² Farmers often try to grow cash crops

¹²⁷ Melniková, L., and Havrland, B. (2016). “State ownership of land in Uzbekistan—An impediment to further agricultural growth?” *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica*, 49(1–4), 6–8. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ats-2016-0001>. Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. (2021). “A turning point in Uzbekistan’s cotton harvest: No central government-imposed forced labor freedom of association needed to sustain reforms.” https://www.uzbekforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UZBEK-FORUM_harvest_reportpdf?fbclid=IwAR3DT3Nkj8XH2LzK4lWuXwnzltVmnAWA2qoTtWcBWS4pXZF3zUlx6uyXT

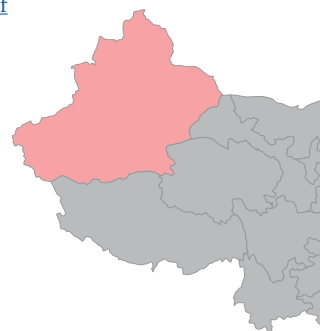
¹²⁸ Tapiola, K. (2022). “Building trust in cotton fields: The ILO’s engagement in Uzbekistan.” ILO, 48–49. https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V5/1292424970002676.

¹²⁹ Ibid, Tapiola, K. (2022). Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. (2021). “A turning point in Uzbekistan’s cotton harvest: No central government-imposed forced labor freedom of association needed to sustain reforms.” https://www.uzbekforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UZBEK-FORUM_harvest_reportpdf?fbclid=IwAR3DT3Nkj8XH2LzK4lWuXwnzltVmnAWA2qoTtWcBWS4pXZF3zUlx6uyXT

¹³⁰ Ibid, Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. (2021). Synovitz, R., and Bobojon, S. (2021). “‘Swamp of poverty’: Uzbek cotton farmers refusing to work with ‘cluster’ monopoly.” Radio Free Europe. 20 January. <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-cotton-farmers-cluster-reforms-monopolyscheme/31053736.html>

¹³¹ Lerman, Z., and Stanchin, I. (2004). “Institutional changes in Turkmenistan’s agriculture: Impacts on productivity and rural incomes. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 45(1), 60–72.” <https://doi.org/10.2747/1538-7216.45.1.60>. O’Hara, S. (1997). “Agriculture and land reform in Turkmenistan since independence. *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, 38(7), 430–444.” <https://doi.org/10.1080/10889388.1997.10641056>. Stronski, P. (2017). “Turkmenistan at twenty-five: The high price of authoritarianism.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 6–7. 20 January. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Stronski_Turkmenistan.pdf

¹³² Ibid, Stronski. (2017). Cotton Campaign. (2022). “Review of the use of forced labor during the 2021 cotton harvest in Turkmenistan.” https://static1.squarespace.com/static/618550501fe9beoff3428860/t/62de40eed701f144dd891c4/1658732787144/CC_TKM



on the side (tomatoes or melons), but these risk being destroyed by inspecting officials: local mayors with police and state prosecutors.¹³³

In Tajikistan post-decollectivization, cotton production is dominated by a kleptocratic elite, which leverages its monopsony over the financing of farm inputs to coerce cotton-producing farm associations through debt bondage into involuntary production mandates and predetermined cotton prices below international market rates.¹³⁴ Despite donor-induced reform attempts and related privatization in the 2000s, the central government continues to use the Ministry of Agriculture to issue mandatory production quotas to local authorities, who must enforce them or risk dismissal.¹³⁵ In both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, privatization of cotton procurement has not improved farmers' economic situation or reduced exploitation. In Tajikistan, the central government hands down cotton production quotas (planted areas and expected yields) in what Hofman describes as a “disguised” continuation of the socialist command economy, although local enforcement varies.¹³⁶ Farmers can lose land use rights if the authorities deem their use practices “irrational,” confining them to abject poverty.¹³⁷ Farmers who fail to follow state orders risk harassment by the authorities, an extreme risk in a context where legal rights effectively only exist on paper.¹³⁸ While farmers have some incentives to grow cotton — including the use of cotton stalks for fuel and rural infrastructure mostly being

¹³³ Ibid

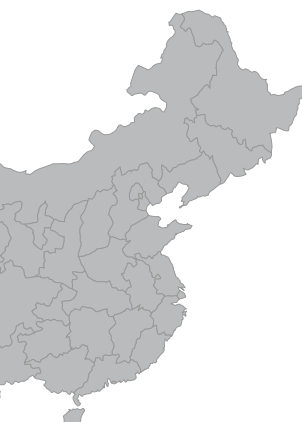
¹³⁴ Hofman, I. (2018). “Soft budgets and elastic debt: Farm liabilities in the agrarian political economy of post-Soviet Tajikistan.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(7), 1360–1381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1293047>. Synovitz, R., and Ashur, S. (2019). “Uzbek farmers get ‘clusters’ bombed by reforms.” *Radio Free Europe*. 17 December. <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbek-farmers-get-cluster-bombed-by-reforms/30328781.html>

¹³⁵ Van Atta, D. (2009). ““White gold” or fool’s gold?: The political economy of cotton in Tajikistan.” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 56(2), 17–35. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PPC1075-8216560202>. Hofman, I. (2023). Interview [Interview]. 12 June.

¹³⁶ Hofman, I. (2018). “Soft budgets and elastic debt: farm liabilities in the agrarian political economy of post-Soviet Tajikistan.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(7), 1369–1370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1293047>. Hofman, I. (2021). “Chinese Cotton Diplomacy in Tajikistan: Greasing the Ties by Reviving the Cotton Economy.” University of Oxford, 505. 25 October. <https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/files/hofmanrbformattedfinalpdf>. Lerman, Z., and Sedik, D. (2008). “The economic effects of land reform in Tajikistan.” *Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N. (FAO)*. <https://www.fao.org/3/aj285e/aj285e.pdf>

¹³⁷ Nekbakhshoev, N. (2021). “Institutional design, local elite resistance, and inequality in access to land: Evidence from cotton-growing areas of Tajikistan.” *Central Asian Affairs*, 7(4), 307–339. <https://doi.org/10.30965/22142290-BJA10012>. Hofman, I. (2021). “Chinese cotton diplomacy in Tajikistan: Greasing the ties by reviving the cotton economy.” University of Oxford. 25 October. <https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/files/hofmanrbformattedfinalpdf>

¹³⁸ Hofman, I. (2023). Interview [Interview]. 12 June.



geared towards this crop — many would grow more cash crops such as melons if given free choice.¹³⁹

Practices that effectively constitute state-imposed forced labor are prevalent in silk production throughout Central Asia. In a continuation of Soviet practice, Tajikistan imposes state quotas for silk cocoon production on farmers owning mulberry trees that are passed down for enforcement from central to local state levels.¹⁴⁰ Depending on their socio-political capital, farmers “cannot easily refuse,” but are almost universally unwilling to produce cocoons, which is very hard work for meager pay.¹⁴¹ The state sets cocoon prices at exploitatively-low levels, and cocoons must be handed over to district-level authorities. Structurally, very similar forms of state-imposed forced silk cocoon production are prevalent in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.¹⁴² In Uzbekistan, farmers risk losing their land tenure for refusing to “voluntarily” meet state-imposed quotas for silk cocoon production.¹⁴³

In sum, multiple Central Asian regions perpetuate forms of state-imposed forced labor, in both agricultural harvesting and production of state-mandated crops (compare Hierman & Nekbakhtshoev, 2018; Le, 2020). While Uzbekistan eventually ended forced labor mobilization into cotton harvesting by 2021, coercive labor transfers for agricultural harvesting and other work persists in Xinjiang, Tibet, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, and to a lesser extent in Tajikistan.¹⁴⁴

In addition, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan use ongoing state land ownership to coerce farmers into meeting agricultural production quotas. This

¹³⁹ Ibid.

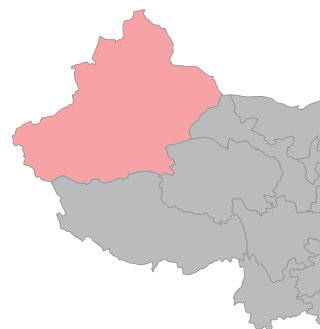
¹⁴⁰ Hofman, I. (2021). “Chinese Cotton Diplomacy in Tajikistan: Greasing the Ties by Reviving the Cotton Economy.” University of Oxford, 505. 25 October. <https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/files/hofmanrbformattedfinalpdf>. Hofman, I. (2022). Just working for wood: life inside Tajikistan’s silk industry. University of Oxford. 11 August. Available from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/tajikistan-silk-cocoon-forced-labour-central-asia/>

¹⁴¹ Hofman, I. (2022). “Just working for wood: Life inside Tajikistan’s silk industry.” University of Oxford. 11 August. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/tajikistan-silk-cocoon-forced-labour-central-asia/>

¹⁴² U.S. Department of State. (2022). “2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan.” <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkmenistan/>

¹⁴³ Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. (2023). “Briefing for the US department of labor on the use of coercion in the silk industry in Uzbekistan” [Unpublished manuscript]. Uzbek-German Forum. (2015). “Silk loops for Uzbek farmers.” <https://www.uzbekforum.org/report-silk-loop-for-uzbek-farmers/>. U.S. Department of State. (2022). “2022 trafficking in persons report: Uzbekistan.” <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/uzbekistan/>

¹⁴⁴ In Tajikistan, coercive cotton-picking is unevenly enforced, has been on the decline, and typically does not entail transportation due to short distances between people’s homes and fields (Hofman, 2023).



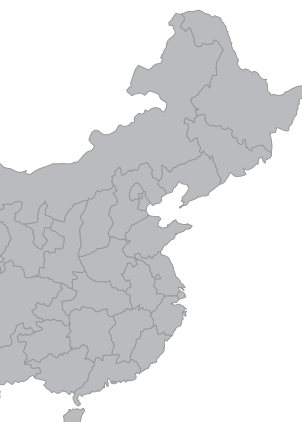
coerced agricultural work constitutes forced labor according to the ILO, because it is performed under the menace of a penalty (loss of land usage rights or other repercussions), and it is involuntary (not performed based on free and informed consent).

Table: Applying the ILO’s Survey Guidelines to coercive agricultural production in Central Asian regions.

Phase / Dimension	Involuntariness	Menace of penalty
1. Unfree recruitment	Adjusted indicator “low profitability in relation to effort” (instead of deception about impending work conditions): Farmers do not want to produce cotton, silk, etc. because their profits in relation to effort are much lower compared to cash crops. Debt bondage (Tajikistan): elite monopsony over the financing of farm inputs forces farmers to produce crops mandated by elites.	Denunciation to (retribution from) authorities, exclusion from future employment (through permanent loss of land use rights), added indicator of abuse of vulnerability: farmers are liable to lose land use rights for not meeting state-mandated production quotas.
2. Work and life under duress	Degrading living conditions, potentially forced overtime (generally exploitative work conditions): Farmers are faced with hard work for low pay to meet state-imposed production quotas. Multiple dependencies: Farmers are often dependent on various state or state-linked entities for essential agricultural inputs, social benefits, pensions, permits, etc.	Denunciation to (retribution from) authorities, dismissal, and exclusion from future employment (through permanent loss of land use rights), potential loss of rights or benefits, added indicator of abuse of vulnerability: farmers are liable to lose land use rights for not meeting state-mandated production quotas. Surveillance: Fields can be subject to inspection by authorities, who may destroy crops other than those mandated by the state.
3. Impossibility of leaving	Debt bondage (potential indebtedness linked to production): Farmers may incur debts for agricultural inputs and may be unable to repay authorities or the supplying entities if they do not produce and sell state-mandated crops.	Denunciation to (retribution from) authorities, dismissal, and exclusion from future employment (through permanent loss of land use rights), potential loss of rights or benefits, added indicator of abuse of vulnerability: farmers are liable to lose land use rights for not meeting state-mandated production quotas. Surveillance: Fields can be subject to inspection by authorities.

9. Soaring Foreign Exports from Southern Xinjiang

Summary: Uyghur forced labor taints global supply chains largely indirectly, through links to supply chains throughout China and neighboring Asian countries, allowing Xinjiang’s direct foreign trade to experience dramatic growth despite nominal forced labor bans. Much of this growth is driven by the Uyghur heartland regions in southern Xinjiang and linked to labor-intensive products, the types of goods most at risk of forced labor. This means that many products made with forced labor are likely entering global supply chains in indirect ways, in violation of national and international forced labor policies and legislation.



In 2021, Xinjiang's direct trade with other countries increased 5.8%. Of the total export value, 51.4% comprised labor-intensive products, especially textile and garment production, which are among those most likely to involve Uyghur forced labor ([Urumqi Customs, 2021](#)).¹⁴⁵

In 2022, Xinjiang's trade increased much faster, by 57%, surpassing growth rates of all other Chinese provinces and regions.¹⁴⁶ Some 85% of this trade consisted of labor-intensive products. In January-September 2023, Xinjiang's trade increased by 47% and its exports by 49%. Exports of labor-intensive products grew by over 50%, while exports of solar cells, lithium batteries, and electric passenger vehicle components grew by 61%¹⁴⁷.



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Despite demonstrated prevalence of forced labor, trade growth was driven especially by increases in southern Xinjiang's Uyghur regions, whose share of Xinjiang's total foreign trade rose from 21.7% in 2021 to 26.6% in 2022, then further to 30.5% for the first 8 months of 2023, boosted by high growth in the Kashgar special economic zone and by targeted state efforts to increase southern Xinjiang's foreign trade.¹⁴⁸ In the first four months of 2023, foreign trade grew fastest in Kashgar (123%), Hotan (123%) and Kizilsu (140%), all regions with particularly high risk of Uyghur forced labor.¹⁴⁹

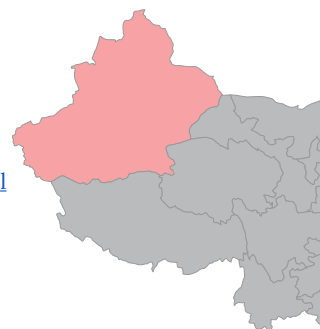
¹⁴⁵ "2021 Nian Xinjiang waimao jin chukou tongbi zengzhang 5.8% shixian "shisiwu" lianghao kaiju," n.d. http://www.customs.gov.cn/urumqi_customs/556675/556651/556655/556657/4150606/2022012810501734456.doc.

¹⁴⁶ Chen Qiangwei. (2022) "2022 Nian Xinjiang waimao jin chukou zong zhi shou po 2400yi yuan." Xinjiang Daily. 17 January. https://web.archive.org/web/20230502221301/http://xj.news.cn/2023-01/17/c_1129293626.htm

¹⁴⁷ Xinyu, W. (2023). "Shouci tupo 2500yi yuan! Qian san jidu Xinjiang waimao chuang lishi xingao." Altxw.com. 21 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20231117134554/http://www.altxw.com/yw/202310/t20231021_16820877.html. Xiaoli, L. (2023). "Qian 8 yue Xinjiang waimao jin chukou zong zhi zengzhang yu wu cheng." Tianshan Net. 11 October. https://web.archive.org/web/20231113163440/https://www.ts.cn/xwzx/jjxw/202310/t20231011_16581203.shtml.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid 145. Xiaoli, L. (2023).

¹⁴⁹ Yanan, L. (2023). "Qian 4 yue Xinjiang waimao jin chukou 949.5yi yuan tongbi zengzhang 82.7%." Belt and Road Portal. May 17. <https://web.archive.org/web/20231113170231/https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/318666.html>



Southern Xinjiang's increased trade shares are also an indicator of drastic growth in local production for at least initial domestic use. This means that more products made with forced labor are entering global supply chains via Chinese domestic companies and their international trade partners.

10. United Nations Entities' Statements on Xinjiang Forced Labor

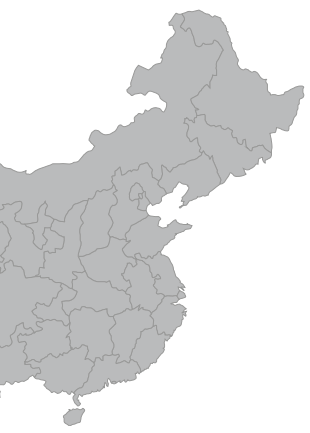


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Several UN entities have published reports and made statements pertaining to forced labor in Xinjiang. In his report, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery wrote that it is “reasonable to conclude that forced labour among Uighur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing has been occurring in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China”.¹⁵⁰ He noted that this was linked not only to the re-education camp system, but also to the “the poverty alleviation through labour transfer system, where surplus rural labourers are transferred into secondary or tertiary sector work.”¹⁵¹ The Rapporteur further noted that forced labor

¹⁵⁰ Obokata, T. (2022). “Contemporary forms of slavery affecting persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minority communities. United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council.” UN. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3984430?ln=en>

¹⁵¹ Ibid



linked to such coercive labor transfers exists not only in Xinjiang but also in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The rapporteur's report concluded that forced labor in Xinjiang in "some instances may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity."

The UN High Commissioner's report on Xinjiang similarly states that "some publicly available information on 'surplus labour' schemes suggests that various coercive methods may be used in securing 'surplus labourers'"¹⁵² It continues to review Xinjiang's Five-Year Plans and other official state documents that indicate the use of coercive methods for Uyghurs and others who are "unwilling" to participate in state-mandated employment arrangements. The report concludes that "there are indications that labour and employment schemes, including those linked to the VSETC system, appear to be discriminatory in nature or effect and to involve elements of coercion."¹⁵³ In its 2022 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, the ILO listed coercive labor practices in Xinjiang under its review of state-imposed forced labor.¹⁵⁴

In December 2022, a group of 12 UN Special Rapporteurs and three UN Working Groups, including the Special Rapporteurs on contemporary forms of slavery, on trafficking in persons, and on minority issues, published a joint statement to the Chinese government, raising concerns about multiple rights violations in Xinjiang.¹⁵⁵ The letter called on the Chinese state to "[p]ut an immediate end to any state policy and directive that authorizes the involuntary transfer of Uyghur and other minorities from detention facilities to work in factories in Xinjiang or across the country" (p.11).

In December 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued an Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure to the Chinese government, noting that it was "alarmed" at allegations of "forced labour" and "forced displacement," and calling upon Beijing to immediately investigate all allegations of rights violations in Xinjiang, including forced labor.¹⁵⁶

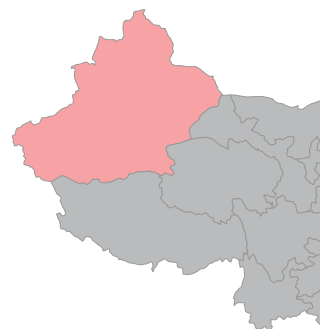
¹⁵² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2022). "OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the XUAR." <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assesment.pdf>

¹⁵³ Ibid 150

¹⁵⁴ International Labour Association. (2022). "Global estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and forced marriage. Report: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage." 12 September. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_854733/lang-en/index.htm

¹⁵⁵ United Nations' Special Procedures. (2022). "Mandates of the special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary" <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26411>

¹⁵⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). (2022). "Prevention Of Racial Discrimination, Including Early Warning And Urgent Action Procedure." United Nations. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FEWU%2FCHN%2F0624&Lang=en



11. Recommendations for Permanent Missions to the United Nations for China's Universal Periodic Review

In their submissions to the 45th Session of the Universal Periodic Review of China, permanent missions to the UN should:

- Note the prevalence and continued expansion of forced labor targeting ethnic groups, especially those linked to mass internment and Poverty Alleviation Through Labor Transfer programs. In particular, note new evidence showing that ethnic group members refusing state work assignments face arbitrary detention.
- Note that Beijing's coercive labor policies in Xinjiang violate the ILO Convention 105, Article 1, prohibiting forced or compulsory labor, in at least three respects:¹⁵⁷
 - (a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system;
 - (b) as a method of mobilising and using labour for purposes of economic development;
 - (e) as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.”
- Note that forced labor in Xinjiang is part of what the OHCHR has stated in its report on Xinjiang may amount to Crimes Against Humanity. Specifically, forced labor is potentially linked to three specific Crimes Against Humanity: forcible transfer, discrimination, and enslavement.
- Ask the Chinese government to abolish all coercive state-mandated work placements in both Xinjiang and Tibet that target ethnic groups in the name of economic development and national security.

12. Recommendations for National Governments

Governments should introduce legislation that allows for the regions and related industrial sectors that are at high risk of state-imposed forced labor to be designated as such. Robust forced labor legislation should be passed or existing laws strengthened to explicitly ban products from such designated regions or sectors using a “rebuttable presumption” of being tainted with forced labor, whereby importing entities are required to demonstrate that goods made in whole or in part with inputs originating from such regions or sectors are free of forced labor.

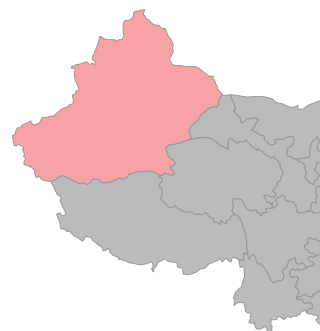
¹⁵⁷ International Labour Organization. (1953). “Report of the Ad-Hoc committee on forced labour.” https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/ILO-SR/ILO-SR_NS36_engl.pdf

This should involve an enhanced disclosure of all relevant supply chains. Audits conducted at factories in affected regions should not be accepted as proof of the absence of forced labor, given that especially non-internment state-imposed forced labor often cannot be assessed at workplaces, and that affected populations are not at liberty to speak freely. During the import inspection, potentially affected goods should be preemptively detained by the authorities. If operators cannot furnish relevant proof, the affected goods should be confiscated.

Because of the nature of state-imposed forced labor, conclusive proof of the absence of coerced work requires evidence that the respective state authorities have repealed all relevant policies, including coercive recruitment programs targeting ethnic minorities at the grassroots level, and are no longer enforcing related employment targets. The state-imposed forced labor is not readily measured at actual workplaces, but must be evaluated through policy analysis and a detailed review of local contexts for recruitment, transfer, and retention. If state-imposed forced labor was implemented for political reasons, such as in Xinjiang, conclusive evidence should be obtained that any political rationales connecting a targeted group with a particular livelihood mode or state of employment have ceased to exist. In sum, governments should ascertain that all relevant ideological convictions, policies, and policy implementation mechanisms have been changed or abolished. For this, they can use key indicators of non-internment state-imposed forced labor, including:

- Securitized social context (surveillance, curtailed mobility, police state characteristics)
- Grassroots mobilizational capabilities (local officials or teams of officials or state-affiliated entities, door-to-door mobilization campaigns)
- Presence of employment policy targeting group(s) for coercive mobilization
- Indications of execution of such policy throughout the six stages of work, from recruitment to retention¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ See a discussion of these six stages in: “Coercive Labor in the Cotton Harvest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan: A Comparative Analysis of State-Sponsored Forced Labor.” *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1822939> or free access: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4439694.



Appendix: List of New Internal State Documents from Xinjiang on Forced Labor and Coercive Poverty Alleviation

Jinqi Tuopin. 2019. “Recent key tasks for poverty alleviation” “Jinqi tuopin gongjian zhongdian gongzuo.” July 9. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/recent-key-poverty-alleviation-work/>.

This 2019 document from Yarkand Government identifies shortcomings in poverty alleviation work, and mandates a set of rectification measures. This includes guidelines for responding to the most “difficult” members of the population, such as withholding subsistence allowances for individuals who repeatedly refuse to participate in poverty alleviation projects, mandating that all villages establish “love supermarkets” to improve inner motivation, and coercing elderly persons to participate in seasonal labor transfers, including picking cotton.

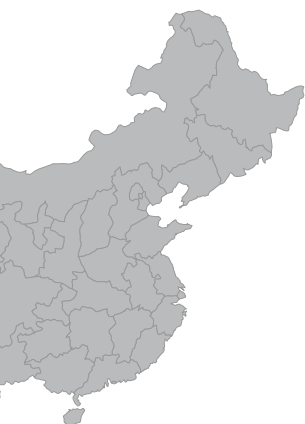
Kashgar Stability Maintenance Group. 2017. “Notice on Printing and Distributing “Work Guidelines for the Lawful Detention of 21 Types of Strike-Hard Focus Targets” Guanyu yinfa “yifa shouya 21lei yanda zhongdian duixiang gongzuo zhinan” tongzhi.” 7 February. Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/notice-on-printing-and-distributing-work-guidelines-for-the-lawful-detention-of-21-types-of-strike-hard-focus-targets-kashgar-2017/>.

This document outlines guidelines for detaining persons belonging to one of 21 types of target (focus) persons. They are to be subjected to “strike-hard detention,” which typically indicates a tougher form of detention than re-education. The 21 categories include a wide variety of individuals, including persons who photograph convenience police stations, fail to participate in government grassroots organizational arrangements, engage in various types of religious activities, or refuse to allow visits by government work teams.

“Kashgar Prefecture 2018-2020 “Targeted Poverty Alleviation Poor Households Information Collection Form” “Kashi diqu 2018-2020 nian” n.d. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/kashgar-prefecture-2018-2020-targeted-poverty-alleviation-poor-households-information-collection-form-2/>.

The Kashgar prefecture government issued this form to gather information about poor households and categorize them during the most intensive period of poverty alleviation from 2018 to 2020. The first section of the form requires basic information about any given household, indicating levels of poverty, resettlement or relocation status, and assistance measures. The second section of the form requires an explanation for the causes of poverty, including “a mindset of waiting, relying, wanting,” “religious influence,” and “low cultural level.” Subsequent sections outline prescribed countermeasures and forecasted future income.

Khotan County. 2018. “Summary of Social Poverty Alleviation Work in Ottur Eriq Village” “Outula’airikecunshehuifupingonguozongjie.” December 5. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/summary-of-social-poverty-alleviation-work-in-ottur-eriq-village/>.



This 2018 document summarizes the work of the village-based work team from Khotan county No. 3 primary school. It outlines successes and areas for improvement. The document focuses heavily on the importance of helping locals develop strong Mandarin language skills, increase ideological work for farmers, cooperate with employment services to ‘guide’ surplus labor to join seasonal labor, and encourage teachers to enter the households to gather more information. Poor families were to be made aware of their deficiencies, subjected to strengthened “motivational education,” and households considered to be poor because of “laziness” were sent to dedicated “education” activities.

“List of “Lazy Persons” and “Drunkards” from Village No.7 in Yarkand County” Qi cun shachexian. n.d. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/list-of-lazy-persons-and-drunkards-from-village-no-7-in-yarkand-county/>.

This 2019 document issued by Yarkand County lists individuals identified as “lazy persons,” “drunkards,” and persons who do not participate in arranged activities.

Qiaolake. 2018. “Chipartopluk Village (Cholaq Terek Township) 2018 Work Summary and 2019 Work Ideas” “Qiaolake tiereke zhen qiba’er tuobuleige cun 2018nian gongzuo zongjie ji 2019nian gongzuo silu.” Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/chipartopluk-village-cholaq-terek-township-2018-work-summary-and-2019-work-ideas/>.

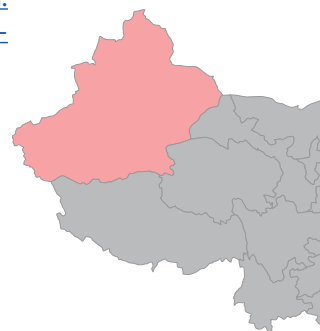
This document outlines a range of government work achievements for 2018 and work priorities for 2019 for Chipartopluk village in Tekes County (Yili prefecture), related to poverty alleviation, grassroots party work, development and combating of “religious extremism”. Among a range of work targets for 2019, the state planned to round up “all women and other surplus laborers” – 500 persons from only 391 households – to work in neighboring cities.

“Yarkand County Poverty Alleviation [No. 9] Develop the Pigeon Meat Industry and Open Doors to Building Wealth” Shache County. 2019. “Shachexian tuopin gongjian.” June 18. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/yarkand-county-poverty-alleviation-no-9-develop-the-pigeon-meat-industry-and-open-doors-to-building-wealth/>.

This classified document discusses industrial poverty alleviation as a fundamental mechanism for lifting ethnic and rural households from poverty. The document describes a farmers’ breeding cooperative which integrates centralized breeding of pigeon meat, geese, and other poultry as an example of industrial poverty alleviation. In explaining the success of poverty alleviation through this example, the document notes that shaming “lazy persons” is an important step to promoting people’s “inner motivation.”

Shache County. n.d. “Yarkand County Plan for Investigating Shortcomings in Assault-Style Poverty Alleviation in Townships and Counties” “Tuopin gongjian duanban qingkuang modi fang’an.” November 8. Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/yarkand-county-plan-for-investigating-shortcomings-in-assault-style-poverty-alleviation-in-townships-and-counties/>.

This document mandates daily reporting of dozens of data points in order to identify shortcomings in township/village poverty alleviation work. This daily report template highlights the wide application of poverty alleviation requirements,



including building love supermarkets and staffing village-based satellite factories with supervising officials.

Shufu County Commission. 2017. “Shufu County Disciplinary Inspection Commission Notice on the Problem of the Poor Implementation of Mass Work and Handling of this Situation” “Guanyu dui luoshi qunzhong gongzuo.” Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/shufu-county-disciplinary-inspection-commission-notice-on-the-problem-of-the-poor-implementation-of-mass-work-and-handling-of-this-situation>.

This Shufu County Disciplinary Inspection Commission notification lists 25 accountability issues identified by the Mass Work Supervision Team of the Autonomous Region, including cases of local corruption or malpractice. For example, in several townships in Konasheher county, officials “forced” Uyghur villagers to work in textile and satellite factories for minimal pay.

Shufu County. n.d. “Shufu County Plan for the Division of Roles to Implement the Feedback from the Autonomous Region’s Party Committee’s Eighth Inspection Group” “Shufuxian luoshi zizhiqiu dangwei di ba xunshi zu fankui yijian de zeren fenjie fang’an.” Xinjiang QQ Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/shufu-county-plan-for-the-division-of-roles-to-implement-the-feedback-from-the-autonomous-regions-party-committees-eighth-inspection-group/>.

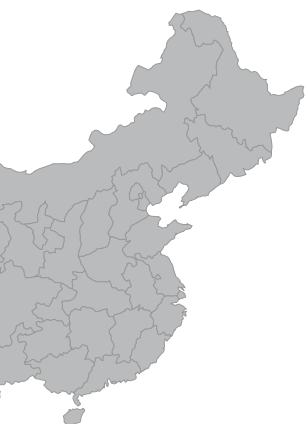
The document summarizes the findings of the regional inspection of the Shufu County Committee and its leading cadres. The Inspection Team noted that ideological work is weak and policy implementation imprecise. In one instance, poor households were accidentally given excessive resettlement benefits. To conceal this error, the authorities demanded immediate repayment of subsidies by (illegitimately) threatening re-education detention.

Tekes County. n.d. “One of the Action Plans of the ‘Major Reflection and Fixing Shortcomings’” “Tekesi xian gongan’ju jin yi bu guanche luoshi ‘liangtou da, wa jian chan’ buqi yingshou jinshou duanban xingdong gongzuo fang’an.” Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/one-of-the-action-plans-of-the-major-reflection-and-fixing-shortcomings/>.

The Tekes County Political and Legal Affairs Commission circulates an action plan forcing the security agencies to reflect on and fix work shortcomings, with a focus on ensuring full implementation of mass internments: “resolutely round up all who should be rounded up.”

“Implement the Five Prevents- Promote Transformation - Action Plan for Making up for the Shortcomings of Education and Training Centers” “Zhua wu fang cu zhuanhua bu qi jiao pei zhongxin duan ban xingdong fangan.” Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/implement-the-five-prevents-promote-transformation/>

This document lists implementation shortcomings related to the re-education camps, such as overcrowding and security issues, and outlines mandated steps for resolving them. This includes a discussion on how to implement detainee skills training and labor placement.



Kashgar Party Office Bulletin No.88. 2017. “Speeches of Comrades Li Ningping, Parhat Rozi, Chen Zhijiang and Dai Qing at the Meeting Promoting Poverty Alleviation to Reach Households and Persons with Precision” “Li Ningping, Parhat Rozi, Chen Zhijiang, Dai Qing tongzhi zai diqu shendu pinkun tuopin gongjian jingzhun dao hu dao ren peixun tuijin hui shang de jianghua.” November 29. Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiang-policefiles.org/kashgar-party-office-bulletin-no-88-2017/>

Kashgar Prefecture Party Secretary Li Ningping gives a speech in 2017 in which he exhorts party officials that poverty alleviation is closely intertwined with counterterrorism, social stability, and long-term economic prosperity. Li Ningping highlights that rural and ethnic populations require intensified and calculated measures to avoid extremism and join a modern and civilized society.

Yarkand Party Office Document No.2. 2019. “Notice on “Looking Back” Work Regarding the Rectification of Problems Related to the Full Implementation of Tackling Poverty Alleviation Through the “Winter Offensive” “Guanyu quanli zuo hao tuopin gongjian “dongji gongshi” fupin lingyu wenti zhenggai “huitou kan” gongzuo de tongzhi.” January 21. Xinjiang Police Files. <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/yarkand-party-office-document-no-2-2019/>

This document issued by Yarkand County in 2019 identifies shortcomings in poverty alleviation work related to implementation of the “Winter Offensive” and mandates a set of rectification measures to counter implementation issues.



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Dr. Adrian Zenz is Senior Fellow and Director in China Studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Washington, D.C. (non-resident). His research focus is on China's ethnic policy, Beijing's campaign of mass internment, securitization and forced labor in Xinjiang, public recruitment and coercive poverty alleviation in Tibet and Xinjiang, and China's domestic security budgets. Dr. Zenz is the author of *Tibetanness under Threat* and co-editor of *Mapping Amdo: Dynamics of Change*. He has played a leading role in the analysis of leaked Chinese government documents, including the "China Cables," the "Karakax List," the "Xinjiang Papers," and the "Xinjiang Police Files."

Dr. Zenz obtained his Ph.D. in social anthropology from the University of Cambridge. He conducted ethnographic fieldwork in western China in Chinese and regularly analyses original Chinese source material. Dr. Zenz has provided expert testimony to the governments of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. After publication of his research on forced labor in cotton picking, the U.S. government banned the import of goods made with cotton from Xinjiang. Following his research on population optimization and birth prevention, an independent Tribunal in the United Kingdom determined that China's policies in the region constitute genocide. Dr. Zenz's work on parent-child separation in Xinjiang prompted *The Economist* to feature this atrocity on its cover page and to refer to it as "a crime against humanity" that represents "the gravest example of a worldwide attack on human rights."

Dr. Zenz has acted as academic peer reviewer for a wide range of scholarly journals, including *The China Journal*, the *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Asian Studies Review*, *International Security* (Harvard University), *China Perspectives*, *Central Asian Survey*, the *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *Asian Ethnicity*, *China: An International Journal*, the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, *Issues and Studies*, and *Development and Change*. Dr. Zenz is a member of the Association of Asian Studies. He has published opinion pieces with *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. You can follow him on Twitter at @adrianzenz.



