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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Joint written statement* submitted by International Career Support Association, Japan Society for History Textbook, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 August 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



China's Abusive Use of Technologies and the Cover-Up of Its Oppression in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China

The restriction upon foreign journalists visiting Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China has been well-known since 2014.

With tight control over its own national media, China ensures that there is no reportage of its atrocities in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China. Even so, its actions periodically come to light from time to time due to some documents coming to light.

The extensive nature of this coverup needs the attention of the global community.

For example, let us look at the incident of an 80-year-old man who passed away during renovation works carried out by the local government in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), China.

The news was tightly controlled till the point it got leaked. Once it got leaked the government went on an extensive crackdown to find the leak and punish the persons who had spread the truth.

“Four separate working groups, consisting of 171 people, conducted a two-day operation against all families known to have foreign connections in the county.

They examined 328 home phones and 171 office phones in Yekshenbebazar, the town where the news leaked, and analyzed the last 3 months' call records.

All phone numbers that had been used for more than three years were changed to prevent further leaks. All those who talked to RFA reporters and leaked the incident were held accountable “according to the law.” It is unknown how many people were punished for the news leak.” *1

Police in the region also rely upon a master list of 50,000 media files that they have deemed to be terrorist in nature. However, a perusal of the files shows that they only contain innocuous material such as verses from the holy Koran.

“The Chinese government's abusive use of surveillance technology in Xinjiang means that Uyghurs who simply store the Quran on their phone may trigger a police interrogation,” said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. “Concerned governments should identify the technology companies involved in this mass surveillance and social control industry and take appropriate action to end their involvement.” *2

This list is then used to make arrests.

The list is part of a large database (52GB) of over 1,600 data tables from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China leaked to the United States of America's media organization The Intercept in 2019. The Intercept reported that Urumqi police conducted surveillance and arrests from 2015 to 2019 based on texts of police reports that were part of this database. *3

The extreme state control on media extends to stifling even basic human courtesies even in death.

The news of the demise of Chinese critic and Shandong University professor Sun Wenguang was kept a secret as the government feared that people may mourn him.

“She quoted a Shandong activist as saying that state security had said that the main reason for the authorities' failure to release news of Sun Wenguang's death was the need to maintain stability, for fear that people would mourn and commemorate the indomitable Charter 08 signatory, dissident, and human rights defender.” *4

The professor had been arrested some years ago in a sensational manner when he was detained during a live interview with a news outlet. *5

Any attempt to bypass this strict regime of censorship is punished very severely as we may see from the case of Uyghur University student Mehmud Memtimin who was sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment for using VPN. *6

As the former Secretary General of the United Nations wrote, freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. *7

China is urged to inculcate respect for such fundamental rights.

1. GRich: Global Research Institute for Comprehensive Human Rights 2. iRICH: International Research Institute for Controversial Histories, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

*1 A Leaked Report Exposes Government's Cover-up of Repressions Against Uyghurs in China - The News Lens International Edition

*2 China: Phone Search Program Tramples Uyghur Rights | Human Rights Watch (hrw.org)

*3 ID

*4 Sun Wenguang was evaporated by the world for 4 years Insiders said he had died, but the authorities still blocked the news (voachinese.com)

*5 US Concerned for Chinese Professor, Arrested During Live VOA Interview (voanews.com)

*6 Uyghur university student serving 13-year sentence for using VPN — Radio Free Asia (rfa.org)

*7 <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/freedom-expression-fundamental-human-right>