

EAST TURKISTAN WAS NEVER A PART OF CHINA

AND

Restoring Its Independence is the Only Way Forward



EAST TURKISTAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

This report has been published by the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE) in cooperation with East Turkistan National Movement (ETNM).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report concludes that restoring East Turkistan's independence is necessary to put an end to the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s ongoing genocide and to ensure the fundamental freedoms, human rights, and very survival of the Uyghur, Qazaq, Qirghiz, and other ethnically Turkic peoples in Occupied East Turkistan. The root cause of China's ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnically Turkic peoples in East Turkistan lies in Chinese colonization and occupation of East Turkistan. The PRC is actively waging genocide with the aim of preventing East Turkistan's independence in order to ensure that East Turkistan becomes an "eternal colony" of China.

Note: The full white paper which exceeds 300 pages will be published as a book.

The Country of East Turkistan

East Turkistan (Uyghur: شەرقىي تۈركىستان or *Sherqiy Türkistan*) is a country at the intersection of Central Asia, East Asia, and South Asia. East Turkistan has been under the military occupation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) for exactly seventy-three years as of the release of this white paper. Despite the PRC's illegal false claims of "ownership" over East Turkistan "since ancient times," actual Chinese control and integration of East Turkistan has only occurred after the PRC invaded and occupied East Turkistan in late 1949.

East Turkistan spans 1,828,418 square kilometers (705,956 square miles)² and is located in the heart of Central Asia. East Turkistan, which stretches roughly 2100 kilometers (~1305 miles) east to west and 1700 kilometers (~1060 miles) north to south, accounts for roughly one-fifth of all territories currently administered by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

East Turkistan is more than twice the size of the U.S. State of Texas, more than three times the size of Ukraine, and is equivalent to the size of (North) Sudan. If it were currently an independent country, it would rank as the 16th largest country in the world in terms of territorial size.

Surrounded by ten other countries, East Turkistan is the most landlocked country in the world, with East Turkistan's Junggar Basin holding the Guinness World Record for being the 'land farthest from the sea.' Russia borders East Turkistan to the north. To the northeast is Mongolia (including Chinese occupied Southern Mongolia), and to the east of the Jiayu Pass is China. Tibet is in the southeast, while India's Ladakh region and Pakistan-administered Gilgit Baltistan are in the south. In the

southwest lies Afghanistan, while the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Qirghizstan [Kyrgyzstan], and Qazaqstan lie in the west.

According to the *Ming Shi*(明史) [*History of the Ming*], which was compiled in 1739, prior to the Manchu Qing conquest of East Turkistan in 1759, the Jiayu Pass (Jiayuguan) functioned as the official border between East Turkistan and China.

Toponym of ‘Turkistan’ and ‘East Turkistan’

The toponym ‘*Turkistan*’ means “The Land of Turks” or “The Country of the Turks” was first used, but a Sogdian contract uncovered in East Turkistan’s Turpan region dating back to 639CE, uses the toponym ‘*Twrkstn* [*Turkistan*’] to describe the territories of the Kök Türk Khaganate, which included the whole of East Turkistan.

The toponym ‘*East Turkistan*’ has long been used by the people of East Turkistan and foreigners to describe the country. The Swedish officer and geographer Phillip Johann von Strahlenberg used the term ‘*Orientalischen Turkestan* [*Eastern Turkestan*’] in his 1730 work *Das Nord-und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia* [*The North and East Part of Europe and Asia*] to describe the areas east of the Issyk Kol and beyond.

Toponym of “*Xinjiang*”

The compound of the Chinese colonial term “*Xinjiang* (新疆),” meaning “New Territory” or “New Boundary,” was defined as “Colony” in the 1887 *English and Chinese Dictionary*.

The overwhelming people of East Turkistan reject the use of the Chinese colonial term “*Xinjiang*” or “*Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR)*” or newer “less offensive” variants such as “*Uyghur Region*” because it only serves to advance Chinese colonialism and imperialism; and undermines the East Turkistani people’s unity, and is characterized by a disregard for East Turkistan’s historical, ethnic, and geographic identity.

While many western scholars use the term “*Uyghur Region*” to refer to East Turkistan with good intentions, the term belittles East Turkistan by inadvertently implying that it is a region belonging to a larger country or political unit. We ask everyone to use the correct toponym ‘East Turkistan’ when referring to the Uyghur/ Turkic country.

East Turkistan is home to the Uyghurs as well as other Central Asian Indo-European and Turkic peoples such as the Qazaqs, Qirghiz, and O’zbeks, whom through their ancient Indo-European and Hun Turkic ancestors have a presence of more than 6,000 years in East Turkistan. The Chinese government further falsely claims that the people of East Turkistan are “part of the *Zhonghua*

Minuzu [Chinese Nation]” and that its Turkic people, particularly the Uyghurs, East Turkistan’s largest ethnic group are “not Turks.”

China’s blatant lies regarding East Turkistan and its people are not only ludicrous, but also are devoid of any factual basis. Simply stated, the people of East Turkistan are not “Chinese” in any way, and they have no cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or historical links to the Chinese whatsoever.

The Population of East Turkistan

The exact population of East Turkistan is heavily contested because the Chinese government utilizes statistics as a tool of control and frequently understates the true size of East Turkistan’s Uyghur and other Turkic populations, and there haven’t been any truly satisfactory census that has been conducted.

Due to the PRC’s deliberate habit of manipulating statistics and understating the population of non-Chinese peoples, the East Turkistani diaspora reject “official” Chinese figures regarding the population of Turkic peoples in East Turkistan. The East Turkistan Government in Exile estimates, based on historical population figures and other data, that East Turkistan’s overall Turkic population may have exceeded well over 40 million people prior to the formal start of China’s genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in 2016. The large “unmanageable” Uyghur and Turkic populations in East Turkistan may have greatly distressed Chinese authorities, who in turn launched the ongoing genocide to reduce the East Turkistani population to a “more manageable” proportion, such as that 13.5 million figure that is being officially pushed.

Prior to China officially launching the ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples 2016, the Turkic peoples of East Turkistan had a relatively high natural growth rate, with Turkic families having an average of four or more children per family.

Historical Chinese statistic figures claim, East Turkistan’s combined Turkic population (Uyghur, Qazaq, Qirghiz), grew at a mean rate of 2.7% from the 1960s to the 1990s, dropping to about 2.5% at the turn of the 21st century. However, the average mean growth rate of East Turkistan’s population from 2010 to 2016 was 10.95%. East Turkistan’s population growth rate has dropped from 11.4% in 2017 to 3.49% in 2019. The Chinese government falsely states that Uyghurs have only grown at a 1.6% annual rate over the last two decades, which doesn’t align with the high birth rate of 15 per 1,000 people on average, with some areas, such as Khoten (98% Uyghur) having 20 births per 1,000 in 2017 and preceding years.

As it is difficult to assess the true population of the Turkic population in East Turkistan with complete certainty due to limited data and no truly accurate census, we calculated rough estimates of what the true population of East Turkistan might have been in 2016, when China officially launched its genocide campaign.

To calculate the true Turkic population of East Turkistan, we used the East Turkistan Republic's 7 million population figure from late 1946 and calculated population growth over a 70-year period (until the end of 2016) at an average of 2.5%, which would have resulted in a Turkic population of approximately 39,424,720 people in 2016.

However, if we take Mao's assertion of 9 million Turkic peoples in East Turkistan in 1949 and compute it by a 2.5% annual growth rate over the span of 65 years, the Turkic population in East Turkistan would have been around 44,801,624 people in 2016.

This is also evident in the fact that, according to Chinese state media *Xinhua*, between 2016 and 2017, the Chinese government collected DNA samples from 36 million people, between the ages of 12 and 65, in East Turkistan.

The Culture of East Turkistan

The culture of the people of East Turkistan, in particularly Uyghur culture, has historically been shaped by its interactions on the Silk Road with other cultures and civilizations from East to West. The people of East Turkistan are perhaps the only people on Earth who have worshipped almost all major world religions throughout their history, including Tengrism, Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manicheanism, Church of the East (Nestorian Christianity), and starting from 960 CE, Islam. Today the overwhelming majority of the people follow the Hanaafi branch of Sunni Islam.

The History of East Turkistan

With a history of over 6000 years, East Turkistan is a hub of ancient civilization in Central Asia and is the cradle of Turkic civilization, culture, and history. Indo-European and Hun-Turkic peoples have lived in East Turkistan from ancient times and founded many states and empires, shaping the culture, identity, and history of the country and its neighbors. East Turkistan, being strategically located, has been the center of many great power competitions between different powers.

The people of East Turkistan have a long history of statehood, dating back to the 2nd Century BCE, some of the historical states are: The Hun Empire (220 BCE – 216 CE), The White Hun [Hepthalite Empire] (440 – 560), The Kok Turk Khaganate(551-745), the Toqquz Oghuz Uyghur Empire (745-840), the Qarakhanid State (840 -1212) , the Idikut Uyghur Kingdom (843- 1370s), the Chaghatay Khanate (1226-1487), the Yarkent Khanate (1514 -1678), the State of Yette Sheher (1865-1877) and the East Turkistan Republic (s) (1933 -1934 and 1944-1949).

East Turkistan has never been a “part of China” or a “Chinese territory.” East Turkistan was annexed by the Manchu Qing Empire in 1884 and renamed “Xinjiang,”which translates as “Colony” or “New Territory” in the Chinese language. The people of East Turkistan twice re-established their

independence as the East Turkistan Republic on November 12, 1933, and again on November 12, 1944.

Throughout history, especially over the past 2,000 years, the people of East Turkistan and their ancestors established numerous independent kingdoms, states and empires. Throughout much of its history, East Turkistan retained its sovereignty with occasional periods where it came under foreign domination such as that of the Mongol Empire and the Manchu Empire.

In 1759 East Turkistan fell under Manchu suzerainty. From 1759 to 1863 the people of East Turkistan rebelled 42 times and re-established their independence as the State of Yettishar or Kahgaria in 1865. In 1876 the Manchu Empire invaded East Turkistan and annexed it on November 18, 1884 as “*Xinjiang*” meaning the “Colony” or “New Territory.”

In the 20th century, the people of East Turkistan twice re-established their independence as the East Turkistan Republic on November 12, 1933 and November 12, 1944. The Soviet Union assassinated the East Turkistan Republic’s core leadership, including its President, General Secretary, Defense Minister, Deputy Defense Minister, and their staff, in late August 1949. In September 1949, ahead of the impending Chinese communist invasion of East Turkistan, another 30 senior ETR officials were assassinated by the Soviet Union.

In a clear violation of international law, the People’s Republic of China launched a belligerent armed invasion of East Turkistan on October 12, 1949 with Soviet support. On December 22, 1949, the independent East Turkistan Republic was overthrown, and East Turkistan was illegally annexed into the People’s Republic of China as “*Xinjiang*.” East Turkistan was only integrated into China after the People’s Republic of China invaded and occupied East Turkistan in late 1949.

East Turkistan is an Occupied Country

Although the PRC falsely claims that it “peacefully liberated” East Turkistan in late 1949, historical facts show that China’s belligerent invasion and subsequent occupation of East Turkistan was far from “peaceful.” The PRC occupation forces encountered strong opposition from the people of East Turkistan, resulting in the PLA killing over 150,000 East Turkistanis between 1949 and 1954. According to international law, it makes no difference whether an occupation has received Security Council approval, what its goal is, or whether it is referred to as a “invasion,” “liberation,” “administration” or “occupation” for the purposes of the law of occupation. Thereby East Turkistan is an occupied country under international law; the PRC falsely promoting its invasion and subsequent occupation of East Turkistan as “liberation” does not change the fact that it is an illegal occupation.

Mass Internment and Genocide

Since 2014, the PRC has been interning over 3 million, and possibly 7.8 million (according to the 2020 Chinese White Paper), or more Turkic peoples in over 1,400 concentration camps and prisons under the false pretexts of fighting “terrorism, extremism, and separatism;” subjecting them to genocide and other crimes against humanity. The genocidal policies being implemented by the Chinese government include the suppression of Uyghur/Turkic culture, language, and identity, the complete erosion of religious freedom, political indoctrination, forced sterilization, forced abortions, forced family separation, forced marriages, organ harvest, rape and other forms of sexual violence, slave labor, torture, and even summary executions.

Since January 19, 2021, the United States government, as well as the legislatures of Canada, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, have officially recognized China’s genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples. Unfortunately, all efforts at the recognition level have ceased and have not been translated into genuine action to address and stop this ongoing genocide, which continues to ravage as aggressively as before, even in 2023.

East Turkistan’s Struggle to Re-establish its Independence

Since the Chinese invasion of East Turkistan in late 1949, the people of East Turkistan have consistently resisted Chinese colonization and occupation, with numerous uprisings and sporadic clashes with the PRC and its occupation forces. The Chinese government has long pursued a policy of co-optation and denial strategy in order to undermine the people of East Turkistan’s efforts to re-establish their independence. The fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Central Asian Republics in 1991 fueled the East Turkistani people’s desire to re-establish their independence, resulting in the establishment of the East Turkistan national independence movement.

Since 1996, the Chinese government has implemented a comprehensive policy to suppress East Turkistan’s national independence movement and prevent the East Turkistan problem from becoming international. The Chinese government’s top secret directive *CCP Document No. 7 (1996)* issues directives ranging from suppressing pro-independence sentiments to infiltrating and co-opting East Turkistani organizations and communities both within East Turkistan and in the diaspora, to the need for wholesale reinforcement of Chinese military and security preparedness to prevent East Turkistan’s independence. The directives also called for strong relations with Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, all of which have a large East Turkistani / Uyghur diaspora, in order to suppress pro-independence activism and prevent the East Turkistan problem from becoming internationalized.

The struggle of East Turkistanis to reclaim their independence has nothing to do with “Islamic fundamentalism” or “religious extremism.” As best expressed by Israeli China expert Professor

Yitzhak Shichor, “Uyghur organizations, with the exception of the Chinese fabricated “Turkistan Islamic Party,” have never identified themselves as “Islamic,” let alone “radically Islamic,” prior to 2004 because Uyghur leaders recognized the fact that “adopting and promoting pan-Islamist ideology would harm the struggle for East Turkistan’s independence and threaten their host nations, particularly the Central Asian Republics who were threatened by radical Islam.”

Chinese Intelligence Operations to undermining East Turkistan

However, in late 1997-1998, the Chinese government fabricated Uyghur islamist groups such as the “Turkistan Islamic Party” to influence, hijack, and undermine East Turkistan’s national independence in coordination with China’s security and intelligence partners such as the Government of Pakistan, Russia, Turkiye, the Taliban regime, and even terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda.

To serves as a prtextt to justify its ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan, Chinese intelligence services in cooperation with Turkey, and possibly other nations, secretly transferred some 20,000 Uyghurs from East Turkistan to the battlefields of Syria from 2012 to 2014. This gave China a one-stop solution for demonizing East Turkistan’s independence struggle and portraying Uyghurs as terrorists, while also providing the Erdogan regime with cannon fodder to use against the Assad regime, Kurdish militants, and more recently even in Karabakh.

Unfortunately, with the active cooperation of certain Uyghur individuals and organizations based in Turkey and elsewhere, many Uyghurs have been lured into this Chinese intelligence trap. On December 22, 2016, Abdulhekim Mexsum, one of the Uyghur leaders in Turkey who spoke out against this joint Turkish-Chinese intelligence trap, died unexpectedly. His death occurred on the exact date that the PRC overthrew the East Turkistan Republic, it is suspected that Abdulhekim Mexsum may have been assassinated.

According to numerous anonymous testimonies, many Uyghurs in Turkey have been coerced into fighting in Syria. Those who refused were later detained and imprisoned on false charges of “terrorism,” according to numerous anonymous Uyghur victims. In an audio clip of a former leader of a Uyghur human rights organization based in the United States, this former leader made serious allegations of Chinese intelligence co-opting a number of Uyghur groups based in Turkey, Europe, and even the United States in order to radicalize Uyghurs and to suppress East Turkistan’s independence struggle. We call on Western governments, particularly the US government, to thoroughly investigate this matter because we lack the resources and expertise to confirm these serious allegations.

In addition to fabricating “Uyghur islamists,” the Chinese government has assassinated many pro-independence Uyghur leaders in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Prior to the official start of the Uyghur genocide, a number of indiscriminate attacks against civilians occurred in East

Turkistan and parts of China in 2013-2014. Based on a careful examination and review of East Turkistani resistance to the Chinese government, we suspect that these indiscriminate attacks are false flag attacks carried out by Chinese intelligence operatives to help set the stage and serve as justification for the launch of the Chinese government's genocidal campaign against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples under the pretext of a "People's War Against Violent Terrorism." According to Dr. Pablo A. Rodrigues, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Defence and International Relations at the United Kingdom's Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, violent attacks carried out by Uyghurs in the past were not "indiscriminate" and did not targeted civilians; instead they focused on targeting Chinese government and security forces.

Chinese Infiltration of East Turkistani Diaspora Communities

We believe that the Chinese government has infiltrated, influenced, and co-opted East Turkistani / Uyghur organizations and diaspora groups all over the world, including the United States. Prior to 2004, all Uyghur groups publicly advocated for East Turkistan independence. After 2004, however, it appears that Chinese intelligence operatives infiltrated and co-opted many East Turkistani / Uyghur organizations and leaders, often through countries like Turkey and the Central Asian Republics, which have strategic intelligence and security cooperation agreements with China, to silence calls for East Turkistan independence.

Unfortunately, this was not limited to Turkiye and Central Asia; pro-independence East Turkistani activism in the United States was met with alarming pushback, often from some Uyghur groups and individuals claiming to advocate "human rights and democracy." In 2018, the PRC weaponized the US justice system by using a specific Uyghur individual with extensive ties to the Chinese government and CCP entities, as well as certain Uyghur "human rights" organizations in the US, to make false and baseless allegations in an effort to undermine the pro-independence activities of the East Turkistan National Movement, and having ETNM's leader arrested on false "terrorism" charges. It took 3 years for the U.S. Justice Department to fully realize the Chinese intelligence services games.

Furthermore, from 2018 to the present, some Uyghur groups and individuals in the United States, many of which have close ties to Turkey, actively opposed and worked to sabotage ETNM and the ETGE's efforts to advocate for recognition of the Uyghur Genocide and the recognition of East Turkistan's status as an Occupied Country. One former leader of a Uyghur organization based in the United States publicly urged Uyghurs not to use the term "genocide," "concentration camps," "East Turkistan," and urged his followers to oppose calls for independence.

Another Uyghur leader from a western-based Uyghur organization publicly urged people not to support the ETGE and ETNAM's genocide case at the International Criminal Court against Chinese officials. Many Uyghur groups would not start using the term genocide until the United States officially recognized the Uyghur Genocide. Based on our research, supporting data, and

countless interviews with dozens of Uyghurs from the East Turkistani diaspora, we believe that the PRC is actively influencing and co-opting Uyghur and East Turkistani diaspora organizations, with the help of Turkey, in order to support China's Defense Goal of "preventing East Turkistan independence.

In 2021, a former Uyghur leader of a western-based Uyghur human rights organization told a group of Uyghurs at a conference in Turkey that he always advised other Uyghurs to "always prioritize Turkey's greater interest, regardless of which country you work for or receive a salary from." In 2017, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated at a press conference in Beijing that "we (Turkey) see China's security as our own, and we do not allow any activity against China, either in our country or in our region. Similarly, we prohibit all types of activities, including publications critical of China. I am also pleased to see that our security cooperation is strengthening. This collaboration will continue to grow in the coming years."

Certain Turkish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with extensive ties to the Turkish government have been actively attacking the East Turkistan Government in Exile and working with suspicious individuals to undermine as part of Turkey's commitments to "China's security." While the Turkish people and some opposition Turkish political parties have been fully supportive of the East Turkistani people's struggle, the Erdogan administration is actively assisting China's efforts to influence, co-opt, and even control East Turkistani / Uyghur diaspora organizations.

Conclusion

As the international community fails to take meaningful action, China's genocide in East Turkistan continues unabated. Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan face becoming a minority within the next decade. Uyghur and other Turkic peoples' population is rapidly declining, while the Chinese colonist populations is rapidly increasing. If China's genocidal policies and colonialism continue, Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples will be reduced to a small minority within a decade and they will cease to exist as a people within 50 years. East Turkistan and its people are running out of time. The international community, particularly Western nations that are truly committed to human rights, democracy, and self-determination, must support East Turkistan's independence.

The only way to truly end China's ongoing genocide and ensure the human rights, freedoms, and very existence of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples is to restore East Turkistan's independence. The people of East Turkistan don't have time to wait for China to become a democracy to secure their fundamental rights, nor is there a guarantee that their rights will be respected under a "democratic China" in the future. In fact, following the US designation of the Uyghur Genocide, the leader of China's Democracy movement, Wei Jinsheng, not only denied China's ongoing genocide against Uyghurs, but also threatened Uyghurs with "real genocide" if they continued to advocate for independence.

If governments, organizations, and individuals around the world are truly committed to ending the ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples, they must recognize that the ongoing genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples is rooted in Chinese occupation and colonization of East Turkistan. They must recognize and support the right of the East Turkistani people to external self-determination [independence]. The overwhelming majority of East Turkistan's people have long expressed their desire to regain their independence, as evidenced by a 2018 petition sent to the White House with over 109,000 signatures from by the East Turkistani diaphora, as well as leaked internal speeches of senior Chinese officials, which clearly state that the majority of East Turkistan's people have "pro-independence sentiments."

The first step toward ending the ongoing genocide should be recognizing the fact that East Turkistan is an occupied country and not a so-called "integral part of China," as the Chinese government falsely claims. The Sino-East Turkistan conflict is not a "internal conflict" or a matter of Chinese "internal affairs." On the contrary, it is an international conflict between an occupied nation and an occupying power.

The ETGE calls on all governments worldwide to recognize East Turkistan's status as an occupied country and to support the East Turkistani people's right to exist as free and independent nation.

The ETGE calls on the international community, particularly Western governments, to oppose China's belligerent efforts to influence, co-opt, and control East Turkistani organizations and diaphora communities around the world.

The ETGE calls on governments, the media, and organizations to refer to the Uyghur/ Turkic homeland by its proper name ' East Turkistan' rather than the racist Chinese colonial term "Xinjiang."

The ETGE calls on the international community, particularly governments, the media, and academics, to stop referring to the people of East Turkistan as so-called "minorities," "indigenous peoples," or "Chinese Muslims." The Turkic people of East Turkistan are still the majority in East Turkistan. Furthermore the political connotations of the term "indigenous peoples" undermine East Turkistan's struggle to restore its independence. As already expressed, the East Turkistani people are not "Chinese;" they are an ethnically Turkic and Indo European people.

The ETGE calls on the that the international community to assist East Turkistan in obtaining justice by supporting East Turkistan's case, at the International Criminal Court, against Chinese officials as well as initiating a legal case at the International Court of Justice.

The ETGE calls on governments to raise the status of East Turkistan and actively advocate for its decolonization at the international level.

The ETGE calls on governments to assist East Turkistanis in strengthening their diaspora institutions such as the East Turkistan Government in Exile.

Lastly, the ETGE calls on the international community to intervene to end the 21st century Holocaust-like genocide of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in East Turkistan.

The only way forward for Uyghurs and other peoples is to restore East Turkistan's independence. It is the only way to truly end the genocide and ensure the survival of their people. Supporting the restoration of the independence of East Turkistan is not only necessary, but also a morally correct thing to do to save a nation from extinction.