



Rejecting the “Xinjiang” Colonial Designation and False Claims of Neutrality Regarding East Turkistan

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The East Turkistan Government in Exile categorically rejects and condemns recent false claims by certain foreign commentators that the Chinese colonial term “Xinjiang” represents the most “precise” designation for our homeland and the crisis affecting it, and that the use of this terminology does not constitute a political stance. Such assertions are demonstrably false and echo the political narrative advanced by the Chinese state.

The Chinese colonial term “Xinjiang” is neither the “most precise” designation for our homeland nor an accurate description of the crisis affecting it. It is a colonial political designation imposed by an occupying power. The historical and national name of the country is East Turkistan, and the crisis itself is the direct result of Chinese military invasion, ongoing occupation, and colonial domination.

East Turkistan is the historical, geographic, and national name of our country and the homeland of the Uyghurs, as well as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Turkic peoples. The name predates the colonial terminology imposed by China and historically reflects the eastern part of Turkistan and the broader Turkic world. It is also the official name of two sovereign states, the First East Turkistan Republic (1933–1934) and the Second East Turkistan Republic (1944–1949), both of which existed prior to the 1949 military invasion and occupation by the People's Republic of China.

By contrast, the Chinese colonial designation “Xinjiang,” meaning “new territory,” was imposed following military invasion and occupation to designate territory that was newly placed under Chinese occupation. It is therefore not a neutral geographic description but a political designation rooted in occupation and colonial domination.

Bad-faith claims that rejecting this colonial terminology constitutes “hypocrisy” invert reality. There is nothing hypocritical about an occupied people insisting on the historical and national name of their homeland and rejecting a colonial designation imposed by an occupying power. True hypocrisy lies in repeating such colonial terminology while falsely claiming neutrality toward its political implications.

Nor is the question of naming trivial. In conditions of occupation and colonization, language shapes political understanding. Genocidal policies imposed on East Turkistan, including mass internment, enslavement through forced labor, forced sterilizations and abortions, family separation, and the destruction of Turkic and Muslim identity and cultural heritage, are directed at dismantling the East Turkistani nation itself. Normalizing the colonial term “Xinjiang” therefore assists the Chinese state in its broader strategy of erasure accompanying occupation and genocide.

Under international law and the principles of decolonization recognized in the Charter of the United Nations and affirmed in *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (1960)*, the people of East Turkistan possess the inalienable right to self-determination, including the right to independence and the restoration of national sovereignty.

The East Turkistan Government in Exile therefore calls upon governments, international institutions, scholars, journalists, and human rights organizations to revert to and consistently use the historical and national name East Turkistan rather than the colonial designation “Xinjiang.”

No colonial terminology imposed by an occupying power can erase the identity of a nation. East Turkistan existed before colonial rule, it exists today despite foreign occupation, and it will continue to exist as a free and sovereign nation once its independence is restored.