

Who Will Stand Up to the Religious Genocide of Muslims in East Turkestan?

On the 27th August, 'Buzzfeed News' published the findings from its investigation based on thousands of satellite images of the region of 'Xinjiang' which revealed a *"vast and growing infrastructure for long-term detention and incarceration"* of Uyghur, Kazakh and other Muslims by the tyrannical Chinese regime. It described how *"China has secretly built scores of massive new prison and internment camps in the past 3 years, dramatically escalating its campaign against Muslim minorities."* Many of these new detention camps are capable of housing tens of thousands of people, as with a new compound built in the county of Shufu. The BuzzFeed investigation identified more than 260 structures built since 2017 which bear the hallmarks of fortified detention compounds, such as containing thick walls, guard towers, barbed wire and other features similar to the construction of high security prisons in other parts of China. It also stated that there was at least one of these camps in every county in 'Xinjiang' and that some compounds often contained multiple detention facilities. It indicates the regime's ability and intention to detain hundreds of thousands more Muslims in the region.

The construction of this vast Muslim incarceration system in East Turkestan, which is believed to hold more than 1 million Muslims, continues even till today. It is already the largest scale detention of ethnic and religious minorities since World War II. These new findings however, reveal how China's campaign of mass detention of Uyghur and other Muslims in the region is even more extensive than previously known. Muslims can be imprisoned for something as basic as reciting Qur'an, teaching Islam, having a beard, wearing a niqab, engaging in prayer and other Islamic practices, downloading Whatsapp which is banned in China, maintaining ties with family abroad, and visiting a foreign website. Interviews with former detainees of these internment camps describe routine torture, humiliation, deprivation of food, desperately overcrowded cells, solitary confinement, appalling sanitary conditions, forced birth control, forced labour and other forms of abuse enacted against those detained. Some former detainees also described gang-rapes and – *"screams echoing throughout the building"*. This is in addition to the forced daily indoctrination with Communist propaganda that those imprisoned are subjected to. Asides to these internment camps which the Chinese regime laughably labels 'vocational education centres', Xinjiang's prison population has also grown exponentially in recent years according to New York Times analysis of Chinese government data. In 2017, the region had 21% of all arrests in China, despite it being only 2% of the national population, and an 8-fold increase from the year before.

All this is of course alongside the system of perpetual mass surveillance, repressive assimilation policies, forced sterilization, removal of children to state-run orphanages, and other oppressive policies that the Muslim of East Turkestan have been and continue to be subjected to by the ruthless Chinese regime under the spurious guise of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism measures. However, in reality, its aim is to wipe away all traces of the Islamic identity of the region's Muslims and indoctrinate them with the atheist communist beliefs. This is in order to make them obedient slaves and pawns of the Communist Party, and loyal and docile subjects of the state. It is in part driven by Beijing's agenda to secure its trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which passes through Xinjiang, aimed at accessing markets in Central Asia and Europe.

The desperate and horrific plight of the Uyghur Muslims and other Muslims of East Turkestan is utterly deplorable. But what is similarly deplorable and totally incredulous is the fact that there is no state in the world today who is willing to stand up to, or take any tangible action to end this industrial-scale internment of innocent civilians, which holds echoes of Germany's Nazi concentration camps. There is a moral vacuum in this capitalist dominated world, where governments are willing to witness mass slaughter, mass torture, mass incarceration of innocents, and mass oppression of entire populations, but do nothing to end these crimes against humanity for fear of risking their economic interests. This norm of capitalist governments of placing 'human rights' up for sale, is encapsulated in US President, Donald Trump's blunt

admission in an interview with Axios in June this year, that he avoided punishing China with sanctions over its mass internment Uyghur camps to protect trade talks with Beijing. He stated, *"We were in the middle of a major trade deal."*

Regimes of the Muslim lands have similarly sold-out the Uyghur Muslims and even supported China's ethnic cleansing and genocide campaign against their Muslim brothers in East Turkestan in exchange for multi-billion-dollar investments from China. In July 2020, a Joint Statement backed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman, among others was issued which stated that the human rights of *"people of all ethnic groups"* living in China's westernmost regions have been *"effectively safeguarded."* In February 2019, during a trade trip to China, the state-run Xinhua news agency, reported that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told Chinese President Xi Jinping, *"We respect and support China's rights to take counter-terrorism and de-extremism measures to safeguard national security."* It was a trip in which Saudi Arabia and China signed 35 economic cooperation agreements worth a total of \$28 billion, according to Saudi state news agency SPA. Indeed, in recent years, the oil dependent Gulf economies have been on the decline and increasingly dependent on Chinese cash and trade. According to China Global Investment Tracker, a data set covering China's global investment, China invested more than \$50 billion in GCC countries between 2016 and 2020. Another example of such dependency is that 80% of the oil exported by Oman is shipped to China.

Hence, the U-turn by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (composed of 57 Muslim countries) to its series of tweets in December 2018 in which it mentioned *"disturbing reports"* of China's Muslim crackdown, is not surprising. It backpedalled on its initial stance by releasing a report saying that it *"commends the efforts of the People's Republic of China in providing care to its Muslim citizens and looks forward to further cooperation between the OIC and the People's Republic of China."* Astaghfirullah! Many of the Muslim countries which are members of the OIC are major beneficiaries of Chinese trade or cash, or located near lucrative infrastructure projects included in Beijing's BRI. It is hardly surprising therefore, that these western-inspired governments, with their toxic capitalist principles and policies, have no qualms about placing their Uyghur Muslim brothers and sisters as sacrificial lambs on the altar of economic benefits. They have sold their souls to the dollar.

The government of Pakistan has also followed suit in the abandonment of the Muslims of East Turkestan. At the World Economic Forum in Davos in January this year, Pakistan Prime Minister, Imran Khan, admitted upon questioning by journalists, that he refuses to criticize China's treatment of the Uyghur Muslims due to Pakistan's special economic relationship with China. He stated that China *"helped us when we were at rock bottom."* Khan infamously dodged questions from the media on China's mass detention of Muslims in a previous encounter, saying shamefully that *"he didn't know much"* about the issue, despite the plight of the Uyghurs hitting mainstream media and being a topic of widespread discussion on social media at the time, while also stating that, *"The Chinese have been a breath of fresh air for us."* Additionally, the Pakistan leadership, shamefully praised China at the UN Human Rights Council for *"providing care to its Muslim citizens"* while also washing its hands of responsibility in standing against the ethnic cleansing of the Uyghur Muslims by classifying it as China's *'domestic affair'*. Pakistan's foreign minister even disgracefully accused the media of *"trying to sensationalize"* the Xinjiang issue. It is perhaps important to note that Pakistan is one of the largest recipients of Chinese loans and infrastructure projects. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for example, which is a collection of infrastructure projects that are under construction throughout Pakistan as part of China's BRI were valued as being worth \$62 billion as of 2017. Clearly, China has bought the silence of Imran Khan and his government! In fact, this August, various media sources reported that Pakistani authorities handed over to the Chinese mission in Islamabad, an internal assessment report done to gauge and control public sentiment and activities organised in response to China's atrocities against the Uyghur Muslims. The main objective of the Pakistani internal study was to manage and prevent negative domestic expressions and emotions regarding the issue,

especially from religious segments of the society, that may detrimentally impact bilateral ties between the two countries.

The Turkish leadership too, although praised by some for condemning China's Muslim internment camps, has done nothing of practical value to end this mass incarceration and persecution of Muslims in East Turkestan. The fact that Chinese investment in Turkey was around \$3 billion as of 2019, with over a thousand Chinese companies operating in the country, and the fact that according to China's ambassador in Turkey, Chinese investment in Turkey will reach \$6 billion by 2021, probably has a significant part to play in Erdogan's preference of restricting his response to the genocide against the Uyghurs to lip service rather than engaging in any serious efforts to end this heinous crime against his Muslim brothers and sisters.

So today, there is no state, no government, no leader who has the political will, the moral conscience, or the back-bone to genuinely stand up for and defend the Muslims of East Turkestan, and indeed any oppressed people. There is no state which responds to the most grievous crimes against humanity – whether it be the slaughter of over a million Muslims in Syria, or the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya population in Myanmar, or the butchering of Muslim children in the Central African Republic or the incarceration of over a million innocent Muslims in Xinjiang! And there never will be while the politics of this world is dominated by capitalist systems and self-serving regimes. For we live in a world where the value of human life is measured according to the extent of profit it can generate!

Consequently, the oppressed are abandoned, left helpless and in despair, and subject to the whims of their tormentors. This is a status that surely cannot be allowed to continue! Dependence on the UN or any western governments to come to the aid of our Muslim brothers and sisters is sheer folly! It offers nothing but false hopes and only prolongs their suffering and plight! Indeed, every Muslim should realise that there is no state today which will come to their rescue if they were to become victims of persecution or slaughter.

Having understood this, are we not in urgent need of a state, system and leadership that sincerely cares for humanity and will stand for the interests of the Muslims? Can any other system provide this, other than the one revealed by the Creator of mankind, Allah (swt), the All-Knowing, the All-Wise? Then surely, if we sincerely wish to end the horrific plight of our Ummah in East Turkestan, Syria, Palestine, Kashmir, Central Africa, Myanmar and elsewhere, we must focus our full attention and exert our full efforts in establishing the Islamic system – the Khilafah (Caliphate) based on the method of the Prophethood, which the Messenger (saw) described as the shield and guardian of the Believers.

Under this system, the ruler Khalifah Al Mutassim sent a whole army to rescue a single Muslim woman who was captured by the Romans. Yet today, over a million innocent Muslims languish in the prisons of a dictatorship, but no leader responds! Under the Khilafah, the Uthmani Khalifah Bayezid II sent his entire naval fleet to rescue 150,000 European Jews who were being persecuted by the Christian rulers of Spain during the Spanish Inquisition and settled them in the lands of the Khilafah, for this is a state that truly stands for the oppressed, regardless of their religion, ethnicity or nationality! It is the Khilafah alone that has the political will to stand against any state which persecutes the Muslims, and which will never be bought off by the lure of wealth! Rather it will use every arsenal in its power to strike fear into the hearts of the enemies of Islam and liberate every oppressed Muslim from the clutches of their tormentors. So, we call every sincere Muslim to respond to the command of their Rabb: ﴿وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ﴾ **“And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help.”** [8:72] by carrying the dawa to urgently establish the System of Allah (swt), the Khilafah – for without it, the persecution, slaughter and suffering of our Ummah, and indeed of humankind, will continue unabated!

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