



The 1st Press Conference on Xinjiang-Related Issues

新疆维吾尔自治区人民政府新闻办公室

The Information Office of the People's Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region





On January 3, 2020, the officials from the Information Office of the People's Government of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) held a press conference in Urumqi, capital of the autonomous region, on Xinjiang-related issues and took questions from journalists.



The New York Times

recently carried a report alleging Xinjiang government sends children to boarding schools, “separates” them by force from their parents, and “replaces ethnic languages with Mandarin,” and “brainwashes” them with patriotic education. What’s your response?



We are aware of this report, which is baseless and packed with fakery. It is completely a subjective fabrication. Today, I’ve brought a short video about a primary school in Kashgar Prefecture, and I’d like to screen it to you before I continue. The video describes daily scenes in primary schools in southern Xinjiang, a window that demonstrates Xinjiang’s stability and prosperity, which is completely opposite to the “miserable” situation portrayed by *The New York Times*.

Boarding school education has been an effective way to improve the educational level and reduce the burden on students and their parents in China’s remote areas. The proximity-based principle applies to all the students of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang: they either can choose not to live on campus, if they live near to school, or the school provides them with free accommodation and free meals for rural students, if they live quite far from school. It is all up to students and their parents to decide whether to go for boarding education. As Xinjiang is a vast region, there are a significant number of students who live rather distant from their schools, and therefore many of them choose to live on campus. *The New York Times*’ so-called “Young children are separated from their parents by force” is simply out of the question. Even its report had to acknowledge that many families in remote areas are more than willing to send their children to boarding schools. Isn’t it self-conflicting?

Despicably, *The New York Times* made irresponsible remarks about Xinjiang’s patriotic education to primary school students. All countries all over the

world educate their young people to love their country. Don't schools in the US conduct patriotic education? In fact, since the end of 19th century, it has been a tradition of American primary and secondary school students to recite and remember the Pledge of Allegiance. According to a report, an 11-year-old American boy was arrested in February 2019 as he refused to pledge allegiance to the American flag, which demonstrates the "importance" the US attaches to patriotic education. However, the patriotic education in schools in Xinjiang has been twisted as "brainwashing," which is a typical double standard. We stand tall with patriotic education, with every justification and confidence, and will unswervingly press ahead with it.





In recent days, there have been “missing people posts” on some foreign social media platforms. People who posted such messages claimed their attempts to locate the whereabouts of their “relatives” or “friends” in Xinjiang yielded no results, even no trace of them. What’s your comment on it?



Just a couple days ago, the *Global Times* carried an investigative report on the so-called “missing people posts” circulated on some foreign social media platforms. Most of the information and pictures of what the posts labeled as missing people were fabricated. More ridiculously, the truth is the “missing people” they alleged are living a normal and stable life. You are recommended to read that report published on the *Global Times*. For example, Rozimamat Atawula, mentioned in the posts, now works in a shoe-making factory in Hotan County, with a monthly income of 2,500 yuan. Abdukelim Abudreyi, another one in the posts, lives a peaceful life now in Urumqi after retirement from a public (bus) transport company. Another so-called missing person Tayer Ablat, who is a peasant of Alal Township of Shule County, Kashgar Prefecture, now works at a restaurant, and is preparing to open his own eatery. And another elderly couple Aziz Niyaz and Mereyem Id now live with their son in Kuqa County, enjoying a happy life with their family. Considering time being limited, I refrain myself from listing more of them. You are advised to refer to the *Global Times* report for more information. While being interviewed by the reporters, the people in the posts expressed that they expect a life free from disturbance, particularly the disturbance from members of “East Turkistan” forces.

Facts show the so-called “missing people” have not gone missing with their real relatives and friends. Rather the rumor makers are often out of contact with the social justice and conscience. I think it is far more meaningful to find the rumor makers, having a look at their real face and locating which corners void of sunlight they hide themselves, and question them what on earth they are doing and aiming for, exposing their motives and true intentions to the world. If they can be found, I would suggest the “missing people” turn to law demanding a justification from those who alleged them missing.

Q

Recently, *The Irish Times* carried a report — ‘Become Family’: China Sends Officials to Stay with Xinjiang Minorities. And some foreign media reported that “Pairing government employees up with people of other ethnicities in a relative-like relationship is to keep a watch on Uyghurs,” “ask ethnic minorities to eat pork” and “Han ethnic males sleep in the bed with local women in the same room,” and so on. What comment you would like to make on it?

A

I have also been aware of the reports from overseas media you just mentioned. Speaking from my own experiences and the perception of people around me, it is for certain to deem that only those who are extreme dark inside would slander it as watching on Uyghurs. Only those who are extremely contemptible and indecent would make up lies like “demand ethnic minorities to eat pork” and “Han ethnic males sleep in the bed with local women in the same room.” I’d like to ask the rumor-making reporter of *The Irish Times*: where did you see which organizations and who forced Muslims to eat pork? And where did you see who from which organization slept in the bed in the same room with his “relatives”?

Ethnic unity is the lifeline of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. In order to strengthen ethnic unity and promote exchange, communication and integration among all ethnic groups, Xinjiang has been carrying out “Ethnic Unity Campaign” and promotion activities among cadres and people of different ethnic groups since 2016. More than 1.1 million cadres and workers have paired up with 1.6 million people of all ethnic groups as relatives and made friends with each other. Among them, Han cadres have paired up with ethnic minorities including Uyghurs as relatives. Cadres of ethnic groups as well have paired up with Han people as relatives. Based on mutual exchange, communication, integration, respect and help, cadres and workers of different ethnic groups have given full play to their own advantages in guiding grass-roots to change their ideology, expanding approaches of being rich, helping them solve practical difficulties in medical service, employment and education. The cadres and workers of different ethnic groups have won great popular support. According to the statistics, they have donated 940 million yuan and 49.21 million items to the grass-roots people, and

finished 18.03 million beneficial things. As has been proven, “Ethnic Unity Campaign” and promotion activities among ethnic groups in Xinjiang are effective measures to strengthen ethnic unity, which is generally welcomed by the people of all ethnic groups.

However, only a few American and other Western journalists flock to hear those ill-intentional lies, and sidestep and look the other way facing the facts and truth. Peter Goff, a journalist of *The Irish Times*, was invited to thematic media event “Approaching Core Zone (Xinjiang) of the Silk Road Economic Belt” in August 2019, and he came to Xinjiang in December again. In defiance of objective facts, he fabricated a mendacious report and interviewee out of thin air, indiscriminately made up interview contents in violation of press ethics. We assigned staff of Kashgar Prefectural Foreign Affairs Office to accompany Peter Goff throughout his visit in Kashgar. He didn’t interview the Imam and Uygur people mentioned in his report. The graduated trainees he had interviewed didn’t say anything as what he described in his report. His report is a sheer fabrication, and our staff who accompanied him can confront with him at any time.

As far as I’m concerned, in November 2019, a woman named Zomure Dawut slandered that she found herself land in a pork meal in her “relative’s” home. In fact, the “relative” Zomure Dawut referred to is her fifth elder brother Abudhl Dawut’s “relative.” In October 2017, Abudhl Dawut was paired up with Zhao Qilin as “relatives.” In January 2018, Abudhl Dawut was entertained at Zhao Qilin’s home as a guest, in company with his wife Hokrz Ahmat, younger sister Zomure Dawut and her children. Zhao Qilin’s mother prepared and cooked the meal for them. Zhao’s mother is an ethnic Hui (a Muslim group) and only eats halal food. The “pork meal,” claimed by Zomure Dawut, has been totally nonexistent. It is rather nothing but nonsense fabricated by Zomure Dawut. During the meal, they took pictures, which I can show to you.

Lies cannot hide the truth. People of all ethnic groups have long been friendly to each other and treat as relatives, rendering mutual assistance in times of need in Xinjiang, which is the best response to their slanders.



Recently some Western so-called “celebrities” attacked Xinjiang on social media or spoke up for Uygur people, which attracted much attention on Internet. What’s your opinion?



I do not know whether these “celebrities” have ever been to Xinjiang, but they seem to be blinded by fake news, and affected by unfounded charges in their judgment. We welcome those “celebrities” to visit Xinjiang. As long as they have conscience, distinguish between

truth and falsehood and uphold the principle of fairness and objectivity, they will see a true Xinjiang.

I hereby emphasize Xinjiang is an inseparable part of Chinese territory, and has been under administration of China ever since the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 25). In Chinese history, Xinjiang has never been called “East Turkistan,” and never has there been any so-called “East Turkistan.” The first national census in 1953 registered over three million Uygurs, and the Uygur population exceeded ten million according to the latest census. Then I do want to raise this question: How can the statistics explain the so-called “ethnic genocide”?

The Chinese government fully protects equal rights and freedom for people of all ethnic groups in accordance with law, such as the freedom for religious belief for all Chinese citizens including the Uygur people. Xinjiang’s counterterrorism and deradicalization measures are wholeheartedly endorsed by the people of all ethnic groups. We have always taken the people’s aspiration for a better life as the goal of our work, and resolutely delivered outcomes of development to improving the people’s life, benefiting the localities and enhancing ethnic solidarity. Over 70% of general public budgetary expenditure is used in ensuring and improving the people’s livelihood, and persistent efforts have been made to advance nine people-benefiting projects with employment, education and medical care being the priorities. We have exerted ourselves to stabilize and grow employment, and put in place a mechanism to constantly ensure every family has at least one member in work. We have made great efforts to develop education, with the nine-year compulsory education fully available all over Xinjiang. In the four prefectures (Kashgar Prefecture, Aksu Prefecture, Hotan Prefecture and Kizilsu Kirgiz Prefecture) in southern Xinjiang, all children have access to 15-year free education. We have worked hard to improve medical service level. People of all ethnic groups including Uygurs can enjoy a free physical examination once a year; urban workers are all insured against major illnesses; all poor rural people can access to treatment at designated medical institutions for 15 kinds of serious illnesses and to contract medical service for chronic illnesses. We have been constructing a mix of indemnificatory housing. Rural and urban residents’ disposable income has been on increase year by year. All rural and urban poor residents have been covered by the subsistence allowance scheme. We have been working hard to bring all people in their eligible insurance schemes, and to improve the basic old-age insurance, medical insurance system, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance, and maternity insurance. People of all ethnic groups now enjoy a much stronger sense of gain, happiness and security.



Recently, a manga named “What Has Happened to Me — A Testimony of a Uyghur Woman” drawn by a Japanese artist Tomomi Shimizu went viral on some overseas websites such as Twitter and Facebook. The graphic novel tells the story of Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur woman from Xinjiang who claimed about her experience of being Prosecuted after escaping from a vocational education and training center. What is your comment?



We have clarified the facts to refute the lies of Mihrigul Tursun for multiple times, and I would like to clarify the facts again here: Mihrigul Tursun used to be a resident in Qiemo County of Bayangol Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang. In August 2010, she registered for marriage with an Iranian in China. In January 2012, she registered for marriage with an Egyptian in Egypt. According to the information offered by Mihrigul herself, in April 2015, she gave birth to three children in Egypt, two of whom were registered for permanent residence in China in October 2015. In March 2018, Mihrigul’s Egyptian husband told the public security bureau of Qiemo County that Mihrigul had acquired Egyptian nationality. After seeking the opinion of Mihrigul and receiving her application for nullifying Chinese nationality, the public security bureau of Qiemo County deregistered the permanent residence of Mihrigul and her two children on April 2. On April 22, Mihrigul and her husband left the country with their two children on Egyptian passports.

On April 21, 2017, Mihrigul was taken into custody by the public security bureau of Qiemo County on suspicion of inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination. During this period, she was found to have infectious diseases such as syphilis. Out of humanitarian consideration, the public security bureau of Qiemo County terminated the compulsory measures against her on May 10, 2017. Apart from the twenty days’ criminal detention, Mihrigul was totally free during her stay in China. According to relevant records, from 2010 to 2017, Mihrigul traveled eleven times between China and Egypt, UAE, Thailand and Turkey.

In a nutshell, Mihrigul has never been jailed or received

penitentiary education in any vocational education and training center. She also lied that her younger brother was tortured to death in a vocational education and training center. Mihrigul claimed that she witnessed the death of nine women during her detention and that the police put her in a cell with more than 50 women. On what grounds are these lies based?! Upon hearing her lies, her younger brother Akbar Tursun replied: “My elder sister Mihrigul always makes foolish lies. She not only said I was dead, but also lied that she saw others die.”

On November 28, 2018, Mihrigul talked about her so-called “experience” at a hearing of the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China in the capacity of a witness, which became an important basis for Senator Rubio and others to propose and promote the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act. Tomomi Shimizu was blinded by the fake news and created such works based on lies.

The Japanese cartoonist didn’t know the truth about Xinjiang. I’d like to take this opportunity to tell her that Xinjiang is a good place. Xinjiang now enjoys social stability, economic development, culture diversity, ethnic unity, religious harmony and beautiful scenery. Every year, massive number of tourists come to visit Xinjiang. In 2019, Xinjiang received over 200 million tourists, increasing 42.62% compared with the year before. I’d like to take this opportunity to invite Tomomi Shimizu to visit Xinjiang. I believe she will find a true Xinjiang rather than the imagination based on lies.



Some netizens overseas launched the movement China kills Muslims on Twitter, criticizing China’s oppression of Uyghur muslims. What is your comment?



We have noticed about that. The counter-terrorism and deradicalization work in Xinjiang never targets any specific region, ethnic group or religion, never links with specific ethnic groups or religion. Recently, there have been posts smearing Chinese Government’s Xinjiang policy on the social media like Twitter and Facebook. It was organized activities to discredit us. We strongly condemn such behavior.

For quite some time, Xinjiang has suffered gravely from terrorism, religious extremism and separatism. From 1990 to late 2016, the three evil forces carried out thousands of violent terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, causing heavy innocent casualties and property losses that defy estimation. Recently, CGTN streamed two English documentaries,

“Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang” and “The Black Hand — the East Turkistan Islamic Movement and Terrorism in Xinjiang.” The documentaries feature original video footage of terrorist attacks, fully reveal the evil deeds of the ETIM. I ask you to watch these two documentaries carefully.

Faced with severe circumstances, the government of Xinjiang Autonomous Region lawfully fought violent and terrorist crimes while addressing the root causes. Our efforts include advancing deradicalization according to the law and the establishment of the vocational education and training centers to rehabilitate those who were influenced by religious extremism and those who have committed minor offences or unlawful or criminal acts. They wouldn’t be the prey of terrorism and religious extremism. The right to subsistence and development of all ethnic groups in the region has been most effectively guaranteed. Those endeavors were endorsed by people of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Xinjiang has not seen a single violent terrorist attack in three consecutive years. Now Xinjiang is generally stable with people living in harmony and content.

Since the end of 2018, over 1,000 people in more than 70 groups have visited Xinjiang, including UN officials, foreign diplomatic envoys to China, Geneva-based senior diplomats of various countries, officials from various countries, regions and international organizations and people from the press and religious groups. They have seen the truth and understood the urgency, importance, legal basis and rationality in the vocational education and training centers. People with vision including those from the Muslim countries have claimed that the violent terrorist attacks in Xinjiang were brutal. The vocational education and training program in Xinjiang turns out to be useful experience and a successful example for the international community to learn from in combating terrorism and eradicating extremism, which is worthy of full recognition. In March 2019, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation adopted a resolution which commended China’s efforts in providing care to Muslim citizens. In July, ambassadors of over 50 countries to the UN Office at Geneva co-signed a letter to the president of the UN Human Rights Council and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, applauding China’s respect and protection of human rights in its counter-terrorism and deradicalization efforts. In October, at the Third Committee Session of the 74th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), more than 60 countries, including Muslim countries, commended in their statements the tremendous human rights progress achieved in Xinjiang.

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Some media said that Xinjiang is undergoing large scale of mosque demolition. What is your comment on that?

A

Let me first share with you a set of statistics on this issue. The number of mosques in Xinjiang has increased to 24,000, compared to some 2,000 in early time of China's reform and opening-up, which means there is a mosque for every 530 Muslims on average, and number of religious personnel has increased from 3,000 to more than 29,000 at present. Are these figures exemplification of religious freedom, or the result of large-scale demolition of mosques?

Facts have proven that freedom of religious belief policy is fully implemented in Xinjiang with all legal rights of religious believers guaranteed by law and their normal religious needs effectively satisfied. In March this year, the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation adopted a resolution which commended China's efforts in providing care to Muslim citizens. Viewing religion issues with tainted spectacles and double standards, those Western politicians and media are hoped to take a correct and impartial stance on China's religious policies and the situation of the freedom of religious belief in China, and stop using religion to interfere in other country's internal affairs.

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It's reported that forced labor exists in vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang, and some enterprises acquire cheap labor force even free labor force from the centers. What's your response?

A

At the press conference on Xinjiang's stability and development on December 9, 2019, governor Shohrat Zakir announced that the trainees who were on the education and training program (which consists of learning national common language, law, skills and deradicalization courses) had all graduated. With the help of the government, the graduates have found stable jobs, improved living quality and are living a happy life.

To remedy lack of occupational skills and employment difficulties, vocational skills training programs are provided. The vocational education and training centers regard vocational skills as an important channel to improve the trainees' employability. Based on local demand and employment opportunities, the courses they present include garment making, food processing, assembly of electronic products, typesetting and printing, hair dressing and beauty services, e-commerce, auto-maintenance and repair, interior design and decoration, livestock breeding, pomiculture, therapeutic massage, household services, handicrafts, flower arrangement, rug weaving, painting and the performing arts such as dance and music. Eligible trainees who are willing to learn are offered training in more than one skill. The education and training centers combine course learning with practical training to improve the trainees' operational skills. There is no any forced labor. Through vocational skills training and study, most of them have mastered practical skills and their employability has increased.

After graduation, the trainees can choose their own jobs, or employment can be arranged for them with the assistance of relevant authorities. Some graduated trainees have found employment in factories or enterprises, some have started their own businesses, and some have continued their studies in secondary and higher vocational schools in order to improve their prospects further. The same as other employees, the graduated trainees who find employment in enterprises have signed labor contract and receive corresponding compensation in accordance with *Labor Law of the People's Republic of China* and *Labor Contract Law of the People's Republic of China*. Any labor practice and the production and operation in enterprises are not related to vocational education and training centers.



Recently, Western media reported the former president of Xinjiang University Taxpolat Taybay has been sentenced to death on charges of splitting the country. Could you verify it?



Taxpolat Taybay, male, a native of Yining City of Xinjiang, born on December 25, 1958, was deputy secretary of CPC (Communist Party of China) Committee and president of Xinjiang University, with an engineering doctorate. Approved by Urumqi Municipal Procuratorate, Taxpolat Taybayay was arrested by Urumqi Municipal Public Security Bureau on suspicion of embezzlement and taking bribes on May 7, 2018. Urumqi Municipal Intermediate People's Court held an open trial of the case on June 13, 2019.

The handling of Taxpolat Taybay case, from investigation

to initiating legal proceedings against him to the trial, fully complied with the provisions of the *Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China*. Taxpolat Taybay and his defense lawyer's every litigation right has been protected. On May 7, 2018, when Taxpolat Taybay was arrested, public security officers informed his family clearly of why he was being arrested and where he would be detained. During the handling of the case, both the procuratorate and court notified Taxpolat Taybay that, besides speaking in his own defense, he has the right to entrust lawyers to plead for him. According to his personal will, his family hired a lawyer to plead his case. His lawyer has already seen him eight times. The *Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China* prescribes that, when the case is under trial, only the defense lawyer can meet the accused; family members have no right to visit or meet the accused. Prior to the trial, Taxpolat Taybay explicitly notified his family through his lawyer that there was no need for them to attend the hearing, and his family deferred to his opinion and didn't sit in on the hearing.