The 5th Press Conference on Xinjiang-Related Issues
Moderator: Dear friends from the press, good afternoon. Welcome to the 5th press conference on Xinjiang-related issues.

The invitees of today’s press conference are Spokesperson of the Information Office of the People’s Government of XUAR Elijan Anayit, Director General of the Ethnic Affairs Commission (Religious Affairs Bureau) of XUAR Mehmut Usman, Mayor of Hotan City Rishat Musajan, a retired cadre of the Hami Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission Zoram Talip. They will answer questions from you.

Our friends from the press, please raise your hands to ask questions. Before asking questions, please introduce the name of your news press.

Q Reporter from China Daily: Recently, the CECC of the US published 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China which includes some Xinjiang-related contents. What is your comment on it?

A Moderator: This question goes to Elijan Anayit, Spokesperson of the Information Office of the People’s Government of XUAR.

Disregarding facts and distorting truth, the America’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China smeared and groundlessly criticized the human rights situation in China with malicious intentions. Xinjiang government and people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang are in strong opposition!

The Chinese government attaches great importance to human rights protection and progress. The central government always cares about people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and takes practical and powerful measures to protect political, economic, social, cultural rights and freedom of religious belief of people of all ethnic groups in accordance with law. Especially since the 18th CPC National Congress (2012), living standards of people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang have been improved year after year. In 2019, the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents reached 34,664 yuan and 13,122 yuan respectively. From 2014 to the end of 2019, Xinjiang lifted a total of 2.9232 million people in 737,000 households out of poverty. The poverty headcount ratio dropped from 19.4%
in 2014 to 1.24%. All rural residents below current poverty standards would get rid of poverty and enter a moderately prosperous society with the whole country by 2020. Social undertakings have made all-round progress. Nine-year compulsory education covers the whole region, while southern Xinjiang enjoys 15-year free education. Since 2016, we initiated the Universal Free Physical Examination Project, under which people of all ethnic groups are entitled to free physical exams at medical institutions. The routine physical exam helps detect illnesses for early treatment so as to best ensure people in good health. We are fully implementing the insurance-for-all plan. Urban and rural residents are fully covered by serious illness insurance for people of all ethnic groups and personal accident insurance; the social security rate hovers above 95%. Great efforts have been mobilized to cement the rural safe water project, which secured 346,200 people with access to clean water, and running water was available to 85% rural population last year. We have been vigorously pressing ahead with dilapidated housing renovation project. All families under the poverty lines have moved into new houses, putting an end to a history that poor people live in dilapidated houses in Xinjiang. We are making sustained effort to create jobs through diversified channels and to facilitate business. A total of 100,000 laborers from the four prefectures (Kashgar, Hotan, Aksu and Kizilsu Kirgiz) in southern Xinjiang have been employed through labor transfer projects since 2018. Every family is constantly ensured to have at least one member in work. Since 2014, Xinjiang has created 2.8272 million urban jobs, with an average of 471,200 jobs added each year. Freedom of religious belief is protected in accordance with law. It is a completely independent choice of citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion. There are 24,000 mosques in Xinjiang, one for about every 500 Muslims, which have effectively met the believers’ demand. Religious classics and books have been translated and published, including the *Koran* and *Selections from Al-Sahih Muhammad Ibn-Ismail al-Bukhari*, in the Han Chinese, Uygur, Kazakh and Kirgiz languages. Channels for believers to gain religious knowledge have been expanded. The excellent traditional ethnic cultures in Xinjiang is protected and preserved. The Uygur Muqam, the Kirgiz epic *Manas* and Uygur Meshrep were registered on the “UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.” Ethnic minority languages are extensively used in judicature, administration, education, press and publishing, radio and television, Internet and public affairs. Xinjiang is in its most
auspicious period of development and prosperity with progress on all fronts. The best explanation to human rights is Xinjiang’s stability and harmony and its people’s happy and peaceful lives.

In stark contrast, the US is notorious for its stained human rights records. First, wealth disparity has been widening increasingly. Poverty rate remains high, and almost half of American families live in financial difficulties. On July 17, 2018, the *USA Today* carried an article of Senator Burnie Sanders, saying 43% of US households can’t make ends meet but have to borrow to pay for housing, food, child nursing, health care, transportation and communications. Second, systematic racial discrimination has been existing for a long time. Senior government officials including the president have made populist remarks endorsing xenophobia. People of color have been widely discriminated, and racial discrimination in justice and law enforcement has not changed. Investigation of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) indicated that 51% Americans believe African-Americans and other minorities are treated unfairly in the criminal justice system compared with white people. Third, religious intolerance remarks are on the rise. The mid-term elections in 2018 saw a surge of anti-Muslim opinions. A report found that conspiracy theories targeting Muslims are increasingly making inroads into the political mainstream. “More than a third have claimed that Muslims are inherently violent or pose an imminent threat,” and “just under a third of the candidates considered have called for Muslims to be denied basic rights or declared that Islam is not a religion.” Fourth, the notorious Guantanamo military prison. Most of the prisoners were not trialed. *Los Angeles Times* reported on its website on July 26, 2018 that a Pakistani, mistaken for an extremist, was imprisoned and tortured in Guantanamo for as long as 14 years without trial, resulting in serious physical and mental damage. Fifth, America turns a deaf ear to its own human rights issues. The US flagrantly withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council. On June 20, 2018, *The Atlantic* on its website reported that the most likely intention for the move is to prevent the US from being called out on its own alleged human-rights abuses. In 2019, *The Guardian* reported that up to 22 formally documented inquires by UN special rapporteurs on human rights in all sectors in response to US human rights records went unanswered from the country.

It is fair to say that from the past till now, the US has done quite poorly on human right issues. As a country that has withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, it has no right or qualification to comment on other countries. It is hoped that the US could reflect on its domestic human rights issues, abandon double standards, and stop
fabricating lies to throw mud at China and using so-called “human right issues” to interfere in China’s internal affairs. The fact of development and progress in Xinjiang’s human rights undertaking is obvious to all around the world, and cannot be written off by any rumor.

Reporter from Global Times: The 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China released by CECC of the US alleges that the “political re-education” in the “mass internment camps” in Xinjiang aims at “political indoctrination and intimidation,” rather than providing vocational skill education and employment training as explained by the Chinese authorities. What’s your comment?

Moderator: This question goes to Rishat Musajan, Mayor of Hotan City.

First of all, I want to emphasize that there were no so-called “mass internment camps” in Xinjiang. Some American politicians and media with ulterior motives always rename Xinjiang’s vocational education and training centers with sensational appellations, such as “mass internment camps,” “re-education camps,” “concentration camps,” etc. These inventions are nothing but just calling black white and confusing the public. In fact, the vocational education and training centers legally established in Xinjiang were no different in essence from the “community corrections” enforced in the US, the DDP in the UK, and the deradicalization centers in France, all being conducive attempt and proactive exploration for preventive counterterrorism and deradicalization.

In order to address the problems of the trainees’ limited command of the standard spoken and written Chinese language, lack of legal awareness and occupational skills, and that they were influenced by religious extremism to different degrees, the vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang delivered a curriculum that included standard spoken and written Chinese, understanding of the law, vocational skills and deradicalization, aiming to root out terrorism and religious extremism from the source, but not the US alleged “political indoctrination and intimidation” at all. Through the systemic education, the
trainees have remarkably improved their comprehensive quality, awareness of rule of law, and ability to use the standard spoken and written Chinese. They have mastered practical skills with their employability being increased, and got rid of the psychological control of terrorism and religious extremism. At the press conference on Xinjiang’s stability and development on December 9, 2019, governor Shohrat Zakir announced that all the trainees receiving the education and training on the standard Chinese, laws, vocational skills and deradicalization at the centers had graduated and realized stable employment under assistance of the government. They have improved their living standards and are living a normal life.

The deradicalization practice of Xinjiang’s vocational education and training centers have got recognition from more and more countries and people of insight across the world. In January 2019, a Turkish journalist who visited the vocational education and training centers for interviews said: “The Western media’s coverage on this place is very partial. One reportage is that ‘concentration camps’ are built here, and some are being persecuted. I came here with that preconception, but it has fallen away after I visited the place. What I see is an education center, where the students receive training while improving themselves, so that they become people of virtue. The atmosphere there is very good, which helps the people reintegrate into the society.”

Lies are lies, even if they are repeated a thousand times. Wearing tinted spectacles and out of personal political agenda, some Americans slandered Xinjiang’s righteous action of countering terrorism and extremism. After all, their deeds are connivance to terrorism and extremism. In so doing, they will only lose credibility and would be scoffed at by people with justice and good hearts.

**Q**

**Reporter from Xinhua News Agency:**

According to 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China released by CECC of the US, the detainees at Xinjiang’s “mass internment camps” include foreign permanent residents from America and Australia. Is it true?

**A**

**Moderator:** This question goes to Elijan Anayit, Spokesperson from Information Office of the People’s Government of XUAR.

China is a country ruled by law with complete judicial procedures. Xinjiang’s judicial authorities deal with criminal suspects in accordance with the law based on the nature and circumstances of their acts. Xinjiang government legally protects foreigners’ legitimate rights and
imposes no compulsory measures on them as long as they don’t violate Chinese law. In fact, no foreigners have ever received any training in Xinjiang’s vocational education and training centers.

**Reporter from China Global Television Network (CGTN):** The CECC’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China alleged that “Xinjiang arbitrarily detained ethnic minorities including the Uygur and tortured the detainees. Nurmuhemmet Tohti, a famous Uygur writer, died in a detention camp; A Uygur named Mutellip Nurmehmet died 9 days after being released from the education and training center.” Is it true?

**Moderator:** This question goes to Rishat Musajan, Mayor of Hotan City.

**Answer:** Xinjiang fights terrorism and extremism in accordance with law, which doesn’t target any ethnicity, and protects people under the threat of terrorism and extremism instead. This is the important principle we uphold all the time. In practice, we insist that everyone, regardless of his or her identity or ethnicity, is equal before the law. Anyone who engages in terrorism and extremism related activities or endangers public safety and property, will surely be brought to justice. In line with the principle of the criminal law that advocates a combination of punishment and leniency, we resort to education and rehabilitation to bring about and educate people who are infected by religious extremism and committed minor offences in education and training centers established according to the law. So-called “arbitrary detentions of ethnic minorities including the Uygur” has never existed at all.

In real practice, the education and training centers strictly followed the Constitution and laws to prevent any violation of the basic rights of the trainees. Trainees’ personal freedom at the education and training centers were protected. The centers were managed in residential education model which allowed trainees to go back home and ask for leave to attend personal affairs. The trainees’ right to use their spoken and written languages
were fully protected at the centers. The regulations, curriculum and menus at the centers all used local ethnic languages as well as standard Chinese. The customs of all ethnic groups were fully respected and protected, and a variety of nutritious Muslim food was provided free of charge. The education and training centers respect the trainees’ freedom of religious belief. The trainees decided on their own whether to take part in religious activities when they went back home. The centers were fitted with clinics on campus providing the trainees with 24-hour medical care free of charge. Minor ailments were treated in the clinics, while acute and serious illnesses will be timely referred to and treated at hospitals.

The allegations in the CECC’s report that writer Nurmuhemmet Tohti died in a detention camp, and Mutellip Nurmehtet died 9 days after being released from the education and training center are totally fabricated rumors out of thin air. Nurmuhemmet Tohti is a Uygur from Hotan who has never studied in any education and training center. He had been suffering from heart disease for 20 years, in which he either was hospitalized for treatment or stayed at home for recuperation for quite a long time. On the evening of May 31, 2019, he was struck by a massive heart attack and rushed to a hospital where he died after emergency rescue failed.

Mutellip Nurmehtet, male, Uygur, a native of Urumqi, Xinjiang, had never studied in any education and training center before he died. According to the information reporters obtained through a visit to his home, he died of excessive drinking derived acute alcohol intoxication, alcoholic encephalopathy, respiratory failure and acute upper
gastrointestinal bleeding.

The death of one’s relatives is heartbreaking. However, some Americans made rumors about the deceased person, which made them extremely angry. I think anyone with conscience won’t be so immoral.

**Reporter from Xinjiang Daily:** The CECC’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China alleged that “Xinjiang suppresses Islamism and contains religious belief.” It specifically mentioned that Abdughappar Abdurusul, a Uygur businessman, was sentenced to death for unapproved pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. What’s your comment?

**Moderator:** This question goes to Mehmut Usman, Director of the Ethnic Affairs Commission (Religious Affairs Bureau) of XUAR.

Respecting and protecting the freedom of religious belief is a basic national policy of Chinese government. Xinjiang has thoroughly implemented the policy of freedom of religious belief. Religious believers and nonbelievers enjoy equal political, economic, social and cultural rights. No citizens are discriminated against or unfairly treated for them being religious believers or nonbelievers. Pilgrimage to Mecca is especially supported by the government. Each year, the government arranges chartered airplanes for Muslims’ pilgrimages to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Besides, medical treatment and translation are funded by the government so as to guarantee a safe and orderly pilgrimage. So far, more than 50,000 people from Xinjiang have made pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia.

Abdughappar Abdurusul, a native of Yining City,
Ili Prefecture engages in second-hand apartment business and leads a normal life. The US alleged that he was sentenced to death citing pilgrimage as the reason. We don’t know where the US sourced such a piece of disinformation. To stop such rumors from cheating more people, a journalist interviewed him in Yining.

**Q** Reporter from China News Service: It was mentioned in the CECC’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China that the Washington Post interviewed Zharqynbek Otan’s wife, a Chinese Kazakh who alleged that Zharqynbek Otan had been detained in the center for nearly two years before he returned to Kazakhstan. After being released, he suffers memory impairment, among other health problems. Can you brief us more on this?

**A** Moderator: This question goes to Elijan Anayit, Spokesperson of the Information Office of People’s Government of XUAR.

Zharqynbek Otan is a 33-year-old Kazakh from Zhaosu County of Ili Kazakh Prefecture, Xinjiang. On January 16, 2017, he entered China via Horgas Port from Kazakhstan. Border check found his passport pages from 15 to 20 were missing and his Kazakhstan Visa on Page 22 was deliberately altered by him. According to Item 1, Article 71 of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Entry and Exit Administration, he is subjected to administrative punishment and passport revoked.

Since then, Zharqynbek Otan has been living in his father’s house at No. 186 Honghanai Street, Zhaosu.
County. His personal freedom has never been restricted and he never studied at any vocational education and training center. On October 26, 2018, upon his personal application for visiting his family members in Kazakhstan, local authority issued him a new passport through due procedures and he departed China on November 11, 2018. His family members in China affirmed that he was in good health with no memory problems before he left, let alone such a thing that he barely recognizes his family members.

With this opportunity, I would like to remind journalists from some American media, the handful so-called witnesses you had interviewed, especially “East Turkistan” members wandering overseas, not only fabricate rumors themselves but also exploit the international media coverage by every means to mislead public opinion. I hope that your future reports should be fact-based. Don’t fall into traps of these vicious people and become a spreader of rumors, which damages your public credibility.

**Q** Reporter from People’s Daily: The CECC’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China also mentioned about the case of Sayragul Sauytbay, claiming that before fleeing China, she was forced to work at a “detention camp.” Why did she escape from China?

**A** Moderator: This question goes to Elijan Anayit, Spokesperson of the Information Office of the People’s Government of XUAR.

This Sayragul Sauytbay, a Kazakh from Zhaosu County, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang, used to work at the Central Kindergarten of Chahanwusu Town of Zhaosu County. But she was neither employed nor studied at any vocational education and training center, nor was she subject to any compulsory measures. In fact, she is a crime suspect for
loan fraud and illegal border crossing. In June 2015, she acquired a ten-year loan of 200,000 yuan from the rural credit co-op of Chahanwusu Township, a branch of Zhaosu County Rural Co-op Credit Union, with forged signatures of her guarantors and fake letters of guarantee. Up till now, she still has 149,000 yuan to pay off. In December 2016, she once again obtained a ten-year loan of 270,000 yuan from the same rural credit co-op with a forged home purchase contact. Currently, the amount yet to be paid stands at 249,000 yuan.

On April 5, 2018, she illegally crossed the national border from China-Kazakhstan International Frontier Cooperation Center to Kazakhstan and made up the “persecution” lies only to escape legal punishment for the crimes she had committed. She wants to seek pretexts and support for her application of a so-called refugee status. To inform the public why she sneaked out of China and what kind of person she really is, reporters interviewed her relatives and former colleagues.

Such a person of notorious history deceived many people with her lies. She even used nonexistent “sufferings” to avoid legal punishment. People who have been fooled by her are believed to see through her, and she will pay the price for her crimes and lies.
Reporter from Xinjiang Radio and Television Station:
The 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China issued by the CECC of the US urged the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) member states to exert pressure on China and, at its conferences and on other international forums, to criticize China for its “massive internment of Muslims and violation of human rights.” What is your comment on that?

Moderator: This question goes to Mehmut Usman, Director General of the Ethnic Affairs Commission (Religious Affairs Bureau) of XUAR.

What I need to stress first is that the so-called “illegal detention of Muslims” is nothing but nonsense. Xinjiang insists that its counterterrorism and deradicalization targets no locality, ethnicity or religion. Instead it safeguards people of all ethnic groups to enjoy extensive rights and freedom including freedom of religious belief, and ensures the normalcy of social life. Xinjiang’s practice enjoys unanimous support from people of all ethnic groups.

Since the end of 2018, over 1,000 people from 90 countries have visited Xinjiang in more than 70 groups. They include foreign diplomatic envoys to China, UN officials, Geneva-based senior diplomats of various countries, journalists and some from religious organizations. They, with those from Muslim countries, have all recognized Xinjiang’s vocational education and training work have made an important contribution to international efforts to fight terrorism and extremism, and generated valuable experience that is of great reference value. In March 2019, the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC adopted a resolution commending China’s efforts in providing care to its Muslim citizens. On multiple international occasions like UN Human Right Council and the Third Committee (SOCHUM) of UN General Assembly, many Muslim countries have spoken in defense of justice, supporting Xinjiang’s counterterrorism and deradicalization measures.

In contrast, massive facts demonstrate Muslims in the US are suffering increasing discrimination. American policies towards Islamic world is even jaw-dropping, and its “Muslim ban” policy has been broadly criticized by the international community. Moreover, the US incites wars in
the Middle East in the name of human rights, leaving massive casualties of innocent people and countless displacements, which are too numerous to record.

It is evident to all who does better and who does worse on protecting Muslims’ basic rights and safeguarding peace and stability of the Islamic world. The 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China calling on OIC state members to apply pressure on Chinese government only reveals the sinister motives of the US to sow discord between China and Muslim countries. We believe any deluding and smear will never work and any alienation and provocation will bound to fail.

**Reporter from Tianshannet:** Not long ago, The New York Times carried a report “Her Uighur Parents Were Model Chinese Citizens. It Didn’t Matter.”, hyping the parents (mother Zoram Talip and father Isaac Payzulla) of Sweden-based Zulhumar Talip, a native of Xinjiang, being put in so-called “camps.” Would you please shed light on the true story?

**Moderator:** This question goes to Zoram Talip, a retired cadre of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission of Hami City.

I am Zoram Talip. I was a director-level consultant of Hami Municipal Language Office before I retired. My husband Isaac Payzulla is a cadre of Hami Daily. We both are children of ordinary farmers and herdsman. And thanks to the Party’s love and care, we became CPC members and were promoted to official positions.

My husband and I have been leading a normal life in Hami. Last year, Zulhumar’s parents-in-law came to Hami for tourism from Hebei Province. With warm hospitality, we enjoyed local delicacies, touring attractions and danced Uygur Meshrep. We really had a good time together. I know that my daughters have been used and was interviewed by The New York Times and some other foreign media outlets, in which she portrayed something erroneous about us. These media then took advantage of her interview attacking and smearing our Party and government. With this opportunity, I would like to say something to my daughters:

My dear girls, you are the dearest to mom and dad. You are so blessed that you have lived through good times of
China’s development since you were born. You were sent to university to become talents to serve the country. A Uygur saying goes: A traveler on a well signposted road never go astray; a wiser mind never eats his words. Don’t be blinded by rumors and used by people of sinister motives. You may visit us at any time.

Reporter from Xinhua News Agency:
A few days ago, Radio Free Asia reported 770 students from Xinjiang have been detained in Wuhan Railway High School, Wuhan East Lake High School and Wuhan No. 1 High School since a lockdown came to effect in Wuhan. Whether there have been infections among the students so far remained unclear, as they are isolated, and restricted to practice their beliefs and use their languages. The Turkish website www.Maarip.org affiliated with “East Turkistan Education & Solidarity Association” carried a passage alleging Chinese government shipped 50 Uygur students from Turpan area to the virus-hit city of Beihai in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, when the virus is spreading further. What is your comment on that?

Moderator: This question goes to Eljan Anayit, Spokesperson of the Information Office of the People’s Government of XUAR.

Such smears are nothing but clumsy acts of overseas hostile forces which take advantage of COVID-19 to catch people’s eye and make themselves being felt. First, I would like to brief you about the real picture of Xinjiang classes in Wuhan.

There are three provincial demonstration high schools — Wuhan Railway High School, Wuhan East Lake High School and Wuhan No. 1 High School — in Wuhan that have Xinjiang classes enrolling a total of 999 students from Xinjiang, with 336 at Wuhan Railway High School, 330 at Wuhan No. 1 High School and 333 at Wuhan East Lake High School. As the winter vacation was short and overlapped the Chinese New Year travel rush, as well as long distances to travel back, overwhelming majority of the students preferred to study at school in the winter vacation. Taking into consideration the real situation and fully respecting students’ will, the three schools provided what’s needed to ensure students’ life and study. Now, there are 955 students remaining in Wuhan, with 334 at Wuhan Railway High School, 297 at Wuhan
No. 1 High School and 324 at Wuhan East Lake High School.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, educational departments of Hubei Province, Xinjiang Autonomous Region and Wuhan City have attached great importance to preventing the Xinjiang students in these classes from being infected. Various epidemic prevention and control measures have been strengthened to guarantee well-organized leadership of the work, provision of supplies, and effective protection. First, a strong organizational guarantee. The three schools have all established their own epidemic prevention and control command and emergency response teams headed by the principals to make thorough deployment of the work. Second, supplies guarantee. Through government allocations as well as social organizations’ and personal donations, medical protective products and daily necessities supplied to the three schools can meet their daily needs. Third, protective measures guarantee. All the three schools have made strict epidemic prevention and control measures, providing enough hand sanitizers, distributing masks in time, disinfecting classrooms, canteens, flats and dormitories on daily basis and keeping a log of the students’ body temperatures. Meanwhile, at the same pace of all the other schools in Wuhan, the three schools have organized students remaining on the campus to attend online classes, so as to ensure that the students make full use of the vacation to improve their academic performance under the premise of ensuring safety and health. In consideration of the parents’ concerns and worries about their children especially after the outbreak, the three schools have asked the students to contact their parents every day, so as to let the parents rest assured.

Thanks to the help and care of the Party committees and the government at different levels as well as the people from all walks of life, none of the Xinjiang-native students in these classes of senior high schools in Wuhan has been confirmed or suspected to be infected with the novel coronavirus. The students live and study happily on the campus with ample food, warm clothes and comfortable lodging. There is no such a thing as “being detained,” or “being forbidden to contact with the outside.”

The above-mentioned article claims that despite the epidemic spread, the Chinese government transferred about 50 Uygur students from Turpan Prefecture to Beihai City of Guangxi where there were confirmed cases. In fact, it is groundless nonsense fabricated by overseas opposing forces harboring hostile intentions. The outright lie is extremely ridiculous.

**Moderator:** Today’s press conference concludes now. Thanks, all the invitees and reporters.