

We are a group of Jewish community leaders, rabbis, organizations, and synagogues who have come together to condemn China's policies toward Uyghurs and to call on your administration to prioritize human rights in U.S. policy toward China.

As a community that acutely remembers times when we were persecuted and unable to teach our traditions to our children, and as we painfully recall the genocide that we suffered under Nazi rule, we know that we can and must speak out against this persecution and in support of the Uyghur community.

The horror stories we are hearing of Uyghurs taken in the night, separated from their families, and put on trains to forced labor camps are all too familiar to the Jewish community. As part of its crackdown on Uyghurs, a primarily Muslim ethnic minority from the Xinjiang region, China is sterilizing women and carrying out forced abortions, torturing Uyghurs under the guise of "re-education" and "poverty alleviation," and preventing Uyghur parents from passing on their customs and traditions. These targeted actions are meant to eliminate the Uyghur people as an ethnic and religious group.

The Chinese government has razed mosques and religious schools. It has destroyed parts of homes that Uyghurs dedicate to prayer: platforms called *supa* and niches called *mehrab* that indicate the direction of prayer. Like some Jews, many Muslims do not cut their beards. But China has criminalized long beards. The government forcibly separated more than 500,000 children from their parents in order to "break the impact of the religious atmosphere on children at home." It has forced Uyghurs to consume pork, designated it as an "ethnic unity food," and compelled inmates in internment camps to eat it, all in violation of Islamic dietary laws. These policies have a single purpose, a purpose that one Chinese official described as "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins."

The U.S. government has taken critical first steps by determining that the persecution of Uyghurs is a genocide and implementing sanctions on some perpetrators and facilitators of these abuses. But such a serious designation requires the U.S. to do more, both unilaterally and with our allies. We therefore urge you and your administration to take the concrete steps recommended by a coalition of leading human rights organizations (such as countering Chinese government propaganda and strengthening sanctions) and to increase the number of Uyghurs admitted to the U.S. as refugees.

Some governments, companies, and organizations believe working with China requires leaving their values at the door. Some believe that private advocacy with the Chinese government is more effective than public condemnation and accountability. We disagree – both are necessary. Our country's interactions with China must embody international norms of freedom and democracy, not underwrite repression.

As Jews we know what happens when people remain silent amid such atrocities. And let us be clear: the Chinese government is also targeting other ethnic and religious minorities, including Jews, Christians, Tibetans, and Mongols. Nothing parallels the persecution of Uyghurs – yet. We must speak out, and we must act now.