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March 19, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I appreciate your continued efforts to safeguard our nation's interests and deliver for the American people in dealing with the challenge posed by China. As Chairman of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, I urge you to press for the release of prisoners of conscience held captive by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in any future meeting with General Secretary Xi Jinping.

The CCP's persecution of human rights defenders, dissidents, and religious and ethnic groups has grown dramatically more severe under Xi Jinping. The scope and scale of the CCP's arbitrary and wrongful detentions and other abuses such as family separation and forced labor arguably constitute crimes against humanity.¹

According to the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), a nongovernmental organization that promotes human rights and empowers rights defenders in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the CCP is using a combination of overly broad and vague laws paired with draconian enforcement to extinguish free expression. The CCP uses ambiguous provisions like "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," "organizing a cult to undermine implementation of law," and "endangering national security" as legal instruments in its intensifying campaign of political oppression.²

¹ *Elements of Crimes*, International Criminal Court, available at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/Elements-of-Crimes.pdf>; *China: Systematic Arbitrary Detentions May Be Crimes Against Humanity*, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, available at <https://www.nchr.org/2025/03/china-systematic-arbitrary-detentions-may-be-crimes-against-humanity/>.

² *Arbitrary Detention in China May Constitute Crimes Against Humanity*, Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, available at https://www.nchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CHRD_In-A-Prison-Waiting-for-Daybreak_full-report-1.pdf.

In a shocking but sadly unsurprising revelation, China detained thousands and convicted 1,545 prisoners of conscience between January 2019 and December 2024. This staggering number includes 1,422 prisoners of conscience in mainland China, which includes Tibet and Uyghur regions, and 123 individuals in Hong Kong. Three of these captives were even sentenced to death; two to life in prison, and eight were given sentences of a decade or more. CHRD data also shows how these two-thirds of the 700 older captives were women. In many if not all of these cases, the CCP's persecution of prisoners of conscience continues well after they serve their unjustified prison sentence through means that deprive them of their rights, including surveillance, harassment, and other forms of intimidation.³

Indeed, the CCP under Xi Jinping has been carrying out its most systematic campaign of religious and political persecution since the Cultural Revolution.

The CCP employs a wide range of instruments of repression to consolidate its control of religious adherents through a policy of "Sinicization of religion." Religious leaders who refuse to be co-opted and join CCP-controlled "patriotic" churches are detained, disappeared, or silenced. The shutting down of the Early Rain Covenant Church led by Pastor Wang Yi in 2018 and re-arrest of Pastor Ezra Jin of Zio Church in 2025 for their Christian activities stand as stark examples of this insidious and escalating campaign.⁴ Groups like Falun Gong and the Church of Almighty God face detention and torture. There are even credible reports of forced organ harvesting.⁵

The CCP continues its incessant efforts to erode the religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans, including by closing Buddhist monasteries and limiting entry or practitioners—none perhaps clearer than in Beijing's blatant interference in the succession process of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The CCP's attempts toward cultural genocide, Orwellian surveillance, and interference in centuries-old Tibetan religious traditions are affronts to American values.

In the span of one year, PRC and Hong Kong officials have accelerated the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy with the prosecution and sentencing of Jimmy Lai, Joshua Wong, and the father of Hong Kong dissident Anna Kwok, who currently lives in exile in the United States, among many other advocates of Chinese democracy. This campaign highlights the CCP's long arm and transnational repression of its diaspora.

In Xinjiang, more than half a million Uyghur Muslims remain in concentration camps—victims of an ongoing campaign of genocide and forced assimilation. The cases of Rahil Dawut, Gulshan Abbas, Ilham Tohti, Ekbar Asat, and Yalqun Rozi, to name only a few of many Muslim Uyghurs and their families, serve as stark reminders of the unconscionable abuses by the CCP. These are

³ *Arbitrary Detention in China May Constitute Crimes Against Humanity*, Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, available at https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CHRD_In-A-Prison-Waiting-for-Daybreak_full-report-1.pdf.

⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Detention of Zion House Church Leaders in China* (October 12, 2025), available at <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/10/detention-of-zion-house-church-leaders-in-china>.

⁵ *Forced Organ Harvesting in China: Examining the Evidence*, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, available at <https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/forced-organ-harvesting-china-examining-evidence>.

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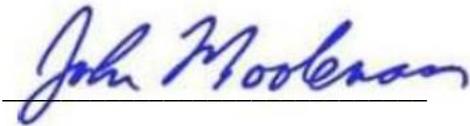
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not isolated incidents but rather a targeted campaign that seeks to snuff out Uyghur intellectuals and along with them Uyghur culture.⁶ These actions are the work of a system that cannot tolerate allegiance to any authority—religious, moral, or political—other than the CCP.

Standing up for American values is a critical domain for strategic competition. As the CCP has made clear in its internal documents, the Party sees itself in a long-term ideological struggle with the United State and views foundational American values—specifically liberal democracy, freedom of speech, individual rights, and the rule of law—as existential threats to its authoritarian rule and ideological legitimacy.⁷

Any future meeting with Xi Jinping can be an important milestone in your administration's effort to restore American strength in relations with China. Please accept my sincere thanks for that critical work. To maximize its benefits to our national interests and values, I urge you to call for the release of China's prisoners of conscience in those discussions with Xi Jinping.

Respectfully,



John Moolenaar
Chairman
House Select Committee on the CCP

⁶ Letter from Uyghur Human Rights Project to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, U.S. Department of State (August 15, 2025).

⁷ *Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation*, ChinaFile, available at <https://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation>.