



AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Witness Name: Laura Harth		
Witness category:	fact <input type="checkbox"/>	expert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of testimony: 13 September 2021		
Link to recording*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7537rLd8OA0&t=34222s		
Time stamp (start/end): 02:18:20 – 03:16:15		
Report included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Statement included:	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transcript included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation included:	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>

*Please note that all recordings of the Uyghur Tribunal hearings can be found on You Tube: [Uyghur Tribunal - YouTube](#)

Submission to the Uyghur Tribunal (August 2021)

Beijing's Public Campaign to Silence and Intimidate Witnesses

Key Findings

The Uyghur Tribunal has repeatedly invited the People's Republic of China (PRC) to partake in its proceedings. While this request has been firmly rebuked by the PRC, direct and indirect insight can be gained from the tools employed by the PRC to deny and/or reframe the narrative surrounding consistent and documented allegations of genocide in Xinjiang.

- While continuing to refuse an independent international investigation on the ground, the PRC's narrative in response to mounting allegations over genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang has gradually switched from outright denial to pressing attempts to re-frame discourse;
- These attempts include far-reaching and relentless campaigns to silence, intimidate, harass and slander witness testimonies, either directly (long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices) or through threats to family and loved ones in China;
- Often responding to the growing series of reports or testimonies abroad - such as the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal - the toolbox employed includes the use of a variation on traditional televised confessions during governmental press conferences as well as traditional forced televised confessions, a practice amounting to severe human rights violations in and of itself, and provoking additional long-term trauma for victims;
- They are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as "enemies," and to create an atmosphere of fear by "teaching" others a "lesson" as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism;
- The number and nature of organs involved in these efforts further highlight the centralized Government and CCP role in their orchestration.

About Safeguard Defenders

[Safeguard Defenders](#) (SD) is a human rights NGO founded in 2016. It undertakes and supports local field activities that contribute to the protection of basic rights, promote the rule of law and enhance the ability of local civil society and human rights defenders in some of the most hostile environments in Asia. Safeguard Defenders also works to counter attempts by China to undermine international rule of law and the law-based order. It is a continuation of the prior Beijing-based *China Action* which operated from 2009 to 2016.

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Introduction

“Terezín’s deception went beyond tricking prisoners—the ghetto was also used to fool the outside world into thinking concentration camps were comfortable and humane settlements, rather than overcrowded cesspools of imprisonment, forced labor, starvation, disease, and mass genocide. In June 1944, the International Red Cross, concerned about the treatment of Jews in Nazi concentration camps, decided to inspect the living conditions of Terezín. A mass beautification effort (Operation Embellishment) ensued, with the Nazis fixing up the ghetto into a model town. Fake coffee shops were erected on the street corners; houses were repainted in cheerful pastel colors with picturesque flower beds planted out front, and false shops were designed with fresh produce in the windows, baked bread being delivered through the side doors, and (confiscated) Jewish items on sale. Prior to the visit, the Nazis selected the healthiest-looking children to play games in the street; prisoners that were aged, sick, or malnourished were either shipped off in a mass deportation to the East (approximately 7,500 Jews were sent to their deaths prior to the Red Cross visit) or shoved out-of-sight in the barrack attics. The Red Cross walked away from the camp singing words of praise for how well Jewish peoples seemed to be treated under German rule.

So effective was the deceit of Terezín [...].”¹

Since the reported expansion of the mass surveillance and detention campaign in Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) beginning 2017, the People’s Republic of China has spared no effort in suppressing information and witness testimonies abroad, effectively delaying awareness of the ongoing genocide in the region. Methods include intimidation of foreign governments and entities, harassment of Uyghur and other activists abroad – either directly or through threats to family and loved ones -, and disinformation campaigns.

Noted examples of eluding foreign public and policy-makers’ opinion include the detainment and denied access on the basis of an Interpol Red Notice upon Chinese request of World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa in Rome, Italy, in July 2017, where he was due to testify on the mass detention campaign underway in Xinjiang during a press conference at the Italian Senate².

The international suppression campaign was long successful, with little international attention paid to the ongoing tragedy adding additional psychological trauma and stress to victims and activists seeking international recognition and assistance. Things started to change in August 2018 – over 1,5 years after the start of the campaign – with the comprehensive review of China issued by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on August 31, 2018³.

Key areas of concern highlighted by the UN experts included reports on the detention of large numbers of ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities held incommunicado and often for long periods, without being charged or tried, under the pretext of countering terrorism and religious extremism, with estimates ranging from tens of thousands to upwards of a million; mass surveillance disproportionately targeting ethnic Uyghurs, including the mandatory collection of extensive biometric data in Xinjiang; and the involuntary return of many Uyghurs abroad who had left China.

¹ Czech Center Museum Houston, *The history of the Terezin Concentration Camp*, available at: <https://www.czechcenter.org/the-history-of-terezin>.

² Reuters, *Exiled Uighur group condemns Italy’s detention of its general secretary*, 28 July 2017, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-italy-xinjiang-idUSKBN1AD16Z>.

³ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding observations on the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)*, CERD/C/CHN/CO/14-17, 30 August 2018, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/CERD_C_CHN_CO_14-17_32237_E.pdf.

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Yet the PRC consistently continued to accuse those coming forward of “terrorism” and “separatism” without providing any substantial evidence to support such claims and answering to the UN CERD experts on 13 August 2018, the Chinese delegation categorically denied the claims over mass internment of Uyghurs. Such denial was lastly repeated by Chinese delegates on UN premises during a parallel event to the 39th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on September 18, 2018⁴, despite repeated threats made by PRC representatives over the years to NGOs over revocation of ECOSOC Consultative Status in case of continuing to provide a platform to so-called “separatists”.

In an apparent response to mounting international attention, on October 16, 2018, CCTV releases a segment showing a “vocational education center”, normalising the camps as places for “free vocational training”. As noted at the time in *The Guardian*: *““The Chinese Communist party is losing precious control of the narrative,” said Timothy Grose, who focuses on ethnic policy in China at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology. “In a few weeks’ time high-ranking officials have gone on record to angrily deny the existence of a network of re-education centres while accusing the ‘west’ of inciting unrest ... to proudly showcasing them as an example of the party’s altruism.””*⁵

In March 2019, China releases a white paper entitled “The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protections in Xinjiang”, citing “education and training centers” being established for de-radicalization and rehabilitation in accordance with the law.⁶ In August 2019, Beijing releases a second white paper entitled “Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang”, stating that “vocational education and training centers” have been established to end extremism and terrorism in Xinjiang. The paper notes that the centers focus on job skills, law education, and deradicalization, and commit to ensuring “trainees” basic rights.⁷

However, during a press conference on 9 December 2019, XUAR Governor Shokrat Zakir declares all “trainees” have graduated the “vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang” in October 2019. This statement remains a fixture in the PRC’s official narrative, as testified by its frequent repetition in dedicated “press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues” to counter continuous international reports of expanding detention centers as seen on satellite images, which are routinely dismissed by officials as “local administrative buildings, nursing homes, logistics parks and local high school buildings”⁸.

Yet, as the change in narrative - from denial to reframing to renewed denial – has failed to assuage international concern and reporting, the PRC is increasingly making use of a propaganda toolbox, employed through a variety of tools including the capture and use of foreign elites, disinformation campaigns including anonymous expert ‘counter-reports’, the staging of a “happy and prosperous Xinjiang” for domestic and foreign audiences, witness intimidation and slandering, and coerced statements.

⁴ Uyghur Human Rights in China. Evidence for the Use of Political Indoctrination Camps, 18 September 2018, available at: <https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/552153/uyghur-human-rights-in-china-evidence-for-the-use-of-political-indoctrination-camps>.

⁵ The Guardian, *From denial to pride: how China changed its language on Xinjiang's camps*, 22 October 2018, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/22/from-denial-to-pride-how-china-changed-its-language-on-xinjiangs-camps?CMP=share_btn_tw&fbclid=IwAR0kekPU3hjMQ6KXHDQmd96JrCyYBD7xhvWHZGDqVWMt1HBxdLYxLcJnGlo.

⁶ *The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang*, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20201005142756/http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_8011005.htm.

⁷ *Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang (August 2019)*, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20201005142739/http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_8013702.htm.

⁸ See for example: The 4th Press conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, 10 February 2021, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/02/11/036577614.shtml>.

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While all key tools in Beijing's efforts, this submission further focusses on the public use of the latter instruments through media and press conferences as they constitute repeated human rights violations in and of themselves and are available for independent verification by all. The evidence provided in this submission is based on publicly available documentation in combination with inference from SD's extensive direct experience, reporting and interaction with international bodies on similar cases.

A. Press Conferences

The Uyghur Tribunal has experienced first-hand the use of press conferences in an attempt to slander and intimidate witness testimonies, often provoking additional agony for those brave enough to come forward as their family or loved ones are coerced to act as a weapon against them. Two press conferences – May 25th and June 18th, 2021 - held in Beijing and two – June 9th and June 12th, 2021 - directly attacked the Tribunal and persons participating in its proceedings.

Highlights from the preemptive May 25th press conference include the description of the Tribunal as [original English spelling maintained]: *“The ‘Uyghur Tribunal’ was established to slander Xinjiang so as to interfere with China’s domestic affairs. The ‘president’ of the ‘Uyghur Tribunal’ Jeffery Niss has been emphasizing that ‘we must exert pressure if we want to draw attention’, which has exposed the his evil intention of spreading rumors to cause troubles. [...] ‘Uyghur Tribunal’ goes so far as to discredit Xinjiang and interfere with China’s domestic affairs. [...] All the so-called ‘Uyghur Tribunal’ has done is conducting ‘presumption of guilty’ and then fake the evidences. What they really care about is to find means to slander and split Xinjiang regardless the truth or people in Xinjiang. The so-called ‘witnesses’ in their mouth are no more than those ‘actors’ that have appeared many times. We have exposed and criticized the ‘actors’ for times. Now, let us review their ugly intentions and clumsy performance again.”*

It then goes on to directly slander and discredit many of those that will testify at the Tribunal in the following days⁹, a feat repeated in the 11th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing and the 40th press conference on Xinjiang related issues held in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. An effort described by Elijan Anayat, spokesman of People's Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region during the 41st dedicated conference: *“Recently, some foreign hostile and anti-China forces have set up the so-called ‘Uyghur Tribunal’ in the U.K., shameless ‘hearing’ of the ‘genocide’ in Xinjiang, which is absolutely ridiculous. In response to this question, the 9th and 40th Xinjiang Related Press Conference held by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Beijing have already pointed out the truth.”*¹⁰

The “truth” cited by Anayat, based on live or video “testimonies” by family members and friends of those who testified before the Uyghur Tribunal routinely include allegations of fraud and other economic crimes, adultery, venereal diseases and family abandonment. The cited 40th press conference of June 9th, expressly aimed at *“exposing the ugly faces of the ‘actors and actresses’ and disclose the evil acts of the so-called ‘Uyghur Tribunal’”*, provoked some international outcry, with

⁹ The 9th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/05/26/036637314.shtml>.

¹⁰ The 41st Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/06/13/036645465.shtml>.

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the Uyghur Tribunal issuing a press statement citing its primary concern with the “impact on the wellbeing of the witnesses who gave evidence at the recent Tribunal Hearings in London and to the relatives and a neighbour of those witnesses who appeared at the PRC conference.”¹¹

Yet witnesses were promptly put through the exact same ordeal, including the parading of family “testimonies” during the 11th press conference in Beijing on June 18: *“At the so-called “hearing”, more than 20 so-called “witnesses” gave their “testimonies”, which went beyond common sense and conventional imagination. Their ability to cheat, lie and cheat is at the pinnacle of perfection. Today, we are holding another Xinjiang-related press conference on this topic to further debunk the evil intention of this pseudo court, further expose the poor performance of these so-called “witnesses”, and let the international community have a better understanding of their illegality, hypocrisy and absurdity.”*¹²

While the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal and the ensuing slandering and intimidation attempts of its witnesses through the use of family members and neighbours rightly drew attention, these practices are far from new and are an integral part of the propaganda toolbox employed by both the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Central Government.

Safeguard Defenders has attentively examined all press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues, leading to the following overview. For respect of the victims involved, we chose to name only government officials and not expressly report any statements that may have been provided under duress. The full overview of press conferences is available at: <http://english.ts.cn/news/xj/pcoxrl/index.shtml>.

- The first press conference organized by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is held on January 3rd, 2020, under the title “Chinese officials rebut foreign media reports on Xinjiang”, immediately exposing the aim of the series of press conferences which, though held at regular intervals, **almost all explicitly reference and seek to offer a counter-narrative to ‘outside events’ in the form of specific reports** (e.g. by Adrian Zenz, ASPI, ...), **international media coverage** (e.g. family separation, destruction of mosques, forced sterilization), **foreign government statements** (e.g. genocide determination) and the **imposition of sanctions**.
- Between January 3rd, 2020, and August 23rd, 2021, **a total of 52 press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues have been held by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Xinjiang**, with a limited number of additional dedicated press conferences showcasing issues such as “ethnic unity”.

¹¹ Uyghur Tribunal, *Press Release 9 June 2021*, available at: <https://uyghurtribunal.com/press-release-9-june-2021/>.

¹² The 11th Press Conference by Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2021/06/19/036648534.shtml>.

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- During the 18th such press conference, three **foreign media outlets** take part for the first time through video-conference, followed by the participation of four foreign outlets through video-conference in both the 19th and 20th press conference. It appears as if this participation sparks the decision to host the 21st press conference by the Information Office of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region at the press release room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing on December 21st, 2020, later dubbed as the 1st Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing.
- Following this “joint press conference” a dual approach ensues, with regular conferences continuing in Xinjiang without foreign media and Beijing-held press conferences numbered separately with the participation of foreign media. Between December 21, 2020, and August 23, 2021, **a total of 14 Beijing conferences** have been held.
- The aim of said conferences is eloquently described by Xu Guixiang, Deputy Director General of the CPC Publicity Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on December 21, 2020, and demonstrates the **intent of reaching global audiences**: *“To rebuke some media’s disgusting acts, we have taken a series of measures. First, hold press conference on Xinjiang related issues. We have held 20 of such events so far this year, citing numerous facts, data, cases and videos to expose the US and other Western anti-China forces’ lies and falsehoods on Xinjiang, such as the region “establishing camps to intern and persecute a million ethnic minorities,” “demolishing mosques,” “instituting massive forced labor,” “forced sterilization” and “performing genocide.” The press conferences are reported through radio, TV, foreign language websites and news apps in 15 languages, including English, Japanese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Turkish and Arabic, with overall viewership hitting 200 million so far.”*¹³
- In the same statement, Xu Guixiang asks journalists to “please turn a willing ear to” the stories of local testimonies. In fact, **at least 39¹⁴ of the listed press conferences use either live or video “testimonies” from “graduate trainees”, “migrant workers”, religious figures, entrepreneurs, relatives or purported acquaintances**, with one press conference (4th Beijing conference, February 10, 2021) hosting up to 15 “graduate trainees”.
- As stated, the choice of “testimony” appears expressly linked to the current international news cycle on Xinjiang and aims at rebuking allegations through **carefully crafted statements. Of particular notice are the testimonies by “graduate trainees”**, which throughout the press conferences all follow the script outlined in Xu Guixiang’s statement on February 10, 2021: *“Today, we dedicated this press conference to the work of the vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang, and invited 15 graduates of the centers to share their own experiences with us. They are the real people with real stories. You can never fake happiness. They were deceived, manipulated, controlled by the extremists, living under their shadow; some of them drifted apart from their families, ignoring laws, engaging in terrorist activities, and even becoming frontline warriors of terrorist, extremist forces.*

¹³ 21st Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related issues in Beijing, available at: <http://english.ts.cn/system/2020/12/24/036541754.shtml>.

¹⁴ Xinjiang-held conferences: 2, 3, 4, 5, (8), 10, (11), (13), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 34, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50.
Beijing-held conferences: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14.

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Extremist ideologies have converted normal people into “devils” of ruthless killers. They all have got rid of radicalism and extremists ideologies, returned to the normal life. Their thinking and mentality have changed totally. They know and abide by laws, excel at skills, have stable jobs and salary. They live a decent life with dignity and value. They are out of the woods of “devils” to become normal people.”

- The eerie overlap between “testimonies” presented, in particular of “graduate trainees” indicates an **extremely high likelihood if not certitude of their being scripted statements**, in line with the PRC’s documented practices of forced televised confessions as documented by Safeguard Defenders in its 2018 report *Scripted and Staged: Behind the Scenes of China’s Forced TV Confessions*¹⁵ [See further below].
- Though less frequent, a second fixture of the press conferences are the **direct slandering and intimidation of witnesses abroad**. Whereas foreign think tanks and researchers are frequent targets, particularly striking are the attacks against victims abroad. Detailed slanderous allegations of fraud and other economic crimes, rape, drug-related crimes, adultery, venereal diseases and family abandonment against people expressly named – many of which are among the Uyghur Tribunal witnesses – have been made in **at least 18**¹⁶ **press conferences**. It must be stressed once again that these allegations – on occasion accompanied by “corroborating testimonies” from family and acquaintances – always follow an ‘outside event’ in which those attacked had a prominent outspoken role.

B. Forced confessions: lessons from CCTV - CGTN

As stated by Xu Guixiang at the cited 21st press conference on Xinjiang-related issues, expressly accompanying the efforts made with the press conferences and government white papers on Xinjiang-related issues, are a series of documentaries and ad hoc news items produced by Chinese Communist Party-controlled networks CCTV and CGTN featuring scripted forced televised confessions with detained purported “terrorists”, “vocational center trainees”, “locals” and family members of Uyghur activists abroad.

Illustrative of the content of such “documentaries” is the example of the first in the series: “Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang”¹⁷. The first **45 minutes** of the ‘documentary’ focus on portraying violent incidents perpetrated by ethnic Uighurs as the work of terrorists, more specifically the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM). As part of CGTN’s “evidence,” 15 Uighur detainees or prisoners are paraded 17 separate clips in front of the camera to confess to violent acts and provide ‘evidence’ that terrorism or ETIM were behind the attacks. All have their eyes blurred and are dressed in prison clothing. The men have their heads shaved; several have microphones clipped to their clothing; one is lying in a hospital bed obviously badly injured; two have head bandages; and one appears to be wearing a leather restraining collar.

¹⁵ Safeguard Defenders, *Scripted and Staged*, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/scripted-and-staged>.

¹⁶ Xinjiang-held conferences: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 40.

Beijing-held conferences: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11.

¹⁷ China Global Television Network, CGTN ‘documentary’: Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang, 5 December 2019, available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-12-05/Fighting-terrorism-in-Xinjiang-MaNLlDtnfq/index.html>.

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- As documented prior by Safeguard Defenders, since 2018 China Global Television Network (CGTN), international Chinese language broadcaster CCTV-4, and their parent company CCTV are directly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)¹⁸. This documented and unrefuted assessment has been shared by UK audio-visual media regulator Ofcom, leading to the stripping of CGTN's broadcasting license in the UK in early 2021¹⁹.
- Moreover, Ofcom has repeatedly sanctioned CGTN²⁰ over its documented production and broadcasting of forced televised confessions, scripted and staged under duress, solitary confinement, threats to family and loved ones, and torture.
- Forced confessions extracted through mistreatment of criminal suspects remain rampant in China, and are of great concern to the international community. In its Concluding Observations for the 2015 review of China's implementation of its commitments related to the Convention against Torture²¹, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) expressed concern over reports "indicating that the practice of torture and ill-treatment is still deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system, which overly relies on confessions as the basis for convictions.
- In addition, airing "confessions" on state television has become a common occurrence since President Xi Jinping came to power in March 2013. During Xi's reign, a growing number of both Chinese citizens and foreign nationals have had their taped "confessions" appear on television in seeming acts of government retaliation. Similar to the tactics used in the above reported press conferences, televised "confessions" are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as "enemies," and to create an atmosphere of fear by "teaching" others a "lesson" as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism.²²
- Safeguard Defenders report *Scripted and Staged*²³ from 2018 exposed the reality behind this practice, revealing how these confessions were extracted by police through torture, threats to loved ones and promises of lenient treatment. With no lawyer access, many even in incommunicado detention and well before they had been tried in a court of law, these violate the fundamental right to a fair trial and the right to remain silent. Chinese Communist Party-controlled media were complicit in both helping to make some of these confessions and in packaging them as "news".

¹⁸ Safeguard Defenders, *Ownership and control of Chinese media*, 14 June 2021, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/blog/ownership-and-control-chinese-media>.

¹⁹ Ofcom, Ofcom revokes CGTN's licence to broadcast in the UK, 4 February 2021, available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2021/ofcom-revokes-cgtn-licence-to-broadcast-in-uk>.

²⁰ Ofcom has found CGTN guilty of producing and airing forced televised confessions five times. See for example: Ofcom, *Decision – Star China Media Limited (fairness and privacy)*, 8 March 2021, available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/content-sanctions-adjudications/decision-star-china-media-limited>.

²¹ UN Committee Against Torture, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, 3 February 2016, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCHN%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en.

²² Chinese Human Rights Defenders, *China: Forced TV Confessions Violate Principle of Presumed Innocence Before Trial, Constitute Cruel & Degrading Punishment*, 12 March 2016, available at: <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/03/china-forced-tv-confessions-violate-principle-of-presumed-innocence-before-trial-constitute-cruel-degrading-punishment/>.

²³ Safeguard Defenders, *Scripted and Staged*, 2018, available at: <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/publications>.

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- Recent news items produced and aired by CGTN around the world in response to international media reports on family separation have included statements against their parents by minors, under duress and without their parents' consent. One of these video "testimonies" was also used during the above-cited press conferences. Safeguard Defenders has obtained direct evidence provided by one of these families documenting the pressure exerted on the minors to provide the recorded statement. A complaint is pending before the French audio-visual media regulator Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel regarding this broadcast.
- The use of CCTV or CGTN-aired "testimonies and similar-style video "testimonies" and productions in a series of the press conferences, may point to a role of CCP-controlled media in their production.

C. Conclusion

Based on the evidence provided above, it is Safeguard Defender's opinion that:

- The PRC's attempts to deny and/or re-frame discourse on mounting human rights abuse allegations include far-reaching and relentless campaigns to silence, intimidate, harass and slander witness testimonies, either directly (long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices) or through threats to family and loved ones in China;
- Often responding to the growing series of reports or testimonies abroad - such as the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal - the toolbox employed includes the use of a variation on traditional televised confessions during governmental press conferences as well as traditional forced televised confessions, a practice amounting to severe human rights violations in and of itself, and provoking additional long-term trauma for victims;
- Safeguard Defenders has studied China's forced televised confessions extensively and continues to collect data and lobby on behalf of its victims. They constitute a gross violation of basic human rights. "Confessors" will not have been given access to a lawyer; they may not even have been charged or been tried in a court of law. "Confessors" must speak the lines that are scripted to them by the authorities. Filmed confessions of detainees and prisoners deny the "confessor" human dignity, the right to remain silent and the right to due process and a fair trial. "Confessors" are routinely mentally and physically tortured and their family threatened unless they speak to the camera. We believe similar tactics have been used on at least part of the press conference "testimonies";
- They are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as "enemies," and to create an atmosphere of fear by "teaching" others a "lesson" as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism;
- The number and nature of organs involved in these efforts further highlight the centralized Government and CCP role in their orchestration.

1 **13th September 2021 (2:18:20 – 3:16:15)**

2 **Laura Harth**

3

4 LAURA HARTH – Thank you. I was never posted in Beijing or representing the EU,
5 just a small correction. I will be testifying on behalf of Safeguarding Defenders. We
6 have acquired the unfortunate expertise on forced televised confessions, a practice
7 which has taken off in China recently. Before I begin, I would like to express my
8 deepest admiration for the witnesses who have come forward during these
9 proceedings. It is in their support that our submission seeks to expose the methods
10 against them with series of conferences in Urumqi. Only yesterday the council to
11 tribunal echoed call to PRC to present evidence. Unanswered, in our evidence, the
12 counterevidence they have sought to present, have hallmarks of more human rights
13 violations, from publicly available doc and experience Beijing sought to present to
14 world with the sole purpose to discredit, intimidate and silence witnesses overseas. I
15 will go through short sequence of slides, to exemplify key points I will make and answer
16 questions to best of my ability.

17 Since the start of the mass internment campaign the PRC's discourse has changed
18 starting from outright repeated denial, then acknowledging the existence of camps,
19 then denial again following the statement by XUAR Governor Shohrat Zakir who
20 declared all 'trainees' have graduated in 'vocational education and training centres in
21 Xinjiang' in October 2019. What we have seen, long before, and I'm talking decades,
22 especially during this timeframe during 2017 to today, 2019, from personal experience,
23 we saw increased and relentless use of their toolbox to silence witnesses and activists
24 overseas, Interpol red notices, transnational harassment, long arm policing, pressure

25 on foreign governments and non-governmental organisations - a campaign for keeping
26 the Uyghur 'issue' under wraps until 2018.

27 Following this 2018 change in discourse, with Uyghur witnesses abroad getting
28 growing attention, additional propaganda toolbox telling the Xinjiang story well also to
29 silence overseas witnesses and experts through slander, direct and indirect intimidation
30 loved ones, forced televised confessions in live videos, government never represses
31 us by UHRP. This was an effort construed by more human rights violations as the PRC
32 has a track record as denounced by numerous human rights bodies. Extracted through
33 torture, threats loved ones, promises of leniency, violate numerous human rights
34 provisions: the right to privacy and the right against degrading treatment.

35 The aim of such forced confessions is plural: the denial overseas claims such as
36 tribunals witnesses, defend gov policy, warn other witnesses of consequences to
37 themselves or loved ones, ultimate and particularly relevant practice most of witnesses
38 have been victim of is to denounce through character assassinations and publicly
39 humiliated and vilify individuals who the government regard as the enemy, and create
40 atmosphere of fear teaching others lesson as tactic to strike down on dissent and
41 activism.

42 Examplifying efforts that the Uyghur tribunal know well as so far 62 press conferences
43 between January 2020 to September 2021, following claims of camp closure, carefully
44 analysed all conferences, forward a few slides, the above, plural aims are all clearly
45 present. End of August 2021, 39 conferences held in Xinjiang, starting in December
46 2020, the foreign ministry in Beijing started hosting additional conferences ostensibly
47 aiming to reach a global audience, as clearly stated in a statement in December 2020

48 made by the deputy director general of the CPC Publicity Department of the Xinjiang
49 Uyghur Autonomous Region. Forward slide, see statement.

50 19 out of 62 conference engages in express slandering of witnesses abroad accusing
51 them of terrorism, fraud, family abandonment, illegal border crossing, using direct
52 video testimony of friends and relatives to denounce and warn. Character
53 assassinations made by officials are disturbing in relation to female victims. Move
54 forward with slides. These are some examples concerning female victims, we can
55 agree these display sexist attitudes which can never hold a credible place in public
56 using alleged adultery, syphilis, to discredit them. Now no less than 29 out of 62
57 conferences in Beijing, emphasizes on televised confessions with counter witnesses
58 present or in video productions. They include people identified as graduates, migrants,
59 religious figures, entrepreneurs, relatives, acquaintances. The testimony serves the
60 aim of denial, linked to outside events, such as sanctions or reports, such as Zenz's
61 who are also aimed at. The statements almost unanimously follow a script laid out by
62 the direct general in February 2021. In fact, if we look at some of them, they are similar
63 across conferences, exact working dates. As you are all aware the Uyghur tribunal
64 figured in 4, now 5 press conferences, as pre-emptive to outside events, May 25, 14
65 overseas witnesses targeted by official's video testimony and family testimony, as well
66 as retort counter witness. At time same Deputy Director General, stated 'we hope this
67 conference in order to speak out the truth and prevent international community being
68 deceived and manipulated, so that the public can examine and make judgement on
69 Xinjiang issues in an objective, impartial and rational way. Now on the basis of this
70 overview and our experience of practice of forced confessions and aims since 2013,
71 we believe the truth professed in the statement is that the PRC attempts to deny on
72 human rights allegation as involved far-reaching campaigns to silence, intimidate,

73 harass and slander witness testimonies either directly or through threats to their family
74 in China. In response to growing reports such as proceedings as the Uyghur Tribunal,
75 the toolbox includes traditional television confession, confession practices amounting
76 to human violation, provoking long term trauma to victims, a gross violation of human
77 rights, confessors have no access to lawyers, not tried or heard in court, and speak
78 lines scripted by authorities. The confessors are mentally and physically tortured, their
79 family threatened unless speak to the camera. We believe this is used in at least some
80 of the testimonies to deny overseas allegations, celebrate government policy public
81 humiliate individuals who the PRC deems enemies, create fear and to teach others a
82 lesson to crack down on dissent.

83 *COUNSEL – In relation to the PRC’s denial to existence of the camp, In your report*
84 *you note at the UN meeting the Chinese delegation categorically denied mass*
85 *detention of Uyghurs and later acknowledged the existence of these camps for re-*
86 *education. Can you comment on the quality and accuracy on information that the PRC*
87 *provided around the issue of these camps initially?*

88 LH – The PRC for a long time denied such detention, camps, education centres as
89 they later called them. I was personally present in 2018 Geneva council where
90 representatives denied any such things were going on. It is my personal belief when
91 the surge in 2018 made its comments, suddenly the Uyghur issues, witnesses abroad
92 gained international attention and credibility. I think China felt they had to change their
93 discourse to respond to changing international attention which lacked.

94 *COUNSEL – I will press you further, would you say the categorical denials in august*
95 *2018 at the UN, in formal form, were those the result of a mistake? Or lack of*
96 *knowledge, or other reasons?*

97 LH – I don't think that would be a mistake. If I refer to statements made by a
98 representative at the UN as something repeated over time in various forums. It was a
99 determined and deliberate choice to deny allegations, later contradicted by the
100 October 2018 reframing of the issue.

101 *COUNSEL – From my knowledge of diplomatic events normally delegation*
102 *participating in high level meetings would have a country position. This country*
103 *position would have been agreed by cabinet. So, do you think this is the case here,*
104 *therefore delegation at UN categorically denying existence of camps was essentially*
105 *expressing position as by government of China?*

106 LH – Yes that would be my personal position exactly as you stated.

107 *COUNSEL – My final question relates to practice to forced televised confessions you*
108 *have studied. Can you tell us more about the nature of such forced confessions and*
109 *how they work. For example, are there common features to look out for as tell-tale*
110 *signs they are forced, how do you know they are forced, would the individuals involved*
111 *be telling the truth.*

112 LH- We have these studied intensively over the years. They have gained international
113 attention good to recall gained momentum since 2013 since Xi Jinping came to power.
114 Many organs involved in scripting and producing these. Reason has insight is lot of
115 foreigners have been subjected to these practices. Have seen over 100 in China,
116 some broadcast abroad on CGTN. The UK regulator Ofcom has held and convicted
117 sanctions of CGTN over these practices stating these are violations of right to privacy
118 of these people. Through these we know these confessions are extracted from mental
119 physical torture, threat loved ones, solitary, leniency promises – people brought to
120 testify scenario scripted. With televised confessions there may be extensive editing,

121 many press conferences and especially when it comes to video testimonies of families
122 or acquaintances, such as those for Uyghur tribunal – know video so we know there
123 is editing. Slightly different in the case of confessions made live during press
124 conferences in Urumqi or Beijing. However, I believe when look at these, have 62
125 press conferences 49 include testimonies, similarity between statements, following of
126 script which is responding to outside event, such as report or sanctions or officials
127 aboard a statement – a clear script of what people saying. Some wordings are the
128 same – some signs if not all are heavily scripted. Not able to interview any witnesses,
129 based on experience it is our conviction these testimonies are staged and scripted,
130 and knowing how extracted, at least some torture, threats, promise leniency have been
131 exerted.

132 *COUNSEL – It is possible though if that event can have testimony after event and not*
133 *necessarily be forced. From analysis any other indications if look at these forced*
134 *confessions from can suspect they are forced – you mention scripted, are there any*
135 *common metaphors and themes or any other indicators, patterns to look for?*

136 LH – People presented as graduates of education camps. What we see if all in the
137 beginning state that they have been influenced by friends, starts with that, poor level
138 of Chinese, not good at job and convinced by family members to sign up voluntarily to
139 educational training. Go on, described conditions in the camps – two statements, from
140 two different people – one was made at second Xinjiang conference on 10 January
141 2020, the 15th Xinjiang conference on 29 oct 2020 were two different people. If you
142 look at them, they are almost literally the same from beginning to end, number of
143 classes, activities, also end both having been given cakes and sent best wishes on
144 birthdays. Out of 49 press conferences, the same can be said for entrepreneurs, see
145 same statements even in use of wording. Another one, next slide, example, these last

146 two statements are from same person but made four months apart – if we look at the
147 two use of wording is almost exactly the same, anyone could agree that would be
148 unlikely. Another indicator is looking at employees or workers where people make
149 unnatural statements – on the amount money of making, how they are looking forward
150 pensions – these are not things people voluntarily give up especially if seeing
151 witnesses one after the other. They are personalised to some extent but follow same
152 script.

153 *PANEL – Can you tell us how the work of safeguards defenders is financed?*

154 LH – It is financed on a project basis by various governmental bodies.

155 *PANEL – Which ones?*

156 LH – I am not sure I can publicly disclose this but can offer it in writing.

157 *PANEL – Picking up on the previous question on to what extent do similarities*
158 *represent coercion. Clearly represent involvement by centralised body, is it possible*
159 *people could consent to effect chant a mantra taught? Does it necessarily mean*
160 *coercion?*

161 LH – The opportunity to visit or interview any of them is not present. There is some
162 degree of doubt that is reasonable. I do not doubt all could have given them in the way
163 they did in a very scripted version. Based on our experience in forced televised
164 confessions, following a script and staging, at least a number of people coercion was
165 used. Goes in particular in looking at other parts, statements made against witnesses
166 overseas. In some cases, in one case regards particular broadcasting of a minor to
167 counter reports CNN reports on lost children of Xinjiang – two children of two families
168 were interviewed in CNN reporting, so CGTN published as interview with children
169 scripted and recorded in interview with children of second family. CGTN used in press

170 conference very strong indications that this was scripted so we have one witness
171 testimony that this happened.

172 *PANEL – Is that individual in a safe position?*

173 LH – No so I prefer not to name any names.

174 *PANEL – With regard to comments made about this tribunal on 25 may who do you
175 think those comments are aimed at?*

176 LH – That was slander campaign against witnesses of tribunal who were also
177 previously victims of slandering campaigns on tv. This one focused on 14 individuals
178 overseas, most of which to testify on Uyghur tribunal. Videos show their family
179 members and acquaintances mirroring accusations in attempt to dissuade them from
180 testifying.

181 *PANEL – With regard to witness intimidation, do you have insight where instructions
182 to do so come from. How far up chain of command do they arise?*

183 LH – Very centralised, evidenced by since December 2020, after the start of press
184 conferences, in Urumqi they are moved directly at the foreign ministry in Beijing. At
185 the 25th conference was in Beijing, hosting by foreign ministry. This is a central
186 government advert.

187 *PANEL – Forced confessions according to those held to give them are sometimes
188 rather curious. Although they made forced confessions, at trial there is no reliance on
189 it?*

190 LH - I do think they are.

191 *PANEL – Peter Humphrey gave an explanation how forced confessions can be made*
192 *– looks like an ordinary room but person in actually in a cage, which shows up on*
193 *shadows on wall, and a camera poking through hole.*

194 LH – Yes, it is possible. They are dressed in certain way, Uyghur in setting of
195 homeliness, children playing around, clear extent of staging. Which is obviously
196 different in press conferencing.

197 *PANEL – In a cage, Peter Humphreys case, there was an Ofcom investigation in this*
198 *country. See how other organs in state allow percolate through. Ofcom fined them*
199 *£200,000.*

200 LH – On August 26 there was a recent on and other three counts broadcast violations
201 in recent fines. Have been fined for total £450,000 over forced confession. There are
202 many more but not always possible to bring cases before relevant bodies abroad as
203 victims not come forward.

204 *PANEL – Detention between whole licence of Chinas television away. So, no*
205 *information would we have.*

206 LH - Those events CGTN did lose licence in UK in February this year as it found after
207 evidence, we provided that CGTN in ample investigation was not able to refute that
208 this was a body controlled by the CCP which is not allowed in the UK. In other
209 jurisdictions in France for example this is not a violation so they have a licence there.
210 But there are investigations going on there for one case of forced confession. Other
211 are for slander or untrue reporting – particularly for case referring to Adrian Zenz.

212 *PANEL – People at press conference saying they have disappeared. A letter was*
213 *written inviting them to come give evidence, no reply and also have not heard of these*
214 *people since. Any comment on that conference?*

215 LH – It is typical. I am trying to make clear when try to rebuke what happening, it is
216 also Uyghur Human Rights reports, proof of live videos which used quite often which
217 do not constitute opportunity for people to contact abroad. Not be surprised if such
218 videos appear in coming weeks. Particularly worrying talking of long arm policing
219 threatening people, tricking people into involuntary returns, extradition, invite to relates
220 abroad, go to the consulate Chinese in the country where they are and try find
221 information. I am afraid these are the usual tactics made by Beijing to put information
222 out there but also threaten and maybe even coercing them in following advice and
223 putting themselves at risk.

224 *PANEL – From all these examples you have gathered, what would you say are the*
225 *events or issues that seem to most trigger this for public rebuttal. And secondly what*
226 *do you know about the intended audience, is there particular effort to make sure these*
227 *press conferences are viewed in certain countries?*

228 LH – What is interesting, although conferences are held with a lot of regularity and
229 there may appear a time schedule. It is clear that and comes from statements that this
230 is not fixed schedule but try to respond to outside events. May 25 was the only one
231 where they talked before the actual event. If you go from very beginning, January
232 2020, they expressed a view on news reports and the New York Times report, then
233 one month lapse then Adrian Zenz report on Qaraqash list then they respond to that,
234 then Uyghurs for sale report – it is very clear they try refute or refute what is raised in
235 reports, in finding the right testimonies.

236 Regarding the attendance, from a western view it may be counterintuitive, not
237 something many in west people might read. Everything is available in English so
238 people who are not informed, people may find these discourses so it does help to bring

239 doubt into minds of people. They say expressly – the conference is held at foreign
240 ministry, start after, foreign media conferences are in Beijing (14 of those). I quote
241 from the Deputy Director General of the CPC publicity department of Xinjiang “press
242 conferences are reported through radio, tv, foreign languages, and news apps in
243 fifteen languages, including English, Japanese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Turkish and
244 Arabic with an overall viewership over 200 million, so far – they reach a global
245 audience. They are linked in a way if you see what they mention, to a human rights
246 council or events. They state so many support this. If I may use this time if any foreign
247 press following this. If you see what questions they are asking, although maybe asking
248 good questions, would be to invite them to not take part in this effort which is their
249 presence seeking to legitimise the discourse Beijing is trying to project. Slandering
250 witnesses abroad and no responsible media should be legitimising this.

251 *PANEL – How many days I cannot remember after the closing of hearing was the*
252 *press conference with relatives. I have two questions, can you confirm where that*
253 *happened, secondly quite a number of people involved – something of logistical task*
254 *to find them all if in free environment, appreciate degree of speculation, any view on*
255 *timetable and readily availability?*

256 LH – we have four press conferences closely around the first session of the Uyghur
257 tribunal. First was May 25 which was pre-emptive, including 14 counts of slander of
258 extensive family video testimony. So they had been found prior to the start of the
259 tribunal. This was in Beijing. Two then were held in Urumqi on 9 June with the support
260 of foreign ministry. Then 12 June and then we have one more in Beijing on 18 June.
261 Three of these had these relevant persons who rejected the witnesses. The parading
262 of family members. Based on facts videos already, the people had been selected. Look
263 at individual places these people have been targeted before. Around the Uyghur

264 Tribunal was bringing it all together. On 25 May 14 counts of slander, many of these
265 had been targeted before.

266 *PANEL – In relation to these press conference, do you do psychological analysis of*
267 *body language, if so, what does that reveal?*

268 LH – I would not be personally qualified, no expertise in this. Others may know persons
269 have said appeared under duress, and unnatural, in body movement stiffness. Would
270 refer to those knowing to those talking.

271 *PANEL – If I was to try sum up some things you have said. To me seems like none of*
272 *audience are Uyghur people, it is about creating fear and other ethnic minorities in*
273 *Mongolia, and efforts to stem language and learning about history and culture. Second*
274 *is citizens of the PRC to keep them on side and feel nationalism. Third is international*
275 *community – legitimacy, various areas in community, not only people but main ones*
276 *are bodies such as WHO, the UN, the Olympic committee, intensified due to Beijing*
277 *Olympics, world cup football could happen, multinational corporations trade, third*
278 *governments, mainly those profits to earn and those from trade who do not necessary*
279 *part of BRI. Am I correct in making those areas of trying reaching?*

280 LH – They reach a very broad audience. Mainly abroad is the target. they have
281 different campaigns at home. One remark definitely targeting and instilling fear in
282 ethnic minorities, these are tactics we know against Uyghur used on large scale
283 against Chinese people human rights defenders, activists, throughout China which is
284 why we know them. Instilling fear in communities is proven tactics they have been
285 using. Try to target broad international audience which consists of many layers and
286 identities.

287 *PANEL – Peter Humphreys and his wife were both forced to confess. Between them*
288 *and other people well known to your organisation, following is clear, being forced to*
289 *confess even without physical coercion can be destructive of mental health?*

290 LH – Yes.

291 *PANEL – It is well known and publicised that damage to personality and mental health*
292 *simply from making forced confession can be extreme?*

293 LH – Yes, the trauma has been well described, if you allow me, those made to speak
294 out against family members, I cannot imagine what that must feel like or to receive.

295 *PANEL – Used to make public forced confession are prepared to process by being*
296 *physical abused, or better fed, allowed little time in comfortable position. People*
297 *speaking at press conferences about the tribunal appear physically ok and well fed*
298 *with no signs of physical maltreatment. If their confessions were false and if*
299 *appearance were as stated, is that consistent of longer-term preparation?*

300 LH – Yes especially in those stated in tribunal, as accounts appearing in different press
301 conferences. They would have good conferences. Proof of live videos that since those
302 people have disappeared or not ability to contact any of them. This may show they are
303 definitely not free after or prior, we have no direct proof. Interesting part of counter
304 witnesses in Urumqi which made some sense especially those testified in press
305 conference in Beijing – how voluntarily was their movement to Beijing? How were they
306 moved there, we know of forced labour and transfer. We have to ask how freely did
307 they go and participate? We have no direct reply but overall evidence points to a
308 number of them being coerced or forced to do this.

Beijing's Public Campaign to Silence and Intimidate Witnesses

Uyghur Tribunal

Laura Harth, Campaign Director

13 September 2021

The logo for Safeguard Defenders features a large, light gray hexagon with rounded corners. Inside this hexagon, the word "safeguard" is written in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "DEFENDERS" is written in a bold, uppercase, blue, sans-serif font. To the left of the main hexagon, there are two smaller hexagons: one is a light gray outline, and the other is a solid light gray. The background of the slide is white.

safeguard
DEFENDERS

From Denial to Reframing

- 2017 – late 2018: Denial
- 16 October 2018: CCTV segment «Voluntary Vocational Training Centers»
- March 2019 – August 2019: Two White Papers state “education and training centers” have been established to end extremism and terrorism in Xinjiang
- 9 December 2019: XUAR Governor Shokrat Zakir declares all “trainees” have graduated the “vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang” in October 2019
- **January 2020 – September 2021: 62 press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues**

Silencing the Witnesses Toolbox

- Long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices
- Capture and use of foreign elites
- Disinformation campaigns
- Staging
- **Witness intimidation and slandering**
- **Forced (televised) confessions**
- **Threats to family and loved ones in China**

CPC Track Record

- CAT Concluding Observations for the 2015 review of China's implementation of its commitments related to the Convention against Torture: « the practice of torture and ill-treatment is still deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system, which overly relies on confessions as the basis for convictions »
- Airing “confessions” on state television has become a common occurrence since President Xi Jinping came to power in March 2013
- Safeguard Defenders report *Scripted and Staged* from 2018 exposed the reality behind this practice: scripted confessions extracted through torture, threats to loved ones and promises of lenient treatment
- UK regulator Ofcom has found CGTN guilty of producing and airing forced televised confessions five times

AIM

Publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as “enemies” and create atmosphere of fear by “teaching” others a “lesson” as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism.

The High Price of Coming Forward

January 2020 – September 2021

62 dedicated press conferences on Xinjiang-related issues

Number	Date	Central topic	Host	Victim Slander / Threats (By name)	"Uyghur Testimony retort"	Link
1	3 January 2020	Chinese officials rebut forei	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Mihrigul Tursun "found to have in	/	http://english.t
2	10 January 2020	Xinjiang's efforts on counte	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Dolkun Isa and Rebiya Kadeer)	YES (IN PRESENCE: Alijan Td	http://english
3	20 January 2020	Xinjiang's basic education (Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Qilbinur Tursun, Rebiya Kadeer, N	YES (IN PRESENCE: Jiapar A	http://english
4	22 February 2020	Adrian Zenz - Karakax List (Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Haibier I	http://english
5	2 March 2020	CECC 2019 Report on Huma	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Sayragul Sawutbay (illegal borde	YES (IN PRESENCE: Zoram T	http://english
6	12 March 2020	Mainly COVID19 + US State	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Sayragul Sawutbay)	/	http://english
7	16 March 2020	ASPI "Uyghurs for Sale" rep	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	/	http://english
8	29 April 2020	PBS Doc "China Undercover	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Gulziyan Taxmamat, Gulzila Awa	(INDIRECT - Yiminjan Sedul,	http://english
9	1 June 2020		Deputy Head of the Pul	/	/	http://english
10	19 June 2020	US Uyghur Human Rights P	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Muradil	http://english
11	17 July 2020	US State Dept. 2019 Interna	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Sayragul Sawutbay, Mihrigul Turs	(INDIRECT - in relation to VE	http://english
12	27 August 2020	US Sanctions 09/07 + 31/07	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Gulbahar Jelil, Mihrigul Tursun -	/	http://english
13	29 August 2020	Zenz report Sterilizations, I	Deputy Head of the Pul	YES (Zamira Dawut, Mihrigu Tursun, T	(INDIRECT)	http://english
14	16 October 2020	Presentation White Paper "	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	/	http://english
15	29 October 2020	Overseas reports on "vocati	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: graduate	http://english
16	4 November 2020	"Religious freedom" follow	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Imam of	http://english
17	13 November 2020	Foreign media reports on s	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: several d	http://english
18	18 November 2020	1st TIME 3 FOREIGN MEDIA	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	/	http://english
19	27 November 2020	"Detention camp" retort (4	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	(YES (IN PRESENCE: former	http://english
20	9 December 2020	Religious freedom retort - F	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Imam of	http://english
21	21 December 2020	Briefing domestic & foreign	BEIJING MOFA - Deputy	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Hatip Ok	http://english
22	7 January 2021	Labor conditions allegations	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: migrant	http://english
23	27 January 2021	Following Pompeo "genocid	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: former t	http://english
24	9 March 2021	Special session religious pe	Deputy Head of the Pul	/	YES (IN PRESENCE)	http://english
25						
26						
27						
28						

29						
30	23 March 2021	EU sanctions	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	/	http://er
31						
32	6 April 2021	Release 4th CGTN Doc "Wa	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	/	http://er
33						
34	13 April 2021	Religion	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	"LIVE" coverage from Xinjia	http://er
35						
36	4 May 2021	7-year old boy broken arm	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	/	http://er
37						
38						
39	6 June 2021	Countering forced labor clai	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ additio	http://er
40	9 June 2021	WITH FM FROM BEIJING -	Deputy Head of the Pub	YES (Sayragul Sawutbay, Tursunay Ziy	YES (IN PRESENCE: Su Lungu	http://er
41	12 June 2021	Uyghur Tribunal	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
42	16 June 2021	"Refute lies relating to Xin	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
43						
44	19 June 2021	"Protection and Inheritance	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
45	23 June 2021	"Refute such lies as "forced	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
46						
47	7 July 2021	"Refutal so called Xinjiang	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
48	11 July 2021	Counter family separation r	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
49						
50	15 July 2021	"Xinjiang through tourism"	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO	http://er
51						
52	12 August 2021	US Human Rights Violation	Deputy Head of the Pub	/	/	http://er
53	30 August 2021	Countering UK (extensive vi	BEIJING - Chinese Emba	YES (Zaomure Dawuti, Tu'ersunai Qiya	/	http://er

Stated Aim Intent to Reach Global Audiences

Xu Guixiang, Deputy Director General of the CPC Publicity Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (December 21, 2020):

“To rebuke some media’s disgusting acts, we have taken a series of measures. First, hold press conference on Xinjiang related issues. We have held 20 of such events so far this year, citing numerous facts, data, cases and videos to expose the US and other Western anti-China forces’ lies and falsehoods on Xinjiang, such as the region “establishing camps to intern and persecute a million ethnic minorities,” “demolishing mosques,” “instituting massive forced labor,” “forced sterilization” and “performing genocide.” The press conferences are reported through radio, TV, foreign language websites and news apps in 15 languages, including English, Japanese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Turkish and Arabic, with overall viewership hitting 200 million so far.”

Number	Date	Central topic	Host	Slander / Threats (By	"Uyghur Testimony retort"	Link	Archived
1	21 December 2020	Briefing domestic & foreign media	BEIJING MOFA - Deputy Head of the Pub	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Hatip Obult	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
2	11 January 2021	Countering population growth decli	MOFA	YES (Sayragul Sawutba	YES (IN PRESENCE: Muhtram S	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
3	1 February 2021	Pompeo genocide	MOFA	YES (Abuduklim Hatwa	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO Pr	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
4	10 February 2021	"Trainees of the Vocational Educat	MOFA	YES (Gulbahar Mahmu	YES (IN PRESENCE: "15 Gradua	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
5	18 March 2021	New Adrian Zenz report	MOFA	YES (Mihrigul Tursun,	YES (IN PRESENCE: Gulbostan	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
6	29 March 2021	EU Sanctions 22/03	MOFA	YES (Turxunnayi Ziyaod	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ VIDEO pr	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
7	9 April 2021	"Countering witness testimonies"	MOFA	YES (Sayragul Sawutba	YES (FAMILY VIDEOS)	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
8	30 April 2021	21/04 US Uygur Forced Labor Preve	MOFA	/	YES (IN PRESENCE: Wubuliaisa	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
9	25 May 2021	Uyghur Tribunal	MOFA (Xinjiang Mansion, Beijing)	YES (14! + FAMILY VID	YES (IN PRESENCE: Orgul Ashir	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
10	3 June 2021	"Views about the issues of labor ar	MOFA	/	YES (IN PRESENCE + VIDEOS: A	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
11	18 June 2021	Uyghur Tribunal	MOFA	YES (Thursunai Ziyaod	YES (several relevant persons v	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
12	5 July 2021	Export restrictions forced labor alle	MOFA	/	YES (IN PRESENCE (+ videos): Z	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
13	15 July 2021	Conclusion 47 HRC ("Canada and ot	MOFA	/	YES ("LIVE" VIDEO: Talaiguli Ke	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i
14	30 July 2021	Rebuking int'l allegations "anti-Chi	MOFA	/	YES ("LIVE" VIDEO: Tusunjiang	http://english.ts.cn	https://archive.i

Date	NAME	Host	Thru	"Uyghur Testimony retort"	Link
21 December 2020	Xinjiang Situation: 'Came	Information	/	YES (Obulhasan Tursunniyaz, on	http://er
20 January 2021	Press conference on Ref	Information	/	/	http://er
20 July 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: Five re	http://er
27 July 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information Office		YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: Seven	http://er
2 August 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: Three	http://er
13 August 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO : Twelv	http://er
9 August 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: Seven	http://er
30 August 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: 3 offic	http://er
3 September 2021	The Special Press Confer	Information	/	YES (PRESENCE + VIDEO: One o	http://er

The High Price of Coming Forward

19 / 62 - express by-name slandering of witnesses abroad:

- «Terrorist activities»
- «Fraud»
- «Illegal border crossing»
- «Family abandonment»

In October 1999, [REDACTED] abandoned his then 3-year-old daughter and exited from China. Such move holds no trace of humanity at all.

secretly sold his family's property. He then illegally exited and joined in "East Turkistan" with the money, ditching his wife, parents and four teenage sons callously. His youngest son was only 7 years old then. After he left the country illicitly, his wife, without incomes, cannot help but move into her parents' house. They were barely scraping by on subsistence allowance. A man who turned his back on his families now brazenly appeared as witness with his perjury in front of us. He is a shame to the title of husband and father.

At least 4 use direct (video) «Testimonies» by friends and relatives

The High Price of Coming Forward Female Victims

In fact, ~~Ms. [Name]~~ is a separatist and terrorist. Her self-proclaimed “undergoing” is a pure lie. She is infamous for her inferior moral, indolence and debauchery among her acquaintances. She was found and accused of adultery when she stayed in China. Can you believe such an incorrigible liar? Next, we will reveal her lies:

worked in vocational education and training center, and everything she says about the vocational education and training center is totally a lie. ~~Ms. [Name]~~ has been living a decadent life with terrible moral principles. It is learned that her husband has been suffering enough from the marriage life long ago, trying to get divorced with ~~Ms. [Name]~~. It is just because ~~Ms. [Name]~~ staying abroad that they cannot go through the divorce proceedings for now.

The High Price of Coming Forward Female Victims

In the meantime, the friends and colleagues of her all know about her poor morality, habitual lies and her turbulent personal life. When she lived in domestic, she fornicated with other people and was exposed by her neighbor. After her going abroad this time, in order to gain favour from the anti-China forces, she colluded with “the World Uygur Congress” and made up all those lies, which once again exposed her immorality and that she is a person without any sense of integrity and shame.

would fall through, so she escaped on the way to hospital. Finally, ██████████ and ██████████ got divorced in ██████████ Fourth, ██████████ is naturally lascivious, keeping amour with someone else besides her husband. She got married with her current husband ██████████ on ██████████. However, after the husband left China on ██████████, ██████████ began the amour with ██████████, keeping multiple cohabitation records.

The High Price of Coming Forward Female Victims

[REDACTED] was taken into custody by the public security bureau of [REDACTED] on suspicion of inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination. She was later found to have infectious diseases, including syphilis. The public security bureau of [REDACTED] terminated the compulsory measures against her [REDACTED] out of humanitarian considerations.

associated with [REDACTED] Fifth, [REDACTED] has abandoned herself to vice. [REDACTED], lover of [REDACTED], said “ She told me that she had a bad relationship with her husband, that she liked me and wanted to marry me after divorce. It never occurred to me that she lied to me and fled abroad. I was heart-broken. But soon I heard that she kept romantic relationship with many men. Now I hate her, she has betrayed my country, she has hurt me and everyone.”

Counter-Witnesses

49 / 62 – counter-witnesses in presence (or video):

- **Graduate trainees**
- **Employees**
- **Migrant workers**
- **Religious figures**
- **Entrepreneurs**
- **Relatives or acquaintances witnesses abroad**

**Emphasis on Beijing-hosted conferences: 14 / 14 with up to 15 in presence
«testimonies»**

Counter-witnesses: Script

Xu Guixiang's statement (February 10, 2021):

“Today, we dedicated this press conference to the work of the vocational education and training centers in Xinjiang, and invited 15 graduates of the centers to share their own experiences with us. They are the real people with real stories. You can never fake happiness. They were deceived, manipulated, controlled by the extremists, living under their shadow; some of them drifted apart from their families, ignoring laws, engaging in terrorist activities, and even becoming frontline warriors of terrorist, extremist forces. Extremist ideologies have converted normal people into “devils” of ruthless killers. They all have got rid of radicalism and extremists ideologies, returned to the normal life. Their thinking and mentality have changed totally. They know and abide by laws, excel at skills, have stable jobs and salary. They live a decent life with dignity and value. They are out of the woods of “devils” to become normal people.”

Counter-witnesses: Script

In the past, I had a low level of education and no vocational skills even though I wanted to go out to work, so I was addicted to watching violent terrorist video clips all day and fooling around with some “friends”. Seeing me like that, my mom was very sad and persuaded me to go to the vocational education and training center. There, I not

I ran jade business before and met so-called “friends”. They told me that: “Paradise is a more magnificent wonderland where you can have 72 beautiful wives. You will have endless money to spend and a sea of delicacy to enjoy. It is a life-long goal for Muslims.” I asked them curiously: “How to enter paradise?” They told me that: “Pray to Allah each day leads to paradise, with participating in jihad and killing pagans as the precondition though.” To live in paradise, I believed in their bullshit, hanging out with them all day. Later on, they gave me a passport and a route map of “jihad”. They asked me to depart from Guangdong for jihad in other countries. I gave up my businesses so as to realize my dream of “engage in a holy war and die for their beliefs in order to enter paradise.”

With a fake passport, I was caught by Guangdong public security organs on my way out. They sent me back to Hotan. Notified by public security organs, I realized that I committed the crime of crossing the border illegally which would be sentenced to no more than 3 years. I was dumbfounded and scared. The paradise I aspired suddenly turned to prison. The police told me that the government set up vocational education and training centers to salvage people like me. He suggested me to study there.

Counter-witnesses: Script

In the past, I had a poor level of Chinese and did not have any skills. When I did odd jobs, I made friends with some bad guys and did a lot of wrong things. Thanks to my elder brother's repeated exhortation, I voluntarily signed up for the vocational education and training program. Through the training at the center, I got to realize the mistakes that I made before, and learned a lot about policies and management. What made me proud was that my Chinese proficiency and computer operation skills were the best in my class.

Previously, I met some "friends" with extremism thoughts. They induced me into participating in illegal gatherings that preach extremism many times. They preached that "pagans" were inferior and they would be in Jahannam after death. Gradually, I regarded "pagans" as enemies of Muslims. I repel non-muslims and other ethnic groups around me and preached extremism to my family. I told them that things donated by government are not "Halal". I prevented my family from participating in health insurance, and moving into the newly-built government-subsidized house. They realized my weirdness and persuaded me to go to the education and training center. Later on, I voluntarily signed up for the training.

Counter-witnesses: Script

At the center, we had six classes per day from Monday to Friday with courses on the country's common language, laws, vocational skills and deradicalization. We could contact with our families and enjoy weekends as well as national legal holidays. When we went home at weekend, we were free to attend lawful religious activities. Our after-class life was also very rich and colorful. We had library, recreational room and interest-oriented classes, in which we were taught to dance and sing. We often organized sport and cultural activities like basketball, volleyball games and artistic performances. There was a clinic at the center with doctors on duty 24 hours a day, so whenever we had a headache, cold or any other ailment, we could go to see a doctor. We took regular health checks at the center. Our customs and habits were fully respected there, and the school canteen provided us with various and nutritious halal food for free every day. There had never been any maltreatment or physical punishment at the center, let alone brutal torture. The teachers cared for us like our own families, and took very good care of us when we were ill. They also prepared delicious cakes and sent us best wishes on our birthdays.

At the center, from Monday to Friday, we had 6 classes every day. We learned courses on the standard spoken and written Chinese language, legal knowledge, vocational skills, and deradicalization. We could contact with our family members and friends at any time we like. We took days off at weekends, on holidays and festivals. Every week, when I came back home, I could take part in normal religious activities at the mosque. Our life at school was very colorful. We had reading rooms, recreation rooms and interest groups. Teachers taught us how to dance and sing. We had many cultural and sports activities, such as basketball matches, volleyball matches and art performance. There was also a school clinic, where offered 24-hour medical service. If we got a headache, felt uncomfortable, or caught a cold, doctors at the clinic could make a diagnosis and give us treatment at any time. We also had regular physical examinations. Our customs and habits were respected at the school. We had various nutritious halal food at the canteen free of charge. There was no physical punishment at all, let alone any torture. teachers at the school treated us as their family members. When we got sick, the teachers took very good care of us. They also prepared cakes for and sent best wishes to us on our birthdays.

Counter-witnesses: Script

Speaking from the bottom of my heart, I think the vocational education and training center is the best school I've ever been to. I learned a lot of knowledge there and got teachers' care and love. I felt extremely moved and grateful. If I haven't been to the center, I don't know what kind of person I would become. It was the education and training center that pulled me back from the edge of the cliff, educated, and saved me and my family. I want to ask the US to stop fabricating lies.

Our religious beliefs are well protected in accordance with the law during the study. Teachers told us that vocational education and training centers are schools, thus religious activities are not permitted. While we are back home during the holidays, it is determined by ourselves whether to pray at home or to go to the mosque for the Koran interpretation by imam. We have never been interfered by anyone. I want to take this opportunity to clarify that America's allegations that our rights to religion, culture and language are deprived are total nonsense! Instead of being deceived by the rumors again, I sincerely invite friends around the world to travel around Xinjiang and communicate with us, thus to know about the truth.

Our freedom of religious belief was fully protected according to the law at the center. Our teacher told us that, the center was a school, so religious activities were not allowed there. But at weekends and during holidays, we could decide on our own whether to pray or listen to Imam explaining Koran at the mosque. No one had ever interfered in this. I want to take this opportunity to tell everyone that, those who said that our rights to religion, culture and using our own languages were deprived are telling a bare faced lie. I sincerely invite friends from all around the world to visit Xinjiang, talk to us and get to know the real situation.

Conclusions

1. The PRC's attempts to deny and/or re-frame discourse on mounting human rights abuse allegations include far-reaching and relentless campaigns to silence, intimidate, harass and slander witness testimonies, either directly (long-arm policing, transnational harassment, Interpol Red Notices) or through threats to family and loved ones in China;
2. Often responding to the growing series of reports or testimonies abroad - such as the proceedings of the Uyghur Tribunal - the toolbox employed includes the use of a variation on traditional televised confessions during governmental press conferences as well as traditional forced televised confessions, a practice amounting to severe human rights violations in and of itself, and provoking additional long-term trauma for victims ;

Conclusions

3. Safeguard Defenders has studied China's forced televised confessions extensively and continues to collect data and lobby on behalf of its victims. They constitute a gross violation of basic human rights. "Confessors" will not have been given access to a lawyer; they may not even have been charged or been tried in a court of law. "Confessors" must speak the lines that are scripted to them by the authorities. Filmed confessions of detainees and prisoners deny the "confessor" human dignity, the right to remain silent and the right to due process and a fair trial. "Confessors" are routinely mentally and physically tortured and their family threatened unless they speak to the camera. We believe similar tactics have been used on at least part of the press conference "testimonies";

Conclusions

4. They are meant to publicly humiliate and vilify individuals who the Chinese Communist Party regards as “enemies,” and to create an atmosphere of fear by “teaching” others a “lesson” as a tactic to strike down on dissent and activism;
5. The number and nature of organs involved in these efforts further highlight the centralized Government and CCP role in their orchestration.