

China Tribunal Submission

Concerns on religious persecution, developments within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and World Health Organisation statements about current transplant practices in China

Professor the Lord Alton of Liverpool,

Independent Crossbench Member of the House of Lords.

Lord Alton is a former UK Member of Parliament for Liverpool, author and founder or patron of numerous humanitarian and human rights organisations. With extensive experience investigating, reporting on and campaigning for religious freedom and genocide legislation. One of the Founders of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Freedom of Religion of Belief, Vice Chairman of the All Party Groups on Egypt, Tibet, Eritrea and Uganda and Vice-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy in Burma.

Reports detailing the magnitude of religious intolerance and persecution throughout China, fuelled my research into the allegations of religious persecution, mass incarcerations in labour camps and the subsequent threat of forced live organ harvesting. My research led me on many occasions to officially call on the British Government to investigate and inquire into these situations as a matter of urgency.

(1)

(1)(Figure 1)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 12 February 2019

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Religious Freedom

[HL13633](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the treatment of different religious groups by the government of China, including the treatment of Uighur Muslims, Christians, Falun Gong and Tibetan Buddhists; and what assessment they have made of whether the treatment of those groups is part of a wider effort by the government of China to suppress religious groups.

Exploring first, the current landscape of China, there are a multitude of reports of religious persecution that need to be considered when assessing the overall climate of totalitarian control. Including, but not limited to:

Christianity:

- **Reports of Chinese citizens facing restrictions on entering churches and being prevented from doing so if they are under 18, a full-time student, a member of the military, a member of the Chinese Communist Party or a civil servant. This is regulated in part through churches being forced to install facial recognition technology (2)**
- **Reports of large-scale arrests and disappearances of Christian Pastors and Catholic Clergy, including Rain Church in Chengdu (3)**
- **Reports of state-sanctioned destruction of churches and shrines, including a cross removal campaign in Zhejiang Province beginning in 2014, and more recently demolitions of both Catholic and Protestant churches in Henan Province (4)**
- **Reports of mass imprisonment of Christians, primarily due to their religious belief (5)**

Falun Gong:

- Reports of a violent, state-sanctioned crackdown on the estimated 70 – 100 million Falun Gong practitioners throughout China since 1999 (6)
- Original reports of forced organ harvesting arose from labour camps which were predominately known to house and persecute Falun Gong practitioners, primarily imprisoned because of their religious belief (7)
- Confirmed reports of Falun Gong practitioners persecuted to death in labour camps, along with reports of wide-spread disappearances of practitioners from Chinese jails and prisons (8)
- Reports of human rights lawyers such as Gao Zhisheng suffering imprisonment, torture and abuse for choosing to represent Falun Gong practitioners (9)

Uyghurs:

- Confirmed reports of up to one million Uyghurs (10) being imprisoned in newly created ‘re-education’ camps, for reasons such as having relatives live abroad, accessing religious materials online, engaging in religious activities or sometimes with no reason at all.
- Reports of the autonomous Uyghur population, which is predominately but not limited to Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang being prevented from wearing religious attire such as hats or headscarves, growing ‘abnormal’ beards or reading the Quran (11)
- Reports of up to 18 million Uyghurs, from the Xinjiang province in Western China being forced to undergo blood and DNA testing on the pretext of counter terrorism (12)
- Reports of nine new crematoriums being built in the Uyghur populated areas within Xinjiang, staffed by security forces, along with reports that *“The police normally contact the head of the crematorium directly and make arrangements”* (13)

Tibetans:

- Reports suggest that Tibet is one of the least free territories in the world (14)
- Reports of Tibetans facing imprisonment, torture, severe violence and/or execution for expressing freedom of belief (15)
- Reports indicate that Larung Gar, the Tibetan Buddhist monastic centre, has now been completely taken over by the Chinese government and reduced to a population of less than 5,000 (16)
- Reports of local authorities severely restricting religious freedom, speech, movement and assembly often through intimidation and violence from security forces (17)

The concerns faced by religious and ethnic minorities, in terms of mass imprisonment, torture and a lack of right to fair legal counsel presents a grim and desperate situation. The common thread of mass incarceration, based on religious choice is difficult to ignore, and is by all accounts irrefutable. This has led me to call upon the (18) United Kingdom’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office to support complaints made to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention against China for its use of arbitrary detention against unregistered religious believers.

(18) (Figure 2)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 12 July 2018

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Religious Freedom

[HL9466](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to support the complaint recently filed by Alessandro Amicarelli to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention against China for its use of arbitrary detention against unregistered religious believers.

A

Answered by: [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon](#)

Answered on: 25 July 2018

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practise, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy. Her Majesty's Government remains committed to promoting and defending the right to freedom of religion or belief for all individuals.

The UK has a close working relationship with UN bodies and is committed to upholding the rule of law and rules-based international system. My officials continue to monitor the progress of the complaint filed by Alessandro Amicarelli and await the outcome.

The connected concerns relating to China's public security bureau and prison camps extend beyond 'normal' reports of human rights violations. There is a growing number of allegations rising from China, describing forced medical tests on prisoners of conscience - including blood and DNA testing. The question arises: What is the link between current persecution practices and DNA testing? This question needs to be considered from the perspective of the overall climate of suppression within China, and current and previous claims made by the Chinese government in relation to the treatment of its citizens.

The Chinese government has on numerous occasions, despite often facing overwhelming evidence, denied its human rights violations. Until it has been made to acknowledge culpability, which is then done so under the guise that China's affairs are internal situations and often with outlandish or implausible explanations.

Over the last decade, the magnitude of DNA testing has been detailed time and time again, leading independent researchers to conclude that DNA and blood testing is an accepted and well documented phenomenon. The scale of this practice too, has been supported by the vast increase in hospitals, both military and civilian, gaining recognition as transplant centres or accredited hospitals with specialist medical teams. It is further supported too, by the documented rise of organ transplant tourism into China.

China's explanation, and subsequent denial of wrongdoing of the alleged link between current prison populations and transplant practices, is at the very least questionable. But even more questionable, is the connection between the current practices and intent, as the intent of any perpetrator is by nature what really determines the scale and seriousness of a situation.

The publicly declared link between China's current prison and hospital systems differs greatly with the realities as reported from released prisoners of conscience, independent investigators and former Chinese medical professionals. Reports suggest that state-sanctioned or state approved medical bodies operate in connection with China's prison population.

With the documented accounts of religious and ethnic minorities facing mass imprisonment, torture, and death while having severe cultural or religious restrictions placed upon them, we must look at the intent of the aggressor. Having investigated and campaigned against numerous state-sanctioned atrocities inflicted upon innocent civilians in several countries, including allegations of genocide in Burma, Nigeria and the Middle East, I am apt to consider the supposed intent of the Chinese Communist Party.

As a sponsor of a new genocide determination bill within the UK Parliament, and having assessed the available media accounts and reports, comparing the scale, severity and processes followed by the Chinese state, it is realistic to conclude, that the campaigns currently inflicted on multiple faiths and ethnic groups within China, bear the hallmarks of genocidal intent.

China has so far refused to allow or engage with any meaningful transparent, independent inquiries or investigations into the allegations of forced organ harvesting. This led me on December 12th to ***“To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the preliminary findings of the Independent Tribunal Into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners Of Conscience in China on allegations of forced organ harvesting from prisoners in China.”***(19)

(19) (Figure 3)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 12 December 2018

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Prisoners

[HL12218](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the preliminary findings of the Independent Tribunal Into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners Of Conscience in China on allegations of forced organ harvesting from prisoners in China.

A

Answered by: [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon](#)

Answered on: 21 December 2018

We are aware of reports that allege that a process of involuntary organ removal may be taking place in China, including suggestions that minority and religious groups are being specifically targeted. The British Government fully supports the Declaration of Istanbul (May 2008), which encourages all countries to draw up legal and professional frameworks to govern organ donation and transplantation activities.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) collates global data on organ donations and works with China. The WHO view is that China is implementing an ethical, voluntary organ transplant system in accordance with international standards, although the WHO does have concerns about overall transparency.

We will continue to review available evidence on this issue, including the preliminary findings of the Independent Tribunal Into Forced Organ Harvesting.

The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, through Lord Ahmad, stated ***“The World Health Organisation (WHO) collates global data on organ donations and works with China. The WHO view is that China is implementing an ethical, voluntary organ transplant system in accordance with international standards, although the WHO does have concerns about overall transparency.”***(19)

The public statements from the World Health Organisation, which have been relayed through the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, pose more questions than they do present answers. Predominately because of an apparent conflict of interest including:

- **Dr Jiefu Huang, Chairman of the China National Organ Transplant Committee and President of the China Organ Transplant Development Foundation was elected to the World Health Organisation Task Force for Donation and Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues in June 2018**
- **Dr Jiefu Huang was formerly the Vice-Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Health from 2001 until appointed to his present positions, directly implicating him to the allegations of forced organ harvesting for the past 18 years**
- **The scope of responsibility of the World Health Organisation and whether it has a mandate to issue advice and reassurances on a governmental level as to the nature and implantation of transplant practices within any country**
- **The detail of the implied independent investigations, which would lead the World Health Organisation to make such statements is unclear**

The reason the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office accepts assurances from the World Health Organisation, in light of the described conflicts of interest, has not been fully explained.

When a country such as China, which regularly wards off reports of human rights violations, has allegations made against them as serious as state sanctioned live forced organ harvesting of prisoners

of conscience, the British and other governments have a duty to offer greater recognition to the concerns, by conducting further investigation and advocating action.

This duty increases when international awareness has grown around the allegations of organ harvesting, which have centred around the persecution of Falun Gong for nearly two decades. As has happened recently, with the level of media attention given to the plight currently facing people from the Uyghur Autonomous region of Xinjiang, and specifically the connected reports of unwanted blood, tissue and DNA testing. (20)

(20)(figure 4)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 12 February 2019

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Human Rights

[HL13634](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Uighur Muslims detained in China have undergone unwanted blood, tissue and DNA tests; what they believe to be the purpose of any such tests; and whether there is evidence of state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting religious prisoners of conscience, including Uighur Muslims.

On February 11^h, 2019, the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office stated through Lord Ahmad that (21) *"We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the Chinese Government's deepening crackdown; including credible reports that over one million Uyghurs have been held in re-education camps, and widespread surveillance and restrictions targeted at ethnic minorities"*

(21) (figure 5)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 28 January 2019

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Ethnic Groups

[HL13146](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the account of Gulbahar Jelilova, a Muslim Uyghur woman, who was reportedly subject to degrading treatment at a re-education camp in China; and what assessment they have made of the accuracy of estimates cited by the United Nations that up to 1 million ethnic Muslim-minority Uyghurs may be held involuntarily in extralegal detention in Xinjiang.

A

Answered by: [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon](#)

Answered on: 11 February 2019

We are aware of reports of the detention of Gulbahar Jelil (Jelilova) in Xinjiang.

We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the Chinese Government's deepening crackdown; including credible reports that over one million Uyghurs have been held in re-education camps, and widespread surveillance and restrictions targeted at ethnic minorities.

During China's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council on 6 November, the UK made a statement which described our concern about the treatment of ethnic minorities in China, including Uyghurs. We issued a specific recommendation, calling on China to implement the recommendations by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Xinjiang, and to allow the UN to monitor the implementation.

Mr Field raised our concerns about Xinjiang with Vice Minister Guo Yezhou during his visit to China on 22 July 2018. The Foreign Secretary also raised our concerns about the region with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his visit to China on 30 July 2018.

Acknowledgments of the current plight faced by more than one million Uyghur prisoners of conscience, recognise the gravity of the situation. However this falls short of the international response required to combat the seriousness of the threat. Expressed within my call to the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office questioning *"what discussions they have had, if any, with other governments about the potential to make joint representations to the government of China on the treatment of the Uyghur population"*. (22)

(22)(figure 6)

Asked by [Lord Alton of Liverpool](#)

Asked on: 12 February 2019

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

China: Ethnic Groups

[HL13632](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with other governments about the potential to make joint representations to the government of China on the treatment of the Uighur population.

Footnotes:

- 1 – Figure 1 – Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 12/02/2019 - displayed within text
- 2 – www.bitterwinter.org/facial-recognition-checks-to-enter-a-church/
- 3 - www.csw.org.uk/2019/01/04/press/4186/article.htm
- 4 - www.csw.org.uk/2018/08/31/press/4063/article.htm
- 5 – www.csw.org.uk/2018/04/06/report/3902/article.htm
- 6 - www.forbes.com/2006/02/09/falun-gong-china_cz_rm_0209falungong.html
- 7 – www.bloodyharvest.info/
- 8 – www.faluninfo.net/persecution-killings/
- 9 - www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/15/gao-zhisheng-persecuted-chinese-dissident-smuggles-out-book-of-abuses
- 10 – www.uk.reuters.com/article/uk-china-rights-un/u-n-says-it-has-credible-reports-that-china-holds-million-uyghurs-in-secret-camps-idUKKBN1KV23P
- 11 - www.independent.co.uk/voices/china-muslims-camps-uyghur-human-rights-religion-islam-religious-leaders-a8713961.html
- 12 - www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/13/china-minority-region-collects-dna-millions
- 13 – www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/crematoriums-06262018151126.html
- 14 - www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/tibet
- 15 - www.freetibet.org/about/human-rights
- 16 - www.hongkongfp.com/2018/01/25/chinese-govt-taking-administration-tibetan-buddhist-monastery-larung-gar-ngo-says/
- 17 - <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/china-and-tibet#bbae7b>
- 18 – Figure 2 - Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 12/07/2018, Lord Ahmad Parliamentary Response 25/07/2018 - displayed within text
- 19 – Figure 3 - Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 12/12/2018, Lord Ahmad Parliamentary Response 21/12/2018 - displayed within text
- 20 – Figure 4 – Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 12/02/2019 - displayed within text
- 21 – Figure 5 – Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 28/01/2019, Lord Ahmad Parliamentary Response 11/02/2019 - displayed within text
- 22 - Figure 6 – Lord Alton Parliamentary Question, raised 12/02/2019 - displayed within text