

Reference: B1924

H. E. Ambassador Zhang Ming  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary  
Head of Mission of the People's Republic of  
China to the European Union

1 October 2018

Dear Ambassador Zhang Ming,

## END ARBITRARY DETENTION IN THE XINJIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

We are writing to express concern about reports of human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and call on your government to take urgent and effective measures to protect Uighurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim people in the XUAR from being arbitrarily detained in "transformation-through-education" facilities in the name of "de-extremification".

On 24 September 2018, Amnesty International published the briefing *China: Where are they? Time for answers about mass detentions in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*.<sup>1</sup> Our organisation has spoken with more than 100 people across the world who report losing touch with relatives and friends inside the XUAR and fear that they have been detained in such facilities.

There are credible reports that these facilities are being used to force people to repudiate aspects of their religious beliefs and cultural identity and prove their unqualified political loyalty for the state. The secretive and undocumented nature of the way people are going missing there makes it nearly impossible to trace or confirm the whereabouts of any particular individual. Hundreds of thousands of families have been torn apart and they are desperate to know what has happened to their loved ones.

Every government has the right and duty to protect its citizens, but this may never be used as an excuse to deny people the ability to exercise their human rights. States should ensure that all measures aimed at counter-terrorism or protecting national security fully comply with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

We urge your government to provide credible answers about what is happening in the XUAR. In accordance with China's obligations under international law, your government should end all arbitrary detention and immediately release all persons who are being held in "de-extremification", "transformation-through-education" or other facilities in the XUAR unless they have been charged with an internationally recognised offence.

We have likewise urged your counterparts in the European institutions to remain in pro-active dialogue with you about these urgent human rights concerns, in line with the European Union's and China's shared international human rights commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, *China: Where are they? Time for answers about mass detentions in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, 24 September 2018. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/9113/2018/en/>

Thank you in advance for your action in this regard and we look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

*C. de la Campa*

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Interim Head of European Institutions Office and Advocacy Director  
Amnesty International