



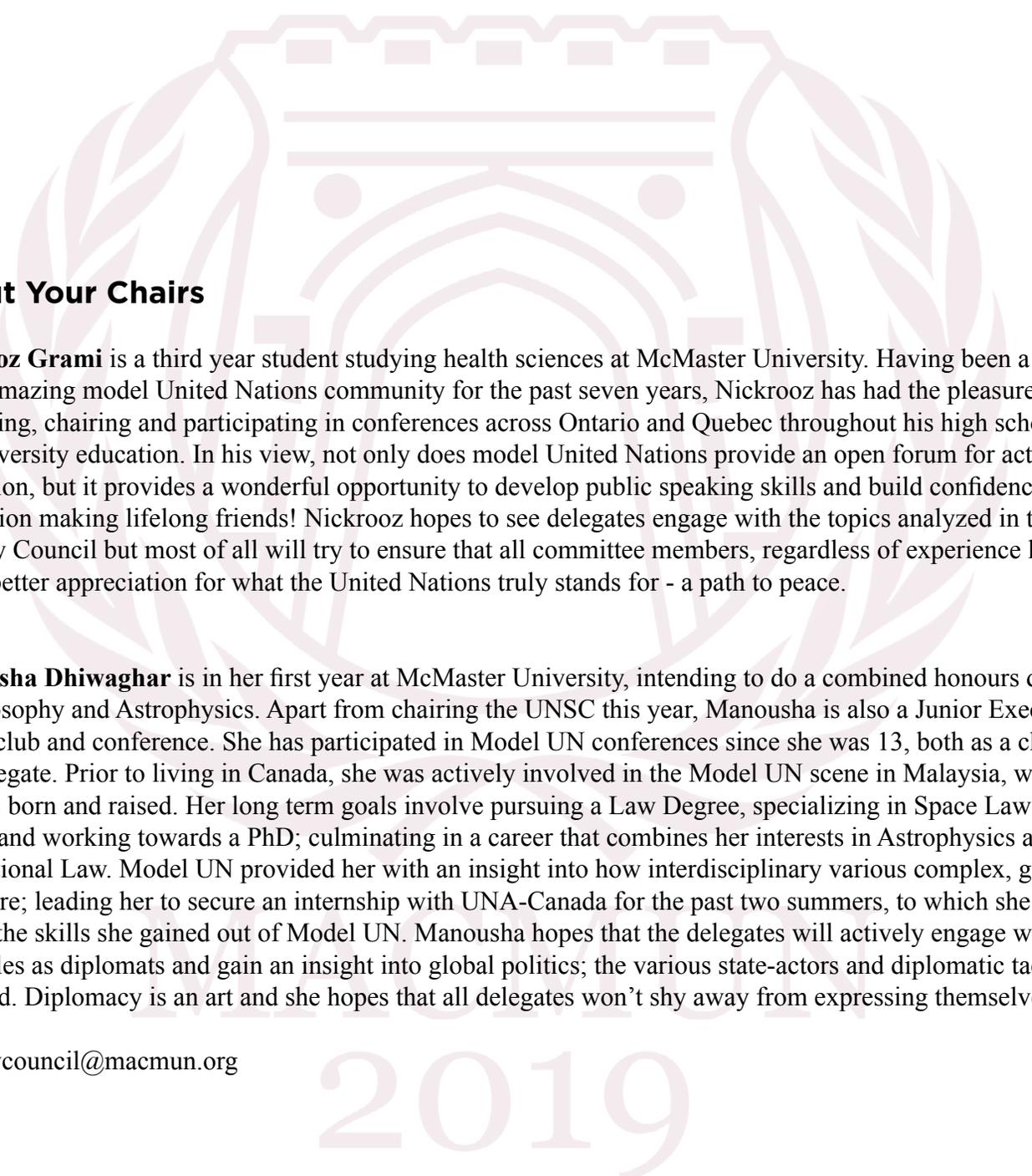
MACMUN  
2019

# SECURITY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND GUIDE



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## About Your Chairs

**Nickrooz Grami** is a third year student studying health sciences at McMaster University. Having been a part of the amazing model United Nations community for the past seven years, Nickrooz has had the pleasure of organizing, chairing and participating in conferences across Ontario and Quebec throughout his high school and university education. In his view, not only does model United Nations provide an open forum for active discussion, but it provides a wonderful opportunity to develop public speaking skills and build confidence, not to mention making lifelong friends! Nickrooz hopes to see delegates engage with the topics analyzed in the Security Council but most of all will try to ensure that all committee members, regardless of experience level, gain a better appreciation for what the United Nations truly stands for - a path to peace.

**Manousha Dhiwaghar** is in her first year at McMaster University, intending to do a combined honours degree in Philosophy and Astrophysics. Apart from chairing the UNSC this year, Manousha is also a Junior Executive for the club and conference. She has participated in Model UN conferences since she was 13, both as a chair and delegate. Prior to living in Canada, she was actively involved in the Model UN scene in Malaysia, where she was born and raised. Her long term goals involve pursuing a Law Degree, specializing in Space Law and Policy, and working towards a PhD; culminating in a career that combines her interests in Astrophysics and International Law. Model UN provided her with an insight into how interdisciplinary various complex, global issues are; leading her to secure an internship with UNA-Canada for the past two summers, to which she largely credits the skills she gained out of Model UN. Manousha hopes that the delegates will actively engage with their roles as diplomats and gain an insight into global politics; the various state-actors and diplomatic tactics involved. Diplomacy is an art and she hopes that all delegates won't shy away from expressing themselves fully.

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2019

# Committee Overview

## *Mandate and Function of the Committee*

The United Nations (UN) was created in the wake of World War II to maintain world peace in the place of past international organizations, such as the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup> As victors of the war, the United States and the Soviet Union, along with the United Kingdom and other world powers, found themselves at the helm of a new world order in 1945. Leaders of these nations desired a united international body to maintain peace and order, and the UN was established.<sup>2</sup>

The Security Council (SC, or “the Council”) was subsequently formed as a “powerful institution of international relations” and was placed at the centre of the organization, with the United States, Soviet Union, and United Kingdom granting themselves permanent membership, along with China and France.<sup>3</sup> The primary goal of the SC, as outlined by the United Nations Charter, is to “investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.”<sup>4</sup> In the early stages of its existence, the SC was virtually paralyzed by Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, but has become increasingly active on the world stage since the 1990s and the formation of the Russian Federation.<sup>5</sup>

As stated in the Charter of the United Nations, the UN, with the SC at its core, has four fundamental purposes:<sup>6</sup>

- I. To maintain international peace and security;
- II. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;
- III. To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, cultural, or humanitarian nature; and
- IV. To be a centre of harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

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<sup>1</sup> “The UN Security Council.” Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations., [www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council](http://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council)

<sup>2</sup> “The UN Security Council”. Council on Foreign Relations

<sup>3</sup> Paul, James. “Global Policy Forum”.UN Security Council, [www.globalpolicy.org/security-council.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council.html)

<sup>4</sup> “Charter of the United Nations”. United Nations, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html).

<sup>5</sup> Paul, James. “Global Policy Forum”.UN Security Council

<sup>6</sup> “Charter of the United Nations”.United Nations.

The Council wields more power than any other UN body or committee. It is able to create resolutions that, unlike in other UN assemblies, are binding according to international law. The SC is also well-known for its peacekeeping missions; as of mid-2015, there were sixteen ongoing authorized peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, it has many tactics at its disposal, including the right to impose economic sanctions, travel bans, and arms embargoes. In extreme cases, it may also take military action against any state threatening its mandate.

The SC is composed of five permanent (P5) and ten non-permanent members. The P5 members are: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The non-permanent members each hold their place for a two-year term, with five new members elected annually.

The SC presidency rotates on a monthly basis, according to the English alphabetical order of their names.<sup>7</sup> Meetings can be held at any time when convened by the President and by the request of any member state. Under Article 35 of the Charter, “The president shall call a meeting if a dispute or situation calls the Council’s attention.”<sup>8</sup> The provisional agenda for each meeting is set by the Secretary-General of the UN and is further approved by the President of the SC.

Each member state has one vote on procedural and all other matters. Decisions are made by a vote from nine of the fifteen members. However, all five permanent members must vote in favour or abstain in order for a resolution to pass. This rule is called the “Right to Veto.” The Right to Veto was established in 1945 within the SC due to the perceived importance and influence of the permanent member states in matters of peace and security. It was commonly used by the United States and the Soviet Union in the first several decades of the SC’s existence due to their pronounced differences in political ideology during the Cold War. Due to these tensions, Council meetings used to be much less frequent. Since the end of the conflict around 1990, however, it has become increasingly active and generally meets on an ongoing basis.<sup>9,10</sup>

It is important to note that the right to veto held by the five permanent members remains a contentious issue in the UN. Many critics contend that the veto allows permanent members a disproportionate amount of power, and that even the threat of the veto is an advantageous tool for these states.

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<sup>7</sup> “Security Council, SC, UNSC, Security, Peace, Sanctions, Veto, Resolution, President, United Nations, UN, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution, Prevention” United Nations, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/sc/about/rules/](http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/rules/).

<sup>8</sup> “Charter of the United Nations”. United Nations.

<sup>9</sup> History of the United Nations” United Nations, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/index.html)

<sup>10</sup> “History of the United Nations”. United Nations.

## ***Simulation Style/Composition of the Committee***

The SC will be composed of two designated Chairs, rather than the UN system of rotating presidency of a single member. They will moderate the debate and ensure it adheres to the appropriate Model UN rules and procedures. The Chairs will be responsible for opening and closing the debate, setting the agenda, managing the list of speakers, and facilitating the discussion. Furthermore, they will give the final rule on disputed points, and state when the delegates must vote on motions. The Chairs will also decide when to introduce the draft resolutions for debate.

The SC will consist of 15 delegates, each representing an assigned Member State. To provide the closest possible simulation of the SC, there will be delegates representing the P5 members, as well as ten non-permanent members,<sup>11,12</sup> Note that the non-permanent members are not representative of the true members of the SC and have been altered to provide a more exciting simulation. As a result, the members of the Council will be: Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Netherlands, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America. All delegates are expected to adequately research the two committee topics, submit a position paper, and be prepared for discourse regarding their country or organization's stances on both issues.

A page will be present during the meeting to pass notes between delegates and to the Chairs, if necessary. Pages will be screening notes to ensure appropriate content, and the Chairs retain the right to read notes.

## **Recent Activity (2016-2018)**

Since the Arab Spring and the inception of the Syrian civil war, the UN Security Council has addressed the Middle Eastern conflicts with swift discussion and debate. Similarly, in recent years, the Security Council has focused its efforts primarily on the Rohingya crisis occurring in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Unfortunately, the Council has not been entirely successful at resolving such conflicts due to issues with sovereignty and the sheer number of international stakeholders involved in conflicts. The Security Council has deliberated the increase in civilian casualties in the West Bank and Gaza, concluding that the international community must stress for the need of a 'two-state' solution to de-escalate the Israel-Palestine conflict.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "History of the United Nations" United Nations

<sup>12</sup> UN university "United Nations Security Council 101" United Nations University, [unu.edu/publications/articles/united-nations-security-council-101.html](http://unu.edu/publications/articles/united-nations-security-council-101.html)

<sup>13</sup> *Security Council Report*. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>

## ***Forming Resolutions***

Resolutions represent the consolidated opinions of the United Nations body and act as proposed comprehensive solutions to the issues at hand. They are a final result of the discussions and negotiations regarding the topics, and detail recommended courses of action. These papers are composed of pre-ambulatory clauses (reasons for addressing this issue) and operative clauses (*solutions* to the issue). A resolution is first considered a draft resolution prior to being voted on by the committee.

During the course of debate, delegates may work individually or collaborate with others to write a draft resolution. At the end of the debate, many draft resolutions can be submitted to the Chairs, and the Chairs will proceed to read all the draft resolutions until the delegates vote and pick the final resolution(s). The delegates writing the resolution are deemed the “sponsors” and states that support seeing the resolution presented are signed on as “signatories.” Signatories are simply members who want to bring the resolution to debate; they do not have to necessarily support the resolution.

The SC requires 1-2 sponsors and 3 signatories on a resolution. The draft resolutions are open to amendments suggested by other delegates. Once brought to debate, amendments can be made until the final resolution is voted on by the committee.

For detailed instructions on how to write resolutions, including a list of pre-ambulatory and operative phrases, and a sample resolution, please refer to <https://www.macmun.org/resources> of our How to MUN guide on our website.

## **Instructions for Writing Position Papers**

The position paper is a detailed essay of your country’s policies and position on the topics that are going to be discussed in the committee. This will help you to organize your thoughts and successfully engage with the committee. You are required to submit a paper to be eligible for any conference award, and the writer of the best position paper in each committee will be given the Book Award.

A strong MACMUN position paper should include the following:

1. Discussion of the topic in general.
2. How your country is affected by the issues.
3. Your country’s policies with respect to the issues.
4. Quotations from your country’s leaders about the topics.
5. Actions that your country has taken with regard to the issues.
6. What your country believes should be done to address the issues.
7. What your country would like to accomplish in the committee’s resolution.
8. A description of your relationship with other countries as it relates to the issues at hand.

Include your name, assigned country, and committee. Please do not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders.

Length: 1 page per topic.

Format: Times New Roman, size 12, single-spaced.

Citation style: Your choice (please include a reference page; not counted in page limit).

Due date: Sunday, February 3, 2018, at 11:59pm to [securitycouncil@macmun.org](mailto:securitycouncil@macmun.org)

For detailed instructions on how to write a position paper, including a template and sample paper, please refer to [macmun.org/resources](http://macmun.org/resources) of our How To MUN guide on our website.

## **Where to Start Your Research**

- <http://www.un.org/en/members/> : The United Nations has a multitude of resources for you to explore. As a starting point for your research on your assigned country, the UN has an extensive collection of fact sheets and assessments on every state under its jurisdiction.
- <http://www.un.org/en/sc/> : The SC website will likely be of specific interest to you for social documents, news, and miscellaneous information.
- <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>: The Security Council Report is an “independent think tank” that assesses the SC’s activities on a monthly basis. Their website provides an excellent starting point for your research and should help especially the investigation of specific issues.

## TOPIC #1: Instability on the African Continent

*“Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear”.*

– Nelson Mandela

### ***Introduction***

As of 2018, 54 African countries with varying linguistic, socioeconomic and political characteristics are members of the United Nations.<sup>15</sup> In such a vast mosaic of people, rich in culture and tradition, one complex, multifaceted issue has emerged as a threat to both human security and well-being. The establishment and propagation of terrorist groups within Saharan and sub-Saharan African nations in tandem with political instability have forced destabilization on par with poverty, malnourishment or infectious disease.

### **History and Background**

#### ***Malian Insurgency***

Following colonial rule by the French, the Republic of Mali gained independence in 1960. Since that time, the country has been under serious political turmoil. Modibo Keita, the first president of the country, established much closer diplomatic relations and economic ties with communist-bloc countries (Soviet Union and Communist China) and built a state-run national economy in the years following independence.<sup>16</sup> After much unrest due to his policies, on November 19, 1968, a group of military officials launched a coup against Keita and his government, ultimately overthrowing them. The military then ruled for approximately ten years until 1979, after which a democratically elected government was established.<sup>17</sup>

In the years to come, Mali came into conflict with neighbouring Burkina Faso over borders multiple times in 1974, 1975 and once more in 1985<sup>18</sup>. As the nation developed economically

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<sup>15</sup>“Africa” United Nations, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/sections/where-we-work/africa/](http://www.un.org/en/sections/where-we-work/africa/).

<sup>16</sup> Imperato, Pascal James, and Andrew Clark. “Mali” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 16 Aug. 2018, [www.britannica.com/place/Mali/Independent-Mali](http://www.britannica.com/place/Mali/Independent-Mali)

<sup>17</sup> Imperato, Pascal James, and Andrew Clark. “Mali”

<sup>18</sup> Imperato, Pascal James, and Andrew Clark. “Mali”

and politically, the urge for a greater level of democracy emerged.<sup>19</sup> Despite a civilian, Alpha Konaré, taking up the position of President, the country did not have a shortage of crises to deal with in the years to come. Chief among these issues was the government's relationship with the Tuareg rebels, a militant group who are members of the Berber-speaking pastoralist ethnic Tuareg people who have inhabited northern Africa for hundreds of years,<sup>20,21</sup> The rebel group sought to establish a separate state than the rest of Mali due to religious and ethnic differences. While peace was maintained for the next few years, the Tuareg rebels grew in influence in the country and resumed their activity in 2007. With government policies tending to neglect northern Mali, already fragile due to a series of droughts, the area was primed for the emergence of multiple rebel groups. This included Ansar Dine, which is linked to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), as well as more aggressive Tuareg separatist rebel groups.<sup>22</sup> Combined with the total collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in nearby Libya in 2011, arms became more abundant in the region, fuelling the potential for further conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, a year later in 2012, the mishandling of the Tuareg rebellion ultimately led history to repeat itself, prompting army groups to stage an uprising and sparking a civil war. Military officers deposed President Toure ahead of the April presidential elections, while Tuareg rebels seized control of northern Mali and declared independence. In the months to come, the military handed over the reins of the country to a civilian interim government, led by President Dioncounda Traore.<sup>24</sup> Following the government's policies to mitigate the insurgency, the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the Islamist Ansar Dine rebel groups merged and declared northern Mali an Islamic state, pushing toward the capital of Bamako. In response to this regional struggle, Mali's government reached out to France for military support. France and Mali worked together to push the rebels out of northern towns, and conflict subsided as France passed security responsibility to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), a United Nations peacekeeping force based in Bamako.<sup>25</sup> Over the next two years, clashes occurred infrequently between parties and fragile peace was maintained.

## Burundian Unrest

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<sup>19</sup> Imperato, Pascal James, and Andrew Clark. "Mali"

<sup>20</sup> "Destabilization of Mali" Global Conflict Tracker, Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. 22 Oct 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/global-conflict-tracker>.

<sup>21</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Tuareg" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 4 Jan. 2018, [www.britannica.com/topic/Tuareg](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Tuareg).

<sup>22</sup> "Oladipo, Tomi" Mali Attack: "Why the Country Is an Insurgent Hotspot" BBC News, BBC, 20 Nov. 2015, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34882931](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34882931)

<sup>23</sup> Oladipo, Tomi. "Mali Attack: Why the Country Is an Insurgent Hotspot"

<sup>24</sup> "Mali Profile - Timeline". BBC News, BBC, 20 July 2018, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881978](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881978).

<sup>25</sup> "MINUSMA Peacekeeping" United Nations Peacekeeping, United Nations, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma>.

Similar to the Rwandan genocide, the Burundian political tension and instability over the past several decades can be attributed to similar factors. Not only were both conflicts located in the same region of the African continent but the brutal twelve-year Burundian civil war was also the result of latent, long-standing ethnic tensions between the Hutu majority and ethnic minority Tutsis, which controlled the government at the time.<sup>26</sup> When Melchior Ndadaye's Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) won a multi-party election in 1993, ending military rule and leading to the installation of a pro-Hutu government, Tutsi soldiers were infuriated and assassinated President Ndadaye four months following his election.<sup>27</sup> This sparked a devastating ethnic conflict, which included the use of child soldiers and an abundance of human rights violations.<sup>28</sup> Once the civil war subsided in 2005 and rebel groups signed ceasefire deals, Pierre Nkurunziza was elected as President from the Hutu National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) political party through voting by Hutu-dominated houses of parliament, with many deeming the polls fair, free and transparent. Likewise, several major political parties accepted the results as legitimate, and peace appeared to have finally taken hold of the country.<sup>29</sup>

## Current Situation

### *Malian Insurgency*

The current situation in Mali does not resemble the peace that transpired in 2012 and 2013. Despite a peace accord being established to end the conflict in the north of Mali in early 2015 (signed by the government and several militia and rebel factions), it was no sooner than November of that same year that Islamist gunmen conduct a well-coordinated attack on the luxury Radisson Blu hotel in the capital Bamako, leading to twenty-two deaths.<sup>30</sup> The attacks continued, with even peacekeeping forces receiving heavy casualties, and the insurgency has returned to levels similar to those prior to France's intervention. To make matters worse, in 2017 alone, 21 peacekeepers lost their lives, making the Malian conflict among the deadliest peacekeeping operations in the world.<sup>31</sup> 287 civilians have been killed between July and October 2018, the highest number since MINUSMA was initially deployed. Over 5.2 million people require humanitarian assistance today, with respect to both health and security in the region.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Burundi Profile - Timeline" BBC News, BBC, 21 May 2018, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13087604](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13087604)

<sup>27</sup> "Burundi Profile - Timeline" BBC News

<sup>28</sup> "Burundi Profile - Timeline" BBC News

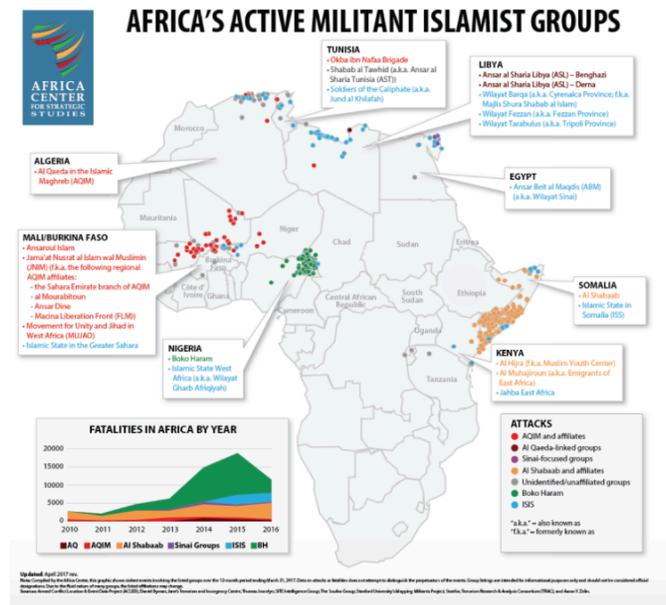
<sup>29</sup> "Burundi Profile - Timeline" BBC News

<sup>30</sup> "Burundi Profile - Timeline" BBC News

<sup>31</sup> "At Least 71 United Nations, Associated Personnel Killed in Malicious Attacks against Peacekeeping Operations during 2017," United Nations: Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, United Nations, [www.un.org/press/en/2018/org1663.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2018/org1663.doc.htm).

<sup>32</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office "Rapid Progress Is Needed in Mali to Implement Peace Agreement" GOV.UK, Government Digital Service, 19 Oct. 2018, [www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rapid-progress-is-needed-in-mali-to-implement-peace-agreement](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rapid-progress-is-needed-in-mali-to-implement-peace-agreement).

Unfortunately, the problem remains as dire as ever, with an October 2018 statement by Ambassador Jonathan Allen, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, urging the Council to push ongoing efforts to implement a multi-faceted, integrated security plan in the country. Ultimately, until all parties lay down their arms, no true ceasefire can be reached.



**Figure 1:** This map lists the continent’s active militant groups, as well as casualties attributed to each as a result of their activity (last updated in April 2017).<sup>33</sup>

## Burundian Unrest

Following Burundi’s constitutional court decision to allow President Pierre Nkurunziza to bid for a third term in office in 2015, angry protesters took to the streets, demanding he back down.<sup>34</sup> Both the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi as well as the Constitution limit the president to two terms. However, the court, in an elaborate statement, had explained that the President’s first term, in which he was not elected by popular vote, was “transitional” and should therefore not count, interpreting Chapter 1 article 7’s third point in the Arusha Agreement.<sup>35</sup> Parallel to this political drama, since 2015, national security forces—often collaborating with members of the ruling party’s youth league, known as the Imbonerakure—have been responsible for numerous killings, disappearances, abductions, acts of torture, rape, and arbitrary arrests of civilians.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> “Map of Africa’s Militant Islamic Groups” Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/map-africa-militant-islamic-groups-april-2017>

<sup>34</sup> Nduwimana, Patrick. “Burundi Court Clears President to Run Again, Angers Protesters” Reuters, Thomson Reuters, 5 May 2015, [www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-politics/burundi-court-clears-president-to-run-again-angers-protesters-idUSKBN0NQ0KT20150505](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-politics/burundi-court-clears-president-to-run-again-angers-protesters-idUSKBN0NQ0KT20150505).

<sup>35</sup> “Peace Accords Matrix” Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/arusha-peace-and-reconciliation-agreement-burundi>

<sup>36</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018, Human Rights Watch, 18 Jan. 2018, [www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/burundi](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/burundi).

In September 2017, a United Nations Commission of Inquiry by the Human Rights Council (HRC) expressed that it had “reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Burundi since April 2015.”<sup>37</sup> Despite this statement by the HRC, which extended the commission’s mandate for another year, Burundi continues to refuse any form of cooperation with the commission<sup>38</sup>. In October 2017, judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized an investigation into crimes committed in Burundi since April 2015.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, Burundi’s federal government adopted a plan to revise the Constitution, allowing President Nkurunziza to stand for two new consecutive seven-year terms. If this modified clause is passed by a vote in Parliament or by national referendum, Nkurunziza could possibly stay in power until 2034, despite his third term ending in 2020.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime, violence continues to threaten the security of civilians in the country, with the bodies of people killed in unknown circumstances regularly found across the country.<sup>41</sup>

Today, Burundi faces a complex situation, where disease, extreme food insecurity, and economic decline in combination with a tense political situation have produced a crisis necessitating immediate resolution. As well, since June 30, 2018, almost 400,000 refugees have been displaced from the country.<sup>42</sup> Catherine Wiesner, Regional Refugee Coordinator, expressed the severity of the crisis perfectly: “Burundi’s refugees are being forgotten. The world needs to urgently help these refugees and the countries hosting them.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Committee Mission**

In the past few decades, the African continent, despite its economic development, has been rendered unstable due to governmental and non-governmental warring factions. In tandem with ethnic divisions and religious differences, it is the civilians of African nations that are caught between the cross-hairs. It is therefore the responsibility of this Council to ensure that both domestic and international security issues are alleviated throughout the African continent. In collaboration with fellow member states, an action plan must be established that takes into account socio-economic, political, and military decisions. The issues in both Mali and Burundi require immediate action and will act as templates to address future internal conflicts across the continent. Thus, the goal of the Security Council will be to establish pragmatic solutions that are multilateral in nature and can be attained in spite of geographic and military limitations in the

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<sup>37</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018.

<sup>38</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018.

<sup>39</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018.

<sup>40</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018.

<sup>41</sup> “Rights Trends in Burundi” World Report 2018.

<sup>42</sup> “Burundi Situation” UNHCR, United Nations, 22 Oct 2018, [www.unhcr.org/burundi-situation.html](http://www.unhcr.org/burundi-situation.html).

<sup>43</sup> “Burundi Situation” UNHCR

affected regions. As a committee, it is imperative to preserve life and security in the region in order to ultimately ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

**Questions to consider include:**

1. How does the security of neighbouring nations affect a country's defense policies? How can similar policies be implemented in African nations affected by terrorist groups or political turmoil?
2. To what extent is national sovereignty relevant in the scope of this issue? Should borders be set aside to tackle the problem at hand, or should a targeted mission to combat the problem be established?
3. What measures have nations taken to aid these situations in Africa, if at all?
4. To what extent is prevention of political tension in the region feasible?
5. How do differing cultural and religious values affect the severity and effects of these conflicts?
6. In very dangerous parts of the globe, how can the international community ensure security for peacekeeping forces? What programs and policies must be set in place to ensure protection for those who protect?

# Topic #2: Exiled Uyghur Muslims in China

*“Freedom is a timeless value. The United Nations Charter calls for encouraging respect for fundamental freedoms. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights mentions freedom more than twenty times. All countries have committed to protecting individual freedoms on paper — but in practice, too many break their pledge” - Ban Ki Moon.*

## Introduction

The history of Xinjiang, the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s largest province, has been quite unique; it also provides an introduction to China’s minority landscape and the multifaceted challenges it faces in a globalized era. China’s minority policy in the province of Xinjiang has been unsettling over the past decade. China’s infamous preferential policy for the 55 ethnic minorities have been recently brought into a spotlight.<sup>44</sup> While China’s constitution allows for the freedom to practice religion, the government’s preferential policies indicates implicitly that the Han culture is more “superior” than that of the Uyghur Muslims. Although the Constitution is directed towards affirmative action for the minorities, Beijing has not rendered the Uyghurs the freedom promised; as such, this has resulted in the ethnic minorities being forced into compliance. In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous province, the threat of the rise of terrorism is a demonstrative example of the minority policy being used to exercise control over the people by the Chinese government. The dynamics of the region changed dramatically when the self-proclaimed Islamic State, or Daesh, put out a call for support that extended beyond the Middle East and into Asia. The Chinese government regarded the 10 million Uyghurs as a potential target group for Daesh’s call for support. As a result, the government began taking drastic measures, such as DNA sampling of the Uyghurs, in an attempt to collect a nationwide database and monitor activities in that region.<sup>45</sup>

The tensions between the Han-majority and Uyghurs date back at least 250 years. Xinjiang's history remains contentious; however, the colonization of Xinjiang by the Qing dynasty in the 1750s might have been the trigger.<sup>46</sup> There had been significant resistance against the Qing dynasty, and the Uyghurs have consistently attempted to establish sovereign states in the region,

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<sup>44</sup> Hongyi, Lai. “China’s™s Ethnic Policies and Challenges” *East Asian Policy*, [www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/Vol1No3\\_LaiHongyi.pdf](http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/Vol1No3_LaiHongyi.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Today, Asia. “China's Minority Policy at the Crossroads” *The Huffington Post*, [TheHuffingtonPost.com](http://TheHuffingtonPost.com), 27 July 2017, [www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/chinas-minority-policy-at-the-crossroads\\_us\\_59788dfde4b0c6616f7ce67d](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/chinas-minority-policy-at-the-crossroads_us_59788dfde4b0c6616f7ce67d).

<sup>46</sup> Nations Borders Identities Conflict. “*Nations Borders Identities Conflict - Causes*,” [nbiconflict.web.unc.edu/conflicts/chinese-uyghur-dispute/causes/](http://nbiconflict.web.unc.edu/conflicts/chinese-uyghur-dispute/causes/).

although they were short-termed<sup>47</sup>. The result of ethnic clashes in Xinjiang is a culmination of long-standing sentiments of oppression felt by the Uyghurs.

The tension in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region escalated after the 1990s, primarily rooted in China's geopolitical and economic interests due to how resource-rich the province is<sup>48</sup>. Following the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, Xinjiang was claimed as Chinese territory and efforts to integrate the province into the rest of the PRC were greatly accelerated<sup>49</sup>. The Uyghurs have since pushed for an independent state and resisted to assimilate with the rest of the Chinese society.

Inter-ethnic clashes between the Han and Uyghur in the province claimed 197 deaths in June 2009, and intermittent violence is still prevalent today.<sup>50</sup> The issue in the Xinjiang province has had extensive ramifications for China's unity; although the ethnic minority population in China is relatively small, they occupy 64% of China, most of which are closer to the borders. The past decades have seen an increase in separatist riots from both the Xinjiang and Tibetan regions, and the Chinese government has responded to them by practicing regional autonomy in regions where more than 20% of the population are ethnic minorities.<sup>51</sup>

The crisis in Xinjiang is widely unexplored by the rest of the world due to the lack of accurate information disseminated that strays away from the official policy and position of the government. Moreover, information is largely censored from outside China and news networks are reluctant in criticizing the government. As such, without access to accurate information, the Chinese public are forced to trust sources that are either the government's position or unreliable sources. The contrast between sources creates a political environment that inherently contributes to polarizing factions within the public.

Although the global community have been engaged since 1990, recent allegations of detention camps in the province of Xinjiang have sparked an international outrage over credible reports made by human rights groups that the Uyghurs have been systematically targeted and tortured.

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<sup>47</sup> Roberts, Sean. "Ethnic Clashes in China: Uighurs vs. Han Chinese" *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 8 July 2009, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2009/07/07/DI2009070701491.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2009/07/07/DI2009070701491.html).

<sup>48</sup> Amnesty International, People's Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (London, 21 April 1999), p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> Amnesty International, People's Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (London, 21 April 1999), p. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Waisbich, Laura. "Transnationalization as Mediation: Uyghurs Rights-Based Mobilization Outside China" *Epress UTSC*, [epress.utsc.utoronto.ca/cord/wp-content/uploads/sites/82/2014/05/Chapter-12-Waisbich.pdf](http://epress.utsc.utoronto.ca/cord/wp-content/uploads/sites/82/2014/05/Chapter-12-Waisbich.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Hongyi, Lai. "China's Ethnic Policies and Challenges" *East Asian Policy*, [www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/Vol1No3\\_LaiHongyi.pdf](http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/Vol1No3_LaiHongyi.pdf).

## *History and Background*

Xinjiang is a region located in western China, with a mainly desert-like landscape comprising of almost one-sixth of the Chinese territory<sup>52</sup>. A resource-rich territory, it harbours much of the oil, minerals, and natural gas resources in China, bordering eight countries: Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Primarily inhabited by Turkic-Muslims, it is culturally linked to central Asia despite being politically aligned with China. Xinjiang population is comprised of approximately 21 million people, with 46% being Uyghur and 40%, Chinese-Han.<sup>53</sup> This has thus changed since 1949, when the Uyghurs made up 75% of the population and the Han-Chinese represented just 6.7%. Such demographic changes can be attributed to the heavy migration by the Han-Chinese in response to the official minority policy by Beijing. Similar demographic shifts can be seen in other Chinese autonomous regions such as Tibet.

The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group inhabiting the region formerly known as East Turkistan and known today as the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, with the majority of the Uyghur being Sunni Muslims. The message of a homogeneous China is heavily emphasized by the Communist Party, and that, along with the dominance of the Tibetan issue, contributes largely towards the indivisibility of the egregious restrictions of religious freedom placed over the Uyghurs.<sup>54</sup>

The Uyghur claim for independence and autonomy dates back centuries; the historical dispute for autonomy created the present diaspora that seeks political justice and changes, although, doing so remotely and outside of China. The Uyghur quest is primarily focused on gaining visibility and legitimacy for their cause.



**Figure 2:** This map illustrates the region of Xinjiang.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Castets, R. 2003. Le Mal-EÛ,tre Des Ouïgours Du Xinjiang. *Perspectives Chinoises*, 08/09(78): 34- 48.

<sup>53</sup> China. 2008. *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook*, 2008 Volume, China Statistics Press.

<sup>54</sup> Amnesty International. *China* | *Amnesty International*. Amnesty International,2016. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/china>

<sup>55</sup> Jiang, Steven. “Thousands of Uyghur Muslims Detained in Chinese 'Political Education' Camps” CNN, Cable News Network, 3 Feb. 2018, [www.cnn.com/2018/02/02/asia/china-xinjiang-detention-camps-intl/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/02/02/asia/china-xinjiang-detention-camps-intl/index.html)

Activist groups such as the Human Rights Watch maintain that Beijing has restricted Uyghur rights, ranging from freedom to practice religion to commercial and other cultural activities.<sup>56</sup> The government has detained several Uyghur leaders or forced them into exile, with false charges of acts of terrorism. Overstating the threat of terrorism by the Uyghurs is a tactic employed by the Chinese government in order to justify enacting policies that impose total control of the region. The curtailment of their rights and freedoms led the Uyghur to be disgruntled with the government and the dominant majority: the Han Chinese.

The international community has responded to the allegations of systematic segregation and torture by the Chinese government on the Uyghurs with deafening silence until it gained mainstream media attention. The United States State Department issued a statement expressing their concern over the apparent crackdown of Uyghurs in the region; the State Department indicated that sanctions against China as a result are in the discussion stage.<sup>57</sup> As part of their crackdown, the Chinese government has labelled multiple protest groups of the Uyghurs as terrorist organizations and have called upon the international community to condemn them. The United States and the United Nations have historically supported China's claim that the organization known as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) be recognized as an international terrorist organization.<sup>58</sup> It is important to note, however, that China makes little distinction between separatist movements, civil rights groups and terrorists.

## Current Situation

The Chinese government has been accused of detaining hundreds of thousands of ethnic Uyghur muslims in recent reports by the United Nations and various other activist groups such as the Human Rights Watch. The detention camps allegedly subject its detainees to abuse (psychological and physical) in a gross attempt to “re-educate” them of their religion.<sup>59</sup> The camps first surfaced in mainstream media when the camps were detected via satellite images and were cross-referenced with mass government bids to contractors with new building projects across Xinjiang<sup>60</sup>. China immediately denied the existence of any such detention camps; however, in recent months, the Chinese government “legalized” and acknowledged the existence of such camps and claimed that they are in part of ‘re-educational’ programs.

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<sup>56</sup> “China: Massive Crackdown in Muslim Region” *Human Rights Watch*, 10 Sept. 2018, [www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/09/china-massive-crackdown-muslim-region](http://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/09/china-massive-crackdown-muslim-region).

<sup>57</sup> “Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom Statement on China” *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 26 July 2018, [www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/religiousfreedom/284557.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/religiousfreedom/284557.htm).

<sup>58</sup> “Mapping China's Xinjiang Internment Camps for Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims” Mapping China's Xinjiang Internment Camps for Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims | Uyghur Human Rights Project, [uhrp.org/news/mapping-china%E2%80%99s-xinjiang-internment-camps-uyghur-and-kazakh-muslims](http://uhrp.org/news/mapping-china%E2%80%99s-xinjiang-internment-camps-uyghur-and-kazakh-muslims).

<sup>59</sup> “China Uighurs: One Million Held in Political Camps, UN Told” *BBC News*, BBC, 10 Aug. 2018, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-45147972](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-45147972).

<sup>60</sup> VanderKlippe, Nathan. “UBC Student Uses Satellite Images to Track Suspected Chinese Re-Education Centres Where Uyghurs Imprisoned.” *The Globe and Mail*, 9 July 2018, [www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-ubc-student-uses-satellite-images-to-track-suspected-chinese-re/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-ubc-student-uses-satellite-images-to-track-suspected-chinese-re/)

Further reports accused the Chinese government of allegedly implementing mass surveillance of the Uyghurs in the province, prompting outrage across the world. Following the accusations, a UN Human Rights Committee held a session where they heard the allegations of credible reports that China is holding approximately a million Uyghurs in ‘re-education’ camps, earlier this year.<sup>61</sup> China had further implemented a ban on beards and veils, specifically in the Xinjiang province, deliberately targeting the Muslim population residing in the region. Several human rights groups such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have since submitted reports to the United Nations backing the claims of mass imprisonment, where inmates are ‘secularized’ and forced to pledge their loyalty to the PRC.<sup>62,63</sup>



**Figure 3:** This is a satellite image of the alleged detention camps in the province of Xinjiang.<sup>64</sup>

### Committee Mission & Focus Questions

There are clear contradictions between implementing a communist, secular state and the right to practice one’s religion freely. Although the Chinese government has refuted claims that it has been systematically targeting the Uyghur peoples, the emergence of credible evidence of detention camps has gained international attention and uproar. Arbitrary detention, torture and egregious restrictions on religious freedoms are the accusations faced by the government. The goal of the Committee is to appropriately investigate the claims brought up in the UN Human

<sup>61</sup> “China Uyghurs: One Million Held in Political Camps, UN Told” *BBC News*, BBC, 10 Aug. 2018, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-45147972](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-45147972).

<sup>62</sup> “CHINA 2017/2018” *Amnesty International*, [www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/china/report-china/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/china/report-china/).

<sup>63</sup> “Uighurs” *Human Rights Watch*, [www.hrw.org/tag/uighurs](http://www.hrw.org/tag/uighurs).

<sup>64</sup> Mapping China's Xinjiang Internment Camps for Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims. Mapping China's Xinjiang Internment Camps for Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims | Uyghur Human Rights Project, [uhrp.org/news/mapping-china%E2%80%99s-xinjiang-internment-camps-uyghur-and-kazakh-muslims](http://uhrp.org/news/mapping-china%E2%80%99s-xinjiang-internment-camps-uyghur-and-kazakh-muslims).

Rights Council and decide upon an appropriate approach to this conflict. The overarching discussion should account for the appropriate method of intervention on cases of human rights abuse associated with freedom of religious expression and the practice of a belief system globally. In this Security Council session, it is imperative that states appropriately investigate and take actionable steps to ensure the rights of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang province are upheld by the PRC.

### **Questions to consider include:**

1. How does the abuse of human rights in one nation affect other nations' economic and political policies towards that nation?
2. To what extent is a country permitted to extend its political influence on its citizens? How should the distinction between upholding national security and infringement of individual rights within a state be made?
3. Should the international community, through the UN Security Council, intervene in cases of human rights abuse? Should a nation's sovereignty be accounted for when deciding the appropriate measures to take against that nation?
4. Should the resistive movements of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang be classified as terrorism, separatist, or freedom-fighting?
5. How can the incidents of recent years be seen in terms of patterns of cooperation and opposition to Chinese rule in the region?

### **Relevant articles:**

1. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1909416,00.html>
2. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/7/the-ethnic-roots-of-chinas-uyghur-crisis.html>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/25/at-least-120000-muslim-uyghurs-held-in-chinese-re-education-camps-report>
4. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-trump-administration-weighs-sanctions-against-chinese-officials-over/>
5. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/world/asia/china-uyghur-muslim-detention-camp.html>
6. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/02/asia/china-xinjiang-detention-camps-intl/index.html>
7. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/08/chinese-official-floats-plan-to-stabilize-fertility-among-some-uyghurs/>
8. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/181010144442645.htm>



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