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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Joint written statement* submitted by Japan Society for History Textbook, International Career Support Association, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 January 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Secure Human Rights of Uighur Students Studying in Japan

Cases of human rights violations in China against ethnic minority groups have often been reported in the United Nations and elsewhere, raising much criticism among the international community. However, the Government of China denies any human rights violations and turns criticism back at the global community. In the name of world peace, it is vitally important for the United Nations Human Rights Council to take swift and decisive actions as one team against the Chinese Government for its grave human rights violations.

1. The circumstance and problems of Uighur students in Japan

There are supposedly about 800 Uighur students in Japan. The most serious problem they currently face is renewal of their passports. Before it expires, they must renew it. At present, however, they cannot go to the Chinese Embassy to renew their passports. Why not? Because it is more than likely their passport will be confiscated or will be denied renewal. In other cases, they will be forced to become a spy in exchange for passport renewal. This infringes on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 12-2 (“Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.”) and 12-4 (“No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.”), which guarantee freedom of movement.

Going home to China involves tremendous danger. A person may be labelled “dangerous” merely because he or she studied abroad or may be sent to an internment camp. There is even the great possibility of being unable to leave the country again. This also violates Articles 12-2 and 12-4.

In addition, there are many Uighur students studying in Japan who can no longer contact their family. Some are unable to contact their family because their family’s whereabouts is unknown. Others fear that their conversations will be recorded and thus avoid contacting their family. This is unlawful interference in personal communication and violates ICCPR Article 17 which stands for the protection of personal privacy of family, home and correspondence.

2. Violation of human rights of ethnically minority groups by the Chinese Government

There are numerous statements of human rights violations on the part of China. It is said that there are over one million Uighurs in internment camps, tortured, forced to undergo sterilization, and evisceration for their human organs. These are infringement of ICCPR Article 9, guaranteeing the right to liberty and security of person and Article 10-1, which states that “All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”

Reports of religious suppression are also coming out of China, including prohibiting Muslims from worshipping and forcing them to eat pork. Moreover, China is prohibiting the use of the Uighur language, forcing the learning of the Chinese language, and brainwashing to erase Uighur culture. These violate ICCPR Article 18, which guarantees the right of people to celebrate their own culture and to use their own language.

3. Countermeasures taken by the United Nations and the Government of Japan

Against the human rights violations committed by China against Uighurs, the United Nations Human Rights Council, Europe and the Americas are raising their voices against China. Here are some examples:

On June 26, 2020, fifty United Nations Special Rapporteurs signed a joint appeal, calling for measures to protect fundamental human rights in China.

In September of the same year, over three hundred NGOs sent an open letter, addressed to United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and United Nations member states, calling for the establishment of an international mechanism to investigate human rights violations in China, foremost in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China.

In addition, in Europe and the Americas, the movement to increase pressure against China has expanded. In July 2020, the United States of America froze the assets of the top leadership of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China. Legislation requires the President to sanction any official found responsible for oppressing Uighurs and Muslims and to revoke their visa. British Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Dominic Raab fiercely condemned Chinese violations of Uighur human rights and suggested possibly boycotting the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing. French President Emmanuel Macron demanded that an international survey commission be sent to Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China during the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020. On January 19, 2021, outgoing the United States of America Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, declared China's Uighurs oppression "genocide". Antony Blinken, Secretary of State to-be, told a Senate confirmation hearing on Tuesday (January 19) that he agreed with his predecessor's declaration.

On the other hand, the Chief Cabinet Secretary KATO Katsunobu, speaking for the Japanese Government, meekly stated: "We are worried about and carefully watching the human rights situation there," The Japanese Diet lacks enthusiasm for standing up to China's oppression of ethnic minority groups, and is extremely passive in dealing with China's policy of oppression of its minorities.

4. Recommendations to the United Nations Human Rights Council

The violation of the Uighurs' human rights by China is totally impermissible.

We request that the United Nations Human Rights Council recommend the Japanese Government to take the following measures:

- 1) For Uighurs studying in Japan, on the expiration of their passports, do not repatriate them to China, but extend their stay,
- 2) Economic support for those Uighur students who cannot afford to pay their tuition because they no longer have a part-time job owing to the coronavirus pandemic.

We also request the United Nations Human Rights Council to take the following measures:

- 1) Hold a special United Nations meeting to examine and assess various forms of human rights violation committed by the Government of China,
- 2) Within the framework of Special Procedures, SP, of the United Nations Human Rights Council, establish a new working group (WG, consisting of five persons) on the violation of the Uighurs' human rights, have the WG continuously and minutely monitor the situation and regularly submit a report on the circumstances.
- 3) Appoint a special United Nations Ambassador to China,
- 4) Have United Nations High Commissioners for Human Rights oversee the Chinese Government's wide-range of human rights violations and report them,

International Research Institute of Controversial Histories (iRICH), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.