

After the disturbances in Urumqi

Persecution of Uyghurs in China continues



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After the disturbances in Urumqi: Persecution of Uyghurs in China continues

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1. Summary

Eight months after the disturbances in Urumqi of July 2009 the real extent of the sometimes violent conflicts between Uyghurs, Han Chinese and the government security forces is still not clear. China's authorities refuse all independent investigations into what happened, the background and the consequences of the most serious conflict for decades in Xinjiang (East Turkestan). In this report the events will be reconstructed on the basis of eye-witness reports and the background to the conflicts.

It is clear that the protests of the Uyghurs were at the outset peaceful and that they were stirred up by the government censure and the arbitrary action of the security forces. It is still not clear how many people were the victims of the bloody conflicts. Crimes and offences committed in the disturbances must be prosecuted quite apart from the ethnic origin of the criminals. Up to now however the legal treatment of the events has been totally inadequate. The defendants have been refused a free choice of legal representation and the lawyers have been intimidated and threatened. In the court cases all principles of fair trials have been ignored.

Since October 2009 more than 20 Uyghurs and a few Han Chinese have been condemned to death for their involvement in the disturbances. At least nine of the accused have since been executed. Dozens have been sentenced to long prison sentences. Hundreds are still waiting for their sentences. East Turkestan is threatened by a new wave of death sentences, which could spark off new violence if minimal legal standards are not respected.

But the report also shows how many different aspects the protest had. Apart from the violent demonstrators, about whom the Chinese government TV reported in detail, there were peacefully demonstrating Uyghur women protesting for the release of their husbands and sons in prison. And there were Han Chinese demonstrating out of fear for their own safety and accusing the ruling Communist Party of incompetence. Those arrested report on torture, death in prison and on violent attacks by the security forces.

The report investigates the reactions to the disturbances and their suppression of the international community, which were by comparison very cautious. The report presents a comprehensive analysis of the broad protests in the Moslem world and deals in detail with the contradictory attitude of Turkey, which after initial sharp protest bowed before the heavy Chinese pressure and did its best to normalise its relations with Beijing.

After the disturbances China considerably increased its military presence in Urumqi. Some 130,000 armed men patrolled the city. The expenditure on public security was increased by almost 90 percent. Instead of analysing the causes and background of the violence China is now only concerned about the reinforcement of security. So the "Hit hard" - campaign was tightened up, in the course of which several thousand Uyghurs were arrested. New laws on the transmission of information and ethnic unity were passed in the autumn and winter of 2009. They suppress and criminalise all public discussion on the autonomy which officially exists in Xinjiang and facilitate a wide net of government censorship. The authorities refuse talks with leading representatives of those concerned with solving the crisis by peaceful means.

It is true that only two days after the outbreak of the disturbances foreign journalists were invited to Urumqi, but this gesture is only a calculation on the part of power-politics and not an expression of a new openness of the Chinese authorities towards the media. On the contrary, there are countless restrictions on the free movements of Chinese and foreign journalists. Beijing's rulers were only interested in journalists as long as they reported on violent attacks by Uyghurs. Beijing had no interest in a comprehensive picture of the background and causes of the bottle-up frustration and anger of the Moslem people.

China's censors cut off hermetically from the outside world the area affected by the disturbances for more than seven months by systematically blocking most of the internet connections, SMS and social networks. So East Turkestan is turning into an "internet prison", which business people and travellers are leaving in a mass exodus in order to get in contact with the outside world again from the neighbouring provinces. The Chinese government does indeed constantly proclaim its concern for "harmony and ethnic unity", but the authorities take particularly harsh action against web-sites which are concerned with conciliation between the warring ethnic groups. While Beijing speaks of harmony, it is hate and rejection which rule the streets. Never before have the relations between the immigrating Han Chinese and the resident Uyghurs been as bad as nowadays. But China's rulers are still not prepared to openly admit the failure of their nationality policies and categorically reject a reform.

In order to divert attention from their own incompetence they look for a simple scapegoat abroad which they can always use to cover up the dramatic situation in East Turkestan. In the *World Uyghur Congress (WUC)* and its President, Rebiya Kadeer, they have found the scapegoat they were looking for. They accuse the organisation of terrorist activity and exaggerate in public discussion its real influence and possibilities, which are in fact with its limited resources merely used to ensure more rights for Uyghurs. The organisation and its representatives are persecuted and criminalised with hitherto unknown energy and harshness. Beijing takes every opportunity to cause problems for the representatives of the *WUC*. It protests constantly against the issue of visas for the Uyghur human rights activists and tries to prevent the showing of a documentary film on Rebiya Kadeer in various countries. A campaign for the defamation of the *WUC* has been successful and has reduced the freedom of movement of individual *WUC* representatives. It has also become known that Chinese consulates and embassies in Germany, Sweden and Pakistan have been spying on the activities of exile Uyghurs.

To the present day official China is not prepared to inform itself on the background to the anger of the Uyghurs. The massive influx of Han Chinese in ever increasing numbers, the lack of equal treatment for Uyghurs and Han Chinese in providing jobs, the refusal of freedom of worship and the failed language policies of China are just some of the most important reasons for the growing impatience and anger of the Uyghurs.

The report also presents the reasons for China wanting to hold its iron hand over Xinjiang. The province in question delivers raw materials safely and cheaply for Chinese industries, without which the economic boom in the People's Republic would be inconceivable.

2. Recommendations of the Society for Threatened Peoples

- All prisoners arrested in connection with the disturbances in Urumqi who have not been sentenced must be allowed free access to the lawyers of their choice. Court cases must meet international standards of fair justice and be open. Representatives of the EU embassies should attend as observers at court.
- All death sentences pronounced after the disturbances should be commuted into prison sentences.
- An independent international investigation commission should analyse and document causes, the course of events and the background to the protests in Urumqi.
- The regional autonomy law of 1984 must at last be completely implemented. Xinjiang in particular must be given a credible and genuine autonomy.
- The criminalisation of human rights defenders must be ended. The German government should speak out in a dialogue about justice with China for the removal of the laws on the dissemination of information and ethnic unity, since they prosecute all public discussion on autonomy and the position in Xinjiang. The defamation campaign against the *World Uyghur Congress* must be ended.
- The immigration of Han Chinese to Xinjiang and the assimilation policies towards Uyghurs must be stopped.
- Free practice of worship for Moslems in north and north-west China must be allowed.
- The international community should speak out more energetically for a genuine protection of Uyghur refugees.
- The German government should speak out to ensure that German citizens are not restricted in their freedom of movement through the People's Republic of China.
- Together with the European Union Germany should speak out for a new direction in China's nationality policies towards the Chinese government. Germany and Europe should pay especial attention to the situation of the Uyghurs.

3. Disturbances in July 2009 in Urumqi

Xinjiang or East Turkestan, as the Uyghurs call their homeland, experienced in July 2009 the biggest disturbances since the massacre in Gulya in February 1997. Several hundred people died after a non-violent demonstration in a blood-bath of Chinese security forces. In the following seven years more than 500 Uyghurs were sentenced to death and executed for their alleged participation in the protests.

3.1 Chinese authorities play down the tensions

Like in Gulya twelve years ago the Uyghurs in Urumqi also protested peacefully at first. Later the protest became violent and it turned not only as in former years against the symbols and representatives of the state, but also against the Han Chinese, who, encouraged by the government, had come to East Turkestan as settlers. The new escalation of the conflict is particularly disturbing since it bodes no good for the co-existence of the different ethnic groups in East Turkestan. But the Deputy Minister for Ethnic Matters, Wu Shimin, hastily asserted that the disturbances had nothing to do with the Chinese nationality policies, the co-existence of the ethnic groups or with religion (*Xinhua*, 21.7.2009). There are indeed different languages, customs and religions which produce some conflicts, but these are quickly well solved. No preachers from the mosques have been involved in the conflicts. Instead of thinking about one's own nationality, whose problems came out into the open at the latest in Tibet in the spring of 2008, the minister holds the Uyghurs responsible for the disturbances.

"The affair was planned and organised by the three sources of extremism, separatism and terrorism at home and abroad", explained Wu Shimin. The Chinese President, Hu Jintao also made scapegoats of the Uyghurs when on his first visit of inspection to Xinjiang following the suppression of the disturbances on 25th August declaring: "The disturbances are a serious crime which have been engineered by separatist forces at home and abroad" (*CNN*, 25.8.2009). Significantly the President visited on his journey apart from the capital of Urumqi above all the oil fields in Karamay and the headquarters of the "Production and Construction Corps of Xinjiang" in Shihezi. This corps, made up of former soldiers and prisoners, serves the Chinese security forces not only as a paramilitary unit but has served since its foundation 50 years ago the express purpose of making possible the immigration of Han Chinese and opening up and exploiting the raw materials in East Turkestan. The President gave express thanks to the militia, police and army for putting down the disturbances. He promised the local Uyghur population more "development", which he sees as the key to more "prosperity and harmony".

The Chinese leaders have tried with a propaganda campaign to cover up the miserable failure of their nationality policies in the far west of the Republic. A few days after the disturbances in Urumqi a choir of smiling Uyghurs and Han Chinese in yellow polo-shirts appeared in a government TV spot singing "We are all part of the same family". Yellow is in China the colour of patriotism. In true life situations however many Chinese citizens have problems with the message of harmony. Han Chinese complain about the

“barbarian habits” of the Uyghur migrant workers and Uyghurs complain about the increasing occupation of their homeland on the part of the immigrating Han Chinese.

3.2 Freedom of movement of the Uyghurs is restricted

Not only in East Turkestan, but also in the densely populated urban centres in the east of China there is no genuine harmony when Uyghurs meet Han Chinese. Already in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Beijing in the summer of 2008 the freedom of movement of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic was heavily restricted on the grounds that the security situation was difficult. Guest-houses and hotels were directed not to let rooms to members of the minority. There were many attacks in southern China on Uyghur restaurant owners. Uyghur travellers reported about reservations and rejection by the Han Chinese, quite regardless of the “ethnic harmony” proclaimed by the government propaganda.

When the Uyghur photographer and student of journalism Kuerbanjiang Saimati visited the city of Shenyang at the beginning of October 2009 he was turned away by all hotels when he said that he came from Xinjiang. On the telephone the 27-year old man, who unlike many Uyghurs spoke good Chinese, was assured that there were enough hotel beds available. But when he complained about the discriminating treatment he was informed that the “Public Security Office” had given directions that Uyghurs were not to be accepted as guests (*China Digital Times*, 3.10.2009).

In spite of the continuing tensions between Han Chinese and Uyghurs the Chinese authorities have since the year 2002 been calling for the sending of Uyghur migrant workers to the industrial centres in the east of China more than 3,000 km away. Particularly controversial is the deliberate recruitment of thousands of young women between the ages of 16 and 25 years, which is understood by the Uyghurs as an attempt to change radically the population structure in East Turkestan to the disadvantage of the Uyghurs. And in the other direction in the year 2006 more than 500,000 cotton pickers came through recruiting by the authorities from the province of Gansu to Xinjiang to harvest the cotton-fields there (*Xinhua*, 8.6.2007).

3.3 Uyghur migrant workers feel discriminated in China

About 100,000 Uyghurs took on jobs as migrant workers in the cities of Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing and in the provinces of Zhejiang and Shandong (*Xinhua*, 23.3.2007). From the district of Yarkant (Chinese: Shufu) in the county of Kashgar every year about 75,000 Uyghurs found jobs as migrant workers (*Xinhua*, 22.7.2009) From the neighbouring district of Payzawat (Chinese: Jiashi) 19,000 Uyghurs in 2006 tried their luck away from home (*Xinhua*, 7.8.2009). In August 2009, 4,300 migrant workers from Payzawat were working in 21 firms in seven provinces in the east of China (*People’s Daily*, 7.8.2009). Even in an article of the government paper “Xinjiang Daily” it is admitted that only 70 percent of the migrant workers go voluntarily to work in the east of the People’s Republic (*New York Times*, 16.7.2009). No information is provided on the question of the pressure under which the remaining 30 percent of the Uyghur workers are mobilised. Uyghur mayors report however that they were placed under

massive pressure to register a certain quota of villagers to work away from home (*Radio Free Asia*, 21.6.2007). Families refusing to send migrant workers are, say the villagers, visited with heavy fines (corresponding to the earnings of a villager for six months) (*New York Times*, 16.7.2009).

The Han Chinese Liu Guolin, who operates a textile factory in the province of Hebei, used for the first time the migrant workers programme in the year 2007. When 143 young Uyghur girls came to work for him he was surprised to see that they were accompanied by a police officer who spoke two languages, who kept a close eye on everything they did (*Washington Post*, 15.7.2009). Today it is clear to the factory owner that many of the girls had not come voluntarily to work in his factory, but would have run away if they had not been supervised by the police officer. He also found out later that some of the girls were only 14 years old and that their papers had been manipulated by the authorities in Xinjiang to enable them to take part in the programme and to satisfy the quota of migrant workers laid down by the government.

3.4 Uyghurs killed in toy factory

The fact that life is difficult in the east of China far away from one's own family and in spite of the harmony propagated by government propaganda is often marked by discrimination and contempt became clear in June 2009, when conflict broke out between Han Chinese and Uyghurs in a toy factory in the town of Shaoguan in the province of Guangdong. The conflict, which was at first underestimated by the authorities, sent shock-waves as far as Xinjiang, where Uyghurs at first protested peacefully, but where then violence broke out. The factory in Shaoguan belongs to the company of *Early Lights – Lacewood International* from Hongkong, one of the largest toy manufacturers in the world. In May 2009 the first 40 Uyghur migrant workers arrived and then their number in the workforce swelled to 818, as against some 16,000 Han Chinese.

Relations between the two groups were frosty and marked by distrust and lack of understanding. Lack of competence in the other language, lack of information on the other group and dreadful working conditions (low wages, long working hours and work on the conveyor belt) gave rise to further conflict. The Moslem workers are regularly told not to practise their faith when away from home. The migrant workers are not used to the hours and the working conditions. The Uyghurs, who mainly come from rural areas, are not used to working closely together with so many people and find the rough tone of their superiors hard to cope with.

At the beginning of 2009 the tensions in the factory increased when anonymous reports were published on the internet that made six Uyghur workers guilty of raping two Han Chinese women. The authorities maintain to the present day that these were just rumours lacking all foundation (*Radio Free Asia*, 29.6.2009) and that they had been sown by a former worker who was angry at not being re-employed. The former worker, whose name was Zhu Gangyuan, was arrested by the authorities.

Violence broke out in the factory when late in the evening of 25th June 2009 the 19-year old apprentice Huang Cuilian mistakenly entered a dormitory of the Uyghur

workers. When she was challenged by the Uyghurs the Han Chinese girl ran away crying and told other Han Chinese about the incident. A gang was immediately formed of the Han Chinese, who, armed with iron bars and sticks, burst into the dormitories of the Uyghurs, who defended themselves with knives. Countless windows were broken and the fight then spread onto the street and was continued with paving-stones and fire-extinguishers. Doctors were prevented from treating the injured (China Daily, 12.10.2009). More than one thousand people were involved in the fighting. "I just wanted to beat them. I hate the people from Xinjiang", said one of the Han Chinese (Guardian, 10.7.2009). "Seven or eight of us rushed onto one of them. Some of the people from Xinjiang hid under their beds. We killed them with iron bars and then brought out their dead bodies and threw them on a pile", said one Han. It was only in the early hours of the morning that 400 riot police could end the fighting. At least two Uyghurs died in fighting. 14 were seriously injured and 120 people – mostly Uyghurs – suffered minor injuries, reported the authorities (Reuters, 26.6.2009 / Guardian, 10.7.2009). But Han Chinese involved in the fighting estimated that the real figure was far higher. Probably more than 30 people died, said one Han Chinese, who declared that he had been involved in the murder of seven or eight Uyghurs (Guardian, 10.7.2009).

Just a few days after the riots photos and films were shown on the government media with attacks by Uyghurs on Han Chinese, but the publication of photos and video-films of the riots against Uyghurs in the toy factory in Shaoguan has to date been prevented by the government censors. This was just another case showing how the official China sets double standards in violent incidents with regards to matters of nationality.

While foreign journalists were encouraged to carry out interviews with Han Chinese who had been attacked in Urumqi, the Uyghur workers in the factory in south east China were systematically screened off from the outside world and prevented from giving interviews to the journalists. In the hospitals police officers were posted outside the wards of the injured to prevent all contact with journalists. Uyghurs who had not been injured were brought to a nearby industrial estate, where they had to live for several weeks sealed off from all contact with the outside world. The police had food brought to them from Uyghur restaurants in the town. The Uyghur workers were later moved to another factory where now only Uyghur workers are employed. The harmony and good relations between the different nationalities proclaimed by the government in Shaoguan have been turned into shambles.

Nevertheless the Chinese ring-leaders of the attacks in the factory have not gone unpunished. On 10th October 2009 the Municipal People's Court in Shaoguan sentenced the leader of the attackers, the Han Chinese Xiao Jianhua, to death. His henchman, Xu Qiqi was given a life-sentence and nine other accused received prison sentences between five and eight years (China Daily, 12.10.2009).

However the news of the pogrom-like attacks on the Uyghurs in Shaoguan and the hesitating intervention of the security forces spread like wildfire by mobiles, telephones and eMails throughout East Turkestan. In many parts of the region there were calls for justice. In the light of the government censorship rumours spread in East Turkestan signalling that there were far more riots and victims than officially recognized by the authorities. Government censorship was then one of the factors increasing the tension

in Urumqi between Uyghurs and Han Chinese at the beginning of July 2009.

3.5 Increasing tensions between the ethnic groups

Urumqi lies more than one thousand kilometres away and rumours and sketchy reports on the murder of Uyghurs and the arrest of Moslem migrant workers in the east of China stirred up rage and desperation. Uyghurs were reminded of previous massacres, everyday discrimination, arbitrary arrests, persecution and other infringements of human rights. The massive intimidation and persecution before and during the Olympic Games in Beijing in the summer of 2008 heightened the ethnic tensions in the region. The enormous influx of Han Chinese and their preferment by the authorities had caused the relations between the indigenous Uyghurs and the Chinese who had move in to deteriorate further and were now at the lowest ebb ever. In the eyes of many Uyghurs the line of distinction between the representatives of the Chinese government and individual Chinese settlers vanished, with the result that Han Chinese were held in the mass responsible by the indigenous people for the discrimination and persecution. A dangerous development in a country made up of different nationalities, as was soon to be seen.

China's government had for years encouraged this deplorable state of affairs with deliberate support for the settlers. The authorities also tried in the disturbances which broke out in July 2009 to present themselves as the "defenders of the Han Chinese who are under attack". The government did its best to represent to the outside world the Uyghur demonstrators as violent and unpredictable and to stand out domestically to the Han Chinese as the irreplaceable guarantee for stability and security. Massive protests of the Han Chinese in Urumqi showed however in the summer of 2009 that the Chinese settlers were also unsatisfied with the policies of the Communist Party in Xinjiang and were no longer prepared to support uncritically all acts of the government in north-west China.

3.6 No independent investigation of the disturbances in Xinjiang

What happened on 5th July 2009 and in the following days in Urumqi is still a matter of controversy today. But there is no controversy about the fact that there were public protests by Uyghurs and later also by Han Chinese and that some of these demonstrations were violent. What triggered off this violence at what point and who bears responsibility for the deaths, injuries or arrests of how many people remains unclear.

The main reason is the refusal of the Chinese authorities to permit an independent and credible investigation into the disturbances and their causes. The High Commissioner of the United Nations for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, called in vain for a comprehensive and transparent analysis of the clashes (Reuters, 7.7.2009). Various human rights organisations and the President of the World Uyghur Congress, Rebiya Kadeer, who lives in exile in the USA, called for an independent investigation by the United Nations (*Associated Press*, 7.8.2009 / *Press releases by Human Rights Watch, Society for Threatened Peoples, Amnesty International*, 6. / 7.7.2009).

Many eye-witnesses of the disturbances contradict each other or are very selective. Thus the only perception of violence is that against members of one's own ethnic group. The reports provide no comprehensive complete picture and cannot take the place of an independent investigation. While Han Chinese report to the government Chinese media mainly on violent attacks of Uyghurs in the later stages of demonstrations, the Uyghurs speak of arbitrary action by the police, arrests and the incommensurate use of force by the security forces.

3.7 Internet mobilises demonstrators

The evaluation of many eyewitness reports indicates that the most likely explanation is that the following took place in Urumqi. On the morning of 5th July 2009 text messages were published through *Tencent QQ*, the most widely used portal, in which Uyghurs were called out to gather at 5 p.m. on the central square in the provincial capital and to demonstrate for an investigation into the attacks and the violent deaths in Shaoguan.

Many readers of these text messages did not follow this call since they feared reprisals by the security forces or surmised that that the demonstrations were a pretext on the part of the authorities to arrest more Uyghurs. Several hundred young Uyghurs, above all students, nevertheless gathered in the late afternoon near the main square, demanding the release of the Uyghurs arrested in Shaoguan, an independent investigation into the attacks carried out in the factory and an end to the racist discrimination of the ethnic group. Some 300 Uyghurs held a sit-down strike, which took place peacefully. Many of the demonstrators carried Chinese flags to prevent the charge of being declared "separatists". Within an hour the crowd had grown to the size of 2,000 demonstrators. Many Uyghurs were prevented by the riot police, normal police and other special units of the security forces which had arrived in large numbers at the demonstration to prevent people from taking part in the demonstration.

After several calls to break up the meeting the riot police used teargas, batons (including electroshock devices) and live ammunition to bring a brutal end to the demonstration (*Radio Free Asia*, 7.7.2009). Eye-witnesses state that the demonstrators were unarmed. The 17-year old Uighur high school student Sakine Zulang, living in Toronto, Canada, who was just visiting the city, reported in October 2009 that Chinese security forces used tanks against the demonstrators and that after the police intervention the streets around the meeting-place was covered with corpses (*CBC, Citizen Bytes*, 20.10.2009). Uyghurs who happened to be in the vicinity were arrested arbitrarily and taken away in police vehicles, reported the eye-witness. Official sources state that at least 70 Uyghurs were arrested at this point in the demonstration (*China Radio International*, 7.7.2009).

3.8 Deaths of passers-by and demonstrators

It was only after the bloody suppression of the meeting near the central square and the arrest of many demonstrators that the protest became violent and turned more often against Han Chinese who had not been involved. Uyghur youths armed themselves with stones, knives and iron bars and some were seen by eye-witnesses attacking

Chinese passers-by in the districts where they lived. Women, children and elderly people were also attacked. Dozens of houses, businesses, buses, police vehicles and cars are said to have been set on fire and businesses were plundered. At 9 p.m. the police imposed a curfew. It was not until 10 p.m. that the security forces managed to restore order.

Official reports state that 197 persons (150 Han Chinese, 46 Uyghurs and one Moslem Hui) were killed and 1,721 persons were injured (*Associated Press*, 16.7.2009). In mid-July 881 injured persons were still being treated in hospital, 66 were in danger of death. The authorities stated that 156 of the dead were civilians (UPI, 6.8.2009). The houses also of 633 families were damaged, 331 shops were destroyed and 627 cars set alight (*People's Daily*, 21.7.2009).

At first the authorities denied the use of firearms against the protesters, but on 18th July 2009 they surprisingly stated that twelve Uyghur demonstrators had been shot by the security forces (*Guardian*, 18.7.2009). The authorities declared that the use of firearms had been correct and appropriate in the light of the attacks on civilians.

It is to the present day not clear how many Uyghur demonstrators died a violent death. Eyewitnesses declare that in contrast to the official version many Uyghurs were killed who had been demonstrating peacefully. A reporter from a local TV station reported that the corpses of Uyghur demonstrators were buried in a mass grave behind the TV station. The grave was then covered with concrete (*Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation, UNPO, Report: Repression in China, p. 14*). A doctor from a local hospital who wished to remain anonymous, is also quoted saying that the police took away to some unknown place the bodies of Uyghurs in two lorries from two military hospitals. It is not possible for independent human rights organisations to check the truth of these statements.

3.9 Protest of Uyghur women

When on 7th July a group of foreign journalists was brought by the authorities to Urumqi to report on the violent protests of the Uyghurs the journalists noticed a peaceful demonstration of about 200 Uyghur women. The women were calling for the release of their relatives, who had been arrested at the beginning of the protests. "My husband was taken away yesterday by the police", said the Uyghur Maliya to a correspondent of *The Times* (*The Times*, 7.7.2009). "They gave no reason why. They just took him away."

"Give us back our husbands", cried the demonstrators, reported the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Peter Foster (*Daily Telegraph*, 7.7.2009). Many of the women held in their hands the identity cards of their arrested relatives. The 15-year old Guli Nazar told the journalist that her 14-year old brother was taken away from the house during the night when the family was asleep.

Several hundred heavily armed police officers ended the peaceful demonstration after one hundred minutes without there being any further arrests or violence.

3.10 Han Chinese become violent at demonstrations

In spite of the massive police presence in Urumqi a large group of Han Chinese armed themselves with sticks, knives and machetes, marching on 7th July from midday onwards through the quarter of Caimachang, which is mainly inhabited by Uyghurs. Crying “Kill all the Uyghurs” some 10,000 Han Chinese demonstrated against the violent attacks on Han Chinese immigrants (*Daily Telegraph*, 7.7.2009). The demonstrators damaged the mosques of Hantengri and Nanziguo, destroyed a Uyghur market and injured many Uyghurs. Eyewitnesses reported that the police took at first no action and it was not until the end of the demonstration that they used tear-gas to break up the protest march. Some of the demonstrators wore special clothing to protect themselves against the tear-gas.

3.11 Countless Uyghurs are arrested

Official figures show that 1,434 persons were arrested in the 24 hours after the outbreak of the disturbances (*Xinhua*, 6.7.2009). Later lower numbers were mentioned by the Chinese authorities (between 250 and 718 persons). At a party committee meeting however there was talk of more than 4,000 arrested Uyghurs, reported an Informant to an editor of the *Financial Times* (*Financial Times*, 19.7.2009).

Some 3,318 pieces of evidence were collected, stated the authorities (*Associated Press*, 21.8.2009). Among these were 91 video-films and 2,169 photos. On 30th July 2009 the police published a search-list with the fifteen most looked for suspects, who were accused with being involved in the disturbances. At least 83 persons were officially charged with murder, intentional bodily harm, arson and robbery, stated the public prosecutor in Urumqi at the beginning of August 2009 (*BBC*, 4.8.2009).

The human rights organisation Human Rights Watch documented in a report the cases of 43 men and boys, who disappeared between 5th Jul and the beginning of August 2009 in Urumqi (*HRW, Report „We are afraid to even look for them“, October 2009*). Dozens of men and youths were immediately after the outbreak of the disturbances arbitrarily enclosed by the police and arrested, reported eyewitnesses.

With many of those arrested it was not clear that they had consciously been taking part in the demonstrations. One example is the case of the 14-year old Sharafutdin, who was on 7th August 2009 arrested by soldiers on his way to his father’s shop. It was in vain that the father five or six times asked at the local police station as to the whereabouts of his son.

Some people were clearly arrested purely on the grounds of their ethnic background. A young Uyghur on his way by car to a meal with friends was surprised by the protests in July (*Le Monde, Blog, 14.9.2009*). He parked his vehicle for security reasons and took a hotel room to await the end of the disturbances. When on the following day he left the hotel to return home he was arrested by the police. After ten days of interrogation and torture the police decided to release him. Since however his body displayed too many wounds he was kept a further ten days in custody so that the scars could heal in order to get rid of the “tell-tale marks” of torture. His family was not informed of his

whereabouts. At the end of his time in custody he was subjected to “re-education” and brain-washing for several days until he was finally released after one month. His car was confiscated by the authorities. All he had wanted to do was to have dinner with friends.

The 17-year old Noor-UI-Islam Sherbaz was arrested on 27th Jul 2009 at a market by policemen because he was accused of taking part in the demonstrations on 5th July. He has been held ever since in prison in Urumqi. His family is not allowed to visit him.

Not only in Urumqi and Xinjiang, but also in other parts of China Uyghurs have been arrested who are suspected of supporting the demonstrations. In November 2009 alone according to information given by the authorities 94 more persons were arrested (*Associated Press*, 9.12.2009). By 9th December 2009, 41 persons were charged with taking part in the protests and sentenced (*Agence France Presse*, 9.12.2009).

It was mainly in Urumqi quarters inhabited by Uyghurs that systematic searches were made by security units. All residents had to leave their houses and line up by sex against the wall outside. Men were arbitrarily beaten, threatened, intimidated or humiliated.

3.12 Deaths in custody

On 6th July 2009 Shohret Tursun from the village of Lenggar (in the district of Korgas, Ili) was arrested in Urumqi for participation in demonstrations. Just two and a half months later the authorities handed over his corpse to his relatives in his native village. When his mortal remains were given to the family they were told laconically that he had died of a heart attack. But his relatives had their doubts concerning a natural death since there were a large number of bruises on his chest and cuts and scars were visible on his legs and stomach. The family is convinced that he died as the result of torture in custody.

It is true that China signed the anti-torture convention of the United Nations in the year 1986 and ratified it in 1988, but torture is still widespread in Chinese police-stations and prisons.

The relatives refused to carry out the directions of the authorities that the corpse be buried immediately. Finally the authorities sent eight lorries with soldiers and two tanks to the village to cut off the house and prevent visits of condolence from other villagers. Finally the soldiers threatened to bury the corpse by force if the family continued to refuse to do so themselves.

The relatives did bow to the massive pressure of the security forces, but the father of the dead man informed the foreign station Radio Free Asia in a telephone call on 19th September 2009 of the mysterious death. Only four days later they arrested the 33-year old Abdusalam Nasir, from whose mobile the radio station had been rung. The 35-year old Haji Memet, a relative of the dead man, was also arrested. They were accused of passing on “state secrets”. They are now threatened with long prison sentences.

4. Reaction of the Chinese leaders

4.1 Lawyers are intimidated

The legal authorities for the city of Beijing warned in a circular to all lawyers in the city sent out in July 2009 that they should be careful in taking on cases on behalf of persons suspected of taking part in the disturbances in Urumqi. The department called on the lawyers not to endanger the unity of the People's Republic and to bear in mind that the accused will be suspected of separatism and terrorism (*Voice of America*, 21.7.2009 / *Associated Press*, 13.7.2009). The lawyers were also forbidden to give interviews to the media on these cases or to make statements about them on the internet. "This is a massive misuse of our profession", the lawyer Li Fangping, a Han Chinese, criticised the intimidation by the authorities. "Lawyers normally take on cases on the basis of professional considerations. But now the authorities are laying down regulations. And what does that mean? It is a big step backward for China's lawyers", said the prominent lawyer.

The circular was an unmistakable threat from the authorities to prevent suspect Uyghurs from being given legal representation. Many lawyers are taking this seriously since the authorities recently withdrew the licences from 53 lawyers for defending critics of the regime at court (*Associated Press*, 17.7.2009). Following the disturbances in Tibet in the spring of 2008 the legal authorities withdrew the licences of lawyers who had offered to take on the cases of accused Tibetans.

It was with grave concern that lawyers registered the statements of the chairperson of the Communist Party, Li Zhi, who publicly emphasised in a press conference on 8th July 2009 that "these brutal criminals will be condemned to death" (*China Daily*, 8.7.2009). Pre-judgements of this kind raise doubts on the independence of the Chinese courts.

Only 17 percent of the lawyers in East Turkestan were in the year 2007 of "ethnic minorities" (Uyghurs, Kasachs and others), although these make up officially about 60 percent of the population.

4.2 Long prison sentences for demonstrators

In the year 2009 the number of politically motivated criminal cases for "endangering the law and order of the state" in the Xinjiang region increased markedly, said the president of the Supreme Court of Xinjiang, Rozi Ismail, in a speech to the People's Congress on 14th January 2010 (*China Daily*, 16.1.2010). While there were only 268 cases in the year 2008, there were 437 in 2009. More than 250 Uyghurs were sentenced to prison sentences of at least ten years for "endangering the security of the state". About 3,000 persons were in the year 2009 sentenced to punishments between five years imprisonment and execution for breaking the criminal law, reported the president of the court. He attributed the sharp rise in "crimes concerning the security of the state" above all to the disturbances of July 2009.

4.3 No court cases before celebrations

When the official daily newspaper *China Daily* reported on 24th August 2009 on the opening of court cases which were soon to be opened against 200 suspect Uyghurs the authorities hastened to contradict the dates (*Agence France Presse*, 25.8.2009). Any further disturbances or clashes between the ethnic groups were at all costs to be avoided before the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. However, fresh protests were to be feared in the case of unfair court cases and long prison sentences.

Instead the President Hu Jintao visited the disturbed region at the end of August 2009 to emphasise "ethnic unity" and reflect normality. The state President shortened his presence at the G8 summit meeting in Italy on account of the public protests. He emphasised the supremacy of the Communist Party and the hopelessness of all separatist tendencies. No organisation aiming at independence from China would be successful, said the President. "Victory in this struggle shows the power of the party and of the people", said Hu Jintao (*Associated Press*, 26.8.2009). "The separatists have no place in the hearts of the people and will certainly fail."

For fear of terror attacks during the celebrations the authorities forbade during 25th September 2009 all transport of arms, ammunition, fuses and radioactive substances to the region of Xinjiang (*Associated Press*, 16.9.2009).

4.4 Sentencing of demonstrators begins after celebrations

Fully ten days after the public celebrations on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic the first trial began against seven presumed participants at the demonstrations in Urumqi on 12th October 2009. Six of the seven accused Uyghurs (Abdulkerim Abdulwayit, Gheni Yüsüp, Abdullah Mettohti, Adil Rozi, Nurali Hoshur and Alim Metyüsüf) were sentenced to death, a further defendant was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment.

On 14th October 2009 14 further Uyghurs were accused. Six were sentenced to death (among them Tohti Pazil, Ahmetjan Mömin, Anwar Akbar and Azizjan Yasin) and in the case of three defendants the execution of the sentence was postponed for two years. The other accused were sentenced to ten years imprisonment. All the trials lasted for only a few hours. There was no fair procedure. The accused were not allowed to choose their lawyers. The lawyers were chosen not only with regard to their legal competence but also for their "good political qualities", said the deputy chairperson of the Office of legal Aid in Urumqi, Ren Guoshen, on 9th August 2009 (*Human Rights Watch*, Press Release 15.10.2009). Public hearings before the trials – as required by law – did not take place. Neither was public notice given concerning the trials. The interference of politicians ensured that the independence of the courts suffered severe damage and that effectively a pre-judgement was ensured. For these trials judges were selected who enjoyed the particular trust of the Communist Party. Accordingly the President of the Supreme Court of Xinjiang declared on 16th July 2009 that for these cases personages had been selected from throughout the region who were seen as politically especially qualified. This constitutes a breach of the fair procedure which is demanded for an

“independent and impartial trial”. The lawyers involved in the trials were subjected to a special training by the Party committee at the Supreme Court. They were given a *Propaganda Paper on the Truth of the Events of 5th July in Urumqi* by the Communist Party whose intention it was to show the officials, police and lawyers how the cadres at national and regional level explain the disturbances.

Uyghur judges, who were originally intended to participate in the trials, were replaced by Han Chinese since the authorities feared that they could on account of their ethnic origin take part for the accused, reported the Hongkong daily newspaper *Apple Daily* on 13th October 2009.

On 23rd October 2009 18 Uyghurs were sentenced for “endangering state security” and “separatism” to prison sentences between three and fifteen years. Abbas Zunun, Abaydullam Tohti and Abdulla Ibrahim were each sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. The Uyghur Ghayat Mollayasin was given a life sentence because he was seen as the “ringleader” (*Agence France Presse, 30.10.2009*).

The US government called on 9th November 2009 on the Chinese government to guarantee fair and transparent trials against the accused in Xinjiang and to respect international legal standards (*Agence France Presse, 10.11.2009*). However the authorities in Beijing saw no need for action and maintained that all cases legally in order.

On 3rd December 2009 the Municipal People’s Court of Urumqi announced that the five Uyghurs, Memet Tursun Helim, Memeteli Abdukerim, Helil Sadir, Memeteli Islam and Kushman Kurban had been sentenced to death. Two further persons were sentenced to life imprisonment and another six Uyghurs were sentenced to long term of imprisonment (*Uyghur American Association, 3.12.2009*).

Three more death sentences were pronounced a day later, on 4th December 2009. One of these candidates for execution appears to have been a Han Chinese who killed a Uyghur in revenge at a counter-demonstration (*New York Times, 4.12.2009*). A Uyghur was also given a life-sentence in this trial and three more were given prison sentences (*CNN, 7.12.2009*).

For more persons were sentenced to death on 25th January 2009 for their participation in the disturbances. One Uyghur was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve. Such sentences were usually changed later into life sentences. On 25th January eight more Uyghurs were sentenced to life imprisonment (*BBC, 26.1.2010*).

By the end of January 2010 at least 25 Uyghurs had been sentenced to death on the charge of involvement in the disturbances. At least eight death sentences were carried out against Uyghurs and one against a Han Chinese by the end of November 2009.

4.5 China strengthens security apparatus in Xinjiang

Only days after the disturbances in Xinjiang Han Chinese and Uyghurs were treated differently by the security forces. The members of the Moslem ethnic group appeared

to general suspicion. Private cars, in which there were no Uyghurs were at the frequent barriers of the security forces allowed to pass after a quick check on the papers. Cars with Uyghur drivers or passengers however were controlled with automatic weapons ready to fire (Financial Times, 19.7.2009). On all exit roads in the city road blocks were set up. Chinese security experts emphasised that suspects could perhaps at first leave the city undetected, but that they would in the long run be caught by the closer security net.

Before the disturbances even began in Urumqi patriotic re-education was stepped up among the students. Thus in the area of Hotan 300,000 people were given political education courses in the framework of a re-education programme (*US- Congressional- Executive Commission on China*, 24.6.2009). To encourage patriotism at schools and universities teachers were called upon to visit the students at home during the vacations. Students were required to go the campus at least twice during the vacation. The students were expected to carry out particular tasks to promote "ethnic unity". The Communist Party announced proudly that over 95 percent of the population of Xinjiang had received propaganda material on the promotion of patriotism (*Xinjiang Daily*, 8.2.2009).

After the disturbances in Urumqi 31 special police units from 31 towns throughout China were brought to the provincial capital of the disturbed region in chartered aircraft (China Daily, 18.8.2009). Some of the units were involved in the crushing of the protests in Tibet in the spring of 2008. Between 5th and 10th July 2009 the authorities had more than 20,000 armed men at their disposal in Urumqi.

In July 2009 the Chinese authorities feared that the protests could spread to the Uighur city of Kashgar in the far west of China. The security forces called out to the people from eight large loudspeaker vans, which patrolled the streets, that they must respect law and order (China Global Times, 9.7.2009). Shops were directed to take especial precautions against plunderers.

Instead of charges being brought against the police-chief of Xinjiang for the selective procedure operated by the security forces and for the unexplained death of Uyghur civilians during the disturbances Dai Sujun was appointed deputy head of the national police force on 12th August 2009 by the State Council and the Central Military Commission. The 54-year old Han Chinese had just been appointed police-chief in Xinjiang in November 2008 (Agence France Presse, 14.8.2009).

In view of the protests from the people against insufficient security measures China decided in September 2009 to send to Urumqi some 7,000 officials as "promoters of harmony" (VNN, 8.9.2009). The officials were sent out to conduct door-to-door visits in order to explain the government's policies and to solve conflicts.

Before the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic on 1st October 2009 the number of armed security guards in the north-west of China was raised to 130,000 (*Financial Times*, 19.7.2009).

As a result of the disturbances China will this year spend nearly twice as much on the security apparatus in Xinjiang as last year. The authorities announced that the expenditure for public security would be raised by 88 percent to 423 million US dollars

(China Daily, 13.1.2010). The size of the security forces would be raised by 5,000, recruited in accordance with a new selection procedure. They are to join the Office for Public Security and be deployed in the whole region to prevent the outbreak of new disturbances (ANI, 4.2.2010). From the end of March 2010 they are after special training for one month to go out on patrol together with police officers from other provinces. The first new police officers began their training at the beginning of February 2010.

Xinjiang revised its security strategy and introduced new "Rules for the Comprehensive Management of Social Security" as from 1st February 2010 (*Xinhua*, 6.1.2010). The regulations ensure that absolute priority is given to the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism and other crimes threatening national security.

The mayor of Urumqi, Jerla Isamudinhe, said in February that it could be years before the fight against separatism would be won and the aftermath of the disturbances in the city would be overcome (*Agence France Presse*, 5.2.2010). "We must keep our eyes open and be ruthless in our battle against terrorism, separatism and extremism. We must stifle all kinds of sabotage and all attempts at it right at the beginning", he said.

4.6 "Strike hard"–Campaign is reinforced

"The rioting is neither an ethnic nor a religious problem and still less a matter of human rights", said Nur Bekri, the Chairperson of the local government on 25th July 2009 before city councillors. "It is a political fight between us and the hostile forces, where it is a matter of preserving national unity, preventing ethnic splintering, maintaining the socialist system, retaining the influence of the Party and protecting decisive national interests." The high-ranking party official emphasised once more his determination to proceed against all enemies of the Party and of national unity. "We shall maintain our policy of "preventive blows" against enemies with an iron fist to hold back violent crime" (*Xinhua*, 25.7.2009). The disturbance in Urumqi were deliberately provoked to endanger the "ethnic unity and social stability" in the region and to divide the country.

Many thousand Uyghurs have already been arrested since the beginning of the "Strike hard"–Campaigns in the year 1997. Many were forced under torture in prison to sign confessions. More than 500 Uyghurs have been sentenced to death for political reasons since 1997 and executed.

On 18th September 2009 the Communist Party announced at a meeting of its Central Committee that it would step up the fight against "ethnic separatism" (*Agence France Presse*, 18.9.2010). On 1st November 2009 the security offices began with a new "Hit hard campaign", which was to last until the end of the year. The intention was to act against "terrorist elements" and against the so-called "ring-leaders" of the protests in Urumqi (*New York Times*, 3.11.2009). The campaigns led for the most part to an increase in joint trials, a dropping of the threshold on arrests and sentences and to the legal requirements for fair investigations and sentencing to be even less regarded. For all members of the security forces what really counted at this time was to make as many arrests with as many sentences as possible in order to give to the political leaders a presentable "success rate".

4.7 Mysterious needle attacks are alarming the people

A considerable stir was caused at the beginning of September 2009 by reports of mysterious needle attacks for no apparent reason in the streets of various towns in East Turkestan. By 9th September 2009 the authorities had received some 531 needle attacks, although only 171 persons were shown in medical reports to be the result of stabbing by needle (*Agence France Presse*, 9.9.2009 / *BBC*, 11.9.2009). Doctors warned of mass hysteria. By 15th September 2009, 75 suspects were arrested on the charge of 19 attacks in Urumqi and 13 in Hotan (*Reuters*, 15.9.2009).

A police officer pointed out that the needle attacks were not cases of bad jokes or simple criminal offences, but were "terrorist crimes" (*Xinhua*, 9.9.2009). Government media reported that the criminals could count on prison sentences ranging from three years to lifelong imprisonment or death sentences (*BBC*, 6.9.2009). The Minister for Public Security, Meng Jianzhu, saw in the attacks indeed the attempt to undermine China's "ethnic unity" (*Radio Free Asia*, 4.9.2009).

Most of the victims were Han Chinese, but there were also Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Mongols and members of other ethnic groups among the injured. All the suspects tracked down by the police were Uyghurs. The police offered a reward of 735 US dollars for information on the strange attacks.

The needle attacks put a new damper on tourism. Hotels which were normally fully booked could only fill ten percent of their beds (*Associated Press*, 9.9.2009). Tourism is in East Turkestan an important branch of the economy. In the year 2006, 17 million holiday-makers visited the north-west of the country and brought the region an income of two thousand million US dollars.

Indeed the needle attacks caused the authorities to impose a curfew in the centre of the city to prevent further attacks. Road blocks cut off most of the quarters of the city inhabited by Uyghurs.

Doctors of the People's Liberation Army pointed out that many of the people who had sought treatment for needle wounds had not in fact been stabbed by needle but most likely bitten by mosquitos or other insects (*CNN*, 5.9.2009). The doctors assured the public that blood tests on victims of the needle wounds showed that no poisonous or radioactive substance had been injected (*Agence France Presse*, 14.9.2009).

4.8 Demonstrators demand removal of party officials

More than 10,000 Han Chinese demonstrated on 3rd September 2010 against the needle attacks and demanded more security for Chinese immigrants (*BBC*, 4.9.2009). Official reports stated that at least five people were killed in the protests and 14 injured. In the days following thousands of Han Chinese protested against the leaders of the Communist Party, calling for their resignation. "Resign, Wang Lequan, the government is useless" chanted the demonstrators. Wang Lequan is the Chairperson of the Communist party in Xinjiang. When he tried to speak to the protesting crowd bottles were thrown at him.

China's authorities had assumed that there would be further protests, but not from Han Chinese. They showed just how great has been the loss of authority for the Communist Party even among the group of Chinese immigrants, which they are specially protecting. Only a few days after the visit of the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, in Xinjiang, in which he did his best to present a harmonious picture of the conditions in the region, tensions between the largest groups of the population of East Turkestan were very clearly evident. Police and soldiers in their tens of thousands were on duty during the demonstrations using tear-gas to prevent conflict between Han Chinese and Uyghurs and the storming of government buildings by demonstrators. The protection by the security forces of Uyghurs was only half-hearted, with the result that these were often victims of attacks. For fear of further conflicts the schools were closed for three days and the population was called upon to respect law and order and not to stand on the streets (*Daily Telegraph*, 4.9.2009 / *Agence France Presse*, 3.9.2009)

After three days of protests the chair of the Communist Party in the city of Urumqi, Li Zhi, had to give up his office. However, the regional head of the party, Wang Lequan, also became the target of massive public anger. Wang lost his political power and was replaced by Zhang Chunxian on April 24th, 2010. Wang was made deputy secretary of the Political and Legislative Affairs Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, an apparent demotion. Wang Lequan is from the province of Shandong. The Culture Revolution (1966-1976) shaped his political career. In the year 1989 he was appointed deputy governor of his home province. He had been living in Xinjiang since 1991 and took over a responsible office there in 1994 as Secretary of the Communist Party. For over fifteen years he governed the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang as "strong man".

On 15th January 2010 Liu Yaohua, was removed from his post as deputy chair of the Xinjiang Committee of the "Political Consultative Conference of the Chinese People". The Conference is an important consultative organ in the Chinese Republic. He also lost his post on the Regional committee of Xinjiang (*Xinhua*, 16.2.2010).

4.9 Spreading of rumours gets heavily punished

When at the height of the needle-attacks rumours arose that persons infected with AIDS were deliberately infecting passers-by with dirty needles, the police threatened severe punishment for the spreading of rumours. The police warned that anyone spreading false rumours could be punished with five years imprisonment (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 7.9.2009). The AIDS rumour later turned out to be false. The unbridled, increasingly absurd rumours are however also a direct result of the government censorship of the media and of the internet. Since there is no chance for the man in the street to gain reliable and comprehensive information on current events and to make up one's own mind on things the spreading of rumours in China is widespread. The Chinese authorities encourage with their often very obscure attitude the emergence of rumours. The authorities in Urumqi for example stirred up the fears of the inhabitants of new disturbances when the city council ordered the closing of shops and businesses (*Radio Free Asia*, 7.9.2009).

4.10 Role of Uyghur women changes

The arrest of hundreds of men in East Turkestan has changed the role of Uyghur women. The recent public protests of women demanding the release of their arrested husbands and sons make it clear that the place of women in Uyghur society is changing. Women are taking a more important place in public life. They are demanding not only justice in clear words, but also a respectful way of dealing with the entire ethnic group.

The Uyghur Tursun Gul stood up with other women on 7th July 2009 at a demonstration in Urumqi against riot police who arrived in a police vehicle. The mother of two children exercised fearlessly peaceful resistance. "My husband, my younger brother and my older brothers, five in all, have all been arrested", said Tursul Gul. "We were having a meal when it happened. The police came and took them and they never came back. I don't know why they took them" (*Radio Free Asia*, 21.8.2009).

Women come out into the open with more confidence and demand civil rights. In March 2008 some 600 women protested in the city of Hotan against the order of the authorities that veils were not to be worn. The authorities ignored the protest and directed the women who were training to be funeral women neither to wear a veil, nor to wear long dresses nor to carry religious texts. The women, who are called "Buwi", accompany and concern themselves with the form of the burials in accordance with Moslem belief.

4.11 China's censors learn from Tibet disaster

When Tibet experienced its most serious disturbances for decades in the spring of 2008 China's rulers gave for weeks the impression of being paralysed. They did in vain their best to seal off hermetically the area of the disturbances from the outer world and to prevent all flow of information. In spite of massive restrictions on travel into the area for foreign and Chinese journalists photos and eye-witness reports on new demonstrations reached the outside and made headlines in the international press. The critical reports on serious violations of human rights, which just a few months before the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing aroused great interest throughout the world, caused lasting damage to the image of the People's Republic.

China's censors have in the disturbances in Urumqi learned from some mistakes the previous year. Instead of shutting foreign journalists out for weeks and forbidding them access to the region the Chinese authorities invited two days before the outbreak of the disturbances foreign journalists and many representatives of the Chinese media to visit Urumqi with an official guide (*Xinhua*, 8.7.2009). But no one should draw the conclusion that the People's Republic has eased its censorship and now allows more independent reporting.

The calculation of the official opinion-makers was clear: The world should be shown that Han Chinese are the defenceless victims of murdering and plundering Uyghurs and that China's security forces are doing their best in a constitutional framework to secure law and order and to defend the poor Han Chinese. In this way the reports on the situation of the Uyghurs abroad were to be corrected in the sense of the Chinese

government. China's authorities have for years been criticising the western reporting as one-sided. At home Beijing counted with shocking pictures of injured Han Chinese producing a strengthening of national unity and of the solidarity of the majority in the population. Police, army and Communist Party were to be presented as the guarantors of the protection of the most important group in the population and of law and order in the People's Republic. But not even in Xinjiang were the Han Chinese prepared to believe this message. The demonstrations of tens of thousands of enraged citizens in September 2009 made it clear that many citizens no longer had any confidence in the security forces and the Communist Party. The protests also showed how bad the relations are between the various ethnic groups.

4.12 Censors suppress critical news reports

In spite of the visit of foreign journalists to Urumqi China's authorities are still far from allowing free reporting on the part of the media on the situation in China. Foreign reporters are closely followed by the security forces and often prevented from interviewing Uyghurs. Journalists report that they were brought to their hotel immediately when they tried to take pictures on the street (*China clings to control, Press Freedom in 2009, International Federation of Journalists, Report, p. 20*). The Canadian journalist Heidi Siu from *Radio Free Asia* was held in her hotel for two days on 10th July 2009 after she had filmed security men in Urumqi searching suspects. She was de facto placed under house arrest and left Urumqi guarded by security personnel. Siu was only released after she had written a "self-criticism". She did get her confiscated camera and laptop back, but the memory card with the photos she had taken was kept. In the city of Kashgar on the same day the photographer Elizabeth Dalziel from *Associated Press* and two reporters from *Agence France Presse* were arrested. They were expelled from the region.

The case of three Hongkong TV journalists, who were arrested in Urumqi on 4th September 2009 and beaten in custody, kicked and handcuffed, drew attention throughout the world and brought protests from journalists' organisations (*IFEX, 16.9.2009*).

Five journalists from Hongkong were arrested on the same day for a short time. From one TV team from *Associated Press*, who filmed a demonstration, the camera was confiscated and only returned five hours later. The Hongkong journalists association accused the authorities of stamping on the freedom of the press.

The procedure adopted by the censors towards the Chinese media was much more heavy-handed. The authorities gave out between the end of June and the middle of August at least seven orders for the national media which made any independent reporting on the situation of the Uyghurs impossible. The media were on 26th June directed to publish only official information on the disturbances in the factory in Shaoguan. The media were prevented from sending reporters to the factory to report on the attacks.

On 27th June the censors repeated that no journalists were allowed to carry out research and interviews in Shaoguan.

On 28th June the order was given that only the government news agency *Xinhua* and the website *Southern* were allowed to report on the events in Shaoguan. No other media were allowed to publish their reports.

Even more heavy-handed were the inroads into the freedom of the press on 6th July 2009 when the authorities ordered that only *Xinhua* was allowed to report on the disturbances in Urumqi and on the conflict in Shaoguan. The authorities ordered that no Chinese journalists were to be sent to Xinjiang.

On 11th July the media were directed to provide information only on the number of victims of the disturbances in Urumqi, but not on the background and the causes of the rising on the part of the people. Media which did not use only material from *Xinhua* were threatened by the censors with heavy penalties.

On 15th August the Chinese media were directed not to print an article from *China Daily*, in which the announcement was made that the first trials against demonstrators in Urumqi were due to be opened shortly. The controversial report had evidently been published without the permission of high party cadres. The party feared that the report could stir up new disturbances just before the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. The censors also ordered that information which had not been officially confirmed on terrorist organisations was not to be published.

The working conditions for the representatives of Uyghur media were particularly difficult. The journalist Hailaite Niyazi was arrested on 1st October 2009. The former manager of the website *Uyghurbiz.net* of the critical professor of economics Ilham Tohti was taken into custody by security forces for more than a month without ever being charged. He was arrested again at the beginning of October and he was threatened with a long term of imprisonment for "endangering the security of the state" (*Associated Press*, 30.10.2009). His wife guessed that he had been arrested on account of his many interviews with foreign media.

Reporting on the protests in Urumqi in the government media was one-sided. *Xinhua* and the government TV *CCTV* showed pictures of beaten and injured Han Chinese. Chinese immigrants to Xinjiang were interviewed in detail and asked about their dreadful experiences. The reporting would not have been problematic if at the same time the causes of the protests of the Uyghurs had been reported and also pictures of the hounding of the Uyghurs in the toy factory in Shaoguan had been shown. But balanced reporting did not take place. Even liberal daily newspapers like the *Southern Weekend* published hefty accusations against the Uyghur human rights activist and President of the *World Uyghur Congress*, Rebiya Kadeer.

4.13 Censors block internet

Access to the internet and social networks and the sending of text messages remained closed for more than seven months. *Twitter*, *You Tube*, *Facebook*, *MSN* and, particularly popular in China, *Tencent QQ* were affected by the compulsory measures. The blockade was explained by the authorities with the purported misuse of these networks and of the internet by "separatists, terrorists and extremists" (*China Daily*,

16.1.2010). An absurd justification for this serious infringement of human rights, for neither in Iraq, nor in Afghanistan would the authorities think up the idea of cutting the country off from the internet just because opposition groups could use it to send eMails.

The fact is that China's rulers fear the internet both as a medium of information and for mobilisation. Too great is the fear of the censure offices of a development similar to that in Burma, where supporters of the democracy movement with text messages and the sending abroad of photos drew the attention of the whole world to the catastrophic human rights position. Of the 340 million internet users in China 124 million turn regularly to social networks.

Leaders of the Communist Party in East Turkestan have accused some Uyghur homepages of stirring up the disturbances. The regional parliament of Xinjiang passed a law forbidding the internet for calling for a release of the region from China. About one hundred Uyghur homepages, forums and blogs were closed after the beginning of the demonstrations. About 85 percent of all Uyghur homepages in English, Uyghur or Chinese were closed in Xinjiang or for other reasons not available, as the human rights organisation "Reporters without Borders" made clear in a study published on 29th October 2009 (*Radio Free Asia*, 15.12.2009). Only a few dozen of the Uyghur homepages close to the government remained accessible.

In order to get around the closure of the internet many Uyghurs and foreigners living in East Turkestan have been travelling over a thousand kilometres to neighbouring provinces. Many business people have seen no alternative to transferring their offices to neighbouring provinces. Many of the more than 600 internet cafes in the region have had to close down completely.

Dilixiati Paerhati, the owner of the Uyghur website *diyirim.com* was on 4th July 2009 summoned to the police-station for questioning. His website had been closed on 6th July. When he left the station after the interrogation he was told that he need have no concern about his well-being. On 7th August he was collected from his house. Since that time there has been no trace of him.

The situation was very similar to that of Ilham Tohti, who had been mentioned above. The owner of the popular website *uyghurbiz.net* was arrested at his house on 8th July 2009 and taken to an unknown place. Prior to this the accusation had been made against the professor of economics at the Beijing University of Nationalities that articles on his website had stirred up violence. Two days before his arrest Nur Bekri, the chair of the regional government of Xinjiang, had publicly accused Tohti of having encouraged on his website *Uighur Online* the Moslem ethnic group to take part in the demonstrations.

Uighur Online is a blog on the situation of the Uyghurs in Chinese. For many Han Chinese it is one of the most important sources of information on the present situation of the nationality and its culture. Tohti has long been working for more contact with the Chinese majority and has built up with his website more understanding between the ethnic groups. Nur Bekri never forgave the professor's declaring him incompetent in March 2009 and recommending his resignation from his offices. The blogger accused the regional government at that time of systematically disregarding laws and decrees

passed in Beijing. Tohti prophesied massive tension and disturbances for the region, should the government in Urumqi continue to disregard Chinese law. With clear statements of this kind the professor did not make himself popular with the local party cadres. His arrest was therefore not surprising. But Tohti did not allow himself to be intimidated. Four months before his arrest he said in a radio interview that he feared that sometime he might be arrested. "Of course I am worried, but I have not said anything violating Chinese law. If they throw me into prison, I am ready. I have spent so many years in front of a computer – prison would give me a chance to do more sport and lose some weight" (*New York Times*, 15.7.2009).

A few days after his arrest the Chinese writer Wang Lixiong and his Tibetan wife, the writer Tsering Woeser, made a public appeal for his release to the Chinese government. The US President, Barack Obama, also spoke out before his visit to China for the release of the prominent blogger. Finally the 39-year old professor was released on 23rd August 2009. The security people warned him however of a renewed arrest if he continued to speak on political matters.

It was not until the end of December 2009 that the provincial government decided to permit the closed homepages to be made accessible again in stages. On 7th February 2010 access to 27 closed sites was once more opened. These were in the main sites of government departments and companies (*Agence France Presse*, 7.2.2010). Statements of the Chinese government to the contrary notwithstanding, many Uyghur internet sites in the region still remained closed in February 2010. The internet sites *Xabnam* und *Diyarim.com* remain seven months after their closure blocked.

4.14 New law forbids discussion of autonomy

After the disturbances in Urumqi the regional government of Xinjiang announced in July 2009 the new laws would be passed in the autonomous region to speed up the struggle against "separatism" (*UPI*, 19.7.2009). In the People's Republic there is indeed a national Anti-Separatism Law, but there are no regional regulations. With a "Law for the Furtherance of Ethnic unity in Xinjiang" this gap is to be closed. Work began on the formulation in August 2008 (*Radio Free Asia*, 24.11.2009). At the end of December the law was passed by the regional parliament and on 1st February 2010 the controversial paragraphs came into force (*Radio Free Asia*, 4.1.2010).

The law requires every citizen and every organisation in the region to work for national unity and to fight every form of secession. Anyone endangering ethnic unity or provoking secession is threatened with prosecution and massive sanctions. The law also forbids all public discussion of national unity and the collection, production and dissemination of information of the matter; all public discussion on the present autonomy statute of the region is also forbidden. Uyghurs like Tibetans in the neighbouring *Autonomous Region of Tibet (TAR)* complain that central components of the autonomy status have only been realised in a half-hearted fashion and have for years called for more comprehensive autonomy.

Xinjiang experts are agreed that a reform of the autonomy statute and a prompt and credible implementation of a revised autonomy concept is the only way to secure lasting peace, democracy and human rights in the north-west of China. Since the

People's Republic of China wants at all events to prevent any division of East Turkestan and every new founding of an independent state, a reform of the autonomy is at present the only realistic way for the Uyghurs and the other non-Chinese nationalities in the region to have a chance of exercising the international right of self-government.

The fact that China's rulers have up to now forbidden and criminalised any legal discussion of a reform of the autonomy statute and its unsatisfactory realisation is a severe setback for all attempts to contain the tensions in the conflict region. It is a damning indictment for the Chinese constitutional state that discussions which are throughout the world normal and desirable on the improvement of the constitutional state in Xinjiang are suppressed and criminalised. The refusal of any attempt at democratic reform could not be clearer. The controversial law will not encourage national unity, but foster further violence in that it shuts out all Uyghurs and also Chinese critics of the regime who are looking for peaceful perspectives for an end to the nationality conflicts. It is to be feared that precisely the opposite of the law will be achieved and that armed resistance against the Chinese rule will be fostered.

4.15 New information law favours censorship

At the end of September 2009 the People's Congress of Xinjiang passed the "Law on the Furtherance of Information" (*Radio Free Asia*, 2.10.2009). The title of the law is misleading because the paragraphs are not intended to have the purpose of spreading as much information as possible in the region, but of providing legitimacy for new "constitutional" censorship to suppress more efficiently the dissemination of critical news and opinions.

All discussion of self-government, autonomy and separatism on the internet is punishable by law. All free expression of one's opinion in blogs or through text messages on the present situation in East Turkestan is in this way criminalised and suppressed. Since nearly all questions of the present living conditions of Uyghurs are directly or indirectly linked with the self-government of peoples the new information law offers the Chinese authorities the opportunity to prevent or criminalise all public discussion on the internet on the situation of the Uyghurs.

5. International community reacts cautiously

5.1 Reactions in the west

It was with concern that the international community reacted on the protests of the Uyghurs and the crushing of the disturbances. A spokesperson for the US President called all those involved in Xinjiang to restraint. The Commission for Religious Freedom set up by the US government, which documents and denounces regularly infringements of the freedom of worship throughout the world, expressed its “deep concern” and called for deliberate sanctions of imports from the region of north-west China. The Commission drew particular attention to the continuing discrimination of the Uyghurs and the rejection of their freedom of worship. These massive infringements of human rights were seen as the cause of the violence (*Agence France Presse, 15.7.2009*). Individual US-Senators and deputies called in vain for a tougher reaction on the part of the American government.

One Chinese diplomat expressed satisfaction at the “moderating attitude” and restraint of the US government in the crisis. US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, had in talks with high-ranking Chinese envoys expressed her “concern” over the disturbances (*Associated Press, 2.8.2009*). The Chinese Deputy-Foreign Minister, Wang Guangya emphasised that his opposite numbers in the US government all considered the protests and riots to be a domestic matter of the People’s Republic.

Russia likewise gave the Chinese leaders no cause for concern. The Russian Foreign Ministry emphasised that the conflict was a Chinese domestic problem and that one was sure in Moscow that China’s security forces would respect the laws and that the situation would soon return to normal (*Agence France Presse, 9.7.2009*).

Appeals for restraint were expressed also by the UN General Secretary, Ban Ki-Moon, and the Canadian, German and British governments. Some members of the European parliament, like the Social Democrat Emine Bozkurt from the Netherlands, called on the Swedish President of the European Council to take definitive action. However, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, contented himself in his statement with a call for a more careful handling of minorities and more respect for human rights. The Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to China, Serge Abou, even expressed understanding for the problems of the Chinese leaders. Europe also has its problems with minorities and “we would not like it if other governments told us what to do”, said the EU diplomat (*New Straits Times, 16.7.2009*). The violence in Xinjiang is a Chinese matter and not a European one, said the representative of the EU Commission, using the same words as the Chinese.

Tibetan exile organisations pointed out that the persecution and discrimination of Tibetans and Uyghurs are very similar. “I am sad and concerned over the deteriorating situation in East Turkestan (Xinjiang), especially over the tragic death of human beings. I expressly call on the Chinese authorities to exercise restraint and to ensure that the situation is dealt with in a spirit of mutual understanding and with a view to the future”, said the Dalai Lama (*International Campaign for Tibet, 8.7.2009*).

Comparing of the reactions of the international community with the protests following the crushing of the disturbances in Tibet in the spring of 2008 and the threats of sanctions which were then under discussion, one sees immediately that public opinion throughout the world reacted with more restraint towards the events in Urumqi. This applies not only to governments, but also to the general public.

At least the lack of reports in the media cannot be held to blame here. Although East Turkestan is not easily accessible for journalists and there are fewer independent information networks than in Tibet, which nevertheless bring critical reports on government repression to the outside world, the media have throughout the world provided comprehensive information for quite a long time on the disturbances and their background. But unlike the matter of Tibet this time there were hardly any public protests since the Uyghurs do not have, as the Tibetans do, a worldwide solidarity movement to organise protests in 170 states within a few hours. While the Tibetans profit from the reputation of the Dalai Lama as the religious and political leader of his people, who enjoys great moral authority throughout the world, the Uyghurs are hardly noticed by the broad mass of people. As a Moslem minority they do not have the same attraction as that of the Tibetan Buddhists, who are held in high esteem by many Europeans and Americans on account of their faith and their philosophy of life.

The fact that the protests began in a peaceful way certainly led also to the reserve of public opinion and of many governments. There is a great fear of further violent conflict, which could lead to massive problems in the People's Republic. It was above all the peaceful resistance of the Tibetans which fascinated the outside world for a long time. But resistance is threatening to become more violent in Tibet as well since persecution by the government security authorities and the feeling of hopelessness on the part of those affected are both steadily increasing. It was for the Dalai Lama extremely difficult and it required all his authority as religious and political leader of the Tibetans in the year 2008 to prevent a further escalation of violence. Whether he can manage to do this again in the future is a matter for conjecture. There is immense anger especially on the part of young people concerning the everyday discrimination and suppression. In East Turkestan the Chinese repression is more extensive than in Tibet. At the same time an increasing number of Uyghurs is losing hope of an improvement in the situation and of more international support. These are all critical factors which make a further escalation in the violence in the north-west of China seem likely.

5.2 Power calculations instead of human rights

The restraint of many governments is also due to the increasing importance of China in world politics and the international economy. In the light of the worldwide financial crisis, the debt of the USA to China and the growing importance of the People's Republic in cranking up international business activity, the international community is becoming more restrained with criticism of Beijing's politics. For a "small minority" one is not inclined to risk good relations with the government of the People's Republic.

This view however completely disregards the increasing dangerousness of the tensions between ethnic groups in Tibet and East Turkestan can be in the long run for the stability of the People's Republic and its relations with the outside world. For if the

violence should continue to increase this could endanger the economic boom in the east of China, which is decisively dependent on cheap and secure raw materials from Tibet and Xinjiang. A further increase in violence and counter-violence by the state could question the stability of the People's Republic. The international community could then see itself compelled to no longer ignore the deteriorating human rights situation.

5.3 The Islamic world reacts with anger

Quite differently from most states of the international community is the reaction of both governments and civil society in Islamic states, which have expressed great anger at the bloody crushing of the disturbances. The *Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)*, a worldwide international organisation of 57 Islamic states, expressed its deep concern over the deadly violence and the "incommensurate use of force" by the Chinese security forces. Similar protests came from the *World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)*. Both organisations condemned the death of civilians, which is to be most deeply regretted, whether it is a Moslem or a non-Moslem (*Arab news*, 8.7.2009). At a ministers' conference of the OIC states in Damascus (Syria) on 25th July 2009 the participating states decided to press the Chinese government to respect the legitimate rights of the Uyghurs. In the middle of August a high-ranking delegation of the OIC visited Beijing and East Turkestan. At the invitation of the Chinese government the OIC General Secretary, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu finally travelled to China in the autumn of 2009 in order to form his own opinion of the situation of the Uyghurs.

An offensive of charm was launched against the Moslem world and the local government of Xinjiang received ambassadors from 26 states (among them the Moslem countries of Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey and Afghanistan) to a five-day visit to Xinjiang. The intention was to demonstrate to the diplomats that law and order once more abide in north-west china and that China's nationality politics does not ignore the rights of minorities (*Xinhua*, 11.8.2009).

Well-known Moslem religious leaders in Iran condemned the bloody crushing of the protests of their brothers in faith in China. The following expressed themselves particularly clearly: Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani, Ayatollah Yousef Sanei, Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi and Ayatollah Lotfollah Safi Golpaygani (*Tehran Times*, 13.7.2009 / *Mehr News Agency*, 2.8.2009). Ayatollah Shirazi und Ayatollah Golpaygani however, also criticised the Iranian government for remaining silent on the events in East Turkestan. In the government-controlled Iranian media a one-sided picture of the situation in East Turkestan had been drawn and the demonstrators depicted as "hooligans". Ayatollahs critical of the regime accused the Iranian authorities of defaming the protests of the Uyghurs because an increasing number of opposition voices are speaking out for democracy and human rights in public demonstrations. Apart from this the theocracy maintains comprehensive economic, military and political relations with China. Among the Iranian people criticism is growing on the close cooperation with the rulers in Beijing. During a speech of the former state president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani members of the audience called out loudly "Death to China" (*Christian Science Monitor*, 17.7.2009).

In predominantly Moslem Indonesia also there were public demonstrations against the Chinese nationality policies. The Indonesian parliament appealed to the United Nations to offer help in stopping the conflicts in Urumqi (*Bernama*, 13.7.2009). The General Secretary of the *Indonesian Council of the Ulemas*, the most important Moslem institution in the largest Moslem state of the world, criticised the restriction of freedom of worship in East Turkestan and called for a rapid removal of the prohibition of attendance at the Friday prayer-meetings in the mosques imposed by the authorities in Urumqi.

In the Ukraine Crimean Tartars protested in front of the embassy of the People's Republic of China against the "genocide against the Uyghurs". The Uyghurs were a brother people, who must not be forgotten, called out the representatives of the ethnic group, which for decades had been deported to the Soviet Union and persecuted. China must quickly end the suppression of the Uyghurs, said the Crimean Tartars.

Even in Azerbaijan, which is far away, citizens demonstrated in front of the Chinese embassy and called for a clear "No to racism" (*Associated Press*, 14.7.2009).

5.4 Protests in Central Asia

The disturbances were being observed with particular attention in the central Asian neighbouring states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan. In both states there live hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs of whom many have relatives in Chinese East Turkestan. But while the people are very concerned about the dramatic human rights situation in the north-west of China the governments are anxious to maintain a good relationship with the very powerful neighbouring country. China's rulers could bring enormous political and economic influence to bear on the domestic affairs of the central Asian states. Deportation of Uyghur refugees, research by Chinese security forces in circles of exile Uyghurs and politically motivated murders by Chinese security forces are in these neighbouring countries no rarity. China's influence on the region has grown through the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)*, in which these states jointly with the People's Republic and Russia coordinate their combat of domestic opposition and other security matters.

About 60,000 Uyghurs live in Kyrgystan. Following the disturbances there were also demonstrations in front of the Chinese embassy. With photos and posters the demonstrators drew attention to the consequences of the suppression of the Uyghurs in China. On 10th August 2009 Dilmurat Akbarov, the chairperson of the *Ittipak Uyghur Society*, and his deputy, Jamaldin Nasyrov, were arrested. They had both called out to a peaceful protest in front of the Chinese embassy (*Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 13.8.2009). The government of Kyrgystan was evidently surprised by the organisation's massive criticism of the Chinese politics. The group, which was closely associated with the government, had until then been cautious in publicly criticising the powerful neighbour. The Kyrgysian Ombudsman Tursunbek Akun promised immediately afterwards to throw light on the background to the arrests. At the same time he called on the Uyghur organisation to stop its protests in front of the Chinese embassy.

The 300,000 Uyghurs in Kazakhstan share the same fears as those in Kyrgystan of new large-scale attacks by the authorities. Uyghur organisations in Kazakhstan have been hard hit by arbitrary arrests and politically motivated murders. Since November last year China now controls 30 percent of the oil production in Kazakhstan (*www.istockanalyst.com*, 19.11.2009). The People's Republic also obtains natural gas from Kazakhstan. In January 2010 the western part of a second east-west pipeline was brought into service to transport the natural gas from central Asia and Xinjiang to Shanghai and Hongkong. In April 2009 Kazakhstan had received a credit to the value of five thousand million US dollars from Beijing as a service in return for its energy policies (*Associated Press*, 14.7.2009).

About 5,000 Uyghurs protested on 19th Jul 2009 in the Kazakh city of Almaty against the crushing of the protests in East Turkestan. It was the first public demonstration of Uyghurs in Kazakhstan which had ever been permitted by the authorities in the country (*Associated Press*, 19.7.2009). This emphasises just how heavy the pressure on the government of Kazakhstan was following the disturbances in the neighbouring country no longer to stifle at the outset all protest against China's nationality policies. On the internet an "Open Letter of the Kazakh Youth in the city of Urumqi" was in circulation addressed to the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in which he was called on to take more energetic action to solve the problems of the Kazakhs in Xinjiang (*Georgian Daily*, 9.7.2009). The Kazakhs in Xinjiang are seriously worried concerning the future of their language. Besides the Uyghurs and the Han Chinese the Kazakhs with about one million make up the largest sector of the population of East Turkestan. Like the Uyghurs they also suffer from the enormous influx of Han Chinese to north-west China.

"The Uyghurs wanted to protest peacefully against the arbitrary actions of the police. But the behaviour of the police led then to a tragedy", said Torgan Tozakhunov, deputy head of the Uyghur Culture Centre in Kazakhstan (*Agence France Presse*, 9.7.2009).

Uyghur human rights activists were prevented by the Kazakh authorities on 21st August 2009 from conducting a press conference on the disturbances and opening a photo exhibition. In the exhibition they wanted to show 380 pictures taken during the disturbances (*Radio Free Asia*, 21.8.2009). The chairperson of the *Kazakh-Uyghur Friendship Society*, Abdurashid Turdiev, and his deputy, Yermek Narymbaev, were arrested immediately before the press conference and held for 90 minutes. The chairperson of the Uyghur Society in Kazakhstan, Kaharman Kozhamberdiev, expressed his outrage at the action of the Kazakh authorities.

The Uyghurs addressed themselves with a mail campaign to the United Nations, Russia and the USA with the request to take action for the human rights situation in Xinjiang. They commemorated in religious ceremonies the victims of the disturbances.

The 6,000 Uyghurs in Tajikistan remained quiet after the disturbances. The Tajiks were afraid that after the protests the 250-miles long border would become even harder to cross. Tajik business-people have extensive trade relations with East Turkestan. With an eye to its economic relations with China the government of Tajikistan expressed itself only very reservedly on the disturbances.

5.5 Pakistan steps in to support China in the Moslem world

The fact that the tensions between the rulers in Beijing and the Moslem world did not escalate further is above all due to the assistance rendered by its close ally Pakistan. Pakistan's President, Asif Ali Zardari, made several public statements praising China's concern to restore law and order in the conflict region (*Xinhua*, 23.7.2009 / *Reuters*, 21.8.2009). He made deliberate publicity in the Moslem world for China's policies and called for restraint in public criticism of China's handling of Moslems.

Moslem Pakistan has maintained for decades close political, economic and military links with China. In the year 2007 the deep-sea port of Gwadar in the hotly contested province of Balochistan was opened. The port has strategic importance for China. The People's Republic is planning the construction of a pipeline from Gwadar to Xinjiang with an extension to the industrial centres of eastern China. The purpose is to ensure secure provision of raw materials and oil from the near East and Africa without the need to use the strategically problematical and expensive passage through the straits of Malacca.

5.6 Unwanted "help" from terror groups

Radical Islamic terror groups also suddenly became aware in the summer of 2009 of the difficult situation of the Uyghurs in China. They quickly realised that this subject concerns Moslems all over the world and that this could be a new starting-point for winning support in their own cause.

Radical Islamist activists called out in July 2009 in Yemen for a boycott of Chinese products to protest against the violence against Uyghurs (*Uyghur American Association*, 14.7.2009).

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), a terrorist movement in southern Algeria and various Maghreb states, called out in July 2009 for revenge attacks on the 50,000 Chinese migrant workers living in Algeria. China took this threat very seriously and appealed to its citizens in North Africa to be especially careful (*BBC*, 15.7.2009). So *AQMI* is performing a disservice to the Uyghurs since China has been trying for years to conjure up links between Uyghur exiles and *Al-Qaeda*.

It is true that there were in recent months a number of clashes between Algerians and Chinese, but these conflicts had nothing to do with the Uyghurs. The Chinese migrant workers have with their arrogant and rather insensitive attitude made themselves few friends in the North African country. Many Algerians sense the Chinese construction workers and engineers employed on the large building projects in the north of Algeria as new colonial masters, a feeling which is felt by many Uyghurs and which leads to growing tension between the ethnic groups. This has however nothing to do with *Al-Qaeda*, but rather with a growing xenophobia in Algeria.

The importance of *AQMI* has in recent years increased in the south of Algeria and Mauretania. At least in its early days the terror movement was an instrument of the Algerian secret service. With the spread of terror in France and in the south of Algeria

after the terror attacks of 11th September 2001 the Algerian secret service drew attention to what it termed as a growth of terrorism in the Sahara. With these secret operations Algeria expected more generous deliveries of arms and the extension of military cooperation with western states.

The *World Uyghur Congress* and the *Uyghur American Association (UAA)*, distanced themselves energetically from the assistance offered by *Al-Qaeda*. Both organisations emphasised their purely non-violent work for the human rights of the Uyghurs, condemning all kinds of terrorism (*Uyghur American Association / World Uyghur Congress, 14.7.2009*).

5.7 Turkey raises the charge of genocide

No other government expressed such weighty charges against China's nationality policies in Xinjiang as Turkey. On 10th July 2009 the Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdogan, charged China with committing genocide in the north-west of the country and appealed to the Chinese leaders to prevent further fatal victims (*Reuters, 10.7.2009*). "We cannot understand the Chinese government just watching and doing nothing", said Erdogan. "We want the Chinese government, with which our mutual relations have been steadily improving, to show more sensibility." The previous day Erdogan had announced that his country would grant a visa to the Uyghur leader, Rebiya Kadeer, who is living in exile in the USA. Twice a visa to visit the European country in which most of the Uyghurs live had been refused.

In Istanbul 5,000 people demonstrated against "ethnic cleansing" in East Turkestan. In Ankara too 700 demonstrators protested against violations of human rights against the Uyghurs (*Agence France Presse, 10.7.2009*). The Turkish Prime Minister repeated his charges at the summit meeting of the G-8 states in L'Aquila (Italy) in the presence of the Chinese President. Erdogan also announced that he would make apply to the Security Council of the United Nations take up the matter (*Hürriyet, 11.7.2009*). Since Turkey is not a permanent member of the Security Council and China announced its firm resistance against any discussion of this matter at the UN organ, the Turkish suggestion had no prospect of success.

The spokesperson of the Turkish Parliament, Köksal Topfan, called on China to allow a parliamentary commission of investigation to visit Xinjiang (*Turkish Daily News, 14.7.2009*). The Turkish deputies wanted to make their own picture of the conditions in Xinjiang. Topfan emphasised the territorial integrity of China.

On 14th July 2009, China objected in the strongest possible terms to the charge of genocide. Most of those killed were Han Chinese, said a spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry in Beijing. Apart from this the number of Uyghurs in Xinjiang would be constantly increasing. In the light of these facts the charge of genocide would make no sense (*Reuters, 14.7.2009*). In the official Chinese media Erdogan was called on to withdraw his charge (*Reuters, 15.7.2009*).

5.8 Turkish government revises its criticism

The Chinese government-controlled media charged the “one-sided reporting on the part of the western media, which is riddled with prejudice” for the critical attitude of the government and public opinion in Turkey (*The Hindu*, 17.7.2009). In the middle of August 2009 a revision of the thinking on the part of the Turkish government set in. The Turkish ambassador in China emphasised after a four-day visit to Xinjiang that his government was confident that “those responsible for the incidents would be brought to justice promptly in transparent and fair trials by the Chinese authorities”.

At a meeting between the Turkish Minister for Foreign Trade, Zafer Caglayan, and the Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jibao, on 31st August 2009 Caglayan said “Turkey understands the measures which China took to deal with the incidents of 5th July” (*Agence France Presse*, 1.9.2009). He emphasised that Turkey rejected all forms of separatism and spoke out for an extension of economic and diplomatic relations. Wen Jiabao reminded him at the meeting that China and Turkey are often confronted with extremism, separatism and terrorism and that China would be glad to cooperate more closely with Turkey in combating these “three forces” (*Xinhua*, 2.9.2009). In a letter to the Chinese leaders which Caglayan handed over Erdogan demonstrated his conviction that stability, harmony and prosperity would soon be achieved in Xinjiang (*Xinhua*, 31.8.2009). Turkey and China, which have the same problems and interests, are anxious to ensure that no harm comes to the relations between the two states, emphasised the Turkish minister.

There was some other annoyance which came about between the two states at the end of the Minister Caglayan's visit to China. When he wanted to leave Urumqi by air on 2nd September he had to undergo a security check by Chinese security officials. There ensued a scuffle between the bodyguards of the Minister and the Chinese officials. The Minister then directed his ambassador to protest in a diplomatic note against the humiliating treatment. Caglayan demanded an apology from the Chinese government. He would otherwise cancel the meeting of the *Joint Economic Committee* planned for September 2009.

At a meeting of the deputy spokesperson of the Turkish Parliament, Nevzat Pakdil, with Li Wuwei, a high-ranking official of the Communist party of China, the last differences of opinion between the two states were finally removed on 14th December 2009. “We want the Uyghur people to be a bridge of peace between the Chinese and the Turkish peoples”, emphasised Pakdil (*Turkish Weekly*, 14.12.2009). “Turkey acknowledges the principle of non-interference in the inner affairs of other states. We want all states to respect human rights”, said the Turkish politician. Ankara's kowtow before Beijing could hardly have been made clearer. Five months after Erdogan's pithy words nothing remained of the Turkish government's criticism of China's nationality policies.

5.9 China puts pressure on Turkey

Erdogan's relationship with the Uyghurs is fickle. It was not for the first time that he openly took the side of the Uyghurs in July 2009, just to retract this shortly afterwards. On 28th July 1995 as mayor of Istanbul when he celebrated the setting up of a

monument to the well-known Uyghur exile politician Yusuf Alptekin in the Sultan Ahmet Park in the city on the Bosphorus. He went here at great length to honour the martyr of East Turkestan, who must always be remembered and he criticised the Sinicisation of East Turkestan (*Ethno-Diplomacy: The Uyghur Hitch in Sino-Turkish Relations*, Yitzhak Shichor, *Policy Studies* 53, East-West Center, p. 2). When Erdogan visited China on 14th January 2003 shortly after being appointed Prime Minister he did his best to forget his commitment to the Uyghur martyrs. His immediate concern was the extension of political and economic relations between the two states. So he emphasised in his speeches the One China policy and the territorial integrity of the People's Republic. Erdogan took up arms against terrorism and separatism. In order to show China's leaders just how seriously he took the fight against "separatism" he gave instructions to forbid at the last minute a conference planned in Ankara for 16th - 17th January 2003 on "The History and the Present Situation of the Uighur Turks".

There are today several thousand Uyghurs living in Turkey. Istanbul above all is one of the largest Uyghur cities. As a Turk people the Uyghurs have a very good standing in Turkish society. Since the 50s an increasing number of Uyghurs has been settling in Turkey. Important organisations for exiles have grown up, working for their culture, language and human rights. When however in the mid-nineties in East Turkestan the dissatisfaction of the citizens increased and the first revolts came and new central Asian states arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union, China increased its pressure on the Turks to check the activities of Uyghur organisations and exile politicians. China began to extend its economic relations with Turkey and achieved in the year 2008 with cheap imports to Turkey a trade surplus of 14 thousand million US dollars.

In the light of this disparity Turkey has become more interested in an improvement in trade relations to even out the imbalance. At the end of June 2009 President Abdullah Gül wet as first Turkish president for 15 years to the People's Republic, being accompanied by a large commercial delegation. He signed in China contracts to the value of 1.5 billion US dollars (*Reuters*, 10.7.2009). The military cooperation between the two countries was also enlarged.

In order not to jeopardise this cooperation the Turkish authorities progressively reduced the tolerance for exile Uyghur organisations. Financial support, accommodation and Turkish nationality were now refused, conferences, travel and demonstrations were forbidden. Exile Uyghur organisations transferred their activities increasingly to the USA or to European states in which China's long arm could not so quickly and so effectively limit them in their work. Beijing has constantly used the unsolved problem of the future of North Cyprus and the Kurdish problem to force the Turkish government to behave in the desired way. China did succeed in noticeably decreasing the influence of Uyghur organisations and politicians in Turkey, but the struggle of the Moslem minority for human rights was made known to a broader public in Europe and the USA and the work of the Uyghur groups was taken up on an international level.

6. China's fight against Uyghurs in exile

6.1 Defamation campaign against *World Uyghur Congress*

The Chinese authorities have been deliberately using the conflicts between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in Urumqi in July 2009 to defame the exile organisations of the Uyghurs and leading representatives of the Moslem population group as "terrorists". Above all Rebiya Kadeer, the President of the *World Uyghur Congress (WUC)*, who since her release from prison as a dissenter has lived in exile in the USA, has been personally heavily attacked and made responsible for the violence in Urumqi. Chinese government media published after the outbreak of the protests long articles, in which purported proofs of the charge were presented, stating that Kadeer and the WUC had called out to the protests and were wire-pullers of the disturbances (*Xinhua*, 10.8.2009, 14.8.2009 / *China Daily*, 12.8.2009). In a report of the government Anti-Separatism Office in the Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture of Kizilsu of 19th December 2008 Kadeer and the WUC were accused of "reactionary mistakes" (*US Congressional-Executive Commission on China*, 24.6.2009). In a letter to the women of the region the Anti-Separatism Office called Kadeer the "blood-hound" of the West, who is stirring up the "anti-Chinese mood". She was deemed "a bad woman", who has not managed to bring up her children properly. The women ought to denounce Kadeer's "true devilish intentions" when the exile Uyghur pleads for law and democracy.

In a 20 minute documentary film of the Chinese government TV *CCTV* serious charges were made against the *WUC*. The *WUC*'s intention would be to whip up violence in the conflict region via chat-rooms in the internet from abroad and to have stirred up hatred between the ethnic groups by disseminating false news and video-films (*Associated Press*, 20.10.2009). The Uyghur exile organisations have the reputation of being very well informed on the present human rights situation in East Turkestan. European news agencies cite them regularly since in the light of the information blockade by China they often are the only ones to have access to independent information from the region. In the face of the difficulties of conducting research and a situation encouraged by the government censors, where rumours fly thick and fast, the news bulletins of the *WUC* have usually a reputation for being very reliable.

"Rebiya Kadeer is a separatist and a criminal who has been sentenced according to law", said Jiang Yu, speaker for the Foreign Ministry at a press conference (*Xinhua*, 3.9.2009). She was referring to an unfair trial in the year 1999, in which the dissident was sentenced to eight years imprisonment in China following the passing on of newspapers which were openly for sale on the charge of "betraying state secrets". Kadeer was for her work for human rights and her life-work awarded the esteemed Rafto Prize in Norway and has been seen in the past three years as a promising candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. Jiang Yu responded: "Rebiya's rumours and evil attacks on China's nationality policies are everywhere... Her accusations are not worth being rejected". The speaker for the Foreign Ministry appealed to the world outside "neither to give her a stage nor to help her in any other way in her anti-Chinese, separatist activities".

China's President, Hu Jintao, called on US President, Barack Obama, in November 2009 to prevent separatists from encouraging from inside the USA the division of Xinjiang

from China. Behaviour of this kind would contradict the One China policy, to which the USA is pledged (*China Daily*, 18.11.2009).

The Dalai Lama has on many occasions praised publicly the peaceful nature of the work of the president of the WUC and rejected indirectly the accusations of the Chinese government that Kadeer is stirring up the violence (*Phayul*, 29.7.2009).

On 16th October 2009 the government daily paper *China Daily* accused in its international edition the WUC of calling out to a demonstration in Urumqi through an instant messaging portal on 5th July 2009. The WUC repudiated the detailed accusations as “trumped up and fictitious” (*South China Morning Post*, 17.10.2009). It seems as though the Chinese authorities overestimated the influence of the WUC in East Turkestan in imputing their direct involvement in the disturbances. It has long been the strategy of China’s rulers to make the outside world responsible for protest and grievances in north-west China. Yet most Chinese experts are fully aware that the problems are domestic and have only to a limited extent anything to do with the outside world. The intention with this strategy is on the one hand to divert attention from one’s own responsibility and on the other to encourage the patriotism of the population. So China is always on the look-out for conflict with the USA in order to further support inside the country.

In the light of the failure of China’s nationality policies the tensions in East Turkestan are now as great as in Tibet, so there is no need of any incitement from abroad to bring people to public protest. No one would seriously imagine that the approximately 70,000 public demonstrations, which are officially registered every year in the People’s Republic, are all the result of incitement from abroad. The disappointment over corruption, nepotism and the misuse of power is now so great that conflicts in China have developed their own dynamism. The furious protests of Han Chinese in Urumqi in September 2009 have shown clearly that the Communist party has even lost to a large extent the confidence of the ethnic group of the Han Chinese, whose interests it was promoting.

The WUC plays in this conflict the part of scapegoat. China’s government uses the WUC to draw attention away from its own mistakes. Instead of publicly questioning why thousands of Han Chinese called for the resignation of the local Party leader and why Uyghurs are being treated by the Chinese courts and offices as second-class citizens the WUC and Rebiya Kadeer are being turned into enemies in the government-controlled media.

The question is certainly valid as to why the Chinese authorities took no action in time to stem the protests in a peaceful manner if they were informed so fully and so early concerning the organisation of the demonstration.

The Chinese authorities adopted a very deliberate procedure against the activities of the WUC in the months following the disturbances of Urumqi. When Rebiya Kadeer visited Japan at the end of July 2009 the Chinese ambassador reacted with anger (*Kyodo*, 27.7.2009). During the preparations for the visit Beijing had tried to get the visa for Ms Kadeer refused. The Chinese Foreign Ministry condemned the visit and refused a request by Japanese navy units to China (*Bloomberg*, 18.8.2009 / *New York Times*, 20.10.2009 / *BBC*, 27.7.2009 / *International Business Times*, 28.7.2009). In view of the Chinese

protests the government in Tokyo tried to play down the importance of the Kadeer visit (*BBC*, 29.7.2009).

It was just the same in Taiwan when Kadeer announced a visit to the island in September 2009. The Minister of the Interior, Jiang Yi-huah refused the issue of a visa following massive pressure from Beijing, the reason he gave being "the national interest and the social order" (*BBC*, 25.9.2009 / *Taipei Times*, 9.10.2009). The decision set up a storm of indignation from the opposition politicians in Taiwan. They have for a long time been accusing the Taiwanese government of paying too much respect to Beijing. Taiwan's President, Ma Ying-jeou, finally found himself in a position where he had to make it clear that Taiwan's government did not see Kadeer as a "terrorist" (*Agence France Presse*, 23.10.2009).

When the Film Festival in the south Taiwanese town of Kaohsiung announced in September 2009 that it would be showing the documentary film "The Ten Conditions for Love" on Rebiya Kadeer, there was once more a hail of protest from China. The Chinese "Office for Taiwan Questions" called on the town of Kaohsiung not to put the good relations with mainland-China at risk (*Xinhua*, 20.9.2009). A Taiwanese delegation of tourist experts was asked to visit China at a later time as the visit was not suitable at the moment. Chinese hackers found their way into the website of the Festival and abused the organisers of the Festival. On the website of the Festival they left the message "Against Xinjiang's separatists, against Tibet's separatists and a Happy 60th Birthday for the People's Republic of China!" (*China Daily*, 22.9.2009). The number of bookings of Chinese tourists in the town's hotels dropped by 30 percent. China denies a boycott of South Taiwan, but the numbers were so worrying that the film was as the result of pressure from commercial circles shown not during the Festival, but a week before (*Bernama*, 28.10.2009 / *Associated Press*, 21.9.2009).

New trouble is brewing in Taiwan because in February 2010 the organisation Guts United Taiwan announced that it would invite Kadeer again to the island (*Radio Taiwan International*, 12.2.2010).

In Australia too there was dissent on the showing of the documentary film at the Film Festival in Melbourne on 8th August 2009. Beijing demanded that the film be cancelled (*The Age*, 28.7.2009). The director of the Festival, Richard Moore, expressed his surprise that China's government could call as a matter of course for the film to be taken out of the programme. A diplomat from the Chinese consulate in Melbourne even called on him to give his reasons for including the film in the programme in the first place. In view of the dispute two Chinese film directors cancelled their appearance at the festival (*BBC*, 22.7.2009). When the organisers in Melbourne insisted on the film being shown, Chinese hackers broke into the website of the Festival, replaced the advertising for the film with the Chinese flag and abused Kadeer with disparaging remarks (*BBC*, 26.7.2009 / *Reuters*, 27.7.2009).

When Kadeer in August 2009 visited the premiere of the film in Australia there were fresh tensions between Australia and the People's Republic. China demanded in vain for her entry to be refused, whereupon Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made it clear that the Australian government would itself decide who could enter and who couldn't - and not Beijing. Foreign Minister Stephen Smith emphasised however to the Chinese government that the visa affair entailed not change in Australia's respect for China's territorial

integrity (*Sky News*, 7.8.2009). When in February 2010 a film club in Western Australia showed the film again this caused such a storm that the Australian Foreign Ministry reacted with alarm (*The Australian*, 13.2.2010). Once again the Chinese government protested. A showing of the film by the TV station ABC did not take place. The Australian station had indeed bought the rights, but then decided to remove the film from the programme (*The Australian*, 13.2.2010). The station did deny any external influence, but it was made clear that after the many protests the film could not be shown without the critics also being heard (*The Australian*, 15.2.2010). Critics term this as the export of Chinese censorship, which in the People's Republic also often consists in self-censure in order not to provoke any trouble (*BBC*, 2.11.2009).

It was in vain that diplomats of the Chinese embassy urged the National Press Club of Australia to cancel the planned broadcast of her speech on TV during the Australia visit of Mrs. Kadeer (*BBC*, 11.8.2009). Australia then warned China of a further escalation of its campaign against Kadeer (*Agence France Presse*, 11.8.2009). China reacted to the dispute with a cancellation by the deputy Foreign Minister, He Yafei, at a summit meeting of the 16 Pacific states in Cairns (Australia) in August 2009 (*Associated Press*, 18.8.2009). After the many instances of resentment in the bilateral relationship the two states came closer together again at the end of October 2009. When it sent its Deputy prime Minister, Li Keqiang, Beijing signalled its interest in normalising relations (*AAP*, 29.10.2009).

In New Zealand also there was a dispute on the transmission of the documentary film on Kadeer's life. The Chinese Deputy Ambassador, Zhou Heng, intervened personally at the TV station Maori Television, but the station remained with its transmission of the film (*Epoch Times*, 13.8.2009). A cancellation of the film would be to question the credibility of New Zealand, argued the leading newspapers of the country (*New Zealand Herald*, 31.8.2009 / *NZPA*, 1.9.2009). However to a certain extent the TV station did give in to the Chinese pressure and immediately after the portrait of Kadeer it showed the controversial film "Xinjiang Urumqi July 5th Riot: Truth", which gave broadly the official Chinese view of the disturbances (*New Zealand Herald*, 1.9.2009).

The producer of the one-hour documentary reported on the difficulties of marketing the film on an international level. Many TV stations were cautious in buying the rights of transmission since the film was controversial and dealt with a difficult subject (*Reuters*, 27.10.2009).

At the invitation of the Green party Kadeer visited New Zealand in October 2009. There was indeed no trouble concerning her entry into the country since a visa was issued without any protest from Beijing (*New Zealand Herald*, 9.10.2009). But when Ms Kadeer was invited to speak to a large audience at the University of Auckland the authorities there cancelled the booking of the room "for reasons of security". Keith Locke, a parliamentary deputy of the Green Party, saw through the safety argument and surmised that the university did not wish to offend China with the controversial meeting. Finally a law professor managed to ensure that Kadeer did speak on the campus. His unusual commitment was explained by the professor with the importance of the exile Uyghur. Her voice must most definitely be heard, said the lawyer (*New Zealand Press Agency*, 12.10.2009). About 20 Chinese demonstrators protested outside the university against Kadeer's visit (*New Zealand Herald*, 14.10.2009).

6.2 Freedom of travel of Uyghurs is restricted

It is not only Rebiya Kadeer who was and is systematically against restricted by the Chinese authorities in her freedom of movement in the world by China regularly protesting against the issue of visas for the president of the World Uyghur Congress. For several years Chinese embassies throughout the world have been distributing “black lists” of Uyghur human rights activists and representatives of Uyghur exile organisations, whose entry visas should be refused.

In recent months the People's Republic has in the framework of its campaign against the WUC been stepping up its efforts to restrict the freedom of movement on the part of important Uyghur representatives living in exile. Particularly hard hit by this was the General Secretary of the WUC, Dolkun Isa, who lives in Munich. When he wanted to fly to Seoul, the capital of South Korea, his entry was stopped at the airport. Since he has a German passport he does not usually need a visa to enter South Korea. Isa was not arrested, but he was not allowed to leave the transit area of the airport. In several interrogation sessions Isa was given no reasons for the refusal of entry documents. The officials investigating did when asked admit that they had had a visit from the Chinese embassy. So the concern for human rights grew.

The *Society for Threatened Peoples* alarmed the German embassy in Seoul and various parliamentary delegates and German politicians who had received Isa in recent years. The German embassy worked hard for his rapid release. They were been informed that an international warrant on China's application had been issued for Isa's arrest. The Chinese authorities accused the Uyghur of having sought support for “terrorist organisations” before his flight to Germany. Eventually Isa was allowed after two days waiting in the transit area to board a plane back to Germany. Amnesty International welcomed his return, but criticised the refusal of his entry to South Korea.

Taiwan also refused entry to Isa with reference to the international warrant. The restriction of Dolkun Isa's freedom of movement shows how Chinese offices plan their work against exile Uyghurs and criminalise the work of human rights activists.

6.3 Spying on exile Uyghurs

On 24th November 2009 it became known that the Federal Public Prosecutor was taking up proceedings against Uyghurs living in Germany suspected of having spied on exile Uyghurs on behalf of the Chinese General Consulate in Munich. There are in Munich some 700 Uyghurs. It is the largest Uyghur community in Central and Western Europe. There are also several exile-Uyghur organisations in Munich, which are described by the Chinese authorities as “terrorist”. But German authorities have never seen any cause to take action – as China would like - against these organisations because they abide by the Constitution and respect the laws. The group of agents suspected is thought to have been controlled by the Chinese General Consulate in Munich. People working for the World Uyghur Congress have received several threats in recent months.

In Sweden also the Chinese embassy has set spies on exile-Uyghurs. The Public Prosecutor in Stockholm has been investigating the case of a 61-year old Uyghur from

China, who came to Sweden as a refugee in the 90s and who today has Swedish citizenship. The man is suspected of spying on 15 exile-Uyghurs and passing his knowledge on to an officer in the Chinese embassy and to a Chinese ambassador (*Agence France Presse*, 15.12.2009 / *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14.7.2009 / *Radio Free Asia*, 24.6.2009). The man was arrested in June 2009 and on 8th March convicted to 16 months in prison for espionage (*BBC*, 08.03.2010).

A similar case took place in Pakistan. The 41-year old Uyghur Kamardin Abdurahman, who lives as a second-generation resident in Pakistan, travelled with a group of 30 Pakistanis and Uyghurs by land to Xinjiang. Their destination was Urumqi, which they had not seen since the disturbances of July 2009. The Uyghurs were separated immediately from the other travellers on entry. His passport was later confiscated by the police in Kashgar. He was tied up and interrogated. He was held for two weeks and fined for having made negative statements. He was later visited by three police officers – two Han Chinese and one Uyghur – in his cell, who pressed him to spy for the security service. They told him that they had paid his fine and ordered him to spy on exile-Uyghurs in Pakistan and to become a member of the cultural organisation *Omer Uyghur Trust*. China has made several attempts in recent years to have the critical culture organisation closed. He was also told to make a list of persons taking part in anti-Chinese activities. He was promised in exchange free entry to China and they said that he would be free to go about his business and that his family would be left in peace (*Radio Free Asia*, 2.12.2009).

Uyghurs living in Pakistan have on many occasions been put under pressure by security personnel on visits to China to force them into spying activities.

6.4 Repression against Kadeer's family

The campaign against Rebiya Kadeer culminated in the publication of a letter of three family members living in China, in which they accused their mother of having stirred up the disturbance in Urumqi. The letter published in extracts by Chinese government media on 3rd August 2009 was signed by her son Khahar, her daughter Roxingul and her younger brother Memet (*Xinhua*, 3.8. 2009). "We would like a stable and secure life here", said the signatories. "Do not destroy our happy life here". This formulation alone made the letter untrustworthy because Khahar Abdureym, her eldest son, was sentenced to a heavy fine some years ago in the framework of "joint family responsibility", which is practised in China. Her daughter and younger brother have been under house-arrest for years to force their mother, who is living abroad, to stop making critical statements in public. Her two sons, Ablikim Abdureyim and Alim Abdureyim, were even sent to prison for several years on a trumped-up charge. Their "confessions" were extorted under torture. In truth a "happy life", which Kadeer's family members remaining in China lead.

In a further letter to Han Chinese, who were victims of violent attacks of Uyghurs in July 2009, the relatives accused Kadeer and the WUC of being responsible for the violence. In view of the strange formulations it can be taken for granted that the relatives were forced by the Chinese authorities to sign the letters. Rebiya Kadeer and the WUC also argue that the letters were not signed voluntarily by the relatives (*Radio Free Asia*, 3.8.2009). Kadeer was extremely upset concerning the fate of her relatives who remain

in China since they are constantly being used as a lever against her (*Agence France Presse*, 5.8.2009). The Uyghur accused the Chinese authorities with using “psychological torture” against her children. Thereupon the US government appealed to Beijing to stop using punitive measures against the president of the WUC living in exile in the USA (*Agence France Presse*, 27.8.2009).

However the Chinese authorities were not impressed by this appeal. Her children and grandchildren were directed to move out of the Kadeer family home in Urumqi. For years the complex, consisting of three buildings, has been watched by the police and the security forces. Filming by foreign journalists near it has been forbidden. Several shops nearby had to close at the direction of the authorities on 7th September 2009. Under the pretext that cracks in the walls formed a threat to the stability of the building the authorities ordered the Akida shopping centre to be demolished (*Xinhua*, 9.9.2009).

There were in the past some 500 Uyghur shops in the complex of buildings belonging to the Kadeer family. In the 80s and 90s Mrs. Kadeer built up a large textiles business and became one of the wealthiest women in China. Since she donated part of the profit to social projects for impoverished Uyghur women she had a good reputation among the Uyghurs. China’s rulers tried to profit from this and made her a deputy in the Chinese Parliament. Kadeer represented China officially at the World Conference on Women in the Chinese capital in the year 1995. But when she publicly voiced criticism in the Chinese Parliament on China’s nationality policies and her husband Sidik Rouzi requested political asylum in the USA she fell in disfavour and was sentenced in an unfair court hearing in the year 1999 for “violation of state secrets” to eight years imprisonment.

The destruction of her business house is full of symbolism. As in neighbouring Tibet, where China is trying to wipe out all traces of the Dalai Lama and even the possession of photos of His Holiness is punishable, the authorities in Xinjiang are trying to wipe out all memories of Kadeer’s work.

6.5 Personal attacks on Kadeer’s husband

Just a few days after the disturbances the Chinese government news agency Xinhua attacked Sidik Rouzi, the husband of his better known wife, Rebia Kadeer. Rouzi is a writer, who has spent eight ears of his life as a political prisoner in Chinese prisons. In April 1996 he fled to the USA after being informed that a new arrest was imminent. The news agency Xinhua quoted some of his former school-friends, who called the writer “a trouble-maker” and “a disgrace” to their village “For years this man has done nothing worthwhile for us, instead he and his wife have only committed crimes which have caused the deaths of old friends”, said the 65-year old Abulikmu Tielwardi.

6.6 Dialogue with exile Uyghurs is refused

All attempts on Kadeer’s part at opening a dialogue with the Chinese rulers have been without success. The President of the WUC called on the Chinese government on 28th August at the Human Rights Committee of the European Parliament to talks in order to seek solutions for the conflicts (*Agence France Presse*, 1.9.2009). Hou Hammin, speaker

of the local government in Xinjiang, rejected the suggestion briskly on 30th August 2009. Kadeer would have no legitimation to speak to the Chinese government (*Global Times / Agence France Presse*, 3.9.2009).

6.7 No protection for refugees living in Cambodia and Burma

In spite of the protests of human rights organisations and the governments of several states twenty Uyghur refugees were deported from Cambodia to China on 19th December 2009. Among the refugees were also two children aged one year and six months. The refugees came from Urumqi and fled with the help of Christian missionaries (*Associated Press*, 19.12.2009). They had applied in December 2009 to the office of the *High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* in Cambodia and requested protection. China had warned of taking in "criminals" and demanded their extradition so that they could be put on trial in the People's Republic for their "crimes" (*Agence France Presse*, 16.12.2009). Beijing welcomed the deportation of the refugees and assured them that a legal trial would be held (*RTTNews*, 21.12.2009 / *New York Times*, 13.2.2010). The human rights organisation *Human Rights Watch* points out that deported ethnic Uyghurs usually disappear without a trace in prison (*BBC*, 29.1.2010).

The deportation took place just two days before the long planned visit of the Deputy Chinese president Xi Jinping to Cambodia. Cambodian-Chinese relations are exemplary for friendly cooperation, said a speaker of the Cambodian government. Both states signed trade agreements to the value of 1.2 billion US dollars (*Associated Press, New York Times*, 22.12.2009). China denied any connection between the deportation and the generous aid programme for its neighbour.

In Burma / Myanmar also there is no real protection for Uyghur refugees. At the end of January 2010, 17 Uyghurs and one Han Chinese from Burma were deported to their home-country. Burma is seen as one of the most loyal allies of China. The People's Republic is the largest investor in the neighbouring country and is building dozens of dams and other large projects in Burma.

7. The systematic suppression of the Uyghurs

7.1 Beijing wants no reform of its nationality policies

China will not make any basic change in its nationality policy, said the minister responsible in the Committee for Ethnic Matters, Yang Jing, after the disturbances in Urumqi (*Xinhua*, 30.9.2009). For the Deputy Prime Minister Hui Liangyu nationality policy is one of the centre-pillars on which the stability of the People's Republic is built. It is vital to continue efforts to strengthen the ethnic unity and harmony in the country. At the present time the relations between the ethnic groups are harmonious and great progress is being made in strengthening ethnic unity, said Liangyu. Wishful thinking... Just a glance at the massively censored government TV ought to start the Deputy Prime Minister thinking and give him cause for alarm. The recent protests in Urumqi and the conflicts in Lhasa and many Tibetan towns in the spring of 2008 have made clear how deep the gulf of misunderstanding between important groups of the population is. Never have relations been so tense between Han Chinese on the one hand and Uyghurs and Tibetans on the other.

Instead of thinking about the causes of the increasing conflicts and looking for new approaches to the failed nationality policies, Beijing sets everything on the card of continuity and looking the other way.

It is not talks with those concerned and with persons they see as being trustworthy which Beijing wants, but simply to rely on the power of the state to achieve its ends in East Turkestan and Tibet. Instead of a solution to the problems Beijing is counting on containment. So the expenses for security in Xinjiang have been increased by almost 90 percent. An increasing number of riot police, soldiers, police and riot police have been sent to the north-west of the country to secure "unity" by military means. No further steps have been taken concerning the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of 1984. No action is being taken to further the genuine autonomy of Xinjiang. Instead of beginning a credible dialogue and gleaning information on the needs and wishes of the local population new laws are constantly being passed which render impossible any open discussion concerning the inadequacies of the present nationality policies. Anyone looking for debate on the subject must expect to be criminalised and declared a terrorist.

7.2 Uyghurs criticise settlement of Han Chinese

The steady change in the population structure through an increasing number of Han Chinese, who settle in the region for at least a certain time, is one of the largest problems in the dispute between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government concerning the future of the region.

Demographic figures from the 19th century show that the Uyghurs traditionally made up the largest group of the population in East Turkestan. The Uyghurs counted in the year 1887 1.13 million, i.e. more than 90 percent of the inhabitants of north-west China (*Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, James Milward, 2007, p. 152).

In 1941 the Uyghurs still made up 80 percent of the population (Kazakhs, 8.7 and Han Chinese 5 percent).

In the year 1982 the Uyghurs were only 45.8 percent of the population (Han Chinese 40.4 and Kazakhs 6.9 percent).

In the year 2000 the Uyghurs made up according to official figures only 45.2 percent of the inhabitants (Han Chinese 40.6 and Kazakhs 6.7 percent).

Between the years 1990 and 2000 the share of Han Chinese in the population has increased by 32 percent. The real figures of Han Chinese inhabitants is probably even higher since there are no statistics to cover soldiers, riot police and members of the paramilitary construction body (Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, XPCC, made up chiefly of former soldiers, who have settled along the state borders for the security of the territory) and the constantly rising number of Chinese migrants.

Particularly along the railway lines and in the larger cities hundreds of thousands of Han Chinese are settling. With tax advantages and other incentives the new settlers from the East of China are being encouraged by the authorities to come to the north-west. The Uyghurs are calling for limitation on immigration in order to prevent a dramatic change in the population structure, which in the long runs would make the Uyghurs a negligible minority in their own region.

The Uyghurs fear a systematic Sinicization of their region. Cities like Urumqi have already lost much of their Uyghur character. In the course of just a few years they have become an exchangeable Chinese metropolis. Uyghurs often find themselves in the minority. The long-term retention of their culture and identity is in such circumstances hardly possible. In regions where the destruction of the old settlement structure has not gone so far, Chinese authorities employ bulldozers, as in Kashgar, to demolish the old town with specious arguments and in order to build a modern Chinese "Kashi". However in the new Chinese city many Uyghurs feel out of place.

7.3 Uyghurs demand equal treatment

In the regularly published "white books" published by government offices and development reports progress in the battle against poverty among the nationalities is emphasised. So the Chinese government declared in its most recent white book on the state of the nationalities that in the year 2008 only 7.7 million people are poor, while in the year 1985 it was 40 million (*Xinhua*, 28.9.2009). This sounds impressive to outsiders, but for most members of the minorities such abstract figures of over-filled plans just produce incredulous surprise.

These people do not see their situation as improved. They compare their conditions of life with those of their Han Chinese neighbours and feel themselves neglected and unequally treated. Time and again they describe their impression of a class society, in which their unsatisfactory knowledge of the Chinese language and the wrong ethnic origin render them fit only to be second-class citizens.

It is in the job-market that they feel particularly at a systematic disadvantage. Many Han Chinese employ only their fellow-countrymen, be it out of solidarity, out of fear of cultural alienation, out of prejudice (“Uyghurs do not work as hard as Han Chinese”) or out of the disregard of the local population. In certain strategically important branches of industry (mineral oil industry etc.), Uyghurs are hardly ever employed as they are seen as politically unreliable.

Both women and Uyghurs are often disadvantaged in recruitment procedures in public service in Xinjiang. It is worth noting that both the Autonomy Law of Xinjiang of 1984 and also various Chinese laws call for equal treatment of women and members of minorities. A particularly extreme example is the discrimination of Uyghurs in the paramilitary *Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC)*, which employs almost exclusively Han Chinese.

Many employers assume that Uyghurs will in matters of doubt always opt for their fellow-countrymen and not for the concerns of Han Chinese. The disturbances in Urumqi have stirred up distrust between the ethnic groups so it is even more difficult for a Uyghur to get a job with a Han Chinese. Unemployment among Uyghurs is said to lie at 15 percent. A particularly large problem is caused by the many young people who leave school and burst onto the labour market without any prospect of finding suitable jobs.

The well respected Uyghur economic scientist Ilham Tohti sees in the growing unemployment one of the greatest social problems of the Uyghurs. Tohti has constantly appealed on his website, read by many Han Chinese, for equal opportunity for the Chinese immigrants and the indigenous Uyghurs. He has very often called on the leaders of the provincial government to do more for the large number of unemployed Uyghurs. He also set up a website in the Chinese language, *Uyghur Online*, which is particularly concerned with building bridges of understanding between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. In the light of the subjective and defamatory reporting by the official media this is an important contribution to getting rid of the general distrust and the low level of knowledge about the other ethnic group. The only answer of the local government to his demands was his arrest after the disturbances in Urumqi.

It is weird and disconcerting that the Chinese government, which is constantly emphasising harmony and ethnic unity should persecute precisely those citizens who are working energetically for credible and genuine understanding between the hostile ethnic groups.

7.4 Beijing's failed language policy

In all official publications China's authorities give themselves good marks for their “two language education”. The Uyghur language is encouraged alongside Chinese in an exemplary fashion, state the White Books and brochures for foreign visitors and journalists. But this has little connection with reality. Nur Bekri, the chair of the regional government of Xinjiang, makes no bones over his low opinion of the Uyghur language: “(...) Terrorists from neighbouring states are recruiting Uyghurs because they are relatively isolated from the majority society since they cannot speak Mandarin. So they get drawn into terrorist activities” (*China Daily*, 5.6.2009). The quotation makes it clear

that Uyghur is in the view of most Han Chinese the language of those who do not want to participate in the general success in life or in the mainstream society.

In the past 20 years China has in East Turkestan conducted an assimilation policy which is being steadily made more rigorous. Chinese laws and international agreements are being broken and the Uyghur language is being forced more and more out of the schools and in spite of all rhetoric about bilingual education the whole education system is being built up exclusively on the Chinese language. Article 10 of the Autonomy Law of 1984 guarantees that ethnic minorities “have the right to use and develop their languages”. Article 37 of this law even provides that “schools in which the students are mainly from the ethnic minorities should whenever possible use books written in their own languages”. The policy of assimilation was sharpened further from 2002 onwards when the regional government decided to introduce the Chinese language compulsorily as the language of instruction also in the first two years of study at the University of Xinjiang. In the year 2004 the regional government ordered that “bilingual language teaching” should be encouraged. This meant that in schools general teaching was increasingly being conducted in the Chinese language, while the minority language was only used in classes for special Uyghur teaching (*Xinjiang Daily*, 7.12.2005). In the year 2006 the decree was finally passed that in primary school instruction should take place only in the Chinese language.

Fewer and fewer teachers are now being trained in the Uyghur language. Teachers today additionally require a good knowledge of Chinese in order to be employed as teachers at all. The Uyghurs see in this fatal development deliberate attempts of the Chinese majority to destroy their traditional language, culture and identity.

7.5 Freedom of religion is infringed

The Chinese constitution does guarantee religious freedom, but since the terror attacks of 11th September 2001 freedom of worship for Moslems in the north-west of China has been radically limited in the framework of the Beijing “Anti-terror campaign”. Moslem religious leaders must take part regularly at patriotic re-education courses. Women are forbidden the wearing of veils, and men are constantly being reminded not to wear beards. Young people under the age of 18 are forbidden to go to mosques. Koran-schools are closed by force and religious ceremonies arbitrarily disturbed and forbidden by security forces. Religious texts are confiscated under the pretext that they encourage extremism. Children and young people are called on not to take part in religious ceremonies. The faithful are prevented from taking part in pilgrimages to Mecca.

In 2007 and 2008 the authorities several times gave instructions that public servants should not take part in the fasting of the fasting month of Ramadan. Restaurants were also forbidden from closing during Ramadan. The owners of two Moslem restaurants were arrested in September 2008 because they disregarded the directions of the authorities and did precisely this. In August 2008 the authorities made children return to Xinjiang who had been sent by their parents to other provinces for religious reasons. On their return the children were taken into care by security personnel for taking part in “illegal religious activities”.

The many cases of preventing freedom of religion are the more surprising since most of the Uyghurs practised a moderate form of Sunni Islam, which has today the strong stamp of the folklore, traditions and customs of the Uyghurs.

China's authorities are responsible for massive violations of human rights in East Turkestan. None of the other ethnic groups in the People's Republic suffers as much from the arbitrary imposition and carrying out of the death penalty and from the irresponsible use of violence by the state. This massive persecution can only be explained by the great economic, strategic and political importance of Xinjiang for the People's Republic of China. East Turkestan with its rich reserves of raw materials is today one of the guarantors of the economic success of the rising world power China.

7.6 The importance of Xinjiang for China

More than 60 percent of the economy of the region is controlled by state companies. Large infrastructure and mineral projects have added additional importance to the influence of the central government and the dependence of East Turkestan. East Turkestan is today one of the most important suppliers of energy and raw materials to the People's Republic. The industrial boom in the east of China would hardly have been possible without the cheap and strategically secure raw materials in East Turkestan.

Natural gas: East Turkestan produced in the year 2008 more than 30 percent of the natural gas used in China. The Tarim Basin is the largest gas field in China. One fifth of the total natural gas production of China came in the year 2008 from the Tarim Basin (*Radio Free Asia*, 13.07.2009). With 24 thousand million cubic meters of gas the region was the most important producer in the country (*People's Daily*, 24.7.2009). The discovery of 17.4 billion cubic meters has within a year nearly doubled the known deposits (2008: 10.8 billion cubic meters).

Since the construction in 2004/2005 of the first west-east gas pipeline 12 thousand million cubic meters are being transported through them to the industrial centres in the regions of Shanghai and Hongkong. This capacity is to be increased to the fullest of 17 billion cubic meters. The construction of a second natural gas pipeline was begun at the beginning of 2008. The cost of construction will be at least 13 thousand million US dollars. This will cover a length of 8,653 km and cross 14 provinces. A third west-east pipeline is to be built by the year 2014 and above all ensure the transport of natural gas from central Asian states (*Bloomberg*, 25.11.2009). Consideration is also being given to the construction of a fourth and fifth gas transport line.

China will double its consumption of natural gas by the year 2015. In 2009 China's gas imports rose by 7.7 percent (*Xinhua*, 16.2.2010).

Mineral oil: East Turkestan became in 2008 with 27.4 million tons the second largest producer of natural gas for China. Between the years 1997 and 2007 the region occupied only the third place among the supply regions. Additional supplies of 115,000 barrels of oil per day were imported through a pipeline and by rail from Kazakhstan (*Radio Free Asia*, 14.9.2009). In the year 2009 it was ascertained that in the Tarim Basin alone there are deposits of 497 million tons of mineral oil (*Xinhua*, 1.8.2009).

In the Junggar Basin there are an additional 10.7 billion tons of oil and gas. The total reserves of East Turkestan are estimated at 20.9 billion tons.

In September 2009 the authorities began to build up a strategic reserve of oil in Xinjiang. From October 2010 oil from Kazakhstan and Russia is to be stored in the 5.4 million cubic meters of reserves (*Agence France Presse, 25.9.2009*).

In February 2010 the *China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec)* discovered a deposit of 100 million tons of oil near Urumqi (*Bloomberg, 12.2.2010*).

The *China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)* is planning the investment of some 40.9 thousand million US dollars in the construction of refineries, pipelines, oil reserves and petrochemical works in Xinjiang (*China Daily, 30.10.2009*).

China's need for oil by the year 2020 is estimated at approximately 600 million tons annually (*Xinhua, 23.9.2009*).

China has now a pipeline network of 50,000 km for mineral oil and natural gas. It is becoming increasingly difficult to guarantee the security of the pipelines. Between the years 2002 and 2006 the *CNPC* registered 18,400 cases of theft, which cost the company 72 million US dollars (*China Daily, 6.1.2010*). But it is also becoming increasingly difficult to protect the pipelines from possible attacks.

Coal: East Turkestan has about 40 percent of the Chinese coal deposits (2.2 billion tons). In the year 2008 about 67.7 million tons of coal got produced. For the year 2010 a production of 100 million tons is estimated (*Xinhua, 24.8.2009*).

In April 2009 in Hami (San Tanghu Basin) a coal deposit of two billion tons was discovered (*People's Daily, 13.5.2009*).

Some 139 new coal-mines are to be opened in the course of 2010 in Xinjiang (*Xinhua, 24.8.2009*). The *China National Coal Group*, the second largest coal supplier in China, announced in May 2009 new investments in East Turkestan to a value of 15 billion US dollars.

Nickel: In the year 2007 new nickel reserves of 900,000 tons were discovered in East Turkestan.

Gold: Some 52 companies are involved in gold-mining in the south-west of Xinjiang. In the year 2009 they were able to mine more than 9 tons of gold, an increase of 14.3 percent by comparison with the previous year (*China.org, 19.6.2009*).

Niobium and tantalum: In August 2009 rich deposits of the rare metals niobium and tantalum were discovered in the south of East Turkestan (Baicheng district, Aksu prefecture). The deposits contain more than 100,000 tons of niobium and 10,000 tons of tantalum with an estimated value of 19 thousand million US dollars. Both metals are needed in the electronics and aircraft industries and in the construction of nuclear power-stations (*China Daily, 31.8.2009*).

Copper: Approximately seven million tons of copper are thought to exist in various deposits in East Turkestan (*Chinamining.org*.10.6.2009).

Iron ore: 600 million tons of iron ore have been discovered in Xinjiang.

Zinc and lead: 2.5 million tons of these raw materials are estimated in East Turkestan.

Transport: By the year 2020 China intends to build ten new railway lines (with a total length of 2,000 km. By this time a rail connection between Tibet and East Turkestan is to be completed. One of the five routes is to join the province of Gansu with Urumqi. The fast line with top speeds of 300 km/h is to reduce the journey time from 36 to 12 hours.