



Legitimizing Repression:

China's "War on Terror" Under Xi Jinping
and State Policy in East Turkestan

UHRP

UYGHUR HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project
Washington, D.C.

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Cover image: Chinese soldiers march in front of the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar on July 31, 2014. (Getty Images)

1. Summary

According to data assembled by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) from Chinese and overseas media, a range of 656 to 715 individuals lost their lives in the violence that engulfed Uyghurs and other ethnicities between 2013-14. The number of fatalities in 2014 is approximately double that of 2013. Although these numbers should not be considered definitive, as the Chinese government tightly controls information in East Turkestan, they are indicative of a deterioration in conditions during the two calendar years of Xi Jinping's tenure as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and President of the People's Republic of China.

In discussing the findings of UHRP's report, it should be noted that behind the data are individuals, families and communities. The statistics referenced throughout the report on fatalities, injuries and arrests all have a human face and it is important to remember the devastation violence causes to innocent lives.

China has described much of the violence in East Turkestan as "terrorism." UHRP condemns terrorism and advocates for a peaceful resolution to the legitimate political grievances of the Uyghur people. Terrorism is a scourge of civilized societies and states should not misuse counterterror measures for political gain, as this may paradoxically create the conditions for violence. When states make "terror" allegations, especially in information-restricted environments and against marginalized populations, it is important to examine these allegations, as much as is possible, to independently assess their trustworthiness.

In the 2013-14 period, UHRP recorded 125 incidents overall from media sources, 89 of these incidents were violent. UHRP selected incidents interpreted as "political." Reports detailing common crimes, such as theft, were not included. Overall incidents that met those qualifications in 2014 were roughly double those in 2013. According to the data, there were approximately eight fatalities per violent incident from 2013 to 2014 and a majority of violent incidents witnessed one to ten fatalities. Uyghurs were three times more likely than Han Chinese to be killed in the violence and Uyghurs were more likely to be labeled as "perpetrators" of the violence, rather than as civilians, which may indicate that the two have become conflated. According to the research, there was a ten-fold increase in 2014 in sentences handed down to Uyghurs for involvement in incidents.

Kashgar Prefecture experienced the largest number of fatalities. Of the 327 deaths in Kashgar Prefecture, 199 occurred in Yarkand County. Aksu (79 fatalities) and Hotan (76 fatalities) recorded the second and third highest number of deaths among prefecture level administrative areas. Unsurprisingly, the prefectures with the highest documented incidents were Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu. Consequently, the south of the region, a Uyghur majority area, was most heavily impacted. The north, where Uyghurs comprise a smaller proportion of the population, was largely unaffected by violent incidents and fatalities, except Urumchi. China does not consistently state to an overseas *or* domestic audience that its Muslim Uyghur citizens bear the highest costs for violence in East Turkestan.

A spike in incidents was noted between April to July 2014, a period that included Ramadan and intensified security measures as Chinese authorities announced a one-year “anti-terror” campaign. From the data, at least one Uyghur was shot dead by Chinese security forces in two thirds of the violent incidents during this period of intensification.

There are a troubling number of incidents in which the police killed all alleged “perpetrators.” The possibility exists that excessive force and extrajudicial killings are a feature of the Chinese state’s security approach to incidents. In addition, a number of incidents recorded by UHRP appear to have been *provoked* by heavy-handed, or at best insensitive, policing. The disproportionate use of force during house-to-house searches and at security checkpoints led to an escalation of circumstances into a violent confrontation. In some incidents, police escalated an already tense situation into an instance of state violence, such as in Alaqagha, Aksu Prefecture, when police opened fire on demonstrators. Incidents such as the one in Alaqagha merit further investigation, as do credible allegations of state violence in Hanerik and Siriqbuya.

The Chinese state media underreported incidents during 2013-14, reporting less than a third of the incidents. Over two thirds of the 37 incidents official media did report were labeled as “terrorism.” UHRP recognizes that some incidents occurring during the 2013-14 period appear to be premeditated attacks and unequivocally condemns these acts. Due to China’s tight control of information, the extreme lack of transparency surrounding incidents of violence should cause alarm among independent observers. Only an independent and international investigation into the violence will dispel fears in the international community that China is employing “counterterror” measures to repress legitimate Uyghur grievances.

China has not only deliberately obscured incidents of state violence against Uyghurs from outside scrutiny, but also it has not offered a full account of the causes for the violence. China’s dominance over the narrative of conditions in East Turkestan should not lead to a closing of a wide-ranging debate on the causes of violence. Scarcity of information, taboos over discussing “sensitive” issues and political expediency are not justifications to avoid a thorough and pluralistic discussion of the instability in East Turkestan.

Chinese officials have not publicly questioned the consequences of repressive policies and provide no forum for Uyghurs to hold policies and officials to account. Employing an approach that intentionally deflects criticism for domestic policies denying Uyghurs fundamental human rights, China claims “overseas forces” and “religious extremists” are the cause of instability. A problematic aspect of China’s “overseas forces” narrative is that China is employing domestic repression to respond to “terrorism” allegedly inspired overseas. Through “counterterror” measures ostensibly aimed at controlling “religious extremists,” China has effectively silenced peaceful Uyghur dissenters to repressive Chinese policies. As a result, Uyghurs have been left with no explicit voice to change policy at a time of inequitable political, economic, social and cultural transformation in the region. These are the seeds for conflict.

In the report, UHRP has identified Han Chinese migration, economic discrimination, restrictions on Uyghur identity, such as religion, and intensified political repression, including curbs on freedom of speech and information as contributing factors to the growth of tension in East Turkestan, especially in the south of the region. These factors should not be viewed in isolation, but as an amalgam of the pressures facing Uyghurs. Furthermore, these factors did not just arise in the time period under review, but have been in place for some time, leading to a slow intensification of the tensions in the region. The latest iteration of Chinese state remedies to purportedly ease the tensions in East Turkestan, announced after the second Work Forum in May 2014, do little to change this direction. The proposed panacea of “ethnic mingling” is misguided at best. It is no solution to tell Uyghurs to move from East Turkestan to seek work and study opportunities, and to subsume Uyghur identity into the *Zhonghua minzu* is not the key to resolving the endemic marginalization and stigmatization of the Uyghur people in China. The vast majority of Uyghurs will still want to continue to self-identify as Uyghurs.

2. Methodology

This report of incidents involving Uyghurs between 2013-14 is intended to offer a more complete picture than presented by the Chinese state media. UHRP researchers noticed a marked difference between the number of incidents reported by state media and overseas media agencies, particularly Radio Free Asia (RFA). It appeared from a rough comparison of these two sources that Chinese state media was not reporting all of the incidents occurring during the time period under review.

The data collected for this report was gathered from domestic and overseas sources on incidents to provide a combined overview of events. UHRP collected information on location (by village, township, county and prefecture) and date of incidents; fatalities, ethnicities and status (civilian, “perpetrator” and state actor) of fatalities per incident; injuries, ethnicities and status per incident; arrests per incident; whether the state declared the incident “terrorist;” whether Uyghurs were shot; and whether the state reported the incident. In a separate database, UHRP researchers recorded the dates and locations of sentences handed down to Uyghurs; the length of sentence, in particular life, death with reprieve or death; total number of sentences; as well as the date, location and total number of executions.

UHRP selected incidents interpreted as “political.” The term “political” in this sense conveys incidents related to state actions or policies. These incidents may be state inflicted or self-initiated. Reports detailing common crimes, such as theft, were not included. UHRP considered an “incident” as an event involving Uyghurs in which there occurred a fatality, injury and/or arrest. Sentencings and executions were not considered as “incidents.”

UHRP’s data differs from previous assessments of incidents using media reports in that sources from inside and outside of China were researched in English, Mandarin and Uyghur. The latter of these sources is critical in making a more complete data reconstruction, as UHRP researchers found a large number of incidents unreported in another language.

Due to Chinese government restrictions on press freedom, the data collected for this report *should not* be considered complete and its conclusions are therefore subject to this condition. UHRP suspects the numbers to be larger than documented. When conducting the research, UHRP sometimes found only one source for an incident or that information for an incident was not complete, especially in regard to exact location and the ethnicities and status of those involved. Accounts of the causes of incidents often varied between state media reports and independent reporting by overseas media, principally Radio Free Asia. Furthermore, researchers on rare occasions found source articles to be confusing with conflicting numbers and dates reported. For this reason and because of discrepancies between state and overseas reports, UHRP collected information in ranges.

It must also be stressed that the report takes its data from *media reports* and not other sources, such as court reports from China, as disaggregated information is not always

available in such information. Finally the review period takes into consideration two years in the history of East Turkestan. Future work on quantitatively assessing incidents in East Turkestan should place this short period into a broader timeframe.

3. Data

I. Data Aggregated by UHRP

a. *Individuals*

According to research of available media reports, UHRP estimates between 656 and 715 people lost their lives in the violent incidents UHRP documented between 2013-14 (see Table 1). The actual number of fatalities is liable to be higher and in most likelihood the number of people killed between 2013-14 will never be known due to the lack of transparency the Chinese authorities employ when reporting violent incidents. If reports of mass killings in Yarkand County in July 2014 can be confirmed, the total number of fatalities during the 24-month period under review will number in the thousands rather than the hundreds. For these reasons, the following analysis of fatalities, injuries and arrests uses the higher number of the range compiled by UHRP unless specified.

The total figure of deaths in 2014 approximately doubles those in 2013, indicating a marked deterioration in the security environment across the region. UHRP recorded 32 violent incidents in 2013 (out of a total of 41 incidents) and 57 in 2014 (out of a total of 84 incidents). Therefore, according to the research, approximately eight individuals lost their lives per violent incident in the 2013-14 period. In 2013, there were seven fatalities per incident, and in 2014 eight per incident.

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Total	199	237	457 ¹	478 ²	656 ³	715 ⁴

Table 1: Overall fatalities 2013-14

Given the shortage of available information on fatalities between 2013-14, UHRP was not able to record identifying characteristics of all individuals killed in the violence. By status (state actor, civilian or alleged “perpetrator”), UHRP identified 635 out of 715 and by ethnicity 521 out of 715.

Table 2 shows alleged “perpetrators” in the violence were more likely to be killed than state actors or civilians in violent incidents. At the low end of the range, “perpetrator” deaths outnumber those of state actors by approximately four times. At the high end of the range, this figure is slightly over three times. Table 3 also shows Uyghurs were more

¹ Total does not include alleged 1,000 to 3,000 killed in Yarkand County incident on July 28, 2014 (see: Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, August 5). ‘At Least 2,000 Uyghurs Killed’ in Yarkand Violence: Exile Leader. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/yarkand-08052014150547.html>)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

likely to die in violent incidents than Han Chinese during 2013-14. Uyghur fatalities outnumber Han Chinese over three times.

UHRP records an average of one state actor killed per violent incident between 2013-14. The number for “perpetrators” is four and the number of civilians is two; however, the status of 80 individuals, about one per incident, remains unaccounted. UHRP also records an average of one Han Chinese killed per violent incident between 2013-14. The number for Uyghurs is four; however, the ethnicity of 194 individuals, about two per incident, remains unaccounted.

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
State	19	63	45	54	53	108
“Perpetrator”	113	122	236	243	229	333
Civilian	26	54	126	167	125	194

Table 2: Identifiable fatalities by status 2013-14

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Uyghur	116	151	235	240	351	391
Han	32	38	80	86	112	124
Other	4	4	2	2	6	6

Table 3: Identifiable fatalities by ethnicity 2013-14

Chart 1 demonstrates the close relationship between alleged “perpetrators” of the violence and ethnicity. According to a month-by-month analysis, there is a close relationship between Uyghur and “perpetrator” fatalities. Only in June 2014 were “perpetrator” fatalities slightly higher than Uyghur fatalities. This does not indicate the involvement of other ethnicities as “perpetrators” in violent incidents, but rather missing information on the ethnicity of people involved in the incidents for that month (in Kargilik 13 “thugs” died whose ethnicity was not known; and in Qaraqash five police of unknown ethnicity were killed by unknown assailants).

Furthermore, the close relationship between Uyghur fatalities and “perpetrator” fatalities points to low Uyghur civilian deaths (Uyghur fatalities notably outnumber “perpetrator” fatalities only in April 2013 when ten Uyghur community officials were killed in Siriqbuya). It is possible to conclude that in most instances when violent incidents are reported, especially when fatalities occur, Uyghur involvement is classed as one of a “perpetrator” in the events. Without a fuller description of the violence, it is difficult to confirm the veracity of this conclusion. Given the breadth of the violence and its location in Uyghur majority areas (see Chart 6), the low number of Uyghur civilian fatalities is startling.

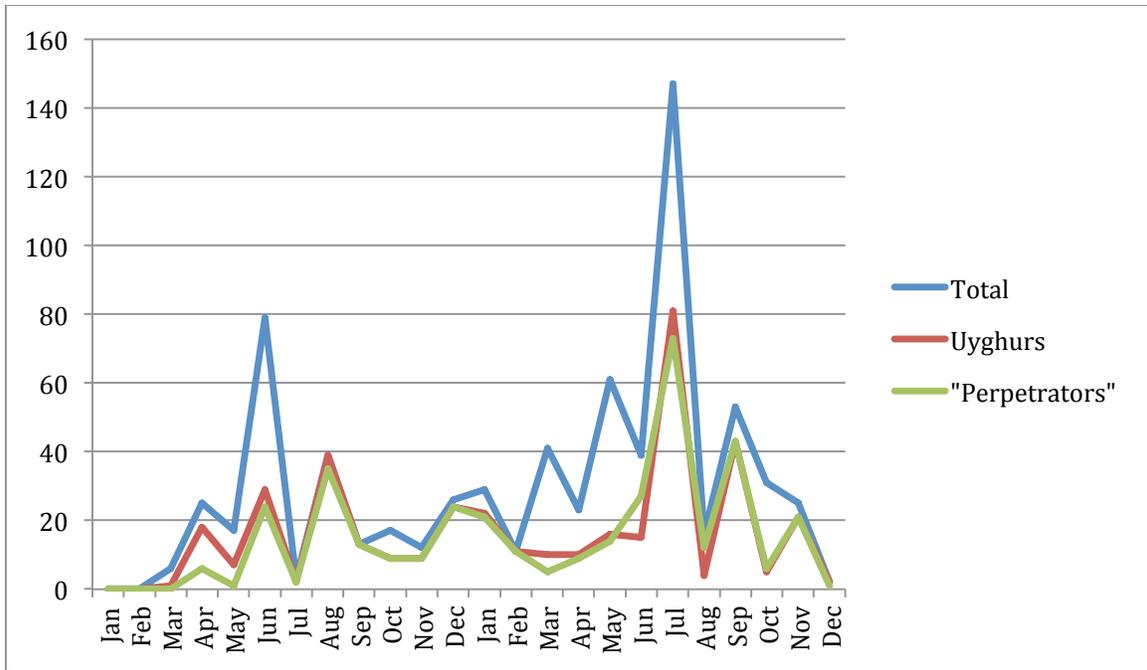


Chart 1: Total fatalities compared by month against identifiable Uyghurs and “perpetrators” 2013-14

2013 experienced 24 incidents in which the number of fatalities ranged between one and ten (five were recorded in the 11-20 range, two in the 21-30 range and one in the 41-50 range). 2014 experienced 44 incidents in which the number of fatalities ranged between one and ten (six were recorded in the 11-20 range and one each in the 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and 61 and above ranges).

Chart 2 illustrates the spatial distribution by prefecture of all fatalities between 2013-14. It is overwhelmingly clear from the diagram that Kashgar Prefecture witnessed the highest number of deaths with a total of 327 fatalities. Aksu Prefecture at 79 individuals and Hotan at 76 individuals recorded the second and third highest number of fatalities during the same period. It is noticeable that in all prefectures (except Turpan) the number of fatalities rose sharply from 2013 to 2014 commensurate with the increase in violent incidents.

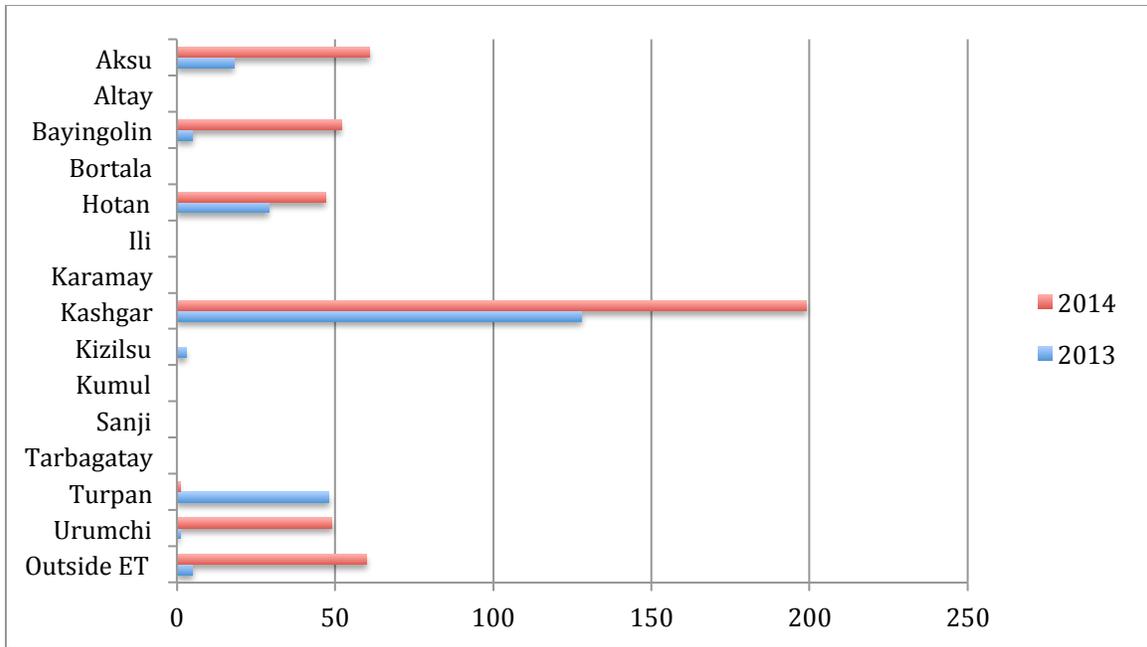
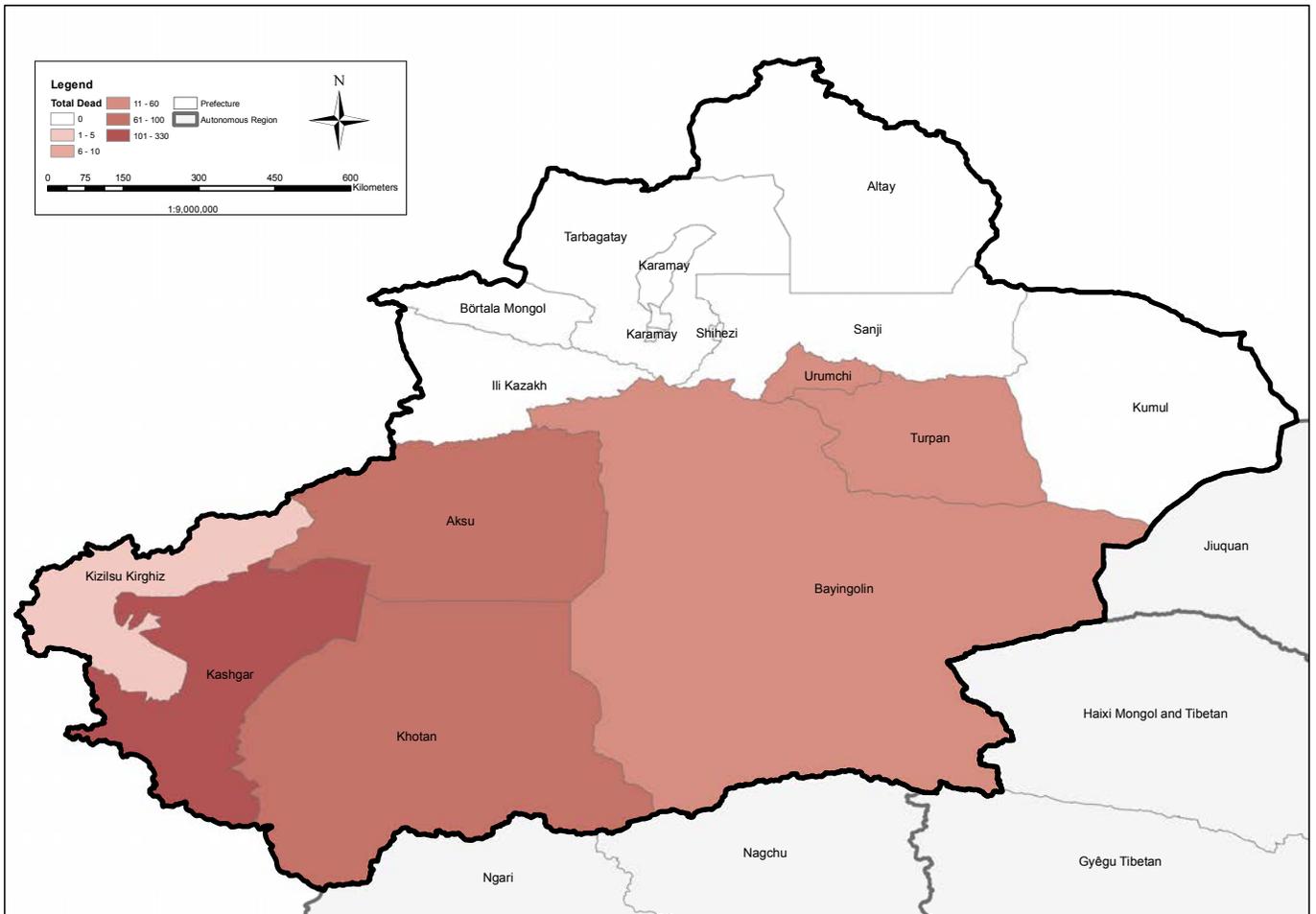


Chart 2: Fatalities by prefecture 2013-14



Map 1: Fatalities by prefecture 2013-14

The following chart looks in-depth into the spatial distribution of fatalities in Kashgar Prefecture during 2013-14. Once more, the location of the absolute majority of fatalities is clear. Yarkand County recorded 199 fatalities during the review period out of a total of 327 deaths in the entire prefecture. The number of fatalities in Yarkand County in 2014 is more than double than that of 2013, even with the exclusion of unconfirmed reports of mass killings in Elishku on July 28, 2014. Three out of 12 counties in the prefecture did not record a single fatality between 2013-14 with the widest geographical distribution occurring in 2014 when eight counties in the prefecture witnessed at least one fatality.

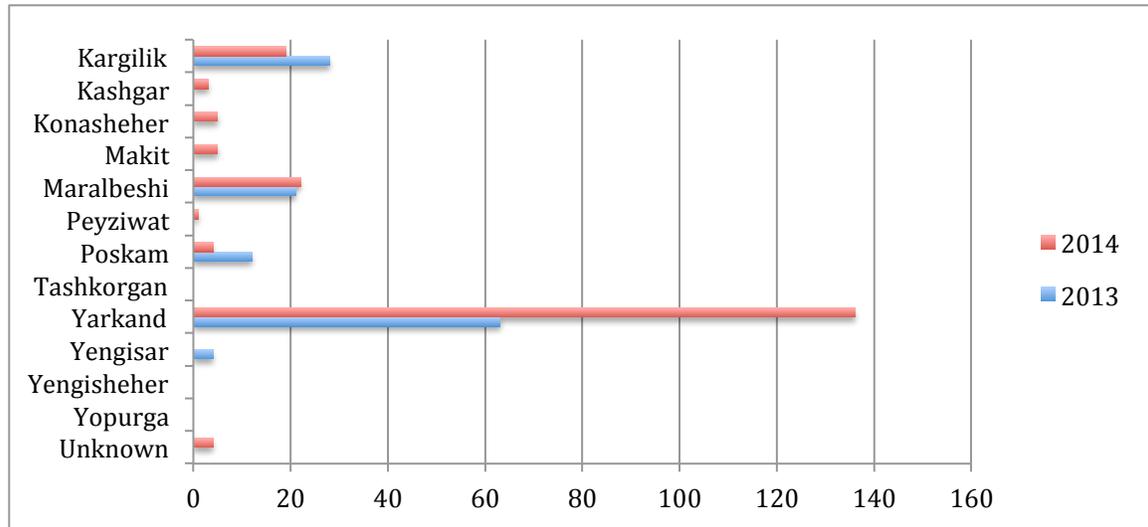


Chart 3: Fatalities in Kashgar Prefecture by county 2013-14

The number of injuries in 2014 appreciably outnumbered those in 2013 (see Table 4). The average number of injuries per violent incident in 2013 was four; however, in 2014, the average is nine. It is possible that reporting was more detailed in 2014 than 2013, but the sharp increase in average also indicates incidents may have grown more violent in 2014. In sum, seven people per violent incident were injured in East Turkestan between 2013-14.

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Total	125	138	445 ⁵	508 ⁶	570 ⁷	646 ⁸

Table 4: Overall injuries 2013-14

⁵ Total does not include two incidents in which the number of injuries was reported unclearly (May 20, 2014 in Alaqagha, Kucha County, Aksu Prefecture and October 10, 2014 in Maralbeshi County, Kashgar Prefecture).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate the characteristics of injured individuals as far as it was possible to determine according to media reports. The totals UHRP was able to record in both tables are considerably lower than figures indicated in Table 4 because in most cases the ethnicity and status were not reported. For example, for the incident in Urumchi on May 22, 2014, UHRP documented 94 injuries, but was not able to determine the ethnicity of a single individual.⁹ The most startling pattern emerging from Table 5 is the low number of “perpetrator” injuries compared to state actors and civilians. As noted, this discrepancy could be attributable to underreporting of “perpetrator” injuries owing to a lack of transparency on the part of state security authorities, even in RFA reports where local officials are cited; however, a more alarming conclusion, given the significantly high number of “perpetrator” deaths, is that security forces were more predisposed to kill “perpetrators” during violent incidents, rather than take them into custody. Table 6 signifies that Uyghurs are more likely to bear the costs of violence, regardless of their status, as injuries amongst identifiable Han Chinese and other ethnicities are lower.

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
State	15	17	26	47	41	64
“Perpetrator”	2	2	6	8	8	10
Civilian	32	32	21	78	53	110

Table 5: Identifiable injuries by status 2013-14

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Uyghur	21	21	19	52	40	73
Han	13	13	2	2	15	15
Other	4	4	0	0	4	4

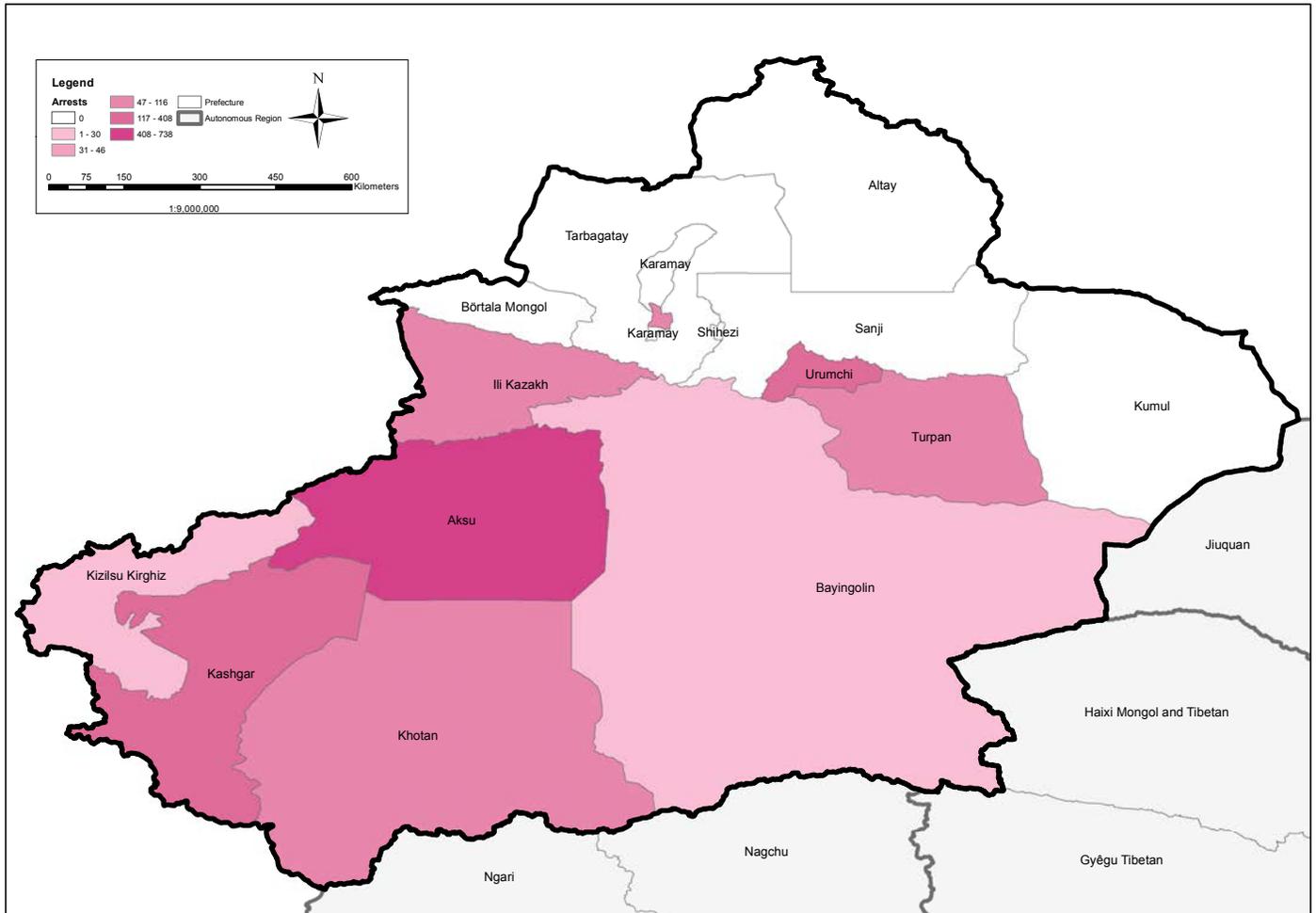
Table 6: Identifiable injuries by ethnicity 2013-14

UHRP recorded a total of 125 incidents in the 2013 to 2014 period (41 in 2013 and 84 in 2014). Table 7 records the number of arrests during the 2013 to 2014 period according to media reports. 2013-14 witnessed an average of 16 arrests per incident. Out of the 125 incidents documented, there were 73 in which UHRP was able to identify at least one arrest (21 in 2013 and 52 in 2014).

⁹ Keyoumu, Guliqiekela; Turdush, Rukiye; Yang Fan; Hai Nan and Bi Zimo. (2014, May 22). 31 Killed in Worst Attack in Years in Xinjiang's Capital Urumqi. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/blast-05222014070505.html>.

	2013		2014		Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Total	523 ¹⁰	663 ¹¹	1049 ¹²	1329 ¹³	1572 ¹⁴	1992 ¹⁵

Table 7: Overall arrests 2013-14



Map 2: Arrests by prefecture 2013-14

¹⁰ Total does not include two incidents in which the number of arrests was indeterminate in the media report (Hotan County on March 9, 2013 and Ghorachol, Awat County, Aksu Prefecture in June 2013).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Total does not include four incidents in which the number of arrests was indeterminate in the media report (Ilchi, Hotan Prefecture on February 10, 2014; Urumchi on May 22, 2014; Ilchi & Topcha, Hotan Prefecture on November 1, 2014 and Yarkand County, Kashgar Prefecture in November 2014).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Total does not include six incidents in which the number of arrests was indeterminate in the media report.

¹⁵ Ibid.

b. Incidents

The distribution of all incidents by month and year is illustrated in Chart 4 below. The number of incidents in 2014 spike between April and July, whereas incidents appear more evenly spread throughout 2013 with an increase in September. Ramadan, routinely a tense time in East Turkestan due to government restrictions on observances of the daytime fast, occurred in 2014 between June 28 and July 28. In 2013, Ramadan began on July 8 and ended August 7. Furthermore, November to February appear as “quieter” periods in both 2013 and 2014, except for one sharp increase in January 2014.

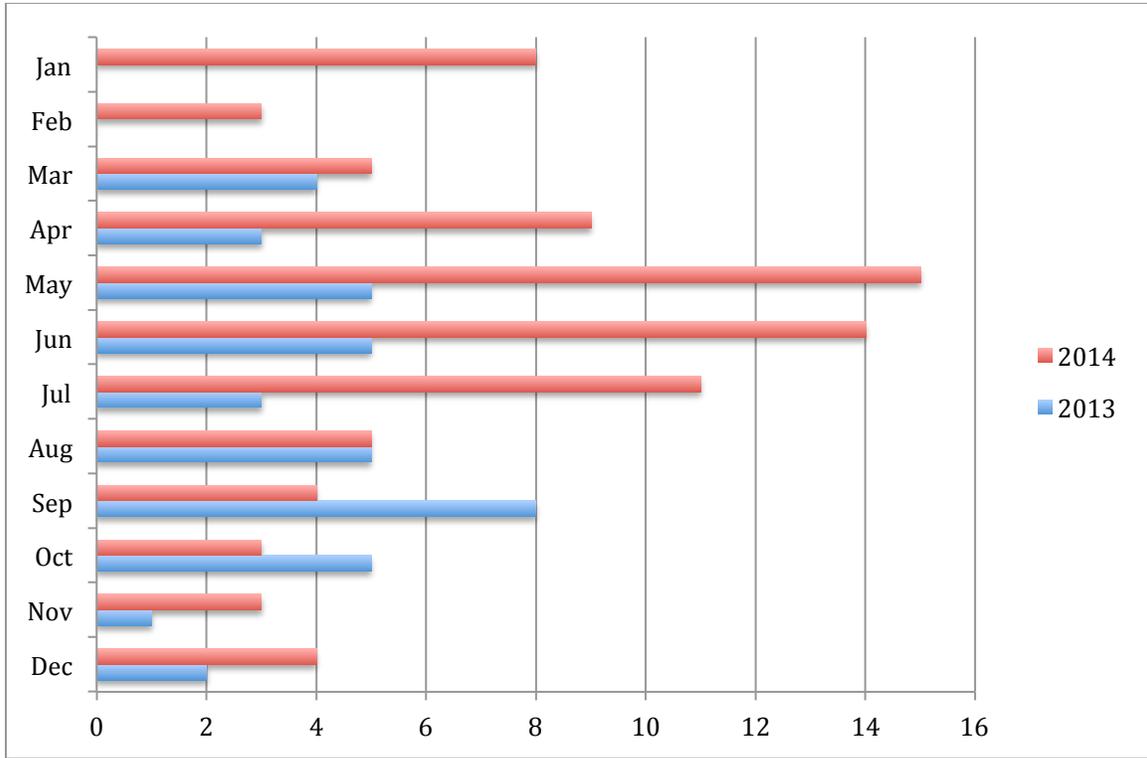


Chart 4: Incidents by month 2013-14

Chart 5 highlights the April to July, 2014 period to illustrate the spatial distribution of incidents during the four-month spike. As the graph shows incidents occurred in Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu Prefectures in each month of the “spike” period. In Aksu 14 incidents were recorded, in Kashgar 13 and ten in Hotan. Seven of the region’s 14 prefecture level administrative areas did not witness an incident during the spike. Only one of those seven prefecture level administrative areas, Kizilsu, was in the south of the region.

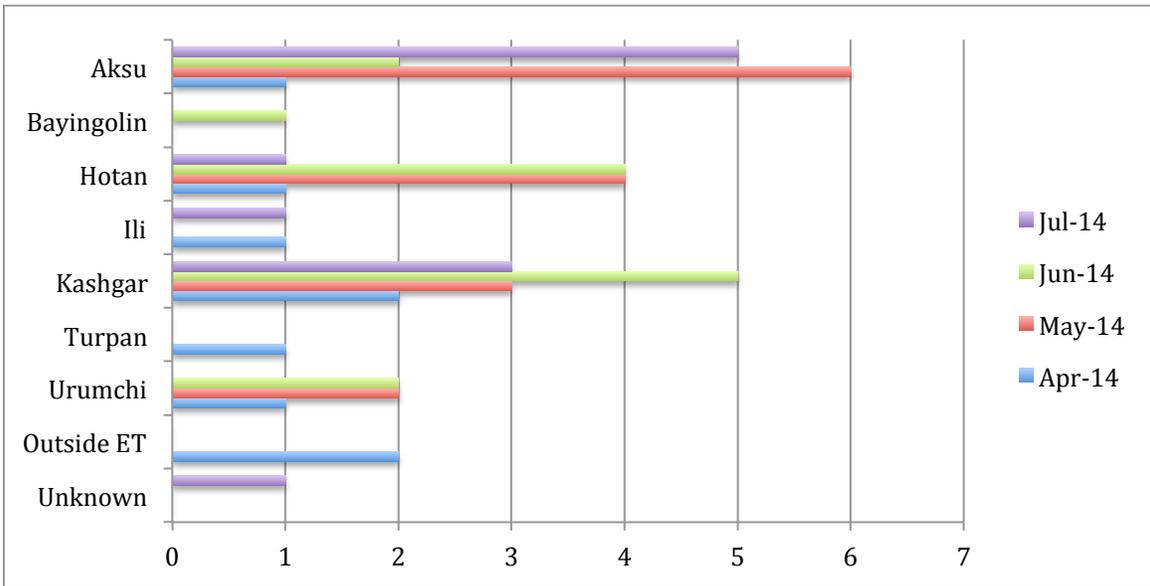


Chart 5: Location and number of incidents by prefecture April to July 2014

Chart 6 illustrates the distribution by prefecture incidents across and outside East Turkistan in 2013 and 2014. Kashgar (32 incidents), Aksu (28) and Hotan (22) recorded the three highest frequencies of incidents; the fourth and fifth highest frequencies were Outside East Turkistan (15) and Urumchi (14). Kashgar Prefecture saw 16 incidents in each of 2013 and 2014; however, clear increases are observable in Aksu, Hotan, Urumchi and Outside East Turkistan from 2013 to 2014. In Urumchi the increase is six fold and in Aksu over three times the number of incidents occurred in 2014 when compared to 2013.

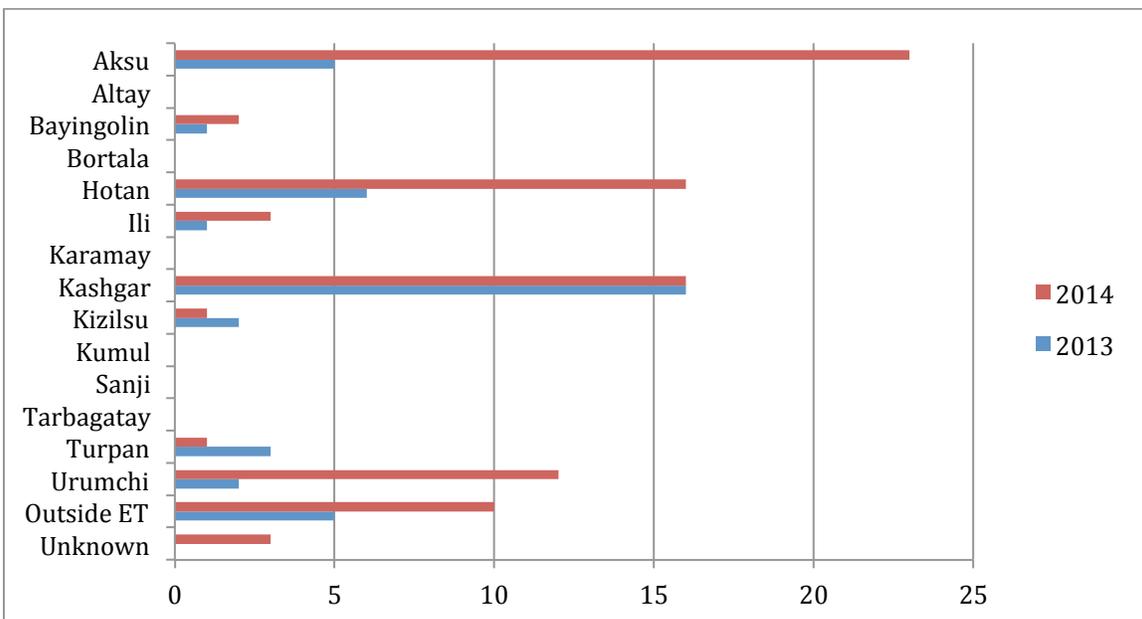
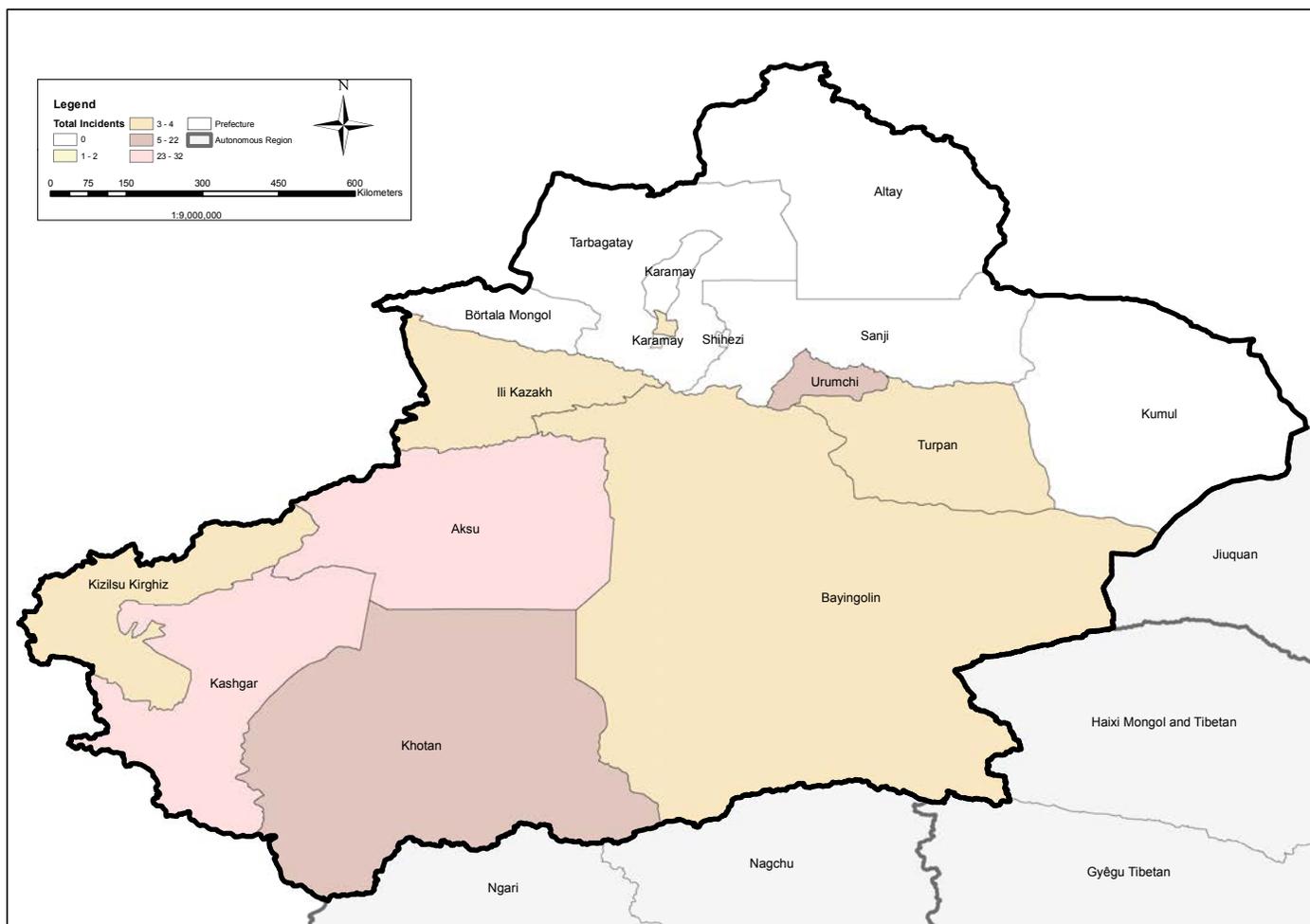


Chart 6: Incidents by prefecture 2013-14



Map 3: Total incidents by prefecture

Charts 7, 8 and 9 illustrate the spatial distribution of incidents in the three prefectures recording the highest frequency of incidents. From Chart 7, it is apparent that Yarkand County recorded the most incidents of any county in Kashgar Prefecture with a total of 14. The number of incidents in 2014 (five in total) fell considerably compared to 2013 (nine overall). As noted above in Chart 3, Yarkand County witnessed 136 fatalities in 2014 and 63 fatalities in 2013. Contrasted against the number of incidents in Yarkand County in 2013 and 2014, incidents in 2014 were deadlier than those of 2013. Otherwise, distribution appears relatively even across all counties in Kashgar Prefecture registering an incident. In 2013, half of Kashgar Prefecture's counties did not record a single incident; whereas, in 2014, this proportion was down to one third of counties.

The increase in documented incidents in Aksu Prefecture is captured in Chart 8. Activity in 2013 was limited to five incidents in four counties. The 23 incidents in 2014 are more spatially dispersed across the prefecture with only two of nine counties free of incident. Aksu County (seven incidents), Toksu County (five incidents) and Uchturpan County (four incidents) register the three highest numbers in 2014.

A similar pattern as seen in Aksu Prefecture is evident in Hotan Prefecture; that is, a much higher rate of incidents in 2014 (16 incidents) than 2013 (six incidents). Five out of eight counties in Hotan recorded at least one incident in 2014 whereas in 2013, incidents were documented in only three. Guma and Qaraqash were most impacted in 2014 and Hotan County in 2013.

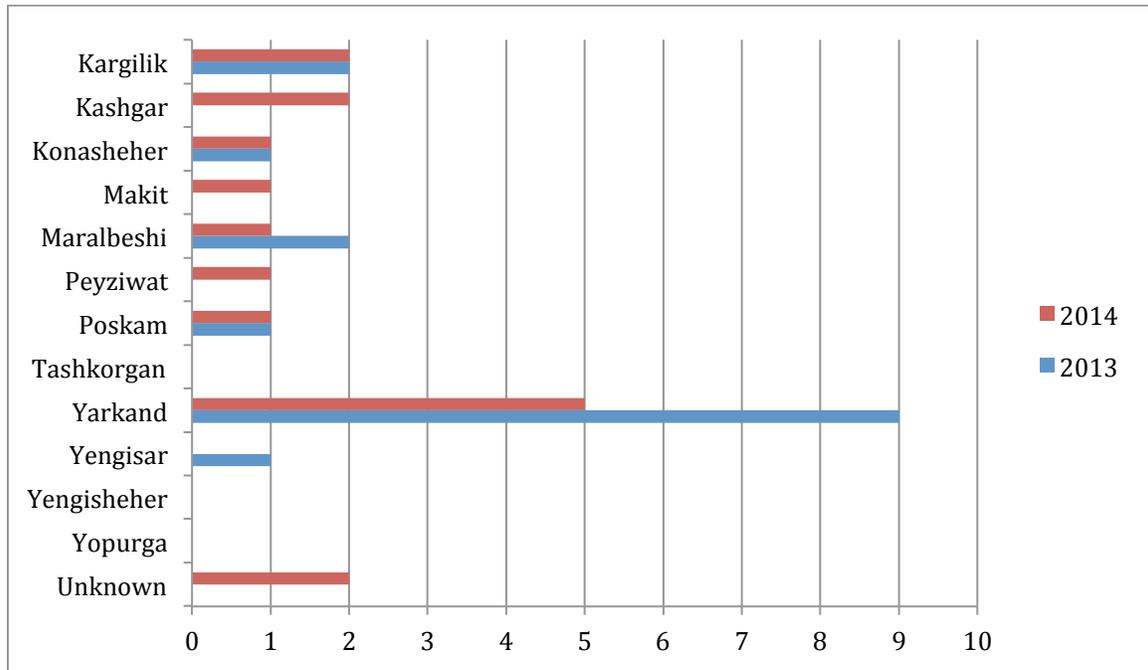


Chart 7: Incidents in Kashgar Prefecture by county 2013-14

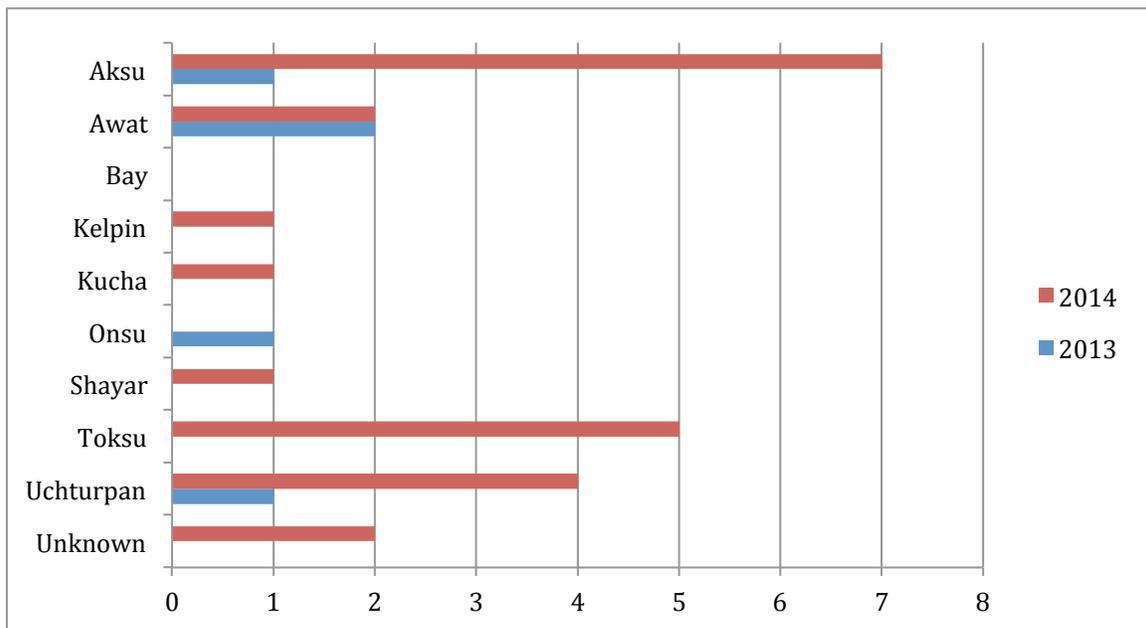


Chart 8: Incidents in Aksu Prefecture by county 2013-14

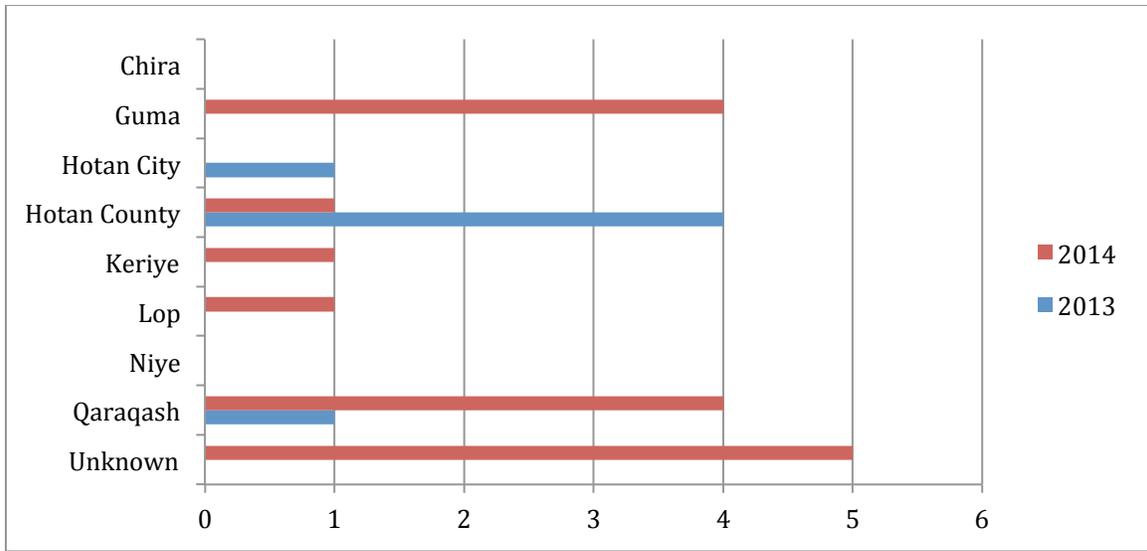
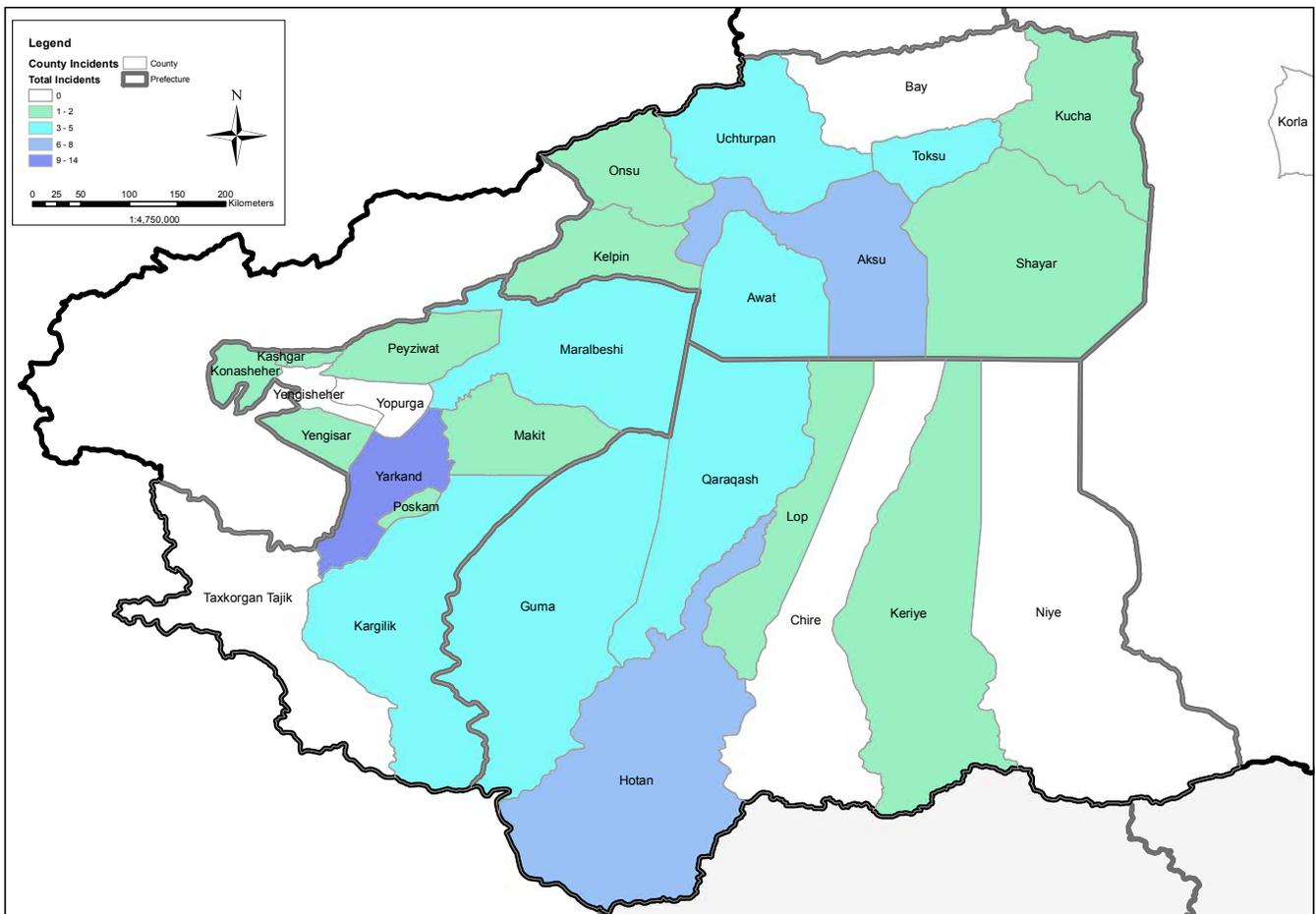


Chart 9: Incidents in Hotan Prefecture by county 2013-14



Map 4: Incidents by county in Aksu, Hotan and Kashgar Prefectures, 2013-14

The table below collates information on types of incidents as recorded by UHRP. Apparent is the low percentage of incidents reported by the Chinese media indicating a low level of transparency; Chinese state media reported only 30 percent of all incidents covered by the overseas media. UHRP documented a total of 125 incidents in the 2013-14 period, which is approximately three and a half times more than that recorded by the state media. Furthermore, there is a high likelihood any incident reported by Chinese state media will be branded as “terrorist,” as 68 percent, or 25 of 37, incidents were labeled as “terrorism.”

In addition, Table 8 demonstrates how almost two-thirds of incidents during the 2013-14 period were violent. Of the 89 violent incidents recorded, security forces shot at least one Uyghur in 60 of those incidents. Therefore, from the research, approximately two in three violent incidents were concluded with the shooting of at least one, and on many occasions more than one, Uyghur.

	Incidents 2013-14	
Violent	89/125	71%
Uyghurs shot	60/125	48%
Violent & Uyghurs shot	60/89	67%
State reported	37/125	30%
“Terrorism”	29/125	23%
State reported & “Terrorism”	25/37	68%

Table 8: Incident types as a percentage of total 2013-14

Chart 10 show how types of incident were distributed by month in years under review. Examining 2013, demonstrates the close relationship from June to December 2013 between violent incidents and incidents in which security forces shot Uyghurs. Although September 2013 saw the highest number of incidents, none of them were labeled as “terrorist” by Chinese authorities.

An analysis of 2014 strikingly illustrates how Xi Jinping’s May 23, 2014 announcement of a one-year “anti-terror” campaign caused an increase in activity in the region. The upward trend from February to April indicates the conditions that preceded the May announcement. The difference in number between total incidents and violent incidents in May 2014 points to a high number of incidents that involved arrests of Uyghurs with no injuries or deaths following Xi’s announcement. Also of note is the downward trend of all types of incident following the commencement of the one-year “anti-terror” campaign.

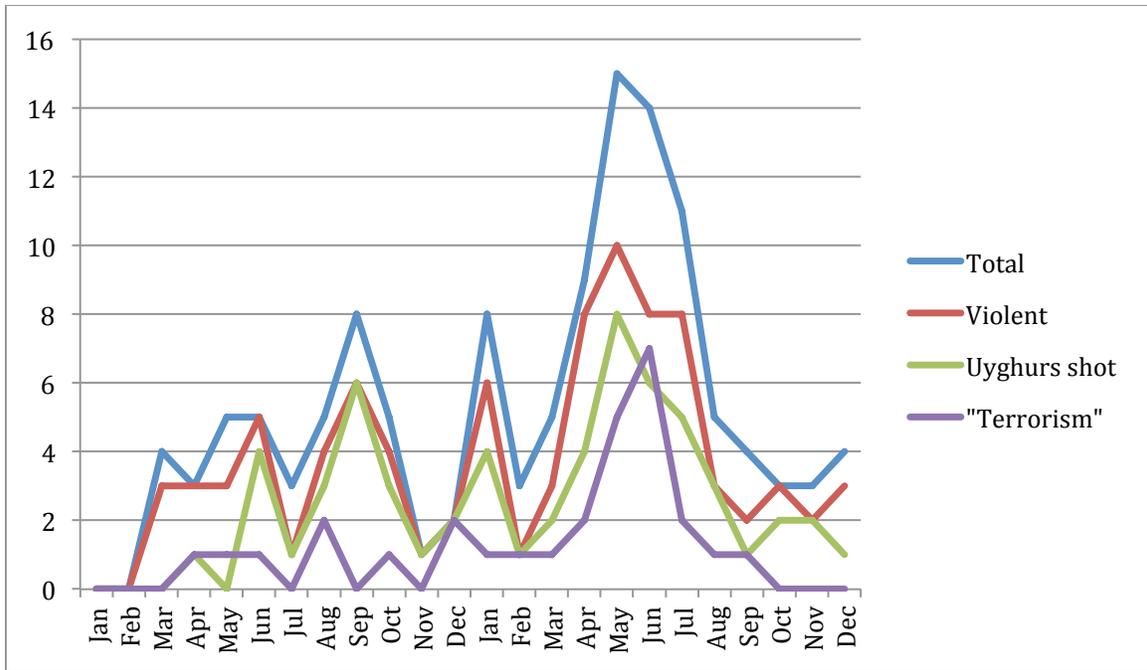


Chart 10: Total number of incidents in 2013-14 compared against number of incidents that were violent, in which Uyghurs were shot and the state labeled “terrorism.”

The geographical distribution of violent incidents in 2013-14 is shown below in Chart 11. The chart reaffirms the concentration of violence in Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan Prefectures demonstrated above. Although Aksu Prefecture records a higher number of violent incidents (17) in 2014 than Kashgar Prefecture (14), Kashgar Prefecture witnessed the higher number of violent incidents (30 in total) over the two-year period under review. In terms of distribution, violent incidents in 2013 were more widely dispersed than those in 2014. Of all the prefectures recording at least one incident in the 2013-14 period, only Ili Prefecture did not see a violent incident in 2013. Kashgar and Bayingolin Prefectures registered a similar number of violent incidents in both 2013 and 2014; however, sharp increases are discernible in Aksu, Hotan, Urumchi and Outside East Turkestan.

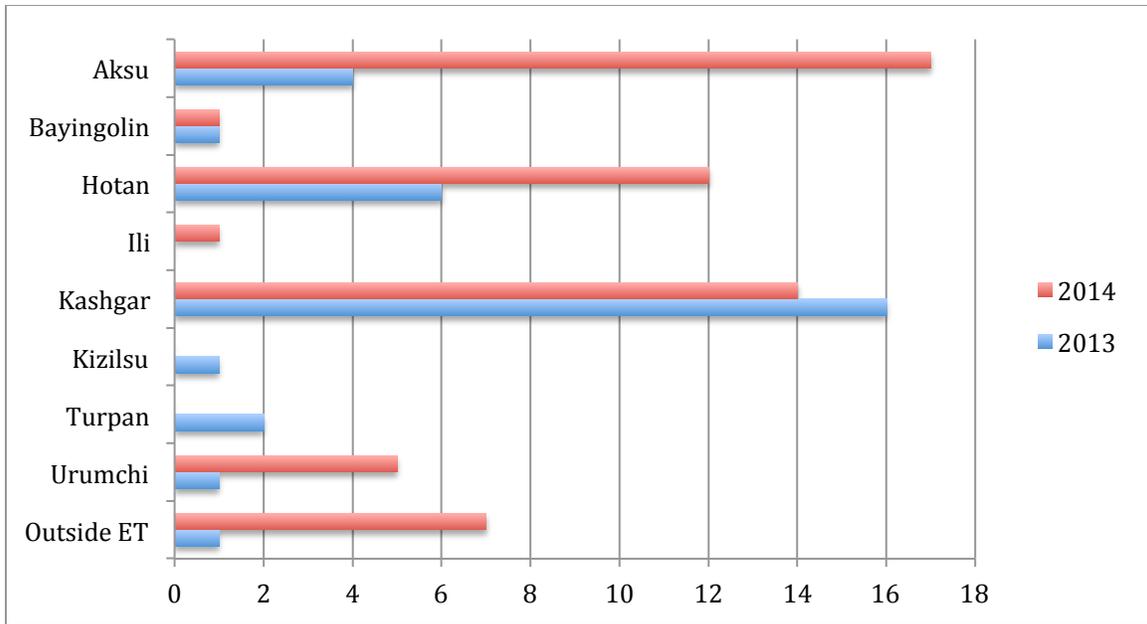
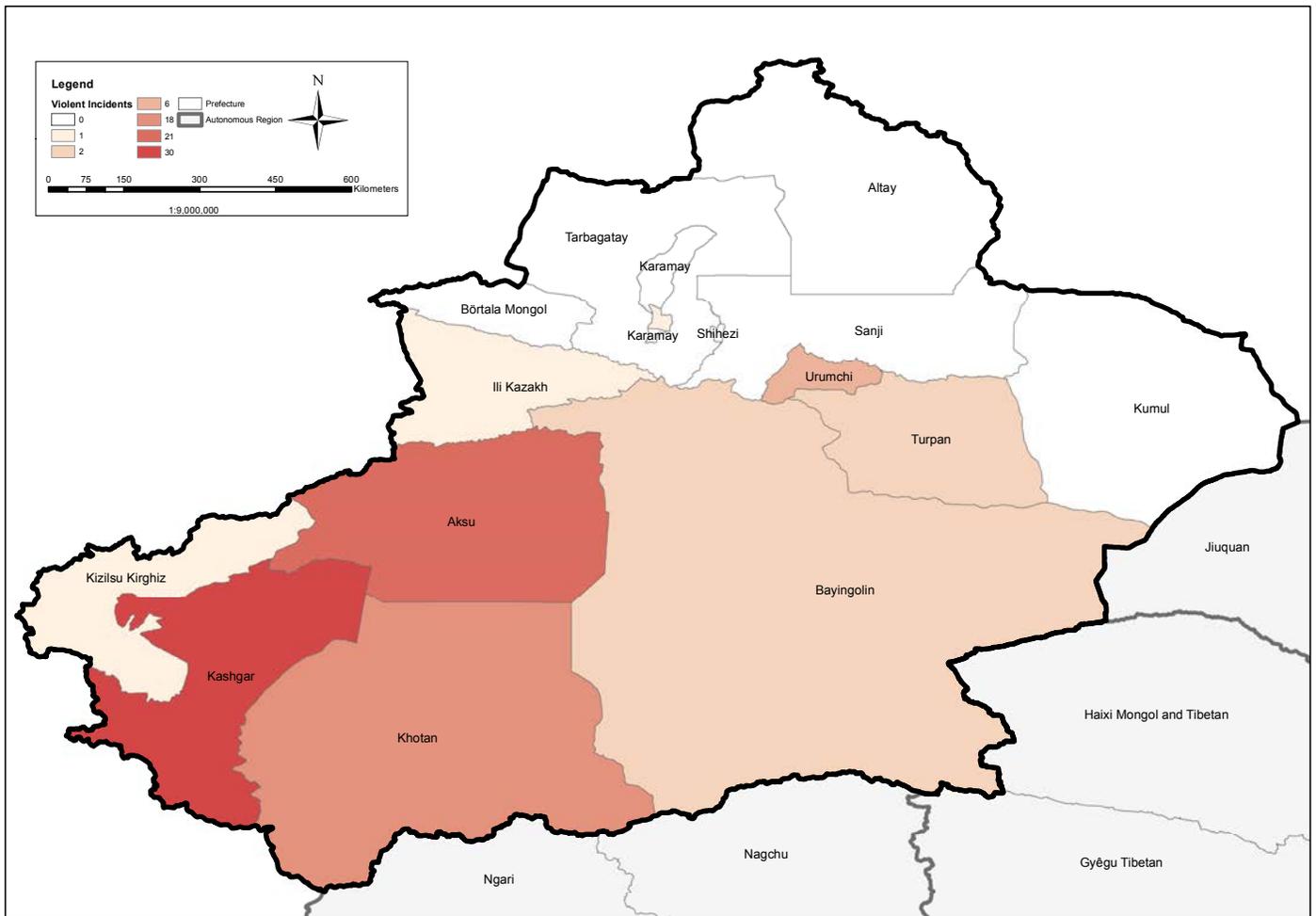


Chart 11: Violent incidents by prefecture 2013-14



Map 5: Violent incidents by prefecture 2013-14

Charts 12, 13 and 14 are a more granular representation of the spatial distribution of violent incidents between 2013-14. Chart 12 looks at Kashgar Prefecture and plainly illustrates the prevalence of violence in Yarkand County during the reporting period. Almost 50 percent of all violent incidents in Kashgar Prefecture between 2013 and 2014 occurred in Yarkand County. In addition, distribution of violent incidents in Kashgar Prefecture in 2014 is more widespread than in 2013. Only Yengisar County did not witness a violent incident in 2014 after recording one in 2013. Three county level administrative divisions, Kashgar, Makit and Peyziwat registered a violent incident in 2014 while being free of a violent incident in 2013.

Chart 13 shows the more widespread distribution of violent incidents in 2014 than 2013 in Aksu Prefecture, as well as the concentration of violence in Aksu, Awat and Uchturpan Counties over the two-year period. The chart also illustrates how Toksu County experienced a spate of violence in 2014 (3 incidents), after recording a year free of violence in 2013.

The spatial distribution of violent incidents in Hotan Prefecture is somewhat more uneven across the 24-month period under review. Qaraqash County experienced one violent incident in 2013, but four in 2014; whereas, in Hotan County, the reverse was recorded with one incident in 2014, as opposed to four in 2013. Like Qaraqash County, Guma County witnessed a spate of violence after a quiet 2013. Also of note is how rural counties experienced more violence than Hotan City; this pattern of violent incidents being more likely to occur in a rural county than an urban county is one that can be extended to Kashgar Prefecture according to the data.

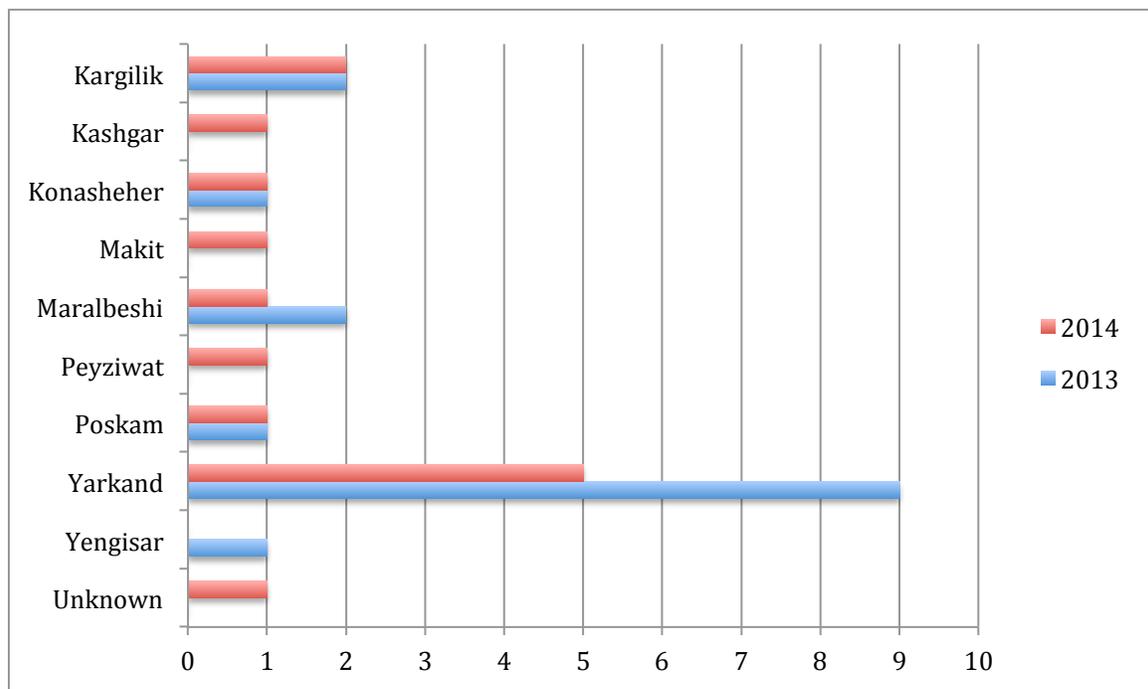


Chart 12: Violent incidents in Kashgar Prefecture by county 2013-14

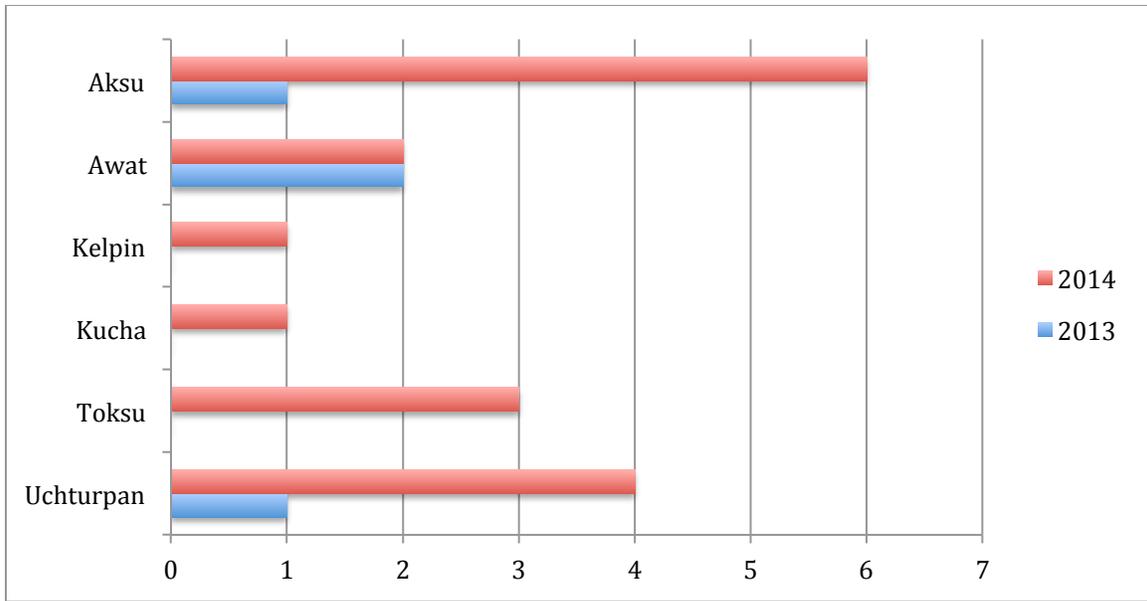


Chart 13: Violent incidents in Aksu Prefecture by county 2013-14

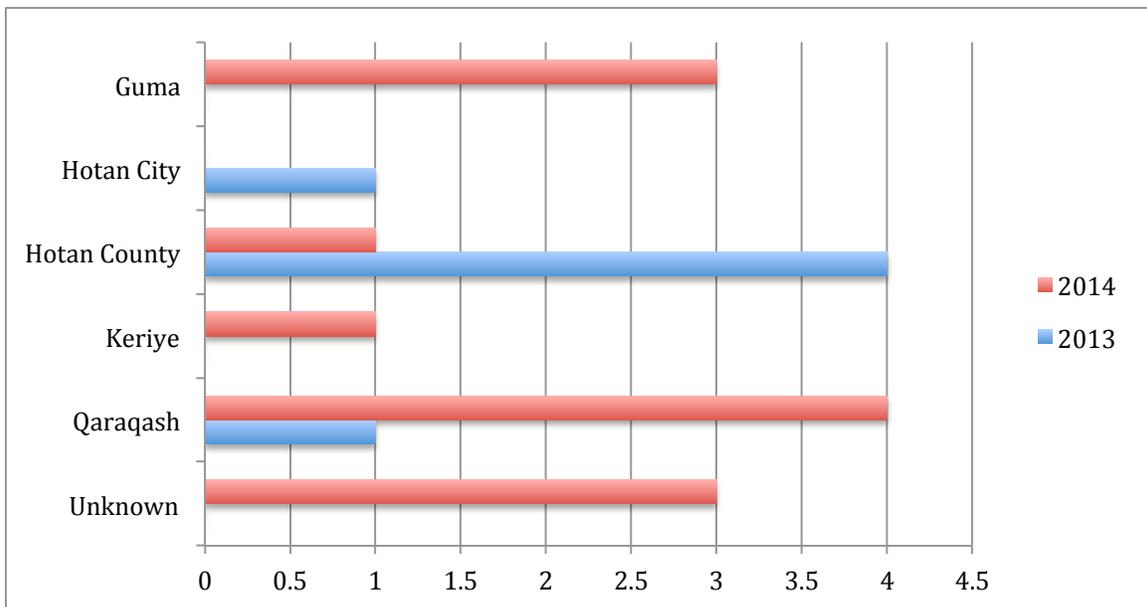


Chart 14: Violent incidents in Hotan Prefecture by county 2013-14

Chart 15 shows how alleged “terror” incidents were distributed by prefecture from 2013-14. Consistent with previous findings, given the higher number of incidents and incidents of violence, Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan all experienced the most “terror” incidents during the 24-month period under review. Kashgar and Hotan both illustrate a similar pattern to the number of violent incidents reported between 2013-14; that is, for Kashgar a roughly equal number of incidents and for Hotan a sharp increase from 2013 to 2014. In the case of Aksu, none of the six violent incidents recorded in 2013 were labeled as “terrorism” by the state.

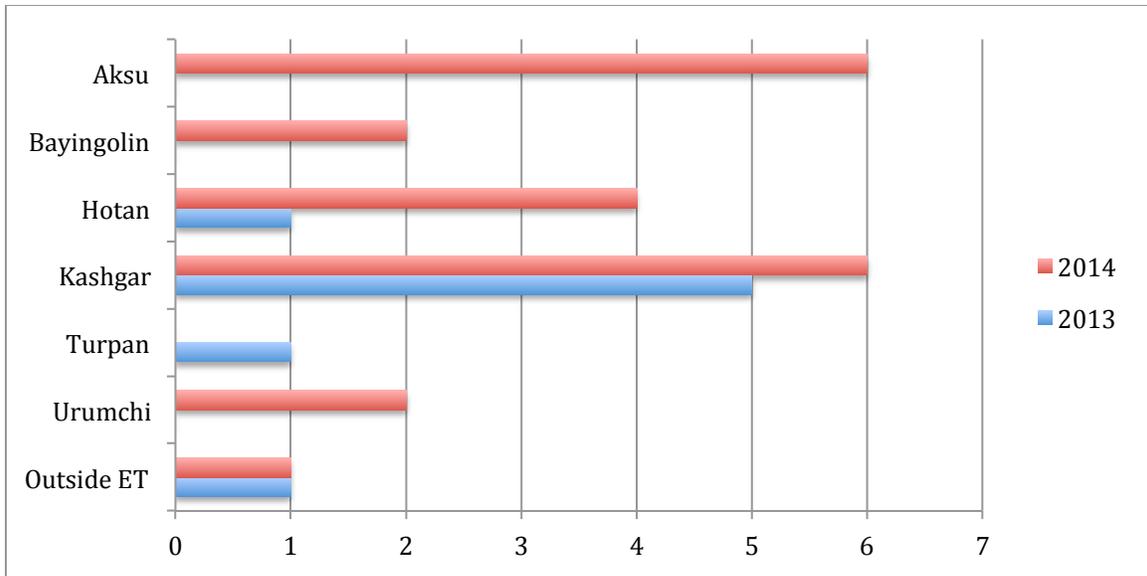
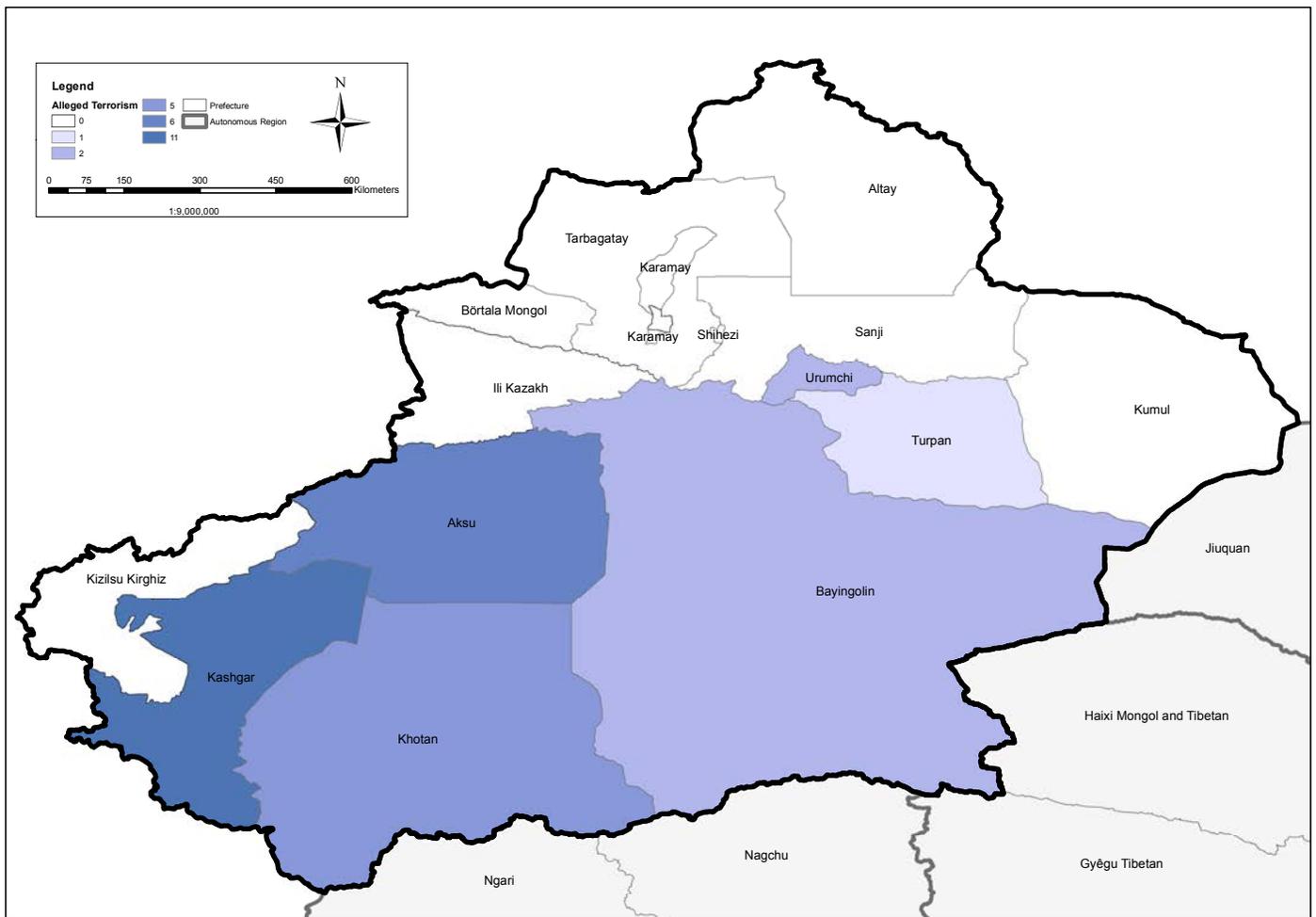


Chart 15: "Terror" incidents by prefecture 2013-14



Map 6: "Terror" incidents by prefecture 2013-14

c. Post-detention

The two tables below illustrate post-detention data related to qualifying incidents for this report as far as UHRP has been able to determine from available media sources. In Tables 9 and 10, there is an undeniable increase in all categories from 2013 to 2014 possibly indicating the enforcement and publicizing of the one-year “anti-terror” campaign in the region. It is also feasible that some of the judicial procedures carried out in 2014 concerned incidents from 2013. Given the uptick in incidents in 2014, it remains to be seen if figures in 2015 will sharply increase. Sentences increased more than ten times in the review period, while the number of death sentences increased eight times and life sentences approximately four times. All of the executions UHRP recorded from media sources occurred in 2014, as well as all of the death sentences with reprieve.

	2013	2014	Total
Sentenced	51-52	560-562	611-614
Death	5	40	45
Death with reprieve	0	23	23
Life	5	21	26

Table 9: Overall sentences and types of sentence 2013-14

	2013	2014	Total
Executions	0	21	21

Table 10: Number of executions 2013-14

II. Data Aggregated by Other Sources

The following section presents data on fatalities, sentences and executions as aggregated by sources other than UHRP for the 2013-14 period. The information is provided to not only offer the full set of data publicly accessible via the media and other sources, but also to further demonstrate the dearth of information made available by the Chinese state in a region with a deteriorating security environment.

In 2014 and early 2015, San Francisco based human rights organization, Dui Hua published a series of three articles documenting endangering state security (ESS) trials and executions in China during 2013. In an article dated February 10, 2014, Dui Hua stated 296 ESS trials (out of a total of 21,061 criminal trials of first and second instance) were conducted in East Turkestan during 2013.¹⁶ According to Dui Hua the figure represents a 10 percent rise from 2012 and is based on the annual work report of the Xinjiang High People’s Court. The number contrasts sharply with the 51-52 individuals sentenced in 2013 whose cases UHRP was able to document from media sources.

¹⁶ Dui Hua. (2014, February 10). Xinjiang Obscures State Security Stats, Trials Likely Up 10%. *Human Rights Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.duihuahrjournal.org/2014/02/xinjiang-obscures-state-security-stats.html>.

In the February 2014 article, Dui Hua added: “[p]ublic information about individual defendants remained extremely limited” and that its Political Prisoner Database contained the names of only three Uyghurs tried on ESS charges in 2013. One of the individuals Nurmat Ibrahim was tried in Ili Intermediate People’s Court and was one defendant among a group of 95 in 21 ESS cases brought by the state. A second individual, Enver Obul, who was tried for inciting splittism by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps 3rd Agricultural Division Intermediate People’s Court in March 2013 and was one defendant among ten.

Furthermore, Dui Hua reported 60 percent of ESS crimes in 2013 were concluded in Kashgar. Kizilsu Prefecture tried 29 individuals in 18 ESS cases; whereas, only one ESS case was heard in Kumul Prefecture. In conclusion, Dui Hua states: “The vast majority of ESS defendants appear to be Uyghurs passing through Kashgar, but their identities, acts, and fates remain unknown.”

A second Dui Hua article published on October 20, 2014 reported on executions in China in 2013.¹⁷ Basing its conclusions on a report published in the *Southern Weekly*, researchers estimated China executed 2,400 people in 2013 and that a similar number is expected for 2014. Referencing Xi Jinping’s announcement in May of an “anti-terror” campaign in East Turkestan, the article also concludes: “Annual declines in executions recorded in recent years are likely to be offset in 2014 by the use of capital punishment in anti-terrorism campaigns in Xinjiang and the anti-corruption campaign nationwide.”

On January 7, 2014, Dui Hua published an article sounding a note of alarm over the increase of ESS trials under the rule of Xi Jinping.¹⁸

2013 was Xi Jinping’s first year as party secretary, and in that year, he oversaw roughly three times as many ESS arrests and indictments as Hu Jintao did in 2003, Hu’s first year as party secretary. In Xi’s second year even more people are likely to have faced ESS charges, as policing increased in Xinjiang and the nationwide crackdown on dissent continued.¹⁹

¹⁷ Dui Hua. (2014, October 20). China Executed 2,400 People in 2013, Dui Hua. Retrieved from http://duihua.org/wp/?page_id=9270.

¹⁸ Dui Hua. (2014, January 7, 2015). State Security Indictments, Cult Trials Up in Xi Jinping’s 2013. *Human Rights Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.duihuahrjournal.org/2015/01/state-security-indictments-cult-trials.html>.

¹⁹ See also Dui Hua research on 2012: Dui Hua. (2013, March 7). Transparency in Xinjiang: Reporting on State Security Trails. Retrieved from <http://www.duihuaresearch.org/2013/03/transparency-in-xinjiang-reporting-on.html>; Dui Hua. (2013, November 26). China’s State Security Arrests Up 19% in 2012. *Human Rights Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.duihuahrjournal.org/2013/11/chinas-state-security-arrests-up-19-in.html> and Jiang Sijia. (2013, November 27). Sharp increase in China state security arrests: rights group. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1366970/sharp-increase-china-state-security-arrests-rights-group>.

The following table is compiled from available Chinese state and overseas media sources. It assembles aggregated figures published within publicly available articles and are not necessarily tied to a particular incident UHRP was able to distinguish from others during the 2013-14 period.

Source	Date published	Period reviewed	Fatalities	Arrests	Cases	Sentences
Radio Free Asia	January 22, 2014	Apr. 2013 - Jan. 2014	91	N/A	N/A	N/A
Radio Free Asia	February 3, 2014	Apr. 2013 - Feb. 2014	About 100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Radio Free Asia	March 2, 2014	Apr. 2013 - Mar. 2014	About 100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Xinhua	May 25, 2014	May 2014	N/A	Over 200	N/A	N/A
BBC	June 5, 2014	N/A	N/A	29	N/A	N/A
Radio Free Asia	June 11, 2014	May 2014 - Jun. 2014	N/A	Over 300	N/A	N/A
China Daily	June 16, 2014	May 2014 - Jun. 2014	N/A	Over 60	N/A	N/A
Legal Daily	June 23, 2014	May 2014 - Jun. 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	315
Reuters	June 26, 2014	N/A	200 (“past year or so”)	380 (May - Jun. 2014)	N/A	N/A
Reuters	July 7, 2014	May 2014 - Jun. 2014	N/A	Over 400	N/A	N/A
China Daily	November 25, 2014	May 2014 - Nov. 2014	N/A	298 ²⁰	342 ²¹	N/A

Table 11: Aggregated data from media sources 2013-14

²⁰ According to the article: “171 religious training sites were shut down, and 238 people who arranged training facilities were detained.”

²¹ According to the article: “44 cases involving explosives instruction via the Internet, 294 cases related to the distribution of violent audiovisual materials and four cases relating to the spread of rumors.”

4. Contexts

From research into publicly available media reports on incidents in East Turkestan between 2013-14, UHRP concludes that fatalities during the period under review were more likely to occur among Uyghurs living in the south of the region. In addition, there is a high probability the Chinese state identifies Uyghurs killed in incidents as “perpetrators” of the violence rather than victims of state violence, and a higher chance that Uyghurs would be killed than any other ethnicity.

UHRP condemns violence and advocates for a peaceful realization of international human rights standards in East Turkestan. UHRP recognizes that some incidents occurring during the 2013-14 period appear to be premeditated attacks. UHRP also recognizes that a greater number of incidents appear to be provoked by insensitive or heavy-handed policing.

From a reading of the Chinese state media, UHRP adds the Chinese authorities have presented information on incidents in a manner that does not offer a full understanding of contributing circumstances. Chinese state media invariably explains violence in the region as an issue of “religious extremism,” and given the high correlation between “perpetrators” and Uyghur fatalities, as well as harsher religious curbs targeting Uyghurs, as a problem of “*Uyghur* religious extremism.” UHRP casts doubt on this singular portrayal of the causes and roots of the violence.

In an August 26, 2013 report, the New York Times stated: “Much of the violence goes unreported in the Chinese news media, but the cases that are publicized are invariably described as ‘terror attacks’ carried out by ‘separatists.’”²² UHRP findings are consistent with this statement, noting the correlation between incidents the Chinese state has designated as “terror” attacks and incidents reported by the state media. In addition, government authorities regularly issue directives to the media, reported by the San Francisco-based China Digital Times, limiting or outright banning reporting and commentary on incidents in East Turkestan. These directives range in scope from banning any commentary or links to old reports,²³ singling out specific incidents to limit reporting,²⁴ banning specific commentary,²⁵ and in many cases scrubbing the web of reports of certain incidents altogether.²⁶

²² Jacobs, Andrew. (2013, August 26). Over News of Clash, a Shroud of Silence in Xinjiang. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/27/world/asia/over-news-of-clash-a-shroud-of-silence-in-xinjiang.html>. See also: Forsythe, Michael. (2015, February 26). Deadly Attacks in Xinjiang Go Unreported in China. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/26/deadly-attacks-in-xinjiang-go-unreported-in-china/>

²³ China Digital Times. (2014, June 18). Minitrue: Take No Liberties When Covering Violence. Retrieved from: <http://c3.mirrors.greatfire.org/2014/06/minitrue-take-liberties-covering-violence/>.

²⁴ For example, in December 2013 or May 2014: China Digital Times. (2013, December 16). Minitrue: Deadly Clash in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://cdt15.azurewebsites.net/2013/12/minitrue-deadly-clash-xinjiang/> and China Digital Times. (2014, May 1). Minitrue: Attack on Xinjiang Train Station. Retrieved from: <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2014/05/minitrue-attack-xinjiang-train-station/>.

China frequently declares it is the victim of terrorism, often in an attempt to align with Western nations who have recently experienced a terrorist attack.²⁷ Commentators have suggested China seeks international recognition for its terror allegations leveled at Uyghurs and legitimacy for its “anti-terror” campaigns in East Turkestan when making such announcements.²⁸ China does not consistently state to an overseas *or* domestic audience that its Muslim Uyghur citizens bear the highest costs for violence in East Turkestan. The increase in fatalities from 2013 to 2014 and the high proportion of Uyghur fatalities among those totals is concerning. At the time of publication, there were 38-39 Uyghur fatalities in 2015.²⁹

Chinese authorities also describe the violence as being orchestrated from overseas without offering a full rendering of the consequences domestic state policies have had in

²⁵ China Digital Times. (2014, May 27). Minitrue: Comparing Xinjiang to Chechnya. Retrieved from: <http://c3.mirrors.greatfire.org/2014/05/minitrue-comparing-xinjiang-chechnya/>.

²⁶ For example, banning reporting on violence in 2014 in Qaraqash in June, Yarkand in July, Kashgar in October and Yarkand in December. See: China Digital Times. (2014, June 27). Minitrue: Delete Article on Terror Attack in Qaraqash, Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://c3.mirrors.greatfire.org/2014/06/minitrue-delete-article-terror-attack-qaraqash-xinjiang/>; China Digital Times. (2014, July 29). Minitrue: Violent Terror Incident in Shache, Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2014/07/minitrue-violent-terror-incident-shache-county-xinjiang/>; China Digital Times. (2014, October 20). Minitrue: Violent Incident in Kashgar. Retrieved from: <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2014/10/minitrue-violent-incident-kashgar/> and China Digital Times. (2014, December 1). Minitrue: Do Not Report Latest Violence in Shache, Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2014/12/minitrue-report-latest-violence-shache-xinjiang/>.

²⁷ Xinhua. (2015, January 8). China mourns Paris terror victims. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-01/08/c_133906275.htm. See also: Drennan, Justine. (2015, February 9). Is China Making Its Own Terrorism Problem Worse? *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/is-china-making-its-own-terrorism-problem-worse-uyghurs-islamic-state/>.

²⁸ Schiavenza, Matt. (2015, January 15). China Is Using ‘Charlie Hebdo’ to Justify Its Own Crackdown on Free Speech. *New Republic*. Retrieved from <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/120777/china-blaming-free-speech-paris-terror-attacks-troubling> and Xinhua. (2015, January 10). Xinjiang legislature approves burqa ban. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-01/10/c_133910351.htm.

²⁹ Wen Yuqing and Xin Lin. (2015, January 12). Six Dead in Police Shooting in China’s Restive Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/police-01122015124821.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2015, January 30). Five Dead After Security Checkpoint Clash in Xinjiang’s Hotan Prefecture. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/hoten-security-checkpoint-clash-01302015175730.html>; Buckley, Chris. (2015, January 19). Chinese Police Kill 2 Uighurs Fleeing to Vietnam, Reports Say. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/20/world/asia/chinese-police-kill-2-uyghurs-fleeing-to-vietnam-reports-say.html>; Qiao Long. (2015, February 16, 2015). ‘Deaths And Injuries’ Follow Clashes Between Uyghurs and Police in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hotan-02162015160611.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2015, February 19). Uyghur Man Draws Knife, is Shot Dead by Police. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/hotan-02192015151015.html> and *Radio Free Asia*. (2015, February 20). Hacking, shooting incident leave 17 dead in Xinjiang’s Aksu prefecture. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/aksu-02202015214715.html>.

the region.³⁰ The absence of a public process of accountability among regional and central officials into the role of state policies should concern observers regarding the veracity of state narratives about the sole influence of “overseas forces.” From an analysis of the research, there appears to be no compelling evidence of any kind of coordination between incidents the Chinese state deems as “terrorist.” While the overwhelming majority of Uyghurs remain peaceful in the face of increasing repression, the part state policies have had in radicalizing a few Uyghurs should be studied more closely overseas and in China.³¹

As noted by academic Reza Hasmath: “[A] common state narrative...portrays ethno-religious violence as originating outside China, such as in Pakistan, Turkey and now Syria, and not home-grown. This narrative allows the state to side-step the main causes of ethnic tensions, which are pre-dominantly rooted in religious/cultural repression and increasing economic disparities.”³² In *Xinjiang and China’s Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009*, scholar Michael Clarke argues that acceptance of Chinese state assertions of an external hand in the violence should be tempered by an understanding of the destabilizing effects of what Clarke calls “developmentalism,” which has “contributed to political, economic and cultural marginalisation of the Uyghur, providing the conditions not only for Uyghur unrest but also inter-ethnic tensions.”³³

If Chinese officials persist in the “overseas forces” narrative and in an increasing alignment with the fight against terrorism across the globe, it must permit an international

³⁰ Bellér-Hann, Ildikó. (2012, March 30). Violence in Xinjiang: indicative of deeper problems?. *East Asia Forum*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/03/30/violence-in-xinjiang-indicative-of-deeper-problems/>; Forsythe, Michael. (2014, May 23). Q. and A.: Gardner Bovingdon on Uighur Discontent and China’s Choices. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/05/23/q-a-gardner-bovingdon-on-uighur-discontent-and-chinas-choices/>; Millward, James A. (2014, September 28). China’s Fruitless Repression of the Uighurs. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/29/opinion/chinas-fruitless-repression-of-the-uighurs.html>; Millward, James. (2014, May 28). China’s Two Problems with the Uyghurs. *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Retrieved from <http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/chinas-two-problems-uyghurs> and Roberts, Sean R. and Kanat, Kilic Bugra. (2013, July 15). China’s Wild West: A Cautionary Tale of Ethnic Conflict and Development. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2013/07/chinas-wild-west/>.

³¹ In a 2004 monograph, scholar Gardner Bovingdon wrote: “Organized protest and violence emerged in the region long before the 1980s. Furthermore, dissatisfaction since then has not been confined to Islamists and separatists advocating violence; ordinary Uyghurs have expressed profound discontent with Chinese rule in Xinjiang.” See: Bovingdon, Gardner. (2004). *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS011.pdf>.

³² Hasmath, Reza. (2013, July 5). Responses to Xinjiang ethnic unrest do not address underlying causes. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1276012/responses-xinjiang-ethnic-unrest-do-not-address-underlying>.

³³ Clarke, Michael. (2013). *Xinjiang and China’s Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009*. p. 154. Abingdon: Routledge. See also: Chou, Gloria. (2012). Autonomy in Xinjiang. Institutional Dilemmas and the Rise of Uighur Ethno-nationalism. *The Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies*, 4. pp. 154-178.

and independent assessment of its terror allegations against Uyghurs.³⁴ When governments or multilateral entities have commented on the violence in East Turkestan in the past, China frequently offers the response that the incident in question is a “domestic matter.”³⁵ Such an opportunistic approach to international relations paired with suppression of information on incidents in East Turkestan should also give rise to skepticism about wholesale Chinese claims over “Uyghur terrorism.”

If there has been one consistent thread during the violence of 2013-14, it is the lack of Uyghur agency in holding government officials, as well as the policies they represent and implement, accountable for the deterioration in the security environment. When legitimate questions over state policies have been asked, the individual concerned is invariably punished, and severely, as illustrated in the case of imprisoned Uyghur academic, Professor Ilham Tohti.³⁶ With his imprisonment, the prospect that Chinese officials will be open to a genuine and meaningful social debate about the causes of violence in East Turkestan and inclusive remedies is remote.

This section offers a broader context to the incidents recorded in 2013-14 than provided by the Chinese government. A following section offers recommendations to ease tensions that differ from the Chinese government’s response of repeated security crackdowns. In many incidents counter state narratives have emerged; not only from Uyghur exiles, but also from the overseas media who have been able to travel to the region. That UHRP has not been able to verify these counter state narratives is not reflective of their accuracy, but a further indication of the formidable information barriers the Chinese state has put in place to prevent a thorough accounting of incidents in East Turkestan.

I. Demographics and Economics

Two thirds of incidents in 2013-14 took place in Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan Prefectures according to the research. In Kashgar Prefecture, the likelihood that a Uyghur will be shot in any incident is one in two.

Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan Prefectures share similar demographic profiles. As a percentage of their total population, the three prefectures have the highest proportion of Uyghurs than any other prefecture barring Turpan, according to 2012 population statistics (see Table 12).³⁷ The following analysis considers the role of economic conditions and

³⁴ The Economist (2015, January 24). Dodging Peril. Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21640402-instead-uniting-china-and-west-jihadist-violence-risks-further-dividing-them-dodging-peril>.

³⁵ Bellér-Hann, Ildikó. (2012, March 30). Violence in Xinjiang: indicative of deeper problems?. *East Asia Forum*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/03/30/violence-in-xinjiang-indicative-of-deeper-problems/>.

³⁶ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2015, January 13). On the first anniversary of his detention UHRP calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Ilham Tohti. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/first-anniversary-his-detention-uyghur-human-rights-project-calls-immediate-and>.

³⁷ Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Statistical Bureau. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Xinjiang 2013*. Urumqi: China Statistical Publishing House.

demographic shifts in the south of East Turkestan, with an emphasis on Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan Prefectures, to provide a context to increased tensions in the region.

Prefecture	Total population	Uyghur	% of total	Han	% of total
Aksu	2,396,877	1,888,881	79	473,646	20
Altay	663,410	9,685	1	272,494	41
Bayingolin	1,374,726	459,041	33	779,310	57
Bortala	484,491	64,901	13	318,578	66
Hotan	2,123,377	2,044,223	96	74,640	4
Ili	4,628,434	783,489	17	1,955,018	42
Karamay	285,837	44,587	16	213,693	75
Kashgar	4,151,345	3,803,463	92	284,958	7
Kizilsu	560,627	360,792	64	41,764	7
Kumul	592,354	107,667	18	405,918	69
Sanji	1,402,107	68,025	5	1,024,159	73
Tarbagatay	1,047,814	42,087	4	598,338	57
Turpan	625,334	449,774	72	135,586	22
Urumchi	2,578,033	332,620	13	1,871,982	73

Table 12: Population by prefecture and ethnicity 2012

In a 2004 monograph published by the East-West Center, demographer Stanley Toops described the possible destabilizing effects of increased Han Chinese migration into East Turkestan: “Party leaders in both Beijing and Urumqi have consistently advocated (and engineered) Han immigration to increase stability of the region. Yet further immigration may only exacerbate competition for scarce land and resources, and therefore inflame Uyghur passions further.”³⁸

He added: “When one region is better off economically, all things being equal, migration occurs. This population movement goes toward the better off region. Another sort of population movement, toward lesser developed regions, occurs when those regions are perceived as having resources or frontier development possibilities.”³⁹

When Toops wrote his monograph, it had been four years since the Chinese government adopted Western Development as state policy. Western Development ostensibly aimed to geographically balance the rates of China’s national economic development, as the east coast experienced high levels of export driven growth.⁴⁰ In East Turkestan, investment into the region focused on an overhaul of the transport infrastructure and on the extraction of natural resources such as oil and natural gas to fuel the booming economy in

³⁸ Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

³⁹ Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

⁴⁰ Lin, Wu-Long and Chen, Thomas P. (2004). China’s widening economic disparities and its ‘Go West Program.’ *Journal of Contemporary China* 13, 41, pp. 663-686.

the east.⁴¹ In his 2004 analysis, Tops clarifies that while forced migration of Han Chinese to East Turkestan may be a thing of the past, relocation “inducements and incentives” for Han Chinese featured in the Western Development campaign.⁴²

In a review of scholar Joanne Smith Finley’s 2013 book *The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur–Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang*, Human Rights Watch researcher Nicholas Bequelin highlights the author’s assessment of Han Chinese migration to East Turkestan:

“What catalyzed identity change” [in the 1990s], Smith Finley writes, “stemmed almost exclusively from the ill-conceived policy of Han in-migration to Xinjiang.” As a consequence, Uyghurs faced “escalating inequalities in the spheres of language use; education; employment and wealth distribution; accelerated resource exploitation; environmental damage and an absence of true indigenous political representation.” It should be no surprise, the author tells us that “development minus equality equals conflict.”⁴³

From 2000-2009, Western Development, through the policy focus on natural resource extraction, accentuated an existing north-south axis of economic disparity. Natural resources are concentrated in the north of the region in prefecture level administrative areas such as Karamay and Bayingolin. As a result, Han Chinese looking to take advantage of increased state investment in natural resource and construction industries during the 2000s predominately relocated to northern East Turkestan.⁴⁴

After a deadly outbreak of unrest in Urumchi in 2009, the Chinese state accused overseas entities, in particular the exiled World Uyghur Congress, for coordinating the violence.⁴⁵ Notably absent was any explicit state acknowledgement of high levels of poverty among Uyghurs and the open discrimination they faced in the job market as an explanatory factor in the swell of resentment against the government. However, in a tacit acknowledgement of economic imbalance across geographic, and by extension ethnic, fault lines in East Turkestan, central authorities convened the first Xinjiang Work Forum

⁴¹ Bellér-Hann, Ildikó. (2012, March 30). Violence in Xinjiang: indicative of deeper problems?. *East Asia Forum*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/03/30/violence-in-xinjiang-indicative-of-deeper-problems/>.

⁴² Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

⁴³ Bequelin, Nicholas. (2014). Book Reviews: The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur–Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang. *The China Quarterly*, 220, pp.1158-1159.

⁴⁴ Howell, Anthony and Fan, C. Condy. (2011). Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52, 1, pp. 119-139.

⁴⁵ Xinhua. (2009, July 7). Anti-terror expert: World Uyghur Congress behind Xinjiang violence. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11669115.htm.

in Beijing in May 2010.⁴⁶ No Uyghur was present at the meeting, even those employed within the Party framework.⁴⁷



Chinese delegates at the Xinjiang Work Forum in Beijing, May 2010. (Tianshan Net)

While the policies emerging from the first Xinjiang Work Forum attempted to spatially disperse a proportion of state investment toward the south of East Turkestan, a significant reemphasis on natural resource extraction as a cornerstone for the regional economy surpassed any endeavors to redistribute state largesse.

One means to stimulate economic activity in the south was through the establishment of a Special Economic Zone in Kashgar although the issue of discrimination Uyghurs faced in accessing capital to establish new enterprises was not clearly tackled.⁴⁸ Another means through which the state tried to address imbalances in economic development across the region was a “pairing assistance” or “counterpart support” program in which prosperous cities and provinces in eastern China would provide localities in East Turkestan with fiscal, human and other assistance.⁴⁹ The program linked 19 eastern cities and provinces

⁴⁶ Xinhua. (2010, May 20). Chinese central authorities outline roadmap for Xinjiang's leapfrog development, lasting stability. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/20/c_13306534.htm.

⁴⁷ Szadziewski, Henryk. (2012, May 22). Kashgar's old city: the endgame. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendemocracy.net/henryk-szadziewski/kashgars-old-city-endgame>.

⁴⁸ People's Daily Online. (2011, February 14). Xinjiang to set up two special economic zones in 2011. Retrieved from <http://en.people.cn/90001/90778/90862/7287228.html> and Harlan, Tyler Ross. (2009). Entrepreneurship and Development in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Unpublished paper, The University of Melbourne.

⁴⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, July 8). Central Leaders Hold Forum on Xinjiang, Stress Development and Stability as Dual Goals. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=141407>.

with 82 towns and cities in East Turkestan. More than \$1.5 billion in aid would be distributed over five years focusing on southern East Turkestan.⁵⁰ Cities and provinces providing partner assistance were required to invest a designated percentage of annual income, 0.3 percent to 0.6 percent of fiscal revenue, to their partner areas.⁵¹



Ceremony highlighting Shenzhen's donations to Kashgar as part of counterpart assistance programs. (Guangdong Province People's Government website)

Human Rights Watch researcher Nicholas Bequelin argues that the state development model in general in East Turkestan is primarily designed to integrate the region with China.⁵² The pairing assistance program is consistent with this approach and reinforces a colonial attitude towards development in minority regions.⁵³ The lack of participatory

⁵⁰ Ibid and Jacobs, Andrew (2010, November 14). Aid Fuels Change of Fortunes on Silk Road. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/15/world/asia/15kashgar.html>.

⁵¹ Ju Chuanjiang and Wang Qian. (2012, May 8). Shandong Special: Shandong's multibillion yuan outreach to Kashgar. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-05/08/content_15231271.htm. and China Daily. (2010, May 5). *Massive economic aid program for Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6973817.html>.

⁵² Bequelin, Nicholas. (2004). *Staged Development in Xinjiang*. *The China Quarterly*, 178, pp. 358-378.

⁵³ Gladney, Dru C. (1998). Internal Colonialism and the Uyghur Nationality: Chinese Nationalism and its Subaltern Subjects. In F. Aubin and F.-J. Besson eds. *Les Ouïgours au XXème siècle. Les Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 25, pp. 47-61.

Toops, Stanley W. (2004). The Demography of Xinjiang. In S.F. Starr ed. *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. New York: M.E. Sharpe

mechanisms in place to ensure development represented local needs as perceived by the target community highlights a persistent civilizing mission among Chinese officials.⁵⁴ In relation to the potential success of the regional pairing scheme in considering local development priorities, Stanley Toops commented: “The coordination of all of these projects will be quite difficult particularly since the experts from the east coast may not be very familiar with local conditions in Xinjiang.”⁵⁵ Nevertheless, “pairing assistance” gave state authorities a renewed developmental platform with which to boost its presence in Uyghur majority areas in the south.

Although an objective assessment of the impact the policies of the first Work Forum have had on alleviating Uyghur poverty in the south of East Turkestan cannot be made without fully disaggregated statistics, it is possible to look at the metrics available at the prefectural level, especially for areas where large numbers of Uyghur and Han Chinese live. In a 2008 paper, Cao Huhua found a very high correlation between poverty-designated counties and counties in which ethnic minorities exceed 90 per cent of the total population. Cao added that rural ethnic minority areas in East Turkestan recorded significantly lower income levels when compared to rural communities in non-ethnic minority areas.⁵⁶

According to data available in the 2013 Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook, Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu Prefectures fell into the bottom third of 15 administrative areas surveyed in at least one of three economic measures available (see Table 13).⁵⁷ Kashgar is in the bottom third in two measures, Hotan in one and Aksu in one. All three prefectures measured in the bottom third in terms of GDP per capita; however, Hotan measured in the top third in terms of average wages and employment. A recent *Phoenix Weekly* report showed that the per capita GDP in each of the four southern prefectures (Kashgar, Hotan, Kizilsu and Aksu) in East Turkestan is less than 45 percent of the regional average. In addition, 85 percent of the rural poor and 63 percent of the unemployed were found in these four prefectures.⁵⁸

Table 13 also demonstrates the correlation between natural resource areas and the regional capital with higher ranking in economic measures. As illustrated above, Han Chinese populate Karamay and Urumchi in the majority; both administrative units

⁵⁴ Moneyhon, Matthew, (2004). China’s Great Western Development Project in Xinjiang: Economic Palliative, or Political Trojan Horse? *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, 31, 3 pp. 491-523.

⁵⁵ Toops, Stanley W. (2010). *China’s Far West: Conditions in Xinjiang One Year After Demonstrations and Riots*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/2010/20100719/index.php>.

⁵⁶ Cao, Huhua. (2010). Urban-Rural Income Disparity and Urbanization: What Is the Role of Spatial Distribution of Ethnic Groups? A Case Study of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Western China. *Regional Studies*, 44, 8, pp. 965-982.

⁵⁷ Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Statistical Bureau. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Xinjiang 2013*. Urumqi: China Statistical Publishing House.

⁵⁸ Phoenix Weekly. (2015, February 1). 疏附县委书记：看什么问题都从民族角度出发，是新疆最大隐患 [Shufu County Secretary: The biggest danger in Xinjiang is to view every problem that arises from the perspective of ethnicity]. Retrieved from: www.guancha.cn/local/2015_02_01_308223.shtml.

register in the top third for all three measures. Six of the seven majority populated Han Chinese administrative units rank at least in the top third for at least one measure. Of the five majority Uyghur administrative units three rank once in the top third.

Administrative Unit	Rank in GDP per capita (High to Low)	Rank in Average Wages (High to Low)	Rank in Employment (High to Low)
Aksu	11	9	6
Altay	10	15	7
Bayingolin	2	5	11
Bortala	8	13	14
Hotan	15	4	5
Ili	12	12	10
Karamay	1	1	1
Kashgar	13	10	15
Kizilsu	14	11	4
Kumul	6	6	7
Sanji	5	8	9
Shihezi	3	7	3
Tarbagatay	9	14	2
Turpan	7	3	12
Urumchi	4	2	3

Table 13: GDP per capita, average wages and employment ranked by administrative area 2012

According to a Hong Kong based scholar, discriminatory practices in Xinjiang have aggravated economic disparities between Uyghurs and Han Chinese.⁵⁹ The natural resource extraction industry in Xinjiang is dominated by Han Chinese labor and managed in line with central government directives.⁶⁰ Differences between ethnic groups in the distribution of jobs can also be detected across a number of types of skilled and unskilled employment. Reed and Raschke claim 80 percent of the workers employed in Xinjiang’s manufacturing, transport, communications, oil and gas, and science and technology sectors are Han Chinese. Additionally, Han Chinese occupy 90 percent of jobs in the active construction industry.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Yang, I. (2010). Violence, Ethnicity and Economics: Can the Government Spend its Way towards Ethnic Peace in Xinjiang? Evidence from Official Data. Unpublished paper, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

⁶⁰ Bovington, Gardner. (2004). *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/autonomy-xinjiang-han-nationalist-imperatives-and-uyghur-discontent> and Ma Rong. (2003). Economic development, Labor Transference, and Minority Education in the West of China. *Development and Society*, 32, 2, pp. 125-145.

⁶¹ Reed, J. Todd and Raschke, Diana. (2010). *The ETIM: China’s Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.



Han Chinese workers in the natural gas industry in East Turkestan. (Tianshan Net)

Research conducted by the Congressional–Executive Commission on China spanning six years of Western Development illustrates discrimination against Uyghur candidates for jobs with the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the civil service, and in the regional education sector.⁶² Maurer-Fazio’s 2012 study of the challenges facing ethnic minority applicants for jobs advertised on the Internet discovered that Uyghur women faced a high degree of discrimination in the labor market.⁶³

Given evidence of unaddressed ethnic imbalances in economic opportunity and levels of poverty since Western Development and the first Xinjiang Work Forum, the following conclusion made by Vicziany and Zhang in 2004 could feasibly be applied to conditions in 2013-14: “The perception is that this development strategy privileges the Han and disadvantages the Uyghur and other minorities. Such perceptions reinforce the negative images of the development process – negative images fed by empirical evidence showing

⁶² CECC. (2005, April 7). Xinjiang Government Says Ethnic Han Chinese Will Get 500 of 700 New Civil Service Appointments. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=10319>; CECC (2006, July 25). Civil Servant Recruitment in Xinjiang Favors Han Chinese. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=61191>; CECC (2009, July 2). Recruitment for State Jobs in Xinjiang Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=122703> and CECC (2011). *2011 Annual Report*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Press.

⁶³ Maurer-Fazio, Margaret. (2012). Ethnic Discrimination in China's Internet Job Board Labor Market. *IZA Discussion Paper*, No. 6903.

the decline of employment opportunities for Uyghur people in skilled urban jobs and the tertiary sector.”⁶⁴



Train brings Han migrant workers from Lanzhou to Urumchi. (Xinhua)

In their 2004 research, Hopper and Webber surveyed Uyghur and Han Chinese attitudes to employment opportunities. Asked whether employment conditions in Xinjiang were better or worse than ten years earlier, 76.3 percent of Uyghurs stated that the employment situation was worse, while only 48.6 percent of Han Chinese felt the situation had worsened.⁶⁵

In *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, James Millward writes that during Qing administration in the nineteenth century few Han Chinese settled in southern East Turkestan.⁶⁶ As noted, Han Chinese migration in East Turkestan under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) administration has tended to follow this pattern. The Tarim Basin, where most Uyghurs live, has largely remained unattractive to Han Chinese settlers. Nevertheless, during CCP rule the proportion of Uyghurs in East Turkestan has

⁶⁴ Vicziany, Marika and Zhang, Guibin. (2004). *The Rise of the Private Sector in Xinjiang (Western China): Han And Uyghur Entrepreneurship*. Paper read at 15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia 29 June-2 July 2004 at Canberra, Australia. Retrieved from <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASAA/biennial-conference/2004/Vicziany+Zhang-ASAA2004.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Hopper, Ben and Webber, Michael. (2009). Migration, Modernisation and Ethnic Estrangement: Uyghur migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC. *Inner Asia*, 11, pp. 173-203.

⁶⁶ Millward, James. (2007). *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press.

shrunk from 75 percent to 45 percent, even if the absolute number of Uyghurs has increased.⁶⁷

In his 2004 monograph, Toops projected that “migration seems to be increasing in recent years, particularly with the addition of the floating population. This migration will ensure a larger percentage of Han in the region.”⁶⁸ Since 2004, demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods, expanded transportation networks and government inducements have encouraged more Han Chinese migrants to settle the south of the region in a move to consolidate state power in the area that will also aggravate economic imbalances between ethnicities. This increase in Han Chinese migrants to the south, as well as the increase in the Uyghur population in the south, has led to reported clashes over limited resources.⁶⁹

Michael Clarke writes that the notion of an East Turkestan full of “‘untapped’ resources and abundant land is undermined by the fact that most of the arable land in Xinjiang is already under cultivation and water resources are increasingly scarce, while there has been significant desertification due to urbanisation, extensive irrigation and land reclamation projects spurred by increased Han settlement since 1949.”⁷⁰

In a November 3, 2013 article, RFA reported Uyghurs were not only complaining of displacement from farming land by Han Chinese settlers, but also of exclusion from the subsidies migrants received to convert unused land for cultivation. The article cites two Uyghur farmers from Aksu Prefecture who describe how the state has disproportionately distributed land and subsidies in favor of Han Chinese settlers. In Hotan, one Uyghur told RFA: “Uyghurs who own farms near the city are often forced to sell their land which might otherwise be expropriated by the government as part of a ‘development policy’ without compensation.”⁷¹

According to Chinese state figures the number of Han Chinese in East Turkestan grew by 1,222,100 from 2000 to 2012. The figure for Uyghurs is 2,005,300 over the same period. Of Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu Prefectures, the number of Han Chinese increased only in Hotan Prefecture during 2000-12 (18,694 individuals), whereas all three prefectures experienced an increase in the number of Uyghurs.⁷²

⁶⁷ Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Turdush, Rukiye. (2013, April 12). Three Uyghurs Held for Resisting Land Takeover. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/dispute-04122013150515.html>.

⁷⁰ Clarke, Michael. (2013). *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009*. p. 154. Abingdon: Routledge.

⁷¹ Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service. (2013, March 11). Han Migrant Influx Threatens Uyghur Farms. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/farmers-03112013164151.html>.

⁷² Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>. and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Statistical Bureau. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Xinjiang 2013*. Urumqi: China Statistical Publishing House.

At a prefectural level, Table 14 illustrates the flows in population by ethnicity in Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu Prefectures between 2011-12 and indicates an increase of Uyghur and a more modest rise in Han Chinese in each prefecture (except Aksu). However, the figures for Aral, a sub-prefecture level city within Aksu Prefecture are not included in prefectural level population data. Han Chinese comprised approximately 91 percent of the population in Aral in 2011 and 2012.⁷³

The data seems to indicate a recent stabilization or slight growth of Han Chinese in the three prefectures under review. In a 2014 presentation analyzing the 2010 census, Toops restated the recent increase in the Han Chinese population in relative and absolute terms, but added that new railroads to Kashgar (completed in 1999) and Hotan (completed in 2011) were taking migrants south.⁷⁴

Prefecture	Uyghur 2011	Uyghur 2012	Difference	Han 2011	Han 2012	Difference
Aksu	1,873,808	1,888,881	+15,073	483,164	473,646	-9,518
Hotan	1,998,831	2,044,223	+45,392	72,466	74,640	+2,174
Kashgar	3,756,475	3,803,463	+46,988	284,050	284,958	+908

Table 14: Population flows by ethnicity 2011-12

The demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods, particularly in the south and including Kashgar Old City, which has been called “the very cradle of Uyghur culture,”⁷⁵ are not only a physical manifestation of the CCP hold over Uyghur society, but also the state authority’s effort to erase organic Uyghur history and transform East Turkestan’s physical appearance into one that is indistinguishable from eastern China. This process seems inevitable given the increasing numbers of Han Chinese in the region, but the new construction projects mirroring cities in eastern China are likely to further encourage the migration of Han Chinese to southern East Turkestan.

This model has been successfully pursued in the regional capital of Urumchi. Data from the 2000 census shows that Han Chinese constituted over 75 percent of the total population of the regional capital, as opposed to 20 percent in 1949.⁷⁶ The change in

⁷³ Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Statistical Bureau. (2012). *Statistical Yearbook of Xinjiang 2012*. Urumqi: China Statistical Publishing House and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Statistical Bureau. (2013). *Statistical Yearbook of Xinjiang 2013*. Urumqi: China Statistical Publishing House.

⁷⁴ Toops, Stanley W. (2014). The Demography of the Uyghur: Spatial Results of the 2010 Census of Xinjiang. Paper read at First International Conference on Uyghur Studies – History, Culture, and Society September 26, 2014 at Washington, DC, USA. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei9wAIZN7_s.

⁷⁵ Dillon, Michael. (2014). *Xinjiang and the Expansion of Chinese Communist Power*. p. 4. Abingdon: Routledge.

⁷⁶ Toops, Stanley W. (2004). The Demography of Xinjiang. In S.F. Starr ed. *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*. New York: M.E. Sharpe and Toops, Stanley W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-anddevelopment-xinjiang-after-1949>.

demography in Urumchi has been accompanied by an architectural transformation in the past two decades that has relegated any defining Uyghur character to the margins. Cities such as Urumchi represent the future for cities in the south of the region, such as Kashgar, where a demolition campaign was started in 2009.⁷⁷



A Uyghur man sits in front of his house, which is slated to be demolished. (Un oeil sur la Chine/Le Monde)

In the context of increasing violence in East Turkestan, Chinese officials convened the second Xinjiang Work Forum in May 2014, which introduced some measurable benchmarks in terms of boosting employment opportunities for ethnic minorities.⁷⁸ However, the Work Forum’s central focus on “ethnic mingling,” gave development planning in East Turkestan an ideological dimension and was an indication that ethnic minority policies were being reformed to blur ethnic lines.

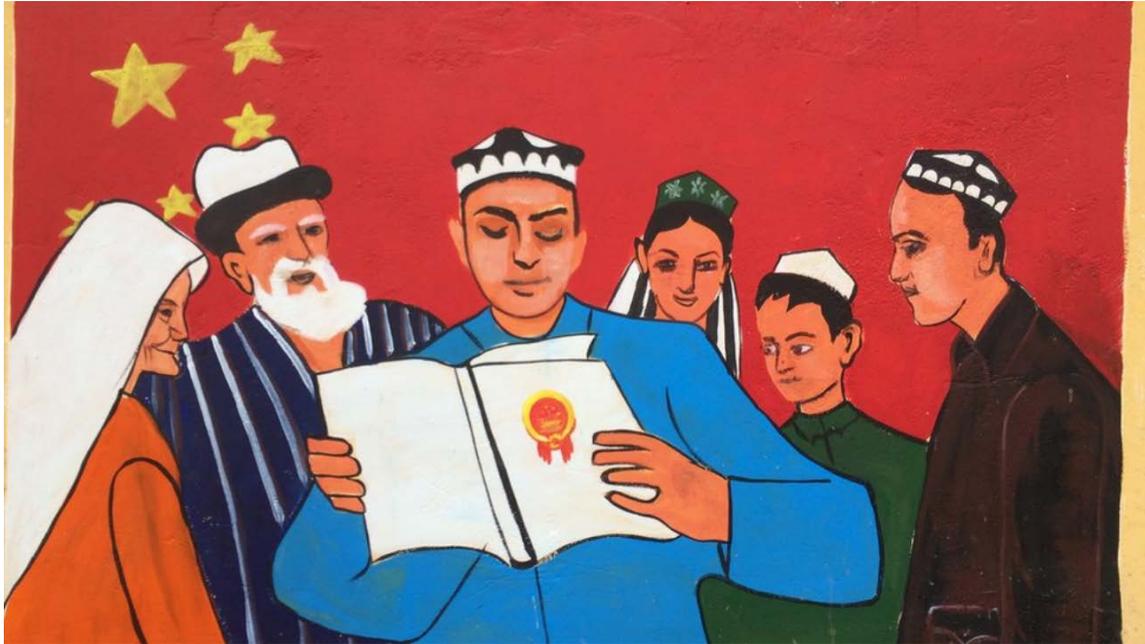
“Ethnic mingling” appeared to reemphasize a commitment to “bilingual” education, as well as encouragement for Uyghurs to move to eastern China for employment and education purposes.⁷⁹ “Ethnic mingling” also appeared to encourage local officials to

⁷⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2012). Living on the Margins: The Chinese State’s Demolition of Uyghur Communities. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/new-report-uhrp-living-margins-chinese-state%E2%80%99s-demolition-uyghur-communities.html>.

⁷⁸ Leibold, James. (2014, June 19). Xinjiang Work Forum Marks New Policy of ‘Ethnic Mingling.’ *China Brief*, 14, 12. Retrieved from http://www.jamestown.org/regions/chinaasiapacific/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42518&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=52&cHash=e382c60e99ad9bfe6cd7453376dc25a0#.VMffHV7F_Y.

⁷⁹ Ibid. See also: Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2008, February 8). Deception, Pressure, and Threats: The Transfer of Young Uyghur Women to Eastern China. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-releases-uaa-and-uhrp-reports/deception-pressure-and-threats-transfer-young-uyghur-women> and Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2007, July 24). Uyghur Language Under Attack: The Myth of “Bilingual” Education in the

implement measures encouraging Han Chinese migration to the south. Reports of cash rewards for couples entering mixed marriages in Cherchen and the announcement of a new mixed ethnicity settlement near Hotan were illustrative of the change in approach.⁸⁰



Propaganda poster of Uyghurs reading a Chinese book in front the People's Republic of China flag. (BBC)

The policy of “ethnic mingling” did not accommodate those Uyghurs in the south who did not wish to participate. Such Uyghurs, already aware of the north-south axis imbalance in development, could potentially see the incentivizing of mixed marriages and mixed communities as further localizing inequity and a threat to distinct Uyghur customs. In a policy environment that incentivizes Han Chinese migration to the resource-scarce south and a body of evidence indicating the failure of development to improve Uyghur living standards, it is reasonable to conclude that economic and demographic conditions have aggravated tensions in the south. Regarding the role of these two aspects in the current violence, Reza Hasmath concludes:

Perhaps the most culpable factor behind current ethnic tensions is socio-economic, such as segmented labour shares and unequal sectoral distribution in occupational categories. This is coupled with growing migration to Xinjiang (most notably, Hans to Urumqi) intensifying economic inequalities between

People's Republic of China. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/uaa-and-uhrp-reports/uyghur-language-under-attack-myth-%E2%80%9Cbilingual%E2%80%9D-education-peoples>.

⁸⁰ Phillips, Tom. (2014, August 19). China plans to fight terror with ‘dozens’ of new cities. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/11042528/China-plans-to-fight-terror-with-dozens-of-new-cities.html> and Sands, Gary. (2014, September 12). Cultural Cleansing with Chinese Characteristics? Foreign Policy Blogs. Retrieved from <http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2014/09/12/cultural-cleansing-with-chinese-characteristics/>.

Uygurs and Hans. Hans earn more than Uygurs in Xinjiang. They are over-represented in high-status and high-paying occupations (for example, professional and managerial jobs), in which more than 35 per cent of the Han working population works in comparison to 13 per cent of Uygurs.⁸¹

II. Religion

China often cites religious extremism as a cause of violence in East Turkestan.⁸² While adopting religion as a symbol of resistance among Uyghurs has grown in recent years, this does not necessarily lead to “religious extremism.”⁸³ Observers have commented that Uyghur religious practices reflect a multifaceted indigenous interpretation of Islam that is not strictly doctrinal.⁸⁴ Religion is a key marker of Uyghur distinctiveness in a country that promotes atheism and is overwhelmingly Han Chinese in its cultural output and social organization. Scholar Arienne Dwyer writes: “...language and religion are valued by most ordinary Uyghurs as central aspects of their identity. As both are considered inviolable and semi-private, significant encroachment by a dominant Chinese culture is perceived as an attack on identity.”⁸⁵ Other scholars have proposed that the recent interest in Islam is a private expression of dissent in response to curbs on public criticism of the state. Scholar Joanne Smith Finley discusses how religious discipline is perceived by some Uyghurs as a means to achieve not only personal salvation, but also the preservation of the Uyghur people in the face of unchecked sinicization.⁸⁶ As a result, the state perceives Islam as a threat to the success of policies of assimilation it has implemented in East Turkestan.

Reza Hasmath writes: “State policies that limit religious practices are major contributing factors to Han-Uyghur tensions.”⁸⁷ China curbs Uyghur religious belief and practice

⁸¹ Hasmath, Reza. (2013, July 5). Responses to Xinjiang ethnic unrest do not address underlying causes. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1276012/responses-xinjiang-ethnic-unrest-do-not-address-underlying>.

⁸² Buckley, Chris. (2014, July 1). China blames religious extremists for violence in Xinjiang. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/world/asia/china-blames-religious-extremists-for-violence-in-xinjiang.html> & Martina, Michael. (2014, February 16). China says religious extremists behind latest Xinjiang unrest. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/17/us-china-xinjiang-idUSBREA1G02V20140217>.

⁸³ Smith Finley, Joanne. (2013). *The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur-Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang*. Leiden: Brill.

⁸⁴ Thum, Rian. (2014, November 12). The Sacred Routes of History. *ChinaFile*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinafile.com/library/books/sacred-routes-uyghur-history> & Rudelson, Justin Jon. (1998). *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁸⁵ Dwyer, Arienne M. (2005). *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS015.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Smith Finley, Joanne. (2013). *The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur-Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang*. Leiden: Brill.

⁸⁷ Hasmath, Reza. (2013, July 5). Responses to Xinjiang ethnic unrest do not address underlying causes. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1276012/responses-xinjiang-ethnic-unrest-do-not-address-underlying>.

despite religious freedom guarantees in the Chinese Constitution and Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law. UHRP has recorded a number of aspects of Uyghur religious activity that are subject to state restrictions. Religious leaders, such as imams, are required to attend political education classes to ensure compliance with CCP regulations and policies; only state-approved versions of the Koran and sermons are permitted, with all unapproved religious texts treated as “illegal” publications liable to confiscation and criminal charges against whoever was found in possession of them; any outward expression of faith in government workplaces, hospitals and some private businesses, such as men wearing beards or women wearing headscarves, is forbidden; no state employees and no one under the age of 18 can enter a mosque, a measure not in force in the rest of China; organized private religious education is proscribed and facilitators of private classes in Islam are frequently charged with conducting “illegal” religious activities; and students, teachers and government workers are prohibited from fasting during Ramadan. In addition, Uyghurs are not permitted to undertake Hajj, unless it is with an expensive official tour, in which state officials carefully vet applicants.⁸⁸

In the 2013-14 period, a number of incidents in Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu Prefectures were sparked by the restrictions over “Islamic dress.”⁸⁹ In a 2013 report, UHRP documented a number of signs posted across East Turkestan either denying service to persons dressed in “religious attire” or advising locals of permitted forms of dress. UHRP documented a pattern of control since 2008 over this personal aspect of Uyghur lives. Uyghurs interviewed by UHRP told researchers how Chinese officials demanded the removal of “Islamic” clothing from male and female Uyghurs, even in public spaces.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013, April 30). Sacred Right Defiled: China’s Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/sacred-right-defiled-china%E2%80%99s-iron-fisted-repression-uyghur-religious-freedom.html>.

⁸⁹ Hoshur, Shohret. (2013, April 24). Xinjiang Violence Leaves 21 Dead. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/maralbeshi-04242013190839.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2013, May 24). Xinjiang Clash Leaves Two Village Officials Dead. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/yengisar-05242013124939.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2013, August 5). Uyghur Man Shot Dead in Violence Sparked by His Beard. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/uchturpan-08052013173737.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, June 11). Six Killed, Two Injured in Fresh Xinjiang Clashes. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/clashes-06112014173139.html>; Sulaiman, Eset. (2014, May 20). Xinjiang Police Open Fire at Protest Against Clampdown on Islamic Dress. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/dress-05202014202002.html> and Jacobs, Andrew. (2013, August 26). Over News of Clash, a Shroud of Silence in Xinjiang. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/27/world/asia/over-news-of-clash-a-shroud-of-silence-in-xinjiang.html?pagewanted=all>.

⁹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013, April 30). Sacred Right Defiled: China’s Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/sacred-right-defiled-china%E2%80%99s-iron-fisted-repression-uyghur-religious-freedom.html>.



Women wearing veils or headscarves and men under 45-years-old with long beards may not enter the hospital. Prayer is prohibited in the hospital. (Bilimkuqi Blog)

Restrictions on Islamic appearance were noted in particular in Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan Prefectures. For example, UHRP reported on clothing restrictions occurring in private businesses in the Hotan area. A local company that leases property to businesses in the city banned women wearing veils from entering its shops and markets, and restricted the sale of clothing with “religious characteristics.” The Hotan Prefecture Jinxing Trading Co., Ltd. posted a notice regarding the new restrictions on June 11, 2012 in front of an entrance to one of the shops on its property, stating that the restrictions were in accordance with the demands of prefectural and municipal party and government authorities. The notice informs readers that the regulations are being instituted “in order to dilute the religious atmosphere, purify the religious environment, and maintain order in the marketplace.”⁹¹ In 2012, officials particularly targeted Hotan with one government website reporting raids on illegal religious activity discovered 1,498 people had worn “traditional Muslim dress.”⁹²

⁹¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2012, June 22). New rules issued by Hotan company discriminate against Uyghur women. Retrieved from <https://uhrp.org/press-release/new-rules-issued-hotan-company-discriminate-against-uyghur-women.html>.

⁹² Qiao Long. (2012, February 21). Uyghurs Detained in Hotan. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/detained-02212012105215.html>.

UHRP’s report also discusses a notice issued by the City of Kashgar People’s Court Party Committee on July 5, 2012 outlining the “religious atmosphere” in the city. The document relates how the wearing of beards is not a custom among young Uyghurs and officials should promote the concept of “beautiful women,” referring to unveiled Uyghur women. Following through on the latter of these recommendations, in 2013 Kashgar authorities regenerated an initiative called “Project Beauty,” in which state officials encouraged local women not to wear headscarves or veils. Government workers occupied street stalls in order to identify women wearing the offending clothing in public. Once they had been singled out, women wearing headscarves or veils were filmed using surveillance cameras and forced to watch a film on the benefits of unveiling.⁹³



*Notice:
 Show your beautiful face,
 Let your beautiful hair flow.
 Remove your veil, change primitive customs
 Make Kashgar harmonious, establish pleasant
 traditions.
 (Uighurbiz)*

On May 8, 2014, UHRP published a translation of an April 16, 2014 notice released on the Aksu Prefecture, Shayar County government website detailing rewards for information on 53 proscribed behaviors. Informants could be rewarded with payments of 50 Yuan to 50,000 Yuan (8 USD to 8,000 USD) for notifying authorities of suspicious conduct including 18 religious activities, among them customary practices. The Shayar County document described how rewards would be issued to residents “[d]iscovering people with bizarre dress or growing a long beard.”⁹⁴ Shayar was not the only county in Aksu Prefecture implementing dress restrictions, in 2010 bans on headscarves and beards in Kucha County were equated with civility.⁹⁵

⁹³ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013, April 30). Sacred Right Defiled: China’s Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/sacred-right-defiled-china%E2%80%99s-iron-fisted-repression-uyghur-religious-freedom.html>.

⁹⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2014, May 8). China attempts to criminalize every aspect of Uyghur religious belief and practice. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/briefing-china-attempts-criminalize-every-aspect-uyghur-religious-belief-and-practice>.

⁹⁵ Radio Free Asia. (2010, June 9). 新疆库车县清查非法宣传品 销毁维族妇女服饰 [In Kuche County, Xinjiang Inventory of Illegal Propaganda Materials and Uyghur Women Apparel Destroyed]. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/xinjiang-06092010163117.html>.

A February 4, 2015 article by scholars Timothy Grose and James Liebold analyzing legislation in Urumchi set to outlaw Islamic veils, determined “the CCP’s assault on the veil is based on a superficial and flawed premise—that dress is a reliable indicator of extremism, or even political loyalty.” The authors describe how in conversations with Uyghurs “women (as well as men) attach a range of different meanings to head and body coverings.” Regarding the outcomes of China’s anti-veiling efforts, the article concludes: “[T]he end result is a more intrusive Party-state—one intent on hollowing out the few remaining spaces for a self-defined Uighur identity and autonomy...The CCP will continue to target head-coverings in Xinjiang, but de-veiling women will likely come at a high cost: a deepening rift of mistrust between the Uighur and the Han-dominated Communist Party.”⁹⁶

III. Militarization and Freedom of Speech

The Chinese government often exploits the Uyghurs’ faith in Islam in order to justify repressive “anti-terror” measures in East Turkestan, which consolidate political and economic supremacy in the region through militarization.⁹⁷ Since 9/11, China has in particular manipulated the “Global War on Terror” to validate this repression of Uyghur human rights. Public statements by Chinese officials shortly before and after 9/11 signaled a decision to influence international opinion that China faced a terror threat. On September 1, 2001, Xinjiang Chairman, Abdulahat Abdurixit said in Urumchi: “By no means is Xinjiang a place where violence and terrorist incidents take place very often,” and just a week before 9/11, ex-Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary, Wang Lequan told a group of Hong Kong investors: “Xinjiang is not a place of terror.” Two months later, then Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan stood before the United Nations and asserted: “East Turkestan terrorist forces have long received training, financial aid and support from international terrorist groups... East Turkestan is... a part of international terrorism and should be resolutely fought against.”⁹⁸

A survey undertaken by AP, cited in an article dated September 4, 2011, highlighted an increase in terror arrests worldwide in the decade after 9/11. Of the 66 countries surveyed, accounting for 70 percent of the world’s population, China was one of two

⁹⁶ Grose, Timothy and Liebold, James. (2015, January 4). Why China Is Banning Islamic Veils. ChinaFile. Retrieved from <http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/why-china-banning-islamic-veils>. See also: Fay, Greg. (2015). China imposes burqa ban on Muslim Uyghur minority. The News Hub. Retrieved from <https://www.the-newshub.com/international/policing-uyghur-womens-religious-expression>.

⁹⁷ See: Narramore, Terry. (2012). Exercising Sovereignty China’s ‘Core Interests’ and Unfinished National Unification.” Refereed Conference Paper APSA 24-26 September 2012 Hobart, Australia. Retrieved from http://www.auspsa.org.au/sites/default/files/exercising_sovereignty_terry_narramore.pdf.

⁹⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2007). Persecution of Uyghurs in the Era of the “War on Terror.” Retrieved from http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Persecution_of_Uyghurs_in_the_Era_of_the_War_on_Terror.pdf. See also: Millward, James. (2004). *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS006.pdf>.

countries accounting for half of the 35,117 terror related convictions recorded.⁹⁹ Given the Chinese state's assertions that it faces a Uyghur terror problem, it is feasible to suggest the majority of the arrests in China were of Uyghurs. In a series of reports, UHRP documented Uyghur eyewitness accounts to arbitrary arrests in a chain of security sweeps conducted across Urumchi following the unrest of July 5, 2009. Eyewitnesses also described the intensification in the presence of Chinese security forces in the region.¹⁰⁰

Chinese authorities have also exploited the international security environment and Islamophobia in the aftermath of 9/11 to silence peaceful Uyghur dissent to state policies. The 2011 AP article added: "Dozens of countries are using the fight against terrorism to curb political dissent."¹⁰¹ The Chinese state's conflation of terrorism with peaceful dissent has effectively checked Uyghurs from speaking out against policies that disregard their economic, social and cultural interests during a time of government-led economic transformation in East Turkestan. A Wall Street Journal article published by Mark P. Lagon and Arch Puddington of Freedom House on January 28, 2015 summarized the Chinese government's approach to peaceful Uyghur dissent as one which: "[I]nvoles terrorism to support harsh prison sentences against nonviolent Uighur activists."¹⁰² When the withholding of state retribution is determined by acquiescence to assimilatory and discriminatory government policies, it creates the conditions for the effective marginalization of large numbers of Uyghurs.

The period under review in this report, January 2013 to December 2014, approximately corresponds with the incumbency of Xi Jinping in the offices of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CCP (assumed office in November 2012), Chairman of the Central Military Commission (assumed office in November 2012) and the Presidency of the People's Republic of China (assumed office March 2013). While research into incidents prior to 2013 are outside the scope of this report, according to an article in *The Diplomat* published on January 23, 2015, the number of "violent incidents has risen sharply in the past 18 months," which roughly corresponds with Xi's consolidation of power.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Mendoza, Martha. (2011, September 4). Since 9/11, at least 35,000 terrorism convictions worldwide. *Associated Press*. Retrieved from http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci_18822690.

¹⁰⁰ See: Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2010). Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From The 2009 Unrest in Urumchi. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Can-Anyone-Hear-Us.pdf>; Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2011). A city ruled by fear and silence: Urumchi, two years on. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/July5-report.pdf> and Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013). To Strike The Strongest Blow: Questions Remain Over Crackdown On 2009 Unrest in Urumchi. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/to-strike-the-strongest-blow.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lagon, Mark P. and Puddington, Arch. (2015, January 27). Exploiting Terrorism as a Pretext for Repression. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/mark-p-lagon-and-arch-puddington-exploiting-terrorism-as-a-pretext-for-repression-1422401031>.

¹⁰³ Collins, Gabe. (2015, January 23). Beijing's Xinjiang Policy: Striking Too Hard? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/beijings-xinjiang-policy-striking-too-hard/>.

A January 2015 report published by Freedom House concluded the “overall degree of repression has increased since Xi rose to power in November 2012.”¹⁰⁴ In an assessment of regime’s future direction, Freedom House added: “The prospects for top-down liberalization under the current leadership appear to be slim to none. Xi and the Politburo are responding to new threats by falling back on repressive tactics rather than experimenting with more liberal policies.”¹⁰⁵

In East Turkestan, repression of individuals has manifested most notably in the arrest of moderate Uyghurs critical of the government. The 2014 arrest, conviction and life sentencing of Uyghur academic, Ilham Tohti marked the seriousness of the Chinese government’s determination to root out any opposition to its policy approach in the region. Ilham Tohti worked as a professor at Beijing’s Minzu University (formerly Central Nationalities University) and often questioned the efficacy of Chinese government policies targeting Uyghurs citing worsening economic, social and cultural conditions. He founded the Uighurbiz website in order to offer information on Uyghur social issues in Mandarin Chinese and to “promote mutual understanding as well as dialogue among ethnic communities.”¹⁰⁶



Screenshot of footage from Ilham Tohti’s trial (Reuters)

¹⁰⁴ Cook, Sarah. (2015, January). Confronting the Limitations of Chinese Communist Party Repression. *Freedom House*. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/china-2015-politiburo-predicament#.VMKf4v7F94c>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. See also: Human Rights Watch. (2015, January 29). China: Political Repression at a High Mark. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/29/china-political-repression-high-mark>.

¹⁰⁶ Tohti, Ilham. (2014, April 6). My Ideals and the Career Path I Have Chosen. *China Change*. Retrieved from <http://chinachange.org/2014/04/06/my-ideals-and-the-career-path-i-have-chosen/>.

Seven of Ilham Tohti's students were given prison sentences of up to eight years in December 2014 for their work on the Uighurbiz website. Perhat Halmurat, Shohret Nijat, Mutellip Imin, Abduqeyyum Ablimit, Atikem Rozi, Akbar Imin and Luo Yuwei (an ethnic Yi) all worked as volunteers.¹⁰⁷ The cases of linguist, Abduweli Ayup and AIDS activist, Akbar Imin are also indicative of the state's zero tolerance to dissenting views on issues of social or cultural relevance.¹⁰⁸ While experiencing the narrowing space for civil society activism across China, Uyghurs also collectively felt the effects of an intense "anti-terror" campaign conducted in East Turkestan, which conflated peaceful dissent with the serious crimes of the "three evils of separatism, extremism and terrorism."¹⁰⁹

UHRP documented in a 2014 report the limited space afforded Uyghurs to discuss economic, social and cultural issues online. UHRP found a pattern of systemic denial of freedom of expression and association all underpinned by a labyrinth of national and local regulations. Furthermore, in an environment where one Internet footprint could land them in jail, Uyghurs tended to heavily self-censor.¹¹⁰ As Michael Clarke notes, even within the party structure, Uyghur voices remain underrepresented. Only a third of party members in the Xinjiang *Uyghur* Autonomous Region are Uyghur and almost all party secretaries at every level of local government are not Uyghur.¹¹¹

On January 7, 2014, Xi Jinping announced a "major strategy shift" in East Turkestan, which reprioritized regional policies toward "social stability" from an emphasis on development to create conditions of regional stability.¹¹² Ten days later, Chinese state media detailed how regional officials planned to double the budget for the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau (PSB).¹¹³ The report was consistent with overseas reports detailing the sharp rise in Chinese government spending on domestic security in recent years. A report from Reuters dated March 5, 2013 described how the budget for domestic

¹⁰⁷ Martina, Michael. (2014, December 9). China jails seven students of Uighur scholar for separatism. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/09/uk-china-rights-xinjiang-idUKKBN0JN0B020141209>.

¹⁰⁸ Jacobs, Andrew. (2014, May 11). A Devotion to Language Proves Risky. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/12/world/asia/a-devotion-to-language-proves-risky.html> and Martina, Michael and Rajagopalan, Megha. (2014, March 10). China detains Uighur AIDS activist amid crackdown. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/10/us-china-xinjiang-idUSBREA290LK20140310>.

¹⁰⁹ Global Times. (2014, January 18). Leave no chance for malicious preaching. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/838112.shtml>.

¹¹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2014, June 16). Trapped in a Virtual Cage: Chinese State Repression of Uyghurs Online. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-release/trapped-virtual-cage-chinese-state-repression-uyghurs-online.html>.

¹¹¹ Clarke, Michael. (2013). *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009*. p. 155. Abingdon: Routledge.

¹¹² Yang Jingjie. (2014, January 9). Xinjiang to see 'major strategy shift.' *Global Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/836495.shtml>.

¹¹³ People's Daily Online. (2014, January 17). Xinjiang doubles terror fight budget. Retrieved from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90785/8515157.html>.

security was higher than money set aside for national defense.¹¹⁴ According to a March 5, 2014 article in the New York Times, domestic security budgets have exceeded defense since 2011.¹¹⁵



President Xi Jinping, center, meets with soldiers during his 2014 visit to East Turkestan. (Xinhua/Li Gang)

A day after the May 22, 2014 incident in Urumchi, which coincided with the conclusion of a visit to East Turkestan by Xi Jinping, the Chinese government announced the commencement of a one-year “anti-terror” campaign in the region.¹¹⁶ As described in the UHRP aggregated data, this has resulted in a rise in arrests in East Turkestan, but the research most certainly does not capture all arrests during the 2013-14 period and UHRP is alarmed that a number of criminal and judicial procedures have been conducted far from the observance of independent monitors. In an article published on January 23, 2015, the China Daily reported how arrests in 2014 were almost double the figure for 2013.¹¹⁷ Another article published by the China Daily on January 27, 2015 described how “148 terrorist cells” had been broken up by police in Kashgar Prefecture.¹¹⁸ In December 2014, head of the Supreme People’s Court, Zhou Qiang told attendees at a legal meeting

¹¹⁴ Blanchard, Ben and Ruwitch, John. (2013, March 5). China hikes defense budget, to spend more on internal security. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/05/us-china-parliament-defence-idUSBRE92403620130305>.

¹¹⁵ Wong, Edward. (2014, March 5). China Announces 12.2% Increase in Military Budget. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/06/world/asia/china-military-budget.html?_r=0.

¹¹⁶ Xinhua. (2014, May 23). Xinjiang starts campaign against terror. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-05/23/c_133356740.htm.

¹¹⁷ Cui Jia. (2015, January 23). Xinjiang arrests nearly doubled. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/23/content_19384490.htm.

¹¹⁸ Cui Jia. (2015, January 27). Kashgar finds success in crackdown on terror cells. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/27/content_19414122.htm.

in East Turkestan that “terror” cases should be dealt with “harshly and quickly.”¹¹⁹ UHRP is concerned that given the atmosphere of retribution in the region, the trials of Uyghurs indicted in terror cases may not have been afforded international standards of due process.

China has also stepped up deployments of security personnel in East Turkestan, as well as increasing public surveillance of Uyghurs. According to September 2014 reports citing the Hong Kong based rights group, the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, China planned to “transfer 100,000 People’s Liberation Army soldiers” to the region.¹²⁰ In 2011 figures, the Lanzhou Military Region (responsible for East Turkestan, Qinghai/Kokonor, Gansu, Ningxia and Shaanxi) accounted for approximately 220,000 troops.¹²¹ In 2014, the BBC merely stated there were “large numbers of troops stationed in the region.”¹²² In November 2014, the UK Daily Telegraph reported how at least 3,000 ex-soldiers would be mobilized into the region’s villages and towns in order to curb the unrest.¹²³ In a January 23, 2015 article, the China Daily reported a “strengthening” of military power in East Turkestan, particularly in border areas. Although the report did not detail specific numbers, it added: “Sources familiar with the Chinese military system said Xinjiang is the largest provincial-level military region in China. It has four deputy commanders and four deputy commissars, while other military regions normally have only one deputy commander and one deputy commissar.”¹²⁴ The escalation of security forces’ presence has been shadowed by the establishment of “volunteer” civilians required to report on suspicious behaviors and man checkpoints¹²⁵ and by a significant boost to the numbers of on-the-ground party personnel in the region. In a June 19, 2014 article scholar, James Liebold wrote:

¹¹⁹ Blanchard, Ben. (2014, December 19). China’s top judge urges swift, severe sentences in Xinjiang. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/12/19/china-xinjiang-idINKBNOJX07P20141219>.

¹²⁰ Want China Times. (2014, October 22). PLA may transfer 100,000 soldiers to Xinjiang: report. Retrieved from <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20141022000063&cid=1101>.

¹²¹ Scobell, Andrew; Ratner, Ely and Beckley, Michael. (2014). China’s Strategy Toward South and Central Asia: An Empty Fortress. *Rand Corporation*. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR500/RR525/RAND_RR525.pdf.

¹²² BBC. (2014, October 14). Xinjiang profile. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16860974>.

¹²³ Phillips, Tom. (2014, November 28). China sends thousands of troops to combat Xinjiang violence. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/11259959/China-sends-thousands-of-troops-to-combat-Xinjiang-violence.html>.

¹²⁴ Cui Jia. (2015, January 23). PLA strengthens Xinjiang forces to foil terror attacks. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/23/content_19384486.htm.

¹²⁵ Phillips, Tom. (2014, July 20). Beijing assembles people’s army to crush China terrorists with an iron fist. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/10978406/Beijing-assembles-peoples-army-to-crush-China-terrorists-with-an-iron-fist.html>.

Early this year, the regional government announced it would dispatch 200,000 high level Party cadres to live and work in grassroots communities for a year at a time. They are tasked with not only assisting and consoling the masses, but also gathering intelligence in order to nip any potential problems in the bud. In urban areas, Xinjiang is following other cities in building a “grid-style” (wangge hua) social management system. The technique divides communities into geometric zones and then assigns personal responsibility for social stability to a team of party members who are equipped (in theory at least) with the latest computer-enhanced technologies for near total surveillance. “In order to achieve complete grassroots coverage,” Xinjiang Party boss Zhang Chunxian recently stressed, “[we must] thoroughly enter and garrison [Xinjiang society] in order that no blank spaces are left behind.”¹²⁶

Another heavy-handed aspect of China’s intensification of security in East Turkestan is the installation of security cameras. In November 8, 2013, an article in *The Diplomat* described how China had put in place a “national program called ‘Skynet’...that aims to increase the number and capabilities of surveillance cameras.” In the article, the effectiveness of the program in East Turkestan was also evaluated: “While public accounts of how video surveillance technologies are used with respect to Xinjiang are elusive, we can note that within the past month, Chinese authorities have detained at least 139 people in Xinjiang.”¹²⁷ According to a June 5, 2014 report in the *Wall Street Journal* 17,000 cameras were in operation in Urumchi,¹²⁸ some of which were positioned outside schools.¹²⁹

In October 2014, Reza Hasmath wrote of the increasing refinement of the state security apparatus in East Turkestan:

At the very least, party members have relatively sophisticated technologies at their disposal if they elect – which seems to be employed more readily in the urban areas. This may involve using riot-proof HD Cameras, policing boxes, and introducing 24-hour inspection routes. Furthermore, Uyghurs in both Xinjiang and across the nation are randomly targeted for surveillance and scrutiny by state

¹²⁶ Leibold, James. (2014, June 19). Xinjiang Work Forum Marks New Policy of ‘Ethnic Mingling.’ *China Brief*, 14, 12. Retrieved from http://www.jamestown.org/regions/chinaasiapacific/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42518&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=52&cHash=e382c60e99ad9bfe6cd7453376dc25a0#.VMffHV7F__Y.

¹²⁷ Collins, Gabe. (2013, November 8). The Limits of China’s Surveillance State. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/the-limits-of-chinas-surveillance-state/>.

¹²⁸ Areddy, James T. (2014, June 5). One Legacy of Tiananmen: China’s 100 Million Surveillance Cameras. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/06/05/one-legacy-of-tiananmen-chinas-100-million-surveillance-cameras/>.

¹²⁹ Fern Tay, Huey. (2014, July 5). Security forces on high alert in China’s Xinjiang Province after a series of deadly attacks. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-05/xinjiang-on-high-alert/5574296>.

authorities, who justified their actions citing the need for increased security measures.¹³⁰



Paramilitary policemen travel during an anti-terrorism rally in Urumchi. (Reuters)

In the wake of the May 23, 2014 “anti-terror” campaign announcement, Xinjiang party chief, Zhang Chunxian commented the crackdown would employ “unconventional measures.”¹³¹ According a January 23, 2015 article in *The Diplomat*, the author speculates that the security situation in East Turkestan “does offer China’s public (and private) security apparatus a number of tangible benefits. Xinjiang gives China’s security forces an internal, restricted access ‘beta lab’ in which to test new techniques and technologies (such as drones) before the Chinese military potentially employs them beyond China’s borders.”¹³² During the 2013-14 period, China conducted a series of anti-terror exercises in the region in conjunction with its “anti-terror” operations.¹³³ Following the incident in Elishku in July 2014, a *People’s Daily Online* article dated August 17,

¹³⁰ Hasmath, Reza. (2014, October 27). Ethnic Violence in Xinjiang: Causes, Responses, and Future Outlook. China Policy Institute Policy Paper: No 7. The University of Nottingham. Retrieved from <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/policy-papers/cpi-policy-paper-2014-no-7-hasmath.pdf>.

¹³¹ Branigan, Tania. (2014, May 26). China detains more than 200 suspected separatists in Xinjiang, state media says. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/26/china-200-separatists-xinjiang-anti-terrorism-crackdown>.

¹³² Collins, Gabe. (2015, January 23). Beijing's Xinjiang Policy: Striking Too Hard? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/beijings-xinjiang-policy-striking-too-hard/>.

¹³³ See for example: Ide, William. (2014, August 29). Anti-Terror Drills Highlight China’s Push Into Central Asia. *Voice of America*. Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/content/anti-terror-drills-highlight-china-push-into-central-asia/2432330.html> and China Central Television. (2013, June 13). SCO to hold anti-terrorism exercise. Retrieved from <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20130613/102996.shtml>.

2014, discusses how security forces deployed surveillance drones in Yarkand County during anti-terror operations. According to the article, the drones were used in Elishku and Huangdi Townships in a search for alleged terror suspects. Operations were conducted “day and night.”¹³⁴

The January 23, 2015 article in *The Diplomat* also asserts: “The continuing conflict in Xinjiang is also creating a core group of police and paramilitary personnel with significant live fire experience in a hostile operational environment. These men (and increasingly, women) offer a prime talent pool for China’s new private security providers as they recruit staff to hire out to Chinese miners and construction firms operating in Africa and other areas where projects may require armed protection.”¹³⁵ An article in the *South China Morning Post* from January 16, 2015 describes how a recruitment advertisement for police in Koktokay County in Altay Prefecture depicting “police squads...in various uniforms showing off their weaponry and tactical formations against unlikely backdrops like fiery skies and spaceship-like objects emitting beams of light” was criticized by netizens for “glamourising the profession.”¹³⁶



We are always ready to guarantee security and peace.” (Weibo via South China Morning Post)

¹³⁴ People’s Daily Online. (2014, August 17). 新疆莎车县：特警操控无人机搜捕暴恐分子 [Xinjiang Shache County: SWAT operate unmanned aerial vehicle to hunt and arrest violent separatists]. Retrieved from <http://xj.people.com.cn/n/2014/0817/c188521-22013482.html>.

¹³⁵ Collins, Gabe. (2015, January 23). Beijing’s Xinjiang Policy: Striking Too Hard? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/beijings-xinjiang-policy-striking-too-hard/>.

¹³⁶ South China Morning Post. (2015, January 16). Police unit in China's restive Xinjiang mocked for cinematic recruitment posters. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1680401/real-or-fake-chinese-police-xinjiang-mocked-cinematic-recruitment>.

Besides accounts of heavy handed policing counter narratives offered by local Uyghurs and Uyghur exiles, especially in Aksu Prefecture,¹³⁷ overseas journalists have been able to document similar accusations from on-the-ground reporting. In June 2013, Uyghurs from the Hotan area told overseas Uyghurs that Chinese security forces patrolling a bridge connecting a mosque to the center of Hanerik, Hotan Prefecture opened fire and killed several hundred Uyghurs. According to the accounts, police also pursued and killed the Uyghurs who fled the scene. New York Times reporter, Andrew Jacobs' August 26, 2013 report on the incident in Hanerik stated: "Although the state media said that no one died during the confrontation between villagers and armed police officers, numerous sources say that dozens were shot dead on the highway that connects Hanerik to Hotan." Residents told Jacobs: "[T]he Hanerik shooting victims were unarmed civilians simply seeking an end to heavy-handed policing."¹³⁸ The BBC's Damian Grammaticas traveled to Siriqbuya, Kashgar Prefecture three days after a violent incident in the village and published a report about his visit on April 26, 2013. After listening to eyewitness accounts, particularly one of the fatal shooting of alleged assailants by police, Grammaticas wrote: "This account clearly raises questions about how at least one of the men died at the hands of police, and, possibly, whether there was justification for shooting the other three as well."¹³⁹

In an indication of the extensive policing targeting Uyghurs, in September 2014, Washington Post journalist, Simon Denyer, reporting from Yarkand County, noted the impressions of locals toward security measures: "'The police are everywhere,' said one Uyghur resident. Another said it was like 'living in prison.' Another said his identity card had been checked so many times, 'the magnetic strip is not working any more.'"¹⁴⁰ Other

¹³⁷ Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, August 22). Three Uyghur Farmers Shot Dead in Xinjiang Police Operations. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/shootings-08222014182027.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, February 3). Uyghur Official Murdered, Man Killed in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/deaths-02032014174649.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, July 30). Wife of Party Official Killed in Xinjiang 'Revenge Attack.' *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/revenge-07302014140303.html>; Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, June 5). Four Killed in New Violence, Nine Sentenced to Death in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/violence-06052014203415.html>; Sulaiman, Eset and Hoshur, Shohret. (2014, April 13). Uyghur Student Motorcyclist Who Beat Traffic Light Shot Dead. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/shot-04132014225306.html> and Uyghur Human Rights Project. (2013, November 20). Eyewitnesses give alternative account of incident in Siriqbuya on November 16. Retrieved from <https://uhrp.org/press-release/eyewitnesses-give-alternative-account-incident-siriqbuya-november-16.html>.

¹³⁸ Jacobs, Andrew. (2013, August 26). Over News of Clash, a Shroud of Silence in Xinjiang. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/27/world/asia/over-news-of-clash-a-shroud-of-silence-in-xinjiang.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹³⁹ Grammaticas, Damian (2013, April 26). Doubts over China government claims on Xinjiang attack. *BBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22319579>.

¹⁴⁰ Denyer, Simon. (2014, September 19). China's war on terror becomes all-out attack on Islam in Xinjiang. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinas-war-on-terror-becomes-all-out-attack-on-islam-in-xinjiang/2014/09/19/5c5840a4-1aa7-4bb6-bc63-69f6bfba07e9_story.html.



Still shot of a security checkpoint In East Turkestan from Damian Grammaticas 2013 video (BBC)

overseas reporters who have traveled to the scenes of violent incidents have not been able to secure firsthand testimonies of alleged violence due to government restrictions on freedom of movement.¹⁴¹ In the case of Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reporter, Stephen McDonnell, Chinese embassy officials from Canberra warned ABC that any airing of footage from McDonnell's visit to East Turkestan would have "wider implications."¹⁴² In conclusion to his report, McDonnell states: "There's another theory being put about by some academics that it [the violence] is really the inevitable result of what you might call a colonial type policy, where one culture subjugates another and dominates it. That this causes general unhappiness in the community and it doesn't take much for it to rise to the top."¹⁴³

In addition to the censorship of discussion surrounding Uyghur economic, social and cultural issues online, the Chinese government carefully controls counter narratives of incidents emerging via the Internet through frequent and localized Internet blackouts, as well as harsh punishment of Uyghurs who publish alternative accounts. For example,

¹⁴¹ Australian Broadcasting Corporation. (2014, September 29). Inside Xinjiang: china clamps down on dissent in restive Uighur homeland. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-30/journalists-blocked-from-reaching-areas-in-xinjiang/5776086> and Sky News. (2014, September 2). Chinese War On Terror May Breed Extremists. Retrieved from <http://news.sky.com/story/1328499/chinese-war-on-terror-may-breed-extremists>.

¹⁴² Scopelianos, Sarah. (2015, January 9). Chinese embassy warns of 'wider implications' over Foreign Correspondent story on Xinjiang conflict. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-30/abc-warned-of-wider-implications-from-china-story/5779218>.

¹⁴³ Journeyman Pictures. (2014, October 1). The Story The Chinese Government Tried To Silence. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5IwwnP5e78>.

when incidents occurred in Pichan County in March 2013,¹⁴⁴ Lukchun Township (also in Pichan County) in June 2013,¹⁴⁵ Hanerik in June 2013¹⁴⁶ and Elishku in July 2014¹⁴⁷ the Internet was cut in all of these locations. According to an August 11, 2014 report from RFA, Chinese authorities detained a Uyghur for “spreading rumors” after posting online an account of the Elishku incident describing state violence against unarmed Uyghur civilians.¹⁴⁸

In reports from the leading press freedom and freedom of expression monitors, China’s record on censorship and harassment of journalists has been unequivocally condemned. China ranks 176th worst for press freedom out of 180 states in Reporters Without Borders’ 2015 World Press Freedom Index.¹⁴⁹ In its 2014 prison census, the Committee to Protect Journalists documented 44 journalists imprisoned in China (of them 17 are Uyghur) out of a global total of 221. The second highest number was in Eritrea with 23 individuals.¹⁵⁰ Freedom House’s annual survey of political rights and civil liberties across the globe published in 2015 placed China in the “worst of the worst” category.¹⁵¹ In a commentary on the findings, Arch Puddington, Vice President for Research at Freedom House wrote: “The government also intensified its persecution of the Uighur community, imposing layers of restriction on Uighurs’ ability to observe their Muslim faith and sentencing activists and journalists to long prison terms.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ Lam, Oiwan. (2013, December 17). In Tibet and Uyghur Regions, Internet Blackouts Are the Norm. *Global Voices*. Retrieved from <http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/2013/12/17/in-chinas-ethnicminority-regions-internet-blackouts-are-the-norm/> and Kamberi, Dolkun. (2013, April 9). Uyghur Boy Hacked to Death in Xinjiang. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/boy-04092013190730.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Mudie, Luisetta. (2013, June 26). 27 Die in Fresh Xinjiang Violence. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/violence-06262013171600.html>; and Mudie, Luisetta. (2013, June 28). Two Uyghurs Believed Killed in Hotan Violence. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/violence-06282013173938.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Jacobs, Andrew. (2013, August 26). *Over News of Clash, a Shroud of Silence in Xinjiang*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/27/world/asia/over-news-of-clash-a-shroudo-f-silence-in-xinjiang.html> and Kitto, Mark. (2013, August 25). Phantom enemies. *Prospect Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/phantom-enemies-mark-kitto-hetianxinjiang-uighurs-china/>.

¹⁴⁷ International Federation of Journalists. (2014, August 1). Xinjiang authorities shut down internet after deadly riot. Retrieved from <http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view/backpid/59/article/xinjiang-authorities-shut-down-internet-after-deadly-riot/>.

¹⁴⁸ Xin Lin. (2014, August 11). China Holds Uyghur Netizen Over Yarkand Massacre Claims. *Radio Free Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/violence-08112014142007.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Reporters Without Borders. (2015). World Press Freedom Index 2015. Retrieved from <http://index.rsf.org/#!/index-details/CHN>.

¹⁵⁰ Committee to Protect Journalists. (2014, December 1). 2014 prison census: 221 journalists jailed worldwide. Retrieved from <http://cpj.org/imprisoned/2014.php>.

¹⁵¹ Freedom House. (2015). Freedom in the World 2015. Retrieved from https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.VMk3V17F__Y.

¹⁵² Puddington, Arch. (2015). Discarding Democracy: A Return to the Iron Fist. *Freedom House*. Retrieved from https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/discarding-democracy-return-iron-fist#.VMk3rF7F__Y.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The role of state policies in fostering an atmosphere of tension and fear in East Turkestan should not be underestimated. Invariably, the Chinese government's response to dissent is further repression of Uyghur political and cultural rights. China's willingness to lock the regional tensions in East Turkestan into a cycle of additional repression following incidents sparked by repressive policies is an approach from which state officials will find it increasingly hard to retreat. In a society that is ever more militarized and surveilled, in which Uyghurs expressing peaceful dissenting ideas are punished and silenced, and where Uyghurs are socially stigmatized, the likelihood of further violence is an unavoidable conclusion.

In her 2005 monograph, *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*, scholar Arienne Dwyer writes: "Youths will only become radicalized if they sense that their language and religion is under threat. If Beijing would support peaceful local forms of religious expression and the maintenance of major minority languages as it did in the 1980s, then the PRC will win back the support of many Uyghurs."¹⁵³

In this regard, George Washington University professor Sean Roberts has said: "The ongoing development and further marginalization of the Uighurs, and particularly the suppression of Uighur dissent and constantly associating it with terrorism by the state, is likely to eventually lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy."¹⁵⁴ This conclusion was taken a step further by Chinese writer Wang Lixiong. Speaking about the harassment of Ilham Tohti, he told journalist Ian Johnson: "[T]he only conclusion is dark: it's that they don't want moderate Uighurs. Because if you have moderate Uighurs, then why aren't you talking to them? So they wanted to get rid of him and then you can say to the West that there are no moderates and we're fighting terrorists."¹⁵⁵

China's strict management over information concerning the incidents of 2013-14 means Chinese officials are in almost absolute control of how the world views conditions in East

¹⁵³ Dwyer, Arienne M. (2005). *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS015.pdf>.

¹⁵⁴ Tang, Didi. (2014, March 4). Experts skeptical of Kunming link to global terror. *Associated Press*. Retrieved from <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/experts-skeptical-kunming-link-global-terror>. See also: Roberts, Sean. (2012). Imaginary Terrorism? The Global War on Terror and the Narrative of the Uyghur Terrorist Threat. PONARS Eurasia Working Paper. Retrieved from <http://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/ponars/RobertsWP.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Johnson, Ian. (2014, September 22). 'They Don't Want Moderate Uighurs.' *The New York Review of Books*. Retrieved from <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/sep/22/trial-ilham-tohti-they-dont-want-moderate-uighurs/>. In a May 7, 2014 Weibo post reported by *The New York Times*, prominent Chinese human rights lawyer wrote: "If you say Xinjiang belongs to China, then don't treat it as a colony, don't act as conquerors and plunderers, striking out against any and all before and after, turning them into the enemy. This is an absurd national policy." See Buckley, Chris. (2015, January 29). Comments Used in Case Against Pu Zhiqiang Spread Online. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/29/comments-used-in-case-against-pu-zhiqiang-spread-online/?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=1.

Turkestan. The Chinese government has not portrayed the situation with the complexity that undeniably exists over prevailing conditions. Incidents reported by the state are habitually characterized as “terror” related without the means for the outside world to check such claims. To simply explain the violence as having been orchestrated from overseas validates failing domestic policies in critical need of reform. As scholar James Millward wrote in a 2014 article for *The New York Times*: “It is unclear if China’s leaders entirely believe their own propaganda — that all Uighur troubles derive from external sources and are unrelated to government policies — but local and regional authorities certainly benefit from it: Whereas common people elsewhere in China enjoy some de facto freedom to protest official and business malfeasance, Uighurs enjoy no such latitude.”¹⁵⁶

However, further violence should not be viewed as inevitable, especially among Chinese officials seeking to cast East Turkestan’s problems into the “Global War on Terror.” Loosening curbs on freedom of speech, participatory development planning, sensitive policing, religious tolerance and depoliticized migration policies are all also within the control of the Chinese government and their implementation will ease tensions between Uyghurs, Han Chinese and the state. These are not policies of preference for one ethnicity over another, but policies of inclusion into a state from which Uyghurs feel increasingly estranged.

¹⁵⁶ Millward, James A. (2014, September 28). China’s Fruitless Repression of the Uighurs. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/29/opinion/chinas-fruitless-repression-of-the-uighurs.html?_r=0.

5. Recommendations

For the Chinese Government:

a. "Terror"

- Conform with the standards outlined in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy resolution and Plan of Action (A/RES/60/288) adopted by the Member States on 8 September 2006. The resolution states: "[T]errorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group." China should also conform with the measures set forth in the sections of the Plan of Action entitled "Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism" and "Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism."
- Permit an independent and international investigation into Chinese government allegations of violence attributed to religious extremism and terrorism.
- Establish an independent judiciary free of political influence from Chinese Communist Party officials in order to conduct free and fair trials of alleged religious extremism and terrorism among Uyghurs.
- Cease the conflation of peaceful and ordinary Islamic belief and practice with criminal acts and terrorism in order to justify crackdowns on the Uyghur people.
- Amend and clarify counterterrorism legislation anticipated for adoption in 2015 so that the human rights of the Uyghur people are not abused through ambiguities on the definition of terrorism, the scope of power enforcing agencies are permitted and the extent to which surveillance can be conducted.

b. Demographics and Economics

- Realize Article 2 of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which establishes "active, free and meaningful participation in development," and take steps to ensure the meaningful participation of Uyghurs, at all levels, in the determination and evaluation of policies regarding development, investment, employment and education in East Turkestan.
- Enforce provisions in the Chinese Constitution, the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, the Labor Law and the Employment Promotion Law that protect Uyghurs from discrimination in the hiring process for opportunities in the state and private sectors.
- Ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and implement Article 5 through domestic law.

- Meet obligations as set out in Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and obligations protecting women from discriminatory policies in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- End the policy of ethnic mingling in order to scale back the loss of tangible and intangible aspects of Uyghur culture. The future direction of individual and collective Uyghur distinctiveness should be placed within the control of the Uyghur people and not state entities that promote a politicized version of Uyghur identity.
- Abide by provisions in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that prevent dispossession of indigenous peoples' lands, territories or resources.
- Stop the social engineering of demography in East Turkestan, particularly the south through incentivized migration of Han Chinese settlers and fulfill obligations outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including Articles 8, 15 and 17 that protect rights to remedy, adequate compensation for dispossession of property and protection of property.

c. Religion

- Realize normative standards outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including Article 18, that protect the right to religious freedom.
- Ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and implement the provisions contained in Articles 18 and 27 through domestic law.
- Realize Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and Article 2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
- Abide by Article 11 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law and Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guaranteeing religious freedom and non-state interference in public and private religious beliefs and practices
- Remove all discriminatory state restrictions against "Islamic appearance" that forbid entrance to state facilities and access to state assistance. Private enterprises that forbid entrance to Uyghurs with "Islamic appearance" should be prosecuted according to anti-discrimination laws.

d. Militarization and Freedom of Speech

- End the militarization of East Turkestan and conduct policing of Uyghur areas according to the norms of outlined in the United Nations International Human Rights Standards for Law Enforcement.

- Abide by Article 52 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law and Article 35 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.
- Ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and implement the provisions protecting freedom of speech and association contained in Articles 19 and 22 through domestic law.
- Put into practice international norms of press freedom to safeguard unfettered access to East Turkestan for overseas journalists and to ensure Chinese media report on events in East Turkestan faithfully and in an even-handed manner.
- Cease any regional or localized shutdowns of the Internet and allow citizen journalists among the Uyghur to report from on the ground about developing incidents in order to offer a balanced account of complex issues.
- Cease the conflation of peaceful dissent to government policies in East Turkestan with crimes punishable in China, such as rumor mongering, separatism, endangering state security and inciting ethnic hatred.
- Release immediately and unconditionally Uyghur political prisoners imprisoned for peacefully dissenting to government policies, including Ilham Tohti, Gheyret Niyaz, Nurmuhemmet Yasin and Akbar Imin.
- Encourage an atmosphere of freedom of speech on Uyghur political, economic, historical, social and cultural issues offline and online to ensure a rational and transparent discussion between Uyghurs and Han Chinese.

For Concerned Governments:

- Raise the issue of militarization and heavy handed policing at bilateral human rights dialogues with the People’s Republic of China and encourage Chinese officials to permit an independent and international assessment of “terror” allegations. Until Chinese government allegations have been transparently assessed, states should treat Chinese “terror” assertions with skepticism and should express concern over the general human rights condition of the Uyghurs, as well as increasing violence.
- Call upon the Chinese government to ensure the consultation and participation of Uyghurs in development processes and urge Chinese officials to implement procedures ensuring that Uyghurs enjoy a fair share of the benefits of development.
- Urge Chinese counterparts in meetings to abide by agreed international obligations that protect Uyghur human rights, to ensure a healthy and open society that permits discussion of complex Uyghur political, economic, social and cultural issues and to release unconditionally political prisoners jailed for expressing peaceful dissent.

- Insist Chinese officials establish religious regulations that reflect international human rights standards ensuring Uyghurs enjoy the right to religious freedom.
- Open consulates in the East Turkestan regional capital of Urumchi that will permit a closer monitoring of human rights conditions in the region.
- Establish a “Special Coordinator for Uyghur Affairs” in national foreign ministries.
- Pass a “Uyghur Policy Act” that incorporates protection of Uyghur freedom to seek, receive and impart information online, as well as mandates investigation of violations of Uyghurs’ fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association.

For the International Community:

- Tighten monitoring mechanisms of the treaty bodies covering international human rights instruments in the United Nations system, especially in regard to the People’s Republic of China’s obligations to meet international standards.
- Send observers, particularly the Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Opinion and Expression; on Religion or Belief; on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism; and on Minority Issues, to East Turkestan with unfettered access to Uyghur communities to impartially conduct an assessment of China’s compliance to its international obligations to protect the human rights of the Uyghur people.
- Ensure human rights standards and obligations are fully met by the Chinese government before multilateral assistance and projects, through agencies such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, are approved.

6. Appendix

I. Incidents of Deaths, Injuries and Arrests of Uyghurs in China

1) March 7 2013, Korla, Bayingolin Prefecture

Agence France-Presse. (2013, March 9). *Knife attack in China's Xinjiang kills 4*. The Nation. Retrieved from: <http://nation.com.pk/international/09-Mar-2013/knife-attack-in-china-s-xinjiang-kills-4>

Qiao Long. (2013, March 12). *Xinjiang Placed on Red Alert After Violence*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/security-03122013193141.html>

Wong, Edward. (2013, March 15). *China: Uighur Detained in Attack*. New York Times. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/16/world/asia/china-uighur-detained-in-attack.html>

2) March 2013, Dighar, Pichan County, Turpan Prefecture

Hoshur, Shohret. (2013, April 9). *Uyghur Boy Hacked to Death in Xinjiang*. Radio Free Asia Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/boy-04092013190730.html>

3) March 8, 2013, Hotan

Sin Chew Daily. (2013, March 10). *和田警局被投汽油彈·門口放鐵釘阻追捕 [Hotan Police Attacked by Gasoline Bomb, Nails Outside of Door to Prevent Pursuit]*. Retrieved from: <http://news.sinchew.com.my/node/281914?tid=40>

Hong Kong Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. (2013, March 14). *传新疆和田派出所遭恐袭 [Report: Xinjiang Police Station Suffers Terror Attack]*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hkhkhk.com/main/messages/18940.html>

Radio Free Asia. (2013, March 12). *Gasoline Bomb Attack on Police Station in Hotan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/attack-03122013020535.html>

4) March 9, 2013, Aktash, Laskuy, Hotan County, Hotan Prefecture

Turdush, Rukiye. (2013, April 12). *Three Uyghurs Held for Resisting Land Takeover*. Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/dispute-04122013150515.html>

5) April 10, 2013, Yingyuerike, Awat County, Aksu Prefecture

Uyghurbiz. 2013 年维吾尔区发生的流血冲突事件 [2013 Violent Conflicts in the Occurring in the Uyghur Region]. (2013, December 31). Retrieved from: <http://chinese.uhrp.org/article/906971579>

Qiao Long. *南疆维族中学生罢课游行 阿克苏警方入室清查致两死*. [Southern Xinjiang Uyghur Middle School student Strike, Aksu Police Enter to Check Causing Two Deaths]. Radio Free Asia. (2013, May 23). Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/shaoshuminzu/ql-05232013150501.html>

6) April 23, 2013, Siriqbuya, Maralbeshi County, Kashgar Prefecture

Hoshur, Shohret. *Xinjiang Violence Leaves 21 Dead*. (2013, April 24). Radio Free Asia. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/maralbeshi-04242013190839.html>

BBC. *China 'arrests more suspects' over Xinjiang clashes*. (2013, April 29). Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22334919>

Grammaticus, Damian. *China violence: Ethnic tension in Xinjiang province*. (2013, April 29). BBC. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22319688>

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7) April 26, 2013, Yengi Awat, Hotan County, Hotan Prefecture

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7. Acknowledgements

UHRP would like to thank all the journalists who, in spite of Chinese government restrictions and pressure, reported faithfully on incidents in East Turkestan from 2013-14. Without their reporting, non-Chinese state accounts of the situation in the region would not be available and the data collected for this report would be threadbare.

In order to better understand the kind of pressure overseas journalists are placed when reporting on East Turkestan, UHRP urges readers to access the International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) January 27, 2015 report entitled, *China's Media War: Censorship, Corruption & Control*. Chinese government threats towards journalists also extend to Uyghurs working in exile. The family of RFA journalist, Shohret Hoshur, whose reporting is heavily cited in this work, has been targeted for his writing on the situation in East Turkestan. On this case, UHRP recommends interested parties to read *China's long-distance tactic to suppress Uighur coverage* by Committee to Protect Journalists, Asia Program Coordinator Bob Dietz. Those Uyghurs in China who have attempted to provide the outside world with accounts of incidents free from state control are clearly the most vulnerable to Chinese government retribution. Their bravery and commitment cannot be underestimated.

All maps included in this report were created by Kyla Jacobsen, a volunteer with GISCorps (www.giscorps.org), an initiative of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association that provides groups in need with geographic information system (GIS) services. She applied her expertise to geocode the incidents in the report, and created maps to highlight key trends. UHRP is grateful to Shoreh Elhami, GISCorps co-founder, who supported the project and coordinated the volunteer placement.

The writers would also like to thank UHRP Director Alim Seytoff, for his invaluable guidance and human rights expertise. We would also like to thank UHRP Chinese Outreach Coordinator Zubayra Shamseden for her Uyghur language assistance and research in Mandarin.

Finally, UHRP extends a special appreciation to the National Endowment for Democracy, whose unwavering support for freedom, democracy and human rights in East Turkestan ensures that Uyghurs will always have a forum to voice their concerns and issues.

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February 2015
Washington, D.C



The Uyghur American Association (UAA) works to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future in East Turkestan.



The UAA launched the UHRP in 2004 to promote improved human rights conditions for Uyghurs and other indigenous groups in East Turkestan, on the premise that the assurance of basic human rights will facilitate the realization of the community's democratic aspirations.

UHRP also works to raise the profile of the Uyghur people and the plight of all “minority” peoples in East Turkestan by:

Researching, writing and publishing news stories and longer reports covering a broad range human rights issues involving civil and political rights, through to social cultural and economic rights;

Preparing briefings – either written or in person – for journalists, academics, diplomats and politicians on the human rights situation faced by the Uyghur people and others in East Turkestan.

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