



Rumors, Suspicion and Hysteria:

Urumchi's Han Residents Target Uyghurs in
September 2009 Pinprick Attack Scare

UHRP

UYGHUR HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

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Cover image: Han protesters march on the streets of Urumchi on September 3. (Associated Press)

I. Executive Summary

On September 3, 2009, Han Chinese residents of Urumchi rallied outside government offices on People's Square to protest a perceived lack of state inaction over the unrest of July 5 that year and a spate of alleged pinprick attacks that began the previous month.

The alleged attacks took place in the context of a communications blackout in East Turkestan. Since the July 2009 unrest, the Internet, international dialing and personal texting had been cut in the region. Chinese authorities maintained near absolute control over the content of information and its transmission. When rumors began to spread that perpetrators of pinprick attacks in Urumchi were transmitting infectious and fatal diseases through syringes, hysteria among residents in the city reached dangerous levels. As the agency in control of the flow of information and the welfare of all citizens in East Turkestan, the Chinese government mismanaged growing hysteria, which led to, UHRP has learned, indiscriminate killing and beating of Uyghurs by Han Chinese mobs. UHRP has learned of no investigation or charges for the fatal beatings of Uyghurs stemming from these credible allegations.

Chinese officials throughout the alleged pinprick attacks did not move quickly enough to calm down panic amongst Han Chinese in Urumchi through a reasoned explanation of claims made by supposed victims. In its research, UHRP found that no alleged victim, the vast majority of whom were Han Chinese, was infected with any disease and many of the cases reported in the official media did not result in a credible claim of a criminal act.

UHRP believes Chinese officials' actions further inflamed existing ethnic tension through unsubstantiated claims the pinprick attacks were a result of an organized terror plot. No evidence has been presented to independent observers to verify such serious allegations. Chinese officials' inability to control mounting hysteria also led to accusations the pinprick attacks had been carried out by drug addicts. In East Turkestan alleged terrorists and drug addicts are invariably Uyghur. Furthermore, officials announced alleged victims of the attacks were predominately Han Chinese, consequently aggravating inter-ethnic sensitivities. All of these public statements resulted in the presumption that Uyghurs were responsible for the alleged attacks. This perception fed into a prevailing discriminatory environment and a post-July 5 unrest atmosphere of resentment against Uyghurs in Urumchi. However, Chinese officials did not move forcefully to protect Uyghurs from the accusation that the attacks stemmed from the Uyghur community.

The Han Chinese led protests of early September 2009 were not only an indication of the government's lack of agency to protect Uyghurs, but also of its double standards in dealing with different ethnic communities. The September protests were dispersed with tear gas, whereas Chinese security forces used lethal force to break up Uyghur-led protests in July 2009. Despite a menacing atmosphere during the Han Chinese protest of September 3, 2009, during which demonstrators voiced anti-government chants and threw missiles at Chinese officials, Wang Lequan, the most senior party official in the region, addressed the crowd and reassured them that the government was listening to their concerns.

The detentions, trials and sentences which followed the alleged attacks were further evidence that regional officials were singling out Uyghurs in East Turkestan in order to regain control of restless Han Chinese residents in Urumchi. All the publicly known sentences handed down for pinprick attack convictions were given to Uyghurs. Most concerning is that the lengthy sentences, the longest being 15 years in prison, were handed down only two weeks after the alleged incidents had taken place. Given the swiftness of the criminal-judicial process and the calls from Han Chinese residents to government officials that action be taken against perpetrators of attacks, UHRP believes these convictions were tainted by political considerations and fell below the even usual very low standards of due process afforded Uyghurs.

UHRP has documented the events of August and September 2009 using interviews with eyewitnesses that were conducted in 2010 and secondary sources, including Chinese and overseas media. In addition, UHRP gained access to an archive of reports from the *Urumchi Evening News* in Uyghur that demonstrate the kind of information residents in Urumchi received from the government during the communications blackout. The archive, translated into English, forms an important element in the documentation of the alleged pinprick attacks.

II. September 2009 Pinprick Attacks Reported

A. Pinprick Attacks Reported in Urumchi, Suspects Held

After July 5, information control was at the top of the government agenda in East Turkestan. On that day, Uyghurs peacefully assembled in Urumchi's People's Square to protest government inaction over a deadly attack on Uyghur factory workers in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province. Police cracked down on the protesters, precipitating deadly unrest that claimed countless lives over the next several days. Afterwards Chinese authorities arrested an untold number of Uyghurs for involvement in the incident. From July 6, 2009 to May 14, 2010 the Internet was disabled in the region, as well as international phone calls and personal text messaging.

The Internet shutdown and other blocked communication limited access to information within East Turkestan, both to domestic news and to international media. It also hindered reporting on the events by domestic and foreign media. State controlled newspapers and television were the only source of news in the region at the time, in addition to government alerts through official text messages. In the past year, UHRP has obtained an extensive archive of official Chinese media reports from the Urumchi Evening News, a portion of which are cited in this report, which span the period of July 2009 to February 2010. The archive, predominately in the Uyghur language, reveals how the Chinese media managed not only the direct aftermath of the July unrest, but also a later incident in September 2009.

Based on UHRP's archive, on September 3, 2009, the Urumchi Evening News ran three articles about incidents of pinprick attacks, in which people were stabbed with hidden needle-like weapons with uncertain consequences. The reports announced that 15 suspects had been apprehended for pinprick attacks, with trials pending for four, and authorities urged the public to come forward with more information.¹ At a press conference, Zhu Hailun, director of the political and legal affairs commission of the party committee in Xinjiang, stated:

In recent days, harmful public incidents of pinprick attacks with unknown weapons have occurred successively in some public places in Urumchi city. The XUAR Party committee and people's government treated the cases with utmost importance and requested support from the Urumchi municipal party committee, government and PSB organs to expose the case with full force. Victims in the cases were evaluated with medical check-ups and treated... these severe and malicious cases were openly intended to disturb social order and create an atmosphere of terror; this

¹ Appendix A: Urumchi Evening News. (September 3, 2009) 15 suspects were arrested in harmful pinprick attack case. The information is similarly contained in an English-language state media report from that day, see: Xinhua (September 3, 2009). 15 seized over syringe attacks in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/03/content_8648716.htm

is the continuation of a struggle between us and our enemies after the “July 5 incident.”²

In no uncertain terms, the reports make clear that no harmful substance or disease was used in the attacks, nor had the victims’ skin been punctured deeply enough that transmission of AIDS or other infectious disease would have been possible. XUAR disease prevention and control center manager Fu Li Ping said, “The needles used in the pinprick attack cases do not have a big impact on health.” Ping did note, however that certain diseases including HIV and hepatitis A and B would only test positive several months after the incident.³

The victims’ ethnicities, seldom disaggregated in official statistics, are clearly spelled out; of them: 433 are Han, 19 are Hui, 2 are Uyghur, 5 are Kazakh, 2 are Mongol, 2 are Tujia, one is Miao, one is Xibo and one is Russian. On the other hand, only 89 of the cases reportedly had a clear mark from a pinprick attack, indicating the others were falsified.⁴

Terrorism was also part of the state media reports on September 3. Deputy director of the XUAR Legal Science Association Abliz Hoshur states that pinprick attacks can be tried as crimes of organizing a terrorist organization, and if the attack results in murder, could face the death sentence.⁵

Thus, by playing down the possibility of disease, public panic was discouraged. By acknowledging the ethnic component to the attacks, the government may have contributed to ethnic tensions already damaged after July. Finally, by linking the attacks to terrorism, especially in light of the victims’ ethnicities, the culprit is easily understood as a Uyghur. These themes would continue as more details of the attacks emerged.

As the story broke internationally on September 3, it was reported that the pinprick attacks had begun on August 20 according to Xinjiang TV.⁶ Police alerted city residents via text messaging earlier in the week of August 30, which said: “Recently, several residents were attacked by hypodermic syringes. Local police security departments have also uncovered a case in which assailants used syringes to attack passers-by. Please don't panic over the incident, and inform police officers if you find any suspects.”⁷

² Appendix A: Urumchi Evening News. (September 3, 2009) 15 suspects were arrested in harmful pinprick attack case.

³ Appendix B: Urumchi Evening News. (September 3, 2009). There is no possibility of viral infection.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Appendix C: Urumchi Evening News. (September 3, 2009). People who caused severe public harm and deaths by pinprick attacks will be sentenced to death.

⁶ Associated Press. (September 3, 2009). 10,000 Chinese protest spate of needle attacks. Retrieved from: http://www.denverpost.com/sports/ci_13265468

⁷ Reuters. (September 11, 2009). Needle attacks and rumours spread in China's Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/11/idUSSP440905>

Both news and rumors regarding the attacks began to spread. Chinese state media reported on September 3 that a man stabbed a 5-year-old girl.⁸ RFA quoted witnesses who said Uyghur senior citizens attacked elderly Han women with contaminated syringes, or alternatively that the attackers were Uyghurs with contaminated syringes containing pesticide, drugs, and sulfate. The clear narrative emerging, particularly after protests by Han residents (discussed in the next section), was that Uyghurs were perpetrating the attacks. AFP published interviews with victims of the pinprick attacks, including a Han woman stated that she was stabbed on September 2. Although the vast majority of the victims were Han, AFP also interviewed a Uyghur man who said that he was stabbed. Neither had any apparent problems and both accused Uyghurs of perpetrating the attacks.⁹

Chinese officials assigned blame to Uyghurs, pinning the cause of the attacks on “ethnic separatists.” Public security minister, Meng Jianzhu, arrived at the request of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council to help manage the situation. On September 4, he said the attacks were premeditated, masterminded and conducted by law-breakers and instigated by ethnic separatist forces, and were a continuation of the July 5 incident in the city.¹⁰ Urumchi Deputy Mayor Zhang Hong added, “The ‘three forces’ (separatism, terrorism and religious extremism) at home and abroad are not willing to see ethnic unity and their failure when the July 5 violence died down quickly.”¹¹ Vehicles with loudspeakers toured the streets and informed residents that the attacks were part of an organized separatist plot to spread terror.¹²

Right: Deputy Mayor Zhang Hong blamed “three evils forces” for pinprick attacks. (Xinhua / Zhao Ge)



⁸ Reuters. (September 3, 2009). Protesters demand China's Xinjiang leader resign. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/03/us-china-xinjiang-idUSTRE5821PT20090903>

⁹ AFP. (September 5, 2009). Victims of Xinjiang syringe attack fear hidden infections. Retrieved from: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2009/09/05/2003452794>

¹⁰ Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). China's police chief urges stability in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11997331.htm

¹¹ Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). Situation basically under control in Urumqi: deputy mayor. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11998382.htm

¹² Times of London. (September 7, 2009). China warns those convicted of needle attacks may face the death penalty. Retrieved from: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6824057.ece>

The next day, the government announced that four Uyghurs were arrested in connection with the crimes. However, police descriptions of the first arrests did not indicate terrorism or ethnic separatism. In fact, state media reported that the two of the suspects committed the attack to get drug money, and another was perpetrated by a drug user.¹³ Reports of the attackers were delivered in a September 5 press conference from the Urumchi Evening News, yet no terrorist plot was apparent.¹⁴

News of the arrests did not ease people's nerves. According to a witness interviewed by the South China Morning Post: "We don't have any other access to information apart from text messages and state media reports."¹⁵ "I think the version the government put out was unconvincing, and I think this contributed to the mismanagement of the crisis," said Nicholas Bequelin of Human Rights Watch.¹⁶ He said that China's "chokehold on information... has not only frustrated people, but helped spread rumours," and said it was "the first real-live test of what happens if you suspend Internet services for too long."¹⁷

B. Environment for Suspicion

It was not the first time that needle attacks had caused panic and confusion in China. In Beijing and Tianjin in 2002, dozens of victims of pinprick attacks caused widespread rumors including that AIDS would be transmitted. In January, people cleared out the streets of Tianjin to avoid being stabbed. At the time, police explained that they would

¹³ Xinhua (September 5, 2009). 4 prosecuted for endangering public security in Urumqi syringe attacks. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/05/content_12001771.htm

¹⁴ See Appendix E: Urumchi Evening News. (September 2009). 4 criminal suspects arrested in 'Urumchi pinprick attack incident' in Urumchi. Specifically regarding the attackers, the report states:

Criminal suspects Muhtarjan Turdi, male, Uyghur, 34 years old; and Amannisagul, female, 22 years old. On August 29, criminal suspects Muhtarjan and Amannisagul together ostensibly hired an automobile, deceiving the driver to go to a small street in Number 1 'Tik Quduq' vegetable market, then threatened the driver with a syringe they had previously prepared and stole 710 Yuan of the driver's money. On August 29, Amannisagul was arrested; on September 1, Muhtarjan gave himself in after confessing his crime.

Criminal suspect Erpan Ilham, male, Uyghur, 19 years old. On August 28, after 4:00pm, a victim reported that after buying fruit and returning to their office, they felt something stabbed on their right hip. The victim reported the case. PSB organs accepted the case report, then initiated an investigation and systematically inspected the situation, and based on the victim's recognition, within 4 hours the criminal suspect Erpan Ilham was arrested. During questioning, the suspect confessed to the crime that while the victim was purchasing fruit, he stabbed a nail the into victim's hip.

Criminal suspect Ekber Imin, male, Uyghur, 47 years old. On August 31, PSB organs received a tipoff from the public, and when they attempted to arrest Ekber Imin on Tugung No.2 street in Urumchi, Ekber held a syringe in his hand which could hold poison, resisted the police and injured them with it.

¹⁵ South China Morning Post. (September 4, 2009.) China: Thousands protest over Urumqi syringe attacks. Retrieved: <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-207269468/china-thousands-protest-over.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Toronto Star. (September 8, 2009). Was needle panic in China a fake frenzy? Retrieved from: http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2009/09/08/was_needle_panic_in_china_a_fake_frenzy.html

not detail the cases so as not to inspire copycats.¹⁸ Observers of the Urumchi incident were quick to point out the similarities: “While some people really had been threatened or pricked by needles, it seemed that many of those who flocked to the hospitals had not been pricked by anyone. Their ‘attacks’ were just a product of mass hysteria.”¹⁹

In this moment of hysteria, the public was quick to lay the blame on Uyghurs. It was not the first time Uyghurs were blamed for crimes that they did not commit. Immediately prior to the pinprick attack incident, a rumor fueled by distrust of Uyghurs also triggered the event in Shaoguan, in which a number of Uyghurs were falsely accused of raping a Han factory worker, by their Han colleagues on the factory line and murdered.²⁰

After the July 5 unrest, ethnic tensions in Urumchi ran high. Based on scholar Jonathan Lipman’s account: “Some local Han say they had it coming, that they should shut up and enjoy the benefits of the harmonious society created by the PRC and the Communist Party. Other Han deplore the violence but consider the Uyghurs to be semi-barbarians, superstitious (that is, Muslim), and not very bright, who need to be educated into the light of Han culture and modernity. Others think of all Uyghurs as thieves and drug dealers who should be locked up in any case.”²¹

2009 was not the first time in which a vicious and untrue rumor was spread about Uyghurs. In March 2008, a foreign observer reported that the cell phone operator China Mobile sent text messages to its customers saying that there was a plot to spread AIDS through the meat sold at kebab stands throughout the country (kebab vendors are predominantly Uyghur).²² The rumor was entirely untrue. That China Mobile is a state owned company illustrates the government’s complacency in this targeting of Uyghurs with malicious rumors.

These rumors reflect a broader demonization of Uyghurs in China, evident both in the way they were targeted after the pinprick attacks, and in a number of past incidents.

¹⁸ Chicago Tribune. (February 20, 2002). China's lid on news lets rumors fly. Retrieved from: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2002-02-20/news/0202200299_1_fear-factor-beijing-needle-attacks

¹⁹ Black and White Cat Blog. (September 14, 2009) Before Urumqi: the 2002 needle attacks in Tianjin and Beijing. Retrieved from: <http://www.blackandwhitecat.org/2009/09/14/before-urumqi-the-2002-needle-attacks-in-tianjin-and-beijing/>

²⁰ Radio Free Asia. (June 29, 2009). 'No rapes' in riot town. Retrieved from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a4dfb0ac.html>

²¹ Mt. Holyoke Blog. (July 16, 2009). Jonathan Lipman on Ethnic Tension in China. Retrieved from: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/media/jonathan-lipman-ethnic-tension-china-0>

²² Liuzhou Laowai. (March 15, 2008). [Web log comment]. AIDS Kebabs. Retrieved from http://liuzhou.blog-city.com/aids_kebabs.htm and Porfiry. (March 26, 2008). [Web log comment]. Kebabs will not give you AIDS. Maybe. Yargh!. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewdominion.net/104/kebabs-will-not-give-you-aids-maybe-yargh/> and Xinhua. (March 24, 2008). 乌鲁木齐：“吃烧烤感染艾滋病”短信属谣言 (Urumchi: “Eating barbecue will give you AIDS” text is false) Retrieved from http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2008-03/24/content_12774454.htm

During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Uyghurs reported being denied hotels in Beijing.²³ Uyghurs have reported similarly being denied the right to stay at hotels in interior China in the past: including in Beijing in the 1990s and in 2006, and in Shenyang in 2008.²⁴ Last year, a flurry of anti-Uyghur sentiment was unleashed after a rumor spread that police had over-compensated a Uyghur street vendor after his product was destroyed.²⁵ This summer, the US-based labor group China Labor Watch reported about an electronics manufacturing company in Shanghai, which produces the iPhone, that specified in its recruitment process that Uyghurs, and other ethnic minorities, would not be hired.²⁶

There have been attempts to document this systematic distrust. A recent paper by a number of Chinese academics published in the Public Library of Science documented the extent of this distrust. Based on surveys of 450 Uyghurs and Han in Urumchi and Ghulja, the survey showed low levels of trust between the groups, with stronger distrust of Uyghurs by the Han.²⁷ In 2004, scholar Blaine Kaltman conducted interviews with 125 Han in Urumchi, Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Asked about Uyghur criminality, 99% of these respondents admitted their concern of being the victim of a Uyghur-committed crime.²⁸ Other accounts of the demonization of Uyghurs can be found in online forums, blogs and message boards.²⁹

²³ Globe and Mail. (July 18, 2008). "Beijing busy welcoming the world as it turns away its ethnic minorities." Retrieved from: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/beijing-busy-welcoming-the-world-as-it-turns-away-its-ethnic-minorities/article1057752/>

²⁴ In October 2009, a Uyghur recorded an incident of being denied a hotel in Shenyang. See a translation of his blogpost: Shanghaiist. (October 11, 2009). Just how welcome are Uyghurs in their own country? Retrieved from: http://shanghaiist.com/2009/10/11/just_how_welcome_are_uyghurs_in_the.php; Global Voices also published accounts of Uyghurs being denied hotel stays in other parts of China in the 1990s as well as 2006. See: Global Voices (August 8, 2006). "China: Han's prejudices and discriminations towards Uyghur." Retrieved from: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/08/06/china-hans-prejudices-and-discriminations-towards-uyghur/>

²⁵ Ramzy, Austin. Time. (December 5, 2012). Don't Let Them Eat Cake: How Ethnic Tensions in China Explode on the Streets. Retrieved from: <http://world.time.com/2012/12/05/dont-let-them-eat-cake-how-ethnic-tensions-in-china-explode-on-the-streets/>

²⁶ Fay, Greg. UHRP Blog. (August 7, 2013). Uyghurs, Other Ethnic Groups Need Not Apply. Retrieved from: <http://weblog.uhrp.org/uyghurs-other-ethnic-groups-need-not-apply/>

²⁷ Zhang S, Xu M, Li X, Fang H, Yang S, et al. (2013) Implicit Trust between the Uyghur and the Han in Xinjiang, China. PLoS ONE 8(8) e71829.. Retrieved from: <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0071829>

²⁸ Kaltman, Blaine. Under the Heel of the Dragon: Islam, Racism, Crime and the Uighur in China. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 2007.

²⁹ In a 2011 online forum, Uyghurs discussed a comment on a New York Times story that Uyghurs are the "most hated ethnic group" in China. See: UAA Message Board. (January 20, 2011). [Guest comment] Retrieved from: <http://forum.uyghuramerican.org/forum/showthread.php?23447-Insulting-and-demonizing-comments-to-Uyghurs-on-the-New-York-Times-comment-s-page>; In a June 2009 blog post, a teacher in East Turkestan describes a similar demonization regionally, with his students attributing crime to Uyghurs. See: This is Xinjiang Blog. (June 7, 2009). Profiling. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.princeton.edu/pia/personal/xinjiang/2009/06/profiling.html>; Nationally, a survey of descriptors that Chinese people from each province use to describe other regions listed those from East Turkestan most commonly as "thieves." See: The New Dominion Blog. (May 10, 2008). Online Humor Affirms Xinjiang

This environment of suspicion fed accusations against Uyghurs. When government narratives of blame failed to hold together, blaming separatists one day and drug-users the next, the part of the story that did not change was that Uyghurs were to blame.

C. Attacks and Rumors Continue in Urumchi

Following initial reports of the attacks, overseas analysts questioned whether the attacks were even real. Stratfor, a US-based global intelligence agency, wrote: “In the current case, the wild reporting suggests a fair amount of hysteria and exaggeration.” It noted that Chinese chat rooms were filled with accounts of people knowing someone who was stabbed, “but almost no cases of people saying they themselves were stabbed.”³⁰ Other commentators abroad shared this doubt. “I don’t think there’s very much evidence to support the idea that there was any sort of campaign,” said Gerald Groot, a specialist at the University of Adelaide, to the Toronto Star. “It seems more like mass hysteria than reality to me.”³¹ A Uyghur interviewee for the report who was present in Urumchi in September 2009 stated that the pinprick attacks were made up by ill-intentioned Han people in Urumchi as an excuse to encourage Han retaliation against Uyghurs and pressure the government to punish Uyghurs who were involved in the July 5 incident.³² Confusion within Chinese state media was also evident, with national media calling them “syringe attacks,” but the Urumchi authorities using the more general term “needle-like objects,” as the Economist noted in a report.³³

Following initial reports of the attacks, subsequent state media continued to drive home the point that the attacks posed no medical risks. On September 8, the Urumchi Evening News carried a report from a panel of medical experts who addressed the situation based on testing all of the victims, and found that no harm was to be done. Ji Yan Jun, a senior official in the People’s Liberation Army Center for Disease Control, stated that local hospitals were testing 22 patients with clear symptoms, including X-rays and physical examinations. He stated their conclusion: “Based on the current examination, we have completely eliminated the possibility of infection from acute illnesses from bacteria, poisonous chemical substances, the AIDS virus, muscle toxins, or anthrax.”³⁴ In an

Stereotypes. Retrieved from: <http://www.thenewdominion.net/2008/05/10/online-humor-affirms-xinjiang-stereotypes/>

³⁰ Stratfor. (September 3, 2009). China: Rumors and Protests in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/china-rumors-and-protests-xinjiang>

³¹ Toronto Star. (September 8, 2009). Was needle panic in China a fake frenzy? Retrieved from: http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2009/09/08/was_needle_panic_in_china_a_fake_frenzy.html

³² UHRP Interview, Melbourne, Australia, August 2013.

³³ Economist. (September 10, 2009). The party under siege in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/node/14413290>

³⁴ Appendix E: Urumchi Evening News. (September 8, 2009). Government sends medical experts to examine and analyze pinprick attack victim conditions.

interview with Reuters, one Han resident responded positively to these alerts: “Now, we know that even if you are stabbed, it's not a big deal, so that's a relief.”³⁵



On September 9, 2009, China's state media ran this image of a doctor inspecting an alleged pinprick attack wound. (Xinhua)

The medical experts also acknowledged the public hysteria. They concluded that the reason most people had come to the hospital was due to “psychological factors” and reaffirmed that there was no need for “public anxiety.”³⁶ On September 4, the total number of attacks was listed at 531, only 106 of which showed any sign of a pinprick.³⁷ Among the causes of the dismissed cases were mosquito bites. On September 7, in an attempt to control this moment of hysteria, officials ordered shops to close by 6pm, and an official notice forbid people from spreading rumors. It said: “Those who deliberately concoct and spread false information about innocent members of the public being stabbed with needles could be tried and sentenced to up to five years in jail,” as Xinhua news agency quoted the notice as saying.³⁸

³⁵ The Guardian. (September 4, 2009). Chinese police use teargas to break up deadly protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/04/xinjiang-urumqi-deadly-protests>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). Victims of syringe attacks in Urumqi rise to 531. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11997211.htm

³⁸ Reuters. (September 7, 2009). China threatens punishment for rumors in Urumqi. Retrieved from: http://www.rferl.org/content/China_Threatens_Punishment_For_Rumors_In_Urumqi/1816626.html

Even as rumors persisted, state media also reported new attacks. The narrative at this point continued to support drug addicts as the perpetrators of the crime, rather than terrorists. On September 9, Urumchi Evening News reported that: “Between September 6 at 3 pm and September 7 at 3 pm, the municipal PSB organ headquarters... received 77 cases of victims harmed by pinprick attacks (among them 43 cases were reported when the pinprick attack took place)...Until now, PSB organs have arrested 45 criminal suspects who harmed the public in pinprick attacks. 12 of them were stopped based on criminal cases. Arrest warrants were approved for 8 people in 4 cases, and 8 people were forcibly taken to drug rehabilitation facilities.”

The Urumchi Evening News reported two new cases of arrests were reported by based on press conferences on September 7 and 8. Neither report referenced terrorism or separatism, just Uyghurs stabbing Han people, with no medical repercussions for the victims reported.³⁹ Yet official analysis of the crime continued to call it planned terrorism, even if none of the individual cases supported the theory. Du Xintao, a legal affairs official with the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regional Public Security Department, said: “The syringe attacks were neither some individuals' practical jokes, nor simple criminal activities, but organized and planned major adverse events, which had disturbed social order and created an atmosphere of fear in the city.”⁴⁰

D. Pinprick Reports In Other Cities

Attacks were subsequently reported in other parts of East Turkestan. The alleged attacks in seven cities outside of Urumchi, some of which state media acknowledged were “false alarms” and some genuine, reflect fear among Han residents across the region. The government narrative continued to accuse “terrorists,” even though no evidence of terrorist involvement in either the previous attacks or the current ones was presented. In fact, very little information was presented at all, given the limited media environment in

³⁹ For the first report, see Appendix F: Urumchi Evening News. (September 9, 2009). 45 criminal suspects of public pinprick attacks arrested. Specifically, the text stated:

Criminal suspect Tohti Nasir confessed that he committed a pinprick attack on a person walking on the street. Officers saw the stabbed person and found the discarded syringe. Then, by searching criminal suspect Tohti Nasir's rented property, they found a syringe that could be used to inject poison, an ID card, a temporary residential card, fake hair and a blade. Based on criminal suspect Tohti Nasir's confession, on September 8, for another pinprick attack, criminal suspects Subhi Ilham and Abdusalam were arrested. Now these criminal suspects have been delivered to PSB organs. The cases are under further investigation.

For the second report, see Appendix G: Urumchi Evening News (September 10, 2009). Urumchi Municipal prosecutor's office accused 2nd round of criminal suspects in pinprick attack cases. The report said:

On September 3, after 10:30, criminal suspects Abdurusul Abduqadir, Abdurahman Razaq, Abduqeyum Ayup, and Ablimit Memet followed Ms. Li as she crossed the road into an underground crossroad in the Little West Gate district, and when she passed him Abdurusul Abduqadir stabbed a needle prepared earlier into her neck with the cooperation of the other three. With assistance from the public, the four were arrested on the spot.

⁴⁰ People's Daily. (September 9, 2009). More suspects prosecuted while Urumqi syringe attacks described as "violent, terrorist" crimes. Retrieved from:

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6751938.html>

East Turkestan. The attacks indicate that panic had spread throughout East Turkestan during the state's information blockade targeting the internet and phone in East Turkestan.

The confusion evident in these reports demonstrates how the government's stranglehold on information exacerbated panic. The state-run Global Times reported on September 8 that assailants had started indiscriminately poking people in Korla and Shihezi with dirty needles. Neither story appeared to hold any water, based on the Global Times report, though dozens of people were reported to go to hospitals for testing. A Shihezi press official said: "Although 16 residents in Shihezi contacted authorities and claimed they had been stabbed between Thursday and Saturday, health departments found no supportive evidence." The Global Times did not report further on Korla, having been unable to obtain an official statement.⁴¹

On September 11, state-run China Daily reported attacks in Hotan, Altay, Kashgar, Ili and Kumul. Du Xintao, an official with the regional public security department, stated, "The attacks are terror attacks." Yet most of the attacks proved to be false, as in Urumchi, and none of the victims in the cases deemed genuine contracted a disease or were exposed to poisoning. In Hotan, the report explained that two Uyghur and one Han were attacked, with 6 other attacks reported but not confirmed. In Altay, a PSB official stated that one syringe attack was reported and four reports which were false alarms. The victim did not show any abnormal symptoms. Two syringe attack suspects were in custody. In Kashgar, two attacks took place, and two false alarms, all reported by Han. One suspect was caught there. In both cities Ili and Kumul, ten attacks were reported, but none were proven.⁴²

The pinprick panic spread beyond East Turkestan to parts of China where internet access and international calling were not restricted. In Xi'an, reports of pinprick attacks began on September 12. State-run China Daily reported that a suspect was detained for stabbing a female college student's back with a needle-like bamboo stick in a downtown street of the district.⁴³ The suspect was a Han student, and not a Uyghur. State media said that local police in Xi'an had received reports of pinprick attacks since August. After, police checked buses daily with dogs, and two more suspects were subsequently arrested.⁴⁴

The main difference between the incidents in East Turkestan and the one in Xi'an was that the incidents in East Turkestan were allegedly perpetrated by Uyghurs and in Xi'an the culprits were Han. The other difference was the way they were described by state

⁴¹ People's Daily. (September 8, 2009). Urumqi vows to stem syringe attacks. Retrieved from: <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6750852.html>

⁴² China Daily. (September 11, 2009). Syringe suspects seized in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/11/content_8678972.htm

⁴³ China Daily. (September 17, 2009). Suspect detained in Xi'an needle attacks. Retrieved from: http://www.china.org.cn/china/2009-09/17/content_18545114.htm

⁴⁴ Global Times. (September 22, 2009). Stabbings lead to high alert in Xi'an. Retrieved from: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/society/2009-09/470179.html>

media reports. Whereas in East Turkestan, every attack was described as “terrorist,” even those perpetrated by drug users or for drug money, by virtue of the fear they inspired, in Xi’an the word “terrorism” was never suggested. A double standard is evident in the way the crime is regarded when committed by Han and Uyghur suspects.

In Beijing, no incidents ever occurred, but the panic spread nevertheless as a result of the government’s campaign of information control. As Beijing prepared to celebrate National Day on October 1, 2009, the People’s Republic of China’s 60th anniversary, security measures were ramped up to prevent any incidents during the celebration. On September 11, international media reported that directives from internet service providers to clients were issued to delete any discussion or mention of syringe stabbings in Beijing as soon as they were spotted. These directives gave the impression that such attacks may have occurred, though none were ever reported. The Times of London interviewed a website manager who said he had been given no indication of where or when such attacks might have taken place in Beijing. He said: “We don’t even know what is in the syringes. But I’m not worried. I’ll just make sure I only go out in my car and don’t walk in the streets.”

⁴⁵ In Beijing, the government incited fear of attacks simply by telling people not to talk about them.

E. Conclusion of the Attacks

Reports of pinprick attacks concluded by mid-September. Urumchi Municipal PSB criminal investigative organ head Huang Ya Bo and PSB vice head Zhang Jun briefed on the “harsh crackdown” against the attacks at a September 15 press conference, Urumchi Evening News reported. Huang said: “As a result of the constant hard work of the different levels of XUAR PSB organs and with public support, until now armed force soldiers and officers have arrested 75 criminal suspects and destroyed 7 criminal rings of pinprick attackers. 36 cases of pinprick attacks have been disclosed, among them 16 in Urumchi, 13 in Hoten, two in Turpan and Kashgar, and one in Sanji, Aksu and in Altay.” It is unclear how these numbers match up to the statistics given in the past – when 22 patients had supposedly already demonstrated clear symptoms in Urumchi. However, the underlying message of his statement was clear – that police had taken control of the situation.⁴⁶

Zhang describes several “typical” pinprick attacks, only one of which involved terrorist allegations. He said: “During the PSB organ’s investigation and questioning, the eight criminal suspects including Tursunjan Turdi confessed the criminal facts that they had gathered together many times and secretly planned to undertake terror activities, aiming to damage national unity in Xinjiang and incite national hatred. Under the coordination of Tursunjan Turdi, the ring stabbed Han Chinese numerous times with needles, hooks and toothpicks both individually and in groups of two, in Yengi Sheher and Tudunghaba

⁴⁵ Times of London. (September 11, 2009). Panic over syringe stabbings spreads to Beijing. Retrieved from: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6830250.ece>

⁴⁶ Appendix G: Urumchi Evening News. (September 17, 2009) Police destroyed 7 involved in pinprick attacks.

districts. Presently there are multiple cases of the act that have been proven.” Of another attacker, the account read: “The two criminal suspects confessed that in order to destabilize society, they used unused injection syringes to stab victims.”⁴⁷ Based on prior reports of confessions extracted through torture. UHRP has reservations that these confessions were genuine.⁴⁸

Finally, he added that on September 11, someone reported a false acid attack to the PSB. He said, “Later, the ‘victim’ was checked by a doctor and the doctor diagnosed that she had a false alarm because of an ‘abnormality’ in the victim’s eyes. Due to the current social situation, and because of the victim’s excessive nervousness, the victim raised a false alarm to PSB organs. Now the victim has been treated and her eyes were normalized.” Huang Ya Bo added, “After inspecting in detail, there is no evidence suggesting an acid attack on anyone”.⁴⁹

At the conclusion of the incident, at least 500 attacks were reported to police in East Turkestan, in an apparent month-long moment of mass hysteria. 36 pinprick attacks were confirmed by the government targeting mostly Han and a few others, and no acid attacks. The criminal suspects were all Uyghur. At a time when the public did not know what information to believe, the only thing that they knew for certain was that Uyghurs were to blame for the incident.

Whereas authorities had suppressed information in previous instances of attacks in China, in this case text messages from officials seemed to have incited hysteria. Suspicion was directed at Uyghurs, already maligned and especially so after the July 5 unrest. Government accounts of the attackers as drug addicts or ethnic separatists only confirmed people’s worst fears. In this climate of suspicion, the government’s information blockade both exacerbated panic, and prevented the outside world from understanding what was happening in East Turkestan.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The use of torture against Uyghurs is documented by Mr. Manfred Nowak, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture based on his 2005 visit to China including Urumchi. See a United Nations and Amnesty International report on torture in East Turkestan, retrieved from: <http://uhrp.org/press-releases/uaa-commemorates-united-nations-international-day-support-torture-victims-and>

⁴⁹ Appendix H: Urumchi Evening News. (September 17, 2009) Police destroyed 7 involved in pinprick attacks.

III. Han Chinese Protests, Attacks on Uyghurs

On September 3, 2009, Han Chinese demonstrators assembled in front of regional government offices in Urumchi's People's Square, where a peaceful Uyghur-led protest had taken place approximately two months before on July 5, 2009. The precise number of protestors on September 3 is unclear. Chinese and overseas media have variably reported the total at 2,000,⁵⁰ 4,000,⁵¹ 10,000⁵² to tens of thousands.⁵³ The demonstrators gathered to protest the perceived weak government response to a spate of alleged pinprick attacks in Urumchi. Protestors also called for the resignation of then-Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan,⁵⁴ and expressed anger that punishment against Uyghur detainees held in relation to the July 5 unrest had, in their view, been too slow.⁵⁵ The protest was broken up with the aid of tear gas.⁵⁶

Smaller protests were also held the day before and the day after the September 3 demonstration. Hong Kong based newspaper Wen Wei Po described a protest held by businessmen and residents of the Little West Gate area of Urumchi on September 2 in which the participants marched for an hour. According to the Wen Wei Po correspondent the demonstrators had caught a pinprick attack suspect and turned him over to a local police station. However, due to a lack of evidence, the police released the individual, a decision that angered those who had handed him over.⁵⁷ Radio Free Asia spoke to a Han Chinese resident of Urumchi named Hua about the September 2 alleged attacks in the city's Little West Gate and South Gate areas. She claimed: "Some Uyghur senior citizens

⁵⁰ The Guardian. (September 3, 2009). New mass protests and violence break out in Urumqi, witnesses claim. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/03/urumqi-china-new-violence-new-claims#history-byline>

⁵¹ Radio Free Asia. (September 3, 2009). New Protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/newprotests-09032009122558.html>

⁵² The Telegraph. (September 4, 2009). Xinjiang protests: Five dead in Urumqi after syringe security clashes. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/6139208/Xinjiang-protests-Five-dead-in-Urumqi-after-syringe-security-clashes.html>

⁵³ WenWeiPo. (September 4, 2009). 烏市數萬人示威 促嚴懲「扎針黨」 Retrieved from: <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2009/09/04/YO0909040005.htm> and Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). Urumqi imposes rules to ban unlicensed demonstrations. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11996758.htm

⁵⁴ New York Times. (September 4, 2009). China Says Five Dead in Latest Xinjiang Unrest. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/05/world/asia/05china.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=0

⁵⁵ The Guardian. (September 3, 2009). New mass protests and violence break out in Urumqi, witnesses claim. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/03/urumqi-china-new-violence-new-claims#history-byline> and The Telegraph. (September 4, 2009). Xinjiang protests: Five dead in Urumqi after syringe security clashes. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/6139208/Xinjiang-protests-Five-dead-in-Urumqi-after-syringe-security-clashes.html>

⁵⁶ BBC. (September 4, 2009). 'Five die' in China unrest. Retrieved from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8238768.stm>

⁵⁷ WenWeiPo. (September 4, 2009). 烏市數萬人示威 促嚴懲「扎針黨」 Retrieved from: <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2009/09/04/YO0909040005.htm>

attacked Han Chinese with contaminated syringes. Most of the victims are elderly women...A local newspaper says about 400 people were attacked. I also heard that some Uyghurs attacked Han Chinese with sulfate.”



Han protestors approach police on September 3, 2009. (AFP)

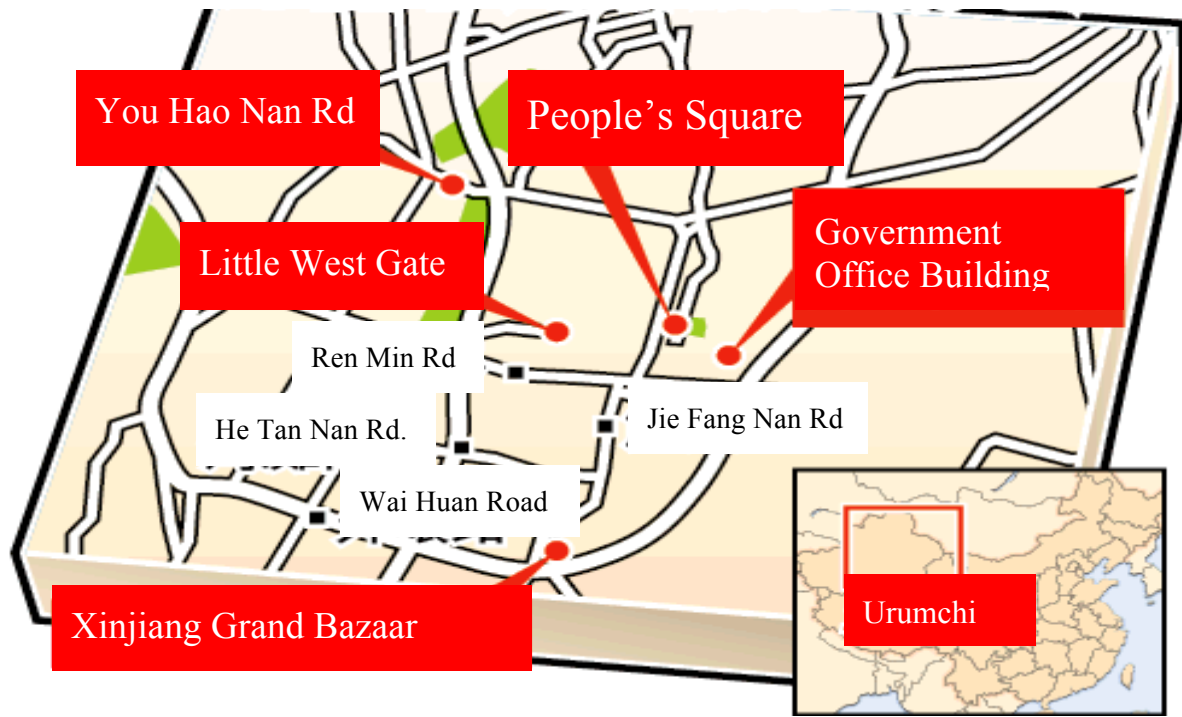
In the afternoon on September 4, Han Chinese demonstrators rallied once more across the city. In an article dated September 5, 2009, the China Daily detailed how 1,000 protestors attempted to enter Nanhu Square, approximately 4 kilometers north of People’s Square. Eyewitnesses alleged two Uyghurs had been caught attacking people with syringes, but police took the two suspects away prompting an angry response. After ignoring public appeals to disperse exhorting the assembled people “to think of the nation,” the crowd was dispersed with tear gas. An Associated Press reporter spoke to a Han Chinese man named Ma, who said: “It’s been two months already. How many more months are we going to wait, how long before us Han can feel safe?”⁵⁸ The China Daily also reported that more than 100 young residents had marched on Jiefangnan Road, south of People’s Square on September 4.⁵⁹ Overseas media noted that the disturbances had closed

⁵⁸ NBC News. (September 4, 2009). 5 killed in needle-attack protests in China. Retrieved from: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/32689688/ns/world_news-asia_pacific/t/killed-needle-attack-protests-china/#.Uht2MmT8IJV

⁵⁹ China Daily. (September 5, 2009). Protestors jostle cops in Urumqi. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/05/content_8658581.htm

businesses, schools and offices as the government attempted to keep people off the streets.⁶⁰

Map of Key Places in Pinprick Attack Protests



(Apple News Map/UHRP Translation from Chinese)

The government response to the demonstrations between September 2 to 4 that took place in Urumchi in September 2009 contrasts starkly with the way in which government officials responded to the July 5, 2009 Uyghur-led protest in the city. On July 5, 2009, Uyghur men, women and children peacefully assembled in People's Square to protest government inaction over a deadly attack on Uyghur factory workers in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province. UHRP and Amnesty International reported in 2010 that Chinese security forces met Uyghur protestors on July 5, 2009 with deadly force.⁶¹ However, on September 3, 2009 following the Han Chinese protestors' calls for his resignation, Wang Lequan spoke to the crowds through a microphone from the balcony of a nearby government building. Wang was seen to address the protestors and to reassure them that action on arrests of July 5 suspects and pinprick attackers was being taken.⁶²

⁶⁰ New York Times. (September 4, 2009). China Says Five Dead in Latest Xinjiang Unrest. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/05/world/asia/05china.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=0 and Al-Jazeera. (September 5, 2009). Tensions run high after Urumqi unrest. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2009/09/2009954184928330.html>

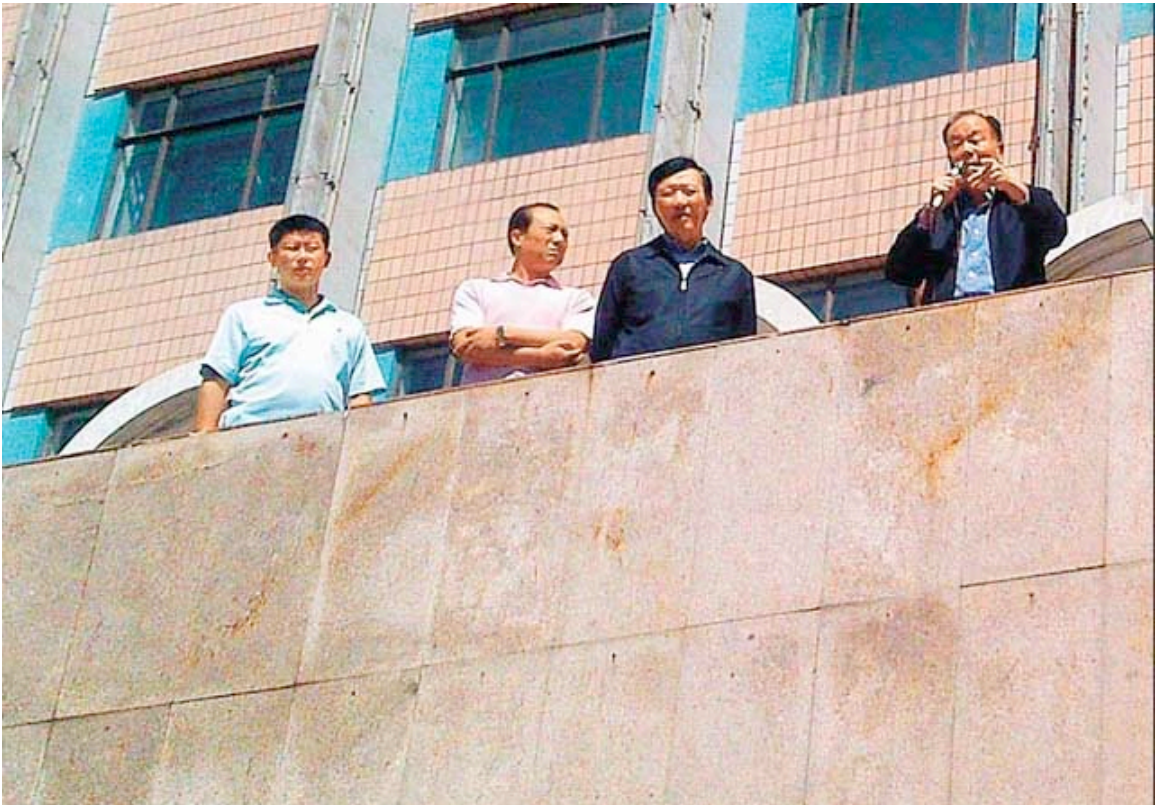
⁶¹ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (July 1, 2010). Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From The 2009 Unrest In Urumchi. Retrieved from: <https://uhrp.org/press-releases-uaa-and-uhrp-reports/can-anyone-hear-us-voices-2009-unrest-urumchi> and "Justice, justice": The July 2009 protests in Xinjiang, China. Retrieved from: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/027/2010/en>

⁶² Reuters. (September 8, 2009). Misinformation age age in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.reuters.com/china/2009/09/08/misinformation-age-in-urumqi/>



Above: Crowd gathers in People's Square before government leaders, on September 3, 2009. (Xinhua)

Below: Wang Lequan (right) regards protestors in People's Square, September 3, 2009. (Xinhua)



In further attempts to allay Han Chinese demonstrators' fears regarding the government's ability to protect them, regional government officials undertook several measures. On September 3, XUAR officials announced: "196 suspects have been charged over the July riot. Fifty-one were indicted and will face prosecution."⁶³ In addition, on September 5, Xinhua reported the firing of both Urumchi Communist Party Secretary Li Zhi and Liu Yaohua, Urumchi's police chief.⁶⁴ No reason was given for the dismissals of either official. Zhu Hailun, who previously commanded all law enforcement forces in the region, replaced Li, while Zhu Changjie, formerly the party chief of Aksu Prefecture, superseded Liu.⁶⁵ Lastly, the Urumchi municipal government declared a ban on "all gatherings, marches or protests on roads or other public venues in the open-air without having first obtained permits from the public security department."⁶⁶



Li Zhi addresses protestors on September 3, 2009, days before being sacked. (Xinhua)

⁶³ Reuters. (September 4, 2009). Five dead in latest unrest in far-west China. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5821PT20090904>

⁶⁴ Wall Street Journal. (September 5, 2009). China Sacks Two Amid Violence in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125205146562586021.html>

⁶⁵ Xinhua. (September 5, 2009). Urumqi party chief, Xinjiang police chief sacked. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/05/content_12001223.htm

⁶⁶ Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). Urumqi imposes rules to ban unlicensed demonstrations. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11996758.htm

On September 4, 2009, AP reported an increased military presence in Urumchi describing how: “By nightfall, authorities had cordoned off the city center, blocking intersections with patrol cars, and disconnected cellphone text-messaging services. Paramilitary police with shields, sticks and submachine guns sealed off People’s Square, where demonstrators had shouted down politicians. About 100 green trucks parked on the plaza.”⁶⁷

The September deployment occurred against the backdrop of a vast security build up post July 5, during which sweeps of Uyghur neighborhoods resulted in mass detentions. More than 130,000 troops were specially deployed to East Turkestan from other regions of China in a bid to restore order and crack down on the Uyghur population following the July unrest. In August 2011, Beijing officials also dispatched an elite anti-terrorism unit known as “Snow Leopard” to East Turkestan to boost the government’s security presence.⁶⁸

A Uyghur resident of Urumchi interviewed by UHRP in 2010 reported the existence of heavily armed police in Uyghur areas of the city during the September unrest. The resident told UHRP that due to the build up of security forces Uyghurs were tremendously fearful at this time, as armed personnel could once again target the Uyghur population. Many Uyghurs who originated from the southern part of East Turkestan left Urumchi to return to their hometowns. The resident also stated that individuals who left the city were not allowed to re-enter unless they possessed the required residency permits.⁶⁹ Another Uyghur resident of Urumchi reported that college campuses were “locked down” in early September, and government minders instructed students not to leave campus. The resident reported that the atmosphere in the city at the time was “extremely tense.”⁷⁰

An excerpt from a Guardian report dated September 4, 2013, citing other media outlets, illustrates the heightened tensions in Urumchi during Han Chinese demonstrations:

Reuters said an angry Han crowd confronted anti-riot police, stopping them from entering a Uighur neighbourhood this morning. ‘They have no right to block off the road like this. These Uighurs have been stabbing us with needles,’ one of the men said. ‘We need to take care of the problem.’

Another resident told Associated Press: ‘These people making trouble, we catch one, we kill one.’

⁶⁷ AP. (September 4, 2009). 10,000 Chinese protest spate of needle attacks. Retrieved from: http://www.denverpost.com/ci_13265468

⁶⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (July 3, 2009). Top regional officials’ comments at NPC bode ill for Uyghur rights, stability of East Turkestan. Retrieved from: <http://uhrp.org/press-release/top-regional-officials%E2%80%99-comments-npc-bode-ill-uyghur-rights-stability-east-turkestan>

⁶⁹ Interviewee 1, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

⁷⁰ Interviewee 2, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

A Uighur woman, Arwa Quli, complained: ‘There have been many Uighurs beaten up ... if you just brush against someone, they might think that you tried to stab them.’⁷¹



Han protestors clash with policeman on September 3, 2009. (AFP)

In addition to being the largest demonstration, the Han Chinese led protest held on September 3 was also the deadliest of those held between September 2 to 4. Chinese and overseas media reported that Zhang Hong, the deputy mayor of Urumchi, revealed the deaths of five people and injuries to a further 14 at a news conference. The ethnicity of those killed and the circumstances surrounding those deaths were not revealed. Zhang Hong only stated that of the five who had died, two were “innocent.”⁷² Furthermore, police were investigating the other deaths.⁷³ Contrasting Zhang Hong’s announcement, Uyghurs interviewed by UHRP in 2010, in preparation for a report on the July 5, 2009 unrest, told UHRP researchers they had witnessed numerous beatings and killings of

⁷¹ The Guardian. (September 4, 2009). Chinese police use teargas to break up deadly protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/04/xinjiang-urumqi-deadly-protests>

⁷² Reuters. (September 4, 2009). Five dead in latest unrest in far-west China. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5821PT20090904> and Al-Jazeera. (September 5, 2009). Tensions run high after Urumqi unrest. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2009/09/2009954184928330.html>

⁷³ Reuters. (September 4, 2009). Five dead in latest unrest in far-west China. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5821PT20090904>

Uyghurs during September. Reports in the overseas media also carried details of Uyghur beatings and killings.

A Uyghur resident of Urumchi informed UHRP that two young Uyghur men were beaten to death on September 3 in a market area in the vicinity of Hualin.⁷⁴ Another Urumchi resident provided the account of a Uyghur man in his mid-thirties who was killed by a Chinese mob on the afternoon of September 3 near Youhao Road after being dragged out of his car by a Chinese mob. The resident reported that police did not inform the man's family of the cause of his death, but family members said he appeared to have been beaten to death.⁷⁵

A third resident of Urumchi who spoke with UHRP said that Chinese passengers appeared very scared of Uyghur bus passengers in early September. The resident reported that a Uyghur individual was beaten to death on a bus, although the resident is unsure where in the city this took place.⁷⁶ A fourth resident of Urumchi told UHRP that Chinese protestors were attacking any Uyghurs who were on the street on September 3 and September 4. The resident reported that two Uyghurs were dragged out of a small Honda and beaten, not far from Xibei Road approximately four kilometers west of Nanhu Square.⁷⁷

A Radio Free Asia article noted how Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti and Tibetan blogger Woesser had published online accounts detailing the severe beating of Uyghur journalist Kaynam Jappar on September 3, and Woesser had reported that popular Uyghur singer Mirzat Alim was beaten to death on September 2. Tohti and Woesser described both attacks as having been carried out by Han Chinese mobs.⁷⁸ Neither account was reported in the official Chinese media.

Chinese authorities targeted overseas media during the protests in an attempt to control the flow of information on events. Three Hong Kong journalists who had traveled to Urumchi to report on the protests taking place were beaten and detained by paramilitary police.⁷⁹ Although all three reported having the required credentials and permits, they were beaten, detained for three hours with their hands behind their backs, and reportedly had a gun pointed at them. A representative of Beijing's central government Liaison Office in Hong Kong subsequently told Hong Kong media that while the actions of officials in East Turkestan were "necessary," "something undesirable" had happened to

⁷⁴ Interviewee 1, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

⁷⁵ Interviewee 3, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

⁷⁶ Interviewee 4, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

⁷⁷ Interviewee 5, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

⁷⁸ Radio Free Asia. (September 9, 2009). Bloggers Report Beatings, Death. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/online-09082009133813.html>

⁷⁹ Foreign Correspondents' Club of China. (September 5, 2009). FCCC Condemns Beating of Journalists in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://freshdstudio.net/clients/oldfccc/2009/09/05/fccc-condemns-beating-of-journalists-in-urumqi/>

the three reporters.⁸⁰ In addition, the Associated Press said Chinese security forces had seized audio-visual equipment from its reporters.⁸¹

Despite harassment of overseas journalists, overseas media were able to offer accounts detailing the beating of Uyghurs. The following excerpts of reports, published at the time of the Han Chinese protests in Urumchi, all detail such beatings. It is unclear if the reports describe separate incidents.

Radio Free Asia, September 3, 2009:

I walked near the Hongxu area yesterday—police were arresting a Uyghur. Several hundred [Hans] beat him. The armed police could not stop it. I saw some nearby security forces holding a needle and a syringe.”⁸²

New York Times, September 4, 2009:

On Thursday, witnesses described chanting crowds marching with Chinese flags, as well as moments of violence. At least one Uighur was beaten by a crowd as paramilitary police officers watched, said one witness. The police erected roadblocks, and schools were shut down.⁸³

The Guardian, September 3, 2009:

The source, who is not Uighur, said some Han had assaulted passing Uighurs, adding that a security force numbering up to around 1,000 had gathered in the area.⁸⁴

South China Morning Post, September 4, 2009:

... Ma said that at one point he saw some protesters badly beat up a Uyghur man they believed had just attacked a pedestrian with a hypodermic needle.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong. (September 4, 2009). Statement about beating of Hong Kong reporters in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.fcchk.org/fccweb/news.html?id=1F29C6B97E92975892C1AB70348375A6> and Bloomberg. (September 11, 2009). Hong Kong Politicians Line Up on Reporter Beatings in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=21072065&tkr=511:HK&sid=aCNp9i5MnSMI>

⁸¹ The Guardian. (September 4, 2009). Chinese police use teargas to break up deadly protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/04/xinjiang-urumqi-deadly-protests>

⁸² Radio Free Asia. (September 3, 2009). New Protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/newprotests-09032009122558.html>

⁸³ New York Times. (September 3, 2009). New Protests Reported in Restive Chinese Region. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/04/world/asia/04china.html>

⁸⁴ The Guardian. (September 3, 2009). New mass protests and violence break out in Urumqi, witnesses claim. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/03/urumqi-china-new-violence-new-claims#history-byline>

Reuters, September 5, 2009:

On Thursday, crowds severely beat a Uighur man they accused of syringe attacks, and then attacked the ambulance that had tried to extract him from the crowd. It is not known whether any of Thursday's casualties died in that incident.⁸⁶



Police stand in front of damaged ambulance guarding Tianshan hospital where a Uyghur man was said to be receiving treatment after being beaten on September 3, 2009. (Reuters)

In a comparative analysis, the following points can be highlighted between the Uyghur-led protests of July 5 and Han Chinese protests of September 3:

- On July 5, no senior Chinese official addressed Uyghur protestors to acknowledge their grievances. On September 3, the most senior regional official at the time, Wang Lequan, personally addressed Han Chinese protestors.
- During the July 5 protest, Uyghur protestors were fired upon, wounded and killed by Chinese security forces. In the aftermath, many young Uyghur males were detained en masse, tried and convicted. In contrast, protesters at the September 3 rally were

⁸⁵ South China Morning Post. (September 4, 2009). Thousands protest over Urumqi syringe attacks. Retrieved from: http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20090902_1.htm

⁸⁶ Reuters. (September 5, 2009). China sacks party boss of western city hot by unrest. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/05/us-china-xinjiang-idUSTRE5821PT20090905>

dispersed with teargas and no Han Chinese were detained, wounded or killed for their role in the protest.

- Despite Uyghur discontent with regional chairman, Nur Bekri, expressed at the July 5 protest, the official was firmly installed in his seat as XUAR chairman. In response to the unhappiness expressed at the September 3 protest, on April 24, 2010, Chinese state media announced that 57-year-old Zhang Chunxian, formerly the Communist Party Secretary of Hunan Province, had been appointed to replace Wang Lequan as Xinjiang Party Secretary.

IV. Criminal and judicial processes post-September protests

A. Concerns over detentions

The number of Uyghur detentions and formal arrests stemming from allegations of pinprick attacks is not clear. Reports in the Chinese media, often citing Chinese officials, presents a picture of mounting detentions, arrests and convictions in response to the pinprick attacks; however, the articles often use indeterminate language, especially in regard to Uyghur detentions. Given the allegations of mass arrests of young, Uyghur males in the aftermath of the July 5 unrest, and the credible allegation that many of those arrested were forcibly disappeared, the lack of a full account concerning detentions is of extreme concern.⁸⁷

In addition, UHRP believes the criminal-judicial process of those detained and charged over the alleged pinprick attacks in the wake of the Han Chinese protests from September 2 to 4 was tainted by Chinese officials' perceived need to respond to the protestors demand for swift justice. As a result, UHRP has serious reservations that due process of law was followed and trials conducted in regard to the pinprick attacks fell far below international standards. UHRP is particularly concerned about the following points:

- Detentions of Uyghurs, especially the number of suspects, lack transparency.
- Procedures against Uyghurs arrested have not been disclosed publicly.
- Trials of Uyghurs charged with carrying out pinprick attacks were politically motivated and conducted under haste to relieve pressure from the Han Chinese community in Urumchi.
- Investigations into credible reports of beatings and deaths of Uyghurs were not undertaken by Chinese authorities, especially of the five people allegedly killed on September 5, bringing into question the equal application of the law.

On September 3, 2009 in an article published by the China Daily, during the height of the Han Chinese protests, party official Zhu Hailun announced 15 people were “seized” for “stabbing members of the public with hypodermic syringe needles.” Zhu, head of the CCP political and legal affairs commission, added that four of the fifteen had been officially arrested and prosecuted. “The court would pronounce judgment on the four in the near future,” he added.⁸⁸ The details contained in the China Daily report were reprinted in an article dated September 3, 2009 by Reuters⁸⁹ and in an article dated September 3, 2009 by the Guardian,⁹⁰ although the Reuters article specifies four of the 15

⁸⁷ Human Rights Watch. (October 21, 2009). “We Are Afraid to Even Look for Them.” Retrieved from: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2009/10/22/we-are-afraid-even-look-them-0>

⁸⁸ China Daily. (September 3, 2009). 15 seized over syringe attacks in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/03/content_8648716.htm

⁸⁹ Reuters. (September 3, 2009). China detains 15 for syringe attacks in Xinjiang. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/03/us-china-syringes-idUSTRE5821G720090903>

⁹⁰ The Guardian. (September 3, 2009). New mass protests and violence break out in Urumqi, witnesses claim. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/03/urumqi-china-new-violence-new-claims#history-byline>

had been only “formally arrested,” while the Guardian stated that the four would face trial soon.

By September 4, 2009, Xinhua reported that police had “seized” 21 suspects in relation to the pinprick attacks of whom six were in custody and four had been arrested for criminal prosecution.⁹¹ Two separate reports in the South China Morning Post, the first dated September 4, 2009, cited the Xinhua report in describing the 21 detentions; however, the September 4 report added that “six have been officially arrested and four charged.”⁹² The 21 figure was repeated in a September 5, 2009 report from the South China Morning Post.⁹³

A People’s Daily article dated September 6, 2009 claimed regional police had “captured” 25 suspected pinprick assailants “of whom seven are in police custody, four were arrested and four others were referred for criminal prosecution.” The article added that according to the procurator general of Urumchi’s procuratorate: “Four suspects, three men and one woman, have been prosecuted for endangering public security.” However, the People’s Daily article continued to specify the ethnicity of the four suspects who had been prosecuted as Uyghur.⁹⁴ The 25 figure was echoed by the South China Morning Post in an article dated September 6, 2009, which stated “four people would be formally charged.”⁹⁵ A September 9, 2009 article in The Asia Times claimed “Xinjiang police had detained 25 suspects, seven of whom had been held in police custody, four of them had been formally arrested and four others had been referred for criminal prosecution.”⁹⁶

An AFP article dated September 11, 2009, reported nine suspects had been “detained” across East Turkestan. Of the nine, six were being held in Hotan, two in Altay and one in Kashgar. An official in the press department of the Xinjiang government disclosed the details. The report added 45 people had been detained on suspicion of carrying out needle attacks in Urumchi.⁹⁷

By September 15, 2013, a People’s Daily headline announced that 75 suspects had been “captured.” In the report, Huang Yabo, an official with the regional public security,

⁹¹ Xinhua. (September 4, 2009). Urumqi imposes rules to ban unlicensed demonstrations. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/04/content_11996758.htm

⁹² South China Morning Post. (April 3, 2012). Thousands protest over Urumqi syringe attacks. Retrieved from: <http://www.scmp.com/article/691441/thousands-protest-over-urumqi-syringe-attacks>

⁹³ South China Morning Post. (April 3, 2012). Five killed as protests continue to rock Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.scmp.com/article/691531/five-killed-protests-continue-rock-urumqi>

⁹⁴ People’s Daily Online. (September 6, 2009). Urumqi party chief, Xinjiang police chief sacked after protests. Retrieved from: <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6749256.html>

⁹⁵ South China Morning Post. (September 6, 2009). Urumqi party boss fired in wake of protest. Retrieved from: http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20090902_1.htm

⁹⁶ Asia Times. (September 9, 2009). Beijing scrambles to find scapegoats. Retrieved from: <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KI09Ad01.html>

⁹⁷ Asia One News. (September, 11, 2009). Nine held in new Xinjiang needle attacks: official. Retrieved from: <http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest+News/Asia/Story/A1Story20090911-167361.html>

stated: “police have arrested 75 suspects, cracked seven criminal rings and 36 cases related to the syringe attacks.” The article continued: “The 36 cases of syringe attacks involved 16 in Urumqi, 13 in Hotan, and two in Turpan, two in Kashgar and one each in the Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Aksu and Altay.”⁹⁸

B. Interference in the Judicial Process

There are valid concerns that the judicial processes for those charged for offences related to the pinprick attacks were not free and fair due to political considerations. In particular, UHRP believes Chinese officials made statements that influenced the judicial process—statements that were prejudiced by public pressure from Urumchi’s Han Chinese community. UHRP understands that the trials are an illustration that there is an absence of the rule of law for Uyghurs, and that Chinese officials are liable to act in a manner that does not afford Uyghurs due process.

Chinese officials displayed a similar disregard for the rule of law in the judicial processes of those charged for crimes related to the July 5, 2009 unrest. Remarks made by Chinese government officials prior to the trials of July 5 defendants indicate the existence of political pressure to issue death sentences to Uyghurs involved in the July 5 unrest. Urumchi Communist Party secretary Li Zhi, at a press conference on July 8, 2009, stated that executions would be used to deal with those involved in the unrest.

According to an Urumchi resident interviewed by UHRP in 2010, during a televised address, Urumchi Communist Party Secretary Li Zhi placed a clear emphasis on the Uyghur ethnicity of four suspects who were alleged to have attacked Chinese people with needles. “He should have just said that they were ‘criminals’... he was inciting people,” said the resident. “This led to more inter-ethnic hatred and caused the Chinese people to demonstrate. During the demonstrations that took place in early September, Chinese demonstrators shouted slogans such as “Uyghurs should get out of Xinjiang” and “Uyghurs are animals.”⁹⁹

According to a report published by CECC, in a July 11 article in the *Legal Daily*, the president of the Supreme People’s Court, Wang Shengjun, called on courts of all levels to be united in their thinking with central authorities’ judgments and policies. Wang also called for “striking hard in accordance with law” against “plotters, organizers, and key members” of the “serious violent criminal incident of beating, smashing, looting, and burning” that took place on July 5.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ People’s Daily Online. (September 15, 2009). Police capture 75 suspects of Xinjiang syringe attacks. Retrieved from: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6758426.html>

⁹⁹ Interviewee 3, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (July 1, 2010). Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From The 2009 Unrest In Urumchi. Retrieved from: <https://uhrp.org/press-releases-uaa-and-uhrp-reports/can-anyone-hear-us-voices-2009-unrest-urumchi>

The buildup of Han Chinese frustrations with Chinese officials over the perceived lack of swift justice is evident in reports from overseas media. AFP issued an article on September 3, 2009 citing a Han Chinese resident of Urumchi who explained that anger had arisen in the Han Chinese community through a “delay in trials for those arrested over the riot, as well as a recent spate of stabbings by people wielding syringes.”¹⁰¹

The Guardian in an article dated September 3, 2009 reported on the motivation of the September protests and the ethnic dimension to Han Chinese grievances. One interviewee stated: “‘Han Chinese are complaining about the worsening social order...They resent the Uighurs for the stabbing thing.’”¹⁰² On September 3, Radio Free Asia also reported on the growing anger of Han Chinese in Urumchi: “Mr. Li, a Han Chinese in Urumqi, said several hundred Chinese have protested beginning Wednesday [September 2, 2009] over the reported syringe attacks and deteriorating public safety. ‘The banners are everywhere. They say the government is unable to handle the mysterious syringe attacks.’” Furthermore, Reuters described how one Han Chinese resident, named Ma, confronted security forces saying: “‘It’s been two months already. How many more months are we going to wait, how long before us Han can feel safe?’”

In a commentary on the September Han Chinese unrest in Urumchi, The Economist noted how the Han demonstrations were a blow to the reputation of Chinese officials in the region, especially in regard to their ability to maintain their perceived notion of social order: “The fresh turmoil would have been embarrassing enough for Xinjiang’s leaders even without the shouts of ‘down with Wang Lequan’ that were heard during the protest on September 3rd.” The embarrassment was compounded according to the article because only a few days earlier Hu Jintao had been in Urumchi and declared President Hu a “victory” for the government’s measures to reestablish stability.¹⁰³

In a revealing paragraph on the attitude of Chinese officials towards a quick response during the September unrest stemming from worries over open hostility in the Han Chinese community, as well as the responsibility of Uyghurs for the alleged ‘instability,’ The Economist added:

Inter-racial tensions in the city have begun to turn into hostility towards the region’s leadership, prompting a new security clampdown. Between September 2nd and 4th, thousands of ethnic-Han Chinese took to the streets of Urumqi to protest against what they saw as the government’s failure to halt an alleged new upsurge of violence by members of Xinjiang’s main indigenous ethnic group, the Uighurs. Both the government and Han residents accuse Uighurs of carrying out

¹⁰¹ Zaman. (September 3, 2009). New protest in China city torn by deadly rioting. Retrieved from: http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=186012

¹⁰² The Guardian. (September 3, 2009). New mass protests and violence break out in Urumqi, witnesses claim. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/03/urumqi-china-new-violence-new-claims#history-byline>

¹⁰³ The Economist. (September 10, 2009). The party under seige in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/node/14413290>

widespread stabbings since mid-August, using syringes, safety pins, needles and other sharp objects...The demonstrations, particularly at their peak on September 3rd, were large and unusually blunt in a country where few normally dare to speak ill in public of senior party leaders. At one point Mr Wang emerged onto People's Square in the centre of town to address the demonstrators, promising harsh treatment for the perpetrators of the stabbings. Residents say plastic water-bottles were thrown in his direction. Mr Wang clearly felt he had to respond.”¹⁰⁴

In the first indication that the court process would be able to provide swift justice on alleged pinprick attacks, Xinhua reported on September 4, 2009 that the “regional information office in a mobile phone text message to the public Thursday [September 3, 2009]...said that the court would hand down severe punishments to those found guilty.”

In addition, during and immediately following the Han Chinese unrest in Urumchi in September 2009, Chinese officials went public to assure a government response was imminent. Public security minister Meng Jianzhu “pledged to speed up the process of dealing with those detained over the earlier riots and severely punish the murderers, in answer to the demonstrators’ complaints of a sluggish response by officials.”¹⁰⁵

Overseas media also reported how Chinese authorities had pledged death sentences for those involved in alleged pinprick attacks, as well as the ethnicity of those perpetrating the attacks. The Christian Science Monitor, in an article dated September 7, 2009 detailed how: “A police announcement reported late Sunday [September 6, 2009] night by Xinhua, the official news agency, warned that anyone caught stabbing passers-by with needle-tipped syringes could face the death penalty. Rumors that minority Uyghurs had been attacking Han Chinese had swept the Xinjiang capital for days.”¹⁰⁶ In addition, Radio Free Asia, in an article dated September 6, 2009, confirmed the harsh penalties for which Chinese authorities’ were asking. The article stated: “Chinese authorities say tough penalties, including a possible death sentence, await anyone convicted in connection with the bizarre series of syringe stabbings in the northwestern city of Urumqi that prompted large-scale protests in recent days.”¹⁰⁷

C. Rapid sentencing of Uyghurs

As far as UHRP has been able to ascertain, through public statements by the Chinese authorities, seven people, all of them Uyghurs, were convicted and sentenced for their role in the alleged pinprick attacks.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The Guardian. (September 4, 2009). Chinese police use teargas to break up deadly protests in Urumqi. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/04/xinjiang-urumqi-deadly-protests>

¹⁰⁶ The Christian Science Monitor. (September 7, 2009). China threatens Xinjiang rumor-mongers with jail. Retrieved from: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0907/p06s01-wosc.html>

¹⁰⁷ Radio Free Asia. (September 6, 2009). Death Penalty for Syringe Attacks. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/unrest-09062009171524.html>



Policemen walk past the Intermediate People's Court in Urumqi, September 12, 2009. (Reuters)

On September 12, 2009, two weeks after the alleged pinprick attacks, Xinhua reported that three Uyghurs had been handed sentences ranging from 7 to 15 years. The hearings for the three, in two separate cases, were heard in the space of three hours at Municipal Intermediate People's Court of Urumqi. "The court sentenced Yilipan Yilihamu [Erpan Ilham], 19, to 15 years in prison for 'attacking with hyped toxic substances' as he was convicted of injecting a hypodermic needle into a woman's buttock on Aug. 28, Shi Xinli, president of the court, told a press conference soon after the court hearing." The report did not mention if the court specified which toxic substance was used in the alleged attack.

The same report added: "In a separate trial in the same court, Muhutaerjiang Turdi [Muhtarjan Turdi], a 34-year-old man, and Aimannisha Guli [Amannisagul], a 22-year-old woman, were sentenced to 10 years in jail with a fine of 5,000 yuan (732 U.S. dollars) and seven years in prison with a fine of 3,000 yuan, respectively... Shi said."¹⁰⁸

A revealing aspect of the September 12, 2009 Xinhua report is the supposed reactions of residents and experts, all of whom are non-Uyghur, toward the sentences. The responses appear to illustrate that confidence in Chinese authorities' ability had been restored and justice had been realized. The rapidity of the judicial process and the harshness of the

¹⁰⁸ Xinhua. (September 12, 2009). Suspects sentenced over needle attacks in Urumqi. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/12/content_12040517.htm

sentences were also allegedly praised. The following is a selection from the Xinhua report:

‘The court verdicts were very accurate,’ said Xu Chun, a lawyer with the Gonglian Law Offices based in Urumqi. The trials strictly punished crimes and alleviated people’s scare, and would contribute to the recovery of the social order, Xu said.

‘The court made a fair judgment and I think Urumqi people will feel satisfied with it,’ said Li Yuying, a saleswoman in the city. She expressed the belief that the government is capable of maintaining social stability and protecting people’s security. She called on the authorities to launch quick actions against any possible security threats in the future.

‘Only harsh punishment of criminals according to law and return of a safe living environment could heal people’s psychological trauma,’ said Shi Shuhong, a teacher with the No. 35 Primary School of Urumqi.

‘A devoted Muslim must love both his country and his religion, and contribute to the national prosperity, to people’s health and welfare,’ said Ma Wenxu, an imam with the Luyuanjie Mosque in the city. ‘The court hearings and the judgments were timely and correct, I fully support and welcome them,’ he said.

‘The trials showed the government’s determination to crack down upon crimes and to bust any attempts to sabotage social stability, which will help appease public indignation,’ said Huang Xuanqian, manager of the Urumqi-based Xinle Investment Co. Ltd. ‘There was no exodus of business people amid the needle attacks despite plummeting sales. We’re always confident of Xinjiang’s development prospect,’ he said.¹⁰⁹

In the space of two weeks after the three Uyghurs were alleged to have committed the serious crimes, they had been arrested, charged, tried, convicted and sentenced from between 7 to 15 years to prison.¹¹⁰ The timeframe for the judicial process was lauded in the Xinhua article: “It’s only been just over two weeks between the arrest and sentencing of the suspect. The speedy trials showed the government’s determination to crack down on crime and to foil any attempts to undermine social stability.”¹¹¹

In a People’s Daily article from September 14, 2009, one interviewee, a 27-year-old resident of Urumchi of undetermined ethnicity, did not feel justice had been served and is

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ See Criminal Procedure Law (prior to 2013 Amendments) for the full criminal-judicial process: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/government/207332.htm>

¹¹¹ Xinhua. (September 12, 2009). Suspects sentenced over needle attacks in Urumqi. Retrieved from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/12/content_12040517.htm

reported to have said: “I think all three of them should get at least life imprisonment as they have caused a massive scare among people and everyone in the city has been deeply affected.”¹¹²

Despite a belief to the contrary among Han Chinese protestors in Urumchi in September 2009, a similar accelerated judicial process for Uyghurs suspected of crimes related to the July 2009 unrest was in evidence. In 2010 UHRP reported that the Xinjiang People’s Procuratorate acted on instructions from the Chinese Communist Party leadership and streamlined the review process of July 5-related cases, adhering to the “three fast” principle (*san kuai yuanze*): “fast review, fast arrest and fast prosecution.” In all of the cases that were reported in the official media up until July 2010, the defendants were sentenced on the same day that their trials commenced or the day after. At least several of the trials were not publicly announced beforehand.¹¹³

In November 2009, eight Uyghur men and one Han Chinese man sentenced to death were executed for unrest related crimes. For these nine men, all of the following happened in less than one month: they were tried, convicted, and sentenced; their sentences were upheld by the XUAR Higher People’s Court and the national Supreme People’s Court; and they were executed.¹¹⁴

On September 18, 2009, the China Daily reported the sentencing of four more Uyghurs after a trial held at the Municipal Intermediate People’s Court of Urumchi. The four were alleged to have been part of an organized group carrying out pinprick attacks: “Abdulrusul Abdukhadi stabbed a woman surnamed Li in the neck in an underground passage at 10:30 am on Sept 3, with the help of three others identified as Ablimit Memet, Rehman Raziq and Abdulkeyum Ayup, according to the court.”

The report also described the punishment given to the four Uyghurs after a criminal-judicial procedure that took little more than two weeks from crime to sentence: “Abdulrusul Abdukhadi and Ablimit Memet were sentenced to 15 years in prison, Rehman Raziq 12 years and Abdulkeyum Ayup eight years. Abdukhadi and Memet were also deprived of political rights for five years and Raziq for three years.”¹¹⁵ The China Daily went on to claim the alleged incident perpetrated by Abdulrusul Abdukhadi was the cause of the Han Chinese protest on September 3. The report did not mention any resentment towards state authorities from Han Chinese in Urumchi.

¹¹² People’s Daily Online. (September 14, 2009). Syringe attackers get up to 15 years in jail. Retrieved from: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6756238.html>

¹¹³ Uyghur Human Rights Project. (July 1, 2010). Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From The 2009 Unrest In Urumchi. Retrieved from: <https://uhrp.org/press-releases-uaa-and-uhrp-reports/can-anyone-hear-us-voices-2009-unrest-urumchi>

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ China Daily. (September 18, 2009). Four sentenced in syringe needle attacks. Retrieved from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-09/18/content_8705870.htm



Police stands in front of Intermediate People's Court during pinprick attack trial, September 17, 2009. (Reuters)

There were also no reports from the official media of any arrests or detentions of Chinese individuals during the September unrest. Furthermore, details of charges against and trials of the “75 suspects...seven criminal rings and 36 cases” that occurred across East Turkestan described in the September 15, 2013 People's Daily report referred to earlier in this section are publicly unavailable.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ People's Daily Online. (September 15, 2009). Police capture 75 suspects of Xinjiang syringe attacks. Retrieved from: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6758426.html>

Recommendations

To China's Government

- Publicly and transparently disclose details surrounding arrests and trials of Uyghurs in September 2009 pinprick attack incidents.
- Investigate credible claims of Uyghur killings and beatings during the September protests, and the criminal liability of Han Chinese who perpetrated these attacks.
- Educate Han Chinese in East Turkestan and throughout China that attacking, beating and killing Uyghurs will result in criminal charges.
- Abolish double standards in dealing with peaceful protests such as the application of moderate force targeting Han Chinese and lethal force against Uyghurs, and apply the law equally in all cases.
- Cease inflammatory rhetoric, including claims of terror, unless substantiated by an independent and open investigation.
- Work toward the creation of an independent judiciary and implement mechanisms ensuring due process of law for Uyghurs, including legal representation, in trials and other criminal processes.
- End the militarization of East Turkestan and seek genuine and meaningful long-term solutions to the Uyghur issue.
- Listen and act on Uyghur grievances by establishing a free and fair complaints process.
- Put into practice international norms of press freedom that would ensure the Chinese and overseas media report on events in East Turkestan faithfully and in an even-handed manner.
- Abide by domestic and international obligations as set out in Chinese and international law. Relevant domestic law includes the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law. Article 48 guarantees equal rights for different ethnic groups in autonomous regions. Relevant international law includes the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, of which China is a signatory. Article 2 (b) forbids any State from sponsoring, defending or supporting racial discrimination by any individual or organization.
- Ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, especially Article 14 guaranteeing due process and equality before courts and tribunals.

To the U.S. Government

- Establish a Consulate in the East Turkestan regional capital of Urumchi that will serve to monitor human rights conditions in the region.
- Send a delegation of senior staff from the US Embassy in Beijing or the State Department to East Turkestan to investigate claims made by Uyghur residents of Urumchi regarding unrest in July 2009 and September 2009.
- Raise the issue of lack of process afforded Uyghur detainees during the pinprick attacks at China's forthcoming UPR.
- Establish a coordinator for Uyghur affairs at the State Department to oversee human rights issues

- Enact legislation, such as the Tibet Act, to systemize US assistance to the Uyghur people.

To the International Community

- Tighten monitoring mechanisms of international human rights instruments to reflect an accurate assessment of human rights conditions.
- Arrange for investigative visits by one of the UN-appointed specialists, including the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms. Rita Izsák; UN Special Rapporteur contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Githu Muigai; or the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Mr. Ben Emmerson.
- Question Chinese officials during meetings about Uyghur human rights issues, including state violence against Uyghurs, discriminatory practices and lack of due process.

VI. APPENDIX: URUMCHI EVENING NEWS ARTICLE TRANSLATIONS

A. 15 suspects were arrested in harmful pinprick attack case

Urumchi Evening News – September 3, 2009

Original report: At a press conference held on the afternoon of September 2, the XUAR Intelligence Agency made a general announcement on recent cases that happened successively in some public places of Urumchi of harmful pinprick attacks. Currently, PSB organs have arrested 15 criminal suspects. Among them 6 people were held based on criminal actions; 4 people were approved for arrest. The prosecution office charged 4 people, and their arrest was approved in 3 cases. A court will try them by law very soon.

XUAR CCP standing member and political law enforcement committee secretary Zhu Hai Lun said in a statement regarding the cases: “In recent days, harmful public incidents of pinprick attacks with unknown weapons have occurred successively in some public places in Urumchi city. The XUAR Party committee and people’s government treated the cases with utmost importance and requested support from the Urumchi municipal party committee, government and PSB organs to expose the case with full force. Victims in the cases were evaluated with medical check-ups and treated.” Zhu Hai Lun said that, “Reported cases involved city residents of nine ethnic groups including Han, Uyghur, Hui, Kazakh, Mongol. Based on observations of the situation, the targets of the criminal acts were pre-planned in the current extraordinary situation; these severe and malicious cases were clearly intended to disturb social order and create an atmosphere of terror; this is the continuation of a struggle between us and our enemies after the “July 5 incident.” In order to genuinely guarantee the public’s physical safety, and guarantee social stability, PSB organs organized sufficient forces to arrest the criminal suspects promptly. After examining the criminal evidence, severe punishment is due to the criminals by law to destroy the enemies’ spirit. These enemies’ illegal and malicious intention to create social panic will be fiercely attacked. We should resolutely resist their dictatorial force with public force; on the one hand, the public should mobilize fully, genuinely implement public resources of power and intelligence, and genuinely realize public stability and protection. On the other hand, we should allocate forces like PSB armed police to further strengthen controlling society, increase the frequency and presence of patrolling the streets, especially strengthen protecting the safety of important public places like public buses and primary and middle schools, allocate police to buses and all public places, and genuinely strengthen a feeling of public safety.”

Zhu Hai Lun said: “We are investigating the ‘July 5 incident’ which commanded society’s attention; our work reviewing and handling the cases is underway day and night. So far, 825 criminal suspects have been held for criminal acts. In 140 cases, 239 arrests were recommended. 196 arrests were approved in 121 cases. 51 people in 14 cases were delivered to the prosecutor’s office to be investigated and charged. They will be tried according to the law.”

At the press conference, deputy director and party secretary of the XUAR health department Yin Yu Lin said in her introductory statement: “From August 20 to September 2, in Urumchi district different levels of treatment centers including XUAR Regional and Urumchi municipal disease prevention and control centers accepted and examined 476 people harmed by pinprick attacks. (Among them 433 are Han, 19 are Hui,

2 are Uyghur, 5 are Kazakh, 2 are Mongol, 2 are Tujia, one is Miao, one is Xibo and one is Russian.) Based on the doctors' examinations of skin damage, among them 89 people had a clear mark on their skin from a pinprick attack.

All treatment centers and examiners who accepted the harmed patients provided them with skin examinations and medical advice; based on the skin damage, they initiated medical examinations and conducted medical evaluations to determine whether there was a danger of illness. After giving the medical evaluations, patients who might need antivirus medicine were selected and treated with preventive medicine. The treatment centers registered each of the city residents who came for treatment; and following the emergency treatment, did follow up tracking.”

According to the hospitals' examinations of the patients, they found no initial signs of contagious illness or symptoms caused by a poisonous chemical substance. None of the medical examination patients had to stay in the hospital due to harm from the pinprick attacks, either because the stabbing or related illnesses. There have been no deaths. There were no illnesses found in the patients requiring preventive medicine against disease. Various levels of disease prevention and control centers set up telephone advisory services. The XUAR disease prevention and control center telephone number: 2621229; Urumchi municipal disease prevention and control center telephone number: 3767541

B. There is no possibility of viral infection

Urumchi Evening News – September 3, 2009

Original report: According to the press conference held on September 2, hospitals in Urumchi have now accepted 476 pinprick attack victims, among them, 89 people have a clear mark from the pinprick attack on their body, however there was no mark of the pinprick attack on most of the people. There is no possibility of infection by virus.

At the press conference, XUAR disease prevention and control center director Fu Li Ping responded to questions related to the medical point of view regarding pinprick attack cases. Fu stated: “According to the examinations, the needles used in the pinprick attack cases do not have a major health impact. Currently, viruses which are transmitted through blood are mainly the AIDS virus and hepatitis A and B. However, in order to get infected by these viruses, the needle should be inserted deeply into the skin and should reasonably cause bleeding. According to domestic and international research, even when needles containing infectious viruses break the skin and are deeply inserted into the skin, the possible rate of viral infection in the human body hardly reaches up to around 3%. Currently, based on the situation of people who hospitals have accepted and examined, the degree of damage caused by the pinprick attacks has generally been minor, marks from the pinprick attacks are small, most of them are only as deep as the top of a needle and caused only superficial skin damage, and although a very few people bled, the amount of bleeding was very little. Due to repeatedly pressing the pinprick wound, some people broke the vein and some blood was released. Other than this, based on past situations, the possibility of pinprick attack victims getting infected by a virus is very low. Since 2000, 167 medical officers and people's police were stabbed due to professional dangers in pinprick attacks with the possibility of AIDS transmission, but none of them were infected because we dealt with it on time. Other than that, it is

necessary to explain that for pinprick attack victims currently under examination in the hospital, if an examination of their blood positively identifies the AIDS virus or hepatitis A or B, it will prove that this was not caused by the pinprick attack but that they were previously infected. Because after the virus enters into body, it takes over a month at least for the virus to spread in the body and show up as a positive test result.”

Fu noted to the city’s public: If you are harmed in a pinprick attack, go immediately to a treatment center to examine the injury; if you are unable to go to the hospital for the examination, the best method is to apply pressure to the injury and wash it with soap and clean water. If the stabbing is deeper, then go to hospital immediately for a checkup.

C. People who caused severe public harm and deaths by pinprick attacks will be sentenced to death

Urumchi Evening News – September 3, 2009

Original report: On September 2, XUAR legal science association deputy director Abliz Hoshur, in response to reporters’ questions about harmful public pinprick attacks in Urumchi, said: “Malicious cases of public harm by pinprick attack that have occurred in Urumchi, have endangered public safety and are severe, malicious criminal cases; this has acutely disrupted social order, created social anxiety, severe threatened the public’s physical safety and health, and severely endangered social stability.” Abliz Hoshur said: “No matter their intention or purpose, the use of weapons like needles, knives, or awls to randomly stab, cut, and slash people is a danger to public security, and from an objective point of view, this violates articles 114 and 115 of the national ‘Criminal law’, and can be considered a criminal count of endangering public security with malicious intent. Based on article 114 of the ‘Criminal law’, if a severe crime is committed, the sentence will be over 3 years and less than 10 years fixed imprisonment; if it causes death, severe harm or severe damage to private or public wealth, based on the first clause of article 115 of the ‘Criminal law,’ the sentence will carry over 10 years unfixed or fixed imprisonment or even the death sentence.” He said: “If the crime was organized, involving more than 3 people who gathered, and all members of the group were given reasonable responsibility, the job assignments were reasonably clear, the organization was reasonably fixed in order to carry attacks using weapons like needles, knives, or awls to randomly stab, cut, and slash people and endanger public security, based on clause 120 of the ‘Criminal law,’ it will be tried under the criminal charges of organizing a terrorist organization, and leading and participating in a terrorist organization. Organizers, planners and leaders will get over 10 years fixed or unfixed jail sentences; and active participants will get over between 3 and 10 years fixed jail sentences.”

Legally what kind of forceful measures will be used for the criminal suspects who committed these acts?

Abliz Hoshur said: “According to clause 61 of the ‘Criminal Procedure Law,’ PSB officers can arrest specific criminals or major suspects for attempting to commit crimes, or those identified immediately after committing a crime using proof provided by victims or witnesses; and criminal evidence found on their person or from the suspects’ homes.

According to clause 63 of the ‘Criminal Procedure Law,’ anyone can turn in criminals who are found committing a crime or identified immediately after committing the crime;

and in the arrest process, PSB organs, the people's prosecutor's office and the people's court will handle the arrest warrant." He said: "Whoever turns themselves in voluntarily and confesses their crime immediately after committing the crime will be treated as guilty. Their punishment will be lightened. Among them, perpetrators of minor crimes may be given amnesty from punishment. Whoever voluntarily confesses their crime, accepts their guilt and is willing to cooperate with the PSB will be given a lighter punishment or amnesty."

D. 4 criminal suspects arrested in 'Pinprick attack incident' in Urumchi

*Urumchi Evening News – September 7, 2009 * This article is undated in the archive. Based on a chronological analysis of the report, UHRP believes September 7, 2009 to be the most likely date of publication.*

Original report: At a press conference held on September 5, the XUAR Intelligence Agency made a general announcement on the situation of handling cases of pinprick attacks with needle-like objects which are happening repeatedly in some public places in Urumchi.

Based on the PSB organs' investigation, the prosecutor's office has now legally approved the arrest of 4 people, and prosecution of 4 people in 3 cases.

Urumchi municipal prosecutor's office chief inspector, Otkur Abdurahman made a general announcement on the concrete situation of the cases:

Criminal suspects Muhtarjan Turdi, male, Uyghur, 34 years old; and Amannisagul, female, 22 years old. On August 29, criminal suspects Muhtarjan and Amannisagul together ostensibly hired an automobile, deceiving the driver to go to a small street in Number 1 'Tik Quduq' vegetable market, then threatened the driver with a syringe they had previously prepared and stole 710 Yuan of the driver's money. On August 29, Amannisagul was arrested; on September 1, Muhtarjan gave himself in after confessing his crime.

Criminal suspect Erpan Ilham, male, Uyghur, 19 years old. On August 28, after 4:00pm, a victim reported that after buying fruit and returning to their office, they felt something stabbed on their right hip. The victim reported the case. PSB organs accepted the case report, then initiated an investigation and systematically inspected the situation, and based on the victim's recognition, within 4 hours the criminal suspect Erpan Ilham was arrested. During questioning, the suspect confessed to the crime that while the victim was purchasing fruit, he stabbed a nail the into victim's hip.

Criminal suspect Ekber Imin, male, Uyghur, 47 years old. On August 31, PSB organs received a tipoff from the public, and when they attempted to arrest Ekber Imin on Tugung No.2 street in Urumchi, Ekber held a syringe in his hand which could hold poison, resisted the police and injured them with it.

Otkur Abdurahman said: "It is my hope the public will be vigilant and strengthen their ability to protect themselves; if anyone sees an abnormal situation, they should report it, especially cases relating to pinprick attacks, confidently report the case and show evidence to nearby PSB organs, PSB police on duty, or armed police and assist PSB organs to investigate the cases and arrest the criminals. Criminals legally arrested can be

delivered to the people's prosecutor's office and people's court office to be dealt with. The PSB organs will surely deal with the cases according to the law, applying for an arrest warrant or investigation. The prosecutor's offices will implement their honorable duties provided by the law, will deal with the cases absolutely according to the law, will not disappoint people's hopes, will protect social justice and achieve the full force of justice, and will protect the honor of the law and of social and political stability."

G. Government sends medical experts to examine and analyze pinprick attack victim conditions: The possibility of infection caused by an acute bacterial illness has been completely discarded

Urumchi Evening News – September 8, 2009

Original report: After incidents of pinprick attacks took place in Urumchi, the government sent medical experts from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) military medical academy head supply division. After they examined and analyzed the condition of pinprick attack victims' illnesses on September 5, they completely eliminated the possibility of infection from acute illnesses from bacteria, poisonous chemical substances, the AIDS virus, muscle toxins, or anthrax.

Possibility of spreading acute bacterial infection completely discarded

Ji Yan Jun, Director and Researcher at the PLA Medical Academy's Bio-security Office and Office for Disease Control and Prevention, said: "We systematically analyzed 217 patients reporting symptoms for treatment and accepted at the same time by the Xinjiang Medical University Hospital and Urumchi 1st Hospital, and based on systematic examinations by the Urumchi 1st Hospital and the Lanzhou Military District and Health Department, 22 patients were determined to have clear symptoms. This involved X-rays and physical examinations. Based on the current examination, we have completely eliminated the possibility of infection from acute illnesses from bacteria, poisonous chemical substances, the AIDS virus, muscle toxins, or anthrax. This is our primary conclusion. However, lab examination analysis needs to continue. Evidence and related materials have been sent to Beijing. Currently examinations are underway day and night. Examination results will be announced to public in a suitable time."

Rui Qing, a researcher at the PLA Medical Academy's Bio-security Bacterial Lab and Office for Disease Control and Prevention's Infectious Microorganism Section, said: "People infected by anthrax or contagious illnesses would have symptoms such as: first a fever, second the location of infection will be red, swollen, and burn painfully; otherwise, different types of blood tests will show changes in certain parameters or the presence of certain antigens. However, in patients who we have examined, there was no fever. All parameters were normal in different types of blood test. After the examination, we didn't detect special antigens. Therefore, we have determined that there are no contagious virus or bacteria that caused infections on the syringes that were used."

No radioactive substance detected

Yang Gao Shan, a researcher at the PLA no. 2 Medical Academy, manager of the army's radioactive defense observation center, member of the state nuclear threat management specialist group, and member of the state's special group for public health incidents said:

“I examined 30 patients at the same time who either reported pinprick attacks themselves or hospitals identified as them as victims of pinprick attacks to test for radioactivity, and also examined equipment and samples collected by PSB organs, and based on the examination, I detected no radioactive substances used in these incidents. Therefore, I believe there is no possibility people were harmed by radioactive substances.”

Unnecessary anxiety, psychological element must be controlled

Wang Han Bin, head surgeon at the PLA Medical academy-affiliated no. 307 hospital's poison center, said: “Based on the diagnosis from counseling, we have detected that most of the patients who came to the hospital for examination was due to psychological factors. This medical term is ‘psychosomatic.’ We didn’t detect any unusual symptoms of illness from most of pinprick attack patients. Certainly in some patients, there were symptoms of illness, however now their symptoms, clinical tests and physical abnormalities are very stable. Therefore, I think there is no need for public anxiety”.

Possibility of chemical poisoning eliminated

Xi Jian Wei, a researcher at the PLA Medical Academy poisons medical research center, manager of the PLA poisonous substances inspection center, and manager of the UN-designated chemical weapons testing laboratory, said: “Based on the current situation, the possibility that acutely poisonous chemical substance were used in the pinprick attacks can be completely eliminated. On the other hand, only when the amount of chemical substances is very high, could it cause any detectable degree of harm. Therefore we can definitely say that there was no use of such a large amount of chemicals. So we can mainly eliminate the possibility of harm by use of poisonous chemical substance.”

No possibility of infection from the AIDS virus

Li Ji Yun, researcher at the PLA Medical Academy's infectious disease research center and manager of PLA AIDS inspection center said: “A precondition of infection by the AIDS virus is a large amount of high density virus directly inserted into the human body. In our work process nationally, when our medical officers have treated or looked after AIDS patients during their operations, there have been situations where medical officers were stabbed with syringes containing AIDS patients' blood and they were harmed. However, none of them were infected with AIDS. Thus, we know that the possibility of infection is very low. According to the current situation of pinprick attack victims in Urumchi, no one is in this kind of situation. The marks from the pinprick attacks are very minor and shallow, and no one was stabbed by a blood-stained needle. Based on an analysis of this situation, I believe there is no possibility of infection.”

F. 45 criminal suspects of public pinprick attacks arrested

*Urumchi Evening News – September 9, 2009 * This article is undated in the archive. Based on a chronological analysis of the report, UHRP believes September 9, 2009 to be the most likely date of publication.*

Original report: Municipal PSB organs held an important special meeting on September 6 and 7, and requested to properly arrange the working process to stabilize and control the

current social situation; they demanded different organs involved in practical combat arise to this urgent situation in order to handle major problems, to observe the problems practically, allocate the maximum amount of police forces onto roads and streets, to form a powerful offensive force; they should be positioned to firmly control designated public places in every district throughout the city including parks and other public places where people gather, especially public buses, middle and primary schools and hospitals; and realize that there should be police assigned to all public buses, all public places to firmly defend against criminals and attack criminals severely.

Between September 6 at 3pm and September 7 at 3pm, the city PSB organ headquarters number “110” police report service station received 77 cases of victims harmed by pinprick attacks (among them 43 cases were reported when the pinprick attack took place). Of the reported cases 56 were female and 21 were male.

Until now, PSB organs have arrested 45 criminal suspects who harmed the public in pinprick attacks. 12 of them were stopped based on criminal cases. Arrest warrants were approved for 8 people in 4 cases, and 8 people were forcibly taken to drug rehabilitation facilities.

G. Urumchi Municipal prosecutor’s office accused 2nd round of criminal suspects in pinprick attack cases

Urumchi Evening News – September 10, 2009

Xinhua Agency, Urumchi, September 8: On September 7, the Urumchi Municipal prosecutor’s office accused 4 criminal suspects involved in a pinprick attack incident on September 3 in Urumchi’s Little West Gate district. It is the second round of criminal suspects in pinprick attack cases accused by the Urumchi municipal prosecutor.

On September 3 after 10:30, criminal suspects Abdurusul Abduqadir, Abdurahman Razaq, Abduqeyum Ayup, and Ablimit Memet followed Ms. Li as she crossed the road into an underground crossroad in the Little West Gate district, and when she passed him, Abdurusul Abduqadir stabbed a needle prepared earlier into neck with the cooperation of the other three. With assistance from the public, the four were arrested on the spot.

On September 3, Urumchi municipal PSB organs opened a criminal investigative case into them for the crime of public harm with malicious intent. On September 7, Urumchi municipal PSB organs completed investigating the case and delivered them to the prosecutor’s office. On that day, the Urumchi municipal prosecutor’s office approved the arrest of the 4 with the criminal accusation of committing a pinprick attack with a disguised, dangerous weapon. On September 7, the Urumchi municipal PSB organ arrested the 4 criminal suspects.

The Urumchi municipal Prosecutor’s office contends that the criminal suspects disobeyed national laws, stabbed a female with a needle in a public place and severely harmed public order with a serious outcome; the criminal facts are clear and criminal evidence is

complete, therefore they will be accountable for committing a public pinprick attack with a disguised, dangerous weapon.

H. Police destroyed 7 involved in pinprick attacks

Urumchi Evening News – September 17, 2009

Original report: At a press conference held by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Intelligence Agency on the afternoon of September 15, XUAR Public Security Bureau (PSB) criminal investigative organ head Huang Ya Bo and Urumchi Municipal PSB vice head Zhang Jun addressed the media regarding the status of its harsh crackdown on recent cases of pinprick attacks that were harmful to the public, and protective measures in response.

According to Huang Ya Bo's introduction, since the end of August, harmful public cases of pinprick attacks occurred one after another in Urumchi. Consequently, similar cases have occurred in other districts and have heavily damaged national unity and social stability. In order to genuinely guarantee the physical safety of the public, protect public security and maintain general social stability, XUAR PSB organs cooperated with each other in order to fight the crimes; PSB organs including those where the incidents occurred, under the guidance of the main leadership group, established a specific case group called the pinprick attack special unit, allocated well-trained police and increased the police force, and through various investigative measures, handled the pinprick attack cases similarly to other malicious criminal cases and cracked down on them. A group of criminal case experts transferred from China's inner provinces by the PSB ministry led the investigation, exposing the cases. At the same time, plainclothes security forces were allocated at main, sensitive and complicated places, public gatherings and densely populated places, they cracked down on criminals immediately as they committed the crimes, and some of those involved were arrested. PSB people's police, armed police division, and neighborhood crimewatch groups increased surveillance and protection of society. As a result of the constant hard work of the different levels of XUAR PSB organs and with public support, until now armed force soldiers and officers have arrested 75 criminal suspects and destroyed 7 criminal rings of pinprick attackers. 36 cases of pinprick attacks have been disclosed, among them 16 in Urumchi, 13 in Hoten, two in Turpan and Kashgar, and one in Sanji, Aksu and in Altay. On September 12, Urumchi Municipal Intermediate People's Court issued a first court order for 3 suspects in 2 cases. Currently the arrested suspects are under investigation.

Zhang Jun briefed on 3 typical needle-stabbing cases:

A civilian was stabbed by a needle on September 1 in front of the XUAR Tumor Hospital. PSB organs undertook an extended investigation on September 6 and 7, and detained eight criminal suspects including Tursunjan Turdi. During the PSB organ's investigation and questioning, the eight criminal suspects including Tursunjan Turdi confessed for the criminal facts that they gathered together many times and secretly planned to undertake terror activities, aiming to damage national unity in Xinjiang and incite national hatred. Under the coordination of Tursunjan Turdi, the ring stabbed Han

Chinese numerous times with needles, hooks and toothpicks both individually and in groups of two, in Yengi Sheher and Tudunghaba districts. Presently there are multiple cases of the act that have been proved.

On September 7, at around 5:30pm, the Xinjiang Armed police division head branch of patrolling officers, with the cooperation of the public, arrested three suspected pinprick attackers including Tohtihaji Nasir in Urumchi on Middle Ring Road and 17th Street, and delivered them to PSB organs on September 9. As the result of the PSB organs' investigation and questioning, the criminal suspect Tohtihaji Nasir confessed to his crime of stabbing a Han man with a syringe on September 7 at around 5:00pm around 'Bahit Road' Circle Bazar, and he was seen by public and captured. Members of the group also stabbed 2 Chinese civilians with syringes separately on September 3 and 6 on 'Jujiang Road', 'Dawan North Road'. Based on the confessions the criminal suspects made, PSB organs arrested 4 other criminal suspects in relation to the crime.

On September 12, in a supermarket in the Yumulaqtagh area, 2 Uyghur youths stabbed the left arm of Zhang Yun with a needle. After receiving the case report, the PSB organ officials reached the crime scene, checked surveillance cameras and used other tools of investigation to identify the first letters of the criminal suspects names, 'M' and 'D', then arrested them. Facing significant evidence, the 2 criminal suspects confessed that in order to destabilize society, they used unused injection syringes to stab victims. Currently three cases are under further investigation.

Zhang Jun said: "Criminals commit these crime by taking advantage of crowded places, therefore their acts are reasonably hidden. However, no matter how hidden they are, they still will be discovered. During the work process, PSB organs not only focus on their job, they also keep a close relationship with the public and find out many clues. On the other hand, under the strong Party leadership and with the assistance of experts within the PSB ministry, they have discovered malicious criminal acts using all investigative methods including high tech equipment, publicly allocating increased number of plainclothes police to all public places including streets, work places, companies, offices, trading centers and super markets, and inspecting all surveillance camera documents. As long as there is public support, party leadership and assistance from across sectors, no matter how skillful the criminals, none of them will be able to escape the punishment of the law."

Huang Ya Bo said this: "Currently, many illegal criminals continue to commit pinprick attack crimes fearless of the risks. Based on our investigation process of these cases, their criminal methods are very hidden. The victim always discovers it after the attack has been completed, which makes it difficult for PSB organs to determine where the crime happened and how to determine who committed the crime. Therefore, PSB organs plea for the public to remain alert and support PSB organs to prevent and crack down on pinprick attack crimes. PSB organs request that if any members of the public are harmed by an attack, they should immediately report it in detail to PSB organs, patrolling civil police or armed police division officers and assist PSB organs to arrest the criminal suspects in a timely manner. PSB organs will offer rewards to people who report pinprick attack cases, violence, terror cases and other similar severe crimes to PSB organs. Also

PSB organs once again officially announce that illegal offenders must stop their criminal acts and come forward to hand themselves into PSB offices or otherwise be punished severely.

Huang Ya Bo said: “On the one hand, by relying on public support, we have discovered many clues from the public. On the other hand, we have revealed the criminals’ terrible crimes by using all investigative tools and by allocating a great number of plainclothes civil police among the public to watch and also investigate using surveillance cameras placed in small and big streets, factories, professional organizations, trading centers, and supermarkets.”

Zhangjun said: “On September 11 in Urumchi, someone reported to the PSB that a person sprayed an unknown liquid onto the victim’s face. PSB organs checked the area including surveillance cameras installed around the ‘crime scene,’ however they didn’t find any proof that the ‘spraying’ incident actually happened. Later, the ‘victim’ was checked by a doctor and the doctor diagnosed that she had a false alarm because of an ‘abnormality’ in her eyes. Due to the current social situation, and because of the victim’s excessive nervousness, the victim raised a false alarm to PSB organs. Now the ‘victim’ has been treated and her eyes were normalized,” Huang Ya Bo added, “after inspecting in detail, there is no evidence suggesting an acid attack on anyone.”



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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