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Determination of the Secretary of State on Atrocities in Xinjiang

PRESS STATEMENT

MICHAEL R. POMPEO, SECRETARY OF STATE

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The United States of America has led the world in holding the perpetrators of the most heinous human rights abuses accountable. From the Nuremberg Trials, to the creation of the Genocide Convention in 1948, to the declaration of ISIS's recent genocide against the Yazidis, Christians, and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria, Americans have given voice to those who have been silenced by evil, and stood with the living who cry out for truth, the rule of law, and justice. We do so not because we are compelled to act by any international court, multilateral body, or domestic political concern. We do so because it is right.

For the past four years, this Administration has exposed the nature of the Chinese Communist Party and called it what it is: a Marxist-Leninist regime that exerts power over the long-suffering Chinese people through brainwashing and brute force. We have paid particular attention to the CCP's treatment of the Uyghur people, a Muslim minority group that resides largely in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Western China. While the CCP has always exhibited a profound hostility to all people of faith, we have watched with growing alarm the Party's

increasingly repressive treatment of the Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups.

Our exhaustive documentation of the PRC's actions in Xinjiang confirms that since at least March 2017, local authorities dramatically escalated their decades-long campaign of repression against Uyghur Muslims and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, including ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Kyrgyz. Their morally repugnant, wholesale policies, practices, and abuses are designed systematically to discriminate against and surveil ethnic Uyghurs as a unique demographic and ethnic group, restrict their freedom to travel, emigrate, and attend schools, and deny other basic human rights of assembly, speech, and worship. PRC authorities have conducted forced sterilizations and abortions on Uyghur women, coerced them to marry non-Uyghurs, and separated Uyghur children from their families.

Party apparatchiks have denied international observers unhindered access to Xinjiang and denounced reliable reports about the worsening situation on the ground, instead spinning fanciful tales of happy Uyghurs participating in educational, counter-terror, women's empowerment, and poverty alleviation projects. Meanwhile, they are delivering far darker messages to their own people, portraying Uyghurs as "malignant tumors," comparing their faith to a "communicable plague," and exhorting the Party faithful to implement a crushing blow, telling them "you can't uproot all the weeds hidden among the crops in the field one-by-one; you need to spray chemicals to kill them all."

Since the Allied forces exposed the horrors of Nazi concentration camps, the refrain "Never again" has become the civilized world's rallying cry against these horrors. Just because an atrocity is perpetrated in a manner that is different than what we have observed in the past, does not make it any less an atrocity. Today, I thus make the following determinations:

1. After careful examination of the available facts, I have determined that since at least March 2017, the People's Republic of China (PRC), under the direction and control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), has committed crimes against humanity against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other members of ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes are ongoing and include: the **arbitrary imprisonment** or other severe deprivation of physical liberty of **more than one million civilians**, forced sterilization, **torture** of a large number of those arbitrarily detained, **forced labor**, and the imposition of **draconian restrictions on freedom of religion** or belief, **freedom of expression**, and **freedom of movement**. The Nuremberg Tribunals at the end of World War II prosecuted perpetrators for crimes against humanity, the same crimes being perpetrated in Xinjiang.

2. In addition, after careful examination of the available facts, I have determined that the PRC, under the direction and control of the CCP, has committed genocide against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. I believe this genocide is ongoing, and that we are witnessing the systematic attempt to destroy Uyghurs by the Chinese party-state. The governing authorities of the second most economically, militarily, and politically powerful country on earth have made clear that they are engaged in the forced assimilation and eventual erasure of a vulnerable ethnic and religious minority group, even as they simultaneously assert their country as a global leader and attempt to remold the international system in their image.

The United States calls upon the PRC immediately to release all arbitrarily detained persons and abolish its system of internment, detention camps, house arrest and forced labor; cease coercive population control measures, including forced sterilizations, forced abortion, forced birth control, and the removal of children from their families; end all torture and abuse in places of detention; end the persecution of Uyghurs and other members of religious and ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China, and afford Uyghurs and other persecuted minorities the freedom to travel and emigrate.

We further call on all appropriate multilateral and relevant juridical bodies, to join the United States in our effort to promote accountability for those responsible for these atrocities. I have directed the U.S. Department of State to continue to investigate and collect relevant information regarding the ongoing atrocities occurring in Xinjiang, and to make this evidence available to appropriate authorities and the international community to the extent allowable by law. The United States, on its part, has spoken out and taken action, implementing a range of sanctions against senior CCP leaders and state-run enterprises that fund the architecture of repression across Xinjiang.

The United States has worked exhaustively to pull into the light what the Communist Party and General Secretary Xi Jinping wish to keep hidden through obfuscation, propaganda, and coercion. Beijing's atrocities in Xinjiang represent an extreme affront to the Uyghurs, the people of China, and civilized people everywhere. We will not remain silent. If the Chinese Communist Party is allowed to commit genocide and crimes against humanity against its own people, imagine what it will be emboldened to do to the free world, in the not-so-distant future.

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