

“The Genocide in the Shadow”

China previously would not admit that it has established concentration camps in East Turkistan. After the UN in 2018 announcement that at least one million people were being held in the concentration camps in East Turkestan, China had to admit the existence of the camps and claimed that these camps were “vocational training” camps. However, what the camp survivors tell clearly reveals that those are not training camps but Nazi-style concentration camps. According to the reports from International independent organizations, more than 1400 concentration camps are located in East Turkistan. In the White Papers published by China in 2020, it is recorded that more than 1.3 million people were "educated" annually from 2013 to 2019. From the leaked documents in China, not only those who were blacklisted by China were taken into concentration camps but their family members and relatives as well. Considering this fact, it is evident that anyone that is blacklisted was either taken to a concentration camp or sentenced to imprisonment after 2013. Therefore, it is undeniable that at least 8 million people were sent to concentration camps and isolated.

There is no doubt that China is subjecting people of East Turkestan to slave labor, systematic rape and sterilization of women in concentration camps, separation of children from their families, deportation of targeted people to other parts of China, and mass murder are completely contrary to the UN convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. The Canadian and Dutch parliaments and the American government announced that China is committing the crime of genocide in East Turkistan.

China conducts many propaganda activities in order to hide and cover up this whole crime of genocide. Taking the domestic media under strict control, China continues its smear campaigns using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, even though they are all prohibited in China. It is well-known media outlets that are making propaganda are controlled by the Chinese government and are in a systematic work with many subsidiaries.

For example, CGTN, manufacture propaganda outside China on behalf of the Communist Party of China. CGTN is a propaganda organization that broadcasts on social media in more than ten languages including English, Arabic, French, Arabic, Spanish and Russian. The number of

subscribers of all CGTN channels is over 4 million in total. CGTN has published many documentaries and interview videos about East Turkistan and Uyghurs. It is very obvious from all the contents that they are making is an intense effort to cover up the genocide in East Turkistan. Famous people of "Muslim" origin living in the USA and Europe have also participated in the propaganda campaign of China through this channel.

The movie "The War in The Shadows" is released on the CGTN's YouTube channel on April 02nd, 2021, is a propaganda film to justify China's genocide in East Turkistan. However, in this propaganda film, China accused the people of East Turkestan on four grounds and tried to justify their evil practices.

In the film, China portrays the Uyghur Turks as terrorists; showing some violent incidents that took place in East Turkistan. The film aims to make a perception by showing Chinese victims who died in the events as an example, and yet they did not mention the people of East Turkestan that have been killed by the Chinese government since 1949. Also, after China invaded East Turkistan in 1949, the Chinese government arrested and killed many East Turkistan citizens under the name of the anti-revolutionary, bourgeoisie, and local nationalists. The CCP also executed hundreds of thousands of people in the cultural genocide carried out between 1967-1977, and many more died of starvation. It has crushed all the uprisings that took place against the increased religious and ethnic pressures after the 1980s with extreme methods. The number of East Turkistan people who lost their lives from nuclear tests in East Turkistan between 1964-1996 exceeded 750,000. This does not include the number of East Turkestan people killed by the armed forces of China at Barin in 1990, Gulja in 1997, Urumqi in 2009, and Yarkand in 2014. Using the family planning law, which is implemented since 1986, many Uyghur babies were taken from their mother's wombs and killed. Yet trains carrying immigrants from mainland China to East Turkistan did not stop even for a day. Since the 2000s, women from rural parts of East Turkestan have been forcibly transported to the interior of China and many of them had disappeared. With the concentration camps implemented since 2017, the policy of execution and destruction of Uyghurs continues unabated.

In this propaganda film, China states that people were sentenced to more than 10 years in prison for watching the video containing extremism and radicalism and that they are being “educated to change their minds”. In the film, as a result of China's "education," a Muslim Uyghur woman named Alimire denies religion and says that paradise is a fabricated fantasy. Another prisoner, rejecting the stories in the Quran and other heavenly books, made fun of the holy religions and scapegoat the Islam religion.

In the Hotan region, where the population ratio of Uyghurs against the Chinese is the highest, this propaganda film depicts the Chinese as the largest victim of terrorism. Yet, in reality, Hotan is the region where the violence of the genocide is most heavily felt. It is a fact that the rate of ethnic Han Chinese in Hotan was 2.66% before 2017 which is an issue that bothered China’s CCP the most. China placed Hotan under the highest pressure for the rapid Chinazation of the region. Hotan is also the region where concentration camps are most intensely established in East Turkistan.

The propaganda film also claimed that the Ababakri brothers were members of TIP and that they contacted the aforementioned organization through Tahir Abbas who lived in Egypt, and they sent more than 60 children between the ages of 14-18 to the organization for training. We asked the relatives of the Abubakri brothers who are now residing in Turkey. Abubakri claims that those are all lies and slanders by China, that their father was a rich businessman in the region. Members of The East Turkestan Human Rights Watch Association visited Tahir Abbas, whom China brought the accusations against, and asked him about those allegations, Tahir Abbas stated that he did not recognize Shirzat Bawdun, who was mentioned in the Chinese propaganda film and said he learned about that name for the first time from that film. He also stated the claim that he received 1.2 million Yuan from Abubakri brothers is a lie and none of them are members of the TIP.

East Turkestan academics and intellectuals were among those targeted during the mass arrest in 2017. However, in this propaganda film, severe accusations were made against 5 academics, especially Yalkun Rozi, a very famous Uyghur academic. The film claimed that separatist and extremist ideologies were concealed in Rozi’s textbooks published in 2003 and 2009. It is clear that the only reason why the textbooks that were allowed to be printed with close scrutiny in 2003

and 2009 are now deemed problematic is because the Chinese administration is only trying to find excuses for its genocidal acts. Putting a popular photo of Ahmet Can Kasimi, who was promoted as a hero by the Chinese administration for decades, on the same page with Atatürk did not pose any problem in 2009, but after 2017, it constitutes a crime of separatism. The sole purpose of this attack is to destroy the intellectuals what is a part of the genocide and banning not only the textbooks but all the education in Uyghur language at once. They claimed that all so-called “problematic” textbooks are now published in Chinese and “normalized” with figures and ideology of Chinese culture.

In the Chinese propaganda film, it is worth noting that the word Uyghur and terrorists are used side by side at regular intervals. However, they did not explain the reasons why ISIS propaganda was carried out comfortably for years in crowded environments. From 2013 to 2015, while normal religious practices were under heavy pressure, that intense ISIS propaganda was intensely carried out in East Turkistan. As the witnesses have stated, it is another well-known fact that China has carried out numerous intelligence activities aimed at directing Uyghurs to Afghanistan since the 2000s. Moreover, since 2012, the Chinese government has tried all means to direct the Uyghurs to Syria. Terrorism is just an excuse, China even locked up people in concentration people for being born in the 1980s and 1990s.

China continues to seek ways to cover up these illegal practices and conduct smear campaigns through the media to justify their heinous crimes. However, many countries have realized that the genocide in East Turkistan is a humanitarian issue. In order to stop the genocide, International organizations and people of conscience ought not to remain silent against such smear campaigns by China, but to act consciously and responsibly. Keeping the human conscience alive against Chinese propaganda is the biggest shield against China’s genocide.

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East Turkistan Human Rights Watch Association