



Living on the Margins:

The Chinese State's Demolition of Uyghur Communities

A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project

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Executive Summary

This report documents the Chinese state's top-down destruction of Uyghur communities in Kashgar and throughout East Turkestan, in a targeted and highly politicized push that Chinese officials have accelerated in the wake of turbulent unrest in the region in 2009. The destruction of Uyghur neighborhoods has resulted in the loss of both physical structures, including Uyghur homes, shops and religious sites, and patterns of traditional Uyghur life that cannot be replicated in the new, heavily-monitored apartment blocks where many have been forcibly relocated. This report does not discount the importance of providing modern structural amenities to Uyghurs. However, it asserts a failure on the part of Chinese authorities to engage in meaningful consultation with Uyghurs regarding how they wish to transform their own communities. The report details the international and domestic legal instruments to which the Chinese government is bound that are designed to protect residents from forcible eviction from their homes and ensure that indigenous populations, such as the Uyghurs, have the right to develop according to their own principles.

The campaigns underway to tear down Uyghur neighborhoods in East Turkestan and replace them with spaces resonant of eastern China, which Chinese leaders have labeled as development, have been implemented by Chinese officials alongside assimilative programs that remove Uyghurs' rights to speak and use their own language, practice their religious beliefs, and express themselves through art, literature and the media. State repression of these aspects of Uyghurs' unique culture epitomize Chinese officials' attempts to weaken Uyghurs' connections with their traditional customs. Chinese leaders' success at assimilating Uyghurs into a Han Chinese physical and social structure has come from a lack of consultation with Uyghurs themselves as to how they would like development to proceed. Without the consent of Uyghurs to demolition and resettlement projects, the legitimacy of stated aims to create "peace and prosperity" through the projects is called into question.

Uyghurs view Kashgar, a center of Silk Road activity memorialized in Marco Polo's travels, as the spiritual heart of their culture, a cradle of Uyghur civilization that is fundamental to their Uyghur identity. Once seen as one of the best-preserved traditional Islamic cities in the world, Kashgar's Old City is undergoing a transformation that represents an irreplaceable loss of heritage to Uyghurs and to the international community. Without any role in the decision-making process, many Uyghurs view the transformation of Kashgar and its re-creation into a Chinese city as the latest official step in removing Uyghurs' identity and integrating the region into China.

In their rush to modernization, Chinese leaders have shown similar disregard to the structures embodying Chinese heritage throughout the People's Republic of China (PRC), and to the discontent expressed by Chinese residents regarding their destruction. However, the official disregard of the value of Kashgar and other historically Uyghur areas is accompanied by ethnic and political dimensions unique to the demolitions taking place there. This report builds a case that "development" projects in East Turkestan's Uyghur neighborhoods entail the physical destruction of Uyghur cities and towns; and equal the comprehensive assimilation of Uyghur people into the fabric of broader Chinese society and culture. The report asserts that the scope and centrally-directed nature of the projects across the region illustrates the highly politicized character of this assimilative process.

Background

Many cultures are under pressure to survive due to the homogenizing effects of globalization; however, the Uyghur people face an additional existential threat to their identity from processes that have been deliberately imposed. The foundation of Uyghur cultural disappearance is traceable through a history of repressive and assimilative policies enforced by the government of the PRC. Exclusionary language planning, religious repression, restrictions on artistic expression and the exclusion of Uyghurs from decision-making processes are well documented. This targeting of all aspects of public and private expressions of Uyghur culture forms the core of a concerted effort to dilute the maintenance of a distinct Uyghur identity.

Chinese government officials and Chinese official media often portray the cornerstones of Uyghur culture as backward. The language of “development” is often invoked in speeches or news articles to justify state interventions into Uyghur cultural practices.¹ Coercive and patronizing policies toward Uyghur cultural life underscore the lack of value the Chinese party-state maintains toward Uyghur identity. Those policies pressure Uyghurs to abandon their attachments to Uyghur culture in order to assimilate with the dominant, and overwhelmingly Han Chinese, culture of the PRC. In such an environment, Uyghurs are compelled to choose: assimilate and possibly, though not necessarily, increase their economic opportunities; or maintain their Uyghur identity and face economic discrimination and official suspicion. Regional officials have publicly commented that resistance to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) policies is considered an expression of “separatism” or “extremism.”²

Uyghur cultural life and identity in East Turkestan has experienced considerable strain since the CCP takeover of the region in 1949. In the purges of Uyghur intellectuals during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of the late 1950’s and the destruction and desecration of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the CCP persecuted countless Uyghurs, along with millions of other victims in the PRC at large.³

Uyghurs were additionally subjected to campaigns aimed at diluting their distinct identity during the formative years of the PRC. For example, in the early sixties, the Chinese Communist administration instigated a forced resettlement policy with the goals of dispersing concentrations of Uyghurs and of isolating Uyghur families from their local communities.⁴ According to scholar Michael Friederich, “[t]he early 1960s were a turning point...in Uyghur life in general. From this time onward, until the present, the

¹ Human Rights in China. (2007). *Uyghur Culture Faced with Endless Campaigns*. Retrieved from http://hrichina.org/sites/default/files/oldsite/PDFs/CRF.4.2007/CRF-2007-4_Uyghur.pdf.

² Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Devastating Blows*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

³ Millward, J. (2007). *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁴ For a personal reflection on relocation policies see: Kadeer, R. (2009). *Dragon Fighter: One Woman’s Epic Struggle for Peace with China*. Kales Press.

Chinese government has pursued a policy of isolating the Uyghurs and changing their traditional westward orientation, with the ultimate aim of incorporating them into a Han-dominated China.”⁵

In the contemporary era, official approaches have largely evolved from the chaotic destruction of material and nonmaterial aspects of cultural expression to policies that attempt to assimilate Uyghurs into an unfamiliar cultural milieu. The public performances of “traditional” Uyghur culture that the Chinese government does permit are completely devoid of the cultural, often religious, contexts that were the original creative inspiration. Officially sanctioned performances reinforce government narratives that shape Uyghur identity in the modern Chinese state and reveal how Chinese officials are attempting to place carefully selected aspects of Uyghur culture into a larger and binding CCP-controlled national identity. In the popular Chinese imagination, the permissible pieces of Uyghur artistic expression often fuel the stereotype that Uyghurs are “good at singing and dancing,”⁶ which, along with “Islamic terrorist” imagery, remains one of the most common perceptions of Uyghurs.

“Transformigration”

Since the CCP takeover, East Turkestan has seen a dramatic transformation in regional demographics. In 1953, according to a PRC census, the region was comprised of 75% Uyghur and 6% Han Chinese.⁷ In the latest available census figures, Uyghurs account for 45% of the regional population and Han 41%.⁸ This remarkable shift has been possible through deliberate state policies aimed at encouraging Han Chinese migration and it has consolidated the Chinese government’s presence in East Turkestan and pressured Uyghurs into cultural assimilation.⁹ In the *longue durée*, the diminishing Uyghur majority in East Turkestan due to Han migration--both forced and incentivized by the CCP--over the past century follows a Qing Dynasty policy of absorbing border regions into the Chinese polity.”¹⁰

⁵ Friederich, M. (2007). Uyghur Literary Representations of Xinjiang Realities. In I. Bellér-Hann et al eds. *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

⁶ Tianshan Net. (2008, January 11). *The Charms of Singing and Dancing*. Retrieved from http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/topic/content/2008-01/11/content_2389626.htm.

⁷ Toops, S.W. (2004). *Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bovingdon, G. (2004). *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*. Retrieved from www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS011.pdf.

¹⁰ Hann, C. (2011). *Smith in Beijing, Stalin in Urumchi: Ethnicity, political economy, and violence in Xinjiang, 1759 – 2009*. *Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, No. 60, pp. 108 - 123.

The dramatic increase in numbers of Han Chinese has changed the economic, social, cultural and political landscape of East Turkestan. The foundations of Uyghur culture that existed prior to the 1949 CCP takeover have been undermined and largely replaced by the institutions and society imposed on the region to support these influxes of Han Chinese migrants. According to CCP convention in the region, a Han Chinese holds the most powerful political post of Party Secretary. This convention filters down to the Party Secretary posts in the various political sub-units that make up the local administration of the region.¹¹ In their homeland, Uyghurs have been, in effect, excluded from the executive decision-making that affects their lives and communities.



Train brings Han migrant workers from Lanzhou to Urumchi. ©Xinhua

The massive influx of Han Chinese settlers and migrants into autonomous areas, and their dominance of the public sphere, has made it hard for minorities to preserve their distinct cultural identities. Through literature and practice, the PRC regularly exoticizes minorities, thereby portraying them as ‘backwards’ and in need of ‘modernization’. This leads to integrationist policies, implemented alongside minorities’ political and economic exclusion, that have the practical effect, if not the primary aim, of assimilating minorities into the dominant culture, which has been imported to these areas with the influx of Han Chinese settlers.

¹¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2005). *Annual Report, III. Monitoring Compliance with Human Rights, III(a) Special Focus for 2005: China’s Minorities and Government Implementation of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law*. Retrieved from http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3a_minorities.php.

*These policies are being implemented alongside systematic violations of minorities' civil and political rights.*¹²

Sinification (the process of cultural and linguistic assimilation into China) of East Turkestan has accompanied this demographic shift and institutional restructuring. Managed by the CCP, Sinification has permeated all aspects of East Turkestan society, from the economy to the culture. With an increased presence of Han Chinese settlers and of the Chinese state, competition for economic resources has sharpened. In this environment, Uyghurs often find themselves at a disadvantage, especially in finding meaningful employment.¹³ State investment patterns that favor Han Chinese economic activity have exacerbated economic discrimination against the Uyghur.¹⁴ The central government continues to encourage Han migration to East Turkestan through economic incentives such as employment opportunities and housing.¹⁵

The demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods is a physical manifestation of the CCP takeover of Uyghur society and cultural life. While the intangible aspects of society in East Turkestan have become more Han Chinese friendly, the demolitions are set to transform East Turkestan's physical appearance into one that is indistinguishable from eastern China. This process seems inevitable given the numbers of Han Chinese in the region, but the new development projects mirroring cities in eastern China are likely to further encourage the migration of Han Chinese to East Turkestan.

This model has been successfully pursued in the regional capital of Urumchi. Data from the 2000 census shows that Han Chinese constituted over 75% of the total population of the regional capital and economic hub of Urumchi, as opposed to 20% in 1949.¹⁶ The change in demography in Urumchi has been accompanied by an architectural transformation in the past two decades that has relegated any defining Uyghur character to the margins. Cities such as Urumchi represent the future for cities in the south of the region, such as Kashgar.

In the past, Han Chinese migration followed patterns that were not designed for such long-term settlement. Political exile, a government posting or a short-term opportunity in

¹² Human Rights in China and Minority Rights Group International. (2007). *China: Minority Exclusion, Marginalization and Rising Tensions*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrichina.org/content/4081>.

¹³ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2011). *Job Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities Continues in Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=156107>.

¹⁴ Szadziewski, H. (2011). *Commanding the Economy: The Recurring Patterns of Chinese Central Government Development Planning among Uyghurs in Xinjiang*. Inner Asia, Vol. 13. No. 1, pp. 97-116.

¹⁵ Bequelin, N. (2004). *Staged Development in Xinjiang*. The China Quarterly, 178, pp. 358-378.

¹⁶ Toops, S.W. (2004). The Demography of Xinjiang. In S.F. Starr ed. *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. New York: M.E. Sharpe. and Toops, S.W. (2004). Demographics and Development in Xinjiang after 1949. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/demographics-and-development-xinjiang-after-1949>.

what was considered a region far from the Chinese heartland characterized previous migration patterns. During the Qing dynasty, new settlers in East Turkestan built 'Chinese' parts of the city that were often set far apart from Uyghur-inhabited areas and were architecturally consistent with eastern China. The *xinshiqu* (new towns) consisted of the administrative apparatus needed to control the newly-conquered border region of East Turkestan. Uyghur neighborhoods during this era often retained their distinct characteristics.¹⁷ However, the recent accelerated bulldozing and reconstruction of Uyghur neighborhoods has begun the process of homogenizing the city's architecture into Chinese styles.

The following analysis takes an overview of aspects of Uyghur cultural life and identity that have been placed under pressure by Chinese government policies.

Language planning

In a monograph titled *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*, Arienne Dwyer states "language and religion are valued by most ordinary Uyghurs as central aspects of their identity."¹⁸

In contrast, Chinese officials often portray the Uyghur language and the Uyghur belief in Islam as impediments to the "development" of the Uyghur people.¹⁹ In 2002, former Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Party Secretary Wang Lequan made the following comment:

*The languages of the minority nationalities have very small capacities and do not contain many of the expressions in modern science and technology, which makes education in these concepts impossible. This is out of step with the 21st Century.*²⁰

Current XUAR Chairman Nur Bekri is quoted in a 2009 *China Daily* article:

*Terrorists from neighboring countries mainly target Uyghurs [Uyghurs] that are relatively isolated from mainstream society as they cannot speak Mandarin. They are then tricked into terrorist activities.*²¹

¹⁷ Millward, J. (1998). *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Xinjiang, 1759-1864*. Stanford University Press.

¹⁸ Dwyer, A.M. (2005). *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS015.pdf>.

¹⁹ Bequelin, N. (2004). Criminalizing Ethnicity: Political Repression in Xinjiang. *China Rights Forum*, 1, 7. Retrieved from http://hrichina.org/sites/default/files/oldsite/PDFs/CRF.1.2004/b1_Criminalizing1.2004.pdf.

²⁰ Quoted in Millward, J. (2007). *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press.

²¹ China Daily. (2009, June 5). *Mandarin Lessons 'Help Fight Terror'*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/indy/2009-06/05/content_8250623.htm.

Both statements are emblematic of perceptions of Uyghurs as either backward or threats to state security. In the case of Nur Bekri's comments, the net of suspicion is cast over all Uyghurs who only speak their native language.



Young Uyghur students taught Mandarin at “bilingual” kindergarten in Urumchi. ©Xinhua

Statements by CCP officials that denigrate and stigmatize the status of the Uyghur language are reflected in state educational policies. Since 2002, the Chinese government has with rising intensity implemented a “bilingual” language policy in East Turkestan’s schools and universities that has virtually succeeded in eliminating Uyghur as a language of instruction. The policy is designed to transition Uyghur students from education in their mother tongue to education in Chinese. The ultimate goal of “bilingual” education appears to be to replace Uyghur-language instruction with Chinese-language instruction in all areas of East Turkestan.

Bilingual education classes in East Turkestan grew from 5,533 students in 1995 to 294,000 in 2007, and the number of schools offering “bilingual” classes grew from 220 in 1995 to 8,788 in 2007.²² According to official media, the number of children in East Turkestan who receive “bilingual” teaching reached 994,300 students out of a total of 2.36 million non-Han students enrolled in the region’s preschool, primary and secondary schools as of June 2010.²³ According to the 10-year plan issued by the regional government, apparently accounting for a projected increase in the non-Han population,

²² Reger, A. (2009). *Human Rights in Xinjiang: Recent Developments, Prepared Statement of Amy Reger*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg48222/html/CHRG-111shrg48222.htm>.

²³ Reger, A. (2011). *The Uyghur perspective: The missing link in Chinese authorities’ implementation of the “bilingual” language policy in Xinjiang*. Unpublished paper.

there will be more than 2.6 million students enrolled in “bilingual” education in East Turkestan by the year 2020.²⁴

In addition to the “bilingual” policy being carried out in East Turkestan, “Xinjiang classes” have been instituted since 1997. Under the program, top Uyghur and other “ethnic minority” students are sent to high schools in large cities in eastern China, where they receive Chinese-language instruction as well as immersion in Chinese culture.

According to government statistics, as of November 2010, Xinjiang classes were hosted at 66 schools in 36 cities, an increase of 14 schools and seven cities since May 2010.²⁵ Official media reported that 22,000 students from Xinjiang were enrolled in Xinjiang classes in eastern China in fall 2010, marking an increase of 2,000 over the previous year.²⁶ These figures increased in the wake of a campaign launched at the May 2010 Xinjiang Work Forum to expand the Xinjiang classes program.²⁷

The effect of these policies has yet to be determined in terms of Uyghur children’s ability to communicate fluently in the Uyghur language; however, with education solely conducted in Mandarin Chinese, the eventuality remains that a new generation of Uyghurs will be cut off from the linguistic underpinning of their ethnicity.

Religious expression

*At its most extreme, peaceful activists who practice their religion in a manner deemed unacceptable by state authorities or Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials are arrested, tortured, and at times executed...independent religious activity or dissent is at times arbitrarily equated with a breach of state security, a serious crime in China and one that is frequently prosecuted.*²⁸

Human Rights Watch made this observation in its 2005 report *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*. Since 2005, the situation has deteriorated. PRC officials have increasingly used Uyghurs’ belief in Islam to portray them as fundamentalists and terrorists, allowing them to suppress peaceful Uyghur dissent without international condemnation. “Religious extremism” has been placed alongside “separatism” and “terrorism” as one of the so-called “three evil forces.”²⁹

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Devastating Blows*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

²⁹ Amnesty International. (2002). *China’s Anti-Terrorism Legislation and Repression in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/010/2002>.

On a day-to-day level, the state administration places tight constraints on religious freedoms in East Turkestan. Imams are required to attend annual political education classes to ensure that they “stand on the side of government firmly and express their viewpoints unambiguously;”³⁰ only officially-approved versions of sermons and the Koran are permitted,³¹ all unapproved religious texts treated as illegal publications liable to confiscation, and those possessing such texts may face criminal prosecution; any outward expression of faith in government workplaces, such as men wearing beards or women wearing headscarves, is forbidden; and no one under the age of 18 can enter a mosque. In addition, Uyghurs are not permitted to undertake Hajj, unless it is with an expensive official tour, in which applicants are carefully vetted for their “obedience to the law.”³² Confiscations of passports, to the point where very few Uyghurs have passports, ensures adherence to the official tours only policy, and also restricts international travel in general.

The control of religious activity permeates to even the most basic and personal actions of Uyghurs during sensitive times on the religious calendar. A Uyghur who spoke to the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) stated that at his university in Urumchi, fasting at the holy month of Ramadan was forbidden.³³ Uyghur students at the university had to prove that they were not fasting by eating meals during the daytime in public canteens on campus. The interviewee added that college authorities monitor if lights in students’ dormitory rooms go on in the early morning to determine whether students are getting up early to eat before the Ramadan fast begins. The interviewee also described how he was not permitted to pray in his dormitory at any time or go to the mosque on the Muslim Holy Day of Friday.

Local governments in the region have publicized measures to politically train or regulate the activities of Uyghur female religious figures (known as *buwi* in Uyghur). In December 2008, the Xinjiang People’s Political Consultative Conference set forth a proposal, initiated by the Vice Chairwoman of the Xinjiang Women’s Federation, on bringing *buwi* under government and party management. The proposal states, among other things, that *buwi* have existed in a “no-man’s land” without state oversight, and calls for using these women’s social status to spread the CCP’s religious and ethnic policies among Muslim women.³⁴

The majority of the Uyghur population believes in a moderate form of Sunni Islam, while

³⁰ Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Devastating Blows*. Retrieved from <http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/Reports/HRIC-HRW-Xinjiang.pdf>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The Hindu. (2011, October 29). *China’s Uighur Muslims Yearn for Liberal Hajj Regime*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2580392.ece>.

³³ Interview with Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), 2011.

³⁴ Radio Free Asia. (2009, August 21). *Asking for Justice*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/women/uyghur-women-08202009140517.html>.

others lead predominantly secular lives; however, regardless of the extent of their religious beliefs, many Uyghurs consider Islam as integral to their cultural identity. Chinese state policies that suppress the freedom to exercise this aspect of their culture are considered a direct affront to Uyghur culture.

*For most Uighurs the paramount issue is not religion per se, but the perceived threat that religious repression poses to their distinct identity coupled with their acute feeling of being colonized. They view the tight restrictions placed by the Chinese authorities on Uighur Islam as an attempt to debase their very identity, as Islam is an essential component of their traditional identity and culture.*³⁵

Artistic expression through the written word

Present PRC policies do not allow for the free study and transmission of Uyghur history and artistic expression, as these are firmly controlled by the government, and individuals who do not follow the government's lead in these areas are punished. Opinions that diverge from official views are often considered "splittist" and prosecuted as "endangering state security."

The level of concern over the potential for "splittist" opinion circulating in East Turkestan through written expression were revealed on a number of occasions in 2002. Human Rights Watch reported:

*In January 2002, pressure to follow the official ideological line was explicitly extended to include artists, writers, performers, and historians, among others, when Abulahat Abdurishit, the region's chairman, made clear that 'all who openly advocate separatism using the name of art' would be purged.*³⁶

Amnesty International reported that in this campaign, "[o]fficial sources made clear that the 'struggle against separatism' is wide-ranging and encompasses repressing all potential dissent and opposition activities, including the peaceful expression of views via poems, songs, books, pamphlets, letters, or the Internet."³⁷

In February 2002, Communist Party Secretary Wang Lequan described forms of "infiltration and sabotage" in the "ideological field." These included, "[u]sing ... works of literature and art performances to ... disseminate dissatisfaction and propagate separatist thought," as well as "[u]sing popular cultural activities to make the masses

³⁵ Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Devastating Blows*. Retrieved from <http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/Reports/HRIC-HRW-Xinjiang.pdf>.

³⁶ Quoted in Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, October 5). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Uyghurs of East Turkestan (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or XUAR, People's Republic of China)*. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/UNDRIP10-2-09.pdf>.

³⁷ Amnesty International. (2002). *China's Anti-Terrorism Legislation and Repression in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/010/2002>.

receptive to reactionary propaganda encouraging opposition.”³⁸

Also in 2002, XUAR officials closed down 52 out of 118 state-controlled publications due to the “sensitive nature of their content,” following an announced crackdown.³⁹ In June 2002, Kashgar authorities conducted a massive public book burning, during which “tens of thousands” of Uyghur books were reportedly destroyed.⁴⁰ The *Kashgar Daily* reported that the Kashgar Uyghur Publishing House also censored more than 330 books and stopped the publication of other books viewed as sensitive. According to eyewitness accounts, books collected from a local Uyghur high school were dumped in a pile and burned.⁴¹

Chinese authorities have targeted a number of Uyghur writers for unacceptable content in their work. XUAR Chairman Ismail Tiliwaldi criticized Tursunjan Emet for a poem he recited at a New Year’s event in Urumchi in January 2002. According to one account of the recital: “[Emet] expressed the popular negative attitudes towards government policies in a symbolic form. The Uighurs expressed their support with big applause whereas the Chinese officials were clearly unhappy about this happening.”

The recital was described by Tiliwaldi as “...a brazen reactionary poem explicitly attacking the reality of society, and which instigated minority revenge, encouraged minority splittist thought, damaged the unity of the minorities and damaged social stability, creating an especially serious political influence upon society.” Tiliwaldi continued, “This shows that ethnic splittists have weapons in one hand, and culture in the other. They not only use violence to oppose us, they also contest us in the realm of ideology.”⁴²

Nurmemet Yasin, a Uyghur writer, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2005 for writing *Wild Pigeon*, an allegory about a pigeon that commits suicide because it is unable to escape its cage. Shortly after Yasin’s story was published in the *Kashgar Literature Journal* in late 2004, he was accused of inciting separatism and arrested by Kashgar police. Police also confiscated his computer, which contained 1,600 poems,

³⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2005, September 29). *China Celebrates, Uyghurs Mourn – Human Rights Violations and the 50th Anniversary of the XUAR*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/old/articles/93/1/China-Celebrates-Uyghurs-Mourn--Human-Rights-Violations-and-the-50th-Anniversary-of-the-XUAR/China-Celebrates-Uyghurs-Mourn--Human-Rights-Violations-and-the-50th-Anniversary-of-the-XUAR.html>.

³⁹ Bequelin, N. (2004). Criminalizing Ethnicity: Political Repression in Xinjiang. *China Rights Forum*, 1, 7. Retrieved from hrchina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2004/b1_Criminalizing1.2004.pdf.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2005, September 29). *China Celebrates, Uyghurs Mourn – Human Rights Violations and the 50th Anniversary of the XUAR*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/old/articles/93/1/China-Celebrates-Uyghurs-Mourn--Human-Rights-Violations-and-the-50th-Anniversary-of-the-XUAR/China-Celebrates-Uyghurs-Mourn--Human-Rights-Violations-and-the-50th-Anniversary-of-the-XUAR.html>.

commentaries, and stories, as well as an unfinished novel. In late 2005, Kuresh Huseyin, chief editor of the *Kashgar Literature Journal*, was sentenced to three years for publishing *Wild Pigeon*.⁴³



Nurmemet Yasin. ©Kempis Poetry Magazine

Uyghur historian Tohti Tunyaz was charged with “providing secret information to foreigners” and sentenced to 11 years in prison following an appeal in 2000. His “crime” was conducting academic research on Uyghur history for his PhD studies in Japan.⁴⁴

Limitations placed on the freedom of written expression were most notable after the outbreak of unrest in the regional capital of Urumchi in July 2009. The Chinese government shut down Internet connections and international phone calls on the night of the July 5 unrest, and only restored “full” communications after 10 months in May 2010.

In 2010, Chinese authorities moved to punish Uyghur webmasters and journalists for their alleged involvement in the July 2009 unrest through a series of harsh sentences. Memetjan Abdulla, a former editor at China National Radio and a manager of the website Salkin, is one of two Uyghur journalists reportedly sentenced to life in prison in 2010.⁴⁵

⁴³ Radio Free Asia. (2005, November 11). *China Court Jails Uyghur Editor for Publishing Veiled Dissent*. Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_kashgar-20051110.html.

⁴⁴ PEN American Center (Unknown). *China/Uighur Autonomous Region: Tohti Tunyaz*. Retrieved from <http://www.pen.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/777/prmID/172>.

⁴⁵ Radio Free Asia. (2010, December 21). *Uyghur Journalist Handed Life Term*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/journalist-12212010162519.html>.

The other journalist, 32-year-old Gulmire Imin, was reportedly sentenced at the same time. Imin was invited to become an administrator for Salkin after having published a number of poems on various Uyghur websites.⁴⁶

Imin was arrested on July 14, 2009, but her family did not receive any official documents regarding her detention. On April 1, 2010, she was sentenced to life in prison for the crimes of “revealing state secrets, illegally organizing a demonstration, and splittism.” Imin was sentenced on the same day as being tried in a closed proceeding, and her husband in Norway was able to publicize the news of her life sentence. Abdulla, who was charged with helping to instigate ethnic rioting, was reportedly also sentenced after a closed trial. News of his trial and punishment reached the public only through an anonymous letter from a friend.⁴⁷



Gheyret Niyaz. ©Uyghurbiz.net

Uyghur journalist Gheyret Niyaz was sentenced to 10 years in prison in July 2010 for endangering state security by speaking to foreign journalists. Niyaz was reportedly sentenced following a one-day trial in Urumchi, which only one family member, his wife Risalet, was allowed to attend. Prosecutors presented essays Niyaz had written and used interviews he gave to foreign media in the wake of the July 2009 unrest in Urumchi as evidence that he was guilty of endangering state security. Niyaz had publicly expressed criticism over what he viewed as official mishandling of the unrest.⁴⁸

Three Uyghur webmasters were also convicted on charges of endangering state security in July 2010. Dilshat Perhat, the 28-year-old webmaster and owner of the website Diyarim, was sentenced to five years in prison after a closed trial; Nureli, the webmaster of the website Salkin, and Nijat Azat, the webmaster of the website Shabnam, were tried in closed trials on or around the same day and sentenced to three and 10 years respectively.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Radio Free Asia (2010, August 8). *Uyghur Web Moderators Get Life*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/sentence-08082010190802.html>.

⁴⁷ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2010, July 1). *Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices from The 2009 Unrest In Urumchi*. Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Can-Anyone-Hear-Us.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2010, July 23). *Uyghur Journalist and Webmaster Gheyret Niyaz Sentenced to 15 Years*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/4022/1/Uyghur-journalist-and-webmaster-Gheyret-Niyaz-sentenced-to-15-years-/index.html>.

Legal Instruments

International law and property rights

Both international and domestic legal instruments stipulate the need to protect the property rights and housing rights of Uyghurs and others living in the PRC. These legal instruments regulate the evictions of residents from their homes and property, the relocation and resettlement of individuals and communities, consultation with affected communities, compensation for the loss of homes and property, and preservation of cultural heritage and the environment, in addition to other issues. Land and housing rights in international law are thus inextricably intertwined with a number of human rights issues. They are also intertwined with development issues, as an expansion in urban development in the PRC has created significant conflicts between residents and developers, and many international conventions are designed to protect indigenous communities' rights to develop according to their own principles.

One of the main principles of international law governing evictions is that affected individuals must be consulted about feasible alternatives.⁵⁰ As stated by Wickeri and Kalhan, the obligation of states to ensure participatory decision-making and the consent of affected communities is heightened when relocations are being considered for indigenous communities from traditional lands.⁵¹ The Commission on Human Rights has stated, "forced evictions are a gross violation of human rights."⁵²

The issues of consultation and the exploration of alternative measures are of particular importance within the context of this report. UHRP has highlighted concerns about an apparent lack of consultation as government officials planned the demolition of Kashgar's Old City. While China's official press has asserted that Old City residents were consulted regarding the resettlement of residents from the Old City,⁵³ no evidence of any consultative process has been provided, and all independent indications point to

⁴⁹ Radio Free Asia (2010, August 8). *Uyghur Web Moderators Get Life*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/sentence-08082010190802.html>.

⁵⁰ Wickeri, E. and Kalhan, A. (Unknown). *Land Rights Issues in International Human Rights Law*. Institute for Human Rights and Business. Retrieved from http://www.ihrb.org/pdf/Land_Rights_Issues_in_International_HRL.pdf.

⁵¹ Wickeri, E. and Kalhan, A. (Unknown). *Land Rights Issues in International Human Rights Law*. Institute for Human Rights and Business. Retrieved from http://www.ihrb.org/pdf/Land_Rights_Issues_in_International_HRL.pdf.

⁵² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; General Comment 7, The Right to Adequate Housing; Forced Evictions*. Retrieved from <http://www.minorityrights.org/3253/normative-instruments/icescr-general-comment-7-the-right-to-adequate-housing-forced-evictions.html>.

⁵³ Iyaxin.com. (2009, March 23). *新疆喀什30亿元改造老城区 将回填35.9公里地道* (Xinjiang's Kashgar will spend 3 billion yuan to transform Kashgar's Old City; 35.9 km of tunnels will be filled). Retrieved from http://www.iyaxin.com/content/2009-03/23/content_835080.htm.

the lack of a Uyghur voice throughout the planning process.⁵⁴ As noted by the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center, official plans for the reconstruction of the Old City have been marked by a lack of transparency rather than a public, consultative process.⁵⁵

An opinion piece published in the *China Daily* in May 2009 echoed independent observers' concerns about the lack of transparency throughout the Kashgar demolition process, in a rare break from official rhetoric about the project. While lamenting their "western colleagues' fixing on issues like the planned demolition in Kashgar," writers of the *China Daily* piece urged municipal decision-makers to employ "transparency and a sincere deliberative process" with regard to Kashgar and other projects:

*The fact that urban development projects became hotbeds of corruption scandals as well as rumors that upset our overseas colleagues has a lot to do with the manner they were executed. We would not assume every urban renovation program has behind it a dirty deal between real estate developers and corrupt officials. But there is reason to suspect, always, because officials seldom bother to inform or consult interested citizens.*⁵⁶



Uyghurs walk against a backdrop of new and old Kashgar. ©Gaia Photos

⁵⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, June 26). *Kashgar demolition is a "serious political issue": official document reveals aggressive nature of propaganda work used to enforce Kashgar resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2348/1/Kashgar-demolition-is-a-quotserious-political-issuequot-official-document-reveals-aggressive-nature-of-propaganda-work-used-to-enforce-Kashgar-resettlement-/index.html>.

⁵⁵ Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center. (2009, April 16). *Please Help to Protect Kashgar Old Town*. Retrieved from <http://en.bjchp.org/?p=66>.

⁵⁶ China Daily. (2009, May 30). *In the name of renovation*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2009-05/30/content_7953396.htm.

Concerned groups and individuals working in the areas of cultural heritage, human rights and archaeology have urged Chinese officials to explore ways in which the ancient old town of Kashgar could be preserved while improvements to safety and living conditions were made, as much as possible, within existing structures. For instance, in an open letter, the International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage (ISCEAH) noted that while it could appreciate the stated goals of the Chinese government to reduce seismic vulnerabilities and improvement of residents' living conditions in Kashgar's Old City, it would be "possible both to preserve the heritage and improve living conditions without resorting to complete rebuilding."⁵⁷ The group urged Chinese authorities to examine methods of implementing seismic retrofitting measures within the Old City's structures prior to any further demolition, and offered to contribute their expertise toward these efforts.⁵⁸

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which has been signed and ratified by China, is an important document to consider when evaluating the property and housing rights affected in the destruction of Uyghur communities. The protection of property rights is enshrined in the ICESCR, as is protection against forced eviction. General Comment 7 of the ICESCR calls for a degree of security that "guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats," and concludes by saying that "forced evictions are prima facie incompatible with the requirements of the Covenant."⁵⁹ It further states that indigenous people and ethnic minorities, together with women, children, youth, and the elderly, all suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced eviction.⁶⁰

Article 2(1) of the ICESCR decrees that states are obligated to use "all appropriate means" to ensure housing rights, including "refrain[ing] from forced evictions and ensur[ing] that the law is enforced against its agents or third parties who carry out forced evictions."⁶¹ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which China has signed but not ratified, provides additional protection against forced evictions in its Article 17, which "protect[s] against 'arbitrary or unlawful interference' with one's home."⁶² Article 2(3) of the ICCPR requires that "an effective remedy," including

⁵⁷ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). (2010). *ICOMOS World Report 2008-2010 on Monuments and Sites in Danger*. Retrieved from http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/world_report/2008-2010/H@R_2008-2010_final.pdf.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; General Comment 7, The Right to Adequate Housing; Forced Evictions*. Retrieved from <http://www.minorityrights.org/3253/normative-instruments/icescr-general-comment-7-the-right-to-adequate-housing-forced-evictions.html>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Wickeri, E. and Kalhan, A. (Unknown). *Land Rights Issues in International Human Rights Law*. Institute for Human Rights and Business. Retrieved from http://www.ihrb.org/pdf/Land_Rights_Issues_in_International_HRL.pdf.

⁶² Ibid.

“adequate compensation for any property,” be provided by state parties to individuals whose rights have been violated.⁶³ Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) also asserts the right to remedy.⁶⁴

Other international forums have also outlined the obligations of governments to refrain from forced evictions whenever possible. The 1976 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements stressed that “undertaking major clearance operations should take place only when conservation and rehabilitation are not feasible and relocation measures are made.”⁶⁵ The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1988, stresses the “fundamental obligation [of Governments] to protect and improve houses and neighbourhoods, rather than damage or destroy them.”⁶⁶

The protection of private property is included in Article 17 of the UDHR, which states, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”⁶⁷ According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), states are required to “provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for ... any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing [indigenous peoples] of their lands, territories or resources.”⁶⁸

The PRC, along with 142 other countries, voted to adopt UNDRIP in 2007. By voting for the Declaration, the PRC recognized that indigenous persons are a particularly vulnerable group in general and specifically supported the principles outlined and rights explicitly enumerated in the articles of this long-awaited and essential human rights Declaration. PRC officials, contrary to the spirit of UNDRIP, avow that there are no indigenous people in East Turkestan or throughout the PRC, and that “the various nationalities in China have all lived for aeons on Chinese territory.”⁶⁹ However, scholars on Uyghur

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ International Accountability Project. (Unknown.) *UN Declaration on the Right to Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.accountabilityproject.org/article.php?id=154>.

⁶⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; General Comment 7, The Right to Adequate Housing; Forced Evictions*. Retrieved from <http://www.minorityrights.org/3253/normative-instruments/icescr-general-comment-7-the-right-to-adequate-housing-forced-evictions.html>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Icelandic Human Rights Center. (Unknown). *The Right to Property*. Retrieved from <http://www.humanrights.is/the-human-rights-project/humanrightscasesandmaterials/humanrightsconceptsideasandfora/substantivehumanrights/therightto-property/>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Consideration of a Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UN Doc. E/CN.4/WG.15/2 (1995), cited in Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, October 5). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Uyghurs of East Turkestan (also known as*

issues such as James Millward have highlighted the flaws in this argument, strengthening the case that Uyghurs are indigenous to East Turkestan.⁷⁰

Former United Nations Human Rights Committee member Martin Scheinin discusses the important role that the ICCPR has played in human rights treaty law in protecting the land rights claims of indigenous people, despite the fact that the ICCPR has no explicit reference to “indigenoussness.” Scheinin highlights the articles of the Covenant relevant to people’s right to determine their own development and their political status, and to practice their own culture and language.⁷¹ Scheinin argues that Article 1 of the ICCPR “makes the right of self-determination an important vehicle for indigenous peoples’ claims on land rights,” and that indigenous people’s right to control their traditional lands is an important dimension of self-determination.⁷² Scheinin also notes the relevance of Article 27 of the ICCPR, which mandates effective participation by indigenous people and the sustainability of the indigenous economy.

The right of communities affected by development to participate in different levels of decision-making is established in the International Bill of Rights, including Article 25 of the ICCPR, which states:

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

*(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives...*⁷³

Article 7 of the 1991 International Labour Organisation Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO Convention 169), while not signed by China, ensures the participation of indigenous peoples in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national and regional development plans that affect them.⁷⁴ The Convention is considered to be a normative instrument of international law

the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or XUAR, People’s Republic of China). Retrieved from <http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/UNDRIP10-2-09.pdf>.

⁷⁰ As Millward points out in his book *Eurasian Crossroads*, for instance, East Turkestan notably lies outside the boundary of China’s Great Wall- the western-most extent of the Wall lies at Jiayuguan, in neighboring Gansu Province. (See Millward, J. (2007). *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 6.) This iconic barrier is believed to have been built in an effort to keep nomadic people out of Chinese lands and demarcate between Chinese and nomadic areas. (See Perdue, P. (2005). *China Marches West*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 42.)

⁷¹ Scheinin, M. (2005, January 5). *Indigenous People’s Land Rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/foredragavmartinscheinin.pdf>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ International Accountability Project. (Unknown.) *UN Declaration on the Right to Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.accountabilityproject.org/article.php?id=154>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

that benchmarks non-discrimination, and China has adopted and ratified ILO Convention 111, which similarly promotes equality of ethnic and religious minorities in employment and occupation.⁷⁵ Article 7 of ILO Convention 169 states:

*The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.*⁷⁶

Article 16 of ILO Convention 169 also mandates government cooperation with affected peoples to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact of development activities on their communities, and directs governments to obtain the consent of affected peoples prior to their relocation.⁷⁷ The Convention further stipulates that governments should cooperate with affected peoples to “protect and preserve the environment of the territories they inhabit.”⁷⁸ In addition, the Convention requires that peoples who are relocated “be provided in all possible cases with lands of quality and legal status at least equal to that of the lands previously occupied by them, suitable to provide for their present needs and future development.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, Article 33 of the Convention instructs states to implement supervisory measures to ensure that the rights of the affected peoples are carried out.⁸⁰

The Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1986, is another important document relevant to the protection of land rights as they relate to self-determination, development policy and popular participation. Article 2 of the Declaration establishes “active, free and meaningful participation in development” and its associated benefits as a necessary foundation of state development policies.⁸¹ Article 8 of the Declaration specifies that “[s]tates should encourage popular participation

⁷⁵ International Labour Organization. (2010). *Equality and non-discrimination at work in China: Handbook*. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_154692.pdf.

⁷⁶ International Labour Organization. *Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*. Retrieved from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C169>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ United Nations General Assembly. (1986, December 4). *Declaration on the Right to Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm>.

in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights.”⁸²

The World Heritage Convention, which came into force in 1975, lays out protections of cultural and natural heritage. The Convention, which has been signed and ratified by China, notes that “changing social and economic conditions” have been even greater factors in the destruction of cultural and natural heritage than traditional causes of decay.⁸³ The Convention sets out to promote the protection of heritage around the world that is of “outstanding universal value.”⁸⁴ The World Heritage List, established by the Convention, consists of cultural and natural properties located in states that are parties to the Convention. The list currently includes 41 properties located within China.⁸⁵

Chinese officials have proposed adding to the list historical sites along portions of the Silk Road located within the PRC, but the submission of Chinese Silk Road sites has now been postponed to 2013.⁸⁶ Chinese officials have submitted a tentative list to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that includes 12 sites located in East Turkestan, in addition to sites located in Henan, Shaanxi, Ningxia, and Gansu Provinces.⁸⁷ The list fails to include sites in or around the city of Kashgar, an ancient outpost on the Silk Road, with the exception of the Tomb of Mahmud Kashgari, which is located about 30 miles outside of the city. The omission of important sites within Kashgar on China’s tentative list occurred despite the May 2004 issuance of a UNESCO report⁸⁸ stressing the importance of including Kashgar in a possible World Heritage listing.

The UNESCO report urges Chinese officials to prepare a conservation management plan for the city of Kashgar, and voices concerns over imminent plans to “intervene” in Kashgar’s Old City:

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>.

⁸⁴ Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. (Unknown). *The World Heritage Convention*. Retrieved from <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/convention.html>.

⁸⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *World Heritage List*. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>.

⁸⁶ Xinhua. (2011, July 21). *Ancient Silk Road continues to wait for World Heritage status*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2011-07/21/c_131000542.htm.

⁸⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (Unknown). *Chinese Section of the Silk Road*. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5335/>.

⁸⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2004, May). *UNESCO Mission to The Chinese Silk Road as World Cultural Heritage Route: A systematic Approach towards Identification and Nomination*. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001381/138161eo.pdf>.

Currently the Municipal Government of Kashgar is planning for major infrastructural interventions in the centre of the old city of Kashgar, which still has a significant and relatively large, authentic core. If the plans of the Municipal Government are implemented, it would severely fragment the remaining authentic heart of this ancient city of mud brick houses and narrow alleyways. This would create serious difficulties in identifying a site of proper proportions with related authenticity issues that would merit inscription on the World Heritage List.

Therefore, it is advised to start up a discussion concerning the necessity of the planned interventions and to seek for alternative solutions to combat traffic congestion, sanitation problems, etc. All this would be best arranged in the framework of a Conservation Management Plan, delimitating the site into core and buffer zones and designing appropriate mechanisms for protection and conservation aiming to upgrade living and working conditions of the resident population, while respecting the particular characteristics of the place.⁸⁹

Chinese authorities' failure to include more sites in and around Kashgar, including Kashgar's Old City, on its tentative submission to the World Heritage List has been the subject of significant criticism in the international community. Linguist Ross Perlin laments what he perceives to be China's selective exclusion of Kashgar from its Silk Road submission while it lobbies hard for cultural legitimacy and tourism profits with the inclusion of other Silk Road sites.⁹⁰ The Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) notes that the exclusion of Kashgar from China's submission precludes it from having to abide by international mechanisms to preserve Kashgar's Old City that would have been required with Kashgar's inclusion on the list.⁹¹ The organization Saving Antiquities for Everyone (SAFE), together with 24 co-signers representing organizations concerned about cultural and archaeological preservation, issued a letter to UNESCO in July 2009 asking it to exert its influence to have Kashgar included in the Chinese Silk Road submission.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Perlin, R. (2009, July 29). The Silk Road Unravels. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/email/the-silk-road-unravels>.

⁹¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, January 14). *Demolition of Kashgar's Old City Draws Concerns Over Cultural Heritage Protection, Population Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=120527>.

⁹² Saving Antiquities for Everyone (SAFE). (2009, July 19). *Statement of Concern and Appeal for International Cooperation to Save Ancient Kashgar*. Retrieved from <http://safecorner.savingantiquities.org/2009/07/statement-of-concern-and-appeal-for.html>.

Domestic legal instruments

The PRC has had an historically weak legal framework with regard to land and property rights, and the Chinese constitution itself devotes just one sentence to the issue of land seizures:

*“The State may, in the public interest and in accordance with law, expropriate or requisition private property for its use and shall make compensation for the private property expropriated or requisitioned.”*⁹³

With the rapid rise of urban development and the expansion of industry into formerly rural areas of China in recent years, the confiscation of land in both urban and rural areas has become a major source of conflict. Unscrupulous developers and officials have taken advantage of vague laws and regulations to demolish the homes of city residents and seize land from farmers and other rural residents. The increase in developers’ use of violent and abrupt tactics to evict residents, together with their failure to provide fair compensation to those evicted, has paralleled a rise in popular protests against forced evictions.⁹⁴ Local government officials consistently work together with developers to carry out land grabs and share in the resulting profits. Those who protest against forced evictions bear the brunt of these conflicts, frequently suffering violence at the hands of hired attackers as police and party cadres look on. Indeed, reports of the arrest of protestors demonstrating against demolitions and land seizures have become commonplace.⁹⁵

Official figures show that land disputes account for 65% of rural “mass conflicts.”⁹⁶ In the face of tens of thousands of “mass incidents” each year nationwide, many of which stem from grievances related to demolitions and property confiscation, Chinese authorities have taken tentative steps to enact new regulations to end forced demolitions.

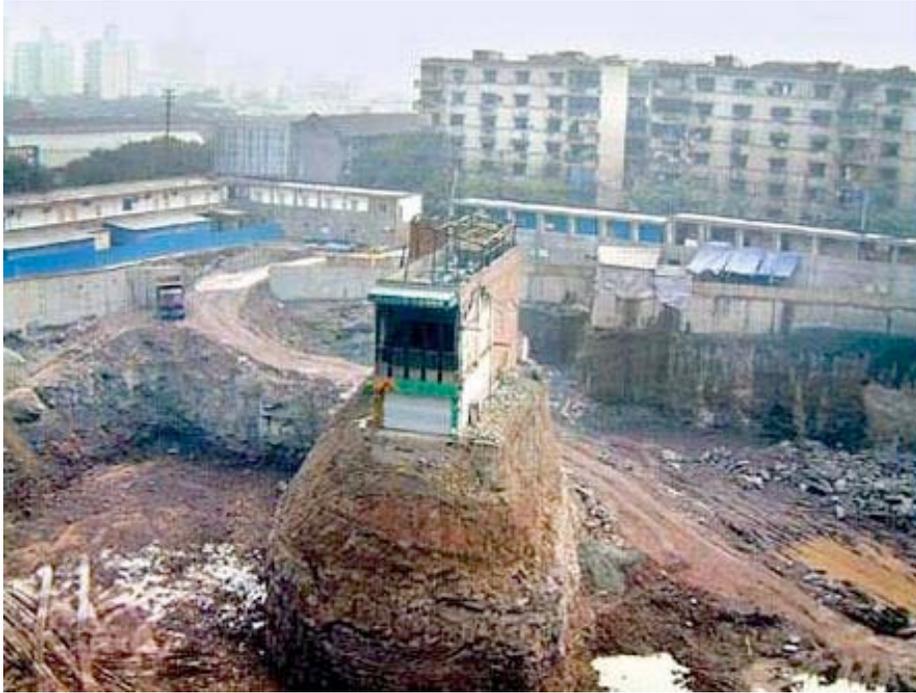
⁹³ People’s Daily. *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*. Retrieved from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>.

⁹⁴ See, for instance, Human Rights Watch (2004, March.) *Demolished: Forced Evictions and the Tenants’ Rights Movement in China*. Retrieved from <http://china.hrw.org/timeline/2004/demolished>; and Chinese Urgent Action Working Group. (2010, March 29). *Papering Over the Cracks: Reform of the forced eviction regime in China*. Retrieved from <http://cuawg.wdfiles.com/local--files/reports/PAPERING%20OVER%20THE%20CRACKS.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Retrieved from Jacobs, A. (2011, September 23). Farmers in China’s South Riot Over Seizure of Land. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/24/world/asia/land-dispute-stirs-riots-in-southern-china.html>; Amnesty International. (2011, December 14). *China must end land grabs amid protests over death in custody*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/china-must-end-land-grabs-amid-protests-over-death-custody-2011-12-14>; and Schmitz, R. (2011, January 21). China tightens law on land seizures. *American Public Media*. Retrieved from <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/business/china-tightens-law-land-seizures>.

⁹⁶ Coonan, C. (2011, January 24). Rules to end forced demolitions in China. *Irish Times*. Retrieved from http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0124/1224288164804.html?sms_ss=facebook&at_xt=4d3ce6413ae681b6%2C0.

New rules introduced by China's State Council, which came into effect in January 2011, prohibit the use of violence or threats to force homeowners to leave their homes.⁹⁷ They also include regulations mandating compensation for homeowners based on a fair-market value, a requirement that a judge issue decisions on evictions, and obligations for local officials to negotiate in cases where homeowners remain dissatisfied.⁹⁸ However, victims of forced eviction remain skeptical about the central government's ability to reign in local officials determined to reap the profits of demolition projects.⁹⁹



Resisting land seizure, a solitary house holds out against a development project in Chongqing. ©Foreign Policy

One recent example suggests that these new laws are not effectively preventing illegal land seizures. In December 2011, thousands of residents of the town of Wukan in Guangdong Province protested the local government's seizure and sale of almost 154 million USD worth of their land. Police sealed off the town in mid-December and cut off its food supplies. Residents of Wukan had already protested for months, but protests escalated in December after authorities arrested five local residents who had been appointed to negotiate with them. One of these residents reportedly died on December 12, and locals alleged that authorities had beaten and killed him. According to a Western

⁹⁷ Ibid; and Xinhua. (2011, January 28). *New rules put an end to forced demolitions*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2011-01/28/content_11934513.htm.

⁹⁸ Schmitz, R. (2011, January 21). China tightens law on land seizures. *American Public Media*. Retrieved from <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/business/china-tightens-law-land-seizures>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

media report, two young children in Wukan were badly beaten, and one may have died.¹⁰⁰ Villagers eventually reached an agreement with government officials, but as of the publication of this report several of the residents' key demands had not been met.¹⁰¹

Article 42 of the Property Rights Law of the People's Republic of China, which came into effect in 2007, addresses the ways in which land, houses and property may be expropriated, and how compensation and resettlement should be carried out, with guarantees against the seizure of property by force.¹⁰² The law states, "where individual residential house is [*sic*] expropriated, the residential conditions of the expropriated shall be guaranteed."¹⁰³

The state legally retains all land in China, and the Property Rights Law doesn't change the fact that individuals can only claim the right to a 70-year lease on buildings.¹⁰⁴ In addition, legal observers have expressed serious concerns over how the law may be carried out in practice, considering the rampant corruption in China's legal and judicial system.¹⁰⁵ Critics charge that the law does not allow individuals to sell their land, and fails to protect Chinese citizens from the threat of expropriation, since, they say, the new law will merely protect the gains of those who have already expropriated large quantities of good land.¹⁰⁶ Chinese legal scholar Mo Zhang pointed out in his research that "the Property Law sets no standard or requirement to guarantee a fair and just process for the taking."¹⁰⁷ In addition, Zhang also criticizes China's "Urban Housing Demolition and

¹⁰⁰ Flock, E. (2011, December 14). Chinese village put on lockdown amid growing unrest. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/guangdong-province-china-entire-village-put-on-lockdown-by-police-amid-growing-unrest/2011/12/14/gIQA0HI0tO_blog.html?hpid=z4.

¹⁰¹ See Jacobs, A. (2012, February 1). Residents Vote in Chinese Village at Center of Protest. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/02/world/asia/residents-vote-in-chinese-village-at-center-of-protest.html?_r=1.

¹⁰² Lehman, Lee and Xu. (Unknown). *Property Rights Law of the People's Republic of China* (Unofficial translation). Retrieved from <http://www.lehmanlaw.com/resource-centre/laws-and-regulations/general/property-rights-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china.html>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Elegant, S. (2007, March 16). China Gets a Property Rights Law. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1599932,00.html>; and Kahn, J. (2007, March 16). China Backs Property Law, Buoying Middle Class. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/16/world/asia/16china.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Elegant, S. (2007, March 16). China Gets a Property Rights Law. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1599932,00.html>.

¹⁰⁶ The Economist. (2007, March 8). *China's next revolution*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/8815075>.

¹⁰⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, January 14). *Demolition of Kashgar's Old City Draws Concerns Over Cultural Heritage Protection, Population Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingl=120527>.

Relocation Management Regulation,” issued in 2001, stating that it “has a focus on the advancement of urban development, and as such it does not make the fair process for takings a priority.¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, it has a bias against owners of households.”¹⁰⁹

The Regulation on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages, which was adopted by China’s State Council in 2008, designates and protects historic cities in China.¹¹⁰ Article 28 of the Regulation specifically forbids new construction or expansion in the centers of historic districts, with the exception of infrastructure installation.¹¹¹ Together with the more expansive Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the Regulation, in its Article 14, seeks to preserve designated historic areas.¹¹²

Three administrations oversee the protection of national heritage in China: the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Construction (for the protection of historic cities) and the Ministry of Culture (for the protection of heritage that is referred to as non-material).¹¹³ These agencies maintain two kinds of lists- one for “officially protected heritage sites” (文物保护单位), and one for “historically and culturally famous cities” (历史文化名城).¹¹⁴ China’s State Council has designated 1,268 Chinese heritage sites as “Priority Protected Heritage Sites” at the national level,¹¹⁵ and has classified 101 cities as “heritage cities” at the national level.¹¹⁶ Notably, according to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics, sites that have been designated as protected at the national level need approval from the State Council before

¹⁰⁸ In property law, “takings” refer to instances where the government “takes” private property for public use- see, for instance, Clarion Associates. (1994). *Takings Law in Plain English*. Retrieved from http://www.commerce.wa.gov/cted/documents/ID_1090_Publications.htm.

¹⁰⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, January 14). *Demolition of Kashgar’s Old City Draws Concerns Over Cultural Heritage Protection, Population Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=120527>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Merle, A. and Peng, Y. (2003). Peking Between Modernisation and Preservation. *China Perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/233>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Chengde Cultural Heritage Bureau, Hebei Cultural Heritage Bureau, and Getty Conservation Institute. (2009, September). *Assessment Report on Shuxiang Temple, Chengde*. Retrieved from http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/shuxiang_voll_1.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Merle, A. and Peng, Y. (2003). Peking Between Modernisation and Preservation. *China Perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/233>.

they can be destroyed.¹¹⁷ This raises questions about if and when the demolition project in Kashgar's Old City was approved by the State Council.

In 1986, the city of Kashgar was designated as a national-level historically and culturally famous city in need of protection.¹¹⁸ However, CECC asserts that ambiguities inherent in China's regulations on the protection of cultural heritage allowed Chinese authorities to sidestep protections for most of the buildings in Kashgar's Old City.¹¹⁹

China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL) also provides theoretical protections to Uyghurs and other "minorities" living in East Turkestan, since the XUAR is an officially designated ethnic minority autonomous region with legally stipulated guarantees for "ethnic minorities' right to administer their internal affairs."¹²⁰ However, while REAL guarantees many freedoms to Uyghurs and other "minorities," including the freedom to develop their own languages, religions, and cultures, Chinese authorities' failure to implement this law has deprived Uyghurs of their legal rights and freedoms and has left them without effective mechanisms to address ethnic and cultural grievances. This failure of implementation has, in turn, affected Uyghurs' ability to challenge authorities' implementation of development and destruction of Uyghur communities in Kashgar, Hotan, Urumchi, and other areas of East Turkestan.

¹¹⁷ Chinatoday.com. (Unknown). *Law of People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinatoday.com/law/china-laws/cultural-relics-protection.htm>.

¹¹⁸ Kashi Today. (2011, March 29). *喀什市历史文化名城的保护工作 (The work to protect Kashgar City as a historically and culturally famous city)*. Retrieved from <http://www.kashitoday.com/kashinews/2011/0329/1092.html>.

¹¹⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). (2010, January 14). *Demolition of Kashgar's Old City Draws Concerns Over Cultural Heritage Protection, Population Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=120527>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Peaceful Resident, Prosperous Citizen; the Broad Scope of Demolition Projects throughout East Turkestan

China's top-down approach to development throughout East Turkestan is perhaps best exemplified by demolition and reconstruction projects begun in the last few years. These projects, often referred to as "slum transformations" or euphemistically as "*anju fumin*" (peaceful resident, prosperous citizen) projects, have raised concerns about resettlement of residents, equitable distribution of resources, and cultural preservation.¹²¹ The vast majority of residents in these communities being displaced have been Uyghurs. The most dramatic example of the demolition of Uyghur communities is that of Kashgar's Old City, an ancient and vibrant hub of Uyghur culture. However, other Uyghur communities throughout East Turkestan have also been subjected to major demolition and reconstruction plans since 2010, including (but not limited to) other areas of Kashgar Prefecture, the Tashbulaq (Chinese: Heijiashan) District of Urumchi, Turpan, Hotan, Ghulja, Kumul, Aksu, Korla, and Uyghur neighborhoods in Karamay, and Bortala.¹²² In addition, Chinese authorities have laid out plans to resettle hundreds of thousands of nomads in East Turkestan, the majority of whom are members of the Kazakh, Mongol and Kyrgyz ethnicities.

On the eve of the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in March 2012, regional authorities told reporters that by 2015, 1.5 million houses would be rebuilt or "transformed" in East Turkestan, with 300,000 homes rebuilt or transformed each year beginning in 2011.¹²³ Nearly 250,000 people have been trained to manage these projects and carry out demolition work.¹²⁴ In each of the cities of Kashgar, Urumchi, Hotan, and Ghulja, tens of thousands of Uyghur homes have either already been demolished or are set to be demolished by 2015.

Communist Party officials in Beijing announced an economic development plan in May 2010 that set a goal of ending poverty in East Turkestan within 10 years, investing 10 billion yuan in the region, and implementing fuel tax reforms. The plan was announced

¹²¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2011, October 10). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>.

¹²² Due to space and time considerations, this report does not include documentation of the demolition work that has been carried out in Kumul, Aksu, and Korla, in addition to other localities in East Turkestan that have been subjected to demolition and reconstruction projects.

¹²³ Tianshan Net. (2012, March 2). 新疆安居富民工程3月底陆续开工 (*Xinjiang "anju fumin" projects to be launched in late March*). Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2012-03/02/content_6622513.htm and Xinhua. (March 2, 2012). "十二五"末新疆将完成150万户安居富民房的建设 (*Xinjiang will complete 1.5 million "anju fumin" buildings by the end of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan*). Retrieved from http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-03/02/content_24813852.htm.

¹²⁴ Xinhua. (2012, March 2). "十二五"末新疆将完成150万户安居富民房的建设 (*Xinjiang will complete 1.5 million "anju fumin" buildings by the end of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan*). Retrieved from http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-03/02/content_24813852.htm.

during the “Xinjiang Work Forum,” to be discussed later in this report in the context of state-sponsored development in the region.

Neighborhood “reconstruction” and “resettlement” projects in East Turkestan were launched under the framework of the Xinjiang Work Forum, the “National Meeting on the Work of Providing One-to-One Assistance to Xinjiang,” held in the first half of 2010, and the outline of the program for the “12th Five-Year Plan” for Xinjiang.¹²⁵ A project to “improve people’s livelihood and provide comfortable housing” was initiated in September 2010, described in official media as being introduced “on the basis of the quake-resistant housing projects that have been carried out for many years.”¹²⁶



Officials from Xinjiang and Shanghai view the model for a Shanghai-funded commercial development in Kashgar. ©Xinhua

One-to-one, or “counterpart support,” assistance programs have been in place in East Turkestan for 13 years, but plans formulated at the 2010 Work Forum expanded the number of partner locations to 19 and directed these eastern cities and provinces to provide localities in East Turkestan with more than \$1.5 billion USD over the next five

¹²⁵ Xinhua. (2010, December 9). 新疆跨越式发展彰显民生理念 (*Leapfrog development in Xinjiang highlights the concept of people’s livelihood*). Retrieved from <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1027/13441014.html>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

years, focusing on southern East Turkestan.¹²⁷ Under counterpart support programs, provinces and cities in eastern China provide localities in East Turkestan with monetary, personnel, and other assistance.¹²⁸

Among the more than 150 pilot projects carried out in East Turkestan by 19 donor provinces and municipalities are projects to construct quake-resistant housing projects in rural areas and rebuild “old and dangerous residences in shantytowns.”¹²⁹ A top Shanghai official in charge of counterpart assistance projects in East Turkestan had this to say:

*The project of improving people’s livelihood and providing comfortable housing is a top priority of the current round of Shanghai’s work to provide assistance to Xinjiang. When the pilot comfortable housing project is accomplished, more than 900 households and more than 4,000 farmers and herdsmen will benefit from the project.*¹³⁰

The official asserted that Shanghai’s newest counterpart assistance programs in East Turkestan would be carried out in Maralbeshi, Poskam, Yarkand, and Kargilik counties in Kashgar Prefecture.¹³¹ He said the programs would also enable more than 130,000 households of farmers and herdsmen in Kashgar Prefecture to live in “high-standard housing.”¹³²

In 2010, Guangdong Province invested more than 100 million Renminbi (just under 16 million USD) in “quake-resistant housing projects and repairing or rebuilding dilapidated buildings in shantytowns,” among other projects in East Turkestan.¹³³

¹²⁷ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2010, July 8). *Central Leaders Hold Forum on Xinjiang, Stress Development and Stability as Dual Goals*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=141407> and Jacobs, A. (2010, November 14). Aid Fuels Change of Fortunes on Silk Road. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/15/world/asia/15kashgar.html>.

¹²⁸ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2010, July 8). *Central Leaders Hold Forum on Xinjiang, Stress Development and Stability as Dual Goals*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=141407>.

¹²⁹ Xinhua. (2010, December 9). 新疆跨越式发展彰显民生理念 (*Leapfrog development in Xinjiang highlights the concept of people’s livelihood*). Retrieved from <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1027/13441014.html>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.



Jia Qinglin visits Ghulja in 2010. ©Xinhua

During an inspection tour of East Turkestan in August 2011, Jia Qinglin, member of the Standing Committee of the CCP's Central Committee, stressed the need to accelerate development in the region by “leaps and bounds” in line with the goals of both the nation's “Western Development”¹³⁴ program and the Xinjiang Work Forum. During visits to Urumchi, Hotan, Ghulja, and Changji, as well as a visit to the new Khorgas Free Trade Zone, Jia called for efforts to “turn Xinjiang into an important gateway and base for China's opening-up policy.”¹³⁵

Jia emphasized the need to implement “reconstruction” projects in East Turkestan with the aim of “improving the livelihood of all ethnic groups.”¹³⁶ During his visit, he inspected the *anju fumin* project in Hotan County, the “project for protecting and reconstructing old urban areas” in Nanshi district in Ghulja, and the “Heijiashan shantytown reconstruction” in Tianshan District in Urumchi.¹³⁷ Jia urged officials in East Turkestan to implement the CCP's policies toward ethnic minorities, including educational activities to promote “loving the great motherland and constructing a

¹³⁴ The PRC's “Western Development” program is also referred to as the “Great Western Development Drive” and “GWDD” in this report.

¹³⁵ Xinhua. (2010, August 26). 贾庆林新疆调研：推进新疆跨越式发展和长治久安 (*Jia Qinglin inspects Xinjiang, calls for advancing leapfrog development and long-term stability*). Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-08/26/c_12487555.htm.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

beautiful homeland,” to reinforce ethnic solidarity.¹³⁸ He included bilingual education, government-directed religious management, and the training of ethnic minority cadres within a framework of maintaining stability in what he referred to as the border area of East Turkestan.¹³⁹ Xinjiang Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian specifically linked the implementation of housing projects to the promotion of long-term stability in East Turkestan, citing the development and improvement in people’s livelihoods that would be accelerated under the region’s 12th Five-Year Plan.¹⁴⁰

Kashgar’s Old City

Kashgar’s Old City, a fabled stop on the Silk Road and an historic meeting point for the exchange of goods and ideas, is viewed by Uyghurs as Jerusalem is to Christians, Jews and Muslims.¹⁴¹ The Old City represents the ancient civilization built by Uyghurs along the Silk Road in the Taklamakan Desert, which served as the center of Central Asian culture and learning.¹⁴² The Old City’s myriad streets and warrens have preserved traditional Uyghur patterns of life for centuries, and have proven difficult for the Chinese Communist Party to manage and control.

The demolition of Kashgar’s Old City has been slowly taking place for decades under the Chinese Communist Party’s administration. The Old City’s original 35-foot high city walls have been demolished, and in the 1980s, the city paved the moat surrounding the Old City to create a ring highway, subsequently opening a main street through the center of the Old City.¹⁴³ In 2001, 2,500 relocations occurred during a “redevelopment” of the Old City’s Id Kah Square area.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

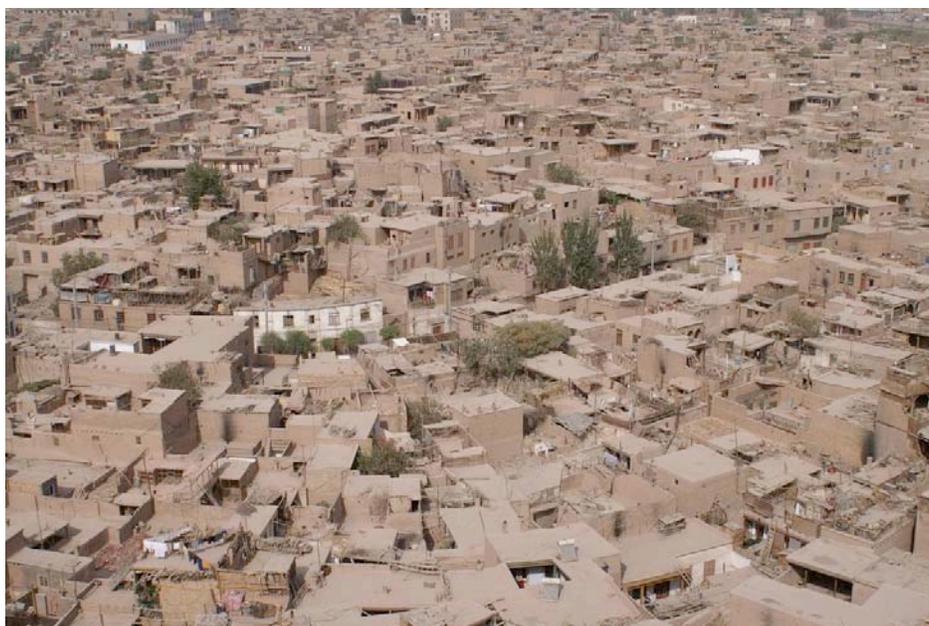
¹⁴⁰ Xinhua. (2010, December 9). 新疆跨越式发展彰显民生理念 (*Leapfrog development in Xinjiang highlights the concept of people’s livelihood*). Retrieved from <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1027/13441014.html>.

¹⁴¹ Szadziwski, H. (2009, September 4). China tightens screws on Uyghurs. *Asia Times*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/uhrp-news/china-tightens-screws-uyghurs>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Wines, M. (2009, May 27). To Protect an Ancient City, China Moves to Raze It. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/asia/28kashgar.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹⁴⁴ Uyghurnomics. (2011, January 27). [Web log comment]. *The Importance of Kashgar for Turkic Uyghur Identity*. Retrieved from <http://uyghurnomics.blogspot.com/2011/01/importance-of-kashgar-for-turkic-uyghur.html>.



Panoramic view of Kashgar Old City. ©Becod.com

While the history of Kashgar’s Old City stretches over 2,000 years, its destruction is now taking place in a mere fraction of that time. Government officials abruptly began carrying out a large-scale demolition of Kashgar’s Old City in February 2009, as part of a “residents resettlement project” aimed at moving the Old City’s 220,000 Uyghur residents (approximately half of the population of Kashgar itself) to other parts of Kashgar. Officials set a target of demolishing 85% of the Old City.¹⁴⁵ The Old City originally contained over eight square kilometers of traditional Uyghur homes, bazaars and centers of worship, such as the six hundred year-old Id Kah Mosque.¹⁴⁶ In 2008, the State Council of the National People’s Congress designated nearly three billion Renminbi (\$440 million USD) to the demolition project.¹⁴⁷

In the summer of 2009, Kashgar officials publicly unveiled reconstruction blueprints, revealing plans to erect residential spaces, office buildings, and schools in tidy geometric patterns in place of the maze of 65,000 households that previously served Uyghur communal life and commerce. The reconstruction plan posted for Kashgar’s Chasa Street

¹⁴⁵ Wines, M. (2009, May 27). To Protect an Ancient City, China Moves to Raze It. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/asia/28kashgar.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹⁴⁶ Sainsbury, M. (2010, January 6). Uighur tensions persist as Kashgar’s old city is demolished. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/uighur-tensions-persist-as-kashgars-old-city-demolished/story-e6frg6so-1225816713997>.

¹⁴⁷ Congressional Executive Commission on China. (2010, January 14). *Demolition of Kashgar’s Old City Draws Concerns Over Cultural Heritage Protection, Population Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=120527>.

area features stores filling the first floor throughout the area, with apartments taking up the five upper floors.¹⁴⁸



Reconstruction plan for Kashgar's Chasa Street. ©This is Xinjiang

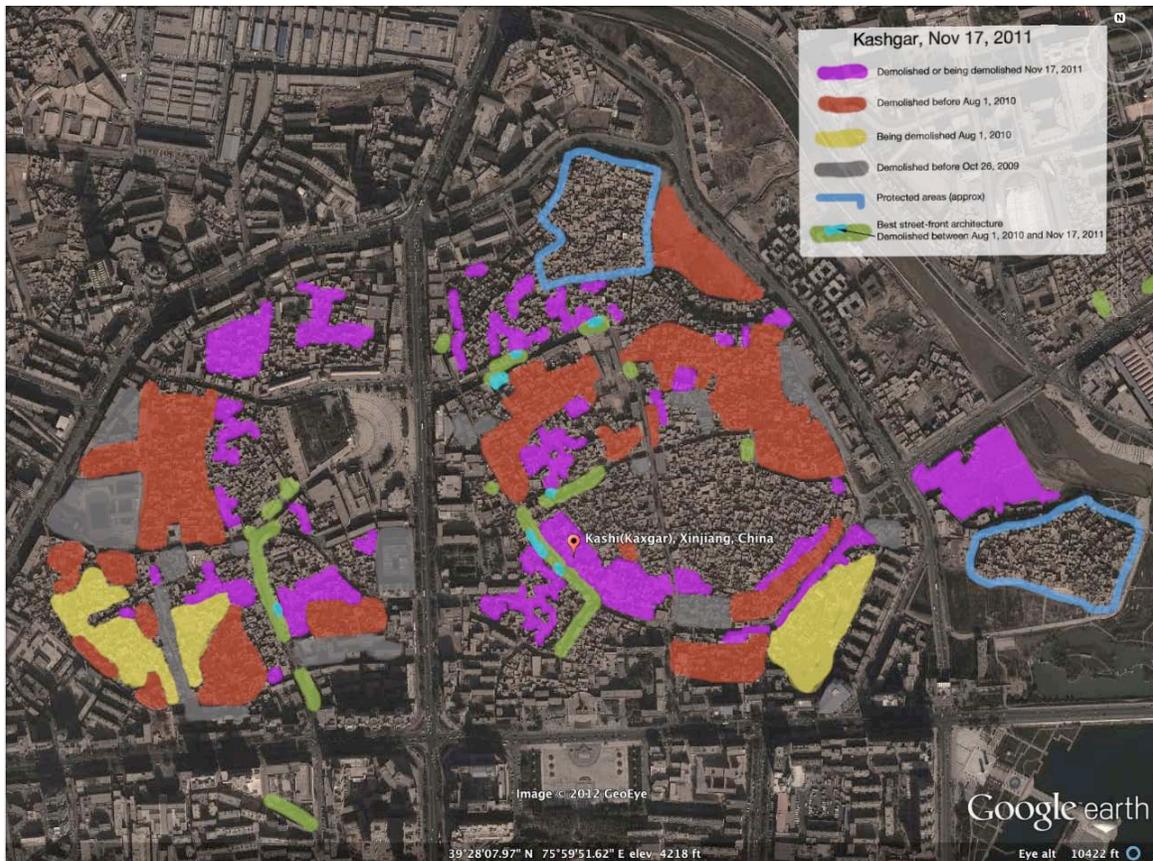
Demolition work was expanded in 2010. A March 2010 report from *Tianshan Net* stated that the initial “pilot project,” under which demolitions had been carried out in five neighborhoods in the Old City, would be significantly broadened in 2010. According to this report, 700 million Renminbi (approximately 111 million USD) had been allocated toward demolitions in the Old City. It stated that a total of 4,817 houses had been demolished by the end of 2009, 3,434 families had been relocated to new houses or returned to rebuilt houses, and 522 families had been given compensation money for their own relocation.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ This is Xinjiang. (2009, June 30). [Web log comment]. *Signs of the Fall*. Retrieved from http://blogs.princeton.edu/pia/personal/xinjiang/2009/06/sign_in_the_qi.php.

¹⁴⁹ Tianshan Net. (2010, March 23). 喀什老城改造试点经验全面推广 (Comprehensive promotion of the experience of the Kashgar Old City transformation pilot program.) Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2010-03/23/content_4861529.htm and Porfiriy. (2010, March 26). [Web log comment]. *Trial Implementation of Kashgar Old City Reconstruction to be Broadened*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewdominion.net/?p=1305>.

In a May 2011 report, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference detailed a plan to “transform” 49,083 households in the Old City in the five years beginning in 2010, and to install water, heating, electricity and other facilities in the Old City.¹⁵⁰

Photographer Stefan Geens has documented the destruction in Kashgar through the use of geo-referenced photos and color-coded maps. Using images captured by Google Earth on November 17, 2011, he was able to ascertain that around two-thirds of Kashgar’s Old City has now been demolished. In addition, he observed through comparisons of satellite images from various dates that the construction of new buildings in the Old City has taken place almost immediately after old houses have been demolished.¹⁵¹



*Image illustrating the extent of Kashgar Old City demolitions. ©Stefan Geens
Note: Stefan Geens is not affiliated with UHRP.*

¹⁵⁰ CPPCC News Net. (2011, May 17). 王刚赴新疆调研纪实：开创更加美好的明天(2) (Wang Gang’s inspection of Xinjiang: To create a better tomorrow (2)). Retrieved from <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/71578/14655883.html>.

¹⁵¹ Stefan Geens. (2012, February 24). [Web log comment]. *The last days of old Kashgar — an update*. Retrieved from http://ogleearth.com/2012/02/the-last-days-of-old-kashgar-an-update/?subscribe=success#blog_subscription-3.

Geens previously documented the demolition in Kashgar after a visit he made in July 2010, revealing destruction of the Old City that had taken place since October 26, 2009.¹⁵² He commented on the effects of the demolition:

*Many alleys now end in wide-open spaces, empty save for the occasional denuded hold-out home whose exterior walls show the interior decorations of vanished neighbors. Here and there, a lone tree marks the spot of a demolished courtyard. Children have colonized these open spaces as a massive romping ground, for now.*¹⁵³

State media reports have cited official concerns over earthquake safety, poor drainage, and other public safety issues as motivations for the demolition. However, critics have charged that the demolition has consisted of a politicized, top-down campaign void of any consultation with Uyghur residents themselves, in line with long-standing official efforts to dilute Uyghur culture and identity. A *New York Times* article about the razing of the Old City cited an unnamed foreign official who said the project had “unusually strong backing high in the government.” The official reportedly refused to be identified for fear of damaging relations with Beijing.¹⁵⁴

Human Rights Watch researcher Nicholas Bequelin had this to say about what drove the demolition:

*What prompted the decision to re-draw Kashgar, because that is essentially what this is about...was simply the protest in Tibet in 2008. That's what really made the government decide it has to be quite aggressive on Xinjiang.*¹⁵⁵

Demolitions have split the Old City into at least three sections, surrounded by high-rise buildings. As of August 2011, visitors were required to have a tour guide in order to enter the Old City. Chinese tour groups come from as far away as China's eastern seaboard to visit the Old City.¹⁵⁶

Kashgar official Wang Zhengrong pledged in 2009 that part of the Old City would be “protected, managed, and developed” with the aim of “creating international heritage scenery.” Wang further added that under this plan, tourists would still be able to view

¹⁵² Stefan Geens. (2010, September 2). [Web log comment]. *The last days of old Kashgar*. Retrieved from <http://ogleearth.com/2010/09/the-last-days-of-old-kashgar/>.

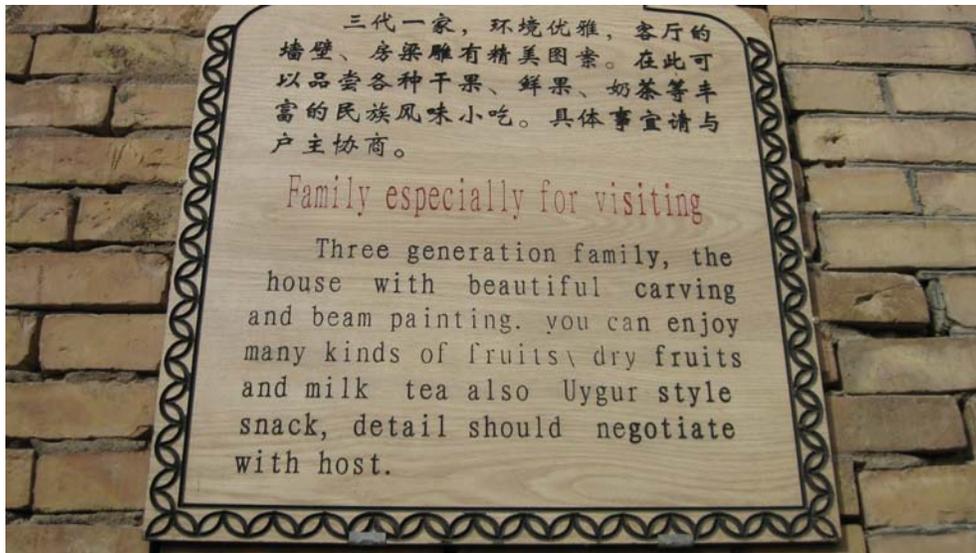
¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Wines, M. (2009, May 27). To Protect an Ancient City, China Moves to Raze It. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/asia/28kashgar.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹⁵⁵ Mong, A. (2011, August 5). A Silk Road culture pushed to the brink. *MSNBC*. Retrieved from <http://behindthewall.msnbc.msn.com/news/2011/08/05/7261730-a-silk-road-culture-pushed-to-the-brink>.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

“minority lifestyle and architectural characteristics.”¹⁵⁷ The small portion of the Old City managed by government authorities, however, suggests that whatever remains of the Old City will operate as an open-air museum of Uyghur culture that is sanitized for tourists’ consumption. The government-managed section of the Old City showcases what it terms “authentic Uyghur life,” which tourists can sample, together with souvenirs and ethnic unity propaganda, for 30 yuan. A typical sign visible in this section proclaims “Family especially for visiting,” and goes on to state thus: “Three generation family, the house with beautiful carving and beam painting. You can enjoy many kinds of fruits/dry fruits and milk tea also Uyghur style snack. Detail should negotiate with host.”



Sign on home in Kashgar’s Old City. ©Anonymous

According to the *Times of London*, June 18, 2009 was the last day for residents of the Old City to claim a bonus for agreeing to move out before their houses were destroyed. The *Times* reported a palpable fear in the air among the remaining Old City residents, who indicated a heavy police presence and were reluctant to talk. One resident displayed a lack of confidence in government assertions that newly-built apartment blocks would be safer in an earthquake than the Old City buildings that had withstood centuries and sheltered generations.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Tianshan Net. (2009, January 9). 结合抗震安居保护喀什老城 (Combining earthquake resistance with “anju” to protect Kashgar’s Old City.) Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2009-01/09/content_3781746.htm.

¹⁵⁸ Macartney, J. (2009, June 18). End of the Silk Road for historic trading hub of Kashgar. *Times Online (UK)*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2308/1/End-of-the-Silk-Road-for-historic-trading-hub-of-Kashgar-/index.html>.

Kashgar Prefecture

Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, and Shandong Province together invested 1.14 billion Renminbi (approximately 181 million USD) to launch *anju fumin* projects throughout Kashgar Prefecture. The four municipalities and provinces also provided technical and personnel assistance to locations throughout the Prefecture.¹⁵⁹

In the absence of independent domestic media and forums for popular debate, state media has manufactured a starkly one-sided portrayal of Uyghur opinions on *anju fumin* projects for television, Internet and print media. In light of discontent voiced by Uyghurs in outlets not controlled by the Chinese state, discussed elsewhere in this report, and in view of the possible consequences of contradicting official propaganda, the universally positive appraisal of demolition and resettlement projects given by Uyghurs in official media must be viewed with skepticism.



Xinjiang Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian and Shanghai Party Secretary Yu Zhengsheng in photo-op with anju fumin residents in Kashgar Prefecture. ©Tianshan Net

A video news report broadcast on state television in December 2011 highlighted the immense satisfaction reportedly felt by Uyghur residents of a new apartment community in Payziwat County's Tugmenbeshi village in Kashgar Prefecture. A reporter announced

¹⁵⁹ Tianshan Net. (2012, January 17). 新疆喀什吹响富民安居集结号 (Xinjiang Kashgar sounds the horn of "anju fumin.") Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2012-01/17/content_6506713_3.htm.

that 7,800 new homes were built for residents of the village outside of municipal Kashgar in 2011.¹⁶⁰

Tianshan Net cited Uyghur residents of a village in Kargilik County as saying that they initially had misgivings about having their houses rebuilt according to the *anju fumin* plan, but later felt that their new residences were well-suited to their needs:

*“Now many of my neighbors who come to see my house say that it’s really good, and they want to have their own house built in the same way,” a female villager reportedly stated.*¹⁶¹

An elderly villager in a village in Konaxeher County that had received counterpart assistance from Guangdong Province reportedly told her Guangdong visitors:

*“The house I lived in before was made of mud bricks- I am so thankful, and I am so happy, that Guangdong helped us build these pretty new houses.”*¹⁶²

Tashbulaq (Heijiashan) District, Urumchi

Xinjiang government officials in 2011 revealed plans for developing the city of Urumchi into a “core city” in Western China and an “international trade center.”¹⁶³ Officials plan to improve transportation links with the city, build two new districts, and possibly construct a new airport. The population of the city is expected to reach 5 million by the year 2020 (from its 2010 population of 2.7 million), and its economic output is expected to quadruple from just over 130 billion Renminbi (approximately 20.7 billion USD) to 420 billion Renminbi (approximately 66.7 billion USD) in the same period.¹⁶⁴ In addition, an annual trade fair held in Urumchi has been upgraded from a municipal trade fair to the “China-Eurasia Expo,” to be held in early September each year. The official website of the Expo describes it as a “major strategic measure to achieve rapid

¹⁶⁰ Tianshan Net. (2011, December 17). 克尤木的家信：我的新家亚克西 (*Qeyum’s letter home: My new home is great*) [video recording]. Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/v/content/2011-12/17/content_6429511.htm.

¹⁶¹ Tianshan Net. (2012, January 17). 新疆喀什吹响富民安居集结号 (*Xinjiang Kashgar sounds the horn of “anju fumin.”*) Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2012-01/17/content_6506713_3.htm.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Xinhua. (2011, March 30). *China Aims To Build Xinjiang’s Capital Into Int’l Trade Center*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-03/30/c_13805559.htm and People’s Daily. (2011, February 14). *Xinjiang To Set Up Two Special Economic Zones in 2011*. Retrieved from <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90778/90862/7287228.html>.

¹⁶⁴ Radio Free Asia. (2011, March 31). *Development Could Widen Ethnic Divide*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/development-03312011175307.html>.

development and the long-term stability of Xinjiang,” with a focus on “making Xinjiang a bridgehead in the development of [the] western region.”¹⁶⁵



“The modification works of Hejiashan district Urumqi---harmonious and beautiful home of the whole people of all nationalities.” ©Tianshan Net

Following the unrest that took place in Urumchi in July 2009, regional authorities increased their monitoring of Uyghur “migrants” from other parts of East Turkestan. Officials implemented measures such as controls over rental units in Urumchi that housed “migrants,” alleging that Uyghurs who had been involved in July 2009 events had lived in unregulated rental housing. An official from the Standing Committee’s Legal Committee connected migrant workers in Urumchi with the “three forces” of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, and complained that their residency in the city’s rental housing impacted the city’s “social order.”¹⁶⁶

The *China Daily* described the transformation of a “dreadful slum” in the Tashbulaq area of Urumchi that was formerly “dirty, chaotic, shabby, and [had] people with a low education background,” stating that urban renewal “has turned the crime-fraught slum

¹⁶⁵ China-Eurasia Expo Website. (2011). *China-Eurasia Expo, China Urumqi*. Retrieved from <http://en.caexpo.org/zhjsen.jhtml>.

¹⁶⁶ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2010, May 27). *Urumqi and Xinjiang Authorities Increase Oversight of Migrants, Rental Housing*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingl=140397>.

area into a pleasant, harmonious region.”¹⁶⁷ Chinese authorities began demolishing residences in the Tashbulaq district of Urumchi in July 2010.¹⁶⁸ More than 200,000 people formerly lived in the district,¹⁶⁹ and the majority of Tashbulaq’s residents were Uyghurs. Many of Tashbulaq’s residents have traditionally been Uyghur merchants who have come from the southern part of East Turkestan to do business in the regional capital.¹⁷⁰ The area was one of the flashpoints in the unrest that took place in the city beginning on July 5, 2009, and government officials subsequently claimed that Uyghur migrants living in Tashbulaq had been easily incited to participate in the unrest, due to “poor management of the area.”¹⁷¹ Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for the demolition of the neighborhood during a visit to Urumchi in the wake of the July 2009 unrest.¹⁷² Pan Zhiping, director of the Central Asia Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, told *Xinhua*, “The transformation of shanty towns is a top priority for safeguarding social stability.”¹⁷³

State media reported that city officials had allocated 300 billion Renminbi (44.1 billion USD) to the project of “transforming shanty towns and slums” in Urumchi, which would be completed in five years.¹⁷⁴ An official in Urumchi’s “slum transformation” office stated that most of the houses in the city’s slums were not earthquake resistant, and that the new residential buildings to be built in the area would meet quake-resistant standards.¹⁷⁵ According to the official, all of the city’s 234 slum areas would be

¹⁶⁷ Sun, U. (2011, August 3). New horizon for Urumqi’s slum areas. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011xinjiang/2011-08/03/content_13045557.htm.

¹⁶⁸ See Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2010, October 10, p. 210). *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2010*. Retrieved from http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_house_committee_prints&docid=f:61507.pdf; Radio Free Asia. (2010, July 13). *China Razes Uyghur Homes*. Retrieved from www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raze-07132010120547.html; and AFP. (2010, July 10). *China demolishes Urumqi flashpoint area*. Retrieved from www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hxiO8nVqMzd2vQL2ONzN-3Lrf2NA.

¹⁶⁹ Radio Australia. (2011, July 16). *Fears of unrest in China’s Urumqi with Uighur homes demolished*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/3978/1/Fears-of-unrest-in-Chinas-Urumqi-with-Uighur-homes-demolished-/index.html>; and Radio Free Asia. (2010, July 13). *China Razes Uyghur Homes*. Retrieved from www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raze-07132010120547.html.

¹⁷⁰ See AFP. (2010, July 10). *China demolishes Urumqi flashpoint area*. Retrieved from www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hxiO8nVqMzd2vQL2ONzN-3Lrf2NA and Radio Free Asia. (2010, July 13). *China Razes Uyghur Homes*. Retrieved from www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raze-07132010120547.html.

¹⁷¹ Radio Free Asia. (2010, July 13). *China Razes Uyghur Homes*. Retrieved from www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/raze-07132010120547.html.

¹⁷² Xinhua. (2010, July 11). *Slum, shanty towns to be removed from Urumqi*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-07/11/c_13394108.htm.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

demolished and rebuilt by 2012, after which the government would work on improving community facilities.¹⁷⁶ *Xinhua* reported the total population of the city's slums, including those in Tashbulaq, at more than 250,000 people.¹⁷⁷

In order to more effectively monitor and control the Uyghur population in the wake of the July 2009 unrest, police in Urumchi installed 40,000 CCTV cameras across the city just before the one-year anniversary of the unrest.¹⁷⁸ City government spokesman Ma Xinchun told reporters that the cameras would be monitored by police at more than 4,000 public locations, including on city streets and buses and in schools and shopping malls.¹⁷⁹

Turpan

The Turpan Prefecture Construction Bureau announced in November 2011 that the targets set for neighborhood reconstruction work in the Turpan area in 2011 were being met. The bureau reported that by the end of October 2011, 6,019 new homes had been built in Turpan out of a target of 6,160 homes.¹⁸⁰ *Xinjiang Information Net* reported that more than 400 million Renminbi (approximately 63.5 million USD) had been invested in Turpan's "*anju fumin*" efforts through October 2011.¹⁸¹

However, state media reported in December 2011 that nearly 70,000 houses in rural areas of Turpan still did not meet new residential safety standards set by the regional government. According to the *China Broadcasting Network*, 39,369 homes in Turpan need to be rebuilt, and 25,191 homes need to be "transformed" or "improved." The

¹⁷⁶ Xinhua. (2011, July 7). *Xinhua Insight: Two years after riots, China's efforts to defuse stability threats in Xinjiang in full swing*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-07/07/c_13966794_2.htm.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Moore, M. (2010, July 2). China installs 40,000 CCTV cameras in Xinjiang ahead of anniversary of deadly riots. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/7867536/China-installs-40000-CCTV-cameras-in-Xinjiang-ahead-of-anniversary-of-deadly-riots.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Associated Press. (2010, July 2). *China installs 40,000 security cameras in Urumqi*. Retrieved from http://www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2010/07/02/china_installs_40000_security_cameras_in_urumqi/.

¹⁸⁰ Huoyan Shan Net. (2011, November 15). 吐鲁番地区安居富民工程竣工情况通报 (*Work report on the completion of the "anju fumin" project in Turpan Prefecture.*) Retrieved from <http://tlf.xjjs.gov.cn/Sub/mod5/DetailsNews.aspx?id=23265&SiteID=22>.

¹⁸¹ Xinjiang Information Net. (2011, November 14). 吐鲁番地区逾4亿资金保障安居富民工程建设 (*Turpan Prefecture invests more than 400 million yuan to guarantee "anju fumin" construction projects*). Retrieved from <http://www.xj.cei.gov.cn/index3.jsp?urltype=news.NewsContentUrl&wbnewsid=198406&wbtreeid=10935>

government of Hunan Province is providing funds to help carry out the implementation of the “transformation” work, which is set to be completed within five years.¹⁸²



Village cadres in Turpan City disseminate propaganda on “anju fumin” to villagers. ©Huoyan Shan Net

A website representing CCP authorities in Turpan proclaimed in September 2011 that propaganda work was underway to mobilize rural residents to participate in the “*anju fumin*” initiative. A report posted on the website details extensive meetings, broadcasting, advertisement in bazaars, face-to-face information, and flyers that had been used to enable rural Turpan residents to “understand the favorable aspects of the “*anju fumin*” project and increase enthusiasm about the project.”¹⁸³

Hotan

According to the Hotan Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Working Committee website, the population of Hotan’s Old City numbered 79,200 prior to demolition efforts, making up just under 65% of Hotan’s total population. The Working Committee stated in June 2010 that up to 17,300 houses in the Old City needed to be “transformed” or “reinforced,” and laid out a more than one billion Renminbi (159

¹⁸² China Broadcasting Network. (2011, December 8). 湖南援建吐鲁番安居富民工程竣工 (*Hunan’s “anju fumin” pairing assistance project in Turpan completed*). Retrieved from <http://news.hexun.com/2011-12-08/136118981.html>.

¹⁸³ Huoyan Shan Net. (2011, September 26). 吐鲁番市恰特喀勒乡2012年安居富民工作早动手、广宣传 (*Charqiliq Village in Turpan City acts early on “anju fumin” work, publicity efforts*). Retrieved from <http://tlf.xjkunlun.cn/xwpx/wxd/tlfxw/2011/2282017.htm>.

million USD) plan to transform the Old City. The Committee also stressed a need to improve the educational levels and vocational skills of the Old City's residents.¹⁸⁴



The demolition in Hotan. ©Jessica Angelson

The Committee cited earthquake and fire safety concerns, haphazard construction of new structures, narrow lanes and problems with refuse collection among factors necessitating the “transformation” of the Old City. In addition, the Committee expressed concern about the lack of access to utilities such as water and electricity, a dearth of schools, a high population density and the absence of green spaces. In a revealing passage, the Committee highlighted what it perceived as dangers from “religious reactionary forces” and “illegal religious activities” that it alleged flourished in the Old City’s narrow lanes.¹⁸⁵

The religious atmosphere is very strong... The city of Hotan is located at the forefront of the struggle against the enemy... The Old City has always been a center for bad elements, with many religious sites... Residents’ livelihood, healthcare, unemployment, and children’s access to education and many other issues must be resolved. The slightest mistake could lead

¹⁸⁴ CPPCC Hotan Prefecture Working Group Committee. (2010, June 3).

关于实施和田市老城区危旧房改造项目的提案 (Regarding the proposal to implement the project to transform dangerous and old houses in Hotan City’s Old Town). Retrieved from <http://218.31.134.225:8266/html/tiangongzuo/46.Html>.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

*to social conflict. It could even be used by the “three evil forces” to stir up trouble and impact the overall stability of society and politics in the city.*¹⁸⁶

Counterpart assistance programs have also been implemented in Hotan, including major aid and investment projects carried out by the government of Zhejiang Province. According to an April 2011 report from a Xinjiang Communist Party website, the Zhejiang Provincial government planned to invest nearly 165 million Renminbi (approximately 26.2 million USD) into 32 assistance projects in Hotan, and had already invested more than 50 million Renminbi (just under eight million USD) since 2009 on five assistance projects.¹⁸⁷

However, Zhejiang’s investment projects have failed to produce their intended results in Hotan. The *Financial Times* reported in July 2011 that an industrial park on the outskirts of the city that was built partly with Zhejiang’s investment money lay empty, having done nothing to improve the lives of the city’s mostly Uyghur population. Most of the plots that were still empty in the industrial park had been dug up in search of jade, a much sought-after commodity in the city. According to the *Financial Times* report, Beijing had begun building a nearby industrial park that was six times larger, but locals doubted that the Beijing-funded project would bring any more benefits to the local population, due to corruption and land speculation.¹⁸⁸

Ghulja area

The demolition of Uyghur homes and property has also been carried out in the city of Ghulja and surrounding areas, in efforts that began in 2007 but appear to have accelerated in the wake of the 2010 Xinjiang Work Forum. According to state media in 2010, 100,000 Uyghurs would benefit from “transformation” work in Ghulja. Local CCP officials reportedly designated more than two hundred million Renminbi (approximately 31.8 million USD) in the year 2006 to “transform” and “modernize” the Uyghur-populated “Old Town” located in the southern part of the city.¹⁸⁹ Uyghurs and other “ethnic minorities” reportedly comprised 77% of the 87,000 people originally living in Ghulja’s Old Town. Authorities have maintained that the Old Town was in grave need of paved streets, water pipelines, and other public facilities. They have asserted that Old

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Xinjiang Party Construction Net. (2011, April 25). *浙江省对口援助和田项目开展顺利 (Zhejiang Province’s pairing assistance program to Hotan is carried out successfully)*. Retrieved from <http://www.xjkunlun.gov.cn/zzgz/jyj/2011/2108836.htm>.

¹⁸⁸ Hille, K. (2011, July 25). Symbol of hope in Hotan yet to reap rewards. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://eastturkistaninfo.com/2011/07/26/symbol-of-hope-in-hotan-yet-to-reap-rewards/>.

¹⁸⁹ Lead Committee of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. (2010, August 19). *伊宁市旧城改造10万维吾尔族群众受益 (100,000 Uyghurs benefit from the transformation of Yining City’s Old City)*. Retrieved from <http://www.xjzgh.org.cn/Article/Show.asp?id=3228>.

Town residents have been consulted for their opinions regarding the transformation project, including through the use of public forms and written questionnaires.¹⁹⁰



New housing for anju fumin residents in the Ghulja area. ©Yili Xinwen Wang.

State media reported that Ghulja County officials had invested more than 44 million Renminbi (approximately seven million USD) toward rebuilding Alte Shar Mehelle (Chinese: Liuxing Street) in Ghulja’s Old Town district, and in February 2010, authorities had designated the Alte Shar Mehelle area as one of historical and cultural importance, selecting 25 courtyard homes as “traveler reception homes” to receive tourists and promote the ethnic characteristics of the street in order to make it a tourist hot spot.¹⁹¹

In August 2010, *Radio Free Asia (RFA)* cited domestic media as reporting that 9,000 homes in Ghulja were being “reconstructed,” including homes in the Uyghur Turpan Yuzei neighborhood.¹⁹² Residents of the nearby town of Hanbing told *RFA* in October 2010 that officials were demolishing Uyghur homes and orchards and forcibly evicting

¹⁹⁰ Tian Gong Net. (2008, January 25). 伊宁市南市区保护与更新规划 (*Plan for the protection and reform of Yining City’s Southern District*). Retrieved from http://info.tgnet.cn/Detail/200801252004474803_1/.

¹⁹¹ China Ethnicity and Religion Net. (2010, July 28). 伊犁旧城改造:与文物保护和民俗传承相结合 (*The transformation of Yili’s Old City: Integration with the protection of cultural relics and the transmission of folk customs*). Retrieved from <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/report/136625-1.htm>.

¹⁹² Radio Free Asia. (2010, August 1). *More Uyghur Homes Demolished*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/karamay-demolition-08012010142714.html>.

residents from these homes, in order to make way for new apartment complexes. Hanbing residents asserted that as many as 1,000 homes in the town had been demolished by authorities, and that the government had not offered adequate compensation for their homes. They claimed that developers from eastern China were making sizeable profits from the apartment buildings where their homes formerly stood, but they were not allowed to share in any of these profits. A woman who had tried to protest the forced demolition of her home told *RFA* that she was subsequently attacked and beaten.¹⁹³

Uyghur neighborhoods in Karamay

Municipal officials in the city of Karamay have carried out the demolition of two neighborhoods with mostly Uyghur residents, beginning in 2010. A Karamay official told *RFA* in August 2010 that one-third of the homes in the city's Xigou and Daxigou neighborhoods had already been demolished, and that the neighborhoods were being demolished to make way for a new tourist destination.¹⁹⁴ He reported that over 400 households and 2,000 people were living in the areas to be demolished.¹⁹⁵

A notice posted in March 2011 on the Karamay municipal government website emphasizes the need to carry out efforts to provide “housing and prosperity” and “earthquake resistant housing.” According to the notice, central and regional government authorities would provide displaced residents with 10,000 Renminbi (approximately 1,600 USD) towards the purchase of their new home, with any remaining balance to be the responsibility of the homeowner.¹⁹⁶

Bortala

According to authorities in the city of Bortala, a total of 2,624 households will have been “transformed” as part of a slum demolition project.¹⁹⁷ Bortala officials have stated that the members of 600 households whose homes were demolished as part of this “transformation” would be moved into a newly-built housing development called “Kuaile

¹⁹³ Radio Free Asia (2010, October 12). *Uyghur Homes Destroyed*. Retrieved from www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/homes-10122010164731.html?searchterm=None.

¹⁹⁴ Radio Free Asia. (2010, August 1). *More Uyghur Homes Demolished*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/karamay-demolition-08012010142714.html>.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Karamay City Government Website. (2011, March 29). *关于成立克拉玛依市安居富民工程建设领导小组的通知* (*Notice of the leading small group regarding the establishment of “anju fumin” construction in Karamay City*). Retrieved from <http://www.klmy.gov.cn/zfgb/Pages/关于成立克拉玛依市安居富民工程建设领导小组的通知.aspx>.

¹⁹⁷ Xinjiang Department of Environmental Protection Website. (2011, April 6). *博乐市多措并举扎实推进棚户区改造工作* (*Bole City takes measures to promote the transformation of shanty towns*). Retrieved from <http://www.xjepb.gov.cn/tabid/787/InfoID/344917/frtid/112/Default.aspx>.

jiayuan” (Happy Home). The development project was implemented under the auspices of the central government’s Twelfth Five-Year Plan, with partnering assistance from the government of Hubei Province. Demolitions were reportedly begun in December 2010 by a private company under the guidance of municipal Party and government authorities.¹⁹⁸



Local officials examine the plans for a new “anju fumin” development in Bortala’s “Wutubulage Township Unity New Village” ©Bortala Government Net

According to a November 2010 state media report, local officials were busy seeking slum residents’ opinions and suggestions regarding demolition work on a daily basis.¹⁹⁹ However, an announcement posted by the Xinjiang Department of Environmental Protection stressed a need for the strengthening of propaganda work to prompt slum dwellers to be “active” instead of “passive” participants in the demolition project.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Tianshan Net. (2011, April 21). 博乐市棚户区改造工程“快乐家园”开建 (Construction begins on “Kuaile Jiayuan”, the transformation project in Bole City’s slum district). Retrieved from http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2011-04/21/content_5756493.htm.

¹⁹⁹ China Xinjiang Web. (2010, November 8). 博乐市棚户区改造体现以人为本 (The people-oriented nature of the transformation of Bole City’s slum transformation). Retrieved from http://www.chinaxinjiang.cn/dzdt/bozhou/t20101108_667979.htm.

²⁰⁰ Xinjiang Department of Environmental Protection Website. (2011, April 6). 博乐市多措并举扎实推进棚户区改造工作 (Bole City takes measures to promote the transformation of shanty towns). Retrieved from <http://www.xjepb.gov.cn/tabid/787/InfoID/344917/frtid/112/Default.aspx>.

A video advertisement designed to promote the “Kuaile Jiayuan” housing development in Bortala features a very modern living environment, but none of the residents depicted in the video appear to be of a non-Han ethnicity.²⁰¹



2,630 “slum dwellers” were displaced to enable construction of Bortala’s “Kuaile Jiayuan” housing development, with counterpart assistance from the Wuhan city government. ©Xinqi Construction Group

Resettlement of nomads and herders²⁰²

Chinese officials have also undertaken a program to resettle nomads in East Turkestan, who are primarily comprised of the Kazakh, Mongol and Kyrgyz ethnicities. According to the *China Daily*, the central government allocated 715 million Renminbi (112 million USD) to a “relocation and settlement program” in East Turkestan in 2011, which the government asserted would benefit more than 760,000 local herders by the end of the decade.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Ku6.com. (2011). 博乐市棚户区改造项目“快乐家园” (“Kuaile Jiayuan”, Bole City’s slum transformation project) [video recording]. Retrieved from http://v.ku6.com/show/N4mVY3LIMFRSfyb1.html?loc=youce_tuijian.

²⁰² Official Chinese media reports use terms such as “nomads”, “herders” and “farmers” interchangeably, making it difficult to ascertain which group is being referred to. UHRP attempted to use such terms as accurately as possible in this report, based on available information.

²⁰³ China.org.cn. (2011, August 13). *Govt urges action on grasslands*. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2011-08/13/content_23202449.htm.

A *Xinhua* report put the number of herdsmen in East Turkestan at nearly 1.23 million, 60% of whom “move from place to place due to difficult living conditions”.²⁰⁴ Nomad resettlement in East Turkestan began more than a decade ago with the advent of the Great Western Development Drive (GWDD),²⁰⁵ and has been carried out alongside large-scale resettlement of nomads in areas such as Tibet, Southern Mongolia and Qinghai.²⁰⁶ In recent years Chinese officials have reportedly ordered Kazakh and Tuvan nomads in East Turkestan to move away from areas near fresh water in order to make room for the hotels and restaurants springing up from a newly-booming tourist industry.²⁰⁷ The resettlement of nomads in the region appears to have accelerated in the wake of the May 2010 Xinjiang Work Forum, as have demolition projects in the region. According to a *New York Times* report, officials taking part in the Xinjiang Work Forum drew up a policy to “force 100,000 nomads to settle down.”²⁰⁸ The *China Daily* quoted regional development officials as stating that about 37% of herders in East Turkestan had been relocated by the end of July 2011.²⁰⁹

China’s State Council issued a statement in August 2011 calling upon central and local authorities to “basically complete the relocation and settlement of nomads by the end of 2015,” referring to nomads living primarily in northern and western areas of the PRC, in what the official media said was a bid to “raise average incomes and accessibility to basic public services in these areas.”²¹⁰ The *China Daily* contended that the new policy was an effort to improve nomads’ living standards and protect their property rights.²¹¹ However, the *China Daily* also cited concerns among some observers regarding the speed with

²⁰⁴ Ministry of Water Resources of the People’s Republic of China website. (2011, April 6). *Xinjiang begins construction of 18 water conservation projects*. Retrieved from http://www.mwr.gov.cn/english/Medianews/201104/t20110406_258052.html.

²⁰⁵ See, for instance, CNN. (2000, December 14). *Nomads in Xinjiang at risk of losing ancient lifestyles*. Retrieved from http://articles.cnn.com/2000-12-14/world/xinjiang.nomads_1_nomads-ancient-lifestyles-xinjiang?_s=PM:ASIANOW.

²⁰⁶ See International Campaign for Tibet. (2008). *Nomad resettlement in Tibet*. Retrieved from <http://www.savetibet.org/files/documents/Nomad%20Settlement%20paper.pdf> for an overview of the resettlement of nomads in Tibet.

²⁰⁷ EurasiaNet.org. (2007, October 4). *Xinjiang, China: Ethnic Kazakhs to Ponder Future amid Tourism Boom*. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav100507f.shtml>.

²⁰⁸ Wong, E. (2010, May 28). *China Announces Development Plan for Restive Xinjiang Region* *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/29/world/asia/29china.html>.

²⁰⁹ China.org.cn. (2011, August 13). *Govt urges action on grasslands*. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2011-08/13/content_23202449.htm.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

which the policy is to be implemented, the adaptability of nomads to urban life and the possibility of land ownership disputes arising from the resettlement project.²¹²

According to *Xinhua*, water resources officials reported in April 2011 that 18 water conservation projects were being launched in East Turkestan in order to help more than 17,000 nomadic households “settle down.” A regional water resources official said that 17 reservoirs and a water diversion project would be built in 18 counties in East Turkestan. *Xinhua* stated that the improvement in water supply would enable nomads to increase their income by engaging in animal husbandry and farming. The total cost of the projects was expected to reach 1.44 billion Renminbi (approximately 220 million USD).²¹³

A *Xinhua* report from May 2009 depicts the state’s narrative of the nature of nomad resettlement programs. A county official said a pilot program to provide 80 new homes to local nomads in the local Hoboksar Mongol autonomous county would protect families and their cattle from the danger they faced from their traditional pasturing practices. “Now the Mongolians can settle without worrying about the hassle of moving, and they can enjoy modern conveniences such as tap water and a regular power supply,” said the official.²¹⁴

Chinese and international researchers have documented the acceleration of pasture degradation, increasing poverty and social breakdown among nomads as a result of nomad resettlement in northern and western areas of the PRC.²¹⁵ Critics of state resettlement policies argue that the resettlement of nomadic herders has given Chinese authorities greater administrative control over the movements and lifestyles of former nomads.²¹⁶ While government programs dictate that job training, loans and schools be given to resettled nomads, critics charge that nomads are robbed of their economic independence, and are forced into a way of life to which they find it extremely difficult to

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ministry of Water Resources of the People’s Republic of China website. (2011, April 6). *Xinjiang begins construction of 18 water conservation projects*. Retrieved from http://www.mwr.gov.cn/english/Medianews/201104/t20110406_258052.html.

²¹⁴ *Xinhua*. (2009, May 30). *Nomads settling down to better lives in NW China region*. Retrieved from <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6667668.html>.

²¹⁵ International Campaign for Tibet. (2010, December 23). *UN Special Rapporteur warns of consequences to nomad settlement*. Retrieved from <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/un-special-rapporteur-warns-consequences-nomad-settlement>.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

adapt.²¹⁷ A report issued by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in late 2010 concluded that Tibetan and Mongolian nomads should not be compelled to settle.²¹⁸

A report issued by Human Rights Watch in 2007 asserted that the suppression of Tibetan culture and the forcible assimilation of Tibetans into Han Chinese society were among the factors motivating the Chinese state to resettle Tibetan herders. The report documents the inability of resettled Tibetan herders to secure meaningful employment, and the Chinese government's continued "enthusiasm for large infrastructure development projects in areas supposedly in need of environmental protection."²¹⁹



New homes for resettled Mongolian nomads in Hoboksar Mongol autonomous county. ©China Daily

The death of a herder run over by a coal truck in Southern Mongolia in the spring of 2011, and the death of another herder whose motorcycle collided with an oil truck in October 2011, set off protests among Mongolians concerned about the exploitation of

²¹⁷ Voice of America. (2009, August 28). *China Intensifies Resettlement of Tibetan Nomads*. Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-08-28-voa2-68821417.html>.

²¹⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2010, December 23). *Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mission to the People's Republic of China from 15 to 23 December 2010, Preliminary Observations and Conclusions*. Retrieved from <http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/de-schutter-china-statement.pdf>.

²¹⁹ Human Rights Watch. (2007, June 11). *"No One Has the Liberty to Refuse": Tibetan Herders Forcibly Relocated in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and the Tibet Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/tibet0607/>.

fossil fuels and the forced migration of nomadic Mongolians into cities to make way for mines.²²⁰ Coal production in Southern Mongolia reached 782 million tons in 2010, and 700 billion tons of coal are being kept in reserve.²²¹

A resettlement site known as Aoluguya in Southern Mongolia is emblematic of the effect resettlement has on nomads in the PRC. Residents, who were forced to move there, live in a theme park-like setting described by signage as a “Reindeer-Herding Tribe Culture Tourism Zone.”²²² Poverty and alcoholism are pervasive. The family of Maliya Suo, an Ewenki matriarch, reveals the effects of alcoholism in Aoluguya:

Suo, whose husband was a talented hunter 12 years her elder, had seven children. Only two are still alive. Her eldest daughter, the first member of the tribe to attend college, drowned while drunkenly washing clothes in a shallow stream. A son died when his bladder burst after a drinking competition. Another son was shot dead in the woods, and two died of illness.

*Suo’s husband, whom she regularly accompanied on hunting trips, drank himself to death, family members said.*²²³

²²⁰ Kirkland, J. (2011, November 4). In a nation addicted to coal, a new province is crowned king. *ClimateWire*. Retrieved from <http://www.eenews.net/public/climatewire/2011/11/04/1>.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Kaiman, J. (2011, December 13). Chinese reindeer wrangler won’t be herded into city. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/13/world/la-fg-china-reindeer-20111214>.

²²³ Ibid.

Kashgar: An In-Depth Look at the Chinese State’s Failure to Protect Uyghur Homes and Communities

In recent years, and especially since the advent of the Great Western Development Drive (GWDD), “modernization” campaigns carried out by Chinese policymakers have targeted multiple aspects of Uyghur society, assigning them a lower value than their Han counterparts. The equation of “modernization” with incorporation into a dominant Han society that is perceived as more progressive, discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this report, is applied to different aspects of Uyghur culture, including Uyghurs’ religion and language and the education of young Uyghur students. The narrative of “backwardness” has permeated into official discussion of both the physical structures supporting Uyghur communities and the more intangible, social elements of these communities. The symbiotic nature of Uyghurs’ relationship to their traditional residences has meant that Uyghurs’ traditional communal patterns have been disrupted by recent demolitions.



*A woman sits atop the ruins of a demolished home in Kashgar Old City. © Stefan Geens.
Note: Stefan Geens is not affiliated with UHRP.*

This section reviews the failure of the Chinese state to protect the structures and neighborhoods that have perpetuated Uyghur customs for generations in Kashgar. Chinese officials have largely ignored the value that Uyghurs in East Turkestan have assigned to Kashgar’s Old City. Government representatives not only failed to consult with Uyghurs themselves regarding demolition and resettlement plans, they failed to take advantage of assistance from international organizations with expertise in architectural preservation and the protection of living communities in traditional areas. Chinese authorities have manipulated the statements of UNESCO, an agency that works to protect

heritage and respect the wishes of local populations to develop according to their own needs. Indeed, Chinese government officials in East Turkestan have portrayed UNESCO involvement in such a way as to place a veneer of legitimacy over demolition work. Such official maneuvering has been accompanied by an aggressive effort to punish those who dare to oppose state plans for Kashgar. The Chinese state's actions have resulted in the loss of both buildings and Uyghur ways of life, and Uyghurs have found it difficult to adapt their social and religious models to life in their new settlements.

In discounting the Old City's vernacular architecture as dilapidated and decaying, it can be argued that those implementing its demolition have also been too quick to disregard the value of earthen architecture itself. Official Chinese reports about the demolition of Kashgar's Old City have emphasized its mud brick structures, with the implication that mud brick buildings are flimsy and need to be completely torn down in order to ensure safety against earthquakes and other hazards.²²⁴ No value is assigned to the preservation of earthen, or adobe, architecture, and no comparison is made to similar types of structures that exist throughout the world that have been lauded for their historical, cultural and architectural value.²²⁵

ISCEAH, whose concerns were outlined earlier in this report, summarizes the Old City's "unquestionable universal value" thus:

- *An interesting example of Islamic town planning: the Old City surrounds and fans out from the historic Id Kah Mosque. The mosque was built around 1442, but established as early as the 10th century, and is the largest mosque in all of China. It is intrinsically tied to the cultural, religious, and ethnic identity of the Uighur community in Kashgar and serves as the physical and religious hub of the Old City;*
- *An extensive living urban settlement and architectural landscape that reflects the cultural expression, social interactions, and technical innovation of the local minority Uighur community;*
- *One of the largest groupings of historic mudbrick vernacular architecture in Central and East Asia, and probably the world;*

²²⁴ See, for instance, Xinhua. (2010, May 25). *Ancient Xinjiang city's residences safer after gov't rebuilding*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/25/c_13315214.htm. The report states: "After a devastating earthquake hit Sichuan in May 2008, Qlirip was told her century-old mud-and-straw home in the Old City of Kashgar, a former trade hub on the ancient Silk Road, would never withstand a similar quake."

²²⁵ Such structures include the Central Market in Koudougou, Burkina Faso, which was constructed using stabilized earth (see <http://en.urbarama.com/project/central-market>); the Great Mosque of Djenné, which was made of mud (see <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/mali/great-mosque-of-djenne.htm>); and the architecture of Ouarzazate, Morocco, which is largely comprised of rammed earth (see <http://www.visitmorocco.com/index.php/eng/I-am-going-to/Ouarzazate/Unmissable>).

- *An important point of cultural, social, economic, and commercial exchange along the Silk Road for centuries.*²²⁶

An estimated one-half of the world's population, approximately three billion people on six continents, lives or works today in buildings made of earth.²²⁷ Ancient and contemporary building techniques for earthen architecture include rammed earth, mud brick, compressed earth, and cob. Far from being a fragile building material, some of the oldest surviving buildings on the planet were made of earth. Contemporary examples of buildings made with earth include airports, embassies, hospitals, museums and factories.²²⁸ Rammed earth was also used in the construction of the Forbidden City complex in Beijing.²²⁹ As stated by architectural scholar Ronald Rael:

*The ground we walk on and grow crops in also just happens to be the most widely used building material on the planet. Civilizations throughout time have used it to create stable, warm, low-impact structures. The world's first skyscrapers were built of mud brick. Paul Revere, Saddam Hussein, Chairman Mao, and Ronald Reagan all lived in earth houses at various points in their lives...*²³⁰

A number of builders and architects around the world today are promoting the ecological benefits and other advantages of contemporary earthen structures. Proponents of a revival in mud brick architecture cite its better thermal insulation, affordability, and lower demand on natural resources.²³¹ Another benefit of mud brick buildings is their inherent resistance to fire, with mud brick structures often surviving where buildings made of other materials were destroyed by fire.²³²

²²⁶ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). (2010). *ICOMOS World Report 2008-2010 on Monuments and Sites in Danger*. Retrieved from http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/world_report/2008-2010/H@R_2008-2010_final.pdf.

²²⁷ EarthArchitecture.org. (Unknown). *Yemen*. Retrieved from <http://www.eartharchitecture.org/index.php?/categories/66-Yemen>.

²²⁸ EarthArchitecture.org. (Unknown). *Homepage*. Retrieved from <http://www.eartharchitecture.org/>.

²²⁹ Chinatourdesign.com. (Unknown). *Walls and gates of Forbidden City*. Retrieved from http://www.chinatourdesign.com/introduction_of_Forbidden_City/Walls_gates_of_Forbidden_City.htm.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ See, for instance: Archnet.org. (Unknown). *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*. Retrieved from http://archnet.org/library/dictionary/entry.jsp?entry_id=DIA0480&mode=full; and de Villiers, D. (2010, November 1). *Stick in the Mud*. *Design Indaba*. Retrieved from <http://www.designindaba.com/article/stick-mud>.

²³² Middleton, G.F. (1987). *CSIRO Bulletin 5. Earth Wall Construction. FOURTH EDITION*. Chatswood: National Building Technology Centre. Available at: <http://www.saiglobal.com/PDFTemp/Previews/OSH/as/misc/CSIRO5.pdf>. Cited in EcoPod Sustainable Homes. (Unknown). *EARTH VENEER™*. Retrieved from

Shibam, Yemen: A traditional community with modern facilities

ISCEAH provides the example of Shibam, Yemen, an earthen settlement where conservation and improvement programs have been successfully implemented.²³³ A number of organizations, including the Shibam Urban Development Project and UNESCO, have worked to both preserve the ancient city and its structures and to revive it as a living community, through efforts restoring houses, strengthening flood prevention measures, and laying new sewage and fresh water systems, storm drains, electricity and telephone cables.²³⁴ The jury that awarded a 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture to the Shibam rehabilitation project applauded efforts thus:

*In restoring nearly 200 houses and disseminating social services, the Urban Development Project has approached the city as a living community rather than a historical artefact frozen in time.*²³⁵

Perhaps most importantly, the first phase of Shibam's restoration, which ran from 2007 to 2010, has "already demonstrated the benefits of participatory urban renewal."²³⁶ In addition to central and local governments, residents, artisans and small traders have been involved in managing the sustainable development of Shibam.²³⁷ Restoration efforts have integrated the development of new community-based organizations that offer training to local craftsmen, literacy classes, and skills training for women, among other programs.²³⁸

A report on the Kashgar Old City demolition project produced by a Global Heritage Network (GHN) site monitor stressed that experts in adobe architecture have shown that retrofitting many of the older adobe structures in the Old City with strengthened

http://www.ecopod.com.au/page/earth_veneer.html; and [Yourhome.gov.au](http://www.yourhome.gov.au). (Unknown). Mud Brick (Adobe). Retrieved from <http://www.yourhome.gov.au/technical/pubs/fs56.pdf>.

²³³ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). (2010). *ICOMOS World Report 2008-2010 on Monuments and Sites in Danger*. Retrieved from http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/world_report/2008-2010/H@R_2008-2010_final.pdf.

²³⁴ Kutschera, C. (1983, August). YEMEN: Saving the Manhattan of the Desert. *The Middle East Magazine*. Available at <http://www.chris-kutschera.com/A/Shibam.htm>.

²³⁵ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit Technical Office. (2007). *Rehabilitation of the City of Shibam*. Retrieved from http://www.akdn.org/publications/akaa/2007_2942_YEM_Rehabilitatioin%20of%20the%20City%20of%20Shibam.pdf.

²³⁶ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). (Unknown). Economic Development of Historic Cities in Yemen. Retrieved from <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/maghreb-naher-osten/jemen/33530.htm>.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Architecture Week. (2007, September 12). *Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2007*. Retrieved from http://www.architectureweek.com/2007/0912/news_1-2.html.

foundations would not be an expensive process. The site monitor recommended that Chinese officials implement more preservation of residential buildings outside of two zones that are currently being preserved. The report notes that, as most Old City residents



Shibam, Yemen. ©Daughters of the Wind

would rather remain in their adobe homes than in six-floor walk-up apartments outside of the city, the preservation of more adobe homes in the Old City would greatly increase Uyghurs' support for the project.²³⁹

Chinese officialdom has not always been universally in support of the destruction of the Old City. According to a piece in the *Phoenix Weekly*, when Minister of Construction Wang Guangtao made an inspection tour of Kashgar in 2004, he stressed that the Old City's original appearance had to be preserved as much as possible while the road network was improved and services were expanded:

*Mud brick structures are the basic characteristic of this ancient city...plans for precautionary strengthening against earthquakes should not be overemphasized.*²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf.

²⁴⁰ Danwei. (2009, July 1). [Web log comment]. *Building a new Old City in Kashgar*. Retrieved from http://www.danwei.org/architecture/building_a_new_old_kashgar.php.

UNESCO and Kashgar's Old City



*A billboard telling residents that UNESCO praised the Kashgar Old City demolition project.
©Sharron Lovell/Global Post*

As detailed earlier in this report, UNESCO in 2004 raised the importance of including Kashgar in China's submission for Silk Road sites to be included on the World Heritage list. However, not only have Chinese officials ignored such expressions of concern on the part of UNESCO, they have also manipulated the statements of UNESCO's Beijing representative to appear to support the demolitions in Kashgar's Old City. Government officials in Kashgar erected a billboard telling residents that UNESCO praised the demolition project, citing UNESCO Program Specialist in Beijing Beatrice Kaldun. However, Kaldun has expressly disavowed such representations of her opinions. Kaldun made clear during an interview with the *Global Post* that UNESCO was concerned about preserving cultural heritage. She stated, "the sign is just wrong," explaining that she had told Kashgar officials that they need to respect local people and customs.²⁴¹

The Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center called upon UNESCO to lodge a protest concerning the misleading billboard with the local Kashgar government,²⁴² but it is unclear whether or not UNESCO ever made such a protest. Chinese officials did not

²⁴¹ McLaughlin, K. (2010, January 13). *Unesco, China and a Uighur mystery*. Retrieved from <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/china-and-its-neighbors/100108/Unesco-China-uighur>.

²⁴² Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center. (2009, November 25). *Kashgar Old Town Local Government Publicly Claims That UNESCO Supports the Kashgar Old Town Reconstruction Plan*. Retrieved from <http://en.bjchp.org/?p=1413>.

remove the billboard following Kaldun's remarks,²⁴³ and the destruction of Kashgar's Old City over the two years since her interview with *Global Post* has defied Kaldun's hopes that UNESCO could influence China to refrain from large-scale demolition.

In March 2011, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on Chinese authorities to end the forced resettlement of Uyghurs in Kashgar. The resolution urged officials in Beijing to consider including Kashgar in its submission of World Heritage sites to UNESCO. June Dreyer, a professor of East Asian studies at the University of Miami, expressed doubt that the resolution would have any effect on the actions of China's leaders with regard to the demolitions in the Old City. "If you have nothing but contempt for the culture it came out of, I suppose it's hard to perceive [the site's significance]," she said.²⁴⁴

In February 2012, Chinese officials nominated the Tengri Tagh (Chinese: Tianshan) Mountains for inclusion on the U.N.'s World Heritage list,²⁴⁵ in spite of a failure to nominate Kashgar for the list. The nomination uses the Chinese name of Tianshan instead of Tengri Tagh, the Uyghur name for the mountain range. In addition, regional authorities vowed in March 2012 to protect intangible cultural heritage by expediting the construction of museums, exhibition centers and educational institutes.²⁴⁶

Chinese officials have used the outward promotion of Uyghur culture, and associated "Silk Road" themes, to promote the ideological agendas of the Chinese state. However, instead of encouraging transnational Silk Road connections, the Chinese state has attempted to erase cultural linkages that challenge its historical claims to the region.²⁴⁷ In addition, aspects of Uyghur musical culture, such as the epic Twelve Muqam song cycles, have been promoted in ways that advance state political goals while muting characteristics of history that prove problematic to the state's historical narrative.²⁴⁸

In addition to culture, the Chinese state has extolled the virtues of its ostensible protections of Uyghurs' religious practices, while at the same time cracking down on those very same practices. State propaganda asserts that Uyghurs enjoy a thriving

²⁴³ McLaughlin, K. (2010, January 13). *Unesco, China and a Uighur mystery*. Retrieved from <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/china-and-its-neighbors/100108/Unesco-China-uyghur>.

²⁴⁴ Radio Free Asia. (2011, March 15). *Resolution Lacks Teeth*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/resolution-03152011175916.html>.

²⁴⁵ Xinhua. (2012, February 13). *China Nominates Tianshan Mountains for UNESCO Heritage Bid*. Retrieved from <http://english.cri.cn/6909/2012/02/13/3124s680783.htm>.

²⁴⁶ Xinhua. (2012, March 24). *Xinjiang to Strengthen Cultural Heritage Protection*. Retrieved from <http://english.cri.cn/6909/2012/03/24/1461s688946.htm>.

²⁴⁷ See Millward, J. (Unknown). Uyghur Art Music and the Ambiguities of Chinese Silk Roadism in Xinjiang. *The Silk Road (The Silk Road Foundation Newsletter)*. Retrieved from http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/vol3num1/3_uyghur.php.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

religious environment- a 2003 White Paper, for example, proclaims, “The right to freedom of religious belief for various ethnic groups is fully respected, and all normal religious activities are protected by law.”²⁴⁹ However, as noted by Human Rights Watch, and as detailed earlier in this report, proclamations such as these that are meant for public consumption are divorced from reality. Human Rights Watch documents the existence of policies hidden from the public that dictate the need to restrict religious practices.²⁵⁰ In much the same way, Chinese officials have used the promotion of the Uyghur meshrep as a vehicle to reflect the state’s magnanimity, while simultaneously acting to damage the very fabric of the Uyghur community that underpins the meshrep as a living tradition.

In late 2010, UNESCO announced that meshrep, a form of traditional Uyghur gathering, had been included on its list of what it refers to as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. A representative of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Section asserted that through its nomination of meshrep, China is trying to “strengthen the tradition.”²⁵¹ However, the video submitted by Chinese officials to UNESCO refers to the tradition as “maxirap,” a Chinese phoneticization of the Uyghur term for the tradition, and makes no mention of the fact that the Chinese government banned meshrep in the late 1990s.²⁵² The video also fails to mention that meshrep leaders were among those detained during a “Strike Hard” campaign in 1996.²⁵³ The Strike Hard campaign in the city of Ghulja led to a peaceful protest by meshrep organizers and attendees on February 5, 1997 that led to a brutal crackdown known as the Ghulja Massacre. Following the brutal crackdown on protest participants, meshrep leaders were among those executed. According to Amnesty International, more than 200 Uyghurs were executed for peacefully participating in the demonstration in Ghulja, and hundreds, possibly thousands, lost their lives or were seriously injured during the massacre.²⁵⁴

Noted musicologist Rachel Harris, who served as an examiner of China’s nomination of meshrep to UNESCO, raised additional concerns about the nomination. In a critical

²⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Devastating Blows*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0405.pdf>.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ National Public Radio. (2010, November 16). *Uighur Gatherings Make U.N. Culture List*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=131365032>.

²⁵² See Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2007, January 10). *A decade on, the Ghulja Massacre is yet to be redressed*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/press-releases/decade-ghulja-massacre-yet-be-redressed>.

²⁵³ Amnesty International. (2005, February 4). *China: Remembering the victims of police brutality in Gulja, Xinjiang on 5-6 February 1997*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/fr/library/asset/ASA17/005/2005/fr/8a1de02b-d526-11dd-8a23-d58a49c0d652/asa170052005en.html>.

²⁵⁴ Rafto Foundation. (2011, February 3). *Fourteenth anniversary of the Ghulja Massacre*. Retrieved from <http://www.rafto.no/?page=55&news=210>; and Amnesty International. (2007, January 2). *Remember the Gulja massacre? China’s crackdown on peaceful protesters*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/002/2007/en/82f6be48-d3b6-11dd-a329-2f46302a8cc6/asa170022007en.pdf>.

review of the nomination, Harris cites Chinese officials' failure to acknowledge the risk to meshrep posed by state-led initiatives to shift teaching to the Chinese language in East Turkestan's schools; the "movement of Uyghur communities in order to make room for new development"; and official restrictions on religious activities and large public gatherings.²⁵⁵ Harris expresses concern that only very brief mention is made in the official nomination of the Islamic component of meshrep and its importance to the practice; and she questions Chinese officials' "folkloric" presentation of the meshrep in the nomination, asserting "this folklorising tendency does not represent an ideal approach to the safeguarding of intangible heritage."²⁵⁶ Perhaps most importantly, she is critical of the Chinese state's failure to demonstrate Uyghur participation in support of the nomination, noted by the absence of the Uyghur language in any of the supporting documents signed by Uyghur peasants. She also assesses a lack of a grassroots participatory role for Uyghurs in the Chinese state's proposed implementation of efforts to safeguard meshrep, and notes an emphasis on proposed funding for international conferences instead of for the traditional practitioners of meshrep themselves.²⁵⁷ As with the demolition of Kashgar's Old City, these areas of concern demonstrate failure on the part of the Chinese government to give a voice to the Uyghurs it claims to be protecting, as well as failure to address the state's own role in the destruction of Uyghur culture.

Pressure to move: Dissenters punished

Official pressure exerted on Uyghurs to leave their residences in the Old City and other Uyghur communities throughout East Turkestan has been coupled with aggressive punishment of those who have dared to engage in dissent over their plight. Buhelchem Rusul, a Uyghur who spent more than 500,000 Renminbi (approximately 79,400 USD) to establish a dressmaking school in Aksu, told *RFA* that officials gave her no compensation when her school was demolished as part of a new city plan. Rusul was detained repeatedly at the request of Aksu officials while petitioning in Beijing, and sent back to Aksu. She described meeting, while under detention in 2011, many Uyghurs who said they had lost their homes under Aksu's development plan without receiving compensation. These Uyghurs were charged with "illegal petitioning," and in some cases reported that police had taken the titles to their homes to prevent them from filing a lawsuit.²⁵⁸

Reuters reported that a Uyghur merchant in Kashgar was handcuffed and taken to the local police station when he refused to leave his home in Kashgar's Old City in 2004, and

²⁵⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2010, October 28). *Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-10-5.COM-CONF.202-5%20Rev.-EN.pdf>.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Radio Free Asia. (2012, January 15). *Unending Plight for Uyghur Petitioners*. Retrieved from <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/petitioners-01152012170946.html?searchterm=None>.

he was detained by Xinjiang officials in 2005 and 2007 when he attempted to seek redress in Beijing over inadequate compensation for his home:

Uighur merchant Obul Kasim carries emotional scars from his confrontation with an unbending government after he failed to save his 100-year-old mud-brick home from demolition, a victim of the urban renewal marching across the historic Silk Road.

... 'Every time I think about my housing problem, I'm so angry I can't sit,' said Kasim, his brown eyes flashing. 'No department has listened to me. My father was so angry because of this, he passed away of a heart attack.'

Kasim, who sells embroidered skullcaps near Kashgar's Id Kah mosque, China's largest, said he would return to Beijing to petition after the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, though he does not expect much.

The local government offered him compensation of 470 yuan (45 pounds) per square metre for his 510 square metre (5,500 square foot) home. High-rise apartments are now worth 30,000 yuan per square metre.²⁵⁹



Id Kah Square in Kashgar, which was bulldozed in the early 2000s. ©Gaia Photos

The lack of compensation, or inadequate compensation, given to Old City residents has been a common theme as far back as the early 2000s, when a wide area around the Id Kah mosque was bulldozed, to the most recent and aggressive wave of demolition. In 2003, Uyghurs displaced from their neighborhood near the Id Kah mosque reported that their livelihoods had been in the Old City, and compensation had been

“meager and non-negotiable.”²⁶⁰ Old City residents told the *New York Times* in May 2009 that even when they were offered the opportunity to build new homes on the sites of their old homes, the proposed compensation failed to pay for the cost of rebuilding.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Wee, S. (2011, August 9). *Land seizures in China's Kashgar fuel anger among Uighurs*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/09/us-china-xinjiang-idUSTRE7781FG20110809>.

²⁶⁰ Ingram, R. (2003, December 17). *The Destruction of Kashgar*. *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*. Retrieved from <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/1724>.

The Old City today: the absence of a thriving Uyghur community

A private real estate and tour company based in Beijing, Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group Co., has established a near-monopoly over tourism in Kashgar, and is in charge of conducting tours throughout the areas of Kashgar's Old City that are being preserved. Zhongkun runs Yar Beshi, an area that has been a tourist site since the early 2000s, and another section in the northeast part of the Old City that has around 10,000 inhabitants. The entrances to the two sections are operated by employees of Zhongkun Travel.²⁶² According to a foreign visitor, small plaques hang above the doors of households deemed free of "separatist activity."²⁶³

According to GHN's report, the several staff members who comprised the entirety of the staff managing tourism in the Old City had no training in cultural heritage preservation, and did not meet adequate professional qualifications in the areas of conservation, management, promotion, or interpretation of the site.²⁶⁴ As noted in the GHN report, while officials plan to raze 90% of the Old City in the name of earthquake prevention, it is unknown what measures are being taken to protect against earthquakes in the two zones that are being preserved.²⁶⁵

It is unlikely that Uyghurs who have been relocated to other areas of Kashgar will be able to return to their Old City residences in the wake of new construction, due to financial constraints.²⁶⁶ The new apartment complexes springing up in and around the Old City are being marketed to Chinese and international investors. A marketing video available online advertising the European View Gardens showcases a large-scale, beautifully landscaped apartment complex, featuring cascading fountains and populated by Han

²⁶¹ Wines, M. (2009, May 27). To Protect an Ancient City, China Moves to Raze It. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/world/asia/28kashgar.html?pagewanted=all>.

²⁶² Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf; and Zhongkun Travel. (Unknown). 景点介绍 网上浏览 (*Introduction to the attraction; Online browsing*). Retrieved from <http://www.gaotaiminju.com/intr.html#>.

²⁶³ Spiced Up: Beth and Dan Experience China, Part II. (2009, May 4). [Web log comment]. *Mud-brick Mosques in Kashgar's Old City*. Retrieved from <http://blog.travelpod.com/travel-blog-entries/bethverde/7/1241438880/tpod.html>.

²⁶⁴ Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf.

families and Han security guards.²⁶⁷ A video marketing an apartment community in Korla, a city in the central part of East Turkestan where demolitions of Uyghur neighborhoods have also taken place, also features fountains and serene waterways meandering through a development indistinguishable from cities in eastern China.²⁶⁸

New housing for Kashgar's Uyghurs: What constitutes development?

The new post-demolition living arrangements in Kashgar are a good example of the architectural features of east China. In blueprints widely available on the Internet and in photographs, plans for the demolished areas of Kashgar and the new apartments on the outskirts of Kashgar for relocated Uyghurs follow architectural styles that are dissimilar to Uyghur styles of residential construction.²⁶⁹



Redevelopment plans on display in a Kashgar Old City neighborhood. ©Gaia Photos

²⁶⁷ YouKu.com. (Unknown). 视频: 喀什恒昌·欧景名苑 (Video: Kashgar Hengchang European Landscape Gardens) [video recording]. Retrieved from http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjM2OTMxNDQ0.html/.

²⁶⁸ Licheng Real Estate Net. (2011, August 16). 海西房产: 孔雀河1号项目视频 (Haixi Real Estate: Peacock River No. 1 Project Video) [video recording]. Retrieved from http://www.0996fang.com/News/news_info/33873.html. For more information on demolitions and development in Korla, see, for example, Bayinguoleng Mongolia Autonomous Prefecture Development and Reform Commission. (2011, December 23). 2011年库尔勒市安居富民工程完成情况 (Completion status of the 2011 "anju fumin" project in Korla City). Retrieved from http://bzfgw.bzjj.gov.cn/html/xmjzh/2011-12/26/2011_12_26_212.html and China Broadcasting Net. (2011, July 9). 新疆库尔勒安居富民工程每户补助1万元 (Each household in the "anju fumin" project in Xinjiang's Korla given 10,000 yuan). Retrieved from http://www.cnr.cn/newscenter/gnxw/201107/t20110709_508205014.shtml.

²⁶⁹ This is Xinjiang. (2009, June 30). [Web log comment]. *Signs of the Fall*. Retrieved from http://blogs.princeton.edu/pia/personal/xinjiang/2009/06/sign_in_the_qi.html and Gaia Photos. (2010, July 18) [Web log comment]. *China: Remember Old Kashgar?* Retrieved from <http://www.gaia-photos.com/china-remember-old-kashgar/>.

The new apartment blocks for relocated Uyghurs are often located far from the heart of Kashgar Old City. The *Australian* provides a description of the new living arrangements for Uyghurs:

*Five kilometres away [from the Old City] is the Pomegranate Compound – an unprepossessing collection of buildings only a few years old and already showing signs of wear and tear that look like decades of decay. And they, too, are built of simple small farmhouse bricks with no steel girders – hardly cutting-edge quake-safe technology.*²⁷⁰



A camera watches over Pomegranate Compound. ©Carolyn Drake

In a special report for the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, reporter Stephen McDonnell was able to visit the new living arrangements on the edge of Kashgar and confirm the poor quality of the new housing.²⁷¹ McDonnell also discovered a large number of surveillance cameras outside the new apartments indicating monitoring of Uyghur activity. Such arrangements illustrate the state's firm control over Uyghurs, and, in the minds of businesspeople, migrants and officials, the security of the region.

²⁷⁰ Sainsbury, M. (2010, January 6). Uighur tensions persist as Kashgar's old city is demolished. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/uighur-tensions-persist-as-kashgars-old-city-demolished/story-e6frg6so-1225816713997>.

²⁷¹ McDonnell, S. (2009, July 28). The Uighur Dilemma. *ABC News (Australia)*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2009/s2639008.htm>.

Effect of relocation on traditional Uyghur life

As Uyghurs' religious beliefs are central to both their identity and their community life, their relocation to apartment blocks on the outskirts of Kashgar has dramatically altered Kashgar Uyghurs' traditional patterns of community and worship. Recent reports have cited former Old City residents who complain of challenges finding transportation from their new residences to shopping areas and places of worship.

Kashgar resident Abdu Kuyyum told the *South China Morning Post* that residents of the Old City were upset about the distance between their new homes and their old community, and they disliked changing their former ways of life:

*“They complained that their new homes were too small. In the old neighbourhood they could shake hands with everyone and go to the mosque every day. But now they live very far away from the mosque,” he said.*²⁷²

Kashgar shopkeeper Mushaq Maimati told the *Australian* newspaper:

*The new compound is far away, it's not convenient to buy daily provisions.*²⁷³



Uyghur residents in a new development on the outskirts of Kashgar. ©Un oeil sur la Chine/Le Monde

²⁷² Kwok, K. (2009, March 26). Uyghurs upset at Kashgar revamp. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.uyghurnews.com/american/Read.asp?UighurNews=uygurs-upset-at-kashgar-revamp&ItemID=OK-542009711134045612426>.

²⁷³ Sainsbury, M. (2010, January 6). Uighur tensions persist as Kashgar's old city is demolished. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/uighur-tensions-persist-as-kashgars-old-city-demolished/story-e6frg6so-1225816713997>.

Religion has been at the tangible center of Uyghurs' lives in terms of the dozens of neighborhood mosques, or *kichik masjid*, scattered throughout the Old City. These neighborhood mosques have been woven into the social fabric of the Old City for generations, together with the homes and teahouses in conjoining alleyways. Demolition of vast areas of the Old City has resulted in the destruction of at least one and probably many more of these *kichik masjid*, in addition to the communities that were built around them.²⁷⁴

In addition to mosques, other buildings with ties to Uyghurs' religious practices have been torn down in the Old City. An Islamic college known as the Hanliq Madrassa was reportedly demolished in the Old City in the spring of 2009, and may have been torn down to make room for an athletic field. One of the school's most famous students is said to have been Mahmud Kashgari, an 11th-century Uyghur scholar and writer who occupies a central place in both Uyghur and Turkish history. His seminal work, *Turkiy Tillar Divani* (Compendium of the Language of the Turks), was the first comprehensive dictionary of Turkic languages. The Hanliq Madrassa itself was the first in East Turkestan to combine Islamic and "scientific" curricula, introducing a trend of similar schools with modern teaching methods in the region that inspired reformist social and political movements.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ GHN's report documents the razing of one *kichik masjid* in October 2010: Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf.

²⁷⁵ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, June 22). *Bulldozers reducing Kashgar Old City to rubble*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2316/1/Bulldozers-reducing-Kashgar-Old-City-to-rubble-/index.html>.

Transformation and Development with Chinese Characteristics

While the demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods has profound resonances for the maintenance of a distinct Uyghur cultural life, it also raises questions over who determines the shape of future development and who the beneficiaries are of the physical spaces laid bare by the bulldozers.

Since the beginning of the centrally-directed Great Western Development Drive for economic growth in 2000, Chinese authorities at all levels of government have stepped up a narrative of an all-encompassing societal transformation in East Turkestan.²⁷⁶ The Great Western Development Drive was conceived as a policy that would bring China's western regions into economic parity with the rapid growth centers of eastern China. State investment in the regional economy and an overhaul of infrastructure, particularly in the transport sector, formed the main driving forces of the initiative. State investment was directed at the natural resources extraction industries that help to fuel the burgeoning economy in eastern China and in which Uyghurs are overlooked in terms of economic and employment opportunities.²⁷⁷ The Great Western Development Drive was also distinguished by the absence of any grassroots monitoring of implementation and performance that may direct state investment to benefit Uyghur economic activity, but it did nevertheless permit for greater state intervention into East Turkestan's social fabric.

The increased involvement of the Chinese state coupled with Uyghur marginalization from decision making in the most significant transformation of the region since the (CCP) takeover in 1949 has resulted in alarming outcomes for Uyghurs. The 12 years of the Great Western Development Drive has overseen a widening gap in levels of poverty between Han Chinese and Uyghurs in the region.²⁷⁸ Transformation and development of the region on Party terms has removed any possibility of critical dialogue between Chinese officials and the Uyghurs directly affected by state policies on a range of local concerns, including the dispersal of once-cohesive Uyghur communities.

The marginalization of Uyghurs from decision-making processes puts the Great Western Development Drive firmly in line with previous state initiatives in East Turkestan. A perceived "mission to civilize" in border areas often dominates CCP justifications for

²⁷⁶ China Daily. (2011, September 15). *Xinjiang's Economy Set to be Transformed*. Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2011-09/15/content_13690476.htm and Christian Science Monitor (2003, September 26). *Go West: China Looks to Transform its Frontier*. Retrieved from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0926/p07s01-woap.html>.

²⁷⁷ Financial Times. (2008, August 28). *Xinjiang Oil Boom Fuels Uighur Resentment*. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/163dec1c-7518-11dd-ab30-0000779fd18c.html#axzz1kIVcMxbC>, Time. (2009, July 14). *Why the Uighurs Feel Left Out of China's Boom*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1910302,00.html> and Washington Post (2000, September 15). *Go West, Young Han*. Retrieved from <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55/470.html>.

²⁷⁸ Hopper, B. and Webber, M. (2009). Migration, Modernisation and Ethnic Estrangement: Uyghur Migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC. *Inner Asia* 11: 173-203. and Bloomberg. (2008, March 17). China: It's Not Just Tibet. Retrieved from http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/mar2008/gb20080317_279332.htm.

large-scale and centrally-led “big push” economic interventions. In this exclusionary approach to development planning, there is little use for local expertise and even less regard for indigenous sensibilities.



Kashgar takes on the appearance of eastern China. ©Stacey Irvin

The bypassing of local participation in the direction of state initiatives has created an impression among many Uyghurs in East Turkestan that interventions have been designed to transform the region into a physical space and society that is indistinguishable from eastern China rather than protect its distinctiveness. In an interview given to the *New York Times*, one Kashgari Uyghur stated the issue in stark terms, “[o]nce the Old Town is gone, who will want to come to a place that looks like every other Chinese city?”²⁷⁹

The following section conducts an analysis of how a lack of meaningful Uyghur input into the demolitions has permitted, through “development,” the continuance of a physical and social transformation of the Uyghur homeland into a region with Chinese characteristics.

Consultation and opposition

UHRP concern over Chinese government development initiatives and over the demolitions of Uyghur neighborhoods does not imply an anti-development stance. UHRP

²⁷⁹ Jacobs, A. (2010, November 14). Aid Fuels Change of Fortunes on Silk Road. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/15/world/asia/15kashgar.html>.

is committed to the economic, social and cultural rights of the Uyghur people. Equitable access to economic opportunity and free cultural expression are cornerstones of a working and healthy society. In terms of housing, UHRP believes access to modern utilities is imperative if communities in transition are to overcome poverty.



A 75-year-old Uyghur sits in front of his house, which is slated to be demolished. © Un oeil sur la Chine/Le Monde

The “Legal Instruments” section of this report discusses the fundamental individual and collective right to determine the direction of development. It is on this basis that UHRP disputes the Chinese government assertion that Uyghurs have been provided the optimum of development conditions offered by the state, and in terms of the demolitions of Uyghur neighborhoods, moved to “better living arrangements.” Simply put, Uyghurs are not empowered to monitor and advocate for an alteration of the course of development and transformation in their own neighborhoods and cities. Indeed, the situation in Kashgar may not only constitute a lack of consultation, but also negligence to accurately communicate the state’s plans regarding the demolition. One journalist who visited Kashgar in 2011 reported that Old City residents interviewed during her visit were unclear what the demolition plans for their area actually entailed.²⁸⁰

China’s official media has asserted that Kashgar Old City residents were consulted regarding the resettlement project.²⁸¹ A March 23, 2009 article claims that 20,000 surveys

²⁸⁰ Mong, A. (2011, August 5). A Silk Road culture pushed to the brink. *MSNBC*. Retrieved from <http://behindthewall.msnbc.msn.com/news/2011/08/05/7261730-a-silk-road-culture-pushed-to-the-brink>.

²⁸¹ Yaxin.com. (2009, March 23). 新疆喀什30亿元改造老城区 将回填35.9公里地道. Retrieved from http://www.yaxin.com/content/2009-03/23/content_835080.htm.

were sent to Kashgar Old City residents and that meetings were held with community members regarding the demolition; however, online forums in Uyghur and Chinese indicate an overwhelming opposition to the demolition of the Old City. The now banned Shabnam, Diyarim and Salkin website forums all hosted several discussions and a survey that expressed wide opposition from Uyghur participants on the Kashgar Old City demolition.²⁸²

In the absence of any verifiable evidence as to the Chinese government's transparency with Old City residents, the reports of non-Chinese media offer a glimpse into the extent of opposition, unhappiness and resignation over the demolitions in Kashgar. The following reports offer a sample of the opinions expressed by Uyghurs to journalists on the demolition that have a resonance beyond the individuals interviewed.

From *NBC*:

In another sector of the Old City--close to the main artery bisecting Kashgar, Renmin Lu, and facing the city's Grand Bazaar—a woman sat in the shade of her doorway, away from the blistering desert heat.

On one side of her home there was nothing but rubble and dirt. The neighbors had left months ago, their house demolished, leaving behind 400 to 500 families like hers still living in the densely packed hill.

'They moved to another part of the city,' explained the woman, who did not give her name but said she was a nurse. 'I don't know when they're going to rebuild this area.'

*She did know, however, that she and her family did not want to move. 'There are elderly members in my family. They can't move around easily,' she said. 'This is a good place to live.'*²⁸³

From the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*:

The ABC asked one 90-year-old man what he thought of the claim by officials that they will rebuild many parts of the old town using traditional Uighur designs.

'It's a total lie. They never tell the truth. There's not one official who speaks truthfully in Kashgar,' he said.

*'All of them have lied and sent people to jail. They beat people, they wrong people, they receive money from the rich and that's who they promote.'*²⁸⁴

²⁸² See Appendix 1 for the survey.

²⁸³ Mong, A. (2011, August 5). A Silk Road culture pushed to the brink. *MSNBC*. Retrieved from <http://behindthewall.msnbc.msn.com/news/2011/08/05/7261730-a-silk-road-culture-pushed-to-the-brink>.

From *The Australian*:

One small section near the old oasis spring is being preserved as ‘a slice of the original Kashgar’. A ticket to get in is 30 yuan (\$5). Uighurworld, if you like.

‘What can we do about it?’ Mushaq Maimati, the shop owner at the old town says, one of dozens of people who expressed a strong sense of desperation about the demolition.

‘It’s the Communist Party’s conduct, we can do nothing to it. They always do whatever they want.’²⁸⁵



Demolished homes in Kashgar Old City. ©Un oeil sur la China/Le Monde

From the *Smithsonian Magazine*:

In an alley bathed in the perpetual shadow of vaulted archways, we fell into conversation with a man whom I’ll call Abdullah. A handsome figure with an embroidered cap, gray mustache and piercing green eyes, he was standing outside the bright green door to his home, chatting with two neighbors. Abdullah

²⁸⁴ Australian Broadcasting Corporation. (2009, July 28). *Tensions Rise as Historic Kashgar Falls to Wrecking Ball*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-07-28/tensions-rise-as-historic-kashgar-falls-to/1369516>.

²⁸⁵ Sainsbury, M. (2010, January 6). Uighur tensions persist as Kashgar’s old city is demolished. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/uighur-tensions-persist-as-kashgars-old-city-demolished/story-e6frg6so-1225816713997>.

sells mattresses and clothing near the Id -Kah Mosque, the city's grandest. During the past few years, he told us, he had watched the Chinese government chip away at the Old City—knocking down the ancient 35-foot-high earthen berm that surrounded it, creating wide boulevards through dense warrens of homes, putting up an asphalt plaza in place of a colorful bazaar in front of the mosque. Abdullah's neighborhood was next. Two months before, officials told residents that they would be relocated in March or April...

...He led us through the courtyard of his home, filled with drying laundry and potted roses, and up a rickety flight of stairs to a balustraded second-floor landing. I could reach out and practically touch the mottled tan house across the alley. I stood on the wooden balcony and took in the scene: head-scarfed women in a lushly carpeted salon on the ground floor; a group of men huddled behind a half-closed curtain just across the balcony. The men were Abdullah's neighbors who had gathered to discuss the eviction. 'We don't know where we're going to be moved to, we have no idea,' one of them told me. 'Nobody here wants to move.'

Another man weighed in: 'They say they are going to rebuild the place better. Who designs it? Nothing is clear.'

Abdullah said he was told that homeowners would be able to redesign their own dwellings and the government would pay 40 percent. But one of his neighbors shook his head. 'It has never happened before in China,' he said.²⁸⁶

From the *Washington Post*:

A 60-year-old man with a neat beard and a wool hat expressed his disapproval as he walked to evening prayers along a narrow road that would soon be widened to 20 feet under the government's plan. 'If the government gives me money, I will go. Everybody is unhappy about this, but government is government, we can do nothing,' he said.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Smithsonian Magazine. (2010, March). *Demolishing Kashgar's History*. Retrieved from <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Demolishing-Kashgars-History.html#ixzz1libI8fvfc>.

²⁸⁷ Washington Post. (2009, March 24). *An Ancient Culture, Bulldozed Away*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/23/AR2009032302935.html> See See Society for Threatened Peoples. (2009). *Save Kashgar's Old Town!* Retrieved from <http://www.docs.uyghuramerican.org/KashgarEnglisch.pdf> for more testimonies.



According to the Kashgar Old City Reconstruction Program website, residents are celebrating Kashgar Old City's redevelopment. ©Tianshan Net

An official document reviewed by UHRP hints at the underlying opposition to the demolition among residents.²⁸⁸ It lays out the importance of local officials' propaganda work in the process of resettling inhabitants of Kashgar's Old City. The online document details a February 27, 2009 meeting of more than 1,100 cadres, just as the demolition of the Old City was launched, and indicates that officials were under great pressure from authorities to counter opposition to the project among Old City residents. The document's language and the need for such intensive propaganda work recognize the existence of widespread disagreement with the project among residents of the Old City, despite official declarations that residents were rejoicing in their good fortune.²⁸⁹

The official working paper, issued by the municipal office overseeing the demolition project and published in a report dated May 31, 2009, states that "those cadres with a mind to create conflict, or who refuse to cooperate in their work, or who don't fulfill their duties and obligations, will be removed from office on the spot, without exception."²⁹⁰ It asserts that propaganda work is a:

²⁸⁸ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, June 26). *Kashgar Demolition is a "Serious Political Issue": Official Document Reveals Aggressive Nature of Propaganda Work Used to Enforce Kashgar Resettlement*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2348/1/Kashgar-demolition-is-a-quotserious-political-issuequot-official-document-reveals-aggressive-nature-of-propaganda-work-used-to-enforce-Kashgar-resettlement-/index.html>.

²⁸⁹ Kashgar Government. (2009). 幸福苑里的笑声. Retrieved from <http://www.kashi.gov.cn/Article/200903/12307.htm>.

²⁹⁰ Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, June 26). *Kashgar Demolition is a "Serious Political Issue": Official Document Reveals Aggressive Nature of Propaganda Work Used to Enforce Kashgar*

*...serious political issue, for which all cadres must scrupulously abide by political regulations...For those who refuse to cooperate, for those who try to obstruct the transformation work of the Old City, as soon as this is discovered, no matter who is implicated, or what their status is, we will firmly deal with them according to administrative regulations...Those creating a negative impression will be investigated and dealt with according to the law.*²⁹¹

A CECC report confirmed that officials in Kashgar saw need to conduct propaganda work among Kashgar Old City residents as urgent in order to offset opposition.

*Authorities in Kashgar implemented a ‘zero-tolerance system’ (lingkongzhi) in the past year to curb citizen petitioning to higher authorities over grievances connected to the demolition and resettlement project. They incorporated incentives for officials to curb petitioning to higher level authorities in official performance evaluations. Authorities reported spreading information on the ‘necessity, urgency, and significance’ of the demolition project and visiting local households to ‘coordinate and solve’ existing problems.*²⁹²

“Big Push” Development

CCP administration and Han Chinese migration have transformed East Turkestan's economy. Economic policies in East Turkestan often take the form of “big push” campaigns that have become largely obsolete in eastern China. Chinese central authorities formulated the Great Western Development Drive (GWDD) in 2000 as an economic initiative that aimed to bring China's regional imbalance in development rates into equilibrium. The goal of the GWDD was economic equity between China's more impoverished (and more heavily non-Han Chinese populated) western regions and its eastern regions, which had experienced a spike in growth since the advent of export-driven economic reforms.

Despite the stated goal of economic parity, economic metrics and performance monitoring of the GWDD are largely absent from official assessments of the program's success. This dearth of statistical analyses suggests that straightforward economic development is not the primary aim of the GWDD. Japanese scholar Onishi goes as far as to state, “[a]s a matter of fact, nobody in China has ever explicitly spoken of the ultimate objective for the strategy for Developing the Western Region.”²⁹³ Nevertheless, through

Resettlement. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2348/1/Kashgar-demolition-is-a-quotserious-political-issuequot-official-document-reveals-aggressive-nature-of-propaganda-work-used-to-enforce-Kashgar-resettlement-/index.html>.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2010). *Kashgar Authorities Announce “Zero Tolerance” for Petitioning Higher Level Authorities About Old City Demolition*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/newsletterListing.php?mode=print&NLdate=20100421&show=ACCESJUSTICE&PHPSESSID=217b7e4c6336260eeeee8e21345d14c1a>.

²⁹³ Onishi, Y. (2001). Executive Summary. In Y. Onishi ed. *China's Western Development Strategy: Issues and Prospects*. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies.

analysis of GWDD policies, German scholar Holbig²⁹⁴ identified five areas of priority, including the “quest for equality,” but also “tackling the nationalities issue”, which indicated central authorities were aiming to quell unrest among non-Han Chinese people through the concerted economic transformation of their regions.

Provinces of Western Development



©Government of Shaanxi Province website

Almost 10 years after the inception of the GWDD, on July 5, 2009, Uyghurs organized a peaceful demonstration in the regional capital of Urumchi. The demonstration was spurred by mob killings of Uyghur workers at a toy factory in Shaoguan, Guangdong the previous month.²⁹⁵ The Shaoguan killings had heightened a feeling that Uyghurs were not being adequately protected by the Chinese state, and many Uyghurs wanted to express their concern at increasing discrimination in Chinese society at large. July 5, 2009 ended bloodily, as state security forces fired on Uyghur protestors, and ethnically-charged violence spread throughout the streets of Urumchi over the following days.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Holbig, H. (2004). *The Emergence of the Campaign to Open the West: Ideological Formation, Central Decision Making and the Role of the Provinces*. In D. Goodman ed. *China's Campaign to "Open Up the West": National, Provincial and Local Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁹⁵ For more information about the Shaoguan incident, please see Uyghur American Association (UAA). (2009, September 24). *UAA Expresses Concern over Shaoguan Indictments*. Retrieved from <http://www.uhrp.org/articles/2953/1/UAA-expresses-concern-over-Shaoguan-indictments-/index.html>.

²⁹⁶ Amnesty International. (2010). *"Justice, justice": The July 2009 Protests in Xinjiang China*. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/027/2010/en> and Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2010, July 1). *Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From the 2009 Unrest in Urumchi*. Retrieved from

The boiling over of tensions and frustrations on July 5 has been viewed by a number of sources as a reaction to the failure of the GWDD to bring inter-ethnic economic parity.²⁹⁷ Inter-regional economic parity through broad state investment did not “tackle the nationalities issue”, but merely exacerbated Uyghur marginalization from the economy. In the 2000-2009 period, rates of Uyghur poverty increased and job discrimination was widespread.²⁹⁸ In separate surveys of jobs advertised on the Internet, CECC and UHRP reported that Uyghurs were frequently excluded from employment opportunities on the basis of their ethnicity and linguistic abilities.²⁹⁹

Writing in 2004, Nicolas Bequelin states:

*...the socio- economic development of ethnic minorities continues to fall behind on all indicators: southern Xinjiang (with a 95 per cent non-Han population) has an average per capita income half the provincial average. In the more prosperous eastern Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, bordering Kazakhstan, 98 per cent of the officially designated ‘poor’ population are non-Han ... The campaign to Open up the West, serving primarily as a vehicle for the interests of the state, gives no sign of altering this discriminative pattern.*³⁰⁰

In a tacit admission of GWDD failures, the Chinese central leadership convened a Work Forum in Beijing in May 2010 to assess and adjust economic policies in the region. No Uyghur was present at the meeting, even those Uyghurs within the CCP framework. While the Work Forum largely reaffirmed the focus on natural resource industries in the

<http://uyghuramerican.org/old/articles/4747/1/Can-Anyone-Hear-Us-Voices-From-The-2009-Unrest-In-Urumchi-/index.html>.

²⁹⁷ Blank, S. (2009). China: Examining the Root Causes of Xinjiang’s Ethnic Discontent. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav070909b.shtml>, Time (2009). *China: At Least 140 Dead in Xinjiang Province Clashes*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1908785,00> and The Wall Street Journal. (2009). *Ethnic Anger Festers Amid Calm in Urumqi*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/Sb124713641544717543.html>.

²⁹⁸ Wiemer, C. (2004). The Economy of Xinjiang. In S.F. Starr ed. *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim borderland*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Zang Xiaowei. (2011). *Uyghur-Han Earnings Differentials in Urumchi*. The China Journal, 65: 141–55, Maurer-Fazio, M., Hughes J.W. & Zhang Dandan. (2004). *The Economic Status of China’s Ethnic Minorities*, presented at the conference: ‘Poverty, Inequality, Labour Market and Welfare Reform in China’, Australia National University, August 25–27, 2004 and Human Rights in China and Minority Rights Group International. (2007). *China: Minority Exclusion, Marginalization and Rising Tensions*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrichina.org/content/4081>.

²⁹⁹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2009). *Recruitment for State Jobs in Xinjiang Discriminates Against Ethnic Minorities*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=122703> and Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). (2009, June 25). *Uyghurs, Women Need Not Apply for Government Jobs in East Turkestan*. Retrieved from <http://uhrp.org/articles/2339/1/Uyghurs-women-need-not-apply-for-government-jobs-in-East-Turkestan/index.html>.

³⁰⁰ Bequelin, N. (2004). *Staged Development in Xinjiang*. The China Quarterly, 178, pp. 358-378.

region, it also included a few initiatives to bring state investment away from the Han-dominated northern parts of East Turkestan.

At the Work Forum, an increase in the tax base of the region was agreed upon, wherein the tax on natural resources was determined on price rather than volume;³⁰¹ however, reinvestment or oversight of the new revenue was not outlined. By 2011, Xinjiang authorities recorded over 100 billion Renminbi (15.9 billion USD) in revenue.³⁰² Also agreed upon was a pairing assistance program between 19 ‘developed’ eastern provinces and 82 sub-districts of East Turkestan that includes transfers of human and financial capital.³⁰³ The transfer of “expertise” is consistent with the routine exclusion of grassroots Uyghur expertise. In reference to the pairing scheme, scholar Stanley Toops states, “[t]he coordination of all these projects will be quite difficult particularly since the experts from the east coast may not be very familiar with local conditions in Xinjiang.”³⁰⁴

At a grassroots level, tax relief was offered to small businesses, and state assistance, especially in securing employment, was promised;³⁰⁵ nevertheless, large-scale investment in natural resources was reemphasized. In a regional economic work conference in December 2011, Xinjiang’s senior leadership confirmed the prioritization of the natural resources sector.³⁰⁶ At the same meeting, attendees agreed to implement more vigorously the central leadership’s Work Forum policies of accelerated progress on bilingual education and ‘urban renovation’.

As a part of the development-migration axis of the transformation of East Turkestan’s urban landscape, the Work Forum mandated the creation of two special economic trading areas, one in Khorgas near the Kazakh border, and one in Kashgar. The selection of Kashgar as a site for a targeted boost in investment was pertinent given the creation of real estate through the demolition of Uyghur neighborhoods in the Old City. The announcement of the creation of the special economic trading area in Kashgar has been accompanied by a rise in real estate prices.

³⁰¹ Zeng Sommer, L. (2010, July 21). *Xinjiang Enticements*. Retrieved from <http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/4727/Xinjiang-Enticements>.

³⁰² Hexun. (2012, January 1). *2011年新疆地方财政收入预计首破1000亿元*. Retrieved from <http://news.hexun.com/2012-01-06/137005273.html>.

³⁰³ Zeng Sommer, L. (2010, July 21). *Xinjiang Enticements*. Retrieved from <http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/4727/Xinjiang-Enticements> and The New Dominion. (2010). [Web log comment]. *Color-coded Guide to Eastern Provinces-to-Xinjiang Economic Aid Pairing*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewdominion.net/?p=1740>.

³⁰⁴ Toops, S. (2010). *China’s Far West: Conditions in Xinjiang One Year After Demonstrations and Riots*. Retrieved from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/2010/20100719/index.php>.

³⁰⁵ Xinhua. (2010, May 20). *Chinese Central Authorities Outline Roadmap for Xinjiang’s Leapfrog Development, Lasting Stability*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/20/c_13306534.htm.

³⁰⁶ People’s Daily Online (2010, August 16). *Xinjiang to Build largest Oil, Gas Base Over 10 Years*. Retrieved from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90778/90862/7105944.html>.



Khorgas special economic trading area. ©China Briefing

According to *Newsweek* reporter Isaac Stone Fish:

*Real-estate prices citywide went through the roof after the Special Economic Zone was created in May [2010]. The central government recently released a report refuting a widely read article stating that prices had doubled in the past few months, saying that Kashgar has seen a yearly appreciation of only 30 to 40 percent. ‘When I went to Kashgar on May 26 to try to do a building [sic], all of the desirable properties had already been taken,’ says Dai Jun, who works for Shun Cheng property developers. ‘I talked to some locals in March who said that they couldn’t even sell their apartments, but by May locals and nonlocals, from places like Guangzhou, Shanghai, Jiangxi, were all buying’.*³⁰⁷

According to a November 14, 2010 article, *New York Times* reporter Andrew Jacobs observed that the spike in real estate interest in Kashgar accompanying the special economic trading area announcement was primarily driven by Han Chinese.

‘We can’t build apartments fast enough for the demand,’ said Han Cunliang, a salesman at European View Gardens, a high-end apartment complex where prices have nearly doubled in recent months. “Come back here in five years, and you won’t recognize the place’...

³⁰⁷ *Newsweek*. (2010, September 25). *A New Shenzhen*. Retrieved from <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/09/25/china-s-hottest-cities-and-kashgar.html>.

...But even if such development schemes gain traction, some of those who study the region fear that the plans will favor Han traders and factory owners, adding to resentment among Uighurs, especially if a more robust economy increases migration from the rest of China...

...The growing crop of new apartment blocks may provide a hint of the future. With few exceptions, the bricklayers, plumbers and electricians are Han, as are about 90 percent of the buyers, real estate brokers say.

Asked why the promotional materials did not include Uighur-language text, Mr. Han, the salesman at the European View Gardens, was frank. 'What's the point?' he asked, standing beside a large architectural model of the complex, which rises on fields and orchards once owned by Uighurs. 'They can't afford this place.'³⁰⁸

In its report on Kashgar Old City, the Global Heritage Network reiterated Uyghur concerns:

Since the summer of 2010, local media in Kashgar has spoken almost daily of the new SEZ, but concrete plans have not yet materialized. Kashgar Uyghurs believe the SEZ is generally a good idea, but are concerned about the beneficiaries of the proposed plan. Most likely the Han Chinese population of Kashgar will expand significantly in the years to come in order to attain a necessary capacity for human capital. Another consequence of the SEZ plan is the increase in real estate prices. Once the plan was announced, many nonlocal Han Chinese investors, and even some foreigners, have purchased land use rights within the urban core. Some of the most cynical responses of local Uyghurs were that their homes are being demolished for nonlocal Han Chinese investors.³⁰⁹

The Uyghurs have been pushed out and priced out of their own neighborhoods. This physical relocation to the heavily-monitored and inadequate buildings on the margins of their cities is an appropriate illustration of a wider pattern that has seen Uyghurs marginalized from the regional economy, stripped of their culture and facing a state-encouraged onslaught of migration.

³⁰⁸ Jacobs, A. (2010, November 14). Aid Fuels Change of Fortunes on Silk Road. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/15/world/asia/15kashgar.html>.

³⁰⁹ Global Heritage Network. (2010). *Site Conservation Assessment (SCA) Report, Kashgar Old City, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. Retrieved from http://ghn.globalheritagefund.com/uploads/documents/document_1950.pdf.



*Billboard in Kashgar. ©Stefan Geens
Note: Stefan Geens is not affiliated with UHRP.*

Recommendations

For the government of the People's Republic of China

- Cease immediately all demolitions of Uyghur neighborhoods across East Turkestan until a transparent process of genuine consultation has been undertaken with residents.
- Meet obligations set out in Article 2(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that protects individuals from forced evictions by the state.
- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and abide by Article 17, which “protect[s] against ‘arbitrary or unlawful interference’ with one’s home”; Article 25, which protects the right to participation in public life either “directly or through freely chosen representatives; and Article 27, which mandates *effective* [UHRP italics] participation by indigenous people and the sustainability of the indigenous economy.”
- Fulfill obligations outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including Articles 8, 15 and 17 that protect rights to remedy, adequate compensation for dispossession of property and protection of private property.
- Abide by provisions in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that prevent dispossession of indigenous peoples’ lands, territories or resources.
- Sign and ratify International Labour Organisation Convention 169 and respect Articles that protect the right of indigenous people to formulate, implement and evaluate national and regional development plans.
- Realize Article 2 of the Declaration on the Right to Development that establishes “active, free and meaningful participation in development”
- Meet signed and ratified obligations contained in the World Heritage Convention and end false assertions of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) support for the demolition project in Kashgar. In addition, an application for inclusion on the World Heritage List for Kashgar Old City should be processed immediately.
- Abide by domestic legal instruments that protect Uyghurs from arbitrary state interference into private and community affairs, such as the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, the Property Rights Law (especially Article 42), as well as protect the Uyghur people’s cultural rights through genuine adherence to Article 28 of the Regulation on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages.

For concerned governments

- Open consulates in the East Turkestan regional capital of Urumchi that will permit a closer monitoring of human rights conditions in the region.
- Urge Chinese counterparts in meetings to abide by agreed international obligations that protect Uyghur cultural life and heritage from assimilation with Chinese culture.
- Pass firm resolutions condemning the demolitions in the strongest terms in national parliaments, and asking the Chinese government to immediately stop the demolitions before a genuine process of consultation can be completed.
- Raise the demolitions at bilateral human rights dialogues with the People's Republic of China in such a way that does not devalue egregious human rights abuses in the face of 'economic realities', making clear that respect for human rights and robust economies are part of the same process.

For multilateral institutions

- Tighten monitoring mechanisms of international human rights instruments in the United Nations system in regard to the People's Republic of China's compliance.
- Voice publicly, especially UNESCO, opposition to the demolition of Uyghur material cultural heritage, asking for clarity on the aims and motivations of the near complete destruction of Kashgar Old City and the commodification of Uyghur cultural life.
- Condemn the use of UNESCO's name to approve the demolition of Kashgar Old City and demand open reporting by Chinese media of the demolitions that permits a considered evaluation of its merit.
- Send observers to East Turkestan with unfettered access to Uyghur communities to impartially oversee that all international and domestic legal protections have been utilized in demolition projects across the region.
- Make clear to Chinese officials in meetings that loss of Uyghur culture (material or non-material, such as language and religious customs) is an affront to the principles of global diversity, and that such a loss is borne globally and not just in the People's Republic of China.

Appendix I – Results of an online survey regarding the demolition of Kashgar’s Old City

The following is a translation of a survey on the demolition of Kashgar’s Old City posted on the now banned Xabnam website in May 2009.

The online survey was closed after 100 people participated due to the limits of the website.

1. What do you think of the demolition of Kashgar Old City?

Disagree	97.8%
Agree	2.2%

2. Where are you from?

Kashgar	43.7%
Hoten	12.6%
Aksu	11.5%
Kizilsu	4.6%
Bayin’golin	6.9%
Urumchi	11.5%
Turpan	2.3%
Kumul	0.0%
Ili	2.3%
Altay	0.0%
Tarbagatay	0.0%
Bortala	3.4%
Sanji	0.0%
Overseas	1.1%

3. Do you have direct or indirect connection with houses that are going to be destroyed in Kashgar?

Have direct connection	28.9%
Have indirect connection	14.5%
No connection	56.6%

4. Do you think it’s fair to destroy vast houses and yards, and to provide small houses in buildings in return?

Unfair	88.3%
Fair	5.2%
Don’t know	6.5%

5. Do you think Kashgar city government will destroy citizens' houses forcibly?

Can't destroy forcibly	32.5%
Can destroy forcibly	53.0%
Don't know	14.5%

6. Do you think each house owner has the right to oppose forced moves and to protect their own lands?

Have rights	90.0%
No rights	5.0%
Don't know	5.0%

7. If the government wants to forcibly destroy the Old City, what will you do?

Oppose wholeheartedly	48.1%
Oppose it	30.4%
Agree	7.6%
Don't know	13.9%

8. If the houses around your house are destroyed, do you have the right to choose demolition by yourself or do you have to obey others and give your house willingly?

I have right to choose by myself	71.3%
Depends on the situation	16.3%
Obey others	5.0%
Don't know	7.5%

9. Do you think leaders in Kashgar will get bribes in this construction?

Yes	74.0%
No	2.6%
Don't know	23.4%

10. Do you believe that Kashgar city and prefecture level governments, and law enforcement and police bureaus in Kashgar work for people truly and fairly?

Yes	25.6%
Not really	28.2%
No	26.9%
Don't know	19%

Source: <http://bbs.xabnam.com/read.php?tid-104192.html>

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Writing a report is a collaborative process and many people have put a lot of effort into making sure that this report is an accurate and objective portrayal of the demolitions occurring in East Turkestan.

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Front cover photograph ©Reuters.



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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