

From Uyghur Muslims in China to the Uyghur Diaspora in Southeast Asia: A Political Reflection

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Abstract: This article discusses the problems of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, People's Republic of China, who have experienced mistreatment and violence from the communist regimes of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Zhu Rongji, and Xi Jinping. Despite facing this treatment, the Uyghur Muslim minority has received criticism and negative labels for their resistance. The world community has also shown little attention to the Uyghur issue. This article aims to reveal the dynamics among Uyghur Muslims as they shift from nationalistic interests to their participation in acts of terrorism. This article uses a descriptive-analytical qualitative method based on data obtained from interviews, documents and literature studies. This article also explores the novelty of this topic by discussing the impact and implications of Uyghur Muslim involvement in global jihadist groups. For example, this article shows that thousands of Uyghur Muslims have become diasporas in other countries (Turkey, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Middle East, Southeast Asia, etc.) seeking solutions to their problems, while being in a difficult and disadvantageous position. This article also explores the magnitude and extent of the activities and presence of Uyghur Muslims in Indonesia, such as in Aceh, Jakarta and Papua..

Keywords: Diaspora, Nationalism, Uyghur Muslim, Southeast Asia, Terrorism, ETIM

A. Introduction

Lately, the international world has begun to pay attention to the fate of ethnic Uyghur, Xinjiang, China who are predominantly Muslim. The reason is the repressive and coercive attitude of the Chinese communist government that arrested around 1 million Muslims and included them for re-education into special camps that looked more like prisons. Uyghur Muslims in China are

reportedly forced to give up their Muslim beliefs and identities by the Chinese government.¹

Re-education camps, mosque monitoring, extensive security inspection networks — these are just a few of the features of a Chinese-developed surveillance system to monitor Uyghur Muslims. Uyghur Muslims face the problem of Sinicization (noun): It is the process where traditionally non-Chinese societies are placed under the influence of the Han Chinese (the dominant ethnicity of China) in order to adapt the latter's culture, customs, and way of life.

Since the 1990s, China has responded to the growth of the Uyghur rebellion with intense oppression. The arrest of moderate Uyghur such as Ibrahim Tohti, "Hanization" of the city of Xinjiang and the systematic suppression of the Muslim community and the tangible manifestations of their faith have led to a steady exodus of Uyghur from China to Turkey through Southeast Asia. This is a crisis caused by the mistakes of China's own policies.² Han Chinese (the dominant ethnicity of China) in order to adapt the latter's culture, customs, and way of life.³

China's oppression of the Uyghur ethnic group has intensified after the events of September 11, 2001 following the emergence of a policy of 'war on terror' led by the United States. With the US 'war on terror' policy, China benefited and exploited it to be more massive and far in repressing and eliminating local residents in Xinjiang by accusing the Uyghur nationalist movement as a terrorist

¹ Sarmad Ishfaq, *The Sinicization and Suppression of China's Muslim Uyghurs*, Nov 23, 2018 <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2018/11/23/the-sinicization-and-suppression-of-chinas-muslim-uyghurs/>. Andrew Mumford, *Theory-Testing Uyghur Terrorism in China*, Oktober 2018, Vol.2, Issue 5, 2018

² al-Jazeera, 12 Desember 2014; al-Jazeera, 12 Maret; al-Jazeera, 1 April 2019).

³ Alwi Alatas, *Pergolakan Muslim Uyghur di Xinjiang dan Kebijakan Pemerintah China* <https://www.hidayatullah.com/kajian/sejarah/read/2018/12/31/157460/ pergolakan-muslim-uyghur-di-xinjiang-dan-kebijakan-pemerintah-china.html>. Thierry Kellner, *China: The Uyghur Situation from Independence for the Central Asian Republics to the Post 11 September Era*. UNHCR Emergency & Security Service, WRITENET Paper No. 2/2002. Nicolas. Becquelin, (2000). *Xinjiang in the Nineties*. *The China Journal*, No. 44, Juli. pp. 65-90. Freeberne, Michael, *Demographic and Economic Changes in the Singkiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*. *Population Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1. Juli 1966, pp 103-124. Haas, Benjamin. (2017). Howell, Anthony & Fan, C. Cindy. (2011). "Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Vol. 52, No. 1. pp. 119-139. Davis, Elizabeth Van Wie, *Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang China*. Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. Januari 2008. Zhao, Tong, *Social Cohesion and Islamic Radicalization: Implications from the Uyghur Insurgency*. *Journal of Strategic Security*. Vol. 3, No. 3. 2010 pp. 39-52.

group. The US terror war since September 11, 2001 has given legitimacy and political reasons as well as benefiting the PRC, because it has caused a reduction in international attention to the humanitarian persecution by the Chinese government.⁴

Between 1990 and 2010, the Chinese government gradually changed the national identity and practices of Uyghur Islam to become a national security threat, which is, weakening / securing them. men to shave their beards. China has banned women from using headscarves or veils, collecting DNA samples in bulk, taking passports and preventing Uyghur Muslim children from receiving religious education.⁵

The crackdown in Xinjiang increased in 2013 and 2014, with around 700 people killed in violence. In Xinjiang in 2014, there were 27,164 arrests, an increase of 95 percent from 2013. In 2014, the Chinese court sentenced 712 people to charges of separatism, terrorism and related allegations. In 2015, that number jumped to 1,419. Almost all convicts are Uyghur.⁶

Until 2008, violence in Xinjiang actually "reached an unprecedented level" and the actions of separatism in Xinjiang were increasingly sophisticated and increasingly related to religion. The religious expression that characterizes the resistance actions against the Chinese government in this matter is only the form used to oppose economic injustice that is the root of the problem. However, it seems that the Chinese government is ignoring the source of the problem and is now taking extreme steps that make it the international spotlight today.⁷

During his visit to China's Xinjiang province on August 26, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized that the Muslim-majority Uighur region is enjoying the benefits of "hard-won social stability", and is moving towards "unity, harmony

⁴Interviews with Uyghur Muslims in Kabul, Afghanistan January 11, 2017 and Frankfurt, Germany, February 22, 2018. See, Zachary Abuza, *The Uyghurs and China's Regional Counter-Terrorism Efforts*, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-Uyghurs-and-chinas-regional-counter-terrorism-efforts/> accessed 11/1/2019.

⁵ Zachary Abuza, *The Uyghurs and China's Regional Counter-Terrorism Efforts*, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-Uyghurs-and-chinas-regional-counter-terrorism-efforts/> accessed 11/1/2019.

⁶ al-Jazeera, 13 Maret 2016

⁷ Boehm, Dana Carver. (2009). *China's Failed War on Terror: Fanning the Flames of Uyghur Separatist Violence*, *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*. Vol. 2. pp. 61-124.

and prosperity". The picture of "beautiful Xinjiang" that Xi spoke of stands in stark contrast to the report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). An OHCHR report released last year concluded that since 2017, the Chinese government has committed serious human rights violations against millions of Uighurs and other Turks in Xinjiang, violations so systematic and widespread that they "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity".⁸

Chinese authorities have long insisted that the region is fine, but they tightly control access to it. This makes it difficult for outside observers to get a complete picture, but information about what is happening in Xinjiang is still leaking. The Chinese government arbitrarily detains and imprisons approximately one million Uighurs, Kazakhs, and others in "political re-education camps," formal detention centers, and prisons.⁹

In interviews with Human Rights Watch, residents described police arriving with lists of names, arresting Uighurs and other Turks from the streets or from their homes – sometimes in the middle of the night – and forcibly disappearing them. Those targeted were often detained for ordinary and lawful actions, such as attending a neighbor's Islamic funeral or using a cell phone app the government frowned upon. UN experts in Geneva on September 26 2023 expressed deep concern over the alleged significant expansion of the boarding school system run by the Chinese communist government in Xinjiang, which fails to provide education in mother tongues and forcibly segregates Uighurs and other minority groups. Muslim children from their families and communities experience forced assimilation by the Chinese communist regime.¹⁰

According to statements by 270 academics in China and the World recently, it is said that ethnic Uyghurs who did not take part in all 'political education' the Chinese government would be beaten, put on the cell, or punished by suppressing

⁸<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/china-xinjiangs-forced-separations-and-language-policies-uyghur-children>

⁹ al-Jazeera, 12 Maret, 1 paril, Desember 2014

¹⁰ al-Jazeera, 13 Maret 2016, al-Jazeera, 24 Desember 2014. The Star, [Malaysia], 4 Oktober 2014

the psyche or violating religious norms.¹¹ Indeed, there are a number of Uyghurs involved in terrorism cases. However, this is considered not to be a justification for being discriminatory.

B. Methods

This study uses qualitative methods. By gathering information in great detail, qualitative research methods seek to provide a thorough explanation of a phenomenon. The focus of qualitative research is on seeing events unfold and delving deeper into their meaning. In order to learn how people in a local area feel about specific problems. Here, it is crucial for the researcher to comprehend and possess sufficient knowledge about the issue that will be investigated. Qualitative research cannot be conducted if the researcher has no idea what he is trying to study. In addition to that, researchers can collect accurate data, keep assumptions to a minimum, and write persuasively to transport readers to the same place. The author takes a sociological and historical approach here, which promotes looking at dynamics in relations between Beijing and Uighur Muslims in China throughout time. The sociological approach has a very important role in efforts to understand and explore the true meanings related to the beliefs, values and traditions adhered to by Uighur Muslims in facing the coercion and repression of the Chinese communist regime.¹²

In the context of historical approach, one of the main tenets of this approach is that historical research is crucial for making sense of dynamics of the Uighur community in China which is experiencing repression and conflict between the state (China government) and society (the Uighur community) in the Xinjiang region. According to this school of thought, the past may teach us a lot about the present and the future of the Uighur community. From a historical perspective, this involves studying primary sources and other sources that provide information about Uighur Muslims and Beijing government issues from the past.

¹¹https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2016/04/160427_indonesia_santoso_Uyghur_sisa, diakses 4/6/2019 pukul 21.0

¹² Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu Sosial dalam Metodologi Sejarah*, (Jakarta: Penerbit PT Gramedia, 1992), p. 123. See. Louis Gottschalk, *Mengerti Sejarah, Pengantar Metode Sejarah*, diterjemahkan Nugroho Notokusanto (Jakarta: Penerbit Yayasan Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1975), pp. 31-32

By doing so systematically, one can gain a deep understanding of the past, present, and future of these topics.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Uyghur Foreign Fighters

Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand have frequently seen Uyghur foreign fighters. They have gone to Turkey from these nations, where they have either stayed or gone on to Syria or Iraq. Many Uyghurs have been apprehended in Southeast Asian transit nations when they unlawfully travel with counterfeit Turkish passports or falsely assert their citizenship of Turkey. Uyghur militants linked to the Eastern Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT), a terrorist organization sympathetic to IS, were apprehended and, in some instances, engaged in gunfights by Indonesian security forces during a recent crackdown. The bombs that killed 202 people in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2015 were also linked to Uyghur militants.

Among the more than 80 nations represented among the 10,000 foreign soldiers who rushed to join ISIS, the media highlighted China as one of those nations. The exact number of Uyghurs who have fought as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq is uncertain, as mentioned above.

Some estimates put the figure closer to 100, while the Chinese government has put it closer to 300. No matter how many there are, it's clear that Uyghurs have fled the volatile Chinese province of Xinjiang and are now fighting for jihad in the Middle East. Fight exclusively for the Islamic State, Timur. In South and Central Asia, there has been a long-standing interaction between Uyghur organizations and foreign warriors, but the Middle East is a new country.¹³

Not even the fighters' profiles are documented. Uyghur foreign fighters were "generally older, poorer, and more likely to join IS with their families." Recorded in Foreign Policy, Uyghur recruitment is "unskilled, and uneducated." This is according to an analysis by the New America Foundation of 4,000 registration records of fighters joining the IS between mid-2013 and mid-2014. The

¹³ al-Jazeera, 12 Maret 2021, 1 April 2022, china.org.cn/english/MATERIAL/139230.htm

exorbitant expense of traveling to Iraq and Syria makes it seem like most people who go there are planning to stay put. Among the recruiting pitches made to Uyghurs by IS is the promise of friendship and education for Caliphate residents. Many Uyghurs will certainly flee as a result of the growing brutality of Chinese policies towards the Uyghur minority, which has been identified as a key reason in their radicalization.

The most of the Uyghur people included in the New American reports do not have any background in jihad, which rules out any affiliation with ETIMs, TIPs, or any of the other prominent Uyghur terrorist groups. Once in Syria, this recruit who was previously unaffiliated may easily join an ETIM affiliated with IS or a TIP tied to Al-Qaeda. On the other hand, there have been reports of close cooperation between ETIM and TIP in Syria, which could mean that Al-Qaeda and IS are fighting side by side. The lower echelons of jihadists are not necessarily part of the rivalry. Still, the larger Uyghur jihadist movement is not without its differences.

It appears that the previous movements will lead to a spiral of disagreements among the key groups, which worried Beijing. As a result, more belligerent rhetoric demanding an assault on the Chinese state emerged. Using photos of Chinese President Xi Jinping as a weapon, Uyghur terrorists threatened China in a video from March 2017. They then proceeded to shoot a burning Chinese flag. Videos threatening the return of Uyghur foreign fighters to perform jihad have been found, seemingly, in China. Islamic State commander Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi said that Muslim rights in China have been "forcibly seized" and called for retaliation in a media output that differed from Al-Qaeda's coverage of the issue.

There is a possibility that Uyghur militants in Syria and Iraq will seek out another jihad battlefield outside of the area. 'Alternative place of jihad' for many radical Uyghurs who cannot travel to Iraq, Syria, or Turkey has been Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. For Uyghurs planning to fly to the Middle East to join terrorist groups, Southeast Asia has essentially become a gathering place and transit hub. Many of them gave themselves up and joined local factions that had ties to Al-Qaeda or IIHS. Returning to the area and connecting with other UFF who have joined the local jihad organization is a distinct possibility for those UFF who managed to reach Iraq and Syria via Southeast Asia. As a result, there will be an overwhelming number of Uyghurs who are both combat-ready and well-versed in the local network.

The oppressive policies implemented by China in Xinjiang have had a chilling effect on Uyghur identity and the radicalization of Islam. These policies include restrictions on the names of Uyghur babies, restrictions on the length of men's beards, restrictions on the practice of Ramadan, and favoritism towards Han Chinese in employment and education. What was once a separatist struggle is becoming more Islamized, and this persecution is a contributing cause.

In 2001, when coalition forces led by the US and Afghan forces commanded by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban killed or captured Uyghur jihadists fighting under the banner of the East Turkestan Islam Movement (ETIM), the Uyghur jihadists first gained international prominence. Nonetheless, jihadists from the Uyghur people have expanded their reach to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. While some ETIM members did remain active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, others joined the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP), which fought in Syria against Jabhah Fatah al Syam (JFS), the umbrella group of Al-Qaeda. Several Uyghurs have enlisted with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other local Indonesian terrorist organizations.

Uyghur fighters in diaspora have distinct traits as a group, despite belonging to several groups with varying goals. The majority of the Han Chinese who rule the Uyghur people see them as culturally and religiously distinct from themselves. Because of these distinctions, the Uyghur people have a strong religious ethnonationalist identity that has driven some of them to resort to violence in their quest to found their own homeland, East Turkestan. To that end, Uyghurs have carried out a number of terrorist strikes in China throughout the last 20 years. Among the most recent assaults are:

- The ETIM assaults at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in October 2013 claimed the lives of five individuals.
- Thirty persons were killed in a knife attack at a Kunming railway station in February 2014.
- Urumqi South Railway Station was the scene of three fatalities and seventy-nine injuries in April 2014 due to bomb and knife assaults.
- Urumqi saw a tragic incident in May 2014 when two cars were targeted in an explosion that claimed the lives of 31 persons.

- Fifty people were murdered and fifty more were injured in September 2014 due to bomb blasts, confrontations, and suicide bombers.
- In October 2015, fifty persons were killed in a knife assault in a coalmine. The Uyghur people of Xinjiang, China, were persecuted by the Beijing Communist Regime.

2. The Uyghur Diaspora

Even outside of China, factors have contributed to the radicalization of Uyghurs and their sense of Islamic identity. Historically, Turkey has felt compassion for the Uyghur people due to the fact that the two groups have ethnic ties. "East Turkestan is not only the home of Turks," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan previously said. A portion of Turkey's rich cultural heritage may be traced back to the Uyghur people who were born there. We honor the martyrs of East Turkistan. Helping Uyghurs who wish to join terrorist groups in Syria is another possible outcome of Turkish sympathies. Although many Uyghurs have Turkish relatives and friends, many are drawn to violent jihadism as a means of expressing their religious identity and continuing their fight against the Chinese government. Two Uyghurs in a recent IS video made this plea clear when they threatened the "henchmen of the Chinese communist stooge" and said they would unleash "rivers of blood" on China in "retaliation for tears flowing from people's eyes." enslaved individuals. Thus, Uyghur warriors overseas are a byproduct of domestic encouragement of tyranny and international appeals to ethnic and religious identity.

Their involvement as foreign fighters in jihad activities has taken on unique forms due to the unique qualities of these Uyghurs from China. Yet, as foreign fighters, Uyghurs are presently under-investigated. Gradually, the Uyghurs were analyzed, with an emphasis on the Uyghur resistance movement or a detailed account of the activities in which the Uyghurs took part. Secondary sources continue to show widespread Uyghur involvement among jihadists, despite the difficulty of developing quantitative studies or researching clandestine groups involved in violent operations across multiple battlefields and foreigners' inability to access Uyghurs in Xinjiang. The policy summary delves into the size and scope of UFF in different regions, their effects on global security, and how their involvement with jihadist groups might grow in this manner by referencing media coverage and research from think tanks.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch documented that Uyghur Muslims were compelled to pledge loyalty to President Xi Jinping, held indefinitely, seen as a potential disease vector, and incited to chant Communist Party slogans. Along with gathering DNA from millions of citizens, checking IDs at checkpoints, and analyzing facial recognition software, the Chinese government keeps a careful eye on the whereabouts of the Uyghur minority.

Suffocation, pain, and even death can result from incarceration. Beijing swiftly rejected any human rights breaches that had been reported. Hua Chunying, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, stated that Xinjiang's multiethnic populace coexisted in "peace, satisfaction, and enjoying a peaceful and progressive life." Beijing formally claimed Xinjiang as its territory after the Chinese Communist Party won the civil war, continuing decades of tumultuous relations between the two regions. It is now officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) because to the recognition it received from the central government.

Because of its rich oil and mineral resources, Xinjiang's autonomy was granted for economic reasons. On top of that, Xinjiang served as China's gateway to Central Asia and the Middle East, two areas that are currently investment gold mines for the Chinese economy. According to a report by the Council on Foreign Relations, China initiated numerous development initiatives soon after being granted autonomy status. The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) was founded in 1954 by the Chinese government to assist with agricultural and settlement growth in the region. About fifty years passed during the course of this undertaking. It was in the early 90s when Xinjiang saw the establishment of special economic zones. Beijing changes its tax policy and provides subsidies to local cotton growers. Infrastructure projects, such as the Tarim Desert Highway and the railway line to western Xinjiang, were funded by the central government during the same period.

Migrant laborers, mainly members of the Han ethnic group—the biggest in China—have flocked to Xinjiang in response to the region's rapid economic development. This led to a meteoric rise in the Han population in Xinjiang, which went from 6.7% (220,000) in 1949 to 40% (8.4 million) in 2008 and 58% in 2018. Social strife is a lasting effect of Han migration. There is a growing problem with the Uyghur community's access to land and potable water. Discriminatory labor recruitment tactics are a major contributor to the widening income gap. While the

Han are becoming wealthier, the Uyghurs are becoming poorer in the country where they have ancestral ties. The Uyghur people are not allowed to fast or wear veils during Ramadan in Beijing. Next, the Chinese government wasted no time demolishing Kashgar's historic structures in the interest of modernizing the city's infrastructure.

Major conflicts between ethnic Han and Uyghurs occurred in Guangdong in 2009 following the deaths of two Uyghur workers. More than 1,600 were hurt, 718 were arrested, and 197 lost their lives as a result of this conflict. As things stand, the Uyghur problem may be worse if Beijing's policies didn't respect the Uyghur people's cultural expressions. Uyghur discontent grows in proportion to the degree to which it is suppressed. Nevertheless, is it feasible to adopt such a strategy in light of the economic challenges and Beijing's efforts to become the world's economic superpower by investing billions in infrastructure projects? The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a separatist group that has been active since the 1990s, has only made matters worse. It is worth fighting ETIM because Beijing considers them terrorists and claims they are linked to Al Qaeda.

3. East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)

Muslim separatists from the Uyghur ethnic group, who speak Turkish, established the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in the Xinjiang province of northwest China. During the height of US-China cooperation in the fight against terrorism following the events of September 11, 2001, the US Department of Defense designated ETIM as a terrorist organization in 2002. The tumultuous atmosphere in China following a wave of terrorist incidents in 2014 has only been exacerbated by this group and its ties to Muslim fanaticism.

The Uyghur resistance movement is based in the sparsely populated Xinjiang Province, which borders eight countries—among them, Pakistan and Afghanistan. A Russian publication claimed in 2000 that ETIM had met in Afghanistan in 1999 and that Osama bin Laden had offered financial support to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. This was the first public reference to the ETIM.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has listed ETIM as one of the extreme separatist groups; it was supposedly created by Hasan Mahsum, a Uyghur from the Kashgar Xinjiang province. Seeking the establishment of a sovereign nation

known as East Turkestan including territories encompassing regions such as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and portions of Turkey.

Following Mahsum's 2003 killing at the hands of Pakistani authorities in an operation targeting al-Qaeda strongholds close to the Afghan border, Abdul Haq—who was allegedly murdered in Pakistan in 2010—took charge of the organization. One of ETIM's leaders, Memetuhut Memetrozi, is currently receiving a life sentence in China for his role in a terrorist act. A report from August 2014 said that he was indoctrinated in a madrasa in Pakistan. The report included an unusual admission of Pakistani links to Uyghur militancy; Memetuhut claimed to have met Mahsum in 1997 and to have founded the ETIM later that year.

Since its inception, the Chinese communist party has labeled ETIM as a terrorist organization. Following the events of September 11, 2001, China cautioned the Bush administration that ETIM had ties to al-Qaeda and bin Laden, a source of concern for the Chinese communist dictatorship. Although the group is not officially listed as a foreign terrorist organization by the US State Department, it has still registered with the UN Security Council's Al-Qaeda / Taliban Sanctions Committee. Over the past decade, China has engaged in joint military drills in Xinjiang with Central Asian nations and Russia in an effort to counter what it terms as "East Turkistan terrorists." U.S. assets will be frozen in August 2002, according to the Bush administration's announcement, following months of pressure from Beijing.

The majority of China's around ten million Uyghurs live in the region of Xinjiang, which gained its status as a province in 1884. They were mostly Sufi Muslims and spoke Uyghur, but they were originally from Turkey. Following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), the Uyghurs enjoyed a brief period of statehood in the years 1931–1934 and again from 1944–1949, when communists seized power and fully subjugated the area. Although several Uyghurs express concerns about being coerced into assimilation, Xinjiang was officially designated as a "autonomous region" in the People's Republic of China in 1955. In a 2008 report for the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Elizabeth Van Wie Davis states that the Uyghur people have not established any agenda. Keeping cultural diversity and independent relations with China is important to some Uyghurs, he added, while others seek separate nations. Part of the population is content with how things have worked out with the Chinese system.

Finally, when it comes to Uyghur secession, ETIM has never stood alone. "The Chinese leadership is clearly worried that Xinjiang separatism has and will continue to gain support from transnational Muslim extremists. This could have positive implications for other dormant separatist movements in China that do not have Muslim ties or a separatist agenda, as well as for other Chinese Muslims who do not have a separatist agenda," the author writes, referring to the large Uyghur émigré population. With the goal of discouraging Central Asian countries from allying with China, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan inked the Shanghai Agreement in 1996. Uyghur minority from Xinjiang's separatist movement and to ensure the return of Uyghurs who have escaped persecution in China.

Anger has flared up from time to time between Uyghurs and Han ethnic Chinese. A quarrel erupted in July 2009 at a Guangdong province plant after Uyghurs accused Han Chinese coworkers of racial aggression. More than 150 people were killed in riots in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, after a demonstration that had been planned by over a thousand Uyghur demonstrators. This was the worst case of public violence in China since the 1989 crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. A well-known Uyghur economist named Ilham Tohti was subsequently arrested and is currently being held under house arrest for his critical writings regarding government policy against ethnic groups. The incident prompted Wang Yang, the Guangdong Party committee secretary, to declare that China must change its policies toward ethnic minorities in order to avoid more "difficulties." Worries have been aroused by a slew of recent knife incidents.

Since March, when a mob of Uyghurs slaughtered 29 people at a train station in Kunming, Yunnan province, there have been three such attacks outside of train stations in China. The most recent one was in May 2014 at Guangzhou. Near the Urumqi, Xinjiang, train station, three individuals were murdered in late April in an explosion and subsequent knife attack. In the aftermath of the attack, President Xi Jinping issued an order to the Xinjiang authorities to eliminate "cruel terrorists" and take "decisive steps."

China has publicly associated ETIM with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban since the 1990s, however the assertion has been disputed. A probe conducted by the Chinese authorities in January 2002 revealed that ETIM had been provided with funds, weapons, and support by terrorist groups. The investigation states that

ETIM terrorists received al-Qaeda training in Afghanistan before returning to Xinjiang and establishing terrorist cells. Despite this, ETIM chief Mahsum maintains that his movement is in no way associated with al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Many Uyghur separatists have fled to Pakistan and other unstable bordering countries as a result of China's crackdown on the ETIM uprising in Xinjiang. There, they have joined forces with jihadists and created strategic alliances. Al-Qaeda and Taliban-affiliated factions. "Therefore, Uyghur militant groups may activate the capabilities of a vast network of transnational terrorist organizations and intensify their cooperation with them. While hiding out in Pakistan in March 2014, TIP commander Abdullah Mansour declared a holy war against China, whom he branded as the "enemy" of all Muslims. The North Waziristan region is a haven for TIP separatists, a disturbing association that has prompted Beijing to put pressure on Islamabad about counter-terrorism measures.

It is also conceivable for jihad to exert pressure on Chinese interests in Pakistan; nevertheless, it is more probable that marginalized groups strive to stand out and attract attention from the Pakistani state, which holds its relationship with China in high regard.

4. Uyghur Diaspora in Indonesia

After being picked up in Puncak, Santoso/Ali Kalora, a leader of the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT-East Indonesian Mujahidin) network, was transported to Makassar and thereafter to Central Sulawesi. That information comes from individuals apprehended in Parigi Moutong. This is very similar to the situation for the foreigners who are still on Mount Poso. Some of Santoso's foreign recruits, like the Uyghur People's Republic of China (PRC), came through the Internet. "Those who desire to engage in jihad, join us here," proclaimed Santoso in an online message.

The arrest of Uyghurs occurred in September 2014, when they attempted to establish contact with the Islamic State-affiliated group Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT-East Indonesian Mujahidin), as reported by Soliev (2016). Five members of Katibah Gigih Rahmat, a terrorist organization supported by TIP, were apprehended by Indonesian authorities on August 5, 2016, while they were on Bantam. The Uyghur people's involvement with terrorist groups in Indonesia is nothing new. Densus 88 (Special Detachment 88) is still on the hunt for foreign

nationals of Uyghur or Chinese descent who are prepared to become "brides" or suicide bombers who were hiding out in Batam. In Eastern Indonesia, the Mujahidin group attracted several Uyghur members who shared their ideology in the fight.

a. Together with Terrorist Santoso / Ali Kalora in Poso, Central Sulawesi

The trail of involvement of Uyghurs from Xinjiang Province, China to Poso to join the terrorist group Santoso, Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (East Indonesian Mujahidin-MIT group). At that time, Central Sulawesi Regional Police Chief Inspector General Rudi Sufhariadi said that Santoso-led terrorist groups were foreign nationals from ethnic Uyghurs. The majority of the ethnic groups in Xinjiang Province, China, even have a special role in the East Indonesian Mujahidin group in guerrillas in the mountains of the Poso region, Central Sulawesi. Because of his stronger physical abilities, they (Uyghurs) were given the task of carrying logistics. The duties of ethnic Uyghurs in Santoso's group are known from four who have been arrested from a number of lists of searches for Tinombala's operations.

The physical strength of the Uyghur ethnic group in Santoso, is likened to Rudi's strength in lifting up rice sacks of food supplies. In a guerrilla campaign to avoid the pursuit of a joint apparatus of the Tinombala operation, the foreigner was more agile in his movements. From the confession of Santoso's captured men, said Rudi, there were six Uyghurs in the MIT group. However, five of them were killed during the Santoso hunting operation and one was caught. Three Uyghur terrorists, Ahmet Mahmud, Altinci Bayyram, and Abdul Basit Tuzer, in the North Jakarta District Court, July 13, 2015.

Police in Poso, Central Sulawesi, arrested Ahmed Bozoglan, 27, in mid-September 2014. Preliminary information from the Indonesian police stated that they were allegedly linked to an Islamic State or ISIS group in Indonesia. They were arrested along with a member of the East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) Assembly group led by Santoso. Preliminary information from the Indonesian police stated that they were allegedly related to the Islamic State or ISIS group in Indonesia. They were arrested along with a member of the East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) group led by Santoso. In mid-July, three of his colleagues, Ahmet

Mahmut, 20, Altinci Bairam, 29, and Tuzer Abdul Basit, 23, were convicted of an "evil conspiracy" and were considered to violate the terrorism law.

Until now, there is still one ethnic Uyghur who joined the Santoso group. According to the search, seven people from ethnic Chinese minorities were detected in Poso since 2014. Four of them, who carried Turkish passports, were arrested in Parigi Moutong, Central Sulawesi. In 2015, they were sentenced to six years in prison. The four were Ahmad Bozoglan, Ahmet Mahmut, Altinci Bayram and Tuzer Abdul Basit. When the panel of judges concluded, they were proven legally and convincingly violated the Terrorism Act and the Immigration Act.

Regarding the entry of Uyghurs into the terrorism scene in Poso, the Indonesian people and government were truly shocked. The community and the government had previously been concerned about the oppression and violence experienced by Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province, China. Nevertheless, according to Vice President Jusuf Kalla, cases of Uyghur ethnic violence must be seen from two sides. Violent cases of Uyghur Muslims must be distinguished between discriminatory treatment and the possibility of radicalism in the region. The government, said Vice President Jusuf Kalla, continued to support an enforcement of Human Rights (HAM) if there was discrimination in religion, violating our provisions or agreements on human rights internationally which must be adhered to by the Chinese side.¹⁴

The other side is related to the possibility of radicalism in the Poso region. radicalism from ethnic Uyghurs has entered Indonesia through the Santoso terrorist network in Poso. At that time there were 12 people who took part in the war and helped Santoso, 6 who participated in the Uyghur death, four were detained.

Six Uyghurs, China, joined the terrorist group Santoso. Through Operation Tinombala, five of them died and left one person left. And four of them have strong physical abilities and are able to carry large amounts of logistics. One of them named Mustafa Genc alias Mus'ab who played the shooter in Santoso's group, and was involved in at least seven events related to shootings, killings and

¹⁴Talks/Interview with Vice President (Wapres) M. Jusuf Kalla, Jakarta, Kamis 20 Desember 2018.

kidnappings of both civilians and security forces in Poso, Central Sulawesi throughout 2014 to 2015.

Mustafa Genc's crimes including in 2014 were known to be involved in bombing in Dewua village, Brimob tactical car attack on Jalan Tangkura, kidnapping of two Sedoa villagers in North Lore District, kidnapping three Tamadue villagers in East Lore Sub-district, and killing a Tauca villager, Poso South Coast.

In 2015 he was also involved in the killing of three farmers from the Tangkura village, the murder of three Sausu villagers, and the shooting that killed two police officers, namely Iptu Bryan and Brigadier Wahyudi Saputra.

Mustafa Genc aka Mus'ab is known to have joined since 2014 with five of his colleagues. Of the six people, five were killed, while one other person named Ibrohim is estimated to still be alive. The five foreign members of the Santoso group who were killed were Faruq, Abdul Azis, Turan aka Joko, Nurettin Gundogdu aka Abdul Malik alias Malik, and Mustafa Genc aka Mus'ab.

And the six foreigners in Santoso's group came with 10 other people around September 2014, but 4 of them were Abdul Basit, Ahmad Bus Okhlan, Altenje Bairam and Ahmad Bozoglan had already been arrested by the police in Ampibabo village, Ampibabo District Parigi Moutong, Central Sulawesi. The four people were later sentenced to an average of six years in prison in the trial at the South Jakarta District Court.

The arrival of Uyghurs in Poso is expected because of Santoso 's appeal or appeal on social media that Asians who want to join ISIS must first study and practice in Poso. Meanwhile, ISIS in Syria, asked the (East Indonesian Mujahidin-MIT) group led by Santoso/Ali Kalora to provide combat training to ethnic Uyghurs.¹⁵

In this connection, the Chinese Consul General in Surabaya, Gu Jingqi, explained that the problem experienced by the Uyghurs was a separatist problem that arose from a small number of local residents. "Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang are around 10 million people, a small number are radical in their desire to be

¹⁵Interview with Christian and Muslim activists in Poso, Central Sulawesi November-Desember 2018

independent, separate from China. That's what the Chinese Government faces and handles," he explained.¹⁶ The number of ethnic Uyghur Muslims is about half of the Muslim population in China.

b. Outside the Poso Terrorist Network

In addition to joining the Santoso network in Poso, terrorist networks from the Uyghurs also guerrilla with other terrorist networks outside Poso. While serving as National Adjunct Senior Commissioner of BNPT, Tito Karnavian once explained that after joining a terrorist network in the country, the Uyghur network used networks in Indonesia to hide, practice, and jihad. Therefore, it is not surprising that ISIS figures in Syria both from Indonesia and from the Uyghur can join in there, "said the Head of BNPT, Inspector General of Police Tito Karnavian, March 21, 2016.

The Uyghur network takes advantage of the changing global situation of ISIS network groups. Uyghur groups use it in separatism, independence or the economy by forming a local caliph. They communicate and interact to form a global network. They can move the network in their respective countries to connect. Six suspected people from Uyghur are known to exist. Four people were arrested and convicted in 2015, one was arrested in Bekasi, and two were shot in Bekasi.

Nevertheless, that does not mean that the existence and behavior of an international network of terrorists from the Uyghurs has not closed their books in the country. At least the ambush of four terrorists in South Tangerang is proof. In addition, before the incident was a suspected terrorist from the Uyghur tribe, the National Police Headquarters Detachment 88 questioned China. This inspection is a result of the wrong landing of a Lion Air plane that should be on foreign flights but on the domestic. Until finally the terrorist suspect escaped from immigration checks at Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Cengkareng, May 10, 2016.

Immigration provided information to the police about the existence of Uyghurs who escaped the incident. Likewise, the Coordinating Minister for

¹⁶<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20181226150942-113-356487/Uyghur-dan-dugaan-penindasan-china-pada-2018> diakses 4/6/2019 pukul 22.00.

Politics and Security Wiranto revealed the results of his meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Xie Feng, namely a joint agreement to hold Uyghur ethnic groups belonging to the ISIS group into the territory of both countries and Malaysia. It is known, Malaysia is the entrance to ethnic Uyghur residents affiliated with the ISIS group to Poso, Central Sulawesi, a power base for Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) Group.

Many Uyghurs are now leaving for Syria to join and train with the ISIS group and it is feared that they will return to China or to Indonesia or Southeast Asia.¹⁷ The Uyghur problem has developed so quickly that many Uyghur people who were later trained in ISIS were in Syria there and very, may later when they returned to passing Malaysia or Indonesia back to their area and this we agreed not to make room for them.

C. Conclusion

Uyghur, especially ethnic Turkestan originating from northwest China in Xinjiang province, have become a real part of jihad terror groups that are globally active. Uyghur jihadists first spread to various parts of the world when the United States and its allies attacked Afghanistan in 2001. While continuing their cooperation with the Taliban under the banner of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Uyghur jihadists have now spread to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. ETIM members are part of the Turkestan Islamic Party fighting with the Al-Qaeda umbrella group in Syria, but other Uyghur have joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and others have joined local terror groups in Indonesia. In this case, it cannot be denied that the seeds of radicalism also grew in some Uyghur residents. Those who joined the East Turkestan Party were called involved in terrorism networks, including Al Qaidah. In fact there are reportedly a number of ethnic Uyghurs who participated in the civil war in Syria and they were also joining the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT- East Indonesian Mujahidin) affiliated to ISIS.

In Indonesia, however, a number of ethnic Uyghurs were arrested for being involved in the East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) terrorist group who affiliated to ISIS, has become evidence that Uyghur Muslims have the potential to join terrorist

¹⁷Interviews with Uyghur Muslims in Frankfurt, Germany February 22, 2018.

groups in an effort to fight against oppression by the China (PRC). Some Uyghur persons are currently under-examined as active participants in jihadist organizations. Their struggle against the Chinese Government or narrowly describes certain groups where Uyghur have become participants.

The issue of human rights violations by the Chinese government against the Uyghur, as ethnic minorities, and followers of Islamic religion is sticking out throughout China in recent years. The Bamboo Curtain country is highlighted because it is considered to hinder religious freedom under the pretext of cultural uniformity and suppressing radicalism. Especially the question of ethnic Uyghurs in Xinjiang is increasingly being reported, because there are allegations that the Chinese government intentionally wants to silence them. It is about one million ethnic Uyghurs in 2018 were reportedly thrown into special camps. Some 'alumni' of the camps said, they were treated badly, some even tortured, inside the camp brutally.

The Chinese government discriminates against the Xinjiang region in which ethnic Uyghurs who embrace Islam, have been the victims of the victimized. They often impose unreasonable rules, such as prohibiting fasting during Ramadan, prohibited from holding recitals, until prayers in congregation. Even the Chinese authorities strictly place checkpoints throughout the region to the Xinjiang border. The reason the Chinese government is doing this is to prevent the spread of radical ideologies among Uyghur ethnic groups. However, from the ethnic side of the Uyghurs, they expressed precisely the treatment of the Chinese government which triggered radicalism and extremism.

When the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Tse Tung (Mao Ze Dong) launched the Cultural Revolution program in 1966 to 1976, a number of people who held fast to religious principles were also affected. In fact, at first the idea was aimed at fighting the aristocracy in the empire who was thought to have infiltrated the government, and was about to restore their position. Because the program also sent China the Red Army to invade and annex Tibet. That caused the Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, to flee and is currently in exile in India. A number of Uyghurs who had felt thrown into concentration camps claimed to be forced to study Chinese Communist Party propaganda every day. Some even claimed to be tortured.[]

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Interview

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