



## Foreign Affairs Committee

House of Commons · London · SW1A 0AA  
+44 20 7219 6106 · fac@parliament.uk  
www.parliament.uk · @CommonsForeign

**From the Chair**  
Tom Tugendhat MP

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

24 November 2020

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee to ask that the UK Government takes formal steps towards determining whether the Chinese government's policies in Xinjiang constitute genocide. The mounting credible evidence of mass incarceration, forced sterilisation, cultural destruction and ethnic displacement means that determining the nature of these crimes, and the appropriate response, is urgent.

The situation has been recognised as a genocide in allied countries, including by the Subcommittee on International Human Rights in the Canadian Parliament and by the campaign of US President-Elect Joe Biden. Likewise, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect has stated that China's Xinjiang policies constitute a "*prima facie* case of genocide".

The Government's longstanding argument has been that it is the place of a "competent court" to determine such definitions. Rather than wait for such a reference to be made, there is an opportunity for the UK Government to demonstrate leadership in making this happen. Alongside this, we would also like to know if the Government considers there to be a serious risk of genocide in Xinjiang – an assessment that can be made without the verdict of a court. You have told the Committee that designating a genocide is challenging because of the need to prove intent. In response, we suggest that the following may constitute proof of intent:

- Forced sterilisation of Uyghur women through the use of intrauterine devices (IUDs).
- Large-scale separation of Uyghur and other minority ethnic children from their parents.

It is difficult to conceive of a situation in which these occurrences would not be intentional, or how these actions would not demonstrate the intended destruction of a group. They correspond directly with the following criteria for genocide set out by Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The Genocide Convention is clear that any one of these acts fulfils the definition of genocide. This is the internationally agreed definition for genocide to which the UK subscribes. While the UK's efforts to raise the situation in Xinjiang at the UN are welcome, I am confident that a court ruling would be a powerful step towards galvanising the international community to bring an end to these atrocities.

It would be helpful to have a response by 8 December. I intend to place your response in the public domain.

Best wishes

**TOM TUGENDHAT**