



House of Commons  
Foreign Affairs Committee

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**Never Again: The  
UK's Responsibility to  
Act on Atrocities in  
Xinjiang and Beyond:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Second Report**

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**Fifth Special Report of Session  
2021–22**

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to be printed 9 November 2021*

## The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and its associated public bodies.

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### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6106; the Committee's email address is [fac@parliament.uk](mailto:fac@parliament.uk).

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# Fifth Special Report

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On 8 July 2021, the Foreign Affairs Committee published its Second Report of Session 2021–22, [Never Again: The UK's Responsibility to Act on Atrocities in Xinjiang and Beyond](#) (HC 198). The Government's response was received on 1 November 2021 and is appended below.

## Appendix: Government Response

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### Introduction

The Government is grateful for the Foreign Affairs Committee's report "*Never Again: The UK's Responsibility to Act on Atrocities in Xinjiang and Beyond*", published on 8 July 2021.

Promoting human rights around the world is at the heart of the FCDO's foreign policy. We are proud that the UK is known as a champion of open and democratic societies, human rights and the rule of law. Xinjiang has rightly been at the centre of our human rights work in recent years. The evidence of the scale and the severity of the human rights violations being perpetrated against Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups is far-reaching, and paints a deeply concerning picture. In response, we have taken robust action and worked closely with a wide range of international partners to increase the pressure on China to change its behaviour. Our actions have included:

- Leading the first two statements on Xinjiang at the UN, and deploying our global diplomatic network to build international support for subsequent statements;
- Repeatedly urging China to grant unfettered access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to verify the facts on the ground;
- Using our Global Human Rights sanctions regime to impose asset bans and travel freezes on Chinese actors responsible for enforcing China's repressive policies in Xinjiang;
- Announcing robust measures to help ensure that no UK organisation is complicit in the human rights violations in Xinjiang;
- Funding research to build the evidence base and deepen international understanding of the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang;
- Consistently raising our concerns with the Chinese authorities at the highest levels in public and private; and
- Working closely with our international partners—including through the G7—to build consensus on the need to take further action.

There is evidence that international pressure has, at a minimum, resulted in China changing its narrative on Xinjiang. It has now acknowledged the existence of 're-education camps', claimed that 'students' at those camps have 'graduated', and exerted significant propaganda efforts to try to justify its policies.

However, we recognise that further international action is required. We have therefore given careful consideration to each of the Committee's 36 wide-ranging recommendations, and have addressed each recommendation in full.

## The Multilateral System

### **Recommendation 1**

***Accept Parliament's view that Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang are suffering genocide and crimes against humanity, and take action to bring these crimes to an end.***

The Government agrees that there is compelling evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. This includes the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in "political re-education camps" since 2017; systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam; and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. There is also credible evidence of forced labour both within and beyond Xinjiang, and of the forced suppression of births.

We are clear that these actions represent gross violations of human rights, for which China must be held to account. However it is the long-standing policy of the British Government not to make determinations in relation to genocide. Genocide is a crime and, like other crimes, whether it has occurred should be decided after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible judicial process.

This longstanding policy has not prevented us from taking robust action, as set out in the introduction, and has no bearing on our commitment to address the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. We will continue to act with our international partners to increase the pressure on China to change its behaviour.

### **Recommendation 2**

***Call for the immediate disbandment of the internment camp system in Xinjiang, the cessation of forced sterilisation of women and separation of children, and an end to mass forced labour programmes such as Xinjiang Aid.***

See combined response to Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 below.

### **Recommendation 3**

***The UK Government should increase pressure on the Chinese government to allow international observers access to Xinjiang, especially the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Government should use every opportunity it has at UN organs, summits, and treaty bodies to raise the issue. To do this, the UK should engage more closely with partners and those nations not currently taking action to ensure support on UN votes and statements.***

See combined response to Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 below.

### **Recommendation 4**

***If the Chinese government continues to stall and prevent in-country investigations, the UK should propose a Human Rights Council motion that the High Commissioner for Human Rights conduct an investigation into the atrocities in Xinjiang from outside of China. The Government should also explore the prospect of a Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry.***

#### **Combined response to Recommendations 2, 3 and 4**

The Government has repeatedly called out the gross violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang, and in response has led international efforts to hold China to account.

In October 2019, the UK led the first formal joint statement on Xinjiang at the UN, which was supported by 23 countries. We have subsequently used our global diplomatic network to incrementally increase the pressure on China to change its behaviour in Xinjiang. This has included a further joint statement led by the UK in June 2020, in addition to statements led by Germany, Canada and France in October 2020, June 2021 and October 2021 respectively. The most recent statement was supported by 43 countries.

Our statements have called on China to end the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and expressed particular concern about forced labour, the sterilisation of women, and separation of children from their parents. We will continue to reiterate these messages in line with recommendation 2.

We have also repeatedly called on China to grant urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights or another independent fact-finding body. In October 2021, a global UK diplomatic effort helped to secure the support of 43 countries for a joint statement at the UN that called on China to allow ‘immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers’, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In May, under our G7 Presidency, G7 Foreign Ministers also called on China to grant such access. The former Foreign Secretary also raised this issue personally on numerous occasions, including in a telephone call with his Chinese counterpart on 27 May, and in his address to the UN Human Rights Council on 22 February. The former Minister for Asia also reiterated this point during his introductory meeting with the new Chinese Ambassador to the UK on 8 September. We will continue to work with our international partners to increase the pressure on China to allow such access, and we accept recommendation 3.

We also agree that it is important for relevant UN bodies and observers to consider the considerable volume of evidence that has emerged, including from satellite imagery, reporting by NGOs, research reports—including those funded by the UK—and the Chinese authorities’ own documents. We therefore welcome plans announced by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in September to finalise and make public an assessment of the available information by the end of the year.

### **Recommendation 5**

***Urgently raise a complaint against China to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.***

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is an important independent mechanism that monitors the implementation of States Parties' obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is already looking closely at China's actions in Xinjiang.

In its 2018 Concluding Observations on China's examination under the treaty, CERD made eight recommendations in respect of Xinjiang. CERD has subsequently followed up on these recommendations with China, including in a public letter in November 2020.

The UK also referred to these recommendations in our advance questions to China during the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in 2018. The most recent joint statement on Xinjiang at the UN Third Committee in October 2021 also called on China to 'urgently implement' the recommendations. Previous joint statements on Xinjiang, including those led by the UK, have also raised this matter.

Given CERD is already paying close attention to the situation in Xinjiang, we judge that lodging a bilateral complaint would not result in an increase in scrutiny, but would risk turning this issue of global concern into a bilateral dispute between the UK and China. This would be contrary to our firm view that concerted international pressure is the most effective means of influencing China. We will continue to work closely with our partners on this matter.

### **Recommendation 6**

***Move for special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Human Rights Council to find solutions to the crisis in Xinjiang.***

While in principle the Government sees value in holding special sessions to find solutions to the human rights situation in Xinjiang, we must also take account of the level of support required to achieve such an outcome. At present we do not consider there to be sufficient support to successfully move for special sessions, or for the creation of international mechanisms on Xinjiang.

### **Recommendation 7**

***Engage in dialogue with the International Criminal Court about the feasibility of a proprio motu investigation into crimes committed against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and beyond.***

As the Committee will be aware, decisions on opening proprio motu investigations at the International Criminal Court (ICC) lie with the Office of the ICC Prosecutor. The Government respects the Office's independence in this matter. The exercise of all ICC powers is also limited by the jurisdictional limits of the Rome Statute. In this instance, the alleged crimes are taking place in the territory of a non-State Party to the Rome Statute and involve nationals of a non-State Party, and we are therefore unable to accept this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 8**

***Allocate funding for the creation of an international mechanism for collecting evidence on the crimes in Xinjiang, and provide further resources to help locate and record the details of those who have gone missing under the Chinese Communist Party's internment system so that they do not remain nameless victims.***

The Government recognises the importance of collecting rigorous and credible evidence of the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. Evidence is used to inform Government policy, raise international awareness, and shine a spotlight on China's actions.

Government funded research has already made a significant contribution to international understanding and awareness of the situation in Xinjiang. This has included reports published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) on the administration of "re-education camps" in Xinjiang, published in October 2021, and on the use of Uyghur forced labour in factories, "Uyghurs for Sale", published in March 2020. We also provided financial assistance for a recent report published by the Rights Practice, "Criminal Law and Deprivation of Liberty in Xinjiang". We will continue to fund similar research.

British diplomats also regularly visit Xinjiang, most recently in April 2021, to gain the latest insights of the situation on the ground.

We have also used our diplomatic network to raise awareness of the human rights situation in Xinjiang among third countries, and engaged the media, business, civil society, and academic stakeholders. Rigorous independent research is particularly important in documenting available evidence, as well as increasing transparency and holding China to account.

Creating an international mechanism through the UN to collect evidence, however, would require a resolution at the Security Council, General Assembly or the Human Rights Council. If such a mechanism were to be established, we would consider at that time whether to provide funding to support it.

### **Recommendation 9**

***Lead efforts to create a more consistent coalition of democratic countries to coordinate action on Xinjiang through the UN and other institutions.***

We are committed to working with a broad range of international partners to make clear to China the cost for its continued violations in Xinjiang.

As set out in our response to recommendations 2, 3 and 4, the UK led the first two joint statements on Xinjiang at the UN in October 2019 and June 2020. These statements played a pivotal role in helping to build the international caucus of countries willing to speak out. We have continued to invest significant diplomatic efforts in widening support for international action on Xinjiang, working closely with Five Eyes and European partners, as well as others around the world. The growing number of countries supporting statements on Xinjiang has served to raise the reputational cost on China for its policies in Xinjiang, and placed greater pressure on China to comply with UN recommendations.

We have also worked closely with international partners outside of the UN. On 22 March, the Government announced asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials and one entity responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang. These actions were taken in parallel with similar action by 29 other countries, thereby increasing their reach and impact, and sending the clearest possible signal about the international community's serious concern and collective willingness to act.

The UK has also used its G7 Presidency to draw attention to the situation in Xinjiang, and to promote models and values that are different to those promoted by China. True to these principles, the G7 will continue to stand up for shared values and the international system, and expects China to abide by its international commitments.

We will continue to work with partners to increase the number of countries willing to call China out for its human rights violations and to increase the pressure on China to change its behaviour. We therefore accept this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 10**

***Commit financial and bureaucratic resources to ensuring future Build Back Better World projects meet all internationally recognised standards, including on labour rights, environmental measures, and transparency.***

Strong standards across environmental, social, financial, labour, governance and transparency issues will be at the heart of our approach to the new G7 partnership on development finance. This is vital in order to ensure that our values are upheld, and to drive a race to the top. To help achieve this, we will ensure that the new partnership builds on agreed multilateral standards on quality infrastructure such as the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment. We will also emphasise the importance of transparent, open, economically efficient, fair and competitive standards for lending and procurement, in line with debt sustainability, as well as adherence to international rules and standards for major creditor countries. This approach will help to provide citizens of recipient communities with the long-run benefits that they expect and deserve. We therefore accept this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 11**

***If the British Olympic Association and competing teams decide not to boycott the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the Government should not attend and should urge others not to do so. The Government should suggest the British Olympic Association does not participate in the opening or closing ceremonies, beyond one representative carrying the Union Flag. It should abstain from sending government officials to any ceremonies or functions, strongly discourage UK businesses from sponsoring or advertising at the Olympics, encourage fans and tourists to stay away, and discourage athletes from supporting or accepting the Chinese government's propaganda efforts while in-country.***

The Government has not made any decisions about potential representation at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics. Team GB's participation and approach is a matter for the British Olympic Association and British Paralympic Association. Both

of these organisations operate independently of the Government, as stipulated by the International Olympics Committee's own regulations in order to protect the Olympic movement from political interference.

### **Recommendation 12**

***Intensify efforts to coordinate sanctions with allies to consistently sanction senior individuals and entities with the most responsibility for or connection to abuses in Xinjiang.***

As stated in response to Recommendation 9, in March the Government announced sanctions against four Chinese government officials and one entity under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime. These measures were taken alongside similar action by the EU, US and Canada, sending a clear message to the Chinese Government that the international community will not turn a blind eye to such serious and systematic violations of basic human rights. Those designated face travel bans and asset freezes across the US, Canada, the EU and the UK, whose economies together make up over one third of global GDP.

While we do not speculate about possible future designations, as to do so may undermine their effectiveness, we will continue to keep all potential listings under review, and commit to working closely with allies on any future action.

### **Recommendation 13**

***Push for an urgent, independent review of UNESCO's investigatory powers and processes, and formally request that the organisation pursue its mandate with determination and commitment. Coordinate with allies to block and reduce the influence of the worst human rights-abusing countries on the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.***

The Government is committed to helping to protect culture and heritage around the world, including in Xinjiang, and we agree that it is important for UNESCO to pursue its mandate with determination and commitment. However, we also recognise that UNESCO's mandate is limited in scope, and that while it has international obligations over World Heritage Sites, it is not responsible for policing the protection of all cultural and religious heritage sites around the world.

Nevertheless we agree with the Committee that UNESCO should be fully aware of what is happening in Xinjiang, and consider carefully how it can pursue its mandate in this context. We therefore agree to raise our concerns with our UNESCO partners.

## **Diaspora and Culture**

### **Recommendation 14**

***Conduct an urgent consultation with members of these communities in the UK to determine the extent of harassment they are facing and the type of support they require, offering support and protection as appropriate.***

The Government is committed to supporting the Uyghur community in the UK, and wants to send a clear message that we respect their culture, history and religion and oppose all efforts to restrict it.

FCDO Ministers have previously met with representatives of the Uyghur community in the UK in order to better understand the challenges they face. We are also aware of reports that members of the Uyghur community in the UK have previously been harassed by Chinese authorities. Such harassment is unacceptable and we have raised our concerns directly with the Chinese Embassy in London. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and where appropriate we urge those affected to contact the police.

We agree to conduct further consultation with the Uyghur community to better understand the challenges that they face, and to use the findings to inform Government policy. We therefore accept this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 15**

***Implement an asylum fast track for Uyghurs and members of other minority ethnic groups who are fleeing persecution in China.***

The Government is committed to ensuring that all asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay and that those who need protection are granted it as soon as possible.

All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on the individual merits of the case and in accordance with our international obligations. We do not currently have plans to implement a fast track specifically for Uyghurs or members of other minority ethnic groups in China.

Our approach to handling asylum claims from members of the Uyghur community in China is based on the relevant country policy and information note (CPIN) that was published in July 2021 under the title 'China: Muslims (including Uyghur in Xinjiang)'. This CPIN is based on country information taken from a wide range of credible sources, including reputable media outlets, local, national and international organisations including human rights organisations, and information from the FCDO.

The CPIN currently states that the Uyghur community in China is generally at risk of persecution, therefore most applicants in the UK are likely to be granted protection. However, each case is assessed on its facts, taking into account the latest available country information and any relevant caselaw. We will continue to keep the situation in China under close review.

### **Recommendation 16**

***Form a coalition of 'sanctuary states' that will publicly recommit to the principle of non-refoulement.***

See combined response to Recommendations 16 and 17 below.

### **Recommendation 17**

*Where there is credible evidence of a state party to the United Nations Convention against Torture deporting Uyghurs and members of other persecuted minority groups to China, the UK should raise a complaint against that state to the Committee against Torture.*

#### **Combined response to Recommendations 16 and 17**

The UK is committed to the principle of non-refoulement and has repeatedly called on other countries to respect their obligations, under Article 3 of the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT), not to force persons to return to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing they would be in danger of being subjected to torture.

We are aware of examples where China has previously pressured third countries to return Uyghurs seeking refuge. UK Ministers and diplomats—working closely with likeminded partners—have previously intervened privately at senior levels with host governments in such cases. We have also attended extradition court hearings to demonstrate the seriousness with which we take this matter. These interventions have had some positive results.

While we do not have plans to form a ‘coalition of sanctuary states’, we will continue to intervene through diplomatic channels where Uyghurs may be at risk of deportation.

We will also continue to use a range of other diplomatic tools, including engagement through multilateral fora, to raise international awareness of the human rights violations being perpetrated against the Uyghurs, and to remind states of their obligations under UNCAT. However we believe that such action is most effective when conducted in concert with international partners, and we do not have plans to raise a bilateral complaint through UNCAT.

### **Recommendation 18**

*The British Council should prioritise cultural protection funding for the preservation and promotion of Uyghur tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The BBC World Service should broadcast in Uyghur in areas where substantial Uyghur communities live.*

The Government recognises the importance of supporting efforts to protect cultural heritage at risk. However the scope of the British Council’s Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) is currently restricted to the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Extending the fund to China would require a significant uplift in funding, and pose logistical challenges. Furthermore, future funding for the British Council will only be confirmed at the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. We therefore do not judge it would be either appropriate or feasible currently to commit to extending the scope of the CPF programme to Xinjiang. However the FCDO will continue to welcome bids through its International Programme from organisations that work to strengthen and protect human rights, including cultural, linguistic, and religious rights.

The FCDO is also supportive of the rights of Uyghur communities to have access to trusted, impartial media. While Uyghur audiences currently have access to trusted

information primarily through BBC News Chinese, the provision of any additional service is for the BBC World Service to decide. The Government is therefore unable to accept this recommendation on their behalf.

## Forced labour and the private sector

### **Recommendation 19**

***Inform the FAC of when the Department for International Trade will share the export review's findings and actions with Parliament.***

The Government is committed to preventing the export of any goods that could contribute either directly or indirectly to the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. To that end, the Government announced on 12 January an urgent review of export controls as they apply specifically to the situation in Xinjiang.

The UK already has one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. This prevents British firms from exporting certain goods, including those that could be used for internal repression or to breach human rights. In addition, we have maintained an arms embargo against China since 1989, which was extended to Hong Kong in July 2020.

Reviewing existing controls as they apply to China requires significant research into the technologies of concern as well as the impact on legitimate trade and investment in those technologies. It is important this work is done properly to ensure we tackle issues of concern but also minimise the impact on legitimate trade.

DIT will report back to Parliament at the conclusion of its current review.

### **Recommendation 20**

***As well as imposing punitive fines for non-compliance with the reporting elements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, we recommend that the Government introduce new legislation that will create a legal requirement for businesses and public sector bodies to take concrete measures to prevent and remove the use of forced labour in their value chains. This new duty should be backed up by meaningful sanctions and penalties for non-compliance.***

The Committee's Report rightly draws attention to the issue of forced labour in Xinjiang. Xinjiang's position in global supply chains means there is a real risk that international businesses may inadvertently source goods from suppliers that are complicit in forced labour. This is a complex and difficult area that the UK is committed to tackling.

In September 2020, the Government announced an ambitious package of changes to the Modern Slavery Act to strengthen its transparency provisions. Under the new measures, businesses and public sector bodies will be required to report on specific areas in their modern slavery statements. These include their due diligence and risk assessment in relation to modern slavery. The new measures are designed to enhance transparency, increase the quality of reporting, incentivise organisations to demonstrate year-on-year

progress, and take targeted action based on where their risks are highest. Our quoted companies, as defined by the Companies Act 2006, are also required to cover human rights in their annual corporate reporting.

On 12 January 2021, the Government announced plans to further strengthen the Modern Slavery Act by introducing financial penalties for organisations that do not comply with their transparency obligations under section 54 of the Act. These penalties will be enforced by the new Single Enforcement Body for Employment Rights. Implementing these provisions is a priority for this Government, and we will introduce these measures as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

In addition to our commitment to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act, the Government's upcoming review of the Modern Slavery Strategy will allow us to explore opportunities to further enhance our approach to transparency in supply chains.

The Government also remains committed to implementing the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights. These are widely regarded as the authoritative international framework to guide businesses in addressing human rights risks in their operations. Our Overseas Business Risk (OBR) guidance on Xinjiang, which was last updated on 16 August 2021, specifically reminds businesses of their corporate responsibilities under the UNGPs.

We are also working closely with international partners and funding research to better understand the risks and raise awareness of forced labour in Xinjiang. We were encouraged that, under our G7 Presidency this year, G7 Leaders committed to ensure that global supply chains are free from the use of forced labour.

We will continue to keep our policy on due diligence under review. In doing so, the Government will remain sensitive to the overall burden of regulation on UK businesses and we would need to be persuaded that any proposals to mandate supply chain due diligence in UK law are practical, proportionate and would deliver tangible improvements to the protection of people's rights in the UK and elsewhere in the world.

### **Recommendation 21**

***Review the £36m threshold for businesses to be required to produce Modern Slavery Statements, with a view to reducing it.***

The UK was the first country in the world to require businesses to report on the steps they have taken to tackle modern slavery in their operations and global supply chains. The landmark 'Transparency in Supply Chains' provision in the Modern Slavery Act has driven a change in business culture and helped to put modern slavery risks on the international agenda.

The Home Secretary is required to review the turnover threshold for businesses that are required to provide Modern Slavery Statements every five years. In September 2020, the Government published a review of the turnover threshold as part of its response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation. It was determined that the current turnover threshold remained appropriate.

In carrying out that review, the Government took into account the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, which advised that the Government should focus on improving compliance, quality and enforcement of obligations at the current threshold. The review considered views from the broad range of stakeholders who had responded to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation.

It is open to any business with a turnover lower than the statutory threshold to publish voluntarily a modern slavery statement, and we encourage them to do so. But we do not have plans to reduce the current threshold.

### **Recommendation 22**

*Equip trade commissioners, envoys, and officers with regularly updated toolkits and training to ensure they are fully informed of the forced labour risk associated with the countries in which they are working. This should be supported by a public Government-led grading system of countries' adherence to global labour standards as set by institutions like the International Labour Organization.*

We thank the Committee for this recommendation, and in response we agree to producing, and running regularly, a specific one-day training course on forced labour open to all Trade Envoys and officials, including those based in regions that could be linked to potential forced labour in Xinjiang.

However, the Government believes that the role of monitoring countries' adherence to global labour standards is best conducted by specialist organisations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The UK works closely with these organisations, including in relation to forced labour (see response to Recommendation 27).

### **Recommendation 23**

*Explore the possibility of banning the import of all cotton products known to be produced in whole or in part in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, in line with WTO rules. While we primarily heard evidence on the cotton industry, we believe this ban should be extended to other industries.*

As part of the Government's commitment to tackling forced labour, the Government announced in January a number of measures to help ensure that no company profiting from forced labour in Xinjiang can do business in the UK, and that no UK businesses are involved in their supply chains.

Whilst we do not currently have plans to place import controls on goods from China, we are working with our international partners through the G7 trade track to ensure that global supply chains are free from the use of forced labour. We will continue to keep our policy response to goods produced using forced labour under close review.

### **Recommendation 24**

*Issue guidance to business to implement modern means of traceability and product origin verification as part of their due diligence measures.*

The Government recognises the role that technology can play in improving the traceability of global supply chains and is working with businesses to build understanding and raise awareness of its potential use.

In March, the Foreign Secretary, in her former capacity as Secretary of State for International Trade, hosted two roundtables on the issue of forced labour in Xinjiang, which discussed the role that technology can play in tackling human rights abuses. Our OBR guidance on Xinjiang also encourages businesses to collaborate with industry groups to share expertise and best practice in identifying and addressing risks of human rights violations. However, improved traceability must be coupled with effective traditional due diligence methods such as on-site audits and supply chain mapping. We will continue to engage businesses on this area, but do not currently have plans to issue further specific guidance on the topic.

### **Recommendation 25**

***Share Post-level intelligence on specific risk areas and factors with UK companies operating in China when appropriate to do so, to ensure it contributes to and supports private sector due diligence within the country.***

The Government is committed to providing detailed guidance to UK companies on specific risk factors that they should consider when operating in China. Sources of guidance include our OBR guidance and the Government's Digital and Tech China website. This guidance draws on a wide range of sources, including information provided by our overseas network. We also regularly engage with businesses to build awareness and understanding of this guidance. We will continue to keep our guidance updated and accept this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 26**

***Use information gained from local sources, Posts, and civil society to identify specific factories and companies that make use of forced labour and prohibit them from importing into the UK through the sanctions regime.***

As stated in response to recommendation 23, in January the Government announced measures to help ensure that no company that profits from forced labour in Xinjiang can do business in the UK and that no UK business is involved in their supply chains. These measures include strengthening OBR guidance; a review of export controls; the introduction of financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act; and increasing support for UK Government bodies to exclude suppliers complicit in human rights violations or abuses.

In March the Government also imposed sanctions against four Chinese officials and one entity responsible for the human violations in Xinjiang, alongside the EU, US and Canada. As above, we do not speculate about possible future designations, as to do so may undermine their effectiveness, however we will continue to keep all listings under review.

It is also important that companies work together to share intelligence about suppliers and parent companies that make use of forced labour. Our OBR guidance advises that UK businesses should take such steps. We will continue to keep these measures under review.

### **Recommendation 27**

***Press for the ILO to conduct a full investigation of the Xinjiang region in order to verify the extent of forced labour there as a matter of urgent priority.***

The UK is committed to working through a range of multilateral bodies, including the ILO, to address the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang.

In April 2021, the UK joined Canada, the US and New Zealand in making a joint statement calling for the ILO to make the elimination of forced and compulsory labour a priority. The statement also called on the ILO to “bring attention to and address serious and persistent labor rights deficits”. This statement provided the ILO with a clear mandate to investigate reports of forced labour, including in China.

The ILO has subsequently taken steps to implement this. Comments submitted by the Representative for Workers on Xinjiang will be discussed at the International Labour Conference in 2022. This matter remains a priority for us and we will continue to press the ILO to investigate reports of forced labour in Xinjiang. We therefore accept this recommendation.

## **Technology and research**

### **Recommendation 28**

***Where a Chinese institution possesses known or suspected links to repression in Xinjiang, or substantial connections to Chinese military research, UK universities should avoid any form of technological or research collaboration with them. They should also conduct urgent reviews of their current research partnerships, terminating them where involved parties are found or suspected to be complicit in the atrocities in Xinjiang.***

The Government is committed to providing support to UK universities and research institutions to help them to make informed decisions and manage risks when undertaking technological or research collaborations with other countries, including China. We will not accept collaborations which compromise our national security or values. However international research collaboration is central to our position as a science superpower, and our research sector therefore needs to be both open as well as secure.

A range of measures are already in place to support UK universities and research institutions to manage these risks, including:

- Launching the Trusted Research campaign, which included the publication of new detailed guidance by Universities UK on the risks involved in international collaborations. The new guidance, *Managing risks in internationalisation: security-related issues*, advises UK institutions to assess reputational, ethical and security risks when conducting due diligence on prospective partners. The Government is also working with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation, to ensure that its employees and grant holders adhere to the latest Government guidance.

- Under the UK's export control regime, the Government rigorously assesses all export licences against strict criteria. We continuously strengthen protective measures and expect universities to do the same.
- The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is currently recruiting a new Research Collaboration Advice Team to help raise awareness and understanding of Government advice on security related matters, including export controls, cyber security and the protection of intellectual property. The new BEIS team will also provide support to researchers to help them to pursue safe international collaborations.
- The Academic Technology Approval Scheme, which the Government expanded in March 2021, also provides robust procedures to protect national security and counter foreign interference.

The Government will continue to keep the support we provide to UK universities under review.

### **Recommendation 29**

***Fund and manage the creation of a regularly-updated due diligence and intelligence database to provide universities with a directory of Chinese institutions and companies that possess strong or suspected connections to technology-aided human rights abuses. The FCDO should convene a panel to oversee and discuss due diligence, to include government officials and members of the academic community. This panel should use all means available to exert public pressure on institutions, ensuring compliance.***

The Government, universities and funding bodies have a shared responsibility and interest in tackling the risks of academic interference.

In October 2020, Universities UK published new security guidelines commissioned by the Government. The guidelines advise universities to utilise publicly available information to enhance understanding of prospective partners and identify any potential links to hostile activity. The guidelines also recommend that universities engage with in-house academics with relevant expertise to inform university decision-making and to provide information to staff. We judge that these are currently appropriate to manage the risks, however we will continue to keep our approach under review and work closely with universities and funding bodies on these measures.

### **Recommendation 30**

***Equipment manufactured by companies such as Hikvision and Dahua should not be permitted to operate within the UK. We recommend that the Government prohibits organisations and individuals in the UK from doing business with any companies known to be associated with the Xinjiang atrocities through the sanctions regime. The Government should prohibit UK firms and public sector bodies from conducting business with, investing in, or entering into partnerships with such Chinese firms, to ensure that UK companies do not provide either blueprints or financing for further technology-enabled human rights abuses.***

The UK is aware of reports that have suggested links between a number of Chinese technology companies, including Hikvision and Dahua, and human rights violations in Xinjiang.

The Government is committed to supporting UK businesses to engage with China in a way that reflects the UK's values and takes account of national security concerns. Last year, we published guidance to help cutting-edge UK firms negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter in China or when working with Chinese businesses, supporting safe and appropriate UK-China collaboration in the digital and technology space. The guidance provides firms with clear, up-to-date information and specialist support.

Our OBR guidance makes clear to UK businesses operating in China the need to consider the risk of exposure to entities that may be providing or developing surveillance technologies in Xinjiang.

The measures announced by the Government in January also include the provision of new guidance and support for UK public sector bodies to exclude suppliers where there is sufficient evidence of human rights violations in any of their supply chains. The FCDO is working with the Cabinet Office to introduce the new guidance, which will enable commercial teams to more effectively exercise their discretion to exclude suppliers linked with modern slavery and human rights violations.

This new initiative builds on a wide range of work already underway to increase the capability of commercial teams across government to prevent modern slavery in public sector supply chains. The forthcoming Public Procurement Bill will further strengthen the ability of public sector bodies to disqualify suppliers from bidding for contracts where they have a history of misconduct, including forced labour or modern slavery. We will set out more detail on this in the coming months.

## The UK's approach to atrocity prevention

### ***Recommendation 31***

#### ***Introduce a national, cross-departmental strategy for atrocity prevention.***

The FCDO is committed to doing all it can on atrocity prevention in all settings, including non-conflict settings.

We deploy a variety of tools, including early warning mechanisms, diplomacy, development and programmatic support, and defence tools—including the armed forces—to strengthen the international system's prevention and response mechanisms. Our work in this area is long-standing, both in terms of preventing atrocities and securing accountability and justice for atrocities committed.

Most mass atrocities occur in and around conflicts. As such the UK's atrocity prevention work is set in the context of our wider cross-government approach to conflict prevention. Our geographic departments can draw on a wide range of expertise aimed at building inclusive and stable environments and preventing conflict and possible atrocities. Thematic teams include those leading on atrocity prevention, Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, sanctions, Women, Peace and Security, Girls' Education, Children and Armed

Conflict, the Protection of Civilians, Modern Slavery, the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief and safeguarding Media Freedom. This work is supported by significant resources. In 2021/22, the Government will spend £874m on tackling conflict and instability through the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. We also regularly raise atrocity risks through diplomatic engagement—both through bilateral and multilateral channels, including through relevant UN bodies.

We judge that individual FCDO geographical departments, working with other government departments, are best placed to decide how to tackle atrocity risks in their regions. This allows agility and flexibility to respond to the particular risks and environments in each country. We do not therefore presently believe that a national, cross-departmental strategy is needed.

### **Recommendation 32**

*Issue clear guidance and training to all relevant departments about their specific responsibilities for mass atrocity prevention. The departments involved should have senior staff members designated as atrocity prevention leads. The newly announced Conflict Centre should coordinate these departmental leads and ensure it offers departments access to experts in international law, sanctions, multilateral coordination, intelligence, aid programming, and so on.*

See combined response to Recommendations 32 and 33 below.

### **Recommendation 33**

*Provide atrocity prevention 'toolkits' and atrocity prevention training for FCDO staff, with a mandatory refresher course every three years for all staff in diplomatic, programming, or policy-related roles.*

Combined response to Recommendations 32 and 33.

The FCDO ensures that all geographical departments have access to relevant expertise on atrocity prevention when formulating policy. Geographic departments work closely with our overseas network and are able to draw on expertise from thematic leads and consult the new FCDO conflict centre and other government departments.

We continue to invest in the capability of our staff. We have developed a dedicated training module in the FCDO's International Academy on atrocity prevention, which is available to all staff. We also provide guidance material to geographic departments, and run training courses for officials on themes which contribute to atrocity prevention, including Sanctions, Human Rights and Conflict. We will continue to look for further opportunities to enhance our International Academy offer. Ensuring that staff have access to the necessary guidance, expertise and points of contact is our priority.

In addition to our offer for FCDO staff, other government departments are able to access a number of training resources on the Open University website. We will consider whether other training should be made available to other government officials.

### **Recommendation 34**

***Implement additional early warning tools focused on predicting mass atrocities, and mainstream non-conflict atrocity prevention in the newly announced Conflict Centre. The Conflict Centre should be renamed to the Conflict and Atrocity Prevention Centre, to ensure atrocity prevention thinking is prioritised in its operations.***

We agree on the importance of drawing on early warning tools to help to predict mass atrocities. Several international mechanisms already exist: the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and other regional organisations have their own systems. The UK is able to draw on these mechanisms, and receives regular updates from the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which the UK helps to fund. The UK also has regular meetings with the UN's Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and R2P and likeminded countries to share our analysis of atrocity risks.

The FCDO is currently exploring how we can better use data and technology to improve our understanding of emerging stability risks and strengthen early warning systems, including in fragile and conflict affected states. Geographic departments can commission a Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability from the FCDO's conflict centre. These can be an effective tool to highlight atrocity risks and identify specific preventive action. There is also a wide range of material in the public domain that we draw on to inform our assessment of atrocity risks. Such material is shared with relevant geographic teams, including copies of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Early Warning Project.

The focus of the FCDO's new conflict centre will be on developing a more integrated UK approach to conflict and instability. This includes harnessing conflict expertise from across government and deploying our capabilities where we can make the most difference. It will identify and develop capabilities where the UK has a comparative advantage, and work closely with international partners to increase our impact. Further details of the FCDO's conflict centre will be announced in due course.

### **Recommendation 35**

***Appoint a Special Envoy on Atrocity Prevention to ensure that the prevention of mass atrocities is consistently championed in Parliament and Government.***

We do not currently have plans to appoint a Special Envoy on Atrocity Prevention. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has oversight of Government policy on atrocity prevention. He is FCDO Minister with responsibility for human rights policy and matters relating to the United Nations, and is the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. Lord Ahmad is therefore well placed to oversee the Government's work in this area.

### **Recommendation 36**

***Commit to funding further such research, which is doing vital work to expose those injustices which the Communist Party of China is eager to hide.***

We recognise the important role that research plays in informing policy and shining a spotlight on the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. Research that the FCDO

has already funded include reports published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) in October 2021 and March 2020, and a report by the Rights Practice, "Criminal Law and Deprivation of Liberty in Xinjiang", published in August 2021.

We accept this recommendation and commit to funding further valuable research on the human situation in Xinjiang.