

UN experts alarmed by reports of forced labour of Uyghur, Tibetan and other minorities across China

GENEVA – UN experts* today expressed deep concern regarding persistent allegations of forced labour affecting Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz minority groups as well as Tibetans within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and across other parts of China.

“There is a persistent pattern of alleged State-imposed forced labour involving ethnic minorities across multiple provinces in China,” the experts said. “In many cases, the coercive elements are so severe that they may amount to forcible transfer and/or enslavement as a crime against humanity.”

According to the experts, forced labour in China is enabled through the State-mandated “poverty alleviation through labour transfer” programme, which coerces Uyghurs and members of other minority groups into jobs in Xinjiang and other regions. They are reportedly subjected to systematic monitoring, surveillance and exploitation, with no choice to refuse or change the work due to a pervasive fear of punishment and arbitrary detention. Xinjiang’s five-year plan (2021 to 2025) projects 13.75 million instances of labour transfers. The actual numbers have reached new heights.

The experts said Tibetans are also subject to forced labour through similar schemes such as the *Training and Labour Transfer Action Plan*, with calls for systematic training and transfer of “rural surplus labourers.” “These policies justify coercive methods such as military-style vocational training methods. The number of Tibetans affected by labour transfers in 2024 are estimated to be close to 650’000.

Tibetans are also reportedly displaced through the “whole-village relocation” programme which applies coercion to manufacture consent, such as repeated home visits, implicit threats of punishment, banning of criticism, or threats of cutting essential home services.

“Between 2000 and 2025 some 3.36 million Tibetans have been affected by government programmes requiring them to rebuild their house for nomads to become sedentary, whilst official statistics say that around 930,000 rural Tibetans have been relocated through either whole village relocation or individual household relocations,” the experts said.

“The labour transfers are part of a government policy to forcibly re-engineer Uyghur, other minorities and Tibetans’ cultural identities under the guise of poverty alleviation,” they warned.

“Labour and land transfers forcibly change their agriculture-based or nomadic traditional livelihoods by displacing them to locations where they have no choice but to pursue wage labour,” the experts said. “Consequently, their language, chosen communities, ways of life, as well as cultural and religious practices are eroded, which causes irreparable harm and loss.”

They also expressed serious concern over goods produced through forced labour which enter global supply chains indirectly via third countries, raising broader questions about the overall effectiveness of targeted trade restrictions and human rights due diligence in the regulation of supply chains.

The experts urged investors and businesses operating and sourcing from China to conduct human rights due diligence in line with the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) by taking the supply-chain related risks into consideration.

“Companies must ensure that their operations and value chains are not tainted by forced labour,” they said, reiterating their call for unfettered access by independent UN human rights mechanisms to China.

The experts have previously been [in contact](#) with [China](#).

