

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	559
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 1- China
Udgivet:	1. november 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	3. februar 2020

Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 1 - China

Overview: China's response to terrorism remained difficult to distinguish from the government's suppression of peaceful activities that authorities deemed separatist or subversive in nature. China's primary counterterrorism focus remained on ethnic Uighur so-called "extremists" whom Beijing ascribes to the East Turkistan Islamic Movement. Using counterterrorism as a pretext, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has detained more than one million Uighurs and members of other Muslim minority groups in camps in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) since 2017. More than two million others have been subjected to political indoctrination in daytime facilities. China also developed new legal guidelines and law enforcement tools to justify and improve its capabilities to carry out this repressive campaign, which included pervasive, arbitrary, high-tech surveillance; the collection of personal data, including DNA samples; compulsory stays by Chinese government officials in Uighur homes; and controls on the expression of cultural or religious observations. Additionally, China has continued to misuse the INTERPOL Red Notice system, which is intended to flag travelers and request that member states provisionally arrest individuals pending extradition. As recently as 2017, China issued INTERPOL Red Notices to target Uighur activists or political dissidents who had not engaged in violence, but were accused of involvement in terrorism.

2018 Terrorist Incidents: Details about alleged terrorism-related incidents inside China were difficult to verify due to a lack of transparency and information from Chinese authorities. China also impeded U.S. diplomatic, law enforcement, and third-party efforts to independently verify state media accounts, which are often the only source of reporting on incidents in China. In addition, Chinese officials provided few responses to requests from U.S. law enforcement officials for information on terrorist incidents. In a notable shift from previous years, China announced that no violent terrorist incidents occurred in the XUAR in 2018 owing to "new counter-extremism policies," – thus publicly justifying Beijing's repressive campaign in Xinjiang.

Chinese citizens abroad were targeted in terrorism-related incidents in 2018. The Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for a string of attacks in Pakistan linked to the Chinese Pakistan Economic Corridor and its infrastructure. In August, a suicide bomber targeted a bus carrying Chinese engineers in Balochistan province. In November, Balochistan separatists attacked the Chinese consulate in Karachi and killed four Pakistani citizens.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In June, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, Supreme People's Court, Ministry of Public Security, and Ministry of Justice issued joint guidelines on legal procedures and penalty standards for terrorism crimes, including aiding or preparing terrorist activities. The guidelines clarified that wearing clothes or symbols that advocate terrorism or extremism, and individuals who write, publish, broadcast, or advocate terrorism-related content online are criminally liable. In October, the XUAR regional government amended existing regulations to state that authorities can use "vocational skills training centers" to "de-radicalize" people suspected of extremism. Satellite imagery analysis, eyewitness accounts, and human rights groups document the use of razor wire, guard towers, and single points of egress consistent with imprisonment. Previous rules made no reference to vocational centers and the change retroactively provided legal cover for the mass detention of Uighurs and other minorities in the XUAR that began in 2017. In November, official media reported that the XUAR and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region governments pledged closer "counterterrorism stability maintenance" cooperation and signed an agreement regarding counterterrorism cooperation and the management of Xinjiang residents studying in Ningxia. International media reports also began to emerge regarding the mass transfer of Uighurs to China's interior due to overcrowding at the camps, and described draconian detention conditions in the facilities including torture and deaths.

In 2018, the CCP made several changes to the People's Armed Police (PAP), a paramilitary organization that deploys both domestically and internationally for counterterrorism efforts. On January 1, the Central Military Commission assumed sole authority to command the PAP. On March 21, the CCP's Central Committee announced changes designed to deepen the militarization and professionalization of the PAP, in part by moving several of its purely civilian functions to other government ministries.

The Chinese government continued to leverage its domestic technology sector to bolster its surveillance capabilities. Police continued to deepen use of closed-circuit television camera networks paired with facial recognition, iris scanning, and other technologies to track, discover, or predict threats to public safety across the country and most extensively in the XUAR. Although such technology has been used to catch criminal actors, it is also used to monitor and control domestic dissidents and ethnic and religious minorities. The government also continued to stress the threat of both domestic and international "cyber terrorism," as it continued to tighten monitoring and censorship of online speech and mobile communications.

In May, member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) – China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – agreed to an extradition treaty on the basis of terrorism charges, which China could potentially use to extradite minority Uighurs on purported "terrorism" charges from SCO member countries. In 2018, China continued to pressure Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, among other countries, to deport Uighurs to China.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: China is a member of the FATF, the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (EAG). Based on current law enforcement investigations, the United States is concerned that China does not adequately control

terrorist financing. Chinese law enforcement claims to have limited ability to freeze funds and investigate banking transactions. Additional concerns include a lack of guidance for designated non-financial businesses and professions, underdeveloped procedures for individuals and groups who seek to be delisted from domestic sanctions, and inadequate regulations defining the rights of bona fide third parties in seizure and confiscation actions.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes* (<https://www.state.gov/2019-international-narcotics-control-strategy-report/>).

Countering Violent Extremism: China continued to implement broad campaigns in the XUAR under the guise of countering what the Chinese government called “extremism.” Authorities intensified a campaign of mass “re-education” or “vocational training” of Uighurs and other Muslims, which began in April 2017 with the purported goal of countering “extremism,” but whose actual goal the United States assesses to be the repression of religious minorities. Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims are reportedly forced to learn Chinese, recite slogans in praise of the CCP, and renounce their culture and religion. Authorities implemented pervasive controls throughout the XUAR that punish Uighurs and other Muslims for displaying signs of “extremism” that included such peaceful and mainstream practices as praying, growing long beards, traveling to Muslim-majority countries, possessing unauthorized religious texts or written materials in minority languages, and refusing to consume pork or alcohol. Chinese officials also mobilized Chinese civilians and officials to occupy the homes of Uighurs and other Muslims in the XUAR through “home stays” to monitor, indoctrinate, and in some cases, abuse them. The government’s broad definitions of “terrorism” and “extremism” and its unclear definition of “cyber terrorism” continued to raise human rights concerns. We refer you to the Department of State’s *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* (<https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/><https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/>) for further information.

Regional and International Cooperation: China continued to promote the UN as the primary international forum for counterterrorism while increasing its engagement in other multilateral, regional, and bilateral fora. In April, Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa held their third Counterterrorism Working Group meeting. China continued to participate in the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism for Counter Terrorism, along with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan and sought to present itself as a global leader on counterterrorism. In May, 28 countries sent representatives to attend the PAP’s biennial Great Wall International Forum on Counterterrorism. In June, the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure conducted its first legal experts meeting in Pakistan. In August, China and other SCO member states conducted a joint counterterrorism military exercise in Russia that included more than 3,000 participating troops. Beijing also pursued bilateral counterterrorism cooperation with Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan, including agreeing to support the development of an Afghan mountain brigade that would combat terrorists in eastern Afghanistan. China is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and East Asia Summit, and it is also a member of the GCTF.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong continued its security and law enforcement partnership with the United States through the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department's joint implementation of the Container Security Initiative and participation in U.S.-sponsored training on port and border security. In October and November, Hong Kong underwent a FATF mutual evaluation review.

No terrorist incidents were reported in Hong Kong in 2018.

Counterterrorism remained an operational priority for the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). The Police Counterterrorism Response Unit provides a strong deterrent presence. It assists police districts with counterterrorism strategy implementation and complements the tactical and professional support of existing police specialist units, such as the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau, the Special Duties Unit, the Airport Security Unit, and the VIP Protection Unit.

In April, the Hong Kong government stood up the Inter-departmental Counterterrorism Unit to strengthen overall counterterrorism efforts by monitoring global trends, reviewing and improving counterterrorism strategies in Hong Kong, developing specialized counterterrorism training, and optimizing emergency response plans.

Hong Kong is a member of the intergovernmental FATF and the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Hong Kong's Joint Financial Intelligence Unit is a member of the Egmont Group. Terrorist financing is a criminal offense in Hong Kong, and financial institutions are required to search continuously for terrorist financing networks. They must also screen accounts using designations lists made publicly available by the United States under relevant authorities, as well as the UNSC 1267 ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida and 1988 (Afghanistan/Taliban) Sanctions Committees' lists. In March, Hong Kong operationalized two laws to strengthen its ability to counter terrorism financing. The first law placed customer due diligence and record-keeping requirements on numerous designated non-financial businesses and professions, including trust company and service providers (TCSPs). The second required TCSPs to pass a fit and proper test before obtaining a license from the Companies Registry. In July, a law imposing reporting requirements for cross-border currency movements over US \$15,385 went into effect.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes* (<https://www.state.gov/2019-international-narcotics-control-strategy-report/>).

Hong Kong law enforcement officers attended U.S. government-sponsored capacity-building training at the International Law Enforcement Academy on personnel and facility security, law enforcement techniques to counter terrorism, and financial investigations. In 2018, a HKPF officer participated in a counterterrorism-focused International Visitor Leadership Program in the United States. In December, the Inter-departmental Counterterrorism Unit visited Xinjiang to evaluate mainland China's counterterrorism response in that province. Hong Kong is also an APEC economy.

Macau

Macau's counterterrorism cooperation with the United States included information sharing. The Police Intervention Tactical Unit (UTIP), which falls under the Macau Public Security Police Force, is responsible for protecting important installations and dignitaries and conducting high-risk missions, such as improvised explosive device deactivation. UTIP's Special Operations Group's mission is counterterrorism operations. Macau cooperated internationally on counterterrorism efforts through INTERPOL and other security-focused organizations.

No terrorist incidents were reported in Macau in 2018.

Macau is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, a FATF-style regional body. Macau's Financial Intelligence Office (FIO) is a member of the Egmont Group. In response to FATF recommendations, Macau established a declaration and disclosure system to detect cross-boundary movement of large quantities of currency and bearer negotiable instruments. Macau has not yet brought criminal charges on offenders based on two laws that went into effect in May 2017 that widened the scope of identifiable criminal offenses and strengthened customer due diligence measures. In October, the Government of Macau moved responsibility for its FIO from the Secretary for Economy and Finance to the Secretary for Security, to reinforce Macau's law enforcement efforts.

Terrorist financing is a criminal offense in Macau. Banks and other financial institutions are required to search continuously for terrorist financing networks and screen accounts using designations lists provided by the United States under relevant authorities and the UN Security Council ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime. Filing suspicious transactions reports irrespective of transaction amounts is obligatory.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes* (<https://www.state.gov/2019-international-narcotics-control-strategy-report/>).

In 2018, the FIO signed separate memoranda of understanding/cooperation for exchange of AML/CFT intelligence with their counterparts in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Estonia, and the Kyrgyz Republic.

ecoi.net summary:

Annual report on terrorism (covering 2018)



Country:

China

Source:

USDOS – US Department of State [\(/en/source/11558.html\)](https://www.state.gov/en/source/11558.html)

Original link (no longer valid):

<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/#China>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

1 November 2019

Document ID:

2019282

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

