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14 October 2022

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China: Situation of Hui Muslims and their treatment by society and authorities; state protection (2020–September 2022)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Overview

According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Hui people are Muslims "who have intermingled with the Han Chinese" (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 24 Feb. 2012). Sources also state that Hui Muslims descend from (DW 9 Dec. 2016) or are "[t]hought to" descend from (FPC 14 Mar. 2019) Persian, Arab [and Mongol (DW 9 Dec. 2016)] merchants who came into China along the Silk Road (DW 9 Dec. 2016; FPC 14 Mar. 2019). The same sources report that, over time, the Hui people became ethnically mixed through intermarriages with the Han Chinese (DW 9 Dec. 2016) or Hui cultural practices "blended and fused" with Han culture (FPC 14 Mar. 2019). According to *Foreign Policy* (FP), an American magazine focused on politics, economics, and ideas based in Washington, DC (FP 3 Jan. 2009), "[o]ften referred to as the 'Chinese Muslims', the Hui as an ethnic group cover a broad spectrum of individuals believed to be the progeny of millennium-old mixed marriages between the Chinese and the Turks, Arabs, and Persians" (FP 10 Feb. 2020). A country information report by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) states that Hui Muslims "are relatively assimilated" and "can look more physically similar to Han Chinese than some other Muslim minorities in China" (Australia 22 Dec. 2021, para. 3.48). An article by *New Europe*, an "independent" weekly newspaper based in Brussels with a focus on EU affairs and international politics (*New Europe* n.d.), reports that "the language, culture, and appearance of Hui" are "closer to the Han Chinese" (*New Europe* 13 Feb. 2020). Sources also report that Hui Muslims use Mandarin as their first language (FPC 14 Mar. 2019; *Encyclopædia Britannica* 24 Feb. 2012; *The Diplomat* 15 June 2021). An article by National Public Radio (NPR), "an independent, nonprofit media organization" based in the US (NPR n.d.), notes that the Hui "have no distinct language" and speak Mandarin and "often some Arabic" (NPR 26 Sept. 2019).

Sources indicate that there are approximately 10 million Hui in China (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 24 Feb. 2012; CHRD 20 Sept. 2022; DW 9 Dec. 2016; *The Diplomat* 15 June 2021; Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Hui is an "official nationality" in China (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 24 Feb. 2012). In an interview with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at the University of Oxford, whose research focuses on Islamic law and who has written on the status of Hui Muslims under Chinese law, stated that the official number of 10 million is "vastly underestimated" since it has not changed in the last 20 years (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022).

The Foreign Police Centre (FPC), a UK-based "international affairs think tank" (FPC n.d.), notes that the Hui "are scattered across China" (FPC 14 Mar. 2019). The same source further states that centres of Hui culture can be found in the northwest region of China, including the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang), the Hui autonomous region [province] of Ningxia, the city of Xi'an located in Shaanxi province, and the Hui autonomous prefecture of Linxia in Gansu province (FPC 14 Mar. 2019). A report on Hui Muslims by the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) states that Hui Muslims "constitute significant portions of the population" in Ningxia, Xinjiang, and the provinces of Gansu and Qinghai [Tsinghai] (US 29 Mar. 2021, 3). According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Hui Muslims are spread "throughout China but are relatively concentrated in western China—in the provinces or autonomous regions of Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Henan, Hebei, Shandong [Shantung], and Yunnan" (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 24 Feb. 2012). The Associate Professor also indicated that Hui Muslims are scattered across the territory of China but concentrated in the Northwest, especially in Ningxia, Xinjiang and the province of Gansu (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The same source stated that Hui people have always been considered and identified as Muslims, even though some of them "may no longer" perform religious practices of

Islam, and they are the only ethnic group in China whose religion constitutes an identity marker (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The FPC indicates that Hui Islam is divided into four sects:

- Gedimu [Qadim, Qadeemiya], which includes 70 percent of all Hui Muslims and "in which religious syncretic practices are the most obvious." For example, Gedimu Imams use a sinicized dialect of Arabic for the Quran;
- Ikhwan, which emerged in Linxia and which "criticize[s] the Gedimu's ritualistic approach and emphasise a return to original Quranic meanings." Ikhwani mosques are the "only" mosques that FPC found with Qurans in Chinese;
- Sufism, specifically the two "globally prevalent traditions" known as Qadiriyya [Qadriya, Qadiriyyah] and Naqshbandiyya [Naqshbandi, Naqashbandiya], the latter of which is split into two sub-sects, Hufia and Jehriya, "centre[d]" in Linxia;
- Salifism or Chinese Wahhabism, which includes a "tiny minority" of Hui Muslims, who follow a "Saudi version of Islam" (FPC 14 Mar. 2019).

The FPC also states that

Hui women generally, but not always, wear headscarves, with different sects wearing different types. Ikhwani women can be distinguished via the headscarf popular among Western Muslims; Gedimu women tend to wear a hat with a light cloth attached to the back and bottom. Hui men wear three types of round hat, although these are not distinguishable according to sect. (FPC 14 Mar. 2019)

The NPR article notes that aside from "the occasional white cap customarily worn by Hui men or hair coverings among women, they are visually indistinguishable" from Han people (NPR 26 Sept. 2019). A *New York Times* article reports that "many" Hui wear a "distinctive skullcap" (*The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2019). The FPC notes that all of the local Huis they met had a Chinese name, which they introduced themselves by, and an informal Muslim name, "usually Sinifications of Mariam, Aishah, Bilal or Ibrahim" (FPC 14 Mar. 2019).

2. Current Situation of Hui Muslims in China

Information on the current situation on Hui Muslims in China was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a senior researcher with Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), "a coalition of Chinese and international human rights organizations" which "investigates and monitors the human rights situation in China" (CHRD n.d.), noted that in Xinjiang "all" Muslim groups are affected by the "crackdown"; "some" religious practices of Hui Muslims in Xinjiang are prohibited and there is surveillance of individuals suspected of engaging in religious activities and/or observing rules and behaviours related to Islam such as not drinking alcohol and wearing a beard (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The same source further stated that Hui Muslims found not to be respecting the "sanitized" Islam imposed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) "could" be sent to re-education camps (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The *New Europe* article states that rights groups have reported that Hui Muslims in Xinjiang "are now being targeted" and have been sent to "re-education camps with the Uyghurs [Uighurs, Uygurs]" (*New Europe* 13 Feb. 2020). Similarly, the CECC states that Hui Muslims are detained in Xinjiang's "mass internment camps" (US 29 Mar. 2021, 2). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an adjunct professor at Delaware Valley University in Pennsylvania, who lived in China for 17 years until 2020 and has written articles on Muslims in China, stated that Hui Muslims "live rather peacefully" compared to other religious groups and that "in general" they are treated better and considered "role model[s]" because they are assimilated with the Han-Chinese culture" (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022). However, the same source noted that the Chinese government monitors the religious activities of Hui Muslims, including monitoring mosques (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022). However, the same source further stated that there is "no evidence to

prove that Hui Muslims are being treated unfairly either by the State" or by the Han-Chinese "majority ethnic group" (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022).

The Associate Professor stated that Hui Muslims face "increasing" discrimination and islamophobia, although it varies by region (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the CHRD Senior Researcher indicated that the living conditions of Hui Muslims in China were relatively good until 2016 when a "political crackdown" began which was followed by the campaign of "Islam sinicization" (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

2.1 Sinicization of Islam Policy

The *Economist*, a British weekly magazine that covers topics including technology, geopolitics, finance and economics (*The Economist* n.d.), reports that in 2016 the government's "attitude towards Muslims" began to change, with China's leader Xi Jinping drawing up plans for the "'sinicisation'" of China's religions (*The Economist* 26 Sept. 2019). The same source notes that, alongside Christianity, Islam was a "main target[t]" for sinicization due its "strong overseas connections"; officials "set out to purge" both religions "of foreign influences deemed threatening to the Communist Party" and, in Islam's case, to "prevent the spread of radicalism" (*The Economist* 26 Sept. 2019). A 2019 article by Radio Free Asia (RFA), a non-profit broadcasting corporation funded by the US Congress (RFA n.d.), reported in 2019 that China was "developing a five-year plan for the 'sinicization' of Islam, according to the country's government-backed China Islamic Association [1]" (RFA 7 Jan. 2019). The same source indicates that according to a report on the China Islamic Association's website, representatives of local Islamic associations [2] from eight provinces and regions, including Beijing, Shanghai, Hunan, Yunnan, and Qinghai, discussed the plan at a meeting held by the CCP's United Front Work Department (UFWD), during which the China Islamic Association's president said that the plan "will focus on

requiring mosques to uphold 'core values of socialism, traditional culture, laws and regulations'" (RFA 7 Jan. 2019). The RFA cites the Association president as stating that mosques will be told to "'guide, mobilize and inspire' Chinese Muslims with lectures and training sessions on such topics" and that these should "uphold the spirit of a sinicized Islam by using examples of notable figures" (RFA 7 Jan. 2019). Among the behaviours encouraged as a part of the sinicization of Islam, the CHRD Senior Researcher noted that the authorities are asking men to shave their long beards and women to remove their veils and head scarves in public spaces, while both are told to abandon their religious clothing in favour of traditional Chinese dress (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the CECC, "official Chinese government rhetoric and policy has become less tolerant toward practice and expression of Islamic identity among Hui Muslim individuals and communities" and restrictions on the practice of Islam among Hui Muslims are "increasingly similar to restrictions experienced by Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities" in the Xinjiang (US 29 Mar. 2021, 2). The same source notes that "[t]his policy shift is due in part to Chinese officials' conflation of Islamic identity with extremism and the Chinese government campaign to 'sinicize' Islam" (US 29 Mar. 2021, 2). The *Economist* indicates that one objective of the sinicization campaign was to "reduce visible links" between Islam in China and in the Arab world (*The Economist* 26 Sept. 2019). A *New York Times* article reports that in northwestern China, including in Linxia, Inner Mongolia, Henan, and Ningxia, authorities "destroyed domes and minarets on mosques," and in Yunnan province three mosques were closed (*The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2019). The same source notes that the provincial government in Ningxia "banned public displays of Arabic script" and that this ban was subsequently adopted in Beijing and other parts of the country (*The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2019). The *New York Times* article also reports that Ningxia and

Gansu have "banned the traditional call to prayer" and that an imam in Yinchuan, Ningxia's capital, was visited by authorities who "warned him to make no public statements on religious matters" (*The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2019). According to the same source, in Yunnan, "where there have long been Hui communities," in December 2018 authorities "padlocked" mosques in three villages that had been operating without official permission (*The New York Times* 22 Sept. 2019). The RFA also notes that in Yunnan province in December 2018, Hui Muslims were "raided and forcibly evicted" from three mosques for "engag[ing] in 'illegal religious activities'," with "[l]ocal Hui Muslims blam[ing] the crackdown on the local Islamic Association's compliance with government directives" (RFA 7 Jan. 2019). According to RFA, citing a US-based Muslim activist, "[t]he sinicization of Islam is mostly targeted at Hui Muslims" (RFA 7 Jan. 2019). According to Bitter Winter [3],

[s]ince the new Regulation on Religious Affairs came into force in February 2018, the government has been implementing [a] "de-Arabization and de-Saudization" campaign in Ningxia and other Muslim-populated regions of China. In late June, the Ningxia authorities proclaimed that "all religious activity venues highlighting Arabic style must be gradually rectified. New buildings or any other constructions that are expanded or rebuilt – anywhere across the region – must highlight the Chinese style." (Bitter Winter 2 Jan. 2020)

Bitter Winter reports that in 2018 the Weizhou Grand Mosque in Ningxia's Tongxin county was "remodeled into a Chinese style building, its dome and minarets replaced with Chinese style pagodas" after "[t]housands" of Hui Muslims protested to prevent its demolition by the Chinese government in August 2018 (Bitter Winter 2 Jan. 2020). NPR also indicates that in August 2018 in Tongxin, authorities tried to demolish Weizhou Grand Mosque, "claiming it lacked the right building permits," but following protests officials called off the demolition (NPR 26 Sept. 2019). The same source reports, however, that in November 2018, local government work units visited "every household" in Weizhou and

"pressur[ed] residents to sign letters stating their acquiescence to 'renovate' the mosque by removing its main dome and domed minarets," and, "[i]n some cases, Weizhou officials threatened to fire state employees" if they refused to sign the letter (NPR 26 Sept. 2019).

The information in the following paragraph was provided by NPR:

Mosques "have become the major vehicle" for the sinification of the Hui. In April 2018, officials "began revoking" the licences issued by the state to imams with residency from a different province than the one in which they practice and for imams who have studied overseas. "In Ningxia, smaller mosques without licensed imams have been closed outright." Imams in Henan and Ningxia are now required to attend monthly training sessions and, according to imams interviewed by NPR, at these training sessions "they are taught Communist ideology and state ethnic policy and discuss Xi Jinping's speeches." Imams are also required to pass an exam assessing their "ideological knowledge" to renew their license annually (NPR 26 Sept. 2019).

The information in the following paragraph was provided in a 2020 article by Agence France-Presse (AFP):

In Linxia, the CCP "has banned minors under 16 from religious activities or study" and local authorities have also "severely" restricted the number of students over 16 who are officially permitted to study in each mosque and have "limited certification processes for new imams." In January 2021, local officials in Linxia signed a degree "pledging to ensure that no individual or organisation would 'support, permit, organise or guide minors towards entering mosques for Koranic study or religious activities', or push them towards religious beliefs." Imams were asked to agree in writing, with one refusing resulting in the "fury" of officials and being "shunned" by his colleagues. According to a caretaker at the local mosque, inspectors checked the premises "every few days" during the school holiday to "ensure none of the 70 or so village boys were present." Local authorities have also "instructed mosques to display

national flags and stop sounding the call to prayer to reduce 'noise pollution' – with loudspeakers removed entirely from 335 mosques" (AFP 1 Apr. 2020).

Global Times, a Chinese daily newspaper "run by the *People's Daily*," "the ruling Communist Party's official newspaper" (CNN 16 Aug. 2019), notes that at a September 2017 forum, leaders of five religious communities—Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant—"reached a consensus" that "the direction of religions is to integrate them with Chinese culture" (*Global Times* 6 Jan. 2019).

3. Treatment of Hui Muslims in Chinese Society

Information on the treatment of Hui Muslims in the Chinese society was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Associate Professor stated that Hui are subject to local social discrimination and that the "big problem" faced by Hui Muslim is the "high level" of islamophobia in Chinese society; individuals who do not hide their religious practices or who show outward signs of Muslim identity risk social discrimination and "different forms of violence" (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). *FP* also noted in 2019 that Islamophobia had "grown over the [previous] four years" and, as a result, Muslim restaurants were "increasingly removing any public display of their faith" such as "Arabic writing and images of famous mosques" (*FP* 5 Jan. 2019).

According to the Associate Professor, "for the most part," the "mistreatment and discrimination" experienced by Hui Muslims is initiated locally by their neighbours, who know their religion even if attempt they hide it in order to avoid being targeted (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The same source also indicated that Hui Muslims are "most exposed to hatred and violence" in rural and semi-rural areas of the Northwest, where Hui Muslims are concentrated, because the Han

people living in these autonomous regions know how to identify Muslims, making them "easy" to target; the risk of being targeted is lower in large cities elsewhere in the country (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022).

The CHRD Senior Researcher noted that there is variation in the treatment of Hui Muslims by society depending on the geographic area and that "social discrimination and harassment" for Hui Muslims is worse in Xinjiang (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The same source noted that there are "a lot of" online smear campaigns about Muslims that "may become explicitly extremist" (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

Regarding treatment of Hui Muslims by society, the Adjunct Professor indicated that Hui Muslims "across China," including the Northwest, "live peacefully," adding that the Chinese government has "many reasons" to avoid provoking "animosity" among the Hui Muslim community, including the community's ancestral ties to the Gulf states (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022). The source further notes that the Chinese government wishes to send a "message to the rest of the world that the State is only opposed to separatism, not [to] Islam or Muslims" (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022).

According to the Associate Professor, the access of Hui Muslims to education, employment, housing, and health care depends on local circumstances and the specific areas where they live, but when they hide signs of their faith and religious practices outside mosques, they are generally allowed to access education, healthcare, housing, and employment (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The CHRD Senior Researcher also stated that access to education, employment, housing, and healthcare for Hui Muslims varies between regions (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

The Associate Professor indicated that Hui Muslims can access education and can attend public schools (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The CHRD Senior Researcher noted that regarding access to education, it is "increasingly forbidden" to attend schools within mosques

even when it is not religious education. The same source described a case in Ningxia where some Hui Muslims attempted to run a private underground school and when this was discovered by authorities in March 2021, students were detained and interrogated and the three teachers who started the school were arrested; one of them remains in detention as of September 2022 (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The same source further stated that the "main" issue in terms of access to education is that Hui Muslims are required to attend public schools, and in public schools they are not allowed to wear their "usual" clothes and are not provided with halal food; expressions of religion have been prohibited (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

The Associate Professor stated regarding employment that "for the most part" Hui Muslims are "encouraged" to go into civil service and into business but "discouraged" from going into religious professions (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The CHRD Senior Researcher noted that employees in the public sector and large enterprises "have to" renounce their Islamic religious practices (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

The information in the following paragraph was provided by the Associate Professor:

Hui Muslims have access to the standard health care "for the most part" and have always benefited from the one-child policy exemption for members of an ethnic minority (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). In certain areas, Hui Muslims "may" face local discrimination in accessing housing and health care. They encounter this less in the Northwest, such as in Xinjiang, Gansu, and Ningxia, where there are many Hui. However, because the identity card issued to every Chinese citizen specifies ethnicity, Hui in places such as Sichuan and Jiangxi "may" encounter local forms of discrimination that make it "difficul[t]" to find housing or rent a hotel room (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022).

4. Treatment of Hui Muslims by Chinese Authorities

Information on the treatment of Hui Muslims by the Chinese authorities was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Freedom House's 2022 report states that "[p]eaceful religious practices are routinely punished under charges of 'religious extremism', resulting in detention, prison sentences, and indoctrination for many ... Hui Muslims" (Freedom House 28 Feb. 2022, Sec. D2).

The CECC annual report for 2021 notes that "[o]fficials in areas with large Hui populations continued to implement policies and restrictions limiting Hui Muslims' ability to practice their religion and culture" and that authorities destroyed Hui mosques, placed Hui scholars and religious leaders in detention and under surveillance, and ordered the removal of Arabic religious inscriptions from Hui Muslim homes and businesses (US 21 Mar. 2022, 12). The same source reports that "[t]here is evidence that authorities have begun using mass surveillance technologies and systems first implemented in [Xinjiang] in other areas of the country with sizable Hui populations" (US 21 Mar. 2022, 12).

The Associate Professor stated that apart from the "widespread" monitoring and the control of Islamic religious practices, including prohibition of religious activities that do not conform to the regime's ideology, there is no governmental measure or program put in place specifically to "mistreat" or "discriminate" against Hui Muslims (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022).

The information in the following two paragraphs was provided by the Adjunct Professor:

The Chinese authorities want to be trusted by Hui Muslims "for political reasons." Regarding whether Hui Muslims could appeal to police and judicial authorities in case of mistreatment or violence, the source noted the State is "stric[t]" in its enforcement of law and order and does

not "usually discriminate" in this regard. There is "little to no evidence" of "unfair" treatment experienced by Hui Muslims due to their culture or religion. However, the atheist State "draws a clear boundary" around religious life and "does not encourage" Hui Muslims to construct Middle Eastern-style mosques.

Because the Hui community is "assimilated" into mainstream Chinese society and Hui people demonstrate "patriotism," they can access "all" welfare services.

In the first-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, migrant Hui receive unemployment benefits and other social welfare if needed. The conditions are pretty much the same in the second-tier cities such as Nanjing and Chengdu.

However, the state programs in China's "underdeveloped" Northwest region are slower and less effective compared to those in cities because of the region's poor transportation and social infrastructure (Adjunct Professor 22 Sept. 2022).

In contrast, the Senior Researcher stated that authorities "abuse" Hui Muslims and "increasingly" deny them the right to freedom of religious conscience, especially in Xinjiang and Ningxia (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The same source also noted that in Xinjiang and Ningxia, people are monitored and are not permitted to leave the country as they are required to turn their passports over to authorities (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The same source further stated that over the "last years," Hui Muslims have "frequently" been harassed or detained by police, with the "extremity of police actions" being the most severe in Xinjiang (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). NPR also notes that since April 2019, the "same restrictions that preceded the Xinjiang crackdown on Uighur Muslims are now appearing in Hui-dominated regions" with forced renovations or shuttering of Hui mosques, demolition of schools and imprisonment of religious community leaders and with "increasing" detentions of Hui who have travelled internationally (NPR 26 Sept. 2019). According to AFP, Hui

Muslims in Linxia now fear "similar surveillance and repression" to that previously experienced by the Uighurs in Xinjiang (AFP 1 Apr. 2020). Similarly, *FP* indicates also that Hui Muslims are "'very afraid to be next, after the Uighur'" with Hui Muslims having already been subject to "attacks" by "'anti-halal' groups" (*FP* 5 Jan. 2019).

The CECC report notes that "authorities held Hui individuals in formal detention and mass internment camps in Xinjiang for actions related to Islam that are protected under international law" (US 29 Mar. 2021, 4).

Sources report the following reasons for detention of Hui individuals:

- advocating for religious freedom for Muslims (US 29 Mar. 2021, 4);
- reading the Quran in a mosque (US 29 Mar. 2021, 4);
- teaching the Quran via WeChat (US 29 Mar. 2021, 4);
- organizing an Islamic funeral (*FP* 10 Feb. 2020);
- viewing religious content online (*FP* 10 Feb. 2020);
- sharing online materials relating to the Quran (US 29 Mar. 2021, 5);
- criticizing the mistreatment of Chinese Muslims by authorities (RFA 27 Jan. 2020);
- purchasing Islamic books (NPR 21 Nov. 2020);
- building a mosque (*FP* 10 Feb. 2020); and
- performing the Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca (NPR 26 Sept. 2019).

Foreign Affairs, a magazine on American foreign policy and international affairs published by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), "a non-profit and nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to improving the understanding of U.S. foreign policy and international affairs" (*Foreign Affairs* n.d.), reports that repression "seems to be spreading beyond Xinjiang to Hui communities in other parts of China, where authorities are tearing down Islamic domes, removing Arabic-language signs, and silencing the outdoor call to prayer" (*Foreign Affairs* 7 Jan. 2019). The same source states that Muslims are "essentially secularized by force" at "reeducation camps" (*Foreign Affairs* 7 Jan.

2019). According to NPR, Hui Muslims whose identity documents were registered in Xinjiang while they were living outside that region have also been sent to Xinjiang's prisons or re-education camps (NPR 21 Nov. 2020). NPR reports that according to Hui residents of Tongxin, local officials are offering rewards between US\$700 and US\$2,820 to individuals "who report suspicious religious behavior, such as proselytizing Islam or secretly teaching Islamic texts" (NPR 26 Sept. 2019).

According to the Associate Professor, in Northwest China "many" local authorities, such as police officers, prosecutors and judges, belong to the Hui ethnic group (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). The same source explained that the Chinese government recruits people from ethnic minorities to become police officers, prosecutors and judges because it creates links with local ethnic minorities and provides an "easy" means of exerting control over these communities (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). However, the CHRD Senior Researcher stated that Hui Muslims who become public servants must renounce their Islamic religious practices (CHRD 20 Sept. 2022).

5. State Protection and Support Services

Information on state protection and support services for Hui Muslims in China was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to sources, there are no public or official private shelters, hotlines or other services or assistance for Hui Muslims who are victims of mistreatment and/or violence in China (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022; CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The CHRD Senior Researcher indicated that there is only the government-run China Islamic Association to organize religious activities, but its purpose is rather to make sure that religious rites and practices conform to the CCP's ideology (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022; CHRD 20 Sept. 2022). The Associate Professor

stated that there are informal networks of Hui Muslims that could assist a member who needed shelter, assistance to relocate, or legal services (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). However, the same source further noted that these networks are under increasing surveillance, and it is becoming more challenging for them to continue to function (Associate Professor 20 Sept. 2022). A report by HRW notes the CCP has "long" employed mass surveillance and government agencies "regularly" gather a "wide range of personal information about people" and link this information to an individual's identification card number (HRW 1 May 2019, 10). The same source indicates that China's government has placed closed-circuit surveillance cameras (CCTV) throughout the country and authorities have used artificial intelligence technologies to assist them in identifying people from surveillance footage (HRW 1 May 2019, 12). According to the HRW report, authorities in Xinjiang have used the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP), a program that aggregates data about individuals and notifies officials of potential threats, to conduct mass surveillance and to target and detain individuals (HRW 1 May 2019, 1). A report by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that there is a "dense" network of checkpoints in Xinjiang which "makes it impossible for residents to move around unobserved in most of the province" (Netherlands 1 July 2020, para. 9.6.2).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] According to the Middle East Institute (MEI), a non-partisan think tank based in Washington, DC (MEI n.d.), the China Islamic Association was founded in 1953 and was the "only legally approved association for

Chinese Muslims" at that time (MEI 14 July 2020). In an article published in the *Journal of Muslim and Minority Affairs*, Jörg Friedrichs, an associate professor of politics at the University of Oxford who has studied Muslim minorities in China (University of Oxford n.d.), notes that the China Islamic Association "is an official state-directed apex body" with its headquarters in Beijing (Friedrichs 15 Mar. 2017, 16). The same source states that the Association's objectives include supporting the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), "'adapt[ing] Islam to socialist society'," "'refut[ing] the fallacies of religious extremism'," "'establish[ing] and improv[ing] the internal management rules and regulations of Islam'," and "'train[ing] Islamic teaching personnel'" (Friedrichs 15 Mar. 2017, 16).

[2] According to the *Atlas of Religion in China*, in addition to the national China Islamic Association, over time Islamic associations were created at lower administrative levels, including at the provincial, prefectural, and county levels (Yang with Pettit 1 Feb. 2018, 20). The same source notes that these local level associations "are organizationally independent from each other" and "are not branches of the higher-level association" (Yang with Pettit 1 Feb. 2018, 20).

[3] Bitter Winter is "an online magazine on religious liberty and human rights in China" published by the Center for Studies on New Religions (Centro studi sulle nuove religioni, CESNUR) (Bitter Winter n.d.). According to its official website, CESNUR is an Italy-based "network of independent but related organizations of scholars in various countries, devoted to promot[ing] scholarly research" on new religious movements (CESNUR n.d.).

References

Adjunct Professor, Delaware Valley University. 22 September 2022.
Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 1 April 2020. Becky Davis. "'We're Scared, Very Scared' – Muslims in China's 'Little Mecca' Fear Eradication of Islam." [Accessed 26 Sept. 2022]

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