

Religious leaders call for action to stop atrocity crimes against the Uyghurs in China

As religious leaders and leaders of belief-based communities, we come together to affirm human dignity for all by highlighting one of the most egregious human tragedies since the Holocaust: the potential genocide of the Uyghurs and other Muslims in China.

We have seen many persecutions and mass atrocities. These need our attention. But there is one that, if allowed to continue with impunity, calls into question most seriously the willingness of the international community to defend universal human rights for everyone – the plight of the Uyghurs.

At least one million Uyghur and other Muslims in China are incarcerated in prison camps facing starvation, torture, murder, sexual violence, slave labour and forced organ extraction.

Outside the camps, basic religious freedom is denied. Mosques are destroyed, children are separated from their families, and acts as simple as owning a Holy Quran, praying or fasting can result in arrest.

The world's most intrusive surveillance state invades every aspect of life in Xinjiang.

Recent research reveals a campaign of forced sterilization and birth prevention targeting at least 80% of Uyghur women of childbearing age in the four Uyghur-populated prefectures – an action which, according to the 1948 Genocide Convention, could elevate this to the level of genocide.

The clear aim of the Chinese authorities is to eradicate the Uyghur identity. China's state media has stated that the goal is to "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections and break their origins." As the Washington Post put it, "It's hard to read that as anything other than a declaration of genocidal intent." High-level Chinese government documents speak of "absolutely no mercy".

Parliamentarians, governments and jurists have a responsibility to investigate.

As faith leaders we are neither activists nor policymakers. But we have a duty to call our communities to their responsibilities to look after their fellow human beings and act when they are in danger.

In the Holocaust some Christians rescued Jews. Some spoke out. To quote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil ... Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act". After the Holocaust, the world said "Never Again."

Today, we repeat those words "Never Again", all over again. We stand with the Uyghurs. We also stand with Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and Christians throughout China who face the worst crackdown on freedom of religion or belief since the Cultural Revolution.

We urge people of faith and conscience everywhere to join us: in prayer, solidarity and action to end these mass atrocities. We make a simple call for justice, to investigate these crimes, hold those responsible to account and establish a path towards the restoration of human dignity.

Signatories

More than 75 faith leaders signed the letter. They are as follows...

Imam Daayiee Abdoul
Executive Director for Mecca institute, Washington DC, USA

Mufti Shareef Ahmad
Imam Al Madni Center, Lawrenceville, Georgia, USA

The Reverend Jonathan Aitken
London, UK

Sheikh Rashad Ali
Institute for Strategic Dialogue, UK

Imam Shamsi Ali
New York, USA

Sayed Yousif Al-Khoei OBE
Director of Centre of Academic Shia Studies, UK

Archbishop Angaelos
Coptic-Orthodox Archbishop of London, UK

Dr Khalid Anis
Islamic Society of Britain, UK

Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen
Manchester Reform Synagogue, UK

Imam Qari Asim, MBE
Chair, Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, UK

Rabbi Charley Baginsky
Interim Director of Liberal Judaism, UK

Qari Zeshan Balooch
Imam, Ghousia Mosque, Leeds, UK

Rabbi Dr Harvey Belovski
Senior Rabbi, Golders Green Synagogue, UK

The Reverend Dr Andrew Bennett
Director and Senior Fellow at the Religious Freedom Institute, and former Canadian Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, Canada

Rabbi Miriam Berger
Finchley Reform Synagogue, UK

Desmond Biddulph CBE
President of the Buddhist Society, UK

Cardinal Charles Bo
Archbishop of Yangon and President of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, Myanmar

Imam Dr Mamadou Bocoum
Muslim Chaplain and Lecturer in Islamic Studies, UK
The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun
Bishop of Southwark, UK

Imam Irfan Chishti MBE
Chashtiah Educational Trust, Rochdale, UK

Andrew Copson
Chief Executive of Humanists UK

The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth
Bishop of Coventry, UK

Sheikh Imtiyaz Damiel
CEO, Abu Hanifah Foundation, UK

Rabbi Joseph Dweck
Senior Rabbi, S&P Sephardi Community (and Ecclesiastical Authority of The Board of Deputies of British Jews), UK

The Reverend Dr Joel Edwards CBE

Canon Dr Giles Fraser
Rector of St Mary Newington, UK

Sonam T Frasi, FCA, RAS
Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Northern Europe, Poland and the Baltic States,
London, UK

Rabbi Dr Moshe Freedman
Senior Rabbi, New West End Synagogue, UK

Rabbi Paul Freedman
Senior Rabbi, Radlett Reform Synagogue, UK

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein
Chair of Conference of Liberal Rabbis and Cantors, UK

Rabbi Herschel Gluck OBE

Imam Dr Usama Hasan
London, UK

Sheikh Saeed Hashmi
Imam Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking, UK

Shaykh Sultan Niaz ul Hassan
Chairman, Bahu Trust, UK

The Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, MBE QHC
Bishop of Dover, UK

Imam Sheikh Mohammad Ismail DL
Lead Imam, Birmingham Central Mosque, UK

Imam Dr. Abdul Jabbar
Atlanta, USA

Rabbi Richard Jacobi
East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue, UK

Rabbi Dr. Margaret Jacobi

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner
Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism, UK

Rabbi Dr Elliott Karstadt
Alyth North Western Reform Synagogue, UK

Imam Adam Kelwick
Muslim Chaplain, UK

The Reverend Cindy Kent MBE

Fr Nicholas King, SJ
Assistant Catholic Chaplain, University of Oxford, UK

Bishop Declan Lang
Catholic Bishop of Clifton, UK

Rabbi Josh Levy
Principal Rabbi, Alyth North Western Reform Synagogue, UK

Al-Haj U Aye Lwin
Chief Convenor, Islamic Centre of Myanmar

Ustadh Dawood Masood
Al-Hira Mosque, Luton, UK

Rabbi David Mason
Muswell Hill United Synagogue and Executive Member of the Rabbinical Council of United Synagogue, UK

Rabbi Monique Mayer
Liberal Judaism, UK

The Reverend Dr Russell Moore
President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA

The Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen
Bishop of Truro, Chair of UK FoRB Forum and former Chair of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, UK

Rabbi Lea Mühlstein
Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue, UK

Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid
Washington, DC, USA

The Rt Rev Michael Nazir-ali
Former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, UK

Rabbi Baroness (Julia) Neuberger

Fr Uche Njoku
Parish Priest, St Joseph's Church, New Malden, UK

Imam Yahya Pallavicini
President of COREIS Islamic Religious Community, Italy

The Rt Rev John Perry
Former Bishop of Chelmsford, UK

Shaykh Umar Hayat Qadri
Chair, Suffah Foundation, UK

Mufti Abdul Rahman Qamar
Madni Masjid, LaGuardia, New York, USA

Fr Timothy Radcliffe
Former Master of the Dominican Order, UK

Imam Nabel Rafi
Director of the International Centre for Tolerance UK

Dr Sheikh Ramzy
Founder, Oxford Islamic Information Centre, UK

Imam Ghulam Rasool QTS
Trustee Bahu Trust UK network, UK

Imam Yusuf Rios
Three Puerto Rican Imams Project, Islamic Learning Foundation Chicago, USA

Fr Dominic Robinson, SJ
Parish Priest, Farm Street Church of the Immaculate Conception and Chair, Justice and Peace
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Imam Zaid Shakir
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The Rt Revd Alan Smith
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Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo
Archbishop of Jakarta, Indonesia

Canon Dr Andrew White
Ambassador of Jerusalem MERIT, UK

The Rt Hon and Rt Rev Lord Williams of Oystermouth
Former Archbishop of Canterbury, UK

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