



The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Room 509-S
Center Block
Ottawa, Ontario

October 19, 2018

Dear Minister,

We write to you today concerning a very important issue—the escalating repression by China of its Uyghur minority.

The Government of the People’s Republic of China finally admitted this week what had been widely reported: that it is interning hundreds of thousands people in "re-education camps" in the far-western region of Xinjiang. According to the U.S. Congressional Executive Commission on China Annual Report, Beijing has enacted a “sweeping program of ethnic cleansing” against this minority population. After weeks of denial, the Chinese government announced that it has enacted new legislation that stipulates that “institutions such as vocational skill education training centers should carry out trainings on the common national language, laws and regulations, and vocational skills, and carry out anti-extremist ideological education, and psychological and behavioral correction to promote thought transformation of trainees, and help them return to the society and family.”

Human rights groups previously estimated that as many as one million people have been held in the camps, which satellite photos show have sprung up across the region in recent months.

During a recent meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, members heard testimony that Chinese authorities managing the internment camps imposed round the clock “re-education,” along with restrictions on halal food, Islamic dress, and general expressions of religion.

It also appears that China expects the West to assist in its repression of its Uyghur population. An October 14 article in the Business Insider UK outlines the expectations that Chinese authorities

have regarding the ways that Google will need to police the speech of this Muslim ethnic minority--if the company is to be allowed to launch its new product in China. At this time, Uyghurs are subject to some of the most intrusive surveillance measures in the world, and new laws that came into effect this past Tuesday show that China fully expects Western tech companies to play their part in the surveillance, policing, and silencing of its minority populations.

Minister, we urge you to break our Government's deafening silence on this issue and immediately condemn China's treatment of this vulnerable population. The sheer scale of the repression requires that the international community act, and act now.

We also strongly urge you to review all information technology sales by Canadian companies to China, to make absolutely sure that no Canadian tech is being used by China to repress its own citizens. Our country simply has no business in the business of repression. We hope that you will agree and put measures in place to ensure that no Canadian company is involved in such matters.

We look forward to your timely reply.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Hardcastle, M.P.
NDP Critic for International Human Rights



Hélène Laverdière, M.P.
NDP Critic for Foreign Affairs