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### **PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Written statement\* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples,  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 November 2007]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Counter Terrorism and human rights in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**

In 2002, the People's Republic of China (PRC) listed four Uyghur organizations as "terrorist" organizations in accordance with the UN resolutions and laws of the PRC. These four organizations are the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)", the "East Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO)", the "World Uyghur Youth Congress (WUYC)" and the "East Turkestan Information Centre (ETIC)." On 12 September 2002, the United Nations accepted a joint recommendation by the governments of the United States, China, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan labeling the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)" a terrorist organization.

Over the past six years, PRC officials have unreservedly used the highly controversial concept of "terrorism" as a justification for their repressive treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and as a way to slander indiscriminately all Uyghur human rights organizations around the world which are currently active in promoting human rights abuses in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Although Chinese officials have placed tremendous emphasis on the threat of "terrorism" in Xinjiang, there is no compelling evidence either from foreign governments' or Chinese sources to justify such a claim. The designation of ETIM, for example, as a terrorist organization was criticized by several researchers, NGOs and politicians who interpreted it as a US pay-off to the Beijing regime to secure its acquiescence at the United Nations in the midst of the war preparations by the Bush administration against Iraq. ETIM was subsequently removed from the US list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations in 2004.

Nevertheless, one of the major repercussions of the frequent use of this designation is the loss of credibility and transparency of the global war on terrorism. Since the tragic events of 9/11 in the US, the PRC has greatly modified its public rhetoric about Xinjiang and strengthened the repression of Uyghurs. There has been an increase in arbitrary detentions, arrests, torture, and executions, as the PRC government has implemented "anti-terrorism" policies to suppress all forms of Uyghur protest, no matter how peaceful. In its annual report 2007, Human Rights Watch claims that "in 2006, China intensified its efforts to use the 'war on terrorism' to justify its policies to eradicate the 'three evil forces'—terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism—allegedly prevalent among Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking Muslim population in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region." In addition, religious freedom and free expression of Uyghurs have been severely restricted after 9/11. Xinjiang remains the only part of the People's Republic of China where people are still executed for non-violent crimes of political opposition to the Chinese state.

The Chinese government, by deliberately confusing violence and civil disobedience, has accelerated its activities to marginalize Uyghurs in Western countries and to libel the peaceful nature of Uyghur efforts to ensure basic human rights and the traditional culture in Xinjiang. The case of Uyghur-Canadian Huseyin Celil, the attacks on the family of the prominent Uyghur leader and human rights activist Rebiya Kadeer and the death sentences handed to four Uyghurs in Kashgar in November 2007 reveal the extent and disproportionate nature of the PRC's repressive policy against Uyghurs. As a result, so-called "anti-terrorism" policies have added fuel to nationalism and xenophobia among ordinary Chinese citizens who are duped by the propaganda of state-controlled media into believing in the politically motivated accusations against Uyghurs.

**Society for Threatened Peoples calls the Council to:**

- express its concern about counter terrorism and human rights violations in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
- urge the Government of PRC to free political prisoners in Xinjiang and to ensure that basic human rights are respected in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

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