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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
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**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL  
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**Written statement\* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of the  
Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and Other Minorities (IFPRERLOM),  
a non-governmental organization on the Roster**

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

[13 February 2006]

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

East Turkestan, known as “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” in present-day China, continues to be a region where the Uyghurs are facing numerous problems challenging their existence, with their fundamental freedoms and human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights being violated on a considerable scale. At the same time, the influx of Chinese settlers, together with coercive birth control among Uyghur women and the systematic sinozation of the Uyghur language, pose a substantial threat to the survival of the Uyghurs.

### ***Repression in the name of fighting terrorism***

The people of East Turkestan continue to be arrested, tortured and executed on political grounds. According to Amnesty International, since 11 September, 2001, the Chinese authorities have arrested more than 3,000 Uyghurs. Reuters, quoting Xinjiang Daily, reported on 21 January 2006 that in the year 2005 alone, thousands of Uyghurs were arrested, accused of being separatists, religious extremists or terrorists. Amongst the arrested are scholars (such as Tohti Tunyaz), writers (such as Nurmuhammed Yasin) and journalists and editors (such as Abdulgani Memetemin and Koresh Huseyin). In November 2005, Reporters Without Borders condemned the three-year prison sentence passed by a court in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, accusing Koresh Huseyin of publishing a fable supposedly alluding to the region’s harsh laws.

According to the United Nations (UN), arrested Uyghurs are frequently subjected to torture, some left physically and mentally scarred as a result. According to Mr. Manfred Nowak, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, “torture in China is still wide-spread” and groups including the Uyghurs and Tibetans “have been particularly targets of torture.”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Nowak made these conclusions after visiting detention centers in Xinjiang, Tibet and Beijing during his recent trip to China.

Since 11 September 2001, more than 200 Uyghurs have been executed on political grounds while 50 people were sentenced to death for so-called separatist and terrorist activities. Despite concerns expressed by the international community, according to the ‘2004 Annual Human Rights Report’, released by the US State Department, the Chinese government “...used the international war on terror as a pretext for cracking down harshly on suspected Uyghur separatists expressing peaceful political dissent and on independent Muslim religious leaders.”<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Amnesty International stated in its 2004 report that, “China has repackaged its repression of Uyghurs as a fight against ‘terrorism’” and Human Rights Watch in its most recent report noted that, “China has opportunistically used the post-September 11 environment to [...] claim that individuals disseminating peaceful religious and cultural messages in Xinjinag are terrorists who have changed tactics.”

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<sup>1</sup> SR report available from: [www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/index.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2004 Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Available at US Department of State. Available at; <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41640.htm>

### *Population transfer*

Before 1949 there were only 300,000 Chinese settlers in East Turkestan. According to a recent official Chinese census the number of settlers has risen to more than 7 million in 2005 although according to observers, this figure could be even higher.

It is estimated that annually 250,000 Chinese settlers are moving into East Turkestan. According to reliable sources in East Turkestan, in the long run the Chinese authorities are planning to settle at least 40 to 50 million Chinese into the region. Population transfer, including the implantation of settlers and settlements, was recognised by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in its resolution 1991/92/93, to constitute a violation of the basic human rights and freedoms of not only the peoples being moved or removed by the governments, but also of the original inhabitants of the territory into which settlers are being implanted.

As stated above, population transfer can violate the rights of the settlers as well as the indigenous population, thus with the steady flow of Chinese settlers into East Turkestan its original inhabitants are faced with the danger of becoming a minority in their own homeland and losing their cultural identity. This demographic policy not only undermines the right to self-determination but also affects the economic, social and cultural human rights of the Uyghurs.

Despite the region's natural wealth, the Uyghurs live at bare subsistence level with almost 80 percent of them living below the poverty threshold. According to a report released by the Xinjiang Provincial Government in October 2004, the average income of Chinese settlers in East Turkestan is four times higher than that of a Uyghur. About 85 per cent of the Uyghur people are farmers. According to the said official Chinese report, the average annual income of an Uyghur farmer is 820 yuan or 100 US dollars, whereas a Chinese farmer in East Turkestan earns an annual income of 3,000 yuan.

### Social and cultural rights violations

Furthermore, in effect restraining the growth of the Uyghur population, coercive birth control is being carried out among Uyghur women, though contradicting China's stated policy of implementing special, preferential population policies for designated minority groups. Recently, in the town of Chapchal, with a population of 180,000, only 100 women were allowed to give birth. In the same town, 40 Uyghurs working in the Chinese administration were fired from their jobs because their wives were pregnant.

Today, Chinese authorities are pursuing a policy of systematic sinocization of the Uyghur language and literature. Until 1949, the literary language of the Uyghurs contained almost no Chinese words, whereas now, a large quantity of Chinese words

has been introduced into the Uyghur vocabulary. In this regard, several thousands of already existing Uyghur words have been removed for reason such as “not favourable to the socialist construction”, “national unity” or for other seemingly political reasons. According to Uyghur scholars, the situation has reached an alarming proportion. Unless preventive steps are taken, it is feared that the Uyghur language, the most representative language of the Altay Language Family, which played a major role in the enrichment of Central Asian civilization for almost two thousand years, may disappear from the linguistic scene.

### ***Lack of freedom of religion***

Furthermore, the Chinese government is directing a campaign of religious repression against Muslim Uyghurs. According to a 114-page report released by Human Rights Watch and Human Rights in China on 11 April 2005, “the world-wide campaign against terrorism has given Beijing the perfect excuse to crack down harder than ever in Xinjiang. Other Chinese enjoy a growing freedom of worship, but Uyghurs, like Tibetans, find that their religion is being used as a tool of control.” Recently Chinese authorities have also tightened curbs on Uyghurs, banning any government officials, state employees, Party members, children and in some cases women from entering mosques. A photo sent to Radio Free Asia’s (RFA) Uyghur service shows a sign above the gate of a Mosque in the southern part of Eastern Turkestan forbidding Muslims to attend worship.

As a result of the current policies of the Chinese authorities, the people of East Turkestan remain in a very desperate and frustrated situation, and it is feared that this frustration could have grave consequences, particularly in terms of civil unrest. Thus, there is now an urgent need to defuse rising tensions in East Turkestan by urging the Chinese government to end systematic violations of human rights against the Uyghurs.

In conclusion, IFPRERLOM appeals to the UN Commission on Human Rights to adopt a resolution that calls upon the Chinese authorities to:

*extend an open invitation to all thematic mandates of the Commission and receive them on official missions in Xinjiang;*

*end so-called “Strike Hard” campaigns aimed at the Uyghur population;*

*put an end to the practice of the death penalty on political and religious dissidents;*

*release all ‘political’ and ‘religious’ prisoners; and*

*guarantee the preservation of the cultural, religious and national identity of Uyghurs.*

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