



# *“Until nothing is left”*

China's Settler Corporation  
and its Human Rights Violations in the Uyghur Region

A report on the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“Chop the weeds and destroy their roots; eliminate the evil until nothing is left.”*

Sun Jinlong, Party Branch Secretary of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, 2017

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (also known as the XPCC or Bingtuan or corps) is a state-run paramilitary corporate conglomerate that operates in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Uyghur Region or XUAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The XPCC functions as a regional government, a paramilitary organization, a bureau of prisons, a media empire, an educational system, and one of the world’s largest state-run corporate enterprises. The central government of the PRC considers the XPCC a “special system of integration of government, military and enterprise.” As such, the XPCC is a colonial institution, responsible for land expropriation and explicitly dispatched by the top levels of the party-state to act as a military and industrial force to suppress Uyghur dissent.

As a colonial government, the XPCC

- manages a sixth of the region’s total land, and a quarter of its arable land
- governs one-sixth of the region’s population
- operates 14 military divisions and 185 regiments, which in practice effectively perform the functions of county- and town-level governments
- controls the production and circulation of knowledge in the region through its ownership of television and radio stations, an online news media empire, and several universities
- operates its own schools, prisons, and courts
- mobilizes Han people from across China to settle in the region and reduce the population density of the Uyghur majority in the region
- Simultaneously, as a corporate conglomerate, the XPCC

- has estimated direct and indirect corporate holdings that could amount more than 862,000 entities worldwide (according to Sayari)
- holds a 50% or more stake in at least 2,873 companies (according to C4ADS)
- concentrates much of its corporate holdings in agriculture and construction
- has expanded its holdings to energy, mining, chemicals, oil and gas extraction, logistics, apparel, electronics, wine, food processing, insurance, tourism, and many other sectors
- produces approximately 33% of the Uyghur Region’s cotton (amounting to about 8% of the world’s cotton) and a third of the world’s tomatoes used for paste, and contributes significantly to the apparel, electronics, and pharmaceuticals sectors, for both domestic and international consumption
- produces goods that reach far into global supply chains and operates construction projects in the XUAR as well as throughout China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa

The XPCC has been sanctioned by the United States government and has been banned from importing its goods into the country, all because of the Bingtuan’s role in human rights violations in the Uyghur Region. Other countries have sanctioned XPCC officials. As this report documents in stark detail, the XPCC is involved in a pervasive program of egregious rights violations that effect the most marginalized people in the Uyghur Region. **The region, its people, and their identities are seen as critical security threats to China’s cultural integrity, the stability of the state’s borders, and the absolute authority of the CCP. In the last five years in particular, the XPCC has played a critical role in suppressing Uyghur life, culture, and identity** through the following means:

- extrajudicial internment and imprisonment
- land expropriation
- forcible migration of people
- repressive, pre-emptive policing
- social engineering
- religious persecution
- forced labor

From cradle to grave, Uyghur people are subjected to centrally directed indoctrination delivered by the XPCC. The XPCC's deliberate program of social engineering requires that every minoritized citizen shed their cultural heritage and language in favor of Han practices and Xi Jinping ideology. This report documents the way this constellation of repressive programs is designed to make the Uyghur people docile and dependent on the state. It identifies the ways the XPCC has operationalized these programs in the last five years to create a reign of terror.

The XPCC exemplifies the way government and corporate ambitions and policies intersect in the Uyghur Region. While the XPCC has its own built-in workforce of Han colonizers, the Bingtuan's corporations are heavily involved in its repressive programs targeted at minoritized citizens of the Uyghur Region. All enterprises and investment projects in the region are expected as part of their corporate responsibility to engage in the government's programs to "transform" and indoctrinate Uyghur people and to "transfer" and coerce them into labor-intensive work. The XPCC provides subsidies and incentives for companies to engage in these programs. Companies in Bingtuan territories—whether owned by the XPCC or operating in XPCC territory—do the work of the state for the state, performing central roles in the repression inflicted on the Uyghurs and other minoritized citizens by the Bingtuan.

**Labor transfers in the Uyghur Region differ from those in operation elsewhere in China in terms of the proportion of the population targeted, the racialization of that targeting, and the goal of transforming ethnic identities. As the minoritized citizens of the region cannot refuse these government programs, labor transfers operating under the current regime of oppression in the Uyghur Region function as a full-fledged state-sponsored forced labor program.**

This report traces some of the XPCC's most important products and services—cotton, tomatoes, chemicals, and construction—out to the rest of the world through supply chains and investments, revealing the way international spending supports this regime of oppression.

Throughout the report, a single XPCC division/city, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of Tumshuq, is used as a representative case study to exemplify how the recent governmental programs—internment camps, prisons, cultural destruction, forced migration of people, population optimization, and forced labor—function as a systematic program of ethnic repression in the region. Tumshuq has been targeted for increased funding for corporate development, expanded agricultural development, forcible migration ("urbanization") of people, and for coercive labor transfers. It is also the location of many prisons and has the largest concentration of internment camps in any XPCC territo-

ry. Through the lens of Tumshuq, we can see the unusual and outsized role the XPCC plays in the operations and business of the Uyghur Region, as well as the in the daily lives of its citizens. As Tumshuq's massive prison and camp system looms over traditional Uyghur villages of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and beyond, so too does the XPCC police state loom over even the most intimate aspects of Uyghur life, culture, and labor.

The report concludes with the following recommendations, directed at legislators and businesses regarding actions to address the repressive tactics of the XPCC and extract our governments and consumer goods from complicity in them.

1. The PRC government should eradicate the XPCC, close all extra-judicial internment camps and detention centers, end prison labor, and halt state-sponsored labor transfers, land cooperativization, and ideological training for minorities.
2. The United Nations should investigate crimes against humanity committed by the XPCC and other government entities in the Uyghur Region.
3. Governments around the world should legislate an import ban on all goods grown, processed, or manufactured using forced labor anywhere in the world, allowing for region-wide bans that would accommodate the scope and scale of state-sponsored forced labor as evidenced by the XPCC. Short of a global forced labor import ban, governments can follow the lead of the United States in issuing an import ban on goods grown, processed, or manufactured by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and/or in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.
4. Governments should place targeted sanctions on the XPCC's leadership, including former Bingtuan First Political Commissar Chen Quanguo.
5. The XPCC and its corporate subsidiaries should be considered branches of the Chinese government and any trade relations, including inward and outward investments, should be screened and regulated accordingly.
6. To facilitate the tracing of products made through state-sponsored forced labor, governments should amend their customs codes to clarify that customs data is not confidential and should be disclosed publicly, as well as requiring companies that import goods to disclose the name and address of the manufacturer(s) to the relevant Customs Authorities. Governments should share lists of companies in which the XPCC holds a stake in order to expedite regulation and extraction from supply chains.

7. The U.S. Treasury Department should analyze the impacts of sanctions on the XPCC (including corporate compliance, investment withdrawal, etc.) with a view towards providing information regarding effectiveness to other governments
8. Development finance institutions and other investment banks should end all investments in XPCC companies and their subsidiaries. Development finance banks should retract all contracts and sub-contracts in their portfolios that have been awarded to XPCC companies and their subsidiaries.
9. Businesses should end all sourcing from XPCC companies and their subsidiaries, as well as those that source from the XPCC, "pair" with the XPCC, or benefit from XPCC labor transfers, subsidies, or incentives. Companies should direct suppliers and sub-suppliers to exclude all cotton from warehouses and logistics firms that have a history of sourcing, storing, or transporting XPCC cotton (some of which are named in [Annex A](#) of this report).



# INTRODUCTION

## What is the XPCC?

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (also known as the XPCC or Bingtuan or Corps) is a state-run paramilitary corporate conglomerate that operates in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Uyghur Region or XUAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It is largely unprecedented among global political or corporate configurations; all analogies fail to capture its expansive function, reach, and powers. The XPCC functions as a regional government, a paramilitary organization, a bureau of prisons, a media empire, an educational system, and one of the world’s largest state-run corporate enterprises. The central government of the PRC considers the XPCC a “special system of integration of government, military and enterprise.”<sup>1</sup>

porate roles of the XPCC. Ma Xingrui serves as a Central Political Committee member, the XUAR Party Committee Secretary, and the Bingtuan First Political Commissar (the roles Chen Quanguo held until December 2021); Li Yifei is the XUAR Party Committee Deputy Secretary, XPCC Party Committee Secretary and Political Commissar, and ZXJ Chairman; Xue Bin holds the roles of Vice Chairman of the XUAR, Deputy Secretary and Commander of the XPCC Party Committee, and China Xinjian Group General Manager.<sup>2</sup> (The U.S. government put Magnitsky sanctions on several of the previous XPCC administration officials).<sup>3</sup> XPCC reports and directives frequently explain the Bingtuan’s subordinate relationship to the central party-state and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government. In practice, the XPCC reports directly to the

central government, largely operating as a regional government of its own, governing an archipelago of non-contiguous cities, towns, and farms assigned to them by the central government. These jurisdictions are scattered throughout the XUAR’s territory, typically in areas that have the best access to water and favorable conditions for agriculture and industry.

In 2021, the XPCC reported that it manages a sixth of the region’s total land, and, more importantly, a quarter of its arable

land.<sup>4</sup> The Bingtuan governs one-sixth of the region’s population, the vast majority of whom are recruits from other parts of China who have moved to the Uyghur Region in the last several decades to colonize the region.<sup>5</sup> The Bingtuan’s territory is organized into 14 military divisions and 185 regiments, which in practice effectively operate as county- and town-level governments, respectively. The Bingtuan controls the production and circulation of knowledge in the region through its ownership of television and radio stations, an online news media empire, and several universities. It operates its own schools, prisons, and courts.

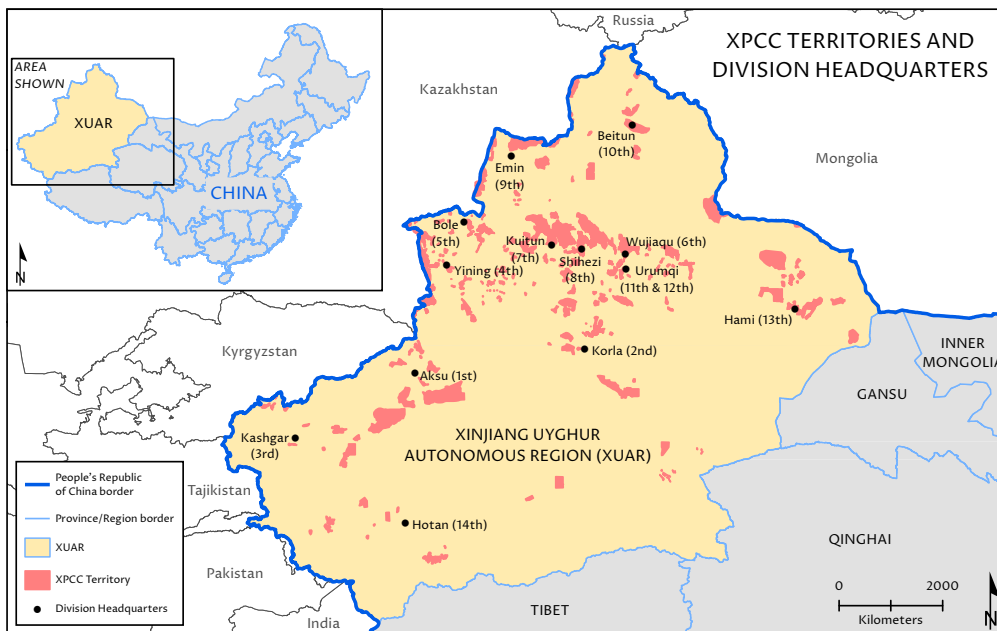


Figure 1: Map of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps territories. Credit: Brian Edward Balsley, GISP

The “Bingtuan,” as the XPCC is called in China, is under the official jurisdiction of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Its economic activities are organized under a registered corporation called the Zhongguo Xinjian Jituan (ZXJ or China Xinjian Group); however, all of the Bingtuan’s operations are supervised and monitored by central party organs and must implement and accord with policy and law legislated by the state. The Bingtuan is administered by senior party members, whose roles exemplify the intertwining nature of the varied governmental and cor-



**The XPCC is** a regional governmental body, with economic, political, and judicial authority, operating an archipelago of territories dispersed within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). It is nominally subject to XUAR authority, but it largely answers to the central government. As such, it is a state within a state, or a parallel government to the XUAR regional government. In many ways, the findings of this report are equally applicable to the XUAR government, as the XUAR government implements the same central government directives and creates many of the same oppressive structures as the XPCC.

The XPCC is simply a case study for understanding the way the government bodies operating in the Uyghur Region have created an environment of extraordinary terror and oppression, directed by the central government, but operationalized at the very local level, to the point that even the most intimate moments of Uyghur life are surveilled, judged, and punished, regardless of whether they are in XPCC or XUAR territories.

## XPCC LEADERSHIP



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钟波 Zhong Bo

Member of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

Figure 2: XPCC Leadership. Drawn from "Leadership Profile," Bingtuannet.com, [Online](http://Online), retrieved May 5, 2022.



Figure 3: "Never forget the original mission" inscribed on the yard of a 3rd Division Tumshuq internment camp. Source: Google Earth

Some estimates suggest that the XPCC's complete direct and indirect corporate holdings could amount to more than 862,000 entities worldwide.<sup>6</sup> The XPCC's corporations were originally concentrated in agriculture and construction, as a result of its central role in those sectors since its origins in the 1950s, but the Bingtuan also now operates corporations in energy, mining, chemicals, oil and gas extraction, logistics, apparel, electronics, wine, food processing, insurance, tourism, and many other sectors. The goods produced by the XPCC reach far into global supply chains, and XPCC construction projects operate not only in the XUAR but throughout China and across Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.<sup>7</sup>

The CCP originally created the XPCC, formed from demobilized troops from the civil war, as a means to prevent Indigenous resistance to the CCP and block interference from external powers. Its economic holdings were primarily agricultural up to the 1980s, but by the 1990s and 2000s, the Bingtuan turned increasingly to expanding industry and entering global trade. However, under Xi's increasing centralization and the PRC government's ever more authoritarian approach to the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other minoritized citizens in the region, the XPCC, like other governments, have been directed to "never forget the original mission." Understanding the settler roots and repressive mandate of the very particular "original mission" of the XPCC is critical to grasping the enormous powers the Bingtuan holds. Scholars have suggested that

this rhetoric serves as a clear example of how Xi justifies genocidal practices, including cultural elimination and mass detention, and this is particularly so for the XPCC.<sup>8</sup> As the XPCC operates provincial-, county-, and city-level governments, it has all of the powers of the state to govern, police, charge, sentence, and imprison. It also has the right to compel people to work, assign children to boarding schools, demolish neighborhoods, and forcibly transfer people, all of which it does. It runs a

system of prisons, internment camps, and "closed" factories that provide labor for its corporate holdings and for other companies that settle within its borders. It operates labor transfer programs that meet all international definitions of forced labor. Through this program, the Bingtuan manages its mandate, as Sun Jinlong put it in 2017, to "chop the weeds and destroy their roots, eliminate the evil until nothing is left."<sup>9</sup>

**The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps plays a critical and central role in the egregious human rights violations being inflicted upon Uyghurs and other minoritized citizens in the XUAR. In response to the Bingtuan's direct responsibility for crimes against humanity in the Uyghur Region, including forced labor, the U.S. government sanctioned the XPCC in 2019, and several other countries are considering similar sanctions.**

## The Purpose of this Report

This report is designed as a primer and an update on the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, providing an in-depth discussion of the Bingtuan's history, its role in driving the crimes against humanity being committed in the Uyghur Region, its engagement in systematic forced labor, and its role in exporting the products of forced labor and repression around the globe. Previous academic and think tank reports, books, and papers have explored the XPCC and its unusual mission and reach.<sup>10</sup> This report is meant to build on those previous reports, historically situating the XPCC's role in the region, providing more evidence of the XPCC's programs of repression and

forced labor, and identifying some of the routes by which the Bingtuan exports forced labor-made goods. The intent is to expand upon the growing body of literature on the XPCC, and to provide an account of the Bingtuan that is accessible to a wide range of researchers and stakeholders.

Using publicly accessible documents, including corporate disclosures and publicity campaigns, accounting reports, government records, state media reporting, and shipping records, as well as recently leaked government directives related to Xinjiang and the XPCC, this report describes the program of oppression designed in large part by the PRC central government and subsequently implemented by the Bingtuan to repress the Indigenous people of the Uyghur Region. Through an analysis of the XPCC's thirteen listed companies, this report then examines the massive system of forced labor and land transfer that the Bingtuan has undertaken in recent years and reveals the ways in which those programs have been integrated into both corporate operations and city governance.

Throughout the report, we use a single XPCC division/city, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of Tumshuq, as a representative case study to exemplify how the recent governmental programs—internment camps, prisons, cultural destruction, forced migration of people, population optimization, and forced labor—function as a systematic program of eth-

nic repression in the region. Tumshuq presents a window into the workings of the XPCC at a local level. It is the Bingtuan outpost that is most impoverished and thus has been designated (in guidance on the development of southern Xinjiang distributed by the General Office of the CCP) as a "strategic fulcrum for maintaining stability and border protection and a demonstration zone for national unity."<sup>11</sup> It has the largest land area of all divisions of the XPCC, and it has the largest ethnic minority population, with 52% of the 270,000 claiming non-Han heritage.<sup>12</sup> It has been targeted for increased funding for corporate development, expanded agricultural development, forcible migration ("urbanization") of people, and for coercive labor transfers. It is also the location of many prisons and has the largest concentration of internment camps of any XPCC territory.

It is critical that people understand the unusual and outsized role the XPCC plays in the operations and business of the Uyghur Region, as well as the daily lives of its citizens. Though it would be impossible to describe every aspect or every corporate investment of the Bingtuan, this report is designed to provide background for and examples of the XPCC's governmental and corporate reach. The report concludes with recommendations directed at legislators and businesses regarding actions to address the repressive tactics of the XPCC and extract our governments and consumer goods from complicity in them.



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE XPCC

## The Bingtuan’s Historic “Settler Mission”

In October 1954, just a month after its new constitution had come into effect, the central government of the People’s Republic of China announced the formation of the People’s Liberation Army Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. Large numbers of soldiers stationed in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region were ordered to re-organize into a new corps from remnants of the Xinjiang Military District, composed of demobilized soldiers of competing Civil War (1927–1949) factions (People’s Liberation Army and Kuomintang troops). The corps’ mission would be to “cultivate and guard border areas.”<sup>13</sup> Chairman Mao Zedong famously encouraged these partly demobilized troops to “put weapons of combat in reserve, and take up the weapons of production and construction,” though he followed that by reminding them that they may yet be called to take up arms again.<sup>14</sup> Though there were originally several other paramilitary corps stationed in border regions of China, the XPCC is the only one that survived beyond the 1970s.

The resulting Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps is a central-government-controlled paramilitary settler-colonial institution that settles Han soldiers and workers in a region populated by Turkic-speaking peoples, including Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other minoritized groups. Inclusion of Uyghurs and other Indigenous people within the XPCC ranks was limited from the corps’ inception. Party-state documents describe Han people as a source of stability whose “higher levels” of “political, economic, and cultural development” confer “special responsibility” to “develop minorities’ economy and culture.”<sup>15</sup> The Bingtuan’s intertwined security and economic roles emerged in this colonial context of “turning pastureland into collective farms” with the “gun in one hand and plough in the other.”<sup>16</sup>

Xinjiang’s Han settlers only accounted for around six percent of the Uyghur Region’s population in 1953, the year before the Bingtuan’s establishment. However, that proportion has increased steadily throughout the last 70 years, with the Bingtuan as the primary institutional mechanism to aid Han settlement and minority desettlement, eliminating the Uyghurs’ majority status in the region by the 1980s.<sup>17</sup> The Bingtuan facilitated the dispersal of local troops from the Ili National Army, and the after the settlement of soldiers from the Korean War in 1954, the Han population reached 200,000 and then grew to 300,000 by 1957 through industrialization and mass labor recruitment. Recruitment increased again with the 1960s “special connection” policy to “farm out excess urban labor” from Eastern China to the west.<sup>18</sup> Efforts to collec-

tivize farms, including by the Bingtuan, led to food shortages, famine, and mass Kazakh migration to the Soviet Union, decreasing the number of Indigenous people in the region, even as Han people were being relocated there.<sup>19</sup> More than 200,000 Han were “sent down” to Xinjiang’s countryside during the Cultural Revolution, and 450,000 additional people from Wuhan and Shanghai settled there by 1979.<sup>20</sup> The Bingtuan was the primary means by which both Han migration and Indigenous depopulation was achieved.

Mao, like his eventual successor, Deng Xiaoping, considered ethnic relations in Xinjiang a “strategic chess game” to create safe borderlands between Han China and European empires.<sup>21</sup> “Local minority nationalism” (i.e. Uyghur and Kazakh identities) was understood as a “problem” in retaining control of the region.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the party-state was also concerned about how “Han chauvinism,” including Kuomintang ideology, could spark conflict with Indigenous groups. Following compromises with KMT soldiers, the central government repeatedly cracked down on Bingtuan “rightists” and “counter-revolutionary espionage” during the 1950s, in an effort to defeat “chauvinist” attitudes of KMT members and refusals to rapidly implement socialist collectivization. While the former KMT soldiers were singled out for “chauvinistic” beliefs regarding the Uyghurs and other Indigenous people of the region, new Bingtuan recruits were not exempt from their own ethnocentrism, looking down upon the traditional non-Han cultures they encountered when they reached the region. Uyghur leaders were systematically excluded from positions of authority as Han colonists took over the reins of power.<sup>23</sup> The Bingtuan’s personnel and institutional position in the party-state, therefore, reflect uneasy, pragmatic compromises between competing Han factions in strategic efforts to settle, populate, and colonize territory traditionally beyond Beijing’s immediate control.

Divisions between Han factions in Xinjiang over ideology and unemployment sparked Cultural Revolution-era (1966–76) street fighting, most notably the Shihezi Incident, in which conservative Bingtuan soldiers killed competing Bingtuan radicals and sent hundreds more to detention centers.<sup>24</sup> The central government sent in the army to take over the Bingtuan, calm the infighting, and promote central authorities’ vision of the Cultural Revolution, but this exacerbated the ethnic tensions erupting all across the region and significantly slowed agricultural production. As historian James Milward put it, by 1969, the Bingtuan was “left in tatters,” due to a combination of a workforce zealous to fight in the factional battles, a massive exodus of the workers, a decline in productivity,

and a government reluctant to pour more money into a losing proposition.<sup>25</sup>

The XPCC was disbanded in 1975 and labelled a “revisionist independent kingdom” due to the center’s inability to enforce policy, particularly amidst the chaos of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>26</sup> All of its land and corporate holdings were handed over to the Xinjiang regional government. The Bingtuan’s original independent military structure, formed by leaders of the Xinjiang Military District, was disbanded, and control of the XPCC territories shifted to civilian authorities.

## Corporatization of the Bingtuan

By 1981, however, political interests made a renewed XPCC an appealing prospect to the central government again, when former Bingtuan Han emigres to the region—left at loose ends without employment or strong leadership when the XPCC collapsed—began to rebel at about the same time as there was growing Uyghur dissatisfaction with the government.<sup>27</sup> The Xinjiang Bingtuan was thus formally reinstituted in 1981 for political purposes, with Deng Xiaoping (then the chairman of the Central Military Commission) stressing that the Bingtuan’s role in Xinjiang was longer-term and more strategically important than other former military farms across China, due to the XUAR’s “unsteady situation.” In his visit to Xinjiang in 1981, Deng found that Uyghurs were openly demanding self-rule. Following the visit, the Bingtuan’s earlier “iron rice bowl mentality” was dispensed with, as government officials announced that state farms must become profitable “agro-industrial complexes” and households were given production quotas.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the economic strain the XPCC had previously caused, Deng determined to make the Bingtuan more profitable and self-sustaining through increased corporatization. Nonetheless, the Bingtuan continued to play a central role in colonization and land reclamation in the 1990s, shifting to developing natural resources, including Xinjiang’s highly subsidized and labor-intensive cotton industry. Land dedicated to cotton farming in the Uyghur Region doubled between 1990 and 1997 through these efforts, and much of it was centered in XPCC territories. This expansion of the agricultural industries of the region facilitated mass Han migration through central government incentives, a process that maintained continued Han control of the region.<sup>29</sup> Despite its history of lagging production and low levels of foreign direct investment,<sup>30</sup> the central government doubled down on the XPCC by pursuing a program of “accelerated integration” to bring the Bingtuan under its political control, providing the corps with significant agricultural subsidies and awards for infrastructure mega-projects (including the

Tarim oil pipeline), which put the Uyghur Region’s economy and logistics hubs at the service of the needs of industry in Eastern China.<sup>31</sup> These programs were integral to the state’s planned development of the region, keeping the Han migrants who moved to the region placated, providing necessary resources for the expansion of the mainland Chinese economy, and setting the stage for the significant expansion of industry in the Uyghur Region that would take place over the course of the next three decades. In the process, the Han population surged by almost a third between 1990–2000, twice the rate of minority population growth.<sup>32</sup> Migration allowed the Han population to stay proportionally the same in the face of a higher birth rate (or natural growth rate) among Indigenous peoples.

Industrial growth in the XUAR expanded the power and reach of the XPCC, even though the enterprise was not particularly financially sustainable. During this period of transformation, as much as 80% of the Bingtuan’s budget may have come from central government funds, though precise numbers are difficult to attain for this period.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the geographical territory controlled by the Bingtuan also grew, as the PRC added land to the Bingtuan’s portfolio to accommodate increased pressure to expand urbanization, create new regiments and cities, and increase the pace of industrialization in the region.<sup>34</sup>

During the “opening and reform” period (1978 onwards), China increasingly used market mechanisms to expand its economy, but those reforms initially prioritized the Eastern coast and overlooked the West of China. Recognizing this as an economic and potential security problem, Jiang Zemin identified economic growth as a strategy for increased security that took the place of (or was at least on par with) explicit military power.<sup>35</sup> In the 1999 campaign to “Open Up the West” (or the “Western Development Project” *Xibu Da Kaifa* 西部大开发), Jiang Zemin emphasized developing the frontier provinces including Xinjiang. “Opening up” the west expedited the growth of industry, including that of state-owned enterprises. Within this strategy, however, the XUAR and XPCC served as sources of raw materials, rather than as a full-fledged industrial economy of its own. As of 2002, half of Xinjiang’s fiscal revenue came from oil and gas exploitation. Raw materials mining and heavy industry dominated the early corporate expansion into the region and continue to contribute significantly to Xinjiang’s economy.<sup>36</sup> But most of the benefits of those industries are extracted by businesses outside of the region.

The strategy of western “development” also required a significant investment in infrastructure, which relied in great part on the XPCC, due to its mission as the construction corps of the region. Railroads, roads, waterways, and mines were developed in rapid fashion, assisting in the

exploitation of Xinjiang's resources and the transport of those resources to the rest of China, and eventually to the rest of the world. The XPCC was also tasked with expanding its model city of Shihezi and developing three smaller municipalities (Aral, Tumshuq, and Wujiaqu) to official city status and in the process opening up opportunities for corporate investment, again expanding its corporate footprint in parallel with its geographical footprint.<sup>37</sup>

In 1998, the XPCC was promoted to an essentially provincial level bureaucratic status. When it was given the power to administer courts and prosecution offices that same year, the Bingtuan was officially placed on a parallel level of jurisdiction as its ostensible supervisory body, the XUAR.<sup>38</sup> As an archipelago of governance within the larger territory of the XUAR, the XPCC consolidated its status as a "state within a state," for which Cliff argues "the ultimate aim is to create a stable and compliant social, political, and economic environment in Xinjiang—a strong foothold in Central Asia."<sup>39</sup> The XPCC territories act as anchors of Han-majority stability and military control that are meant to keep the XUAR in check and maintain China's power in Central Asia.

It was in 1998 as well that the XPCC was formally reclassified as a corporation, establishing the China Xinjiang Group. Part of the XPCC's transformation was directed at attracting corporate investment—foreign and domestic—and more educated Han workers from the mainland who would drive the expansion of the region's industrial economy (rather than serving in military or menial labor roles as many of the XPCC soldiers had previously).<sup>40</sup> The XPCC would begin to play a larger role in global commerce, with Xinjiang Baihuacun Co. (新疆百花村股份有限公司) the first XPCC company to be listed on the Shanghai stock exchange in 1996. Although Baihuacun would later be delisted, it heralded a broader shift to public listing for the XPCC, and in 2005, the deputy commander of the XPCC called listing companies a "[binding] duty" of the corps.<sup>41</sup> The Bingtuan then reorganized much of its agriculture and mining under those listed companies, consolidating its corporate structures to leverage the companies' scale on the global market.<sup>42</sup> Today, the Bingtuan controls thirteen publicly listed companies, and estimates place its full direct and indirect holdings at over 860,000 companies.<sup>43</sup> Chapters 3 and 4 will engage more closely with the corporations associated with the Bingtuan and the labor practices that have landed the XPCC on the U.S. Entities list and have garnered it a Withhold Release Order which bans all products made in whole or in part by the XPCC from entering the United States. But suffice it to say, the XPCC was transformed in two short decades from an agricultural military outpost to a global corporation.

## Xi's Era: Centralization and "Fusion"

The Bingtuan is officially described as the "embodiment of China's active spirit" and "settler culture," with its "function" to secure and "settle the frontier" imagined as continuation of 2,000-year-old Han military settlements to secure non-Han territory on China's frontiers and "modernize" or assimilate its peoples.<sup>44</sup> This role has been increasingly emphasized by China's leaders since the 2009 Ürümqi violence between Han and Uyghur citizens of the region. The party-state's first Xinjiang Working Group meeting in 2010 announced the acceleration of assimilation policy ("fusion")<sup>45</sup> with compulsory "ethnic unity education" classes teaching the party line that Uyghurs are not a Turkic group and not a Muslim nationality which the government believed would only be disputed by the "three forces" of separatists, terrorists, and extremists.<sup>46</sup> At the 2014 Xinjiang Working Group Meeting, Xi announced that building an "ethnic smelting furnace" was key to achieving the Bingtuan's historic "special function" of securing and "settling the frontier" in China's "long-term, complicated, and intense struggle" against combined forces of "Westernization" and "separatism," the latter a reference to Indigenous calls for greater autonomy or independence.<sup>47</sup> Xi described this work and Xinjiang policy at the 2020 3<sup>rd</sup> Xinjiang Working Group Meeting as highly successful in deepening "contact, communication, fusion" towards a shared Chinese identity, Sinicization of religion, and "security feelings."<sup>48</sup> The Bingtuan, Xi announced, was "a stabilizer for the frontiers, a smelting furnace for the masses of all ethnic groups, and a demonstration zone for advanced productive forces and advanced culture."<sup>49</sup> Xi Jinping has announced continuity of the Bingtuan's long-term strategic "mission" to secure frontier territory and "smelt" (also could be translated as assimilate or fuse) minority people.<sup>50</sup>

Centralization of power under Xi Jinping across China increasingly means that monitoring and supervision (including over the Bingtuan) have become key priorities to maintaining central control over the Uyghur Region. The State Council's supervisory authority has placed greater emphasis on reining in the Bingtuan and on the notion that the "Bingtuan spirit" includes following orders from the central party in economic and military affairs.<sup>51</sup> Chen Quanguo, the XUAR Party Secretary and XPCC's official Political Commissar until December 2021, clearly outlined that the XPCC is guided entirely by Xi Jinping thought and his ideology as the "core":

First, we must resolutely maintain the core. Firmly establish political awareness, awareness of the overall situation, core (principles), and alignment<sup>52</sup>... resolutely safeguarding the authority of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, with all actions following the

command of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core.<sup>53</sup>

In 2014, following a visit by Xi Jinping, The State Council Information Office published a history of the XPCC, celebrating its accomplishments over sixty years and explicating the role the Bingtuan would play in the coming years. The historical narrative reveals the strategic and security functions of the organization.

Since the 1980s the threat of the "three evils"—separatists, religious extremists, and terrorists—to Xinjiang's social stability has grown. To confront this threat, divisions, regiments, companies, enterprises, and public institutions under the XPCC have established emergency militia battalions, companies, and platoons that enable it to respond rapidly to outbursts of violent terrorist activities. The XPCC has played crucial roles in fighting terrorism and maintaining stability, especially in the April 5 riot in Barin Township, Akto County in 1990 and the February 5 Yining incident of 1997. Familiar with the situation, and located close to these sites, the XPCC militias struck swiftly and joined hands with armed police and residents of various ethnic groups in cracking down on violent terrorist crimes, so maintaining social stability. In rapid response to the July 5 Urumqi riot of 2009, the XPCC sent militias to patrol the city and guard key districts from possible attacks. At present, the XPCC is focusing its efforts on forging a top militia force in China and building a system

of regular rotation training and standby duty, which combines production, training, duty performance, and emergency response."<sup>54</sup>

Xi restated the Bingtuan paramilitary group's historic "mission" of "settling the frontier" (屯垦戍边) at the 2014 and 2020 Xinjiang central work meetings.<sup>55</sup> In 2014, Xi gave fiery speeches and orders to implement new policies to resolve the XUAR's problems in a "painful period of interventionary treatment."<sup>56</sup> He stated that combatting terrorism in the Uyghur Region was integral to the "reform, development and stability of the country, the maintenance of the unification of the motherland, ethnic unity, and national security, and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." He explained that "the separatist and anti-separatist struggle in Xinjiang is long-term, complicated, sharp, and sometimes even fierce."<sup>57</sup> **The XUAR government and Chen Quanguo subsequently issued orders in 2017 and 2018 to "round up all those who should be rounded up,"<sup>58</sup> which led to both the XPCC and XUAR governments building internment camps, expanding prisons, and putting over a million people into extra-judicial, indefinite detention.**

Under Xi, the party-state increasingly emphasizes using force and strong centralized standardization, monitoring, and supervision to govern the XUAR, including through the XPCC, rather than allowing the logics of markets or the "direction of history" to immediately resolve social "contradictions" in China and specifically, in regional policy.<sup>59</sup> The following chapter explores the recent program of repression implemented by the XPCC, under the authority and direction of Xi and the PRC central government.



# THE XPCC’S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In April 2014, Xi Jinping made an official visit to the Uyghur Region and delivered a speech to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. In this direction-setting speech, Xi described the XPCC as a “party-government-military-enterprise unity system” whose objectives are to “strengthen the party’s core leadership position, improve and transform its ‘political’ functions, highlight the attributes of the ‘military,’ and establish the status of the ‘enterprise’ as the mainstay in the market.” The speech subordinated the corporate function of the XPCC to the original mission of the XPCC of “reclaiming and defending the borders,” and its primary role in “regulating social structure and promoting unity” in the region.<sup>60</sup>

With the appointment of Chen Quanguo as XUAR Party Secretary in 2016, the XPCC’s original mandate to serve as a border defense fully returned to the fore. In April 2017, then XPCC Party Branch Secretary Sun Jinlong gave a speech about the XPCC’s implementation of the Party Central Committee’s plan for the Bingtuan to achieve long-term stability in the Uyghur Region, in which he celebrated that the XPCC had recently “significantly improved its comprehensive stability maintenance and border guarding capabilities,” “carried out in-depth special campaigns for the crackdown, [and] strengthened social and key element management and control.”<sup>61</sup>

In August of 2017, Chen emphasized that “the situation in Xinjiang is still grim and we must keep the alarm bells ringing for a long time.” Chen then invoked the fear of terrorism as a motivator: “Don’t forget the chaos; never give the hostile forces a respite; never give the violent terrorists the opportunity to make a comeback or any chance of resurgence.” As part of that mission, Chen indicated that his administration would implement Xi’s goal to create “vocational skills and training conversion centers” (a euphemism at the time for internment camps) and to establish an “integrated platform” (which refers to the Integrated Joint Operations Platform policing app).<sup>62</sup> Chen thus directed and authorized the regional government to develop these new and highly repressive instruments of control in the Uyghur Region—the internment camps and the mass surveillance system. Deployed by the central government as the leading force for security, the XPCC is central to the development and practical operation of that machinery of repression.

The campaign of repression that has been developed through the XPCC since 2016 operates through several distinct (though often overlapping) campaigns, which are described in government directives as: a) “vocational skills and training” b) “land cooperativization,” c) “population optimization,” d) “border security” and “stability management” e) “ideological security,” f) “Sinicization of Islam,” and g) “surplus labor transfers” for “poverty alleviation.” Based on the directives sent out by the XPCC and other governmental agencies, it is clear that these euphemized policy priorities are instead a deliberate and systematic program of **a) internment and imprisonment, b) land expropriation, c) forcible migration of people, d) repressive, pre-emptive policing, e) social engineering, f) religious persecution, and g) forced labor.**

The central government guaranteed that the XPCC’s expanded role in developing more robust security, industry, and infrastructure deemed necessary to stabilize the region would be financed centrally. The central government promised to guide financial institutions to provide capital for the XPCC’s needs.<sup>63</sup> Though many Bingtuan state-owned enterprises have extremely high debt ratios, plummeting profits, and cost the central government billions of RMB each year, the XPCC’s central security function appears to reduce the importance of its economic failures for the central government. XPCC-controlled cities also carry enormous debt loads, reliant as they are on funds from the central government.<sup>64</sup> The XPCC seems decidedly too big—or too important—to fail.

*“Don’t forget the chaos; never give the hostile forces a respite; never give the violent terrorists the opportunity to make a comeback or any chance of resurgence.”*

## Mass Internment and Imprisonment

In 1983, when the central government expanded the Bingtuan’s powers, the Party Central Committee and the State Council determined to “combine the reform of criminals with the development of Xinjiang and the development of the corps,” essentially ordering the organization to use forced labor through the older reform through labor (*laogai*, 劳改) programs to expand its eco-

nomic operations and increase profitability.<sup>67</sup> In 1983, the central government also changed the name of the XPCC prison system from the "Bingtuan Reform-through-Labor Bureau" to the "Bingtuan Prison Administration Bureau."<sup>68</sup> This did not necessarily signal a radical change in the practices of the prisons; indeed, the government simultaneously established the XPCC Labor Reform Work Management Bureau and put it in charge of prisoner rehabilitation. Though the PRC government officially ended extra-judicial re-education through labor camps (劳动教养) in 2013 under significant international pressure,<sup>69</sup> prison forced labor not only continues to be permitted but is actually required by PRC law. Chapter 1 Article 3 of the Prison Affairs Open Handbook states "Prisons shall implement the principles of combining punishment and reformation and combining education and labor to reform criminals into law-abiding citizens." Article 4 continues: "Prisons shall supervise criminals in accordance with the law, organize criminals to engage in productive labor according to the needs of reforming criminals, and conduct ideological, cultural, and technical education for criminals."<sup>70</sup> Juvenile offenders are not exempt.<sup>71</sup>

Until recently, many of the prisoners held in the Bingtuan prisons were Han men and women who were typically transported to the XUAR to serve criminal sentences.<sup>72</sup> The central government treated the XUAR as a kind of penal colony for violent criminals from the mainland. However, starting around 2016, the role of the XPCC's prisons seems to have changed. By 2017, the population of the XPCC prisons seems to have shifted significantly toward housing Uyghurs and other Indigenous people of the region, particularly on extralegal accusations related to religious practice, "extremist" ideology, and ethnic pro-independence thought. Policy and practices in the prisons changed with the influx of Uyghur prisoners who had been deemed to be "corroded and poisoned by extremist thoughts."<sup>73</sup> Bingtuan media reports began to reveal a shift toward prison programming that demanded Uyghur prisoners confess how their minds had been harmed by extremist ideology as defined by the party-state and perform self-criticisms and criticisms of those who disseminate those ideologies. Previously concerned with drug rehabilitation and criminal behavioral changes, increasingly after 2016, reports from the XPCC Prison Bureau remark on the critical work of eradicating the "three evils" of "separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism" for which minoritized inmates from the Uyghur Region were increasingly sentenced to XPCC prisons.<sup>74</sup>

Selections from a speech given by Chen Quanguo following the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CCP, at which "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was enshrined in the constitution:

"General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that 'to ensure the long-term stability of the country and the people to live and work in peace' 'in the big game of safeguarding national unity and security, it is necessary to stabilize Xinjiang as a first move.' We must [...] firmly grasp the scientific positioning of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, that social stability and long-term stability are the overall goals of Xinjiang's work, and fully understand that there has been no fundamental change in Xinjiang's current 'three-phase superposition' situation, with concurrent periods of violent and terrorist activities, the intense period of the anti-secession struggle, and the painful period of interventionary treatment. [We must] fully understand the long-term, complex, and sharp nature of Xinjiang's anti-separatism struggle, and fully understand that the anti-terrorism and stability struggle is a protracted battle, as well as a tough battle. [We must] unswervingly regard the maintenance of stability as an overriding political task and a political responsibility that is more important than Mount Tai. We must establish a sense of long-term commitment and long-term combat, always maintain a high level of vigilance, keep the alarm bells ringing, and tightly adhere to maintaining stability at all times. We must resolutely overcome slackness, numbness, and war exhaustion, and ensure that we never relax for a moment, never waver an inch, wage one battle after another and target one point after another in the pursuit of stability. [We must] build the momentum of long-term stability, growing and governing the cause."<sup>65</sup>

"(9) Strive to create a new situation in the reform and development of the XPCC. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that 'The XPCC is an important force in Xinjiang's economic and social development' and 'The XPCC can only be strengthened but not weakened.' We must resolutely implement the important instructions of the General Secretary, firmly establish the idea of 'the corps and the region as a game of chess,' insist that the development of the XPCC is the development of Xinjiang, the growth of the XPCC is the growth of Xinjiang, and the reform of the XPCC is the reform of Xinjiang. We must fully support the corps' growth, the improvement of its ability to defend borders, support the corps' deepening reforms, support the corps' southward development, and actively promote the development of the integration of the military and the region, so that the corps can better play the special role of a stabilizer, smelting furnace, and demonstration areas."<sup>66</sup>

Essentially, the XPCC’s already significant prison system has been developed as critical infrastructure in the service of the party-state’s repressive policies, including the system of mass internment that emerged in those years.

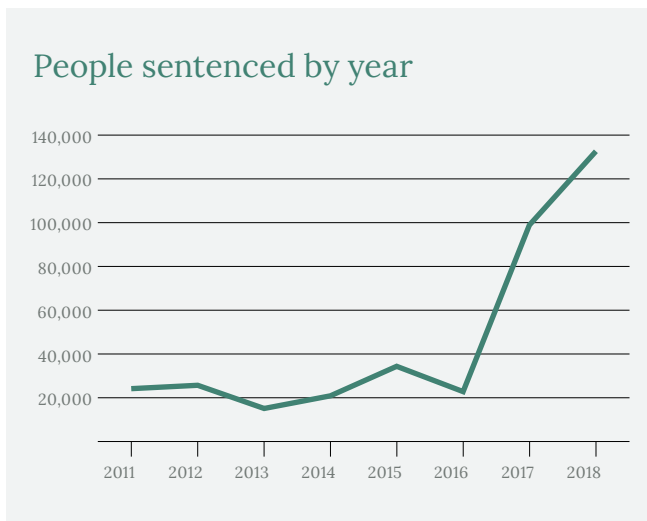
In the midst of the campaign of mass internment and imprisonment of Uyghurs and other Indigenous people of the region in 2017, the central government tasked the XPCC with building four new pre-trial detention centers (看守所), six detention centers for lesser offenses (拘留所), three standard prisons (监狱), and three high-security prisons (高度戒备监狱), along with remodeling and expanding seven already existent prisons (监狱). Extensive, first-person evidence suggests that the pre-trial detention centers have been used across the XUAR alongside internment camps and “re-education” centers for arbitrary, extra-judicial detention of Indigenous peoples.<sup>75</sup> Between 2016 and 2019, the XPCC recruited thousands of new prison staff.<sup>76</sup> The XPCC equipped these new and expanded prisons and their guards with equipment such as tear gas knapsacks, electric batons, shock shields, tasers, anti-riot devices, stab-proof clothing, handcuffs, and ankle restraints.<sup>77</sup> The significant growth in prisons, prison staff, and prison equipment echoes a marked increase in the number of Uyghur people sentenced to prison in the last five years, in addition to the mass internment campaign for which the XPCC increased its detention facilities.<sup>78</sup>

In the last several years, it has become difficult to distinguish between the XPCC’s prisons and its internment camps. For the purposes of this report, “internment” is used to describe a situation of arbitrary extra-judicial confinement without a clear termination date, to differentiate it from “imprisonment,” which we use to describe the experience of people who have been sentenced through formal judicial process and have been given criminal sentences specifying a release date. Increasingly, journalists and scholars have reported that internment victims are being sentenced in mass or sham trials without the right to a defense, and some people are moved between internment camps and prisons without due process.<sup>79</sup> This in-

*In the last several years, it has become difficult to distinguish between the XPCC’s prisons and its internment camps.*

tegrates the XPCC’s massive system of prisons into a constellation of de facto internment camps operating as part of the larger system of mass internment across the region.

The transformation is evidenced through the physical expansions of the prisons that occurred between 2015 and 2019, which is readily identifiable from satellite imagery (see Figure 7 below), as well as through tenders and announcements that provide insight into the changing uses of the prisons. For instance, Tamen prison was built in 2014–2015 (replacing an older Tamen reeducation through labor prison), one of the early prisons built in the expansion after Xi announced the Strike Hard campaign. Construction tenders reveal the expectations of the inmates who would be held there. The new prison required road construction and flooring in a maximum-security area for state-security endangering inmates, transformation of existing facilities for inmates endangering state security, door controls, an electronic night watch system, and transformation of inner fencing.<sup>80</sup> In 2017, Tamen added a surveillance system, a halal dining hall, solitary confinement rooms, and additional door controls.<sup>81</sup> The Xinjiang Victims Database documents 41 people who have been imprisoned in Tamen.<sup>82</sup>



▲  
Figure 4: People given prison sentences in XUAR, 2011 – 2018. Source: China Law Yearbooks, Xinjiang Regional Yearbooks and Xinjiang Court Annual Work Reports, via Human Rights Watch

Tamen Prison is located in the middle of the Aral Industrial Park, which is home to several sock companies including Xinjiang Nakai Textile and Aral Jieliya Group Hosiery (both of which are subsidiaries of Jiangxi Maohua), Aral Zhentai Yongfeng Hosiery, and Xinjiang Xinyue Silk

Road Co.<sup>83</sup> It appears that most if not all of the companies export internationally, including to the United States; Maohua claims among its “cooperative partners” several prominent US apparel retailers on its website, last updated in 2018.<sup>84</sup> It is unclear if the companies operating in the Aral Industrial Park use prison inmates as laborers, but there is also evidence that Tamen Prison runs its own labor workshops,<sup>85</sup> and, as described more in depth below, all prisons require the prisoners to work.

In 2019, the XPCC invested in making “smart prisons” of the eight prisons it had renovated and expanded in the previous years.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the additional riot gear and less lethal weapons that were purchased by the XPCC Prison Bureau described above also provide a glimpse into the transformation of the XPCC’s carceral system.

### One Farmer’s Experience in XPCC Kuytun Prison

Ismayil Sadiq had spent his life as a farmer and herder in Yengisar. Official court proceedings collected by the Xinjiang Victims Database reveal that he was detained in the summer of 2017, and it only took five days before he was sentenced to 10 years in the XPCC’s Kuytun prison for “propagating extremism.” We do not know what that charge involved, but less than a year later, he had 11 years added to his sentence, this time for “undermining prison supervision” and “inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination.” Court records show that he was found guilty of covertly praying, performing a religious ablution, reprimanding his cell mates for reporting that he had done these things, and then wiping his nose on the form on which he was supposed to confess his crime. Ismayil Sadiq will be 74 years old when he has completed his sentences.<sup>87</sup>

It is clear from the Bingtuan’s own media that many recent Uyghur prisoners have claimed to be unaware upon their arrest that they have committed any crimes and are often unaware of which crimes they are accused. However, in prison, prison indoctrination aims to make them believe that the government is correct in its assessment of their undesirable behaviors and thought and to admit their guilt. For instance, one prisoner at a public confession event admitted his complete ignorance of his behavior constituting criminal activity. He revealed that his religious practices were what made him suspect in the eyes of the state: “When I first came to prison and served my sentence, I always believed that I was right, and that I did not commit a crime. Through the police officers patiently speaking about the law, the situation, and religious poli-

cies for us, I gradually realized: I was wrong. I was blinded by them [the three evils] in the name of religious beliefs and went to the road of crime. But I didn’t know it at all. Now I finally understand that my behavior is a manifestation of extremist religious thought.”<sup>88</sup>



Figure 5: Prisoners submit to public confession meeting at XPCC prison. Source: Tahe Eagle’s Voice via Weixin, [Online](#).

These kinds of coerced confessions result from months or sometimes years of ideological indoctrination within the camps, designed to reduce religious piety and observance. In the 3rd Division, the Pichaqsundi Prison program, for instance, explicitly calls on prisoners to embrace the party’s ethnic and religious policies and “admit guilt and submit to the law” by which officials hope to “encourage prisoners to be actively reformed and reborn as soon as possible.” The program provides opportunities for family members to have meals with inmates, with the expectation that their sadness upon seeing their families will encourage them, again, to “admit guilt and submit to the law, obey the discipline, actively reform, and reunite with their families as soon as possible.”<sup>89</sup> Huaqiao prison officials explain the purpose of the prison’s rehabilitation work, “The aim is to enable prisoners to further recognize the harm of religious extremism, the harm of their own crimes, to distinguish right from wrong, to know when they are lost, to completely break with the three forces, and to embark on the road of active transformation.”<sup>90</sup> As stated before, local and regional government bodies consider extremism and terrorism in the region to include participation in a myriad of entirely innocuous and otherwise legal behaviors. Because the list of religious practices that are prohibited are regularly changed and quite arbitrary, the “transformation” expected by these prison programs is a denunciation of religion and identity.





Figure 6: Police visit Uyghur woman’s home. Source: Corps Police Administrative Bureau of the 3rd Division via Weixin, [Online](#).

The prison’s role in pressuring the Uyghur Region’s minoritized citizens to reduce religious piety extends beyond the walls of the prisons. As part of the Prison Bureau’s ideological outreach programming, XPCC prisons host training events for visitors, employing a similar program to the widely criticized “scared straight” programs in the United States, which introduce at-risk youth and young adults to the horrific conditions of the country’s prisons as a way of deterring actual illegal behaviors. In the Uyghur Region, these XPCC prison outreach programs are held for both adults and youth, regardless of their risk of offending. In one of these events, visitors were invited to see the “three major scenes of inmates’ study, life, and labor.” The visitors were meant to “feel the majesty of the prison and the pain of losing their freedom.” The prisoners testify to their crimes for the audiences: the Han speak of their professional crimes, the Uyghurs of their religious extremism, demonstrating the racialized discrimination in policing and imprisonment.<sup>91</sup> In another prison-sponsored ideological training event targeting children, Uyghur youth—many of whom likely had family members in camps or prisons at the time—were brought to the prison for a program that “provides young friends with the opportunity to learn about prisons, to experience the security and rigor inside the walls and the pain of losing their freedom, to warn young friends to abide by the law and stay away from crime, and makes a needed contribution to the work of preventing juvenile delinquency.”<sup>92</sup> (See Figure 5) In another public event, an XPCC prison recruited a young child to explain the difficulties she’s faced since her father had been sent to prison. Audience members shed tears as the girl described her hatred of the people who had supposedly taught her father to “participate in illegal religious activities.” She told the audience that “she hates them very much, because it is

these people who made her lose the company and care of her father, and caused her mother bear the responsibility of the family alone.” The young girl said, “I want to tell people affected by illegal religious thoughts that we are now living in a great environment of great economic leaps, people’s livelihoods, and national unity. We should resolutely resist the erosion of extreme religious thoughts and be free from illegal religious thoughts.”<sup>93</sup> XPCC prisons train Uyghur Region youth from an early age to adopt the idea that even their thoughts could be illegal and to understand that the detention, internment, and imprisonment of their family members was due to their practice of their religion. Indeed, prison publicity campaigns often celebrate these programs and their demonstrated capacity to compel people to obey party rules and correct their thinking.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 7: Children swear an oath at the Youth Education Base event held in Huaqiao Prison. Source: Corps Prisons via Weixin, [Online](#).

**Labor is central to the PRC’s (and thus the XPCC’s) model of prisoner rehabilitation.**<sup>95</sup> Article 69 of the Prison Handbook indicates that “Criminals who are capable of working must participate in labor.”<sup>96</sup> Prisoners do not have a choice to opt out of prison labor programs, and thus they are necessarily forced labor. Prison reform through labor is seen as “a form of cultural fusion that purifies and redeems the soul.”<sup>97</sup> The Guiding Principles on the Work of Rehabilitating Criminals, distributed by the PRC Ministry of Justice, states that “Prisons perform the duty of rehabilitating criminals, and prison companies are responsible for providing labor positions for rehabilitating criminals and serving the rehabilitated criminals.”<sup>98</sup> The very nature of reform-through-labor is ideological, and work is a central means of effecting the desired ideological change. The ostensible premise is that people made docile by labor-intensive work for long hours are more amenable to “re-education” and more easily controlled by the state.

Table 1. A Partial List of XPCC Prison Enterprises

COMPANY	PRISON	LISTED CORPORATE ADDRESS	PRODUCT
Wensu County Xinjian Coal Industry Co., Ltd. 温宿县新建煤业有限公司	Shahe Prison 沙河监狱, 1st Division <sup>99</sup>	First Compound Shahe Prison Fifth Regiment, First Division, Aksu Region <sup>100</sup>	Coal mining and processing, security door manufacturing
Aral City Jiafang Textile Co., Ltd. 阿拉尔市佳纺纺织有限公司	Aral Prison 阿拉尔监狱, 1st Division <sup>101</sup>	First Division Aral Prison <sup>102</sup>	Textiles
Aral Central Prison Pig Farm 阿拉尔市佳纺纺织有限公司	Aral Prison 师阿拉尔监狱, 1st Division	Xinjiang Aral Central Prison <sup>103</sup>	Pig products
Alar Xinjiang Carton Factory 阿拉尔市鑫强纸箱厂	Xingfu Cheng Prison 幸福城监狱, 1st Division	Alar Xingfu Cheng (Happy City) Prison of the 13th Regiment Headquarters <sup>104</sup>	Containers
Yanqiyu Fengyuan Foundry Co., Ltd 焉耆裕丰源铸造有限公司	Korla Prison 库尔勒监狱, 2nd Division	Third Compound of Korla Prison, No. 2 Agricultural Division, No. 27 Regiment, Yanqi County, Bazhou <sup>105</sup>	Cast iron products
Nai’er Electromechanical Manufacturing LTD 耐尔机电设备制造有限公司	Korla Prison 库尔勒监狱, 2nd Division	Second Compound, Korla Prison <sup>106</sup>	Switches
Unnamed Wig Factory and unnamed Aluminum Foil factory	Cherchen Prison 且末监狱, 2nd Division <sup>107</sup>	Unknown	Wigs, aluminum foil
Xinjiang Junggar Cotton and Linen Co., Ltd. 新疆准噶尔棉麻有限公	Fangcaohu Prison 芳草湖监狱, 6th Divi- sion <sup>108</sup>	Third Compound of Fangcaohu Farm Prison, Route 192, Highway 21, Hutubi County, Changji Prefecture, Xinjiang <sup>109</sup>	Cotton farming, processing and textiles
Shuijiang Agricultural and Sideline Products Distribution Office, Fangcaohu, Hutubi County 呼图壁县芳草湖曙疆农副产品经销处	Fangcaohu Prison 芳草湖监狱, 6th Divi- sion <sup>110</sup>	Fourth Compound of Fangcaohu Prison Hutubi County <sup>111</sup>	Agricultural products
Xinjiang Bingmian Tiansheng Cotton Industry Co., Ltd. 新疆兵棉天盛棉业有限公司	Xinhu Prison 新湖监狱, 6th Division	Xinhu Prison, Xinhu General Field, Manas County, Changji Prefecture, Xinjiang <sup>112</sup>	Cotton processing
Xinjiang Jintian Ling Wool Textile Co., Ltd. 新疆金天羚毛纺织有限公司	Wujiaqu Prison 五家渠监狱, 6th Division	Inside the Xinjiang Wujiaqu City Prison (First Compound) <sup>113</sup>	Wool textiles
Kuytun Tianhe Fine Chemicals Co. 奎屯天合精细化工有限公司	Kuytun Prison 奎屯狱, 7th Division <sup>114</sup>	Beijing West Road (7th Agricultural Division Kuytun Prison), Kuytun City, Ili Prefecture <sup>115</sup>	Asphalt, oil and petroleum products <sup>116</sup>
Xinlei Hollow Brick Factory 石河子北野镇鑫磊空心砖厂	Beiyue Prison 北野监狱, 8th Division	Shihezi Beiyue Prison 2nd District <sup>117</sup>	Bricks
Xinjiang Zhuofan Clothing and Accessories LLC 新疆卓凡服装服饰有限责任公司	Beiyue Prison 北野监狱, 8th Division	Room 401, Liangyou Hotel, 22 District, Shihezi City, Xinjiang (receives prison laborers) <sup>118</sup>	Textiles
Shihezi Guangjuyuan Plastic Processing Co., Ltd 石河子市广聚源塑料加工有限公司	Zhongjiazhuang Prison 钟家庄监狱, 8th Division	First Compound of Zhongjiazhuang Prison <sup>119</sup>	Plastics
Zhongjiazhuang Town Red Feather Breeding Professional Cooperative 钟家庄镇红羽养殖专业合作社	Zhongjiazhuang Prison 钟家庄狱, 8th Division	The fourth team of labor reform in Zhongji- azhuang Town Prison <sup>120</sup>	Animal breeding
Shihezi Xin’an Cotton Processing Factory 石河子新安棉花加工厂	Xin’an Prison, 石河子新安 监狱, 8th Division	First Compound of Shihezi Xi’nan Prison No. 1 <sup>121</sup>	Cotton Products
Shihezi Jinhanli Planting Professional Cooperative 石河子市金瀚利种植专业合作社	Xin’an Prison, 石河子新安 监狱, 8th Division	No. 1, Building 1, 24th Prison Farm, Honggu- ang Town, Shihezi City, Xinjiang <sup>122</sup>	Agricultural products

The bureaucratic structure of the Bingtuan's prisons includes a Bureau of Prison Enterprises, which manages the many farms, factories, and other enterprises that operate out of XPCC prisons.<sup>123</sup> Some companies even list the prison as their official addresses. The 1st Division's Shahe Prison houses a coal company on its premises; XPCC prisoners have worked as miners for decades. Because this source of cheap or 'free' labour is critical to China's cheap prices and the Uyghur Region's fast-paced industrial growth, the fact that prisoners are likely mining that coal is a significant concern related to both human rights and fair economic competition.<sup>124</sup> The 1st Division Aral Prison is also the location of at least one textile company, in line with the region's prominence in cotton, and it also houses a pig farm.<sup>125</sup> Xingfucheng Prison of the 1st Division houses a cardboard container factory.<sup>126</sup> The 2nd Division Korla prison runs an iron foundry.<sup>127</sup> Fangcaohu Prison of the 6th Division is infamous for operating the Xinjiang Junggar Cotton Industry Co., which has been sanctioned by the U.S. government for use of prison labor.<sup>128</sup> Xinhui Prison<sup>129</sup> and Wujiaqu Prison<sup>130</sup> of the 6th Division also run cotton or textile facilities. The 7th Division Kuytun Prison houses a chemical company.<sup>131</sup> 8th Division Beiyue sets its prisoners to work making bricks,<sup>132</sup> while its Zhongjiazhuang Prison breeds animals and makes plastics.<sup>133</sup> Many (perhaps even all) of the XPCC prisons run their own farms on which the prisoners labor, and some of those agricultural products are intended for export.

Table 1 identifies companies that have operated out of or appear to be co-located with XPCC prisons (including relevant addresses and citations). Beyond the named companies with identified connections to XPCC prisons included in Table 1, the Xinjiang Victims Database identified additional documentation of compulsory prison labor at Gamelik, Kokkol, Nankou, Huaqiao, Shihezi, Ulughkol, Jindun, and Tumshuq prisons as well. This list is far from complete, however. As Citizen Power Initiatives for China suggests, "prison and labor camp authorities in Xinjiang have deleted online information regarding these prison companies and factories, changed the names of prison factories, and created layers of complex company ownership structures in order to disguise prison factories and farms as schools and trading companies."<sup>134</sup>

A focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Tumshuq territory provides insight into the extent and functions of the XPCC's carceral empire. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Tumshuq houses at least 5 official prisons—Chighmeydan, Jindun, Tumshuq, Gamelik, and Pichaqsundi—some of which maintain several satellite prisons. These prisons pre-date the system of internment that emerged under Xi, and several of these prisons include multiple compounds spread out over a few kilometers that were developed over time as the XPCC prison population expanded.<sup>135</sup> However, under the central government's directives to the XPCC to expand current pris-

ons and to build new ones, and in response to what seems to be a significant increase in Uyghurs and other Muslims being imprisoned and interned in the XPCC's carceral system, the footprint of XPCC incarceration grew exponentially. Several of the major prisons expanded, and at least one new, massive internment camp was constructed from the ground up in recent years.

Tumshuq has a population of about 110,000, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division maintains at least 13 official prison sites. By way of example, the images on the following pages depict the numerous carceral complexes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> division Tumshuq alone. The first page are prison compounds that have largely maintained the same footprint since 2016. (See Figure 8.) The second set of images shows the significant post-2016 expansion of several 3<sup>rd</sup> Division prison complexes. (See Figure 9.)



Figure 8: XPCC 3rd Division Prisons unexpanded after 2016. Source: Google Earth; Mapbox for Jindun Prisons.  
Note: Some may be abandoned after the expansion of prisons in Figure 9.





Figure 9: XPCC 3rd Division Prisons expanded after 2014. Source: Google Earth; Mapbox for Qigamedan 2021.





Figure 10: Select XPCC Prisons and Camps Built or Significantly Expanded in or after 2014.



Between 2014 (when Xi first announced the crackdown in the Uyghur Region) and 2020, the XPCC expanded its carceral empire by building at least 20 new camps and detention centers in its territories, even beyond the expansion of its massive prison system already in place. As was the case with the XUAR government, the XPCC was tasked with “rounding up all those who should be rounded up,”<sup>136</sup> a directive to intern minoritized citizens. Internment in these camps does not require a sentence—the camps operate outside of due process and people can be interned there for any reason whatsoever or no reason at all. Supposed “thought crimes” and “pre-crimes” can be punishable by internment.

Satellite imagery allows investigators to identify internment complexes that appeared between 2014 and 2020, typically in areas that were barren desert or farmland prior to their transformation. In the Aral area, the XPCC built at least four new carceral complexes since 2014; in Tiemenguan, the Bingtuan built a massive complex of four or five separate carceral facilities before 2019, and yet another internment camp in the midst of agricultural fields in 2020. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division built at least one new massive carceral facility in 2018. In Wujiaqu, the 6<sup>th</sup> Division built at least two new internment camp compounds in 2017 and another in 2019; in nearby Ürümqi, at least two more. Kunyu was the site of a massive new XPCC carceral complex in the middle of the desert. The XPCC built one of its earliest camps in Shihezi, which was in operation by late 2014, and followed it with a new high security prison in 2018 or 2019, both of which are in very close proximity to a massive fortified corporate complex with watchtowers and high walls that predated the new sites by at least a decade. Hami saw at least another two camps built by the Bingtuan in that period. And the XPCC built at least one new internment camp or prison each in Mekit, Beitun, and Kokdala after 2014.

In line with the government’s policy to require prisoners to work and the XPCC’s dual purpose of security and development, many of the internment camps (like their prison predecessors) house factories in which camp victims are forced to work. These factories are identifiable in satellite imagery because they often have blue roofs that cover massive open spaces used as workshops, both of which are visible in satellite imagery, while the dormitory and administrative buildings have very distinct, standardized construction. These factories are surrounded by high cement walls with watchtowers and by barbed wire typically on both the inside and outside of the cement walls. There are often fenced paths connecting the internment camp dormitories to the factories. Because internment camp victims are not allowed the freedom to determine their own schedules, work in the camps is clearly a form of forced labor. (See Figure 5 for a selection of post-2016 camps built across the XPCC territories.)

In the south of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, a massive internment camp complex was built as recently as 2019. Satellite imagery from 2021 suggests that the camp may still be growing, and may include factory work spaces. It can be seen from the satellite imagery that carved into the grass in the prison guard’s yard is Xi Jinping’s political slogan for the XPCC and XUAR: “Never forget the original mission.” (See Figure 6 for time lapse images of the camp and Figure 1 in a previous chapter for the detail of the yard carving.) Another internment camp was built within Tumshuq’s Yonganba Industrial Park in 2017, replete with the requisite high security walls, watchtowers, and barbed wire fencing, as well as a fortified factory complex. (See Yonganba Industrial Park and Internment Camps textbox below)

Despite the fact that PRC Ministry of Justice guidance indicates that “prison criminals’ labor products are only sold on the domestic market,” products grown, processed, or manufactured by the XPCC prisons and internment camps alike enter into global supply chains. The products of such programs are prohibited from being imported by U.K. and U.S. law. Nonetheless, **the XPCC’s carceral system produces, farms, or mines tomatoes, coal, cotton, cotton and wool fabrics, apparel, and other products for export. Uyghur laborers, largely imprisoned for practicing their religion or interned for religious or even completely arbitrary reasons, make up an important part of the XPCC’s labor force and thus their oppression taints international supply chains and renders consumers complicit.** The XPCC operates in an environment of impunity because repressive programs and policies are determined by the Chinese government and because its supply chains are incredibly opaque and complex. In a subsequent chapter on the XPCC’s global reach, we map XPCC’s cotton’s movement to mainland Chinese regions and companies, much of which is related to prison labor.



Figure 11: 3rd Division Internment Camp Development and Expansion, 2017, 2019, 2021 Credit: Google Earth.





## Case Study: Yonganba Industrial Park and Internment Camps

The XPCC's Tumshuq 3<sup>rd</sup> Division first began construction on the Yonganba Industrial Park in 2011 through Xinjiang Aid assistance funding of CNY 200 million donated by Dongguan City (See next chapter for more on Dongguan Xinjiang Aid).<sup>137</sup> Yonganba Textile Park mainly engages in cotton spinning, weaving and garment manufacturing. Companies that signed contracts to build facilities in the park include Qianhai Cotton Spinning, Tianhua Textile, Yongan Cotton Spinning, Xinjiang Xiyu Honglu Textile Technology Company, Nantong Yinshuai Home Textile, Dongguan Xiaodouding Smart Induction Electronic Label Technology Company, Tumshuq City Zhonggang Electronic Technology Company, and Xinjiang Yabo Clothing Co., Ltd.<sup>138</sup> In the 2010 architectural design for the park, it was noted that the park was expected to reach an annual production output of 10 million garments.<sup>139</sup> Later reports indicated that developers expected Xinjiang Xiyu Honglu Textile Technology Co., Ltd. alone to manufacture 100-180 million pairs of socks in that park each year.<sup>140</sup>

It appears that construction of Yonganba did not get fully underway until 2017-18, when factory buildings and dormitories were rapidly erected.<sup>141</sup>

The companies located in the Yonganba Industrial Park have actively engaged in the labor transfer programs sponsored by the XPCC.<sup>142</sup> See next chapter for extended discussion of forced labor programs in the region. However, the industrial park also houses two fortified compounds—one with dormitories, another with factories—that appear to be part of the massive system of internment camps described above.

Satellite imagery of the park reveals that by 2021 the park housed numerous factories and businesses. Furthermore, the park contains two internment camps identified by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, both of which are fortified with exterior walls and fencing, guard towers, and in some places internal fencing near dormitories. One of the fortified compounds appears to be primarily factory buildings. Even those factories that operate on the outside of the camp walls could potentially be employing internment camp victims. (See Figure 11).



Figure 12: A young woman works in the Xinjiang Western Honglu Textile Technology Co., Source: Bingtuan Daily, [Online](#).

The original 2010 design for the park did not include fortified compounds or watchtowers. However, historic satellite imagery indicates that in 2012, when the park was first conceived, it was these fortified dormitory and factory compounds that were first developed. By 2017, many companies began to move into the park, which included these heavily securitized compounds. By that time, the internment camp system was fully operational.

Baidu maps places Xinjiang Boshi Textile Co. (新疆博实纺织有限公司, reportedly a wholly owned subsidiary of Zhejiang Huitai Textile Group) within the fortified factory compound to the north of the internment camp dormitory compound. The company started production in Yonganba in 2021, and executives for the company indicate that the company plans to expand to house a vertically integrated yarn to cloth manufacturing facility.<sup>143</sup> The company explicitly claims to pay high worker salaries, but its location (if the Baidu map is correct) inside a complex with watchtowers, security walls and multiple layers of barbed wire fencing show this is a highly secured compound and workers are unlikely to enjoy freedom of movement or freedom of choice of work, and that in fact, the company may employ laborers from the adjacent internment camp.

Figure 13: Yonganba Industrial Park, 2021, Detail of fortified internment facilities within Yonganba, 2021, Source: Google Earth.

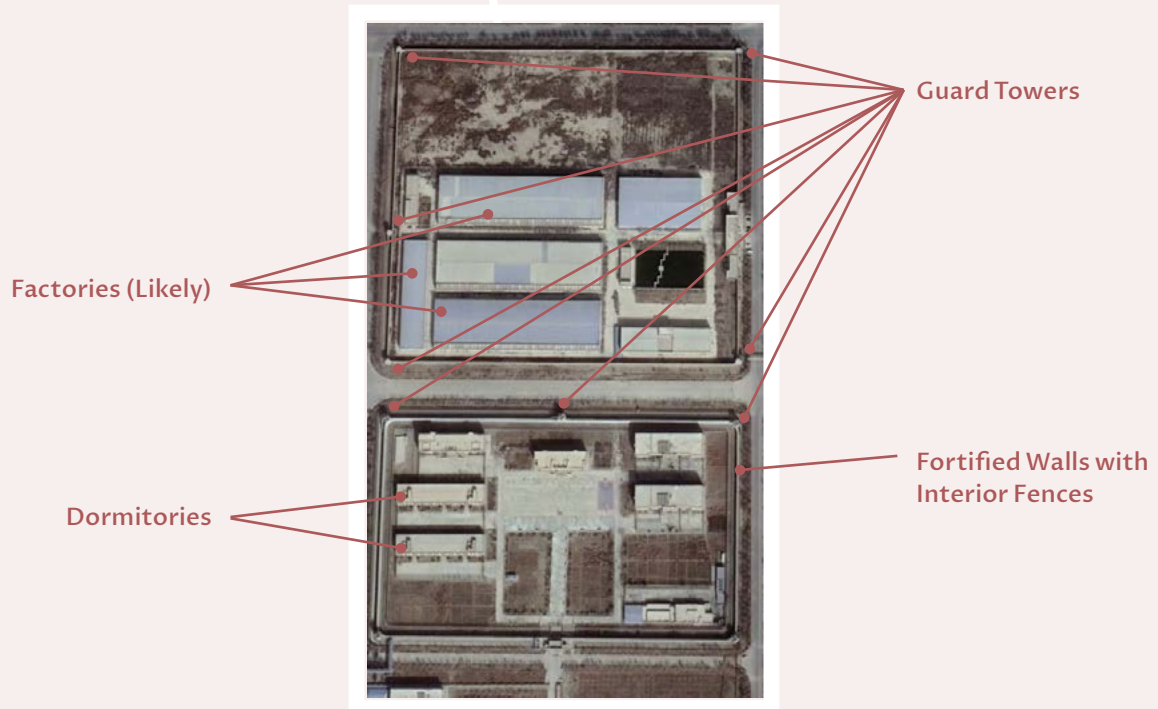






Figure 14: Yonganba Industrial Park 2012, 2017, 2019. Source: Google Earth

## Land Expropriation

The history of the Bingtuan is a history of land expropriation. In its earliest manifestation, the XPCC was directed to take over supposed “wasteland” and desert to increase cultivable land in the Uyghur Region, but what it amounted to was the seizure of Uyghur and other minoritized citizens’ lands. The Bingtuan created its own cities, which expanded rapidly with the influx of migrant laborers and conscripted soldiers.<sup>144</sup> Though the XPCC is supposedly prohibited from “competing for benefits with the local people” and consistently congratulates themselves for accomplishing this mission,<sup>145</sup> many Indigenous people justifiably contend that the XPCC has long expropriated land that was rightfully theirs.<sup>146</sup> The Bingtuan’s earliest settlements were not all uninhabited wastelands as its official history has suggested—indeed, some of the places the XPCC inhabited were ancient cities next to which the XPCC established farms and military bases and upon which it slowly encroached in the ensuing decades. In 1953, the Bingtuan established settlements in Aral (part of Aksu), Tiemenguan (part of Bayingolin), Huyanghe and Kökdala (part of Ili), Qoshögüz (Chinese: Shuanghe, part of Bortala), Wujiaqu (part of Changji on the outskirts of Ürümqi), Shihezi (part of Karamay), and parts of Ürümqi proper. Most of these settlements were celebrated as the establishment of new cities in a barren wasteland but were adjacent to and dependent on the old cities that long pre-existed them.<sup>147</sup>

As Cliff has shown, the XPCC settled lands at the headwaters of rivers and along the most viable waterways in a region with scarce water supplies. While the XPCC controls only 30% of the region’s arable land, it “controls the viability” of the rest of the region because many of its cities are positioned at the headwaters of the region’s riv-

ers, and the corps has persistently dammed and altered the waterways of the region for over fifty years.<sup>148</sup> The influx of Han migrants requires significant additional water resources in a region where water is in limited supply, rendering expansion a significant challenge and leading to severely negative outcomes for local Indigenous communities. But the near monopoly on water resources that the Bingtuan has secured in the last seventy years means that the Uyghur livelihoods rely on the ability to tap into the resources that this colonial entity has harnessed for itself.<sup>149</sup> This also lends the Bingtuan additional coercive tools for transferring people from rural areas to urban ones. Farmers, and even city dwellers, who wish to remain in their hometowns find themselves cut off from the water resources necessary to make that possible.<sup>150</sup>

In the last decade, however, this encroachment has increased dramatically as the central party-state places mandates on the XPCC for both agriculture and industrial expansion, which have put pressure on the Bingtuan to control more land and increase production. However, coupled with the pressure to optimize the population, the XPCC’s work in southern Xinjiang has increasingly displaced Uyghurs from their homes and homeland.

In 2017, the XPCC was given official central government priority over non-Bingtuan territory in southern Xinjiang, specifically when granting contracts to enterprises to exploit natural resources. Xi declared in a speech given to the XPCC that there should be greater weight placed on ensuring that the demand for economic and social development of land is met. He made a commitment to “encourage and support XPCC enterprises to participate in the exploration and utilization of mineral resources in southern Xinjiang.”<sup>151</sup>



Figure 15: Uyghur home in Pishan Farm destined for demolition; new homes constructed in its place. Source: National Poverty Alleviation Propaganda and Education Center, [Online](#).

Toward that end, regional and county-level governments, including XPCC governments, have initiated “cooperativization” projects in resource and land management at the disproportionate expense of Uyghur households who have lived and farmed in the region for generations. These programs are designed to “establish cooperatives and integrate land transfers, livestock care, contract farming, characteristic planting, and surplus labor transfers.”<sup>152</sup> This entails an agreement by which companies, often based in other regions of the PRC, determine what crops will be planted in an area to meet their own manufacturing needs, without care to Uyghur interests, knowledge, or input. The company or government then sets the price for the harvest of those crops. The local government then organizes small-scale farmers to transfer their land to a larger cooperative, run by a small group of the most prominent farmers in the area, or sometimes a Han Chinese person. Ostensibly the farmers receive a payment, but as researchers have documented, those payments are typically subject to huge fees that reduce them to little or nothing.<sup>153</sup>

XPCC media has often celebrated the coercion used to convince poor Uyghur farmers they should transfer their land. The program is premised on the idea that by moving away, “the ethnic minorities bid farewell to their traditional and backward lifestyles.”<sup>154</sup> One 2019 Xinhua news report tells the story of Nubia Maimat, whose “husband is not home”—likely because he is interned in a camp—and therefore she must raise her four children alone while tending to a small cotton field. The Han official “relative” assigned to her visited her home to conduct “ideological work” multiple times and “guided” her to transfer the land and instead use her tailoring skills to open a clothing store; she eventually acquiesced and transferred her land. Prior to her husband’s detention, the family was able

to manage the land, but now, like so many other families whose “breadwinners” have been detained for years on end, Maimat was forced to transfer her land and work as a tailor.<sup>155</sup> Under central party commands, the XPCC is responsible to intern male family members and then determines that the family land must be cooperativized because the family can no longer manage the labor process. Stories of detention and land expropriation such as these are celebrated as successes for the local officials who run the cooperativization programs.

Land transfers are initiated, facilitated, and “encouraged” by local officials, including during “Becoming Family” visits. The local officials visit households to pressure farmers to transfer their land. As an XPCC media report indicated, “because many workers in the group farm lack farming skills and management skills, they need to transfer the land, and then organize all the surplus labor for operation and construction, and use diversified development instead of monotonous farming income.”<sup>156</sup> Local officials are given the authority by the central party-state to determine that Uyghurs who have been farmers for generations are incapable of managing their own lands and to determine the fate of their lands and their livelihoods. **In that one village, 70% of the land was transferred from Uyghur farmers and more than 200 people were “transferred” to other sectors.**

**Expropriation of minoritized citizens’ lands is clearly not welcomed by Uyghur and Kazakh agriculturalists who have worked the land in the Uyghur Region for generations.** In April of 2020, a Xinjiang State Rural Cooperative Economic Development Center report revealed signs of the Indigenous people’s reluctance to relinquish the rights to their land when they indicated that “[i]n order to make grassroots cadres and the broad masses of farmers truly realize that land transfer and the development of rural land management at scale are the only way to realize agricultural modernization, [government agencies] have jointly organized many training courses in land contract management law, regulation, and policy for rural cadres, actively guiding farmers to carry out land transfers, speeding up the exchange of land, and organically combining rural land transfer with the exchange and merging of land plots, making the policy well-known, and arousing farmers’ enthusiasm for land transfers.” The farmers are trained through ideological programs to change their mindset from “I am wanted to transfer [my land]” to “I want to transfer.”<sup>157</sup>

Expropriation of land often involves the destruction of existing structures. Refusal (or even hesitation) to submit to the demolition of one’s own home is not an option and comes at a high cost. In Tumshuq, Uyghurs whose homes are slated for demolition are required, according to a



2020 central government policy interpretation issued by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, to demolish their own homes themselves.

Those who demolish the home and neatly stack the remaining salvageable materials are provided CNY 5,000 in compensation—if they complete the job within 10 days of notice. Those who wait 20 days only receive CNY 3,000. Those who hesitate or delay by 30 days or more receive no “bonus” compensation for demolishing their own homes. Owners of two or more houses are limited to compensation for demolishing only one of their houses. The houses are demolished regardless of the owner’s acquiescence or participation. Those people whose houses are demolished are given a small subsidy to “buy” a government-built house or to build a bungalow in a government-designated township using government-approved designs. These appear to be the only options. **Uyghurs are thus forcibly removed from their homes, coerced into doing the manual labor of demolition themselves, compelled to hand over the recyclable materials from the demolition, and then forcibly relocated to state-run and monitored communities.**<sup>158</sup>



Figure 16: Cookie cutter houses that replaced a Uyghur village after it had been “renovated” by the XPCC. Source: National Poverty Alleviation Propaganda and Education Center, [Online](#).

In the three years leading up to April 2018, the XPCC 3<sup>rd</sup> Division alone had “relocated” 4,444 households in this way.<sup>159</sup> The expropriated land is coopted for the benefit of large-scale farmers and corporations moving into the area.<sup>160</sup> The cooperatives promote just a few individual farmers to be the shareholder managers of the cooperative. For example, of the 92 Tumshuq (XPCC 3<sup>rd</sup> Division) cooperatives registered in the Chinese corporate registry that list shareholders, thirty-three have only one or two listed shareholders and forty-three have five or fewer

shareholders. Only fourteen have more than ten shareholders and only three have twenty or more. Often the majority of the shareholders are Han.<sup>161</sup> This expropriation of Uyghurs’ privately held land can leave them landless, homeless, and incomeless.

Tumshuq has long been a state planned community. The Bingtuan established the city in 1966, but it has expanded significantly in the last several years. Uyghurs have always lived in small communities in and around Tumshuq, and they have imprinted their own aesthetics and traditions on the largely segregated communities in which they live, at least in part through the way they adapt their housing and community life to reflect their own tastes and practices. In the last few years, however, the XPCC has invested significantly in occupying not just the territory of Tumshuq but also the surrounding villages and private lives of the Uyghur people. Satellite imagery of neighborhoods in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division reveals an unmistakable pattern of Uyghur villages being destroyed to make way either for industry, large-scale farming, or standardized housing. The first two images below reveal small Uyghur villages with a mosque at the center, entirely demolished. In the first, no mosque is built in the replacement cookie-cutter village. The third and fourth villages depict villages in which families had small household farms—by 2021, all of those homes had been demolished, the people transferred elsewhere, and the farmland likely coopted for large scale farm use. This pattern of land expropriation, village transformation, and cultural eradication is evidenced across XPCC-administered territories.

**Uyghurs in southern Xinjiang traditionally live in tree-shaded, green oases. However, the state-provided settlements that replace Uyghur villages are all sterile, treeless, and anodyne. These urban designs maximize visibility and surveillability.** Government media celebrates these markedly less hospitable or community-centered living areas as social mobility opportunities for Uyghurs and government directives reveal their intended function is the assimilation of Uyghur people, which requires government surveillance programs and door-to-door visits of minoritized citizens to monitor everyday Uyghur behaviors. The image below is a detail of the final before and after photos above, depicting a section of that village in 2017, 2019, and 2021. Under orders from the central party-state, the local government has straightened the streets, removed the family gardens and all shade trees, and standardized all housing without preserving any features of traditional Uyghur architecture or urban design. Whereas Uyghur family life typically centers around private courtyards at the center of housing compounds, there is no longer any private central space where residents cannot be viewed by neighbors, the police, or security personnel. Furthermore, the changes to

Figure 17: Destroyed and reconstructed villages of the XPCC 3rd Division. Source: Google Earth





Figure 17: Destroyed and reconstructed villages of the XPCC 3rd Division. Source: Google Earth



Before



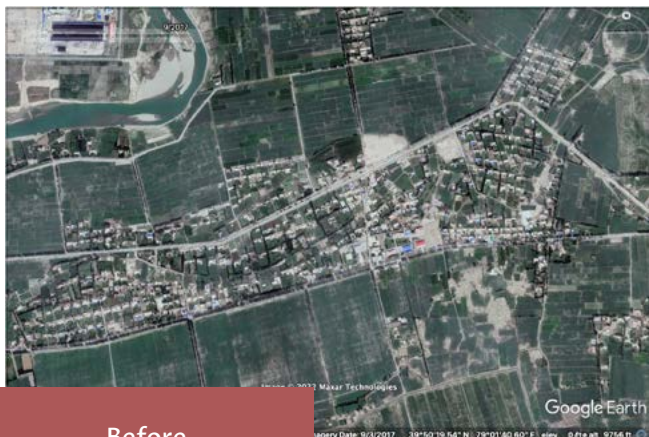
After



Before



After



Before



After





Figure 18: Detail of destroyed and reconstructed village in XPCC 3rd Division. Source: Google Earth

*These coercive state-sponsored land expropriation programs are structured to directly benefit corporations owned, subsidized, or endorsed by the state.*

Uyghur household structures and practices do not stop at the construction of the homes themselves. The party-state has mandated the standardization of home furnishings, replacing the beds, sofas, and decor with which Uyghurs traditionally adorn their homes with what the state deems to be “modern” furnishings.<sup>162</sup>

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps also conducts similar programs of dispossession and land collectivization in concert with nominally private enterprises, including Xinjiang Tianjiao Hongan Agricultural Technology Co. (新疆天椒红安农业科技有限责任公司, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Chenguang Biotech Co, Ltd.). In 2017 and 2020, Xinjiang Tianjiao signed planting agreements (possibly with both Uyghur and Han farmers) whose land had recently been cooperativized under the guidance of the local Party Committee and then assigned them to work the very land they had handed over.<sup>163</sup> Reports show how the XPCC deployed “ideological work” to convince Uyghur farmers to transfer their land to Chenguang or plant marigolds for the company through another cooperative project. The Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company of the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment told reporters, “The masses were unwilling to accept the cultivation of marigolds in the early stage. After the inspection in Yarkand County, we returned to the public and widely publicized [the plan] and did ideological work. Everyone slowly changed the traditional planting method.”<sup>164</sup> Such methods of land expropriation and labor transfers into new industries are common aspects of “ideological work,” with government officials relentlessly pressuring farmers under the threat of being deemed infected by “extremism” if they refuse to participate in government programs.<sup>165</sup>

These coercive state-sponsored land expropriation programs are structured to directly benefit corporations owned, subsidized, or endorsed by the state. Village “work teams” made up of CCP cadres visit the homes of area farmers promising a dividend for their land. In some cases, whole Uyghur villages are forcibly demolished at the local government’s orders. The people of the village are compelled to relocate to government-built, featureless, and culturally inappropriate housing blocks in treeless deserts, often conveniently adjacent to factories. Transferred farmers must study Chinese language and receive ideological education.<sup>166</sup> Some of the now landless farmers are then expected to work the land that has

just been expropriated from them and are paid wages below minimum wage. Others are “liberated” from the land and “transferred” for work in factories, often



far from their homes.<sup>167</sup> In one case of XPCC land transfers, the Division agents determined that a Uyghur farmer didn't understand the planting techniques the government deemed most efficient, so they transferred 40 mu of his land, and he now has to work on his neighbors' farm instead for far less than minimum wage even with the promised land rent payments.<sup>168</sup> Reports from the last ten years of Uyghur dispossession suggest that the government threatens Uyghurs that if they do not "transfer" their lands for the use of private companies owned by Han people, they could be arrested.

By the government's own reports, land cooperativization has led to increased mechanization. "The development of large-scale land transfer operations has driven agriculture to mechanize, making plant protection drones replace manual field management. Spring ploughing and plant protection are all mechanized operations."<sup>169</sup> The result for the Uyghur people, however, is greater displacement, dispossession, and economic dependency. Rendered landless and unemployed, they are deemed surplus labor by the government. People who have been subjected to land transfers are at even greater risk of being forced to participate in labor transfers (discussed further in the next chapter).<sup>170</sup>

Programs that systematically dispossess Uyghurs and other minoritized citizens of their land are officially celebrated as poverty-alleviation and stimulating entrepreneurialism amongst Uyghurs.<sup>171</sup> Instead, the programs leave them landless and unemployed, making them vulnerable to forced labor transfers. Farmers are compelled to sign contracts to transfer their land to state-organized cooperatives because resistance is a sign of religious extremist mentality that leads to detention.<sup>172</sup> Again, because the supposed poverty alleviation programs operate on a backdrop of mass internment, state violence, and concomitant all-pervasive state terror, refusing to participate in a land transfer is not possible for minoritized people of the Uyghur Region and could be deemed a terrorist act.<sup>173</sup>

## Population Engineering and Forcible Migration

After anti-racist protests erupted into violence in Ürümqi in 2009, the central government renewed calls for increased Han migration to the XPCC territories to subdue the Indigenous population of the region. After a period of relative population stagnancy between 2004 and 2009, the post-2009 period saw a rapid uptick in the population of the Bingtuan, due almost entirely to in-migration of new Han members from other regions of China.<sup>174</sup>

In his 2014 visit to the XPCC, Xi reiterated the long-standing concern that "southern Xinjiang is a key difficulty for realizing social and long-term stability in Xinjiang. Strengthening the construction of the southern Xinjiang corps is not only a top priority but also a strategic move."<sup>175</sup> He exclaimed that "the stability of Xinjiang and the whole country depends on southern Xinjiang!"<sup>176</sup> Between 2016 and 2018, the population of the region reached what one report termed the "substantial growth stage," again due to migration in response to XPCC policies including the development of the southern Xinjiang region, expansion of the industrial sector, and an invigorated dedication to expanding the Han population under central party directives.<sup>177</sup>

By 2018, only 30% of the citizens of the Bingtuan lived in southern Xinjiang,<sup>178</sup> but 77.85% of the Bingtuan's Uyghur population lived in the south, suggesting significant homogenization and segregation of both Han and Uyghur communities. (Note: the total population of XPCC territories in both the north and the south is almost certainly no more than 14-20% Uyghur at this time).<sup>179</sup> **Long unsatisfied with the demographic proportions in southern XUAR, where Uyghurs overwhelmingly dominate, Xi Jinping intensified a campaign of so-called "population optimization" with a particular emphasis on concentrated Indigenous communities in the Uyghur Region.** "Population optimization" in the Uyghur Region is a demographic engineering project. The party-state incentivizes the migration of Han people into primarily Uyghur areas and encourages or coerces Uyghurs to move into cities and workplaces outside of the southern XUAR to intentionally disperse Indigenous communities and increase the proportion of Han settlers in the region.<sup>180</sup> This program, which also includes disproportionate forced birth control for Uyghurs, was a primary basis upon which the Uyghur Tribunal in the U.K. made a determination that the crisis in the Uyghur Region is tantamount to genocide by transgressing article 2(d) of the UN genocide convention.<sup>181</sup>

The party and the Bingtuan explicitly state that these demographic engineering programs are designed to address the perceived problems of a) Uyghurs outnumbering Han people and outpacing Han birthrates, b) concentrated ethnic enclaves in the southern Xinjiang that are less penetrable to government interference, and c) the resulting perceived vulnerability of the Han population to Uyghur violence. With Bingtuan member populations residing largely in northern Xinjiang while minority rural populations were demographically concentrated in the XPCC's southern regions, the central government feared that the Bingtuan might not be able to control the population of the south. Researchers working for the XPCC determined that "the XPCC's 'strong north and weak south' layout

does not match the counter-terrorism and stability maintenance tasks.”<sup>182</sup>

The XPCC is thus tasked with “spreading civilization,” managing “population distribution,” and “expand[ing] the proportion of the population” that is Han.<sup>183</sup>

It is clear that population expansion should be a result of “attracting the inland population” of Han people as settlers in the region (and thus clearly not related to the growth of the Indigenous population).<sup>184</sup> Toward that end, the XPCC was assigned a goal of increasing the Bingtuan population in southern XUAR by 300,000 people by 2022, to total 1.1 million, with a focus on increasing the Han population share in XPCC territories.<sup>185</sup> Primary (agriculture) and secondary (manufacturing) industries are being developed, but the XPCC’s five-year plan includes significant investment and “major development of the tertiary industry, to provide a solid guarantee [of desirable employment] for the new population of 300,000 people.”<sup>186</sup> The government promises educated Han migrants employment, housing, and other material incentives for moving to the Uyghur Region towards the Bingtuan’s “original mission.”

The XPCC embarked on its “southward development” strategy, designed to address these perceived crises in governance that originate in what officials deem to be undesirable demographic imbalances, less of a problem in the developed and arable areas of land in northern Xinjiang, which long had small Uyghur populations, and, since the 1980s, large Han populations. This is operationalized through two counter-flows of populations. As noted above, the XPCC initiated a campaign to encourage talented young people in inland China to move to southern Xinjiang while the Bingtuan simultaneously increased the number of labor transfers of southern Xinjiang people out to northern Xinjiang cities and elsewhere in China. The XPCC government also encouraged Bingtuan members from northern Xinjiang to take up posts in the south, while coercing rural southern farmers into transfers to more urbanized, Han-dominated areas within the XPCC.<sup>187</sup> Sun Jinlong, the XPCC Party Secretary until 2020, said that “Urbanization is the only way to modernization... the city... is a gathering place for modern civilization but also a new fortress for maintaining stability and safeguarding the border and a locomotive for a well-off society in an all-round way.”<sup>188</sup> Uyghurness, backwardness, and a proclivity toward terrorism are all viewed as the same thing, and “modernization” is designed to eliminate them.

Industrializing southern Xinjiang is a major part of this

*The XPCC is thus tasked with “spreading civilization,” managing “population distribution,” and “expand[ing] the proportion of the population” that is Han.*

“urbanization” process, as it allows the XPCC to disperse the densely concentrated populations of Uyghurs in rural areas, move them into urban areas where they can be surveilled and controlled more easily, and effectively reduce their numbers.<sup>189</sup> The program to “accelerate population agglomeration” in urban areas was thus written into the evaluation of divisions, making population engineering and the forcible migration of Uyghurs a critical key performance indicator for party officials and cadres alike.<sup>190</sup> Chinese businesses are politically and economically incentivized to display their commitment to Xi Jinping thought by moving production to the Uyghur Region to absorb these migrant laborers and promote the dispersal of minoritized citizens of the region (to be discussed at length in Chapter 3).

To achieve these goals, counties across China were instructed to send surplus Han laborers to the XUAR and the XPCC in 2018. Officials from Dingxi city in Gansu Province described their efforts for transferring impoverished Han households to the XUAR and the XPCC in a 2018 directive: “Municipal, county and district human resources, and social and labor departments should promote the transfer and placement of rural poor laborers in Xinjiang as an important part of employment work, implementing employment support policies, improving training services, and promoting labor cooperation.”<sup>191</sup> The directive indicates that counties and districts were responsible for implementing this plan, and those that did not successfully recruit people to work for the XPCC would be held to account. The city invited the XPCC to visit and recruit directly, and the Bingtuan held regular job fairs to encourage poor households to move to the Uyghur Region. The county designated specific personnel in all labor service agencies to recruit workers to transfer to the XPCC. Officials also promoted seasonal labor migration among citizens: “we regularly organize transportation of migrant workers to engage in cotton picking, tomato picking, and wolfberry picking, field management and vegetable dehydration and other seasonal labor work, broadening labor transfer employment channels.” Poor households that transferred to the XPCC were given a RMB 20,000 subsidy. Police are also recruited to the XUAR from outside the region and are encouraged to start new businesses,

including restaurants and groceries, and receive 35 mu of land, between RMB 2,000 and 5,000 in an assistance grant, and are eligible for free rent and utilities for four years.<sup>192</sup>

By contrast, Uyghurs have no or lesser access to related subsidies and are targeted by the state to move out of their home regions and are in fact often coerced to do so against their wills. Policies require that Uyghurs be moved to urban areas, and government agencies and cadres are assessed based on their ability to meet quotas assigned for moving Uyghurs. Some XPCC divisions engage in trading workers between their territories through these labor transfer programs to move Uyghurs from more rural areas into more urban regiments. In April of 2020, for instance, the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment transferred laborers to XPCC areas, including Wujiaqu City (81 transfers), Xuyangxe City (66 transfers), and Shihezi City of the Sixth Division. Propaganda programs focus on mobilizing impoverished households to transfer for work. Full-time cadres accompany the deployed workers to their placements to ensure "orderly transitions."<sup>193</sup> (See the next section on land transfers and the chapter on forced labor for extended discussion of these inequities and coercive mechanisms.)

By the XPCC's own accounts, the program of population optimization has been extremely successful. The corps announced in 2019 that it was dedicating more than 70% of its funding to the work of southward development. Media articles began to circulate to celebrate the influx of Uyghur workers into cities. As part of the work to promote "population agglomeration," the Bingtuan had increased from only 5% of laborers "resettled" in the manufacturing sector in 2017 to more than 20%.<sup>194</sup> This marked increase was a sign of the desired "urbanization" of the Uyghur population. In one article, a man says that Tumshuq had been so successful since the southward development program began that the city was beginning to feel "a bit like Shenzhen in the early days of opening up."<sup>195</sup>

After decades of developing hyper-segregated Han cities in the Uyghur homeland, most famously the Bingtuan areas of Karamay and Shihezi, the central government determined that Uyghur enclaves were not as easily controlled or policed, and thus mandated the forced migration of (at least) tens of thousands of people in an effort to radically transform the Indigenous people of the region through processes of assimilation into Han society. Meanwhile, the party-state invested significant resources in encouraging Han people to move to the Uyghur Region to expand the presence and dominance of Han culture in the region. This project of demographic and social engineering and forcible migration is specifically designed to reduce the population density of Uyghurs, consolidate state control and assimilate the region's Indigenous people.

## Repressive Policing

As demonstrated in speeches delivered at the central and regional governmental levels, including within the XPCC, the PRC government deems the whole of the XUAR to be a matter of concern in terms of "border security" for the whole of China. Border government directives and policies described perceived threats that are both internal and external—a cultural border more than a physical one. On the one hand, the XUAR geographically borders the largest numbers of international countries of any province or region in China, connecting directly by road to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Russia, and Mongolia. It controls 9 of the region's 16 first-class open ports.<sup>196</sup> Critical logistics hubs connect mainland China to much of Central Asia and thus on to Europe, and the XUAR is the location of several international border disputes.

On the other hand, while there is indeed some concern that the government "resolutely seal the hidden dangers outside the country to ensure the security of the border and the stability of the northwestern border of the motherland," when PRC and XPCC directives describe the "border," it typically refers to the entire XUAR. The official Chinese name of the region, "Xinjiang," means "new frontier," and the whole region continues to be treated as China's frontier borderland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. **The region, its people, and their identities are seen as critical security threats to China's cultural integrity, the stability of the state's borders, and the absolute authority of the CCP.**<sup>197</sup>

For example, during the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress, Xi Jinping declared that "the situation in Xinjiang is related to the unity of the motherland, ethnic unity, and national security." XPCC officials received these orders and responded that they would "fully implement the overall national security concept, maintain the responsibility to defend territory, and persist with the combination of civil, physical, and technological defense through party, government, military, police, and civilian defense and joint control."<sup>198</sup> A 2017 directive indicated that a top priority of the XPCC in the coming five years would be to increase its capacity "of maintaining stability and defending borders" through the development of "special forces," and those forces are deployed to defend against the region's Indigenous population, not against an external threat.<sup>199</sup>

In addition to the development of special militarized forces that police Indigenous citizens, the corps was instructed to "establish a regiment field military emergency duty detachment" and improve training for emergency personnel. It was assigned to construct public security special police detachments and emergency mobile forces. The directive specifically instructed the XPCC to develop armed

police mobile groups for the 1<sup>st</sup> (Aksu/Aral), 3<sup>rd</sup> (Kashgar/Tumshuq), and 14<sup>th</sup> (Hotan/Kunyu) divisions,<sup>200</sup> some of the divisions deemed by the government to be the most insecure and prone to ethnic protests.

In 2017, Chen Quanguo boasted that “The border line of more than 5,700 kilometers has been fully enclosed, and an impenetrable defense has been built to prevent backflow, interference, and the influx of weapons.”<sup>201</sup> Those metaphorical walls were designed not to keep non-citizens out but to keep Turkic-speaking groups inside PRC borders, as well as to keep those minoritized citizens who had already departed (and thus are perceived to be prone to radicalization) from returning (“backflow”). In a speech Xi gave reflecting on the failure of the U.K. to prevent terrorism within its own borders, he emphasized the importance of securing the borderland region against threats from China’s own citizens by insisting that Xinjiang regional governments must “implement strict border control measures for all illegal exits and unknown destinations, and strictly prevent the ‘return’ of riot terrorists and the influx of weapons.” The XUAR government and the XPCC was directed to adopt a “one can’t get out, and the other can’t come in” policy.<sup>202</sup> This policy that prohibits out-migration locked Uyghur people within China, as most of them had already had their passports confiscated by local Public Security Bureau officers, preventing them from leaving the country.<sup>203</sup> Official records clearly indicate that the government interned vast numbers of minoritized citizens who returned from stays or studies abroad.<sup>204</sup>

The XPCC’s increased investment in this centrally directed program of repressive policing of its minoritized citizens’ movements was not restricted to prohibiting them from crossing international borders, but also included high-pressure policing tactics directed against Uyghurs and other Indigenous people and precise military strikes to “chop the weeds and destroy their roots, eliminate the evil until nothing is left.”<sup>205</sup>

*“chop the weeds and destroy their roots, eliminate the evil until nothing is left.”*

Xinjiang authorities, including the XPCC, implemented grid management of communities and created a “grass-roots mass defense” program that involved neighborhood citizen policing in rural areas, innumerable new “convenience” police stations in cities, security checkpoints, and a massive expansion of its detention and prison facilities (discussed in more detail below), all in the name of “border security.”<sup>206</sup> To enlist the participation of the populace in policing one another, the XPCC was tasked with developing a militia survey and registration system that would identify everyone “of recruiting age” and “promote the full participation of people of eligible age in the militia organization in their jurisdiction.”<sup>207</sup> The XPCC’s policing of the populace was ubiquitous, employing both technologically-enhanced official channels as well as an amped up community surveillance program backed by fear of internment and state reprisals.<sup>208</sup>



Figure 19: Uyghur citizens deployed to monitor neighbors, carrying bats. Credit: Lisa Ross, 2018

“Strike hard, hit hard. Establish a foothold by striking early, striking small, striking at the first sign of trouble. Pull out the nails, destroy the dens, fight the gangs, chase the fugitives, and catch those operating behind the scenes. Strike by pursuing them, pinning them down, and digging them out. Don’t give violent terrorists any respite.”<sup>209</sup>

Treating all aspects of daily life as security matters required an extraordinary infrastructural investment in the XPCC, which included significantly expanding the density of “police stations, border police stations, public security checkpoints, border checkpoints, convenience police stations, and ten new military bases.” The XPCC was also tasked with supporting the further development of the



Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) surveillance system for the region. The corps was central to a larger data sharing security program and were instructed to “accelerate the construction of the Bingtuan’s internet monitoring system, telecommunications monitoring system, and border control and prevention video monitoring network as well as sharing between them, [to] enhance the coordination of military forces in planning and deployment, intelligence exchange, information sharing, organization and command, and action coordination, and actively promote and improve the construction of emergency response mechanisms.”<sup>210</sup>

This combination of efforts indicates the critical deployment of the XPCC to rapidly and significantly expand the surveillance and policing apparatus in the region under the guise of border security. This indicates a clear increase in the state security apparatus in the region during the period following Xi’s “investigation” visit in 2014, and as a direct order of the central government and Xi himself. The result was a Bingtuan with enhanced tools and aptitude for inflicting terror on the Indigenous citizens of the region. The Bingtuan was better able to monitor and surveil Uyghur movement. Its repression was also backed and supported by the central government, giving them nearly free reign to control the minoritized populations of the region. This repressive and ubiquitous policing apparatus paved the way for the XPCC’s implementation of the programs described below.

## Social Engineering

Xi’s intensification of the party-state’s focus on “border security” was in fact a part of a larger campaign of “ideological security.” Ideological security relies on Xi’s concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics with Xi Jinping “as the core,” pursuit of the Han-centric “China Dream,” and a commitment to a state-determined Chinese national spirit.<sup>211</sup> Xi stated at the 19th Congress that “strengthening the struggle against separatism in the ideological field is decisive for winning people’s hearts and building the foundation of long-term stability.”<sup>212</sup> Within the totalitarian logic of “ideological security,” Uyghur identification with language, history and religion is considered a national security threat.<sup>213</sup> This is reflected most vividly in the “75 signs” of religious extremism distributed to local officials, which listed innocuous and otherwise legal behaviors such as quitting drinking alcohol, wearing certain clothes deemed to be religious, debating Islamic law, closing restaurants during Ramadan, selling real estate, buying or storing what the government deems to be excess amounts of food, owning barbells or boxing gloves, or refusing government assistance programs.<sup>214</sup>

**Ideological security is a far-reaching program of social engineering.** Social engineering involves a constellation of programs, directed by the central government, designed to determine the behavior, culture, and identities of minoritized citizens of the Uyghur Region. It is enacted through invasive compulsory home visits, school programming, and community events. It is monitored and maintained by constant surveillance and threat of internment.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2017, Sun Jinlong explained some of the programs the Bingtuan must pursue and expand upon to ensure ideological security:

It is necessary to persist without wavering in the party’s management of the media, firmly grasp the correct guidance of public opinion, promote the main theme, and spread positive energy. It is necessary to carry out in-depth mass spiritual civilization creation activities, further strengthen the ideological and moral construction of young people and the ideological and political work of college students, accelerate the construction of a social credit system, and continuously improve the level of social civilization and make the citizens more civilized and high quality.<sup>215</sup>

The XPCC’s ideological work extends to “conduct[ing] in-depth anti-separatism struggles in the ideological field, and firmly occupy[ing] ideological, public opinion, and cultural positions,” as well as “carry[ing] out online public opinion guidance and online struggles, and strengthen[ing] online public opinion monitoring, security risk reporting, intelligence sharing, and deliberation and response.”<sup>216</sup> In its effort to shape “correct” public opinion, the XPCC committed to “guide the cadres and masses of all ethnic groups to firmly establish correct views on the country, history, ethnicity, religion, and culture” which would be effected through strict government control over literature published, information disseminated on the internet, and cultural programming presented to the Indigenous citizens of the region.<sup>217</sup> State-run media was instructed to write special columns to promote this propaganda among rural and religious people.<sup>218</sup>

To achieve these ideological goals, the XPCC plays an active role in advancing “fanghuiju” and “Becoming Family” programs, through which cadres are sent out to rural villages and into Indigenous people’s homes to promote Han culture and Xi Jinping thought among the Indigenous people, as well as to surveil the population.<sup>219</sup> Through these programs, government agencies and local businesses pair their Han employees with of Uyghur families, sometimes even under the disguise of becoming “relatives.” The Han

employees are tasked with visiting the family regularly in their homes, assessing their needs, and also assessing their commitment to the CCP and Xi Jinping thought. "Relatives" regularly stay overnight, often as long as several weeks or a month, during which time they take notes about the Uyghur family's behaviors to identify any potential signs of "extremist ideology," including what they eat and drink, whether they pray, and whether they readily accept government assistance. By 2017, the XPCC had organized 1,700 teams made up of 6,900 Bingtuan members to conduct this type of ideological work.<sup>220</sup>



Figure 20: An officer from XPCC Huaqiao Prison has a "re-union dinner with his paired family." Source: Huaqiao Prison via Weixin, [Online](#).

"Becoming Family" cadres sometimes hold "surprise trials" and recommend punishments for those who the cadres deem to be dangerous. One of the immediate projects of many "Becoming Family" working groups is to set up an "intelligence information network through which they essentially conduct social network analyses meant to determine the "source" of extremist ideas, operationalize the villagers as informants against one another and even themselves, and train a handful of people to do regular home visits to detect any sources of supposed "instability" in the Uyghurs' households, which could include any sign of Islamic practice or resistance to government programs or ideology. In one small village, the "Becoming Family" work team "detained 65 people and trained 52 people, accounting for one-fifth of the village's adult population."<sup>221</sup>

In 2016, the XPCC Prison administration inaugurated a program called "National Unity and Family" (民族团结一家亲) as part of the "Becoming Family" program, through which the Bingtuan assigns policemen or prison staff to act as Han "relatives," increasing the visibility of the program's clear intent of surveillance and policing of the Uyghur population. All police and prison units were tasked with carrying out the National Unity program. In the Kor-

la and Pichaqsundi prison districts, every police officer is assigned to a family and required to visit once every two months. Shihezi Prison sent emissaries out once a month. In Beiye prison, Uyghur families were required to share their phone numbers with their "relatives" so that "they can contact them and drop in frequently in the future to exchange ideas and follow up on assistance measures."<sup>222</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division alone deployed 332 police officers to be paired with families from Indigenous communities.<sup>223</sup> The programs require that police visit each individual household on a regular basis, regardless of whether anyone in the household is a person of interest in a crime. This persistent surveillance is a method of disciplining Uyghur life and essentially creates a virtual prison for everyone. (Han people are exempt from such home visits and monitoring.)



Figure 21: Huaqiao prison official visits his "new relatives." Source: Huaqiao Prison via Weixin, [Online](#).

A social media post by the XPCC 1<sup>st</sup> Division Yarkand prison reveals that prison staff use these visits to relatives as a means of pressuring family members of imprisoned people to turn away from religious behaviors. A policeman from the Shahe prison told one woman that it was "necessary" for her to "assist the prison police to do a good job in the ideological reform of the husband ... and strive to make him reborn and reunite with his family as soon as possible." The woman, left alone and destitute as a result of her husband's imprisonment, is threatened with his further detention—and her family's continued destitution—if she does not assist in changing his ideological disposition.<sup>224</sup> The government assigns the police officers to provide some social aid for families that had been worst hit by the mass internment and imprisonment that affected millions of families in the Uyghur Region starting in 2016. However, while the programs provide nominal support to those families that had been affected by the arbitrary detention of family members, they more critically create an opportunity for surveillance and ideological indoctrination.

In one small village, the local XPCC *fanghuiju* cadres initiated a public event in which they explained the 75 manifestations of illegal religious activity and then required that Uyghur farmers come forward to present lectures on de-radicalization. Their instructors invoked the Chinese national anthem, telling them: “Get up, people who don’t want to be slaves; build our new Great Wall with our flesh and blood.” Four people who had previously been held in internment camps obediently and tearfully confessed the “harm extremist ideology had on their body and mind, accusing and exposing the reactionary nature of extremist religious ideology.” The XPCC Youth Corps article that described the event mentioned that the local XPCC cadres had been visiting this village for months, “inviting” all those upon whom they had “cracked down” to speak up against what the government had deemed extremism. This kind of forced indoctrination, confession, and public recitation appears to be common practice for the XPCC’s *fanghuiju* teams.<sup>225</sup>



Figure 22: Students returning home for holiday attend a program to help them understand Xinjiang history, provided by a local government agency. Source: Ethnic Unity Magazine, [Online](#).

These ideological programs to monitor and transform everyday thought and behavior in the home begin at an early age. In Tumshuq, the Bingtuan government says it “organizes and mobilizes teachers to enter the students’ studies and lives, enter the students’ families, solve the students’ ideological, learning, and life difficulties and problems in a timely manner, and guide the students to consciously love the party, the country, and socialism, and strive to become qualified socialist builders.” In order to ensure the youths’ indoctrination in Han culture, the government works to “establish interest groups such as waist drums, Peking opera, the lion dance, and classic poetry reading, and vigorously promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture.”<sup>226</sup> Once the youth have graduated, the programming continues. As one directive indicated, college students returning home for winter and

summer vacations are subjected to “patriotic education” that includes the study of government directives and the history of the corps, as well watching educational videos and engaging in a “Love Hometown Anti-Secession” program. The programs are designed to “educate and guide the people of all ethnic groups to change their ideological concepts, and completely eliminate outdated rules and bad habits.”<sup>227</sup>

**From cradle to grave, Uyghur people are subjected to centrally directed indoctrination delivered by the XPCC. The XPCC’s deliberate program of social engineering requires that every minoritized citizen shed their cultural heritage and language in favor of Han practices and Xi Jinping ideology.** Police and prison staff are deployed to ensure adoption and performance of these new behaviors are fully integrated into even the most private of spaces. Schools, family members, and cultural institutions are coopted into this all-encompassing enterprise of social engineering, such that there is no place for individual expression or behaviors. Those that do not submit to the indoctrination are often interned or imprisoned.

## Religious Persecution

Religious persecution through the “Sinicization of Islam” is an integral aspect of the campaign of social engineering in the Uyghur Region. On his 2014 visit to the XUAR, Xi declared: “The root of violent terrorist activities is national separatism, and the ideological foundation is religious extremism.” However, he demonizes Islamic practices when he asserts that “people who have been captured by extremist religious ideas, regardless of age or sex lose their conscience and humanity and kill people without blinking!”<sup>228</sup> Xi further warned: “Extremist religious forces are stepping up their competition with us for rural youth, inciting rural youths with lower incomes and weaker critical thinking abilities to engage in all kinds of illegal and criminal activities.” He continued: “The main means of the ‘three evils’ are to use cultural influence, exaggerate the wrong history and culture, exaggerate cultural differences, and incite ethnic estrangement and hatred.”<sup>229</sup> In light of the fact that merely refusing to drink alcohol or attending certain worship services or fasting during Ramadan were identified as extremist religious behaviors, this demonization affects a broad swath of the Indigenous people of the region, even some who are not practicing Muslims. This highlights how Xi views his Sinicization of religion policies as a civilizational struggle and imposes his belief that there is a correct and politically acceptable Chinese history and culture that should be imposed on all Muslim citizens regardless of their participation in crimes. The perception of a persistent threat of “cultural influence” renders all minoritized citizens suspect



as 'foreign' cultural threats in the eyes of the state. For Xi, the solution is to "use the socialist core value system to lead the construction of a shared cultural and spiritual home for all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and to continuously enhance the identification of all ethnic groups with the great motherland, with the Chinese nation, with the Chinese culture, and with the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics." In a patently racist remark directed towards the dietary practices amongst the region's Muslims, Xi demanded that the Uyghurs "must speak up about the kindness of the party, the support of the state, and the support of the whole country justly and forcefully, and should not scold the Communist Party, the country and the Han nation while eating mutton."<sup>230</sup>

Using the perceived failures of Western democracy to eradicate all terrorist actions as justification, Xi's speech on "Strengthening and progressing Islam Work under new conditions" of 2018 is framed as an official governmental "suggestion" (意见) issued by the Central Party Committee, which serves as a guide to active adherence to a broad set of ideological rules and specific policy measures for cadre behavior and policy. "Suggestions" create momentum in the party-state bureaucracy, pressuring cadres to explain behavior and policy implementation through its ideological and institutional framework. These "suggestions" were studied widely by officials, with "all cadres" expected to "follow its spirit" and "all regions and related departments" expected to implement its "concrete measures." In this example, Xi establishes a state-directed commitment to an ideological system of global Islam that corrupts Uyghur's Chinese identity, presenting that corruption as a national stability problem that China must harmonize and Sinicize.<sup>231</sup> The directive describes "problems in basic 'Islam Work' of not being able, willing, or daring to monitor" enforcement of state-approved religious practice in the region. Therefore, "the party's leadership of Islam Work urgently requires strengthening."<sup>232</sup> In the speech, Xi warns of a rising religious piety, marred by "de-Sinicization," "Saudiization" and "Arabization" that demand stricter policy and implementation. Islam in China is described as "harmonious," but in the XUAR, it suffers from supposed "infiltration."<sup>233</sup>

The Sinicization of Islam and the demand for assimilation is a program of religious persecution and thought transformation, with local XPCC officials given the leeway to implement this repressive policy as they saw fit within the bounds set by the "suggestions." A police chief in the XPCC's 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of Tumshuq wrote a reflection on the necessary actions to be taken to curb religious extremism, claiming that it was liberal policies that were responsible for "today's fertile soil for religious fanaticism in Xinjiang." He railed against the "wild imams" (imams who practice without formal government permission) who he claimed

influenced the region's religious people. He argued that he'd rather "be excessive than indulgent" in his policing of religion, indicating through a poem he included that people could expect "blood on the frontier," and that "iron and blood forged the soul of the police."<sup>234</sup>

Starting at least as early as 2015, the XPCC revived the practice of public self-criticism in work units and residential communities that was central to the oppressive state apparatus of the Cultural Revolution in the PRC. In this recent iteration, Uyghur and other minoritized citizens are required to participate in public events at which XPCC division cadres hold "Exposure, Confession, and Condemnation of Extreme Religious Thought" events, at which Uyghur citizens are compelled explain to crowds how they were led astray by religious leaders and people in the crowd confess their own participation in religious activities.<sup>235</sup> During one of these state-sponsored, public self-criticism events, a retired cadre member confessed that he had returned to religious practice after his retirement but now recognized that that made him a bad role model for others. His behavior was deemed "two-faced" and in violation of party membership. At another, "a person suspected of participating in the 'Three Illegals' activities was detained on the spot and criticized at the meeting."<sup>236</sup> The three illegals include illegal religious activities, illegal religious publications, and illegal religious online transmissions.<sup>237</sup> Official XPCC prison social media accounts often report such confessions or other public attestations whereby prisoners perform contrition for local audiences in a sort of disciplining public deterrence program.<sup>238</sup> All of these programs are reminiscent of Cultural Revolution era public confessions and purges. They create inter-ethnic and interpersonal discord and fear among the people at the neighborhood level.



Figure 23: Village work team berates wife of detained man for wearing her preferred clothing, telling her the clothing is not traditional Uyghur clothing Credit: Xinjiang Bingtuan TV, [Online](#).

Nationwide restrictions on Islamic practice and teaching are more intensively and arbitrarily enforced in the Uyghur Region. People have been detained and interned for donating to a mosque, having a religious wedding, visiting a Muslim country, being related to someone deemed by the state to be extremist, being born in a certain decade (ostensibly in an age group prone to radicalization), or for wearing a beard or traditional clothing.<sup>239</sup> Uyghur, Kazakh, and other minoritized people in the XUAR are regularly sent to internment camps and prisons on charges related to religious practice and the extremely broad “75 signs of extremism.” Local XPCC cadres regularly visit villages to admonish Uyghurs not to participate in religious activities. In one five-day period, an XPCC “Becoming Family” working group visited one small village, and provided ideological training for religious leaders, compelled them to preach specific political points in their services and to deliver party-written messages over the radio, went door

to door to inspect people’s clothing and admonish anyone who deviated from “modern” attire claiming their clothing is not traditional Uyghur attire (see Figure 20), and inspected factories to ensure that ideological transformation was taking hold among the workers. The messaging is focused on changing religious practices and behavioral norms among the Uyghur people, rather threats to state sovereignty or territorial integrity.

State restrictions on the practice of Islam have been enacted in very tangible and visible ways. Mosque destruction has been widespread, as shown in studies of cultural erasure using satellite imagery.<sup>240</sup> Xi’s 2018 directive indicated that “no new construction or establishment of activity venues is allowed,” and instructed the XUAR government to abide by the principle of “demolishing more and building less.”<sup>241</sup>



Figure 24: Mosque destroyed in central Tumshuq, before (2013) and after it was replaced with a highway (2021) Credit: Google Earth; image of this entire village demolition below Source: Google Earth (39.866248, 79.095083)



Figure 25: Mosque destroyed in 50th regiment of Tumshuq, before (2013) and after (2018). Source: Google Earth (39.953138, 79.286028)

As an Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) report explains, an official CCP academic article published as early as 2015 recommended mosque demolition because, in the researcher's analysis, mosques provide a safe haven for extremist behaviors. The article asserts that Islamic faith itself (and increased enthusiasm for religion of recent) is a problem for CCP power because "some people only recognize the imam and no longer seek the government for the most important events in the life of the masses." Youth religiosity is identified as a particular concern, and the report specifically says that "primary and secondary school students and unemployed youth are the key targets for religious extremist forces to cultivate through illegal religious activity."<sup>242</sup> Demolition of mosques was one of the recommended responses to suppress religious practice, and for those that remain, strict regulation was recommended, which is practiced in Bingtuan administered regions such as Tumshuq See figures 22 and 23.

The effects of Xi's and others' recommendations regarding mosques and other places of worship were significant. Through satellite imagery analysis, ASPI determined in 2020 that of the 112 mosques located in XPCC territories sampled for its study, 63% of had been either completely destroyed or severely damaged in recent years.<sup>243</sup> Numerous other studies have identified the destruction of mosques, graveyards, and other religious sites in the Uyghur Region, including several of the Uyghurs' most sacred pilgrimage sites, as one of the most significant affronts to Uyghur daily life and culture.<sup>244</sup>

Furthermore, the state aimed for the intentional reduction of large gatherings for religious worship—such as the cultural religious festivals that take place outside mosques or at desert shrines—which have been controlled in quantity, scaled down in size, and limited in frequency.<sup>245</sup> In place of Islamic cultural and religious centers, the XPCC was tasked in 2017 with constructing "advanced culture demonstration zones" that would "play an active role in disseminating advanced culture" and promoting "Chinese culture."<sup>246</sup>

Another method the XUAR and XPCC governments used to instill the government-approved disposition toward Islam was actively restricting the selection of Islamic imams and cleric and requiring that training be delivered only through state-run programs. Instead of emerging from within the community and being trained in traditional schools, religious staff are subject to state qualifications and selection and are required to study standardized curriculum and training materials in state-designated schools. They are monitored by the state in the performance of their duties and can be removed for pursuing any prohibited behaviors or if they are perceived as hav-

ing veered off the path prescribed for "patriotic religious persons" or otherwise incited radicalization. Records are kept in a centralized state system used to track any prohibited behaviors of religious clerics across provinces. The state has banned any practices that officials may arbitrarily determine to be "illegal religious activities, illegal religious propaganda, and illegal religious network dissemination, and underground teaching and learning activities," though what precisely these behaviors consist of is not clearly codified in law.<sup>247</sup> The government called for so-called "underground activities related to discussing and learning the Quran" to be banned and "wild imams" imprisoned.<sup>248</sup> None of these were entirely new programs, but Xi's management of this intensified and more widespread targeting reflects what he called a "period of painful interventionary treatment".

These are merely some of the most egregious and visible forms of religious persecution enacted by the XPCC in response to directives from the highest levels of the central party-state. Other XPCC enforced restrictions included largely prohibiting minoritized citizens from going on the Hajj, restricting the consumption of halal food, reading religious texts, dressing in clothing that distinguished one's religion, etc.<sup>249</sup> Because of the unpredictability of what will be deemed a religious practice, practitioners of Islam must assume that they can be punished for simple acts of piety such as praying or wearing a beard. The overall result is the destruction of cultural heritage and, for a large part of the Uyghur population, the full prohibition of religious practice.

## Conclusion

The Bingtuan is a colonial institution under the command of the party-state that preemptively polices and arbitrarily detains the Indigenous populations of the territories it administers based on signs of undesirable thought, prohibits their religious practices, transfers Uyghur land to corporations and state control, and arbitrarily imprisons and detains extraordinary numbers of minoritized citizens. The purpose of these programs is the "optimization of the population," specifically, the forced displacement of minoritized citizens, the prohibition of their expanding numbers, and the eradication of their cultural practices. The incentivization of corporate participation in this wide range of genocidal practices ensures Han elites benefit from them—politically and economically.

As the XPCC's manufacturing and agricultural footprint grows and the need for manual labor increases, the Bingtuan simultaneously recruits more Han workers to populate the region, while it moves minoritized citizens into intensive labor industries. However, much of this



economy is reliant on coercive and forced labor programs that are ubiquitous in the region. This forced labor is performed by minoritized and Han citizens held within the XPCC's carceral system, which is not limited to prison labor. Corporations have engaged in a state-sponsored, -incentivized, and -facilitated system of forced labor that may be unprecedented in human history. The next section focuses on the programs of labor transfer that the XPCC deploys as both a branch of government and corporate conglomerate to serve both those sectors' desires for a docile populace. The chapter following that analyzes the global corporate reach of the XPCC, through an analysis of the XPCC corporate footprint and the supply chains that connect this deliberate program of repression and forced labor to the rest of the world.

# FORCED LABOR

## Background

As early as 2014, PRC Premier Li Keqiang linked “stability” in the Uyghur Region to labor: “We must understand and solve employment and people’s livelihood issues from the strategic perspective of stabilizing Xinjiang and securing Xinjiang.” He indicated the “problem of surplus labor” was “particularly prominent” in southern Xinjiang. In that same speech, Li set a new requirement for companies, saying, **“All enterprises and investment projects in Xinjiang must pay attention to absorbing local labor. The recruitment of local employees, especially ethnic employees, should not be lower than a certain [unnamed] percentage.”** He deemed this the companies’ “social responsibility.”<sup>250</sup> That same year, Yu Zhengsheng, then the Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, said that the development of labor-intensive industries was “particularly urgent,” despite the fact that they “do not necessarily contribute more to economic growth and taxation than other industries” because they are “important for promoting exchanges and integration of various ethnic groups.”<sup>251</sup> Again, in the same year, Xi Jinping noted that if people in the Uyghur Region work and earn money, they are less likely to engage in religious fanaticism.<sup>252</sup>

These three landmark speeches delivered in 2014 by top PRC officials, including Xi Jinping himself, established a clear mandate—government and corporations should cooperatively invest in expansion of enterprise to support the government’s political, social, and population engineering described in the previous chapter. Yu explained just how mission critical this employment scheme would be: “To maintain the stability of Xinjiang, southern Xinjiang is the main battlefield and the pressure point. If this pressure point is not choked, society in Xinjiang will not be peaceful, and the whole country will be unstable.”<sup>253</sup>

“Labor transfers” (劳动力转移)—the assignment of agricultural and other laborers to new industries or manufacturing—is a technique used across the PRC to address several shifts in rural economies. With the increase in agricultural mechanization across China, there has been a consistent heightened risk of massive under- or unemployment in rural areas, described as a problem of “surplus labor” (剩余劳动力 or 富余劳动力).<sup>254</sup> The central government has long strategized to get ahead of that trend. The 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2002) declared that “the transfer of surplus rural labor to non-agricultural industries and to cities and towns is an inevitable trend of industrialization and modernization.”<sup>255</sup> The XUAR and XPCC governments began implementing

significant localized transfers of people deemed to be “surplus” at least as early as 2004 in response to the “2003–2010 National Migrant Worker Training Plan”<sup>256</sup> and the 2004 “Sunshine Project for Rural Labor Transfer Training,”<sup>257</sup> issued by Central Government ministries to direct regional and local governments to establish rural surplus labor transfer training programs and to begin moving people from their traditional agricultural labor into large-scale agricultural endeavors, manufacturing, and service industries.<sup>258</sup> In the Uyghur Region, as in some other regions, labor transfers and rural income generation was linked to annual cadre evaluations, providing significant pressure on local leaders to ensure that minoritized citizens participated in the programs, who in turn put significant pressure on those citizens. The development of a database of all rural citizens and their labor situations was immediately put into effect and continues to exist today (in a more technologically advanced form). Rural farmers in the Uyghur Region were also encouraged to go to other Central Asian countries to work, and these programs emphasized moving people “from seasonal transfer to long-term transfer and family transfer.”<sup>259</sup>

The “surplus labor” Li and Yu describe are people who are determined by the state to be unemployed or under-employed. Surplus labor is a concern across China and programs to “transfer” such people into “labor-intensive industries” have affected millions of impoverished citizens. Social security bureaus and human resources departments throughout China are tasked with “solving employment” and “alleviating poverty.” The programs, even in the XUAR, are touted by Xi Jinping and the central government as designed to alleviate poverty and address the problem of young people facing unemployment.<sup>260</sup> These programs, however, are often coercive, typically identifying people who the state deems in need of work who may indeed already have jobs or are satisfied with their current circumstances. The government then identifies factories to which citizens will be transferred, trains the potential workers in appropriate work “discipline” (which they are deemed not to possess), and then assigns the workers to a factory for a specified period of time. Rural laborers across China feel significant pressure from local authorities to help them meet government-determined poverty alleviation targets, and reports have shown resistance among some impoverished people against the programs in mainland China as well as in the XUAR.<sup>261</sup>

**Labor transfers in the Uyghur Region differ from those in operation elsewhere in China in terms of the proportion of the population targeted, the racialization of that targeting, and the goal of transforming ethnic identities.**

Government officials accompanied by security personnel go door-to-door to coerce the Indigenous citizens to comply with their labor transfer assignments. Coercion is considered necessary because, as Li Keqiang (and other Han officials) understands it, Uyghurs "have a weak sense of going out to work and starting businesses."<sup>262</sup> Government, academic, and media reports have provided evidence that many people resist assignment to these programs, but that they are given no option to refuse.<sup>263</sup> **Widely circulated government documents indicate that refusal to participate in government assistance programs in the Uyghur Region is tantamount to aligning oneself with the three evils—separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism—and thus anyone who might not want to work in a factory for any reason would risk being sent to an internment camp.**<sup>264</sup>

It is clear from the evidence provided by the government itself that Uyghur people are not voluntarily engaging in labor transfer schemes operated by the XPCC and other XUAR agencies. Even in the early stages of labor transfers, many rural Uyghurs refused to participate in labor transfers. The National Bureau of Statistics enumerated the causes of Uyghur disengagement:

1. "They would rather stay in their own patch of land and suffer poverty than to go out of their homes and work to earn money."
2. "Rural ethnic minority women are even more constrained by stereotypes and bad habits" of not wanting to travel far from their homes for work.
3. "Rural roads are underdeveloped."
4. "A very small number of grassroots cadres [assigned to implement the transfer programs] who have not fully understood the importance and necessity of transferring rural labor and developing labor income generation work" fail to recruit sufficient workers.
5. "Most of the migrant workers in Xinjiang who are employed in China lack basic production skills and can only engage in simple manual labor."
6. Some farmers are tied to land because of a notion that one "can't waste the land you contract."
7. "Peasants who work in cities still have more

Experts and researchers have consistently determined that labor transfer programs, as they operate in the Uyghur Region, constitute a systematic program of state-sponsored forced labor.<sup>265</sup> These labor transfers clearly suggest the indicators of forced labor identified by the International Labor Organization (ILO), including (at a minimum): abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, isolation, intimidation and threats, withholding of wages, and potentially debt bondage.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, there are other indicators of state-sponsored forced labor, including threat of detention or imprisonment, no access to fair and unretaliated grievance mechanisms, state labor agency harassment, expropriation of land, or forcible transfer of children and elders to state care for the purpose of labor transfer, all of which are practiced by the XPCC. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) Forced Labor Convention of 1930 defines forced or compulsory labor as: "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily,"<sup>267</sup> and in 1957 they further prohibited member states from employing compulsory labor

- (a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system;
- (b) as a method of mobilising and using labor for purposes of economic development;
- (c) as a means of labor discipline;
- (d) as a punishment for having participated in strikes;
- (e) as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.

It is clear from the evidence presented in this chapter that the XPCC's labor transfer program in the Uyghur Region is used to punish people with oppositional ideological views, to create a regime of economic development built on compulsory labor, and to discipline the masses whom they deem to be inherently deficient because of their race and religion. While the PRC and XPCC governments justify these programs as "poverty alleviation" strategies, the specter of internment camps and arbitrary prison sentences loom, creating a situation in which no Uyghur or other minoritized citizen could refuse participation in these government-run program without risk of being sent to the camps. This clearly contravenes the ILO convention to which the PRC is subject, because all member states must comply with the four fundamental principles of the ILO, which include the abolition of slavery.<sup>268</sup>



or less different pay for equal work, and their children have difficulties enrolling in nurseries and attending schools in the cities, making it difficult to enjoy completely equal treatment with urban residents."

8. "The lack of funds for the autonomous region to carry out transfer employment training into the rural areas has severely restricted the labor transfer training work."
9. "The flow of surplus rural labor in Xinjiang is still in a semi-disordered state. The main disadvantage of this semi-disordered state is that it is difficult to carry out macro-control."
10. "Among farmers' per capita net income from household operations, the income from the primary industry is more than 500 yuan higher than the national average, while the income from the secondary and tertiary industries is nearly 200 yuan lower than the national average."<sup>269</sup>

Uyghurs refused participation in government labor transfers because they did not all want to leave their land, their families, or their homes to take up work elsewhere. Many women justifiably saw their roles as mothers as sufficient work in and of itself. Uyghur workers knew that when they did go out for work, they were often discriminated against, paid less than they made when farming, and only given the most demeaning and labor-intensive roles, which are all strong disincentives. And for the government's part, the report suggested that there was serious concern that the government's "micro-control" over the population and their choice of work was undermined by the labor transfer system being "disorderly," which in the discourse of language transfers indicates that it was not being guided by the government's hand sufficiently and was left too much to the desires and interests of the people.

Despite significant resistance on the part of rural Uyghur people, the programs continued apace through the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and indeed became singularly focused on the "orderly transfer" of "rural surplus labor."

**Labor transfers operating under the current regime of oppression in the Uyghur Region function as a full-fledged state-sponsored forced labor program.** Li's speech and his enlisting of companies in "absorbing" so-called "surplus laborers" pre-date the internment camp system, and the role of companies in absorbing that "surplus" has persisted and expanded. The central government actively recruits companies to move to the Uyghur Region and expects them—and even incentivizes them—to engage in the "acceptance" or "absorption" of surplus laborers. Companies are incentivized to:

- build or operate a factory within the walls of a camp or prison and benefit from the labor of those interned;
- "absorb" forcibly "transferred laborers" into an already existing factory in the Uyghur Region;
- build a "satellite factory" in a village in the Uyghur Region so that people can be assigned to work "on their doorstep" if they are deemed too high a security risk;
- build a factory in an industrial park that "absorbs" transferred laborers and distributes them to companies located in the park;
- "pair" with a company or factory in the Uyghur Region to either train transferred laborers in other parts of China or to send Han trainers to factories operating in the Uyghur Region that are dependent on forced labor; and/or
- accept "batches" of Uyghur workers, in groups as large as 100 or more, at a factory in other parts of China.<sup>270</sup>

The PRC government has implemented an extensive system of incentives to entice companies to move operations to the XUAR since 2010 to benefit from forced labor, especially in the years since the advent of the "Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism" (严厉打击暴力恐怖活动专项行动) in 2014.<sup>271</sup> These incentives include reduced rents in industrial parks, subsidized electricity and water, elimination or significant reduction in taxes for several years, and provision of office space, desks, chairs, and computers. Since as early as 2010, the government has also included subsidies for training Uyghur workers in Chinese language, worker discipline, and ideological education, expanding in reach and intensity since 2017.<sup>272</sup> In addition, the government has called on companies to engage in coercive "poverty alleviation" and "surplus labor transfer" programs as part of their "corporate social responsibility" programs.<sup>273</sup>

The program of forced labor in the Uyghur Region operates through three primary mechanisms: 1) labor assigned to people held in the system of mass internment and prison, 2) labor transfers to satellite factories located across the Uyghur Region, 3) labor transfers to factories in other region of China. The programs all operate through force and coercion. Labor is compulsory for those internment camp victims and prisoners assigned to work in factories. As noted in the previous section, labor is required for all prison inmates in China. Furthermore, the internment camps were billed as vocational training programs by the PRC government, and factories have been built within the walls of or adjacent to hundreds of these camps in order to compel the detainees to work. However, forced labor

extends beyond the walls of the camps. To compel those Indigenous people who are not interned in the camp system to work, government agents go door-to-door, harassing citizens (which they term “educating,” and “doing ideological work”) until they are coerced into leaving their homes to work.

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, under command of the central PRC government, plays an integral role in all of these forced labor programs. The Bingtuan’s subsidiary companies benefit from widespread forced labor in its prisons and camps. The Bingtuan incentivizes the engagement of other corporations in these forced labor programs. It provides subsidies for the training of “surplus laborers” and assists in placing them in local factories. It implements labor transfers to other provinces for Uyghur citizens who live within XPCC administered territories. Indeed, in 2017, the XPCC established an explicit mandate to strengthen cooperation in the “export” of labor and nearby transfer of employment for impoverished households.<sup>274</sup> As described in the previous chapter, **the Bingtuan also cooperativizes Uyghur land to help facilitate their dispossession and forcible migration, subsidizing private and state-owned enterprises to exploit these land transfers to increase their efficiency and bring their products to global markets, leaving Uyghurs landless and unemployed, and thus subject to transfer.**

The repression and forced labor of the Uyghurs and other minoritized citizens and the development of industry in the region are part and parcel of the central government’s overall strategy to stabilize the region, and the XPCC was assigned an enormous set of tasks to make both possible. In 2017, as the camps system was being built and expanded, the central government directed the Bingtuan with a specific program of industrial expansions in the region. The Bingtuan was directed to expand textile and garment manufacturing, increase agricultural production and processing of cotton and chemical products, intensify natural resource extraction and refining (including minerals, coal, oil and gas), and to increase electronic and other equipment manufacturing, home appliance assembly and manufacturing. In addition, the XPCC was instructed to develop robust “modern commerce and logistics, financial insurance, cultural tourism, medical education, and elderly care.” The central government instructed the Bingtuan to “foster and develop strategic emerging industries such as bio-industry, new energy, new materials, electronics and information, energy conservation and environmental protection,” under a military-civilian integration program.<sup>275</sup> The directive anticipated that “industrial added value of the Southern Xinjiang Division will increase by an average of 20% annually, reaching more than 50 billion yuan,” and the Bingtuan was directed to

“strive to employ no less than 250,000 people, of which more than 160,000 will be employed in new jobs.”<sup>276</sup> The labor transfer program was integral to the deployment of rural workers into the new jobs created. The expansion of industry and the forcible transfer of laborers thus went hand in hand.

## XPCC’s Embrace of Labor Transfer Schemes

In August 2014, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division “tested the water” on a project to transfer so-called “surplus” agricultural laborers to provinces outside of the XUAR. It was the first time the XPCC had organized a “large-scale export of ethnic minority migrant workers to work outside Xinjiang.” The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Labor and Social Security Bureau sent 107 people to a company in Dongguan, Guangdong for a one-year term as an experimental agreement between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and the Guangdong provincial government. The Social Security Bureau indicated that people of the extremely rural 51<sup>st</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Regiments were targeted for transfer, noting as well that there was a higher than 50% minority population in those areas. The XPCC also noted that there was purportedly too little land for minoritized citizens to work in the region in which they lived (even as the XPCC was expanding its own farms in the region). XPCC officials perceived Uyghur workers as harboring bad “employment concepts”—usually an indication that the government has deemed them to be inadequately interested in the work to which the government assigns them. Tumshuq government sent officials to monitor the transferred workers.<sup>277</sup>

By 2015, the Tumshuq 3<sup>rd</sup> Division reported that it had achieved the “permanent migration” of 100 minority laborers to regions outside their homeland, transferred 40 others to animal husbandry in Southern Xinjiang, and transferred 36 minoritized citizens to the 8<sup>th</sup> Division/Shihezi to work at Huafu Printing and Dyeing Factory and Hoshine (Chinese: Hesheng) Silicon Industry Co<sup>278</sup>—both companies that have come under significant scrutiny and even government sanctions for using forced labor in the years since the internment camps have emerged.<sup>279</sup> Ten of the workers were “male minority youth” who were “assigned” to work at Hoshine.

The June 2015 transfer of laborers (both within the Uyghur Region and to the rest of China) was the first XPCC labor transfer that included a significant number of women. A *Xinhua* news report about the transfer claimed that one woman had expressed enthusiasm about being transferred but was hindered from accepting it because of childcare responsibilities. The Labor and Social Security Bureau reported that officials would arrange for her

to find work within Tumshuq at the next opportunity. Another woman left her children in the care of her parents so that she could go out to work. The labor recruitment agents admitted that many women are unwilling to work outside the home in that region, as they have familial obligations. A *Xinhua* report indicated that convincing rural laborers to engage in labor transfers had led to significant resistance, particularly among women. Some of the reasons provided for why people did not want to leave their home for work included familial obligations, but also an unfamiliarity with travel to other parts of the country, lack of work experience and skills, and fear of being treated poorly.<sup>280</sup> Local labor and social security agencies were later deployed to ensure that targeted citizens did not resist and that women were trained that they should go out of the home to work. Unwillingness was known and documented, and government programs were designed specifically to counter that resistance.



1团少数民族贫困劳动力转移至华孚纺织厂就业通过转移就业实现稳定脱贫。

▲ Figure 26: Original caption reads: “A group of impoverished ethnic minority laborers were transferred to Huafu Textile Factory for employment to achieve stable poverty alleviation through transfer of employment.” Though yarn production has been significantly mechanized, images and media like this show that labor transfers are still in effect in the cotton processing and manufacturing industry in the Uyghur Region. Source: National Poverty Alleviation Propaganda and Education Center, [Online](#).

These transfers were only the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division’s commitment to labor transfers. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division committed at the time to transferring as many as 13,840 laborers by 2016, 12,000 (or 87%) of which were to be from minoritized groups (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division is only 52.6% minority). 3<sup>rd</sup> Division officials also established a plan at the time to transfer agricultural laborers within the Uyghur

Region into labor-intensive industries, including cotton processing and textile manufacturing. In particular, they were focused on employing farmers during “slack” time, as they were perceived as being seasonally unemployed in off seasons, despite the fact that farmers typically have many tasks to attend to in the off seasons.<sup>281</sup>

## Labor Transfers in the Era of Internment and Southward Expansion

In June 2015, the State Council released its “Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Supporting the Development of Xinjiang’s Textile and Garment Industry and Promoting Employment.” In these “guiding opinions,” the government stated its ambition to lead Xinjiang to the forefront of the country’s textile industry by 2020. This industrial expansion was explicitly designed with social and political control of the region in mind. The transformation of the region to a textile center was predicted to create 500,000–600,000 jobs. The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps was to be an integral part of the process of this transformation. Vocational and technical training (of the kind that has been linked to detention of the local population) was prioritized, and beyond the walls of the camps the XPCC initiated subsidies for companies to “absorb” local workers, especially in the southern XUAR. To incentivize companies to do so, the XPCC and XUAR governments were encouraged to “provide public services such as water, electricity, heat supply, and centralized sewage treatment,” and to increase access to financing. Furthermore, Xinjiang Aid programs in cities across China would be evaluated on the success they had in transferring production and manufacturing to the region, which increased the incentives or, indeed, requirements for at least some companies to move to the region and absorb “surplus” laborers.<sup>282</sup> This set the stage for a massive transformation of the Uyghur Region into an industrial base along the Belt and Road, as well as for the massive system of internment and forced labor that would emerge soon after.

Since the camp system was established in 2016, labor transfer programs in the Uyghur Region have operated in an unprecedented atmosphere of fear and coercion. In some rural villages within XPCC purview, policemen, prison personnel, and even prosecutors are sent house-to-house to pressure people into accepting labor transfers. In the 14th Division Pishan Farm of Kunyu City, for instance, fanghuiju work teams promote the labor transfer programs. In February of 2021, that team included four members of the Bingtuan Prison Administration Bureau.<sup>283</sup> A court prosecutor visited families in the 51st regiment “to learn more about each household, each person, and each piece of land,” as well as to do “ideological



work,” attempting to persuade locals to go out for work even if they had to leave behind their family members, or to plant crops desired by area companies and raise animals purchased for them by the XPCC’s Guannong Fruit and Antler Co.<sup>284</sup> This regiment and others rely on the official representatives who have interned their neighbors and relatives to convince people to accept the jobs the government has assigned them. These tactics suggest that the XPCC mobilizes force and state terror in its work to assign hundreds of Uyghur villagers to vocational trainings and hundreds more to manufacturing jobs near and far.



第十四师昆玉市少数民族贫困家庭子女进厂务工。

Figure 27: Original caption reads: “The 14th Division of Kunyu City, the children of impoverished ethnic minority families enter the factory to work.” Source: National Poverty Alleviation Propaganda and Education Center, [Online](#).

A series of directives that coincided with the expansion of the internment camps system ensured that labor transfers became a central aspect of governance and control in the Uyghur Region. A 2017 XPCC directive instructed all divisions to “encourage and guide the group field labor force and local ethnic minority people to transfer to cities, parks, and enterprises for employment.” Companies were assigned to “absorb the surplus labor force from urban and rural areas in Kashgar and Hotan to transfer employment.”<sup>285</sup> Again, framed as support for unemployed people, this directive accompanied a massive, coordinated expansion of the coercive labor transfer programs and industrialization of the region.

Further extending the reach of the programs, in 2018, the PRC government set new standards and guidelines for

*Since the camp system was established in 2016, labor transfer programs in the Uyghur Region have operated in an unprecedented atmosphere of fear and coercion. In some rural villages within XPCC purview, policemen, prison personnel, and even prosecutors are sent house-to-house to pressure people into accepting labor transfers.*

poverty alleviation, with the unrealistic ambition of eradicating poverty in China by 2020. The central government emphasized the importance of investment by private and state-owned enterprises in labor transfer schemes and in expanding vocational training to meet the country’s manufacturing needs. The directive provided specific subsidies for educated people to move to southern Xinjiang to aid in the effort.<sup>286</sup>

In 2019, Wang Wenduo, deputy head of the Organization Department of the Party Committee of the XPCC, commended the 53<sup>rd</sup> Regiment’s achievements in regard to surplus labor transfers, but announced that there would be higher quotas for 2019 transfers to meet so-called poverty alleviation goals. He announced that the XPCC would be “exporting more poor laborers willing to transfer to relevant provinces and cities in the mainland to stabilize employment and increase income, ensuring that they will not return to poverty and achieve real poverty alleviation.”<sup>287</sup> The language of “willingness” begins to appear in the rhetoric of the programs, but the coercion remains. The XPCC further heeded the central government’s call to “alleviate poverty” by implementing the 2020 “Three-year Action Plan for Winning the Human Resources and Social Security Poverty Alleviation Battle.” Through this initiative, the XPCC transferred at least 4,722 impoverished people to work and brought 1,497 poor laborers into the corps itself to work. Officials also employed another 731 in public service jobs, which could include street sweeping or light office work.<sup>288</sup>

Within five years of its first major labor transfer, the XPCC responded to these central party directives by announcing that its poverty alleviation programs had resulted in extraordinary success. In 2019, the XPCC announced that it had lifted 161,000 people out of poverty in the previous six years.<sup>289</sup> “By the end of 2019, the XPCC’s four impoverished sub-regions and thirty-eight impoverished regimental townships were all lifted out of poverty, and the number of poverty-stricken people established and registered was reduced by 6,018.” Under serious and unrealistic pressure from the central government to lift the entire population out of poverty by 2020, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division an-

nounced it had met its targets early.<sup>290</sup> It is important to note, of course, that that this achievement was only possible because China has set its poverty line inappropriately low,<sup>291</sup> and that labor transfers to other regions and land expropriation reduced the population total, reducing the number of impoverished people who would count toward those figures. Internment may have also reduced the number of impoverished people counted in the census.

The XPCC explicitly articulated the means by which the corps made such progress on poverty alleviation work. Poverty alleviation was attributed to a combination of:

- a) special incentives for companies to set up satellite factories in areas with high poverty,
- b) implementation of the “one household, one employment” program that required that at least one person in every household be employed in government-approved jobs (even when multiple family members were already employed as agriculturalists or even when families resisted the transfers),
- c) establishment of group/cooperative farms, and
- d) weekly scheduling of labor transfers and monthly management of new employees for companies.<sup>292</sup>



▲  
Figure 28: A young woman works as a transferred laborer in a sewing factory in the 3rd Division, Tumshuq. Source: National Poverty Alleviation Propaganda and Education Center, [Online](#).

**Together, these programs transferred extraordinary numbers of people away from their livelihoods, homes, families, land, and work, often under state coercion.** For instance, in one village the media reported that, deploying the *fanghuiju* teams to “provide multi-faceted and multi-channel matchmaking for ethnic minority people

to go out for work,” a single small town had “exported” 900 workers. The town celebrated that these transfers resulted in a total of CNY 123,500 in additional income—only CNY 137 per person (or about \$22).<sup>293</sup> In another small town, one poverty alleviation officer and his colleagues were credited with “mobilizing” more than 700 people to migrate for work, 150 people to work on the town’s construction team, and an additional 560 people to travel to Korla and Aksu for seasonal farming, purportedly leading to an end to poverty in the town.<sup>294</sup> Another social media propaganda piece celebrates one cadre in Tumshuq who had supposedly trained 4,000 people in basic Chinese language skills. She also helped to transfer 422 people to work.<sup>295</sup> In June 2020, the XPCC boasted that in 2019: “730 surplus laborers of the 14<sup>th</sup> Division went to the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions to take care of the employment of Pimo Industrial Park enterprises, and 1,497 registered poor laborers from the deeply impoverished areas of the four prefectures of southern Xinjiang were taken to the Southern Xinjiang Division for employment.”<sup>296</sup> What was deemed poverty alleviation by the government was in fact a massive system of coercive labor and land transfers that amounts to forced labor and forcible migration of people.

### Case Study: Dongguan Xinjiang Pairing with The 3rd Division

The Xinjiang pairing program is a PRC directed scheme in which provincial or city governments in the mainland pair with cities in the Uyghur Region to assist in poverty alleviation, in particular through the development of industry and the transfer of minoritized laborers.<sup>297</sup> The central government transferred as much as CNY 80.2 billion annually to the XPCC from 2017 to 2019 to support Xinjiang. With this funding, the XPCC developed at least 481 cooperative projects with enterprises from thirteen provinces, garnering an additional investment of over CNY 220 billion, accounting for as much as 35% of the XPCC’s funds.<sup>298</sup> Uyghur workers pay a high price for this program purportedly designed in the name of “development.”

One example of such a pairing is the relationship between Dongguan and the XPCC’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in Tumshuq. In 2014, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division welcomed the Guangdong Investment Promotion Office to Tumshuq to initiate “Xinjiang Aid” programs. Dongguan was the lead city in the Tumshuq effort, and the city implemented a program to “go out and bring in” cities and businesses in the mainland of China that would provide investments to improve the economy of the region. Within two years, the program had brought in CNY 8.19 billion for the Division and the city, and an additional CNY 170 million in support to local businesses. The program required nearly 4,000 workers within the Uyghur Region to be transferred to employ-

ment locally. As part of this project, Dongguan invested in the Qianhai Logistics Company, strategically located high in the mountains. The investment allowed XUAR-based businesses to export goods to Europe and elsewhere through Central Asia instead of by sea in eastern China.<sup>299</sup>

The Dongguan Xinjiang Aid program is specifically designed to facilitate the transfer of laborers from Tumshuq to Dongguan.<sup>300</sup> The XPCC's first labor transfers were between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and Dongguan through the Xinjiang Aid partnership.<sup>301</sup> In fall of 2015, the Dongguan Textile and Clothing School sent a teacher to serve as Vice Principal of the Tumshuq Vocational and Training Center, at which time the school established a specialized textile and garment vocational course; after three years, the program had 150 students, 142 of which were minoritized students.<sup>302</sup> Every year the vocational school provides on-the-job training to 3,000 workers for the Tumshuq Industrial Park,<sup>303</sup> the majority of whom are likely to be transferred to Dongguan or other locales for state-sponsored labor placements.

By mid-2016, as the internment camp system was being built and more people were beginning to disappear, 449 Tumshuq youth deemed to be "surplus laborers" had been transferred to Dongguan for work in the previous three years, and at least another 120 Uyghur youth were transferred in the first half of the year to train and work at Dongguan Rushifeng (or Shifeng) Knitting Co. (广东入世丰针织有限公司).<sup>304</sup> By 2019, the Dongguan Xinjiang Aid program was taking credit for having created over 13,000 jobs in Tumshuq—4,000 people alone had been transferred to Dongchunxing Textile. The XPCC anticipated another 8,800 jobs created in the near future through Dongguan's aid. The XPCC had also transferred 1,384 laborers to Dongguan by that time.<sup>305</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division became a prolific transferrer of laborers through its partnership with Dongguan. These thousands of Uyghur workers were part of a state-sponsored scheme that assigned those who were not interned to work placements, while the threat of the camps loomed over their every decision.

The rural and predominantly Uyghur 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Tumshuq 3<sup>rd</sup> Division has established special arrangements with individual companies to implement labor transfers that particularly target a demographic that the government has deemed most dangerous—people between the age of eighteen and forty. By July 2020, this regiment alone had sent 1,194 minoritized citizens to factories both within the Uyghur Region and outside. One nearby location where those workers are transferred is to the Tumshuq Qianhai Cotton Textile Co. in the Yonganba Industrial Park.<sup>306</sup> Through a special arrangement with the 6<sup>th</sup> Division Wujiaqu, the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment also exports laborers to Huaifu Textile Factory, more than 1200

km away.<sup>307</sup> Huaifu has been singled out by scholars for its intensive engagement in forced labor programs, for which it has been sanctioned by the U.S. government.<sup>308</sup>

Beginning at least as early as 2016, as part of the Xinjiang Aid pairing between Tumshuq and Dongguan, the XPCC also began dispatching workers to shoe manufacturer Dongguan Oasis, including Uyghur and Kyrgyz farmers, herdsmen, and industrial workers. By 2019, the factory had accepted at least 270 such transfers. In that year, the Deputy mayor of Tumshuq visited Dongguan Oasis factory (also called Dongguan Lvzhou), where he addressed the Uyghur workers, reminding them that "integration," hard work, and Chinese language skills would lead them out of poverty and to a win-win for Dongguan and Xinjiang.<sup>309</sup> Media stories about the workers at Dongguan indicate that they ask to go home but are "encouraged" to stay, and some of them cry every day when they are first placed there. While the reports indicate that workers receive pay, it is highly likely that they are not allowed to refuse the transfers, and first-person testimonies at other such factories suggest they may also not receive the promised pay. When *Globe and Mail* journalist Nathan VanderKlippe and BBC journalist John Sudworth visited the Dongguan Oasis factory in spring 2021, they found Uyghur workers' housing surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by men in "police-style uniforms" appearing to restrict access to the dorms. He learned from other workers that Uyghur workers are segregated from Han and Hui workers and have their own line bosses.<sup>310</sup> Dongguan Oasis' primary customer is Skechers shoe company.<sup>311</sup> In a March 2021 statement, Skechers USA stated that they had conducted yearly audits of Dongguan Oasis between 2017 and 2020 and additional audits following allegations of forced labor, and "none of these audits revealed indications of the use of forced labor or other concerning labor conditions." Skechers also commented that Dongguan Oasis had denied allegations of forced labor and provided a social responsibility commitment. There was no indication that Skechers had reviewed Dongguan Oasis's relationship with the XPCC or the recruitment programs that brought the Uyghur workers to Dongguan. Skechers' full statement is available online.<sup>312</sup>

This pairing program and the state-sponsored labor transfers continue to be lucrative for less developed XPCC cities like Tumshuq, even as they intensify the pressure and coercion on Uyghur and other Indigenous citizens of the region to be transferred to work. Over the course of 2020, Tumshuq welcomed 259 new investment projects totaling over CNY 6 billion, resulting in a reported year-on-year GDP increase of 8%.<sup>313</sup> In February 2021, Dongguan city government hosted a business promotion fair for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Tumshuq city, which resulted in twenty new corporate partnerships amounting to CNY 25.68



million in the electronics, agriculture, textile, infrastructure, biotechnology, and new materials sectors. In this renewed phase of Xinjiang Aid paired cities/counterpart assistance, Foshan, Jiangmen, Zhaoqing and other cities have joined Dongguan in investing in Tumshuq.<sup>314</sup> This incentivizes the government to participate more avidly and to recruit more workers for transfer, and it results in ever more minoritized citizens compelled to work.



Figure 29: Transferred laborer packages Skechers shoes.  
Source: Iyaxin.com, [Online](#).

## Conclusion

As this report has shown, the XPCC operates numerous official programs and policies designed to create a docile population of the minoritized citizens of the Uyghur Region. The XPCC is responsible for internment, imprisonment, aggressive preemptive policing, hyper-surveillance, religious regulation, restrictions on movement, and state-sponsored forced labor, to maintain stability and enhance its competitiveness in the global economy. Whether it is manufacturing inside the walls of an internment camp, compelling prisoners to work, or transferring citizens to factories and farms through coercive state-run programs, the XPCC is prolific in its use of labor transfers to discipline and control the minoritized citizens of the region and to control the population's mobility and secure its own financial future. The next chapter will reveal the extent of the XPCC's own corporate reach, as well as its use of forced labor (and other mechanisms of oppression) for both its own corporations and to incentivize lucrative partnerships with private and state-owned enterprises countrywide.

# CORPORATE REACH

## Bingtuan Corporate Expansion

Despite its military history and its function as a governing body, casual observers in the Uyghur Region could mistake Bingtuan logos emblazoned on industrial facilities and tower blocks for corporate branding. That is because economic activities of the Bingtuan as both a state-owned enterprise (SOE) and paramilitary organization have been registered as a corporation, China Xinjian Group Corporation (中国新建集团) since 1998.<sup>315</sup> The Bingtuan has built and governs numerous cities and administers swaths of land in an archipelago of governance. The corps uses that land and its governmental powers to support a massive corporate empire, controlling 13 publicly listed corporations and (by some accounts) maintaining holdings in as many as 800,000 companies.<sup>316</sup>



Figure 30: XPCC logo.

The Bingtuan's thirteen listed companies appear to be some of its crowning achievements. These corporations not only represent the corps' perceived successes in the Uyghur Region but also its global relationships and ambitions. They include an agricultural conglomerate that supplies much of the world's tomato paste and cotton and warehouses even more, an energy company that powers huge swaths of the country, a chemical company that supplies building materials manufacturers around the world, and construction and logistics firms that facilitate the movement of those products to global markets.

According to the XPCC's own tally, the corps has seen significant growth in the nearly seventy years of its existence.

In 1954, the production value of the XPCC was only 118 million yuan. In 1995, it exceeded 10 billion yuan, in 2012 it exceeded 100 billion yuan, in 2016 it exceeded 200 billion yuan, and in 2018 it

reached 251.516 billion yuan. Calculated at comparable prices, from 1954 to 2018, the XPCC's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 9.6%, and its share in the autonomous region increased from 11.2% to 20.6%. The per capita GDP increased from 723 yuan in 1954 to 82,318 yuan in 2018, an average annual increase of 4.7%, which is 66.4% and 27.3% higher than the autonomous region and the national average respectively.<sup>317</sup>

**The Bingtuan is an enormous and complex corporate entity that penetrates production and manufacturing across China, with few industries entirely free of XPCC inputs, investments, or influence.** A recent report from C4ADS examined how the XPCC is connected to and supported by global financial and trade systems, including through international commerce, development finance, and investment banks. The C4ADS report identified more than 2,873 companies for which 50% or more of the enterprise was held by the XPCC or its subsidiaries. The think tank estimated that more than 10% of the goods made by the XPCC, worth more than U.S. \$7 billion, may be entering into global supply chains.<sup>318</sup>

Long committed to its original mission as a military and development outpost, the Bingtuan leads markets in agriculture, construction, logistics, and transportation in the region, owning dozens of related companies that dominate the field of infrastructure expansion. Those enterprises largely employ Han migrant workers as they "develop" the region. The Bingtuan produces approximately 33% of the Uyghur Region's cotton (amounting to about 8% of the world's cotton)<sup>319</sup> and a third of the world's tomatoes used for paste.<sup>320</sup> Beyond their original sectors, however, the Bingtuan has expanded manufacturing of an array of other consumer products including apparel, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and a range of agricultural products for both domestic and international consumption.

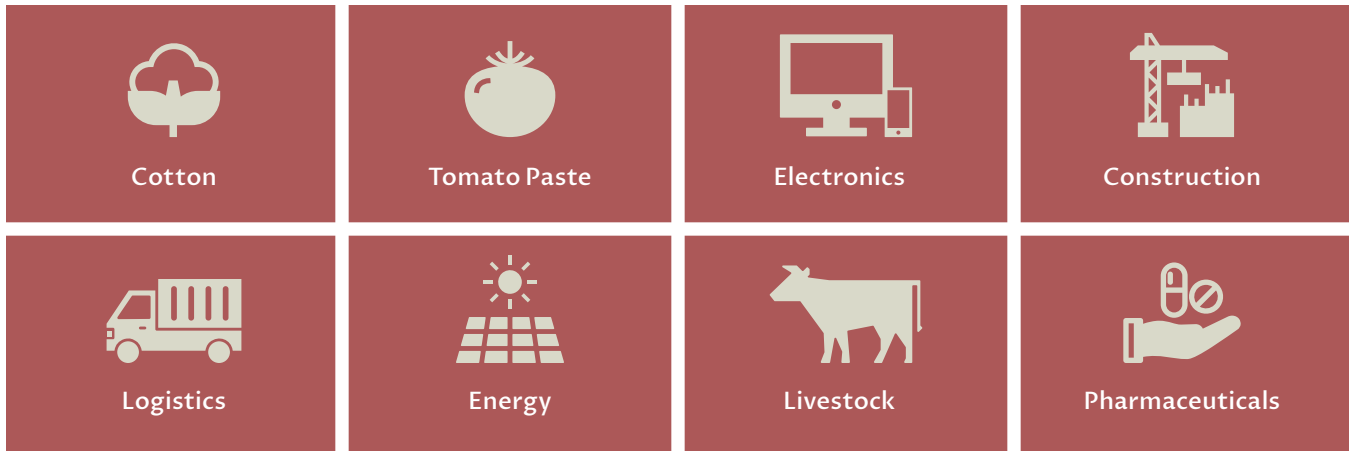
While the XPCC has its own built-in workforce of Han colonizers, the Bingtuan's corporations are heavily involved in its repressive programs targeted at minoritized citizens of the Uyghur Region. The XPCC provides significant incentives for companies to expand into the Uyghur Region, including providing them with laborers through coercive labor transfers, as well as access to prisoners and internment camp victims as workers.

As the products of the Bingtuan traverse borders to reach consumers, the oppressive regime of the XPCC taints supply chains across China and out to the rest of the world.

Table 2. Listed Companies of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

COMPANY	YEAR LISTED	DIVISION/PRIMARY LOCATION	PRIMARY SECTOR(S)
Xinjiang Tianye (新疆天业股份有限公司)	1997	8th Division/Shihezi	chlor-alkali, PVC, chemicals
Xinjiang Tarim (Talimu) Agriculture Development (新疆塔里木农业综合开发股份有限公司)	1999	1st Division/Aral	cotton, dairy, licorice extract
Xinjiang Yilite Industry 新疆伊力特实业股份有限公司	1999	4th Division/Kokodala	liquor
Chalkis (Zhongji) Health Industry 中基健康产业股份有限公司	2000	6th Division/Wujiaqu	tomatoes
Xinjiang Tianrun Dairy 新疆天润乳业股份有限公司	2001	12th Division/Ürümqi	dairy products, livestock
Xinjiang Tianfu Energy 新疆天富能源股份有限公司	2002	8th Division/Shihezi	electric services, hydropower
Xinjiang Guannong Fruit & Antler 新疆冠农果茸股份有限公司	2003	2nd Division/Tiemenguan	tomatoes, cotton, sugar beets, logistics
Xinjiang Qingsong Building Materials and Chemicals Group 新疆青松建材化工(集团)股份有限公司	2003	1st Division/Aksu	cement, construction materials, chemicals
Xinjiang Sayram (Sailimu) Modern Agriculture 新疆赛里木现代农业股份有限公司	2004	5th Division/Shuanghe	cotton, logistics, mining
Xinjiang Tianye Water Saving Irrigation 新疆天业节水灌溉股份有限公司	2006	8th Division/Shihezi	irrigation systems
Tiankang (Tecon) Biological 天康生物股份有限公司	2006	Ürümqi	agriculture, livestock, animal pharmaceutical
Xinjiang Beixin Road and Bridge 新疆北新路桥集团股份有限公司	2009	11th Division/Ürümqi	construction
Xinjiang Western Animal Husbandry 新疆西部牧业有限公司	2010	8th Division/Shihezi	dairy, livestock, feed





## XPCC’s Corporate Empire

This section of the paper will provide a more in-depth examination of some of the industries that the XPCC dominates in the Uyghur Region—tomatoes, cotton, chemicals, and construction—to identify the reach of the Bingtuan as well as the financing that supports it.

**XPCC supply chains are exceedingly difficult to trace (and increasingly so after the U.S. sanctions on the Bingtuan), as Bingtuan subsidiaries tend to ship their products indirectly through other mainland China companies and logistics firms or through Central Asia where shipping records are more difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, there is significant evidence available that its products reach global markets.**

## TOMATOES

### Xinjiang Guannong Fruit & Antler Co., Ltd.

(新疆冠农果茸集团股份有限公司)

Xinjiang Guannong Fruit and Antler Co., Ltd. is an agricultural enterprise focused primarily on the Uyghur Region’s two most significant agricultural products—tomatoes and cotton.<sup>321</sup> The company is wholly owned by several regiments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the XPCC.<sup>322</sup> The company’s cotton mainly grows in Bayingolin, Aksu, and Shawan; the company’s tomato and sugar inputs come from the Yanqi Basin in Xinjiang.<sup>323</sup> Guannong also operates the Guannong Huijin Logistics Park, reportedly “the largest storage and transportation station in the XPCC and southern Xinjiang.”<sup>324</sup> The logistics park ships cotton to Henan and Jiangsu provinces.<sup>325</sup>

Note: A few months after the U.S. Withhold Release Order was leveled against the XPCC, Guannong sold its majori-

ty stake in subsidiary Zhejiang Xinwei Information Technology Company. This is an interesting development that suggests the possibility that the sanctions may have had an effect on the company and led to a change in ownership of one of the Bingtuan’s non-XUAR-based entities.<sup>326</sup>

### Corporate Participation in Repressive Government Programs

Guannong and the 51<sup>st</sup> regiment have engaged in a labor exchange program that transfers workers from the impoverished 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment in Tumshuq to Tiemenguan for work in XPCC-owned factories more than 700 kilometers away from their homes. In August of 2018, Guannong’s Tiemenguan tomato processing factory and its subsidiary Luyuan Sugar Co. participated in an “organized transfer of employment” of forty “relocated surplus laborers.” According to media reports, the company signed an agreement to support the workers, not with the workers themselves, but with the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment.<sup>327</sup>

In July 2020, the government assigned 235 poor seasonal workers to work in Guannong Tomato Company through poverty alleviation labor transfer programs.<sup>328</sup> Then in September, the company worked with the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the XPCC to “consolidate the achievements of poverty alleviation,” and visited 85 poor households.<sup>329</sup> In October, the company announced that it had received 60 more “surplus laborers” to work in its tomato factory.<sup>330</sup> Over the course of the fall of 2020, Guannong subsidiaries received nearly CNY 350 million in government-funded poverty alleviation loans, in part for the company’s participation in these labor transfer schemes.<sup>331</sup>

On October 17, 2020, the company won the “XPCC Poverty Alleviation Award—Organizational Innovation Award.”<sup>332</sup> In its 2020 Annual Report, the company reported that its current poverty alleviation plan was to “resettle” another 50-70 “exported personnel” for seasonal employment.<sup>333</sup>



▲ Figure 31: Gino brand tomato ketchup advertised on the Tianjin Tianwei website. Source: Tianjin Tianwei, [Online](#).

### Supply Chain Risks

Guannong ships its tomatoes to its subsidiary Tianjin Tianwei Food Co (formerly Tianjin Sanhe). According to the company’s own website, Tianwei in turn sells canned tomato paste globally, including to more than 40 countries in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia.<sup>334</sup> Tianwei sells a Xinjiang Guannong” branded tomato sauce that is advertised as using “raw materials [that] are selected from natural tomatoes from Bazhou, Xinjiang, under 16 hours of sunlight, and irrigated with snow water from Tianshan Mountains. Export standard international quality.”<sup>335</sup> The company makes Gino tomato paste, which is popular in West Africa.<sup>336</sup> Some of the company’s tomato products are advertised as Italian, as in the case of Precio Johns brand<sup>337</sup> and Antonio Petti Fu Pasquale S.p.A.<sup>338</sup> According to a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Report, Antonio Petti has indicated that it sources Chinese tomatoes for its African exports but not for those sent to Canada.<sup>339</sup> C4ADS found that Guannong ships tomato paste to Russia’s Grand Star LLC under the brand name Kubanochka, and Grand Star then exports paste on to over 24 countries, including the United States.<sup>340</sup>

### Chalkis Health Industry Co., Ltd. (查尔基斯健康产业有限公司)

Chalkis Health Industry Co., Ltd. is a Uyghur-Region-headquartered agricultural company that is a leading supplier of tomatoes for the world’s tomato paste.<sup>341</sup> The Uyghur Region produces 70% of China’s tomatoes and 90% of its tomato paste for export.<sup>342</sup> Chalkis claims to have China’s second and the world’s third highest production of tomato paste. The company also owns approximately 30 active subsidiaries, in industries from logistics to investing to pharmaceuticals and traditional Chinese medicine.

### Corporate Participation in Repressive Government Programs

Chalkis’ 2018 corporate “Implementation Plan for Strengthening Ideological Work” reveals that the company requires strict ideological commitments from its employees, which includes a rejection of religious piety. In the plan, Chalkis commits to implementing “strict political discipline and political rules,” as well as to “strengthen historical and cultural education, rehabilitate the roots and restore the true colors of history.” Chalkis forbids its employees to practice Islamic traditions, insisting that employees “never wear the burqa, do not grow a big beard, do not wear a veil, do not participate in illegal religious activities, and consciously resist and prevent the erosion of extremist religious ideas.”<sup>343</sup>

According to the Social Responsibility section of the 2018 Annual Report for Chalkis Health Industry Co., Ltd., the company participates in the *fanghuiju* program as part of its ideological work. The goal of the company’s *fanghuiju* team is to “complete the maintenance of social stability and do work well for the masses, do a good job in poverty alleviation, strengthen grassroots organizations, and promote the integration of the corps.”<sup>344</sup> The program involves the transfer of Han employees to assist the *fanghuiju* team in its work.<sup>345</sup> By the end of December 2018, the company had 35 employees paired with Uyghur workers.<sup>346</sup> Typically, “families” such as the ones that Chalkis facilitates are ideological monitoring and surveillance programs through which Han workers visit the families with whom they are paired, to record details about them and to ensure that they are committed to party ideology and are avoiding overt religious piety. The Director of Administration of Chalkis is the captain of the company’s *fanghuiju* team. A 2019 *Bingtuan Daily* article indicated that he visited the homes of Uyghur families to change their minds to encourage them to want to become rich, and thus more willing to leave their farms to take up other work. He transferred the farmers in his regiment to work at the grocery store instead, where they are subjected to ideological training, language courses, and patriotic programming through which they earn points to exchange for items at the store. The article indicates that the captain had to persist to convince farmers to shift away from their chosen work.<sup>347</sup>

Chalkis actively engages in the labor transfer program. In 2017, the 6<sup>th</sup> Division reported that Chalkis’ sauce factory was part of a group of 33 companies that had invested nearly CNY 4 billion in the division’s farms, together transferring 824 people for work in the fields. The 6<sup>th</sup> Division “regards the solving of the employment of surplus labor as one of the conditions for enterprises to settle on the farm.”<sup>348</sup> When companies choose to build in the division’s lands, they are required to take on workers or to

otherwise engage the agricultural farmers in the region. In the Social Responsibility section of the 2018 Annual Report for Chalkis Health Industry Co., Ltd., the company mentions that “the transfer of rural surplus labor during the slack period has been achieved relatively well,”<sup>349</sup> suggesting that Chalkis engages in regular seasonal labor transfers. It is highly likely that Chalkis continues to participate in the labor transfer program to this day because the company is a state-owned enterprise engaged in state programs such as labor transfers and because Chalkis, like other companies, receives incentives from the XPCC government to engage in these programs.<sup>350</sup>

### Supply Chain Risks

Based on its own website, Chalkis’s tomato paste is sold under the brands Sympa, Bonum, Alba, Po’mo, Royal IV and MR2 (sold in Nigeria), Miralinks Super Mama (sold in Nigeria), Sada (sold in West Africa), and Seven Star (sold in UAE and Yemen), among others.<sup>351</sup> Chalkis invested in a joint venture with American tomato paste company Hunt’s in 2006. Hunts Chalkis Co (中基汉斯食品有限公司) remains in operation today, with Hunt’s parent company Conagra holding 50% stake in the company through its Mauritius branch and Chalkis’ subsidiary Tianjin Zhongchen Tomato holding the other 50% (as of 2021, according to SAIC records).<sup>352</sup> A representative from Conagra wrote to the authors that the company does not have any ownership of Chalkis Health, but did not provide further details about the Mauritius subsidiary or about the end of the investment in Chalkis.

## COTTON

The XPCC grows and processes 33% of the cotton from the Uyghur Region.<sup>353</sup> This amounts to more than a quarter of China’s cotton production and about 5% of the world’s cotton. Adrian Zenz has demonstrated that “despite increased mechanization, most of the cotton produced in Xinjiang is still picked by hand.” While the XPCC has managed to mechanize a significant part of its cotton harvest—as much as 97% according to some reports—that does not preclude the continued use of forced labor in some cotton picking, as well as in other aspects of cotton farming, or in the processing, ginning, bailing, and transport of that cotton.<sup>354</sup> Indeed, there is further evidence to show that in the process of mechanizing its cotton industry, the XPCC made Uyghur people more vulnerable to being transferred for labor. Some of them end up working for major corporations on the very land that they used to profit from themselves. Others are transferred to factories or gins that process the cotton or manufacture apparel from it.<sup>355</sup> Furthermore, cotton farms and processing facilities are operated by XPCC prisons that deploy prisoners as laborers, notably in Aral, Fangcaohu, Xinhu and Shihezi.

XPCC cotton moves with the Uyghur Region from farms to gins to warehouses, and then on to mainland China. A review of online cotton wholesale websites allows significant insight into the destinations of XPCC cotton. Figure 30 provides a map of the known sites in mainland China that received cotton from XPCC companies or warehouses between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2022.<sup>356</sup> This only accounts for the movement of XPCC cotton between warehouses or processors that is recorded on online wholesale sites—there is significantly more cotton that is processed and ginned in the XUAR that is unaccounted for in the online wholesaler sites. Even given the limitations on available data, however, it is clear that significant amounts of Xinjiang cotton can be traced moving from the XPCC through inland China before being manufactured into thread, yarn, or fabric. According to the available data, during the six-month period in 2022 when data was collected, the XPCC moved at least 178,000 metric tons of cotton out of the region bound for markets across China through online wholesale sites alone. This was actually a decrease of nearly 33% from the same six month period in 2021, when nearly 265,000 metric tons of cotton was moved through online wholesale sites.<sup>357</sup>

The majority of this traceable XPCC cotton is transported to logistics firms and storage facilities. This makes it difficult to identify where the cotton supply chain continues. However, understanding these routes to the inland markets is vital for companies who wish to exclude Xinjiang cotton produced using forced labor or by the XPCC in general. The top fifteen warehouses, logistics firms, and other companies that have received XPCC cotton in 2022 are listed in Table 3. A list of all warehouses, logistics firms, and other companies that have received XPCC cotton is included in [Online Annex A](#).

Jiangyin Xiefeng Cotton and Linen Co. (江阴市协丰棉麻有限公司) is one of the most significant Chinese importers of XPCC cotton for the last two years. The company sourced over 19,000 metric tons of XPCC-originating cotton in just over a six-month period in 2021. The company stores more than 100,000 tons of cotton in its warehouses in Huaxi Village Industrial Park, a location that, according to the company, is the largest cotton warehouse in the Yangtze River Delta. In that location, XPCC cotton is stored alongside cotton from all other origins and its origin may be obscured in the process. The Huaxi Village warehouse location puts it in proximity to customers in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai.<sup>358</sup> Jiangyin Xiefeng is a subsidiary of the Jiangsu Huaxi Group, the famous “collective village” in Jiangsu Province that became extraordinarily wealthy during Deng Xiaoping’s era due to mass industrialization (but has declined somewhat in recent years).<sup>359</sup> The Huaxi Group of companies exports cotton products to companies all over the world.



Table 3. Top 15 Warehouses, Logistics Firms, and Other Companies Sourcing XPCC Cotton on Online Wholesale Cotton Site, January 2022–June 2022.

WAREHOUSE: CHINESE NAME	WAREHOUSE: MACHINE-TRANSLATED ENGLISH NAME	WEIGHT (METRIC TONS)
河南豫棉物流有限公司	Henan Yumian Logistics Co., Ltd.	21585
江阴市协丰棉麻有限公司	Jiangyin Xiefeng Cotton and Linen Co., Ltd.	19198
山东青州中外运储运有限公司	Shandong Qingzhou Sinotrans Storage & Transportation Co., Ltd.	18289
滨州中纺银泰实业有限公司	Binzhou China Textile Yintai Industrial Co., Ltd.	17442
中棉集团山东物流园有限公司	China Cotton Group Shandong Logistics Park Co., Ltd.	16238
菏泽市棉麻公司巨野棉麻站	Juye Cotton and Linen Station of Heze Cotton and Linen Company	11651
舞钢市中昌物流有限责任公司	Wugang Zhongchang Logistics Co., Ltd.	11353
江苏银隆仓储物流有限公司	Jiangsu Yinlong Warehousing and Logistics Co., Ltd.	5630
福建闽龙仓储有限公司	Fujian Minlong Warehousing Co., Ltd.	3871
湖北储备物资管理局338处	Hubei Reserve Materials Administration Office 338	3513
江阴市联运有限公司	Jiangyin City Union Transport Co., Ltd.	3426
南阳红棉物流有限公司	Nanyang Hongmian Logistics Co., Ltd.	3302
江苏银海农佳乐仓储有限公司	Jiangsu Yinhai Nongjiale Storage Co., Ltd.	3262
菏泽市棉麻经贸开发总公司	Heze Cotton and Linen Economic and Trade Development Corporation	3095
国家粮食和物资储备局河南局四三二处	Department 432, Henan Bureau, State Administration of Grain and Material Reserve	2868

Source: MCotway.com



Figure 32: Map of regions receiving XPCC cotton through online wholesale site January 2022-June 2022. Data source: MCotway.com, Rendered in Google Data Studio.

China Cotton Group’s Shandong logistics park (中棉集团山东物流园有限公司) was also one of the biggest purchasers of Xinjiang cotton during the period data was collected. The center is owned by the China National Cotton Group Corporation, a state-owned enterprise that is the largest cotton logistics and distribution company in China.<sup>360</sup> Many of the sites to which the XPCC cotton is destined are these major regional state-owned cotton reserve warehouses, where cotton is stockpiled and sold on to manufacturers.

One online cotton wholesale site provides some insight into who buys the XPCC cotton. Companies seeking to buy Xinjiang cotton post adverts requesting bids for cotton from the wholesalers in the region. Cotton purchasers in the mainland that made requests of XPCC companies are included in [Online Annex A](#).

Essentially what this reveals is the extent to which XPCC cotton can be circulating within China and the extremely high risk that XPCC (or other XUAR) cotton is being used in the manufacture of apparel and other goods at coastal manufacturing operations. When XPCC cotton moves through these wholesale sites, it is unclear which manufacturers eventually buy the cotton for production of yarn, thread, or fabric. Those who wish to avoid XPCC cotton would need to ensure that their suppliers were not sourcing cotton from any of the companies, warehouses, or logistics firms named in [Annex A](#) or they would need a method for ensuring that any cotton sourced from those sites did not originate in the XUAR, which would be a difficult task.

## CHEMICALS

### Xinjiang Tianye (Group) Co., Ltd. (新疆天业(集团)有限公司)

Xinjiang Tianye Group<sup>361</sup> is a highly diversified XPCC enterprise that is a significant manufacturer of chemicals and also has holdings in companies that specialize in a range of industries, including irrigation, tomato processing, packaging, logistics, technology, and new materials. Xinjiang Tianye Co., Ltd. (新疆天业股份有限公司) is a subsidiary of Tianye Group and one of the Bingtuan’s listed companies. It is China’s second ranked manufacturer of caustic soda and PVC resins. The subsidiary also controls its own diverse holdings. Xinjiang Tianye is the partial owner of another Bingtuan listed company, Xinjiang Tianye Water Saving Irrigation System Co., Ltd. (新疆天业节水灌溉股份有限公司). The company also entered a joint venture in Shihezi with a subsidiary of the China National Chemical Engineering Group to manufacture PBAT, a biodegradable plastic that has recently gained significant popularity.<sup>362</sup>

### Corporate Participation in Repressive Government Programs

Xinjiang Tianye Group has won awards for its “poverty alleviation” efforts.<sup>363</sup> Xinjiang Tianye’s 2018 annual report indicates participation in a wide array of so-called poverty alleviation programs, including labor transfers and vocational training programs. The company reports that it established a subsidiary in Shache Farm and invested CNY 20 million in a factory there that has “absorbed” (吸纳) 100 local workers, which are likely to be Indigenous farmers involved in labor transfers (though the annual report does not make the ethnicity of the workers clear other than by calling the people “local,” which typically refers to Uyghurs).<sup>364</sup> State media has celebrated Tianye’s program of stationing cadres in southern XUAR villages to carry out labor transfers on behalf of the company as part of poverty alleviation programming.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, a state media report in 2020 provides evidence that the company has been the recipient of surplus labor transfers as a “paired poverty alleviation work unit” (对口帮扶单位).<sup>366</sup>

In its 2019 annual report, Tianye also reported that the company is actively engaged in the “Becoming Family” program. The company has stationed its workers in Uyghur villages, where they are assigned families to surveil. The Tianye workers determine plans for the families to alleviate poverty, which included directing them to engage in new agricultural enterprises. The Tianye cadres set up mushroom planting cooperatives, despite the fact that the local people were resistant and were already growing pomegranates and grapes, which are local traditional crops and consumed widely in the region. In yet another village, an agent of Tianye went to a village and prescribed that the villagers must turn to monocrop farming, meeting significant resistance from the farmers, but the Tianye cadre insisted on the implementation of his plan nonetheless, and the villagers were required to comply. He also developed ideological programming for the villagers, to “stimulate farmers’ endogenous motivation for poverty alleviation and establish a correct concept of honor and disgrace.”<sup>367</sup> These programs, which are commended as “poverty alleviation,” are both coercive and, company reports indicate, pay far under the regionally mandated wage. The company’s agents enforce their own programs on Indigenous people without regard for community input, which leads to dangerous mono-crop agriculture in areas that had previously had a diverse agricultural output. Furthermore, the programs represent a systematic effort to eradicate Uyghur cultural traditions and farming techniques and preferences.

In another example, the company set up flour mills in a small southern village in the Uyghur Region, where it employed approximately 25 farmers. While it is unclear to what extent coercion was used to pressure workers in



this situation, it appears that the company is not meeting the minimum wage requirements in the region. Xinjiang Tianye’s annual reports indicate that the company paid 40 rural workers in flour mills and mushroom farming operations a total of CNY 390,000 between March/April and the end of the year, which means that the workers each received no more than CNY 1,083 a month, far below the XUAR-mandated minimum wage of CNY 1,920.<sup>368</sup>

### International Investment

Xinjiang Tianye Group has come under scrutiny due to recent international investments. The 2019 U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Withhold Release Order banned the import of XPCC-made goods and the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the XPCC, prohibiting the “making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit” of the named entity.<sup>369</sup> However, in September of 2021, HSBC’s wholly owned Hong Kong subsidiary bought 20,000 shares of Xinjiang Tianye stock, costing CNY 16.68 million.<sup>370</sup> Upon learning of this investment, the Interparliamentary Alliance on China urged the U.K. and E.U. to develop a blocklist of entities identified as perpetrating atrocities, which would include the XPCC, and thus Tianye.<sup>371</sup> The U.K. government has briefly discussed the ethics of a London-headquartered investment corporation profiting from an investment in such a company, with Sir Iain Duncan Smith formally requesting the government call on the bank to inquire into possible breaches of the U.K.’s laws to prevent modern slavery.<sup>372</sup> HSBC has responded that the investment was for one anonymous client alone.<sup>373</sup>

### Supply Chain Risks

While Tianye sells much of its chemical products domestically (which makes their routes into international markets less traceable), the company also exports internationally. Shipping records suggest that the company predominantly ships caustic soda flakes and PVC resins internationally to Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan, where international intermediary manufacturers produce a variety of end products that the company sells into the global market. It appears that Xinjiang Tianye ceased exporting directly from its XUAR locations (at least to the 19 countries that publish their import records) in September of 2020, which could be a result of the U.S. setting the date upon which customs agents would begin prohibiting imports from the XPCC at the end of that month.<sup>374</sup> It is likely that Tianye continued to ship products internationally but through non-XPCC intermediaries.

A review of 2020 shipments, however, suggest that Tianye’s products have been shipped to many international destinations. For instance, Xinjiang Tianye Group shipped \$457,000 worth of PVC resin to Pioneer Polyleathers in New Delhi India in April of 2020.<sup>375</sup> Pioneer Polyleathers in the following months sent plastic garments, polybags, and PVC foam boards and adhesive vinyl on to Jeewa Plastic Ltd, plastic accessories to Ami Lanka (which ships fruits and vegetables to Saudi Arabia, perhaps in plastic packaging) and PVC banners to advertising company Tradefirst, all companies in Sri Lanka. Interestingly, when Pioneer Polyleathers stopped buying “PVC Resin Suspension Grade SG5” from Tianye, it began sourcing it from Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical Co, Tianye’s biggest rival, but also a company engaged in labor transfers in the Uyghur Region.<sup>376</sup> By April of 2021, however, Pioneer Polyleathers again shifted it sourcing and began buying its PVC SG5 from Texas-headquartered chemical distribution company Tricon Energy, which shipped the product from China, making it impossible to identify the original manufacturer of the PVC through customs data. If the company used Tricon as an intermediary for PVC manufacturers,<sup>377</sup> it suggests that the sanctions on XPCC and other Uyghur Region-made products could be significantly affecting sourcing decisions globally. It still remains likely that Tianye continues to export its goods from the Uyghur Region, but those shipments may be obscured through intermediaries.

Similarly, Indonesian company Mavica Maju Bersama received four shipments totaling 35 million kilograms of PVC Resin SG5 from Tianye between August 2019 and August 2020, but in October 2020, the company began sourcing instead from Sincere Cooperation Material in Zhengzhou. Sree International Indonesia received five shipments of caustic soda flakes from Tianye, totaling 744,000 kg, between April and July 2020, after which point the company sourced from other companies, including Tianye’s competitor, state-owned Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical, briefly. The company now sources its caustic soda flakes largely outside of China. Tianye shipped to many other international manufacturers, none of which received shipments directly from Tianye under its own name after September of 2020.

Because Tianye is still producing PVC and other products, it is highly possible that its products continue to make their way through international value chains. On the one hand, this provides evidence that companies have likely responded to the U.S. W.R.O. by shifting their supply chains, which can be instructive for other governments. On the other hand, it also suggests that increased vigilance in supply chain tracing is necessary to ensure exclusion of XPCC-made products.

## CONSTRUCTION

### Xinjiang Beixin Road And Bridge Co. (新疆北新路桥集团股份有限公司)

Xinjiang Beixin Road and Bridge Company is one of the XPCC’s thirteen listed companies. It is the XUAR’s most significant highway construction firm. The company claims that it enjoys “a certain brand awareness and reputation and has been widely recognized by customers at home and abroad.”<sup>378</sup>

#### Corporate Participation in Repressive Government Programs

Despite the fact that Beixin recruits laborers from across China and also hires laborers in the international locations where it constructs roads, the company has participated in state-sponsored labor transfer programs. For instance, one of its subsidiaries “absorbs” 400–500 surplus laborers each year.<sup>379</sup> In the midst of COVID, Beixin took on transferred laborers from southern Xinjiang, despite the ban on people traveling on public transport and the fact that most people in the country were required to stay home from work due to a lockdown.<sup>380</sup>

#### International Investment

Beixin is in many ways a standard bearer for China’s Belt-and-Road initiative. The company has outposts all across the Uyghur Region, but also has offices in other Chinese provinces as well as in other countries, including Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.<sup>381</sup> In Beixin’s own company profiles, the company often indicates that it has projects in twenty domestic provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) and nine countries in Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.<sup>382</sup> It appears that its work in Africa was largely in Angola, Algeria, and Niger,<sup>383</sup> and that those projects have been completed since they do not appear in recent corporate annual reports. In 2018, however, Xinjiang Beixin International announced that it intended to work on more development projects in Africa that do not seem to have come to fruition.<sup>384</sup> Nonetheless, Beixin has many recently funded international projects in Central Asia that have either been completed in the last few years or are still under construction. (See Table 3.)

Beixin’s international projects have been funded by the China Import Export Bank (EXIMBank), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. The ADB in particular has invested significantly in Beixin, both through contracts and sub-contracts. Indeed, between 2013 and 2018, Xinjiang Beixin was one of ADB’s top five contractors in China.<sup>385</sup> By 2021, when knowledge of the XPCC’s

role in the regime of oppression in the Uyghur Region was widely known, Beixin had fallen out of the top five,<sup>386</sup> but was still being financed by the ADB. Notably, in 2020, through the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Development Investment program, the ADB participated in funding CNY 394 billion for a highway project in Pakistan.<sup>387</sup> Beyond direct contracts, some development investment fund contracts that go to other parties seem to be completed nonetheless by Beixin, according to Beixin’s own corporate reports.

Despite the XPCC’s extensive violation of minoritized citizens’ rights in the Uyghur Region, to such an extent that these warranted sanctions by the U.S. government, the XPCC’s Xinjiang Beixin continues to receive significant contracts from international development finance institutions for projects outside of China’s borders. These institutions are largely funded by Western governments. For instance, the U.S. accounts for 15.5% of the subscribed capital that funds the ADB; Canada 5.2%, Germany 4.3%, France 2.3%, U.K. 2%, and Italy 1.8%.<sup>402</sup>

### XPCC’s Support for Private Corporations

In addition to operating state-owned enterprises (SOEs) within XPCC territory, in the mainland, and even abroad, the Bingtuan divisional governments also provide significant incentives for private companies to operate within its dispersed territories. Since 2010, the XPCC has provided companies with extraordinary benefits and subsidies for moving production to the XUAR. In Tumshuq, those incentives have included the following since 2021 (and are indicative of subsidies in other XPCC divisions):

1. 100,000 yuan for every 30 million in investments not to exceed 2 million
2. Projects spending 30m yuan on equipment will receive a 20% subsidy after 1 year in operation; foreign investors get 25%
3. A rent subsidy to be determined by the development zone
4. Decoration subsidies
5. Newly built or newly purchased factories or dormitories receive 700 yuan per square meter
6. 50% subsidy on raw materials transported into or out of Xinjiang, up to 10 million yuan a year for 3 years
7. A set, subsidized general industrial electricity price of 0.35 yuan/kWh
8. A set, subsidized water supply price of 1.89 yuan/cubic meter, and conventional sewage treatment price of 0.8 yuan/cubic meter

Table 4. Internationally Funded Beixin Projects or Sub-contracts

PROJECT NAME (ENGLISH)	PROJECT NAME (CHINESE)	COUNTRY	STATUS AS OF 2020 ANNUAL REPORT <sup>388</sup>	FUNDER
North-South Highway Construction Project, Eighth Tender	吉尔吉斯斯坦南北第二条公路第 八标段	Kyrgyzstan	in progress as of 2020, likely completed in 2021	EXIMBank China, <sup>389</sup> funded Beixin, but some contracts completed by Beixin seem to have gone to China Road and Bridge <sup>390</sup>
North-South Highway Tunnel Project	吉尔吉斯斯坦南北第二条公里建 设隧道项目	Kyrgyzstan	completed	See above
North-South Highway Construction Project (Sixth Tender)	吉尔吉斯斯坦南北第二条公路建 设项目第六标段项目	Kyrgyzstan	completed	See above
Kyrgyzstan-Central Asia Link Road Project Batken Highway, 56km Project	吉尔吉斯斯坦中亚连接道路项目 巴特肯公路 56 公里项目	Kyrgyzstan	completed	World Bank financed \$42 million of \$52m project <sup>391</sup>
Dushanbe-Kurgan Tube Road Reconstruction Project	塔吉克斯坦杜尚别-库 尔 干 秋 别 道 路 改 建 项 目	Tajikistan	in progress	Asian Development Bank for Phase 1: \$96m <sup>392</sup>
Tosontsengel-Uliastai Highway Project, Mongolia	蒙古陶松青格勒-乌里 亚斯台 方向 114 公里 公路项目	Mongolia	completed	Chinese government loan \$500m (only part of that funding is for road) <sup>393</sup>
Qalbatau-Maykapshagay Tenth Tender Road Reconstruction	哈萨克斯坦新兴卡-麦 第十标 段道路改建 项目	Kazakhstan	completed	unknown funder, contract officially went to China Xinxing Construction Co., but Beixin names the project in its own corporate reporting <sup>394</sup>
Kabul to Jalalabad Highway Project	阿富汗喀布尔至贾拉 拉巴德高 速公路萨巴 里项目	Afghanistan	cancelled	Funded at \$110; ADB one of the funders; “stopped due to security threats” <sup>395</sup>
Kajaki to Gereshk road restoration project	阿富汗查尔安吉至盖雷 什克公 路修复项目	Afghanistan	completed	unknown funder
CW05 Highway Project	柬埔寨CW05项目	Cambodia	completed	ADB funded the government of Cambodia for a major infrastructure project; Beixin won a contract for road construction <sup>396</sup>
Rural Road Improvement Project in Stung Treng Province	柬埔寨上丁省农村道路 改善项目lot6标	Cambodia	under construction	unclear, perhaps same as above <sup>397</sup>
Petaro-Sehwan section of N55 Highway Project (additional two lanes)	巴基斯坦N55公路贝达 罗至塞赫万段新增两车 道项目	Pakistan	under construction	funded by Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Development Investment Programme; ADB funded in part, bidding occurred in 2020 <sup>398</sup>
M-4 Gojra-Shorkot Section ICB-M4-IIA Project	巴基斯坦M-4戈杰拉-绍 尔果德段ICB-M4-IIA 项目	Pakistan	completed	Funded 2015. ADB invested. Gojra to Jamani went to Beixin. Jamanti to Shorkot went to China Railway First Group, but Beixin lists it as its own project. Those two sections together received 115m. <sup>399</sup>
M-4 Shorkot-Khanewal Section ICB-M4-IIIB Project	巴基斯坦M-4绍尔考特- 汗尼瓦尔段ICB-M4-IIIB 项目	Pakistan	completion “pending”	Funded by AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank), ADB, and DFID; with ADB as lead financier, <sup>400</sup> for a total of \$234m. <sup>401</sup>
Reconstruction Project of Provincial Road in Sindh Province, Fourth and Sixth Tenders	巴基斯坦信德省省道 改造道项目四、六标段 项目	Pakistan	completion “pending”	unknown funder

**Update November 2022:** Since the report’s publication, we have been made aware of updates to ADB project closures and additional projects funded by the ADB that were contracted to the XPCC. Those interested should refer to the ADB’s [procurement database](#) as well as ADB’s response in this report’s [corporate responses](#).



9. Discount subsidies for medium- and long-term bank loans and working capital loans up to 40% of the bank’s one-year benchmark loan interest rate, for a period of up to three years, with the annual interest discount not to exceed 5 million yuan
10. **Vocational training subsidies ranging from 400-1,800 yuan per person according to the training type and level; labor-intensive enterprises such as textiles and garments are subsidized at a rate of 2,400 yuan per person**
11. **Fully subsidized social security payments for all newly recruited workers up to three years**
12. A subsidy of up to 1,000 yuan a month for absorbing workers (from “outside of Xinjiang” for up to two years)
13. **A one-time subsidy of up to 5,000 yuan total for “absorbing” local employees (from Tumshuq)**
14. For the successful creation of national 5A and 4A scenic spots within Tumshuq city, a one-time subsidy of 5 million yuan and 1 million yuan respectively
15. For companies that build hotels, up to 5 million RMB in subsidies
16. Up to a 500,000 yuan subsidy for development of new automotive dealerships and service centers
17. A one-time subsidy of up to 100,000 yuan for opening a new auditing or accounting firm.
18. Up to a 5 million yuan subsidy for enterprises recognized as national-level enterprise technology centers and industrial innovation centers
19. A one-time subsidy of 5 million yuan for industrial enterprises publicly listed in China on the Main Board; a one-time subsidy of 1 million yuan to industrial enterprises that are listed on the SME Board, the ChiNext Board [also called the Growth Enterprise Market Board], the STAR Market or an overseas stock market.<sup>403</sup>

These incentives continue to attract thousands of individual businesses in various industries to expand into the Uyghur Region. With the assistance of the Xinjiang Aid city pairing programs described in the previous chapter, massive industrial parks have been built atop farmland and villages as well as in deserts to accommodate the rapid growth of industry. **The sectors that benefit from XPCC largesse are diverse, including green technology, agriculture production and processing, textiles and apparel, wine and beverage, electronics, mining, and many more.**

Companies that locate facilities in an XPCC industrial park are engaged in what is officially termed “poverty alleviation”—surplus labor, labor transfer, and land transfer programs—often by way of the Xinjiang Aid paired cities programs, such as the one Dongguan benefits from. By way of example, we can look at how one large section of Tumshuq was transformed into an industrial zone over the course of about five years and currently plays host to a number of companies engaged in forced labor and other repressive state programs.

## Conclusion

This extensive evidence provides insight into only a small sample of the state-owned enterprises and private companies that benefit from preferential policies of the XPCC and participate in coercive labor transfers and other repressive programs to enhance their competitiveness and gain unfair advantages in global markets. This is just one industrial park, in one division of the Bingtuan. The Bingtuan’s influence and scope of labor transfers to state-owned and private enterprises is so vast and widespread that all companies that operate within the XPCC’s industrial parks and administrative jurisdiction should be considered at very high risk of participating in the Bingtuan’s oppressive programs.

## Case Study: Tumshuq Economic and Technological Development Zone

The Tumshuq Economic and Technological Development Zone (TETDZ) was first conceived in 2010 as a 26.9 square kilometer space in which at least three separate industrial parks would be housed. The Tangwancheng Industrial Park to the north of the Zone was designed to accommodate building materials, mineral processing, machinery manufacturing, and logistics. The Yonganba Industrial Park to the south was meant to house cotton processing and textile and apparel manufacturing (see Case Study of Yonganba in section above on prisons). The Dongcheng Industrial Park was the location for the development of pharmaceuticals and agricultural processing.<sup>404</sup>

In 2011, that vast space was mainly farmland. A handful of factories—likely for processing agricultural harvests—were situated in the midst of the farms. Small local-style houses abutted the factories. The earliest Google Earth satellite imagery from 2006 shows that a small police station or military training site equipped with a shooting range had long been located next to the small village. See Figure 32 for satellite imagery revealing the rapid transformation of the area.

By August 2012, satellite imagery shows that the first of the major factories had been erected and land had been cleared for further development. The other major construction project that emerges in that first year, across the street from the factory, is a detention facility built right in the middle of the new economic and technological development zone. The detention



Figure 33: Tumshuq Economic and Technological Development Zone, 2011, 2021. Source: Google Earth.

facility is identifiable by its high security walls with watchtowers and interior fencing. Across the street to the north of the detention facility, a massive factory complex, also surrounded by security walls and watchtowers, was built at the same time. Over the course of the next five or six years, factories and industrial facilities surrounded the detention camp, and an energy plant is built to power the whole area. A new security facility was built and connected to the internment camp by a tunnel, and the military training site just to the south was expanded and upgraded. By that time, the XUAR and XPCC internment camp system was in full operation and internees were being used as free labor.<sup>405</sup>

The XPCC sought to "create a good investment environment, low business costs, and strong supporting capabilities" in the new economic zone. The Bingtuan offered "nanny-style" services to companies, to ease their settling into the park and ensure the smooth operations of the companies once in Tumshuq. This included helping to facilitate investment finance from inland China and internationally to attract businesses and further investment.<sup>406</sup>

In 2018, Bingtuan media estimated that more than sixty companies had moved into the park, and, using a common euphemism for people conscripted into the labor transfer programs, the report claims that the park could "solve the employment problem" of more than 4,900 people.<sup>407</sup> Indeed, in addition to benefiting from the services that a colonial paramilitary government organization like the XPCC can provide, many of the companies engaged enthusiastically in the XPCC's programs of state-sponsored and coerced labor transfers. Some of those companies and their practices are described below.

**Tumshuq Qianhai Cotton Textile Co.** (图木舒克市前海棉纺织有限责任公司) appears to be one of the first companies to have settled in the Yonganba section of the Development Zone. The XPCC holds a 53% stake in the company,<sup>408</sup> and it exemplifies how companies conduct business with government assistance and promote Bingtuan political and social policies. The Guangdong Aid Xinjiang Working team spent CNY10 million to support the expansion and operation of Qianhai's factory in Tumshuq, which was planned to "solve the transfer of employment for more than 300 ethnic minority people."<sup>409</sup> In March of 2019, Qianhai reported to *Yarkand News* that the company had accepted nearly 10,000 "surplus laborers" from "ethnic minority" groups in southern Xinjiang. This is likely one of the most prolific adopters of the labor trans-

fer programs identified to date. The "company adopts order-based recruitment," by which companies request that villages provide a certain number of workers and negotiate with the local labor agencies to train and transport them to the factory.<sup>410</sup> According to the *Bingtuan Daily*, the 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment has a special agreement regarding labor transfers with Qianhai.<sup>411</sup>

In March of 2021, **Xinjiang Boshi Textile Co.** (新疆博实纺织有限公司), reportedly a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zhejiang Huitai Textile Group (浙江惠泰纺织集团) and one of the most recent companies to enter the Development Zone, settled inside the facility with the security walls and watchtowers in the center of the industrial park described above, if the Baidu map location for the company is correct.<sup>412</sup> (See Figure 13 for closeup images of camp and factory complex at Yonganba.) While it is unclear if the workers are allowed freedom of movement, at least one article indicates that some of the workers do live outside of the factory walls, though that is not necessarily an indication of at will employment.<sup>413</sup>

Xinjiang Tangjin Textile Co. (新疆唐锦纺织有限公司) is a privately-owned sock and hosiery manufacturer that is a subsidiary of the Jiangxi Maohua Group.<sup>414</sup> The company expanded into the Uyghur Region to take advantage of the region's location as part of the "Belt and Road" initiative and of the "abundant cotton resources in southern Xinjiang."<sup>415</sup> In one media report, the company declared that it had moved into Tumshuq because the "abundant cotton resources, low land use costs, labor cost advantages, and multiple superimposed policy advantages of the central government and the Corps make Tumshuq one of the most popular places for investment in the textile industry."<sup>416</sup> The company employs transferred laborers in its factories, which it advertises explicitly in its labor recruitment drives. While the company's administrative and management positions are recruited from the interior of the PRC (outside of the XUAR), and some jobs are allocated to graduates of the Tumshuq Vocational and Technical School, other "auxiliary types of work" (including the manual labor jobs) are relegated to "transfer surplus labor."<sup>417</sup> The company has also created "satellite factories" inside Uyghur people's homes by installing machinery in their domestic living spaces. According to one report, an adult worker put the finishing touches on as many as 1,000 pairs of socks per day. The company reported that it has committed to "solve the employment" of 10,000 people.<sup>418</sup> It plans to set up more than 1,200 workshops in people's homes in the 3rd Division.<sup>419</sup> The socks produced in Tumshuq are likely shipped to



Ningbo before being exported internationally, but the company's ambition is to ship directly to Central Asia and Europe from the XUAR.<sup>420</sup> Tangjin's website suggests that their products are sold globally.<sup>421</sup>

**Chenguang Biotech Co.** (晨光生物科技集团股份有限公司) produces plant-based extracts that are used in the manufacturing of supplements, pigments, additives, and cosmetics. The company located its processing facilities in the Tumshuq Economic and Technological Development Zone, while it sources its raw materials (including marigolds, peppers, tomatoes, cotton seeds, cumin, walnuts, and grape seeds) from across southern Xinjiang. The company has received funding from the International Finance Corporation to expand its raw materials sourcing in the Uyghur Region.<sup>422</sup> The company exports its goods to numerous spice and supplement companies in the U.S. and around the world.<sup>423</sup> CCGB reportedly sources raw agricultural materials from approximately eight thousand small-scale agricultural producers in the Yarkand area alone,<sup>424</sup> but many of them are subject to coercive land/labor transfer programs. In collaboration with Chenguang, the XPCC organizes small-scale farmers to transfer their land to larger cooperatives, run by a very small group of the most prominent farmers in the area, or sometimes Han people, who appear to retain the majority of revenues. SAIC filings have identified "cooperatives" that are 90 percent controlled by a single shareholder.<sup>425</sup> According to an article published by Chenguang Bio promoting its poverty alleviation efforts, in one small town in Yarkand, cadres from the Department of Natural Resources and Xinjiang University arrived in the village, observed the situation, and declared unilaterally that all of the land (with few exceptions) would be dedicated to marigold planting.<sup>426</sup> Often whole villages are dispossessed of their lands and then determined to be "surplus labor," thus rendering them subject to labor transfers, either to Chenguang-designated farms or nearby factories.<sup>427</sup>

Like Chenguang Biotech, **Tumshuq Xindi Biological Technology Co.** (图木舒克市新地生物科技有限公司) is a privately-owned enterprise that has cooperated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division government to transfer land away from Uyghur farmers and into the company's control to turn the land from cotton farms to the production of pigment peppers (often used for food coloring, additives, or cosmetics) for international export. Uyghur people who had previously worked the land for themselves are left landless and unemployed

by Xindi's transfers and are often compelled to either work on the land for Xindi or for the company's pepper processing plant. The public-private partnership is part of the Dongguan Xinjiang Aid Program and is located in the TETDZ.<sup>428</sup>

**Xinjiang Afanshu Biotechnology Co.** (新疆阿蕃叔生物科技有限公司) is another privately-owned company in the TETDZ that is engaging through Dongguan Xinjiang Aid in the company + cooperative + farmer scheme arranged by the XPCC to transfer Uyghur lands to companies.<sup>429</sup> In this case, Dongguan Vehicle Internet of Things Industrial Investment Co., Ltd. invested \$50 million in the development of Afanshu in the Tumshuq industrial park.<sup>430</sup> Like Chenguang and Xindi, Afanshu then converted Uyghurs' lands to the production of peppers through government land transfer programs. The company's "Uncle Afan" brand products were originally sold to a domestic food and sauce company, Lao Ganma, but the company also planned to sell internationally, as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>431</sup>

**Xinjiang Yuetong Industrial Co.** (新疆粤通实业有限公司) was directly approached by representatives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division government agency in charge of placing labor transfers in companies, who recruited the company to accept surplus laborers. The company then signed an agreement with a local vocational school to train the surplus laborers. Those transferred laborers then moved into work at the factory producing data cables, mobile phone and computer accessories, and other small electronics.<sup>432</sup> Yuetong's chairman, Chen Hongyang, was awarded by the XPCC with the "Progress in National Unity Model Individual Award." The description of his work included his efforts to "organize employees of all ethnic groups to study the party's ethnic theory and ethnic policy and educate employees to maintain the unity of the motherland [and] oppose ethnic division." He was praised for his work to "enrich the non-professional time of ethnic minority workers" through the introduction of three days of after-work language training per week and three days of history and culture classes, which includes singing patriotic songs and watching "movies about war against the Japanese and historical documentaries," which "give them a great feeling and let them feel how stable and happy their life is now."<sup>433</sup> This leaves workers with little to no discretionary time, as they are being ideologically trained in the majority of their spare time.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The XPCC is, at once, a branch of government, a corporate empire, and a military. It has been central to the development of some of the most egregious human rights violations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and for that, it has the distinction of being the only government entity that has had *all of its products* banned for import into the United States. The XPCC is a colonial institution, responsible for land expropriation and explicitly dispatched by the top levels of the party-state to act as a military and industrial force to suppress Uyghur dissent. The combination of corporate and military authority means the XPCC holds power over every aspect of life in its administered territories. From the mass human and technological surveillance conducted by the Bingtuan, to the forcible removal and replacement of populations, to the extraordinary restrictions on cultural and religious behaviors, to the expansion of prisons and prison labor, and the development of a network of internment camps most recently, the XPCC is an unavoidable and oppressive political and economic force in the daily lives of minoritized citizens in the Uyghur Region.

The XPCC runs a vast corporate empire that touches on a broad array of sectors, including agriculture (cotton, tomatoes, walnuts, grapes, peppers, etc.), textiles and apparel, electronics, animal husbandry, transportation, logistics, construction, alcohol, and many more. The products that the Bingtuan’s companies produce reach far into global supply chains. Tracing those products is a challenge, because the Bingtuan supplies an uncountable number of private and state-owned companies across China. However, the open-source intelligence data we have at our disposal identifies many products consumed globally that originate with the XPCC and provides insights into how those products move within China and then abroad.

Industrial growth is not in and of itself oppressive for Uyghur and other minoritized people. Throughout the world, farmers choose to move from agriculture to industry, which can enhance social mobility. However, the evidence presented here is clear that the “modernization” and industrialization initiated by the XPCC is conducted coercively under political orders that consider Uyghur and other minoritized people and their cultures to be security threats. Most corporate executives and labor agents in China revert to racist stereotyping to justify “transformation” of the Uyghur people from their “backward” beliefs and “lazy” behaviors for their own good. The threat of internment in camps mediates nearly every life decision made by Uyghur people, including their choices of what to grow, where to work, and whether to relent to government pressure to abandon their lives, land, and families.

When prison bureau agents, cadres, or security personnel visit day after day to implore people to turn their land over to companies or cooperatives or to leave their homes to take a job in a factory, there is no right to refuse. For these reasons, the land and labor transfer programs that the companies described above participate in are in fact forced labor programs.

Practically every company operating out of an XPCC-administered territory participates in these repressive programs in one way or another. They deploy their own employees to conduct door-to-door surveillance and ideological training in Uyghur homes; they coerce people into working in factories and accept sometimes hundreds or even thousands of laborers forcibly conscripted by the state; they accept subsidies for accepting these laborers and win awards for doing their “social responsibility.” Companies in Bingtuan territories—whether owned by the XPCC or operating in XPCC territory—do the work of the state for the state, performing central roles in the repression inflicted on the Uyghurs and other minoritized citizens by the Bingtuan.

For these reasons, it is critical that governments, businesses, and consumers take steps to limit exposure to the XPCC and put pressure on the PRC government to eradicate it and its oppressive control over the Uyghur Region. We recommend the following:

1. The PRC government should eradicate the XPCC, close all extra-judicial internment camps and detention centers, end prison labor, and halt state-sponsored labor transfers, land cooperativization, and ideological training for minorities.
2. The United Nations should investigate crimes against humanity committed by the XPCC and other government entities in the Uyghur Region.
3. Governments around the world should legislate an import ban on all goods grown, processed, or manufactured using forced labor anywhere in the world, allowing for region-wide bans that would accommodate the scope and scale of state-sponsored forced labor as evidenced by the XPCC. Short of a global forced labor import ban, governments can follow the lead of the United States in issuing an import ban on goods grown, processed, or manufactured by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and/or in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

4. Governments should place targeted sanctions on the XPCC's leadership, including former Bingtuan First Political Commissar Chen Quanguo.
5. The XPCC and its corporate subsidiaries should be considered branches of the Chinese government and any trade relations, including inward and outward investments, should be screened and regulated accordingly.
6. To facilitate the tracing of products made through state-sponsored forced labor, governments should amend their customs codes to clarify that customs data is not confidential and should be disclosed publicly, as well as requiring companies that import goods to disclose the name and address of the manufacturer(s) to the relevant Customs Authorities. Governments should share lists of companies in which the XPCC holds a stake in order to expedite regulation and extraction from supply chains.
7. The U.S. Treasury Department should analyze the impacts of sanctions on the XPCC (including corporate compliance, investment withdrawal, etc.) with a view towards providing information regarding effectiveness to other governments
8. Development finance institutions and other investment banks should end all investments in XPCC companies and their subsidiaries. Development finance banks should retract all contracts and sub-contracts in their portfolios that have been awarded to XPCC companies and their subsidiaries.
9. Businesses should end all sourcing from XPCC companies and their subsidiaries, as well as those that source from the XPCC, "pair" with the XPCC, or benefit from XPCC labor transfers, subsidies, or incentives. Companies should direct suppliers and sub-suppliers to exclude all cotton from warehouses and logistics firms that have a history of sourcing, storing, or transporting XPCC cotton (some of which are named in [Annex A](#) of this report).



# ENDNOTES

Note: Most hyperlinks refer to an archived version of the website, in an effort to increase link stability. Videos and PDFs are not archived in full, so any such media referenced in the notes have been uploaded to the report’s website at [Sheffield Hallam University](#).

The research team has requested information from all of the companies discussed in this report. Their responses are included in [Annex B](#) on the report’s website.

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99. Xinjiang Victims Database (XVD) indicates that procurement bids show the prison has workshops attached. The XVD has documented 72 people imprisoned here. “First Division Shahe Prison,” Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#).

100. “Unsu County Xinjian Coal Industry Co., Ltd.,” Kan-zhun, [Online](#); SAIC records accessed via Sayari Graph, [Online](#). The company’s corporate registration indicates

that there are only 1-5 employees working for this company. This may be an indicator that prisoners labor here if prisoners are not registered as workers in the systems that track employee numbers.

101. XVD documented 64 prisoners in this location: "First Division Aral Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#)

102. "Aral City Jiafang Textile Co., Ltd.," *Tianyancha*, [Online](#). Note: The Xinjiang Victim Database identifies court records that confirm the address of the company in the prison.

103. "Aral City Center Prison Pig Farm," *Ai Qi Cha*, [Online](#). The fact that this farm is a registered business suggests that it is a commercial enterprise and not simply serving the needs of the prison. Its official address is the prison.

104. "阿拉尔市鑫强纸箱厂" [Aral Xinjiang Carton Factory], *zhaozhaoqu.com*, n.d., [Online](#)

105. "Qarashehr Yufengyuan Foundry Co., Ltd.," *Kanzhun*, [Online](#). Note the corporate listing only indicates 1-5 people officially registered as working in this factory. Corporate registry also indicates that the company has been "revoked" but not "cancelled."

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107. The Xinjiang Victims Database located court records that indicated that the prison has wig and aluminum foil factories on its premises. See <https://shahit.biz/supp/wenshu/cherchenprisonlabor.pdf>. XVD has documented 121 inmates in this prison. "Second Division Cherchen Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#).

108. A legal transfer bidding document indicated "Xinjiang Fangcaohu Junggar Cotton Industry Co., Ltd. (formerly Fangcaohu Prison Ginning Factory), was founded in 2008 and funded by the Sixth Division Cotton and Linen Company of the Corps, covering an area of 130,300 square meters." See: "Transfer of machinery and equipment and above-ground building of three ginning plants affiliated to the Sixth Division SASAC," Bidding Tender, State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the People's Government of Xinjiang

Uyghur Autonomous Region, n.d., [Online](#). The Xinjiang Victim Database also identified other sources that suggest that the prison compels the inmates to work. The XVD has documented 166 people imprisoned in here. See "Fangcaohu Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#). The U.S. sanctioned Xinjiang Junggar for use of prison labor: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "DHS Cracks Down on Good Produced by China's State-Sponsored Forced Labor," Press Release, September 14, 2020, [Online](#). See also: "Laogai Handbook," The Laogai Research Foundation, 2008, 472, [Online](#).

109. Xinjiang Junggar Cotton and Linen is a large company with many sites, including within the Fangcaohu Prison. "The first batch of the Corps announced the list of ginning factories: 12 in the fifth division and 29 in the sixth division," *Sohu*, September 10, 2020, [Online](#). A recent corporate registry indicates the same address as the above, but calls the site the "former" third prison compound of Fangcaohu Prison; Union Cotton also lists the address as the "former" third compound. It is unclear what led to this change in address, as the prison does seem to continue to function. "Xinjiang Fangcaohu Junggar Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.," *Qichacha*, [Online](#); "Gin Factory: Xinjiang Fangcaohu Junggar Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.," Union Cotton, [Online](#).

110. SAIC via Sayari Graph, [Online](#).

111. Ibid.

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113. SAIC via Sayari Graph, [Online](#).

114. Xinjiang Victim Database researchers identified court records and sentence-reduction records that indicate inmates are compelled to work in the prison. 17 documented victims are listed as being imprisoned here in the XVD, including several who were sentenced after attending a birthday party in 2017. The prison is also only 200 meters west of the Kuytun Bonded Logistics Park. See "Seventh Division Kuytun Prison" Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#).

115. "Kuytun Tianhe Fine Chemical Co., Ltd. Tianhe Chemical Plant," *Tianyancha.com*, [Online](#); "Business license information," Global Trade Center Network, [Online](#).

116. "Kuytun Tianhe Fine Chemical Co., Ltd. Tianhe Chemical Plant," *aiqicha*, [Online](#).

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118. "新疆卓凡服装服饰有限责任公司" [Xinjiang Zhuofan Garment Co., Ltd.], *Qcc.com*, [Online](#). Court records indicate



that Xinjiang Zhuofan recruited workers from the Beiye Prison in 2015–2016, and that other enterprises received prison laborers similarly. Xinjiang Victims Database also reveals a news article about the prison's workshops. The XVD has documented 41 people imprisoned here. The prison identified by XVD is one of several located quite close to one another and also located close to a walled factory complex. See ["Xinjiang Zhuofan Garment Co., Ltd.," qcc.com, [Online](#); "Eighth Division Beiye Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#)].

119. The Xinjiang Victim's Database has an analysis of Zhongjiazhuang Prison's labor, citing the Bingtuan Prison Administration, court verdicts, and an online forum that suggests that the prison is engaged in forced labor, primarily in agriculture and handicrafts. XVD has documented 51 people imprisoned here. "Eighth Division Zhongjiazhuang Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#). See also: "Zhongjiazhuang Prison of the Eighth Agricultural Division of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps," 11467.com, [Online](#).

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121. "Shihezi Xin'an Cotton Processing Factory," Union-Cotton, [Online](#). The address is also sometimes appears as "near the Tuan hospital," but the Xinjiang Victim Data base researchers located legal records that also tie the company to the prison address, and the company is registered to the prison's warden's. XVD lists 47 documented inmates imprisoned in Xin'an Prison, most for religious extremism charges. See "Eighth Division Xin'an Prison," Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#).

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123. Corps Prison Administration, "新疆生产建设兵团监狱工作管理局" [Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Prison Administration], *Bingtuan Prison Administration*, April 28, 2015, [Online](#).

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125. "Aral City Jiafang Textile Co., Ltd.," *Tianyancha*, [Online](#); "Aral City Center Prison Pig Farm," *Ai Qi Cha*, [Online](#).

126. "Aral Xinqiang Carton Factory," *Zhao Zhao Qu*, [Online](#).

127. "Yanqi Yu Fengyuan Foundry Co., Ltd.," *Kan Zhun*, [Online](#).

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Xinjiang Victims Database, [Online](#); U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "DHS cracks down on good produced by China's State-Sponsored forced labor," Press Release, September 14, 2020, [Online](#).

129. "Xinjiang Bingmian Tiansheng Cotton Co.," *Qixin*, [Online](#); note that the XPCC Cotton and Linen Co., Ltd. is the majority owner of this company.

130. SAIC records accessed via Sayari Graph, [Online](#).

131. "Kuitun Tianhe Fine Chemical Co., Ltd. Tianhe," *Global Trade Center China*, [Online](#).

132. SAIC records accessed via Sayari.

133. SAIC records accessed via Sayari.

134. Citizen Power Initiative for China, "Cotton," 4.

135. Note: These prisons are largely not identified in the ASPI dataset.

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