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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0255/2019**

16.4.2019

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on China, notably the situation of religious and ethnic minorities  
(2019/2690(RSP))

**Charles Tannock, Bas Belder, Monica Maçovei, Hans-Olaf Henkel, Arne Gericke, Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, Branislav Škripek, Branislav Škripek**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B8-0255/2019**

**European Parliament resolution on China, notably the situation of religious and ethnic minorities  
(2019/2690(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on China,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2018 on the state of EU-China relations,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2019 on EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU (2018/2155(INI))
- having regard to the 37th round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue held in Brussels on 1-2 April 2019,
- having regard to the EU-China Summit Joint statement of 9 April 2019,
- having regard to the joint communication of 12 March 2019 from the Commission and the HR/VP entitled ‘EU-China – A strategic outlook’ (JOIN(2019) 5),
- having regard to the joint communication of 22 June 2016 from the Commission and the EEAS to Parliament and the Council entitled ‘Elements for a new EU strategy on China’ (JOIN(2016)0030),
- having regard to the EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the EU-China Strategic Partnership launched in 2003,
- having regard to Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of religious belief, and to Article 4 thereof, which upholds the rights of ‘minority nationalities’,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas freedom of religion and conscience in China has reached a new low since the start of the economic reforms and the opening up of China in the late 1970s; whereas religious and ethnic communities have been facing increasing repression; whereas China is home to one of the largest populations of religious prisoners, likely numbering in the tens of thousands and reports exist of torture and killings while in custody;
- B. whereas overall religious groups in China have been swept up in a broader tightening of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control over civil society and an increasingly anti-Western ideological bent under Xi Jinping;
- C. whereas on 1 February 2018 revised Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) came into effect, which further tighten control over religious activities and include vague and undefined references to ‘foreign control’ and ‘national security’, which have the potential to be used to place further restrictions on religious groups.
- D. whereas in September 2018 China issued draft regulations on the management of Internet Religious Information Services, which stipulate that those wishing to disseminate religious teachings and information online must apply for a licence and meet a number of requirements; whereas the draft also contains broadly worded prohibitions against undermining national unity and social stability, attacking the state’s religious policies and regulations, and inciting minors to participate in religious activities;
- E. whereas the revised RRA have been accompanied by an increase in restrictions on both registered and unregistered churches, that are being targeted through the harassment and detention of believers, the demolition of churches and the crackdown on Christian gatherings; whereas nationwide churches were ordered to remove Christian symbols, replacing them by the national flag, propaganda posters with ‘socialist core values’ and Xi’s portraits and to sing patriotic songs, while CCP cells and surveillance devices were set-up in churches; whereas reportedly cases of coerced renouncing of faith occur;
- F. whereas in March 2019, a primary propaganda theme emerging from the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was the need to “persist in the

Party's leadership over religion and persist in advancing the sinicization of our country's religions";

- G. whereas the human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), home to around 10 million ethnic Uyghurs and Kazakhs, has deteriorated rapidly over the past years, especially since the launch in Xinjiang of the 'Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism' in 2014; whereas the Chinese Government's war on terror in XUAR is increasingly turning into a war on religion and ethnicity;
- H. whereas the repressive efforts have been dramatically scaled up since the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Secretary Chen Quanguo assumed leadership in Xinjiang in 2016; whereas credible estimates place the number of detainees, who are or have been detained in political re-education facilities around one million; whereas these re-education facilities are also referred to as 'vocational training centers', 'rehabilitation correction centers' or 'legal system schools';
- I. whereas the detainees are subject to the concept of 'transformation through education' - *jiaoyu zhuanhua* - in the context of de-extremification, subjecting large parts of the Muslim population as well as Christian converts to extensive extrajudicial and political indoctrination procedures for days, months, and even over a year, depending on the risk category and the pace of transformation of the 'focus subjects'; whereas detainees are supposedly taught to distinguish illegal religious activities from 'normal' cultural customs, though reportedly people are often forced to recant any religious beliefs; whereas there have been reports of deaths in the political education camps, raising concerns about physical and psychological abuse, as well as stress from poor conditions, overcrowding, and indefinite confinement;
- J. whereas the Chinese government consistently denies the existence of re-education camps or counter terrorism training centers in Xinjiang;
- K. whereas in recent years the Chinese government has devoted enormous financial, human, and technical resources for social control in Xinjiang to ensure the 'comprehensive supervision' via electronic surveillance, installations of GPS trackers in motor vehicles, use of facial recognition scanners at checkpoints, and a blood-collecting effort by Xinjiang's police to further expand China's DNA database;
- L. whereas the authorities are closely monitoring people's familial and social networks as indicators of their level of political trustworthiness; whereas the government detains people and subjects them to greater levels of controls not only based on their own behaviour or beliefs, but also those of their family members – a form of collective punishment contrary to international human rights law;

- M. whereas reportedly Uyghur university students outside China are being called back in the middle of their semesters abroad; whereas Uyghur expatriates are forced to share personal data, such as ID scans, car license plate numbers, bank card numbers and employment contracts with the Chinese authorities, while being threatened that their relatives in China are penalized if the demands are not followed;
- N. whereas China has invited EU diplomats based in Beijing to visit the Xinjiang region to witness the situation; whereas this would mark the first time in recent years that a group of Western diplomats has been allowed to visit the region;
- O. whereas the situation in Tibet has deteriorated over the past few years, with the Chinese Government curtailing a wide range of human rights under the pretext of security and stability, and engaging in relentless attacks against Tibetan identity and culture; whereas the surveillance and control measures have been on the increase over the past few years as well as arbitrary detentions, acts of torture and ill-treatment; whereas the Chinese Government has created in Tibet an environment in which there are no limits to state authority, a climate of fear is pervasive, and every aspect of public and private life is tightly controlled and regulated;
- P. whereas in Tibet, any acts of non-violent dissent or criticism of state policies with regard to ethnic or religious minorities can be considered as ‘splittist’ and therefore criminalised; whereas access to the Tibet Autonomous Region today is more restricted than ever for foreigners, including EU citizens, particularly for journalists, diplomats and other independent observers, and even more difficult for EU citizens of a Tibetan background; whereas no progress has been made in the resolution of the Tibetan crisis in the last few years as the last round of peace talks took place in 2010; whereas the CCP restricts religious activity also in Tibetan communities outside of the autonomous region;
- Q. whereas China’s human rights record was under formal scrutiny at the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) where the report of China’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was considered; whereas China reportedly made efforts to mute criticism and to present a distorted account of its rights record;
- R. whereas the 37th round of the EU-China The Human Rights Dialogue addressed the issues of the protection of freedom of religion and belief, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and the situation in Xinjiang and Tibet;

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1. Is deeply concerned at the increasingly repressive climate for religious communities in China; denounces the politically motivated detentions, harassment and intimidation of

members of religious communities, the demolitions of houses of worship and the CCP's tightening grip on religion in the country;

2. Calls on the Chinese government to guarantee the rights to freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, assembly, association and culture for people of all ethnicities and religions in the country;
3. Calls on the Chinese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience and religious freedom advocates; urges the Chinese government to treat prisoners humanely and allow them access to family, human rights monitors, lawyers, and adequate medical care from independent health care professionals, and the ability to practice their faith; calls on the authorities to stop all forms of torture and ill-treatment and to impartially investigate allegations and reports of torture and deaths in detention;
4. Is strongly concerned that the main content of the new religious regulations will result in all religions and non-religious ethical associations, whether authorised or unauthorised, being given certain labels by the Chinese Government; calls for the repeal of the Regulations on Religious Affairs, which restrain freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and contribute to the growing intolerance of religious minorities putting individuals at risk; calls on the Chinese Government to allow the many house churches which are willing to register to do so directly with the government's Department of Civil Affairs, so that their rights and interests as social organisations will be protected;
5. Expresses its deepest concern at the system of political re-education camps which has been established in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and at the implementation of the vast range of surveillance measures in the region; is worried at the forced political indoctrination and reported ill-treatment of detainees in the re-education facilities; reminds the Chinese authorities that the re-education facilities have no legal basis;
6. Denounces the intimidation by the Chinese authorities of the Uyghur people living outside XUAR and outside China; calls on the international community to ensure that Uyghurs and individuals belonging to other non-Han Chinese ethnic groups are not forcibly deported to China;
7. Urges the Chinese authorities to immediately close all political re-education camps in Xinjiang and to free those reportedly detained for their beliefs and cultural practices;

8. Expects China to also allow meaningful, unsupervised and unrestricted access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Special Procedures;
9. Considers China's invitation to EU diplomats to visit the region as a positive move, but stresses that the visit would only be meaningful if the diplomats could tour Xinjiang freely, if they have access to a random sample of camps, and if they are able to interview locals without restrictions;
10. Urges China to review its policies in Tibet; calls on China to review and amend the laws, regulations and measures passed in recent years that severely limit the exercise of civil and political rights of Tibetans, including their freedom of expression and their religious freedom; calls on the Chinese government to investigate the ongoing cases of enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment of Tibetans and to respect their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and freedom of religion and belief, in line with international human rights standards; calls for the resumption of a constructive and peaceful dialogue between the Chinese authorities and representatives of the Tibetan people; urges China to give EU diplomats, journalists and citizens unfettered access to Tibet; urges the Chinese authorities to allow independent observers, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to access Tibet;
11. Underlines that the promotion of human rights and the rule of law must be at the core of the EU's engagement with China; stresses the importance for the EU and the international community to robustly act to promote full respect for human rights in the context of its relationship with China;
12. Calls on the EU to closely monitor the situation of religious and ethnic minorities in all relevant meetings with the Chinese counterparts at all levels;
13. Calls on the EU and its member states to take the lead during the next session of the UN Human Rights Council on a resolution establishing a fact-finding mission to Xinjiang;
14. Recommends the Commission to ensure the continuity of the mandate of the Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, and urges the Special Envoy to travel to China to raise awareness on the situation of religious minorities;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the accession and candidate countries, the Government of the People's

Republic of China, the Chinese National People's Congress, the Taiwanese Government and the Taiwanese Legislative Yuan.