



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 30, 2020

China Forcing IUDs, Sterilization, and Abortion on Uighurs

After decades of allowing Uighurs and other minorities to have children while enforcing a one-child policy on its Han Chinese majority, the Chinese government is now trying to drastically reduce, if not eliminate, its minority population in what some experts are calling “demographic genocide,” reports the [Associated Press](#).

Minorities long received special favors from Beijing, including being permitted to have two or even three children per family, but President Xi Jinping started changing the rules in 2014, relaxing the childbearing policy for Han Chinese while cracking down on minorities who flout the law — or even come close to doing so.



“The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands,” explains the AP. “The population control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and as a punishment for failure to comply. Having too many children is a major reason people are sent to detention camps, the AP found, with the parents of three or more ripped away from their families unless they can pay huge fines. Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.”

The AP continues:

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to get an IUD inserted. Two years later, in January 2018, four officials in military camouflage came knocking at her door anyway. They gave Omirzakh, the penniless wife of a detained vegetable trader, three days to pay a \$2,685 fine for having more than two children.

If she didn’t, they warned, she would join her husband and a million other ethnic minorities locked up in internment camps — often for having too many children.

“God bequeaths children on you. To prevent people from having children is wrong,” said Omirzakh, who tears up even now thinking back to that day. “They want to destroy us as a people.”

As a result of the “climate of terror around having children,” birth rates in the western region of Xinjiang, home to many Uighurs, fell 24 percent last year, notes the AP.

“This kind of drop is unprecedented.... There’s a ruthlessness to it,” China scholar Adrian Zenz told the AP. “This is part of a wider control campaign to subjugate the Uighurs.”

“It’s genocide, full stop. It’s not immediate, shocking, mass-killing on the spot type genocide, but it’s slow, painful, creeping genocide,” Joanne Smith Finley of the U.K.’s Newcastle University told the AP. “These are direct means of genetically reducing the Uighur population.”



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The worst of the crackdown began in 2017, when authorities launched investigations to discover parents who had too many children, even if their children were now adults. “Officials and armed police began pounding on doors, looking for kids and pregnant women,” pens the AP. “Minority residents were ordered to attend weekly flag-raising ceremonies, where officials threatened detention if they didn’t register all their children.... Local governments set up or expanded systems to reward those who report illegal births.”

Women who end up in detention camps are often forcibly given IUDs — in Xinjiang, IUD insertions increased 60 percent between 2014 and 2018 — and birth-control shots. Those who are already pregnant are made to undergo abortions. A Chinese-born woman who lives with her husband in Kazakhstan told the AP that when she visited China in 2017, she was found to be pregnant and was forced, under the threat of officials’ detaining her brother, to lie still while “medics inserted an electric vacuum into her womb and sucked her fetus out of her body.”

Authorities have also been sterilizing women in Xinjiang — more than 60,000 in 2018 alone. In one Uighur-majority city, over a third of all married women of childbearing age were sterilized last year.

Omirezakh was fortunate enough to have been able to raise the money to pay her fine. After her husband was released, they fled to Kazakhstan. The IUD she was forced to get now causes her stabbing pain. “For Omirezakh, it’s a bitter reminder of everything she’s lost — and the plight of those she left behind,” writes the AP.

“People there are now terrified of giving birth,” she said. “When I think of the word ‘Xinjiang,’ I can still feel that fear.”

Image of Uighurs in detention camp: screenshot from [YouTube video](#)

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