

**The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP**  
Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London, SW1A 2AH

Sent via email

23 July 2020

**Dear Secretary of State,**

### **Uyghur detention camps in Xinjiang, China**

We are writing to you, on behalf of the BMA (British Medical Association), to express our grave concern about the persistent reports of human rights abuses against the Uyghur people in the Xinjiang province of China. Amnesty International has previously estimated a million or more Uyghurs are being detained in so-called “re-education camps”.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous abuses have been reported within these camps, including torture, both physical and sexual abuse, as well as forced labour.<sup>2</sup> Many of the detainees are forced to undergo political indoctrination and are only released when the authorities are satisfied. Former prisoners have noted that food and sleep deprivation, as well as forced injections, are typical tactics used against the detainees and reports of the deaths of inmates are common.<sup>3</sup> Many Uyghurs, both in China and abroad, have been discouraged from speaking out, fearing retaliation from the Chinese state against either them or their relatives.

The reports of the forced sterilisation of the Uyghur population, the forced insertion of intra-uterine devices,<sup>4</sup> and forced abortions are elements of this abuse that the BMA finds particularly troubling. Not only are these violations of the fundamental human rights of the Uyghur people, but they also suggest medical involvement in the detention centres and control of the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, which could cause both serious physical and mental harm to the detainees.

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International report, February 2020, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2020/02/china-uyghurs-abroad-living-in-fear/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2020/02/china-uyghurs-abroad-living-in-fear/)

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch report, February 2020, [www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/20/more-evidence-chinas-horrific-abuses-xinjiang](http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/20/more-evidence-chinas-horrific-abuses-xinjiang)

<sup>3</sup> CNN report, June 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/19/asia/xinjiang-explainer-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> BBC report, June 2020, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-53220713](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-53220713)

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Listed as a Trade Union under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.



The BMA welcomed your interview with the BBC, on 19 July 2020, where you raised the “gross human rights abuses” committed by the Chinese state against members of its own population. We urge you to continue to highlight this. We note the letter to the High Commissioner of the Human Rights Council in July 2019, co-signed by the British permanent representative, calling on China to respect the freedoms and human rights of the Uyghur people.<sup>5</sup> We would like to add our voice to the call in the submission for an independent review and strongly encourage you to raise this with your Chinese counterpart. It is imperative that UN investigators are allowed to enter the Xinjiang region and assess these detention centres.

We hope you will continue to draw attention to this matter at the highest levels of government and work towards a just solution to this egregious situation.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr John Chisholm CBE**  
Chair, BMA medical ethics committee



**Dr Terry John**  
Chair, BMA international committee



**Professor Raanan Gillon**  
BMA President

cc. Kate White CMG, Director of Asia Pacific, Foreign & Commonwealth Office

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<sup>5</sup> Letter to HRC High Commissioner, July 2019,  
[www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/190708\\_joint\\_statement\\_xinjiang.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/190708_joint_statement_xinjiang.pdf)