

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 23, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Acting Secretary Wolf:

We write to urge greater U.S. government action to assist Uyghurs at heightened risk from persecution by the government of China. We call on you to begin expedited consideration of visa applications to enter the United States, Priority One (P-1) refugee referrals for Uyghurs abroad along with raising overall refugee limitations, and actions to protect Uyghurs already in the United States. We believe these actions are urgently necessary because of both the humanitarian challenges facing Uyghurs and the foreign policy implications of assisting them in the face of Beijing's relentless crackdown.

As the United States commemorates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations, we must consider the lessons of history when U.S. policymakers failed to do everything in their power to assist refugees and those facing persecution, state oppression, and concentration camps. Recent reports indicate that the Chinese government has constructed or expanded at least 60 detention facilities in Xinjiang in the past year. More than one million Uyghurs are believed to be held in such facilities, characterized by many as concentration camps. The Chinese government is accused of torturing Uyghurs, implementing forced sterilization and forced abortions by Uyghur women, and destroying the unique culture of the Uyghurs, including by demolishing mosques and compelling denunciations of Islam. Moreover, the Chinese government has confiscated the passports of most Uyghurs, making it nearly impossible for them to leave China. Beijing also uses extensive surveillance technology to track Uyghurs in China and reportedly to harass and intimidate Uyghurs living outside of China.

There is a backlog of approximately 3.6 million visa applicants waiting to enter the United States. Wait times for certain visas are between five and 18 years. In response, and in light of the ongoing state persecution of the Uyghurs, we urge you to consider expedited consideration of applications for both family, educational, and employment-based visas for those deemed at risk of coercive population control, forced labor, arbitrary detention in internment camps, torture, physical and sexual abuse, mass surveillance, family separation, and repression of cultural and religious expression around the world.

We also ask you to consider aggressive use of P-1 status to prioritize refugee referrals for Uyghurs, while encouraging efforts to raise the presidential determination for refugee admittance. Under P-1, American diplomats can identify those in need and directly recommend

them to U.S. refugee authorities without a referral from the United Nations. Prioritizing and accelerating embassy refugee referrals would benefit numerous Uyghurs located in southeast Asia, central Asia, and Turkey who are at heightened risk of Chinese persecution. This effort should be done in conjunction with lifting the annual cap on total refugees admitted into the United States, so other at-risk groups are not inadvertently delayed or de-prioritized.

Finally, we ask you to assist Uyghurs already in the United States. We urge you to protect Uyghurs through both Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) and humanitarian parole to ensure they remain in the United States and safe from Chinese persecution.

In your conversations with foreign officials, we call on you to encourage other governments to prioritize similar relief and assistance to Uyghur populations. These forms of assistance to Uyghurs would represent a continuation of the best traditions of U.S. foreign policy and humanitarianism and uphold America's image as a beacon of refuge, hope, and liberty to millions worldwide. We stand ready to work with you to support efforts to safeguard the basic human rights of Uyghurs both in China and around the world.

Sincerely,

Ted Deutch  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Joe Wilson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Andy Levin  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Brian Fitzpatrick  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jan Schakowsky  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jim Costa  
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Thomas R. Suozzi  
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Donna Shalala  
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Steve Cohen  
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Gerald E. Connolly  
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Ro Khanna  
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David Trone  
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