

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P): PROJECT BEAUTY AND THE QUEST FOR GENDER SECURITY OF CHINESE UYGHUR IN XINJIANG

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the normative force of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and to seek whether the neglect of R2P is indicative of large-scale human rights violations as displayed against the Uyghur women in Xinjiang. While discourse on minority prosecution has been on the spotlights for quite some decades, gender-based violence towards Uyghur women has been lacking addresses in international research and policy responses. The Government of China's continual negligence and 'perceived immunity' from international sanction had 'side-lined' the deliberation of various human-rights norms, including and particularly, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). To address the omission, this paper operationalized a qualitative method based on the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the theory of gender security in the context of Uyghur women as stipulated in the 'Project Beauty' initiative. The result shows that there has been a 'pre-emptive' lack of deliberation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) owing to the Chinese government persistent refusal to discourse relative to the gender-based violence in Xinjiang resulting in various forms of structural deconstruction of identity and existence as a consequence of the state-led 'Project Beauty' initiative.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi kekuatan normatif dari Responsibility to Protect (R2P) dan untuk menyelidiki apakah pengabaian R2P merupakan indikasi pelanggaran hak asasi manusia berskala besar seperti yang ditampilkan terhadap perempuan Uighur di Xinjiang. Sementara isu mengenai persekusi minoritas telah menjadi sorotan selama beberapa dekade, kekerasan berbasis gender terhadap perempuan Uighur kurang mendapat tanggapan dalam penelitian dan kebijakan internasional. Kelalaian Pemerintah China dan kekebalannya dari sanksi internasional telah mengesampingkan berbagai deliberasi dari norma hak asasi manusia, termasuk dan khususnya, Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Untuk merespon kelalaian tersebut, penelitian ini mengoperasionalkan metode kualitatif berdasarkan konsep Responsibility to Protect (R2P) dan teori keamanan gender dalam konteks perempuan Uighur sebagaimana ditampilkan dalam inisiatif 'Project Beauty'. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa telah terjadi pencegahan struktural terhadap deliberasi R2P yang disebabkan oleh penolakan pemerintah China yang konsisten terhadap wacana kekerasan berbasis gender di Xinjiang yang mengakibatkan berbagai bentuk dekonstruksi struktural identitas dan eksistensi yang dialami oleh perempuan Uighur sebagai konsekuensi dari inisiatif 'Project Beauty' yang dipimpin negara.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of People's Republic of China has been in the international radar for subjecting over 13 million ethnic Uyghurs and other Turkish Muslims to arbitrary oppressive monitoring and mass imprisonment in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) under the shadow of '*Strike Hard against Violent Terrorism Campaign*' (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Although tensions in Xinjiang have existed for decades, there has been a significant policy shift since 2016 when Communist Party Secretary Chen Quango took over the region (Kenderdine, 2021). Various sources reported that those inside the camp were structurally targeted to various forms of forced political indoctrination and religious persecution where houses of worships were demolished immediately once built. Moreover, each form of religious manifestation, from wearing a veil to refusing to eat pork, were looked at with suspicion (Nagib & Anam, 2021). Consequently, a multitude of monitoring tools has been developed by the Government to track Uyghur movements and activities

in order to assess the 'threat level' caused by the population (Wang et al., 2018).

This political gesture is only a tiny element of a grand monitoring system that is designed to constantly track Uyghur's livelihood and their movements. Furthermore, thousands of police stations have sprouted up around the province, and various means of communication with family members outside of China has been shut down (Apps, 2019). Adding the complication, in 2018, the government expanded the initiative that allows Communist Party cadres to spend five days in Uyghur family homes every two months to indoctrinate the Uyghur camps about national unity. Throughout their presence, the cadres perform various tasks including performing comprehensive background checks over their family roots, household, migrant status, political beliefs, and religion (Human Rights Watch, 2018). These implied that the Government of China has enacted various 'preventive' and 'proactive' measures for socially and politically excluding the Uyghur society from one of the country's official ethnicities that allows them to

be received various forms of discriminations hence forcibly allowing them to opt to flee internally and abroad.

Owing to the above premises, this article sees that the Chinese authorities made a concerted effort to forcefully reduce Uyghur birth rates and take their children from their care. As per Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, an estimated 250,000 children under the age of 15 have lost at least one parent due to imprisonment in XUAR, with many more placed in government orphanages or boarding schools (GlobalR2P, 2021). Furthermore, according to Leta Hong Fincher, a gender studies specialist, in her newest book, the government has given incentives for Uyghur couples to have fewer children and for Uyghur women to marry outside their ethnicity (Marcus, 2021). While this is by no means a policy against human rights and gender security, incentivising mixed-married in a targeted population is a repercussion of a highly political agenda-setting aimed at objecting women to de-securitize a community, by allowing them to assimilate with the

outsiders with the intention to cut their existence.

A preliminary inquiry was conducted on eyewitnesses from several camps. This is owing to China's consistent rejection of various external attempts to undertake an independent investigation into what happened in Xinjiang. Based on this precondition, the United States emerged as one of the big powers opting for this (Press, 2021). Consequently, The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act was passed by the Senate with anonymous support, having the current administration imposed various sanctions on major US-based Chinese conglomerates. Unfortunately, the bill is not completely representative to the real context of the conflict, as it leaves critical human rights issues such as rape, forced sterilisation, or sexual harassment completely unaddressed (Peters & King, 2018). Consequently, even if the sanctions are in effect, China's gender policy would still remain in place. In addition to demanding the Chinese government to shut down indoctrination camp, a deterring and timely diplomatic pressure is essential to be launched collectively by parties of concern in full

force to reduce mistreatment to the Uyghur society particularly their women.

Based on the existing international customary law, systematic persecution of Uyghurs and other ethnic groups on the basis of religion, culture, ethnicity, and gender as a result of the massively organized detention program, torture of detainees, forced sterilization, sexual violence, and denial of information about the fate of people in state custody are all crimes against humanity (Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2020). Nevertheless, while the international justice system is still 'handicapped' against China, it implies the increasing tension is evidently protracted, and the international pressure remains critical to hold the responsible authorities into account.

Building from this preliminary investigation, this article aims to explicate the interplay between the political motives of the Chinese government's persecution towards Uyghur Muslims in general, whilst drawing a gender-based violations narrative through the establishment of 'Project Beauty' as a form its oppressive repercussion. The idea

foresaw enormous amounts of religious rights being violated, as well as sterilization and forced relocation for the Uyghur society. As a result, this article attempts to elucidate the effects of Project Beauty to the civilization utilizing different literatures on gender security and international human rights mechanisms specifically the Responsibility to Protect to answer to what extent the oppression towards the minority constitutes crimes against humanity and how the UN should address its deliberation in times to come.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Security

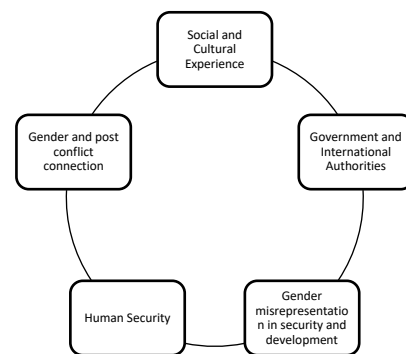
Gender security asserts that gender is an important factor to consider while studying international politics. Furthermore, gender is critical in any debate of security and development since women are affected differently than males in war, conflict, and poverty. It also demonstrates how gender systems are intertwined with other 'differences,' and how they are contextually unique. Gender is not purely biologically determined but is

constructed socially and culturally through meaning-making processes such as language. That being said, gender-based security issues are frequently closely connected to other threats (Moynan, 2013). In response to these gender challenges, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in 2000. The resolution focuses on women's rights in post-conflict cultures and encourages their engagement in restoration and settlement efforts (United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 2000). The document is a critical historical legacy within the international relation systems that signifies the status of women as vulnerable groups of society as well as recognizing their role universally in the post-conflict scene. Therefore, a systematic and universal gender-based intervention was infused within the UN system as a universally celebrated evident-based approach to address the gender-based violence (GBV).

Marsha Henry, a gender security expert, indicated that gender identities are influenced by a range of characteristics such as race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, disability, and citizenship.

Understanding the political functioning of gender in connection to security and development is critical for developing innovative ways to policymaking and practice (Henry, 2007). There are at least five key elements that embody evidence-based policing in gender security:

Figure 1. Political Elements of Gender Security



Source: Marsha Henry, 2017

Based on the above figure, to better understand the connection to gender-based approach to international security, the following features must be taken into consideration. First, the distinct social and cultural constraints of development, as well as the various ways in which men and women interpret and perceive security in general. Second, the experiences of men of the third world countries in the violent scene and how governments and international authorities perceive

them. Third, how masculinity is entangled with security and development ideals. Fourth, the fulfilment of human security, where substantial social and economic conditions must be strengthened. Finally, interconnections between gender and post-conflict resettlement as well as development agenda in connection to it (Henry, 2007).

Based on these theoretical backdrops, this paper examines several areas where a feminist worldview may contribute to dialogue and a deeper knowledge of the world affairs, with a focus on international security. Moreover, this paper will discuss how a feminist interpretation of security that includes gender can reveal inconvenient truths about the world we live in, how the 'myth of protection' is a complete fabrication used to justify violence, and how rhetoric in international politics is built on paradoxes and how their reinterpretation can benefit humanity. Each of these aspects will be addressed and demonstrated within the case of Project Beauty as state-enabled structural violence against Uyghur women as discussed in this paper.

Responsibility to Protect

As tension between the community and authority grows uncontrolled and violence rate skyrocketed, international attention needs to be concretized more than ever. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has always been a critical benchmark to policing crime against humanity as well as an instrumental tool to contextualize international pressure to governments not held accountable for enabling structural violation to human rights.

The Responsibility to Protect, or R2P as it is frequently abbreviated, attempts to guarantee that the international community would never slip to act in the face of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity (GCFRP, 2013). The R2P is the legal document that ties the moral obligations of states and the international community to safeguard humanity through collective actions. It was anonymously adopted in the 2005 UN World Summit, the then-largest gathering of head of states in the history of the UN (Simonovic, 2005).

As stipulated in the document, the function of R2P is strictly limited to only four types of mass atrocity crimes:

genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and war against humanity. These categories have been precisely defined in several documents, including within the foundational principle of International Criminal Court's (ICC). R2P does not apply to other significant hazards to human security, such as climate change, diseases, or many harmful and destructive national policies (GCFRP, 2013).

The premise at the heart of the R2P standard is that nations, with the assistance of the international community, must work to avoid mass atrocity crimes. The key notion is that concerned outsiders should assist nations in preventing these heinous violations using "diplomatic, humanitarian, and other peaceful methods", as defined by the UN resolution (Simonovic, 2005). This involves boosting state capacity through development assistance, rule-of-law reform, and the establishment of inclusive political institutions, as well as active mediation when conflict becomes imminent.

As the foundational *modus operandi*, the UN Secretary General issued a document entitled '*Implementing the Responsibility to*

Protect' elucidating the three pillars strategy for the universal implementation of R2P as follows:

Figure 2: Three Strategic Pillars of R2P



Source: Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

It is arguably evident that each condition as described in the above three pillars fulfill every indicator of gender-based violence in China. This has heavily emphasized the systematic failure to interject domestic atrocities as a consequence of discriminative community-specific policy. The urgency is central for the conflict to be examined internationally under the international norms embodied in various international laws to ensure the safety and protection of the subjected minority under the guise of international mechanism of human rights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Conceptually, qualitative research method is an approach opted to investigate and comprehend the significance of the beliefs and norms that certain individuals or groups derives from social or human problems. The conclusion of a qualitative study has a more flexible structure or framework than that of quantitative. It is also a method that gathers and evaluates, non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio) in order to better comprehend the concepts, views, or experiences of a group or individual as a research object. This method is operationalized to get in-depth insights into a topic or to develop new research ideas (Bhandari, 2020).

This research is carried out qualitatively in full swing using discourse and descriptive analyses of various government archives, academic literatures and various forms of external sources such as think tank reports and media reports available on internet. That being said, the approach is inductive, focuses on individual interpretation of a phenomena to communicate the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2013).

This research is exploratory, elucidating the 'how' and 'why' aspects within the research question through a comprehensive explanation. As such, the study analysed why the Government of China uses the 'Project Beauty' initiative as a form of indoctrination to neutralize cessation and, to a larger extent, legalize mass prosecution towards the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang. Furthermore, it also discusses how specific international human rights norms within R2P operate in the context of gender-based human rights violations as experienced by the Uyghur civilization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Project Beauty: The Myth of Protection or Minority Persecution?

Arguably, 'The Myth of Protection' might be the most dangerous yet surprisingly most effective indoctrination to sustain the public discourse about the inferiority of women as a weaker gender into eternity. It narrates about the falsification of women's consequential dependence towards men's counterparts, including their society leaders and governments, in which

allows them to be violated their rights and involuntarily be surrendered of their destiny (Moylan, 2013). Tickner and Sjoberg pointed out an intriguing fact about the dangerous belief of wars and conflicts fought for women, children, and elderly people as a gesture to points the 'protector' and 'protected' that created social and economic division permanently (Tickner, 2011). Similarly to the context of Rohingya women, as the perceived weaker gender, the myth delimits women's contribution to a conflict resolution through motherly narratives such as child-bearing, support to husbands and sons, leaving them unremunerated, underappreciated, and hence unrecognized (Alchatib, 2019).

As a gesture to prove nationality to the country, the Government of China urges that Uyghurs should first become Chinese and later Muslims. Consequently, Xinjiang has severe worship restrictions, anybody under the age of 18 is not permitted to visit the mosque. According to various sources, the Xinjiang authorities emphasized that Uyghur youngsters to attend school rather than mosques as a consequence of the misleading doctrine

of jihad (Attwood, 2010). Therefore, the government initiated the 'Project Beauty', a community-specific regulation or policy in which only Uyghur parents are permitted to grow beards, while Uyghur women in general are not permitted to wear veils. Moreover, in an attempt to advance security, the 'Project Beauty' initiative came with the idea of discouraging women from hiding their faces during religious rites as the largest ethnic minority in China's Xinjiang province.

According to Shan Wei, a political scientist at the National University of Singapore, the Chinese government's causal process is that Islamic fundamentalists seek independence, or separatism, which is why they place very stringent restrictions on Uyghur religious activities. The regulation prohibiting them from hiding their faces or, to a lesser extent, their hair was not made public (Shan & Chen, 2009). 'Project Beauty' did not specify the veil ban, but instead promoted local beauty products and other merchandise, as well as encouraging women to become 'modern cultural practitioners' by abandoning their hijab (China File, 2015). Some Uyghurs agree with the

authorities' precautions, claiming that thieves or jihadists can use clothing to conceal their intents and identities. Nevertheless, some claimed that the authorities' harsh actions incited hatred and violence, including as the April attacks by Uyghur on police in the Maralbishi district near Kashgar, which killed 21 people (UNPO, 2013). As similarly portrayed in various gender-based cases, including those of the Rohingya women, these gestures are highly political and refers to an attempt for structural elimination of a society and the cultural legacies embodied within them (Alchatib, 2021).

Based on the contexts above, it is arguably evident that the myth of protection as empirically contextualized in 'Project Beauty' phenomena perpetuates all the five fundamental elements by simultaneously keeping women deprived of their full right of self-determination, controlling their social consciousness, forcefully modifying their behaviour and public display, separating them from each other in public and private sphere, and socially punishing them for their apparent lack of contribution that negatively judged

their presence, which, eventually left them publicly vulnerable.

Gender-Based Violence Revisited: Impacts and Consequences

Beauty Standard Modification

The massive dissemination of 'Project Beauty' tells the whole story about the endeavour of the Chinese government to structurally deconstruct the traditional beauty values upheld surrounding the community of Uyghur women (UNPO, 2013). Evidently, policing the 'Project Beauty' is a clear idea of stripping the Uyghur Muslim women of their core identity as the campaign forcefully encourage the Uyghur women to showcase their 'beautiful features' as similarly to those of non-Muslim Chinese. It also declares the danger of hijab as the 'feature of a terrorist', thus removing their coverings (*hijab*) is an essential requisite of communal identification thus hindering the notion of 'otherness' within the Chinese society in general. The premise is steadfast having the Chinese police authorities within the East Turkestan area involved directly in monitoring this policy (Traywick, 2013).

Therefore, it is arguably evident that the grand monitoring system is part of a larger goal of converting Uyghur women into a 'neutralized entity' with the expectation that by modifying the ideals of the women's beauty appearance, the Uyghur women would begin to think and to present themselves differently in public space. This is counterproductive to the growing ideals of multiculturalism internalized within the UN community as forcefully changing the fundamental ways of thinking and appearing in public is a public hegemony and a clear violation of human rights.

Religious Marginalization

As emphasized in the previous sub-chapter, Uyghur Muslims in China's western Xinjiang province have been agitated and socially excluded by the attempts of Chinese authorities to prohibit native Uyghur women from wearing headscarves and men from growing beards. It is followed by various reports of them being detained, interrogated, and often listed in the police case files as the consequences of doing so (Nagib & Anam, 2021). Nevertheless, there is a far more fundamental issue looming beyond all of these obvious physical

contrasts. Beijing is concerned that activists from the extremist East Turkestan Islamic Movement are attempting to form an independent state in Xinjiang (Giglio, 2004). It is therefore evident, that by enacting this community-specific policy, the Chinese Government opted to eliminate the separatist sentiment within the society by outlawing Islamic attire and lifestyle. Thus, in this sense, 'Project Beauty' reflects a gesture of a larger political agenda to debunk a targeted group from within.

Against this strongly manufactured premise, this article argues that the intertwining discourses on terrorization and religious marginalization is highly counterproductive to R2P, as it leaves the public discourse blurred as to whether the international community should be more attentive to the 'feasible' marginalization or the campaign against terrorism. This will, in turn, distract the navigation of humanitarian agencies and human rights operations in the long run. Thus, a concerted UN-led resolution is critical to draw on the correct picture as well as navigating the way the crisis should be responded.

Sterilization

Although international law acknowledges the nature of gender-based violence, international communities paid little attention to the Government of China's campaign against Uyghurs. Subsequently, misinformation sprouted out, leading to the misrepresentation of women-specific concern in security scene as it silenced a broader and more strategic human rights investigation in the state of Xinjiang. Thus, R2P is inevitably side-lined, owing to the absence of international urgency to look at the gender side of the conflict.

As various sources reported, around a quarter of the total 1.5 million Uyghurs and other Turkish Muslims being detained in Xinjiang detention camps are women (Buckley, 2018). This reflects that the Government of China has a complete awareness of their gender-specific policy and hence policing 'Project Beauty' is a conscious choice made to dilute the Uyghur civilization and eliminate their religious legacies by targeting their women.

Furthermore, various whistle-blowers unveiled specific incidents where women in the Xinjiang camp

were being forced to undergo a behind-the-scenes treatment that interrupted their menstrual cycle. As reported by International Service for Human Rights, an Uyghur survivor, Gulbahar Jelilova testified before the press that female detainees were injected monthly with drugs that interrupted their cycles (International Service for Human Rights, 2021). Furthermore, initial investigation perpetuates this as the intended Government's method to curb the Uyghur population and purportedly aimed at achieving near-zero population growth through a mix of sterilization and long-term birth control strategies (Reinsberg, 2020).

While this is a clear indication of the absence of gender security, R2P remain essential to mechanize international pressures. As it is too consequential to human rights in the future, failures to abolish these abuses and seek justice for the population control efforts may have contributed to the continuation of other forms of involuntary sterilization including forced abortion and force adoption that would cut fraternities and family roots. This also constitute crimes against humanity as it abolishes a community

from existence through a concerted state-led effort.

Forced Migration

The Chinese government has been enforcing the One China Policy by continuing to increase prejudice against Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Moreover, the Chinese government's comprehensive civic education program has not succeeded in assimilating Uyghur Muslims into mainstream Chinese culture (Maizland, 2021). Uyghur Muslims, on the other hand, actively opposed the Chinese government's immigration policy, which drove the majority of Han Chinese out of Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang (SCMP, 2015).

Following the issue of forced migration, international suspicion grew into the perceived act of genocide or ethnic cleansing committed by the Government of China which has led to the gradual exodus of Uyghur Muslims from the state of Xinjiang (Utami & Saleh, 2018). While this is a clear violation towards R2P for failing to guarantee citizen's security, it directly pledges betrayal to the refugee statute to which China is a signatory (UNHCR, 2017). As the victims of state-enabled forced migration, the

Uyghur Muslim is entitled with the rights of state protection as set out by the UNHCR regarding the principle of *Non-Refoulement* whereas countries of signatories must base all forms of displacement on voluntary consent of the subjected individual (Alchatib, 2021).

Economic Dilemma

In contrast to the government's initial pursuit of ethnic elimination, the Urumqi riot, an incident that occurred as a result of the Chinese government's repressive approach, was a bitter historical pill to swallow up until today, representing the complete picture of Beijing's dilemma of economic decline as a result of waging and prolonging conflict in Xinjiang (Wong, 2009). While the Chinese government has made significant investments in Xinjiang in recent decades to improve the economic well-being of minorities, it has been unable to close the income gap between ethnic groups (Shan & Chen, 2009). As a result, forced migration targeting women must come at a hefty price. Thus, it is clearer than ever that state-led gender-based violence, as depicted in this case, is more of a 'ticking time bomb' to China's socioeconomic development

than a strategic policy to remunerate the Beijing's economic growth.

Navigating International Response: China vs Human Rights Agencies

China's Position

Throughout the conflict deliberation, worldwide press coverage on violence perpetrated against Uyghur Muslims was centred on political indoctrination camps. Although the Chinese government has not publicly disclosed the number of detainees in this concentration camp, it is speculated that there are around 1 million individuals in these camps (Millward & Peterson, 2020). The Chinese government's persecution against Uyghur Muslims, and more specifically, given the significant number of victims in the Urumqi riot, has elicited and channelled various narratives of condemnation from the international community (Shan & Chen, 2009).

Furthermore, Turkey shares a cultural connection with the Uyghurs, and civil protests cropped up in Ankara and Istanbul. Having delivered a clear diplomatic message, Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan

blatantly endorsed anti-Chinese rallies organized in front of the Chinese Embassy in Ankara to oppose the state-led ethnic cleansing (Furtun, 2010). Thus, as Turkey rounding up international pressure, exposure to the conflict became more viable, and demands for a more strategic UN-led response is inevitably came into force.

At a meeting held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, various countries of concern and global human rights agencies have demanded China to end discrimination and systematic prosecution against Uyghur Muslims through a US-led joint statement (U.S. Mission to the United Nations, 2020). China contended the reports and ignored pressure, arguing that it has an excellent track record of enforcing human rights, which has risen over the last 40 years. The Chinese government has consistently disputed the allegation of human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, where they were detained in 'special facilities' (Cumming-Bruce, 2018). In full contrast, the Government of China believes that Uyghurs are not ordinary citizens, that the detention is a part of the state's awareness to provide them

with a ‘civic education’ (Besheer, 2021). Conclusively enough, the Government’s insistence represents a clear indication that it has no intention to redeem its actions but rather to signal a consistent ‘push back’ at the UN.

UN Response

As R2P grows into a more concerted and globally proliferated international norms in sanctioning crimes against humanity, tension continue to heat at the various UN meetings including in the recent events (UN, 2021). The highlight of the latest General Assembly was a showdown of great power politics as the US, the UK, Germany involved in a diplomatic clash with China owing to the accusation of Beijing-led genocide that involves torture and women’s forced sterilization (Nichols, 2021). More recently, in October 2021, the third committee of the UN General Assembly led by France issues a joint statement in response to the China’s repression against Uyghur society (Permanent Mission of France to the UN, 2021). The conclusions are summarized as follows:

a) Encourage political education camps in Xinjiang to be terminated,

and all detainees to be released immediately.

- b) Terminate anti-terrorist violence programs in Xinjiang immediately, including the *Pair Up and Become Family* initiative and several other mandatory projects focused on monitoring and controlling Turkish Muslims.
- c) Respect for freedom of speech and expression, assembly, union, religion, and culture, as well as guaranteeing that Uyghur Muslims can engage in various democratic and peaceful activities.
- d) Suspend the biometric data collection and usage in Xinjiang to safeguard people’s privacy and discard biometric data as specified in the existing policy.
- e) Reinstate Xinjiang citizens’ identification document immediately and put an end to the ‘forced migration’ strategy.
- f) Terminate international pressure on Uyghur Muslims living in other countries to repatriate or forcefully investigate them.
- g) Provide timely and adequate compensation, including medical and psychological treatment, to

individuals unfairly jailed and persecuted as part of Project Beauty.

US Response

Owing to the China's zero-sum power in the conflict as well as the international scepticism continues to chase the spotlight, this article argues that the deliberation of the Responsibility to Protect must be embodied in a binding regulatory framework. Whereas it is near impossible for human rights mechanism to directly regulate the behaviour of a giant powerhouse such as China, providing an 'outsourced and externalized' delimitation could be hypothetically progressive. Progressing with affirmative action, the US Congress passed the 'Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act' in 2021 where it imposed ban on outsourcing products imported as a result of forced labour as it specifically put great emphasis on those of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (US Congress, 2021). Furthermore, as reported by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) and the White House, the US President Joe Biden has signed the conversion of the act into a law

(The White House, 2021). As a pre-emptive action, this facilitates US-based and global companies to cut ties with the Government of Xinjiang (UHRP, 2021). Reactionarily, this has been a strong diplomatic signal to the Beijing administration to reset its internal agenda, specifically in Xinjiang, and start to contain its future addresses in the UN meetings with 'compelling human rights narratives'.

CONCLUSION

Whereas provoking statements on counterinsurgency persisted throughout its deliberation, it is inevitably evident that 'Project Beauty' represents a state-led effort of a nationwide de-securitization of a specifically targeted community, the Uyghurs. This research summarizes that the initiation of the 'Project Beauty' campaign has caused collateral damages not only to the international justice system but also to the Chinese economy and demography. Through a forced modification of beauty standards, crimes against humanity are visually reinvented through various forms of political exclusion, organ sterilization, forced migration, and detention while seeing economic and

demographic trends in decline, all of which are pointing to a specific target, the women.

While the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has been celebrated globally, its operationalization is lack context due to it being ‘paralysed’ against great power politics. Hence, it is fair to mention that R2P as an international norm has been relatively failed to regulate the prevention and response to crimes against humanity, particularly towards gender-based violence. This is due to it being ‘consistently compromised’ by veto-wielding China that led potential resolution in the UN Security Council stymied. While the US government has been enacted sanctions against Chinese authorities and corporates involved in the repression, deterrence has been far from achieved as it covers only some tiny elements while the root cause stands by.

Eventually, the UN as the highest authoritative body must claim its central role by deploying a special task force to hold responsible authorities accountable. This article also sees that China’s reputation as a ‘responsible great power’ needs to be ‘publicly challenged’ with what could be a

‘detering signal’ to the Government that the atrocity it ‘consciously’ caused has ‘by default’ shaped a new global approach to the Responsibility to Protect, that is the gender-based violence as a crime against humanity

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