



December 9, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA, we urge the Senate to swiftly come to an agreement with the House and pass the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019 (S.178). We were pleased to see the House pass S.178 on December 3 after the Senate passed it through its chamber through unanimous consent. We understand there is strong bipartisan support in both chambers to see something become law, but time is of the essence.

Amnesty International has documented an intensifying Chinese government campaign of mass internment, intrusive surveillance, political indoctrination and forced cultural assimilation against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups living in the Xinjiang province. For example, one of Amnesty International's featured cases in our global Write for Rights campaign, Yiliyasijiang Reheman, is a Uyghur who was kidnapped while studying abroad in Egypt. His wife, who was expecting their second baby, has not heard from him since his disappearance two years ago.

Recently leaked documents obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists reveal the framework that the Chinese government set up to build the Xinjiang facilities where hundreds of thousands of predominantly Muslim ethnic groups have been detained and subjected to ill-treatment. Open or even private displays of religious and cultural affiliation, including growing a beard, wearing a veil or headscarf, regular prayer, fasting or avoidance of alcohol, or possessing books or articles about Islam or Uyghur culture are considered "extremist" under the regulation. The leaks showcase the horrors of the Chinese government's campaign against the Uyghurs,

Kazakhs and other ethnic Muslims. The international community, led by the U.S., must respond.

The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act sends a loud and clear message that the Chinese government cannot continue to inflict horrors upon its own people. The U.S. government must use diplomatic and economic tools to press the Chinese government to release all Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims who are being detained.

We urge the Senate to pass a reconciled version of S. 178 before the end of the year.

Sincerely,

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CC:

Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi

House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee James E. Risch

Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Eliot Engel