



SAVE UIGHUR CAMPAIGN

Council on American-Islamic Relations
Georgia Chapter
P.O. Box 942134
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June 27, 2019

Curt A. Ferguson
President, Greater China and Korea
The Coca-Cola Company
One Coca-Cola Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30313

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I am Edward Ahmed Mitchell, attorney and executive director of the Georgia chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Georgia). As you may know, CAIR-Georgia is part of our nation's largest Muslim civil rights organization.

I write alongside the Save Uighur Campaign in regard to China's imprisonment of one million Uighur Muslims in concentration camps, where the government tortures and brainwashes detainees in order to force them to renounce their culture and faith.^{1 2 3} According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, Chinese suppliers to multiple American corporations, including the Coca-Cola Company, "employ" workers who have undergone "re-education" in these concentration camps.

In light of these and other gross human rights violations committed by the Chinese dictatorship, we respectfully ask that the Coca-Cola Company join companies such as Adidas and H&M in suspending any business relationships with suppliers in the Xinjiang region.⁴ We also ask Coca-Cola to announce that it will suspend all of its other operations in China until the government closes its concentration camps, which represent one of the worst human rights abuses the world has seen since World War II. As we explain in this letter, corporations have the unique opportunity and obligation to shed light on this injustice by taking their business in China elsewhere.

¹ "Western Companies Get Tangled in China's Muslim Clampdown," *Wall Street Journal*. May 16, 2019.

² "World Report 2019: China," *Human Rights Watch*. 2019

³ "Save Uighur Campaign. www.SaveUighur.com. 2019.

⁴ See Citation 3.

I. History of Uighur Muslims

Uighur Muslims represent a religious and ethnic group in eastern China, constituting eleven million of the twenty-six million residents in Xinjiang.⁵ The Xinjiang region has long enjoyed relative autonomy from Beijing, briefly declaring independence in the early twentieth century before being brought under communist China rule in 1949.

In recent years, the government has sponsored the forcible influx of Han Chinese (the ethnic majority in China) into the region in order to supplant the Uighur Muslim community in an act of ethnic cleansing.⁶

II. Oppression of Uighur Muslims

According to Rushan Abbas, director of Campaign for Uighurs, detainees experience brainwashing, physical abuse, forced medication, and sleep deprivation.⁷ The Chinese government also forces detainees to violate their religious beliefs by requiring them to drink alcohol, consume pork, skip prayers, and eat during Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting.

Detainees do not receive trials or access to lawyers, nor can they otherwise challenge their detention. They remain detained until the authorities decide that they have significantly “transformed,” and sometimes they disappear altogether.⁸

Uighur Muslims who manage to avoid imprisonment in the concentration camps live under constant surveillance, including facial recognition cameras, QR codes on their front doors, and government monitors who live with them.⁹ Indeed, the Chinese government has deployed over one million¹⁰ government spies into Uighur homes without the permission of the targeted families.¹¹

⁵ Hughes, Roland. “China Uighurs: All you need to know on Muslim 'crackdown,” [BBC News](#). November 8, 2018

⁶ See citation 4.

⁷ “China Continues to Abduct Uighur Muslims, Sending Them To Internment Camps,” [NPR: All Things Considered](#). May 7, 2019

⁸ “Up To One Million Detained In China’s Mass ‘Re-education Drive,”” [Amnesty International](#). September 2018.

⁹ Hughes, Roland. “China Uighurs: All you need to know on Muslim 'crackdown,” [BBC News](#). November 8, 2018

¹⁰ “China Continues to Abduct Uighur Muslims, Sending Them To Internment Camps,” [NPR](#). May 7, 2019

¹¹ “China Continues to Abduct Uighur Muslims, Sending Them To Internment Camps,” [NPR](#). May 7, 2019

Government monitors consider common everyday religious practices, including growing a beard, wearing a veil or headscarf, prayer, fasting, avoiding alcohol, or possessing books or articles about Islam or Uighur culture “extremist” conduct.¹² The cadres’ reports, which also include details on the family’s cleanliness and their political beliefs, can lead to even further detention, surveillance, and forced indoctrination.¹³ Uighur Muslims must also submit biomedical data and samples for government testing.¹⁴ The government has cited travel abroad for work or education, particularly to Muslim-majority countries, or even contact with people outside China, as reasons for suspicion.¹⁵

III. Corporate Ties To Chinese Oppression

As part of their “re-education” and political indoctrination, the government routinely forces residents in Xinjiang into training programs that feed workers to area factories, which then provide products and services to international corporations.¹⁶

The Wall Street Journal has named Coca-Cola alongside other Western companies (Adidas AG, Hennes & Mauritz AB, Kraft Heinz Co., and Gap Inc.) that reportedly benefit from the forced labor of Uighur Muslims detained for “re-education training.”¹⁷ Specifically, the state-run Cofko Tunhe Company, which regularly visits and recruits from Xinjiang villages, is reportedly a major sugar supplier to Coca Cola.¹⁸ Cofko Tunhe Co.’s training program for new recruits includes “de-extremification” through the government’s Uighur Muslim programs before sending those recruits to work.¹⁹ Described as “concentrated, closed-off, military-style management” programs, they are designed to meet the needs of factories without regard for the wellbeing of their workers.²⁰

¹² “Up To One Million Detained In China’s Mass ‘Re-education Drive,” [Amnesty International](#). September 2018.

¹³ “China: Visiting Officials Occupy Homes in Muslim Region,” [Human Rights Watch](#). May 13, 2018

¹⁴ Hughes, Roland. “China Uighurs: All you need to know on Muslim ‘crackdown,” [BBC News](#). November 8, 2018

¹⁵ “Up To One Million Detained In China’s Mass ‘Re-education Drive,” [Amnesty International](#). September 2018.

¹⁶ Dou, Eva and Evan Deng. “Western Companies Get Tangled in China’s Muslim Clampdown,” [Wall Street Journal](#). May 16, 2019.

¹⁷ See citation 16.

¹⁸ See citation 16.

¹⁹ See citation 16.

²⁰ See citation 16.

Furthermore, Cofko Tunhe and all other Xinjiang factories spy on workers and conduct “deradicalization” programs, according to factory announcements.²¹ At these meetings, workers are told, among other things, not to pray in public or keep books with ethnic or religious content.²²

In response to these blatant human rights violations, companies like Adidas and H&M have already suspended their Xinjiang operations, citing concern about forced labor and discrimination.²³ We urge Coca-Cola to do the same—and to go a step further by announcing the suspension of all operations in China until the government closes its concentration camps and releases all prisoners.

If American businesses continue to do business in Xinjiang or elsewhere in China, its government will feel emboldened to continue monitoring, detaining, dehumanizing, and otherwise persecuting Uighur Muslims in direct contradiction of Coca-Cola’s Human Rights Policy,²⁴ as well as the values of the City of Atlanta and our nation at-large.

We look forward to your response, and we thank you in advance for your consideration.

With thanks,



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²¹ See citation 15.

²² See citation 15.

²³ See citation 15.

²⁴ “The Coca-Cola Company Human Rights Policy,” [Coca Cola Company](#). November 2014.