



[Leaked Data Highlights the Massive Scale of the Chinese Government's Imprisonment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang](#)

A data leak has shed further light on the enormous scale of the Chinese government's imprisonment of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region. The troubling finding reveals that approximately one in 25 people in a county there have been sentenced to prison, the highest known such rate in the world. For years now, human rights activists have tried to draw attention to the brutal crackdown and abuses against the minority group at the hands of Chinese authorities. Impartial analysts and experts have outlined the deliberate targeting of Uyghurs on trumped-up charges, which has resulted in millions being arbitrarily detained and imprisoned. The secretive nature of the spurious charges is particularly alarming as well. While China makes its legal records easily accessible otherwise, almost 90% of these in Xinjiang are not public. The information uncovered this week is the largest list to-date with the names of imprisoned Uyghurs, and validates the concerns that Chinese authorities are using a system of long-term incarceration to unjustly oppress them.

The list of imprisoned Uyghurs in Xinjiang was passed on to The Associated Press by an exiled Uyghur linguist in Norway, Abduweli Ayup. It was then thoroughly authenticated via interviews with people who recognized names on the list, in addition to legal documents, recordings of phone calls with Chinese officials, and verification of personal information. The data consists of Uyghur citizens who have been imprisoned on bogus charges related to "terrorism" and "religious extremism," and does not include people convicted of more common offenses like theft. Thus, many observers suspect that the actual number of those imprisoned in the region is even higher than the already shocking and global-record rate. In some documented cases, Uyghurs from entire villages were detained and whole families collectively uprooted from their homes. The methodical and intentional targeting of solely members of the Uyghur minority group has all been done under the guise of "combatting terrorism," and has drawn widespread criticism and condemnation from rights activists, international organizations, and foreign government officials.

Konashesher county, the site of the disturbing statistics in the Xinjiang region, is home to more than 250,000 residents. The leaked data showed that the massive scale of prison sentences across the county ranged from two to 25 years, with an average of nine years. Even with a conservative estimate which does not include those locked up on legitimate crimes like robbery, Konashesher county's imprisonment rate is over 10 times higher than that of the United States. Additionally, it is also more than 30 times higher than the country of China's as a whole, according to the most recently released figures on this. All of this helps to emphasize the extent of the Chinese government's oppression campaign toward Uyghur citizens in Xinjiang.

The data leak this week is just the latest evidence of the Chinese regime's human rights violations against the persecuted Uyghur minority group. Reputable rights groups and organizations have documented the scope of these abuses in the preceding years, as well as the clear systematic and state-organized nature of them.