



# COMPLICIT:

Is UK money contributing to coerced abortion in China?

MAY 2023

## AT A GLANCE FINDINGS

- Under the One Child Policy, atrocities including forced abortion and sterilisation, imprisonment, torture and financial ruin were perpetuated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Moves to a two and then three child policy did not end brutal state interference in family life.
- The One Child Policy created an estimated **30 to 40 million** “missing women” in China.<sup>1</sup>
- The independent Uyghur Tribunal found that the Chinese Communist Party put in place “a comprehensive system of measures to ‘optimise’ the population in Xinjiang” to reduce the Uyghur birth rate, including mandatory sterilisation and forced abortions.<sup>2</sup>
- The Tribunal also found that between 2015 and 2018 the natural population growth rates of Uyghurs in the southern Xinjiang prefectures declined by **73.5%**, and by 2018 and 2019 (in several counties) dropped to zero or became negative.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2019, at least **186,400 fewer children** were born in Xinjiang than would be naturally expected.<sup>4</sup>
- The Independent Commission for Aid Impact calculates that UK bilateral aid engaging China totalled around **£82 million in 2019**.<sup>5</sup>
- Further sums of **£55.3 million**<sup>6</sup> and **£23.7 million**<sup>7</sup> were given in the most recent year available to the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), both of which have been implicated in China’s coercive reproductive policies.
- Recent polling found that almost **two-thirds of people (60%)** believe the UK should cut abortion funding in countries such as China where concerns exist about women being coerced into abortion.<sup>8</sup>

## FOREWORD

Whatever your personal view on the subject of abortion, having it imposed on you by the state must be abhorrent, whether your position is informed by religious, clinical or moral considerations, or just personal rights or none of these. China’s infamous one child policy, introduced in 1979, and its successors (the two child policy, introduced in 2016, and the three child policy, introduced in 2021) represent centralised state

enforced reproductive coercion on an enormous scale. We must therefore not forget the grave consequences and horror of the one child policy, which the Chinese Communist Party regime openly admitted led to 336 million abortions and 196 million sterilisations being performed. One harrowing account in this report from a midwife tells of how she performed as many as 60,000 forced sterilisations and abortions.

The impact is dramatic and long lasting. Through the control exerted by the one child policy and the traditional preference for male children, the percentage of the population of China who are women has fallen every year since 1987. Although the two- and three-child policies are less strict, they are still proof that the CCP has not changed. Undercover reporting by the BBC found that China's many 'family planning officials' are still in place and still threatening mothers with physical force if they refuse to have an abortion.

But it is perhaps in the Xinjiang region and against the country's Uyghur minority, that the CCP's policy of imposing abortions on its population has been most pernicious. Above all the atrocities it was the evidence produced on this subject in the Uyghur Tribunals that lead the eminent QC Sir Geoffrey Nice to pronounce that the CCP was guilty of genocide. And it was speaking out against China's record on genocide that led to seven Westminster Parliamentarians, including me, being sanctioned by China two years ago.

As Chairman of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission and a member of the Inter Parliamentary Alliance on China I have been deeply concerned about China's ongoing genocide against the Uyghur Muslims for years, and against the Tibetans for the sixty plus years before that. Growing awareness of the conditions in China's rapidly growing Uyghur 're-education' camps mean that the CCP's crimes in that region are now well known. This report makes it even harder to ignore the truth – and the very concerning evidence it produces to suggest that UK taxpayers' money may be indirectly, and I hope inadvertently, supporting it.

The statistics that reveal what China is doing in Xinjiang are clear. Population growth in the region has declined dramatically; growth rates fell by 84% in the two largest Uyghur prefectures between 2015 and 2018, and declined further in several minority regions in 2019.

The stories behind the statistics covered in this report are also deeply disturbing; such as the Uyghur doctor who spoke to ITV News in September 2020 about her participation in at least 500 to 600 operations on

Uyghur women that involved forced abortion, forced contraception, forced sterilisation and forced removal of wombs.

Shockingly, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children's report suggests the UK is still contributing to schemes that fund China's birth control policies – despite pledging on different occasions to reduce dramatically or better still end aid to China.

As Lord Alton and others have consistently pointed out, the UK has for decades given aid funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), both of which have a long history of operating in China.

Both the IPPF and the UNFPA have denied the truth behind China's state enforced birth control policies; this is despite multiple international investigations uncovering harrowing tales of forced abortions in China and the United States withholding funding from the UNFPA over concerns that its country program in China engaged in or provided funding for abortion or coercive family planning programs.

We can't ignore what is going in China any longer. It is welcome that the UK ended direct bilateral aid to support China's development in 2011, but we must not stop there. Rightly, when faced with this evidence the British people will want the Government urgently to axe international aid to countries where coerced abortions are being carried out.

I am grateful to SPUC for this worrying and timely report. We will use its findings in Parliament to put further pressure on the FCDO to end urgently UK aid going to China and to stop funding multinational organisations which collaborate with the CCP's ongoing genocidal policies.

**TIM LOUGHTON**

*Member of Parliament for East Worthing & Shoreham*

# OVERVIEW

China's coercive birth control policy has been termed a "barbaric experiment in social engineering"<sup>9</sup> and the greatest bioethical atrocity on the globe"<sup>10</sup> by commentators across the political spectrum. To enforce the One Child Policy, introduced in 1979, the authorities subjected countless women to forced contraception, forced sterilization, and forced abortion, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2013, the Chinese Government announced that 336 million abortions and 196 million sterilisations had been performed under the One Child Policy. Since China moved to a Two Child Policy in 2016, and to a Three Child Policy in 2021, less international attention has been paid to this brutal form of totalitarian control. However, despite these relaxations (sparked by demographic fears rather than any concern for women or their babies), it remains legal in China to forcibly abort the babies of unmarried women, and fourth children.<sup>11</sup> According to one campaigner, "The total number of forced abortions today, under the One, Two and Three Child Policies, is likely close to 500 million – **half a billion.**"<sup>12</sup>

While the scrapping of the One Child Policy has made it easier for Western nations to turn a blind eye to China's general policy of reproductive coercion, evidence of a targeted campaign against the Uyghur population in Xinjiang has proved harder to ignore.

An Associated Press investigation in 2020, "based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor", concluded that the Chinese "state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands".<sup>13</sup>

The Uyghur Tribunal, an unofficial body assessing claims of human rights abuses and claims of genocide against Uyghurs in China, "established beyond reasonable doubt" in December 2021 that the People's

Republic of China had committed crimes against humanity, including forced sterilisations and abortions.

The Tribunal was also satisfied that such crimes, including measures preventing births in order to reduce the size of the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, met the criteria for genocide.

Crimes reported were stated to include forced abortions, the killing of babies "born alive", enforced sterilisations, including IUDs, and removal of wombs.<sup>14</sup>

The evidence of forced abortion and other coercive reproductive policies in China is made more disquieting when it is acknowledged that these policies have been implemented with the cooperation and support of Western aid agencies, and, most pertinently, the British Government. Lord Alton of Liverpool challenged the former Department for International Development (DFID) to account for how, "over three decades, British Aid given to UNFPA and IPPF has gone to the China Population Association...

"The CPA, in turn, has implemented a One Child Policy that makes it a criminal offence to be pregnant, and illegal to have a brother or a sister. It is a policy that has led to an estimated 400 million babies being aborted or killed through infanticide; a gendercide policy that favours the birth of male children so that one out of every six girls is aborted or abandoned. China is a country where 500 women take their own lives every single day. China has the highest suicide rate for women anywhere in the world."<sup>15</sup>

In recent years, the UK Government has come under pressure to cut aid to China. Indeed, in 2021, the Foreign Secretary submitted a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament in which he committed to reducing UK aid to China by 95%. However, this figure, which the Government continues to quote, is misleading at best. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) concluded that "the description of a 95% reduction applies to two funding channels provided by FCDO

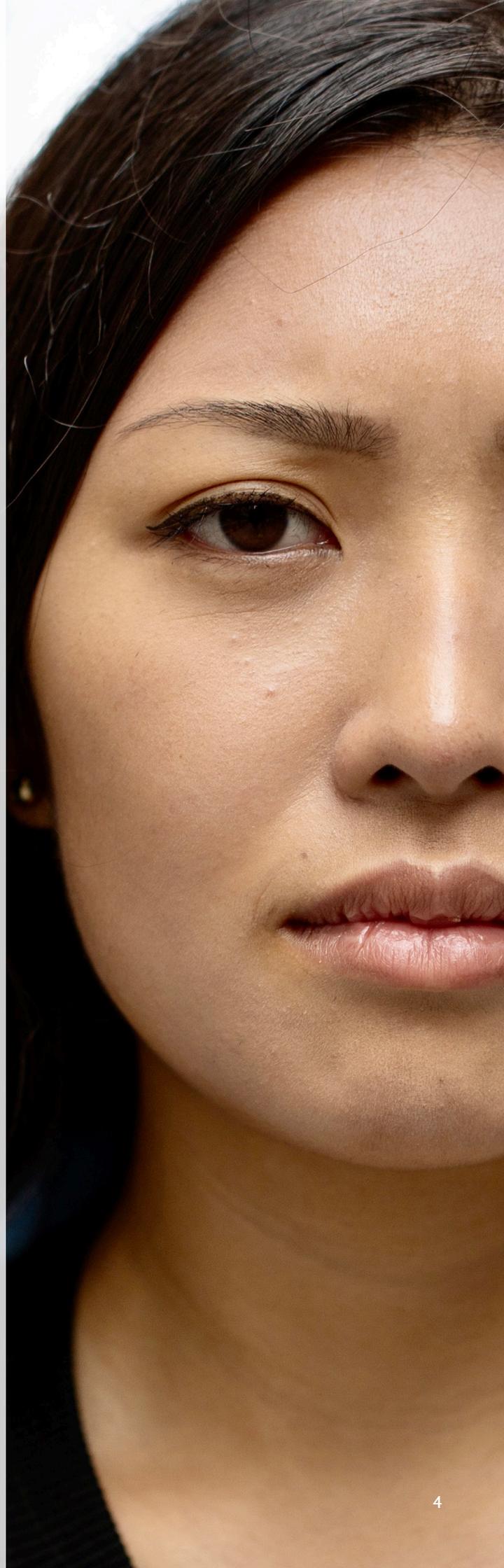
[Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office] which are considered 'programme delivery... in China', and therefore only a portion of total ODA [overseas development aid] spent by the government on engaging with China."<sup>16</sup>

The Commission calculated that UK bilateral aid engaging China totalled around £82 million in 2019, with a further £4.4 million provided through core funding to multilateral organisations.<sup>17</sup> Despite the promised 95% cut, Dr Tamsyn Barton, the chief commissioner of the ICAI, told The Telegraph that millions were still being sent to the country, but the Government would not reveal how much. Dr Barton said the latest published figures from 2020-21 suggested more than £60 million was being sent to China each year – but said ministers had not yet revealed the figure from 2021-22.<sup>18</sup>

UK development cooperation with China of any type remains controversial, and there are many voices arguing that no UK aid should go to a rising economic power whose interests and values are not well aligned with the UK's.<sup>19</sup> This is especially the case when it comes to funding abortion. According to recent polling, almost two-thirds of people (60%) believe the UK should cut abortion funding in countries such as China where concerns exist about women being coerced into abortion.<sup>20</sup>

This report aims to lay out in detail the evidence of forced abortion and other coercive reproductive practices in China, especially against the Uyghurs, and the extent of UK taxpayers' money being sent to China.

SPUC calls on the UK Government to immediately end all aid to China, and to make it clear to any country in receipt of UK ODA that there should be robust safeguards against women being coerced into abortion.





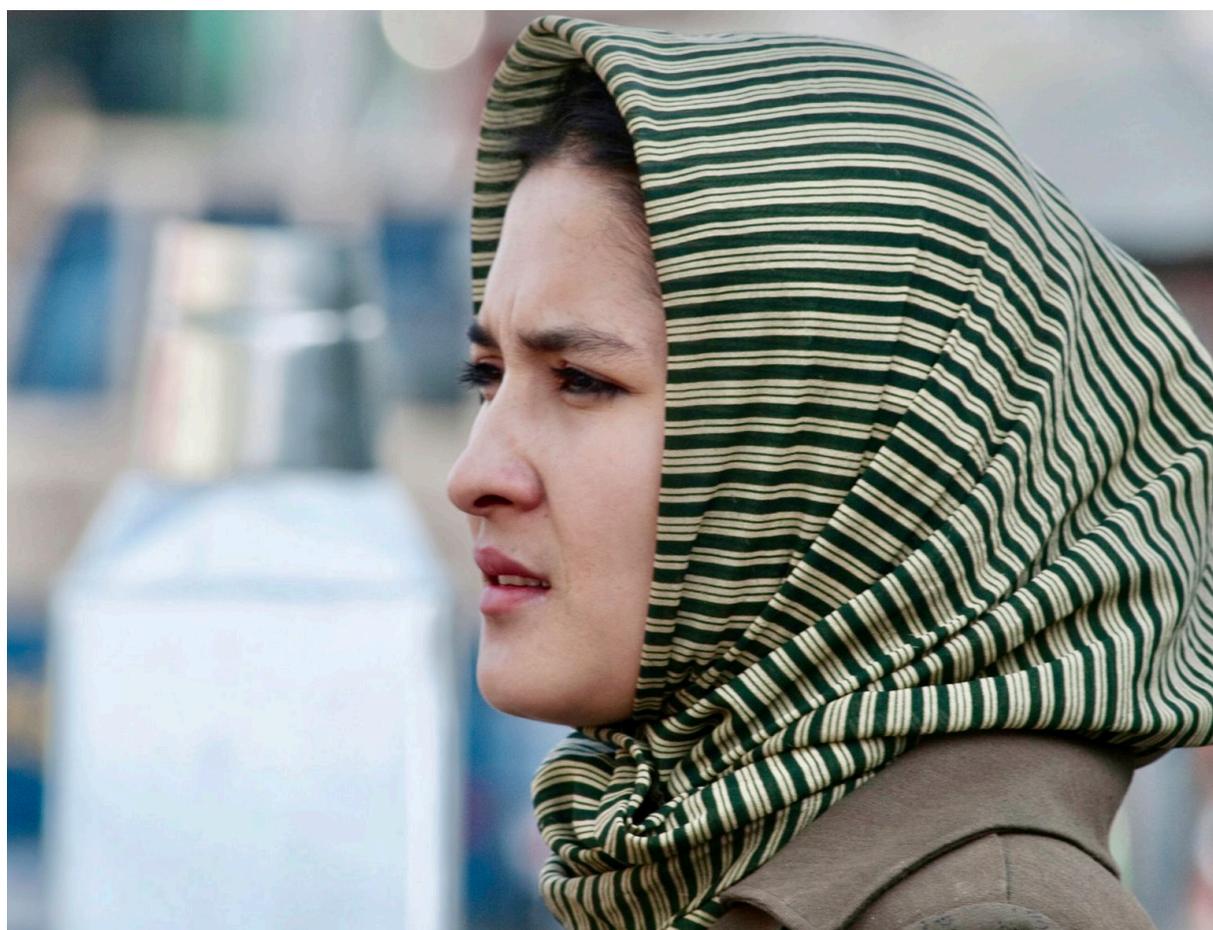
## CASE STUDIES

### Mehmut Tevekkül: “illegal” children.

I have four children, they are illegal, but we managed to bring them up by hiding them from the authorities. If we went to the market or city, we would cover them under stuff or we would take a donkey cart and sit them in the middle. The punishment for illegal birth is 300,000 to 500,000 Yuan. Somehow the local authorities found out in 2003 so I sent them to my parents in law to hide. They forced my wife to have an IUD. They did that for six years. My wife was sick for six years because she had a reaction to the IUD, she couldn't cope with any daily work. So, in around August 2008 I realised I had to save my wife, the mother of my children. So, we ran away. I took my whole family, my kids and wife, and we just ran without a plan. We went to Aksu, Turpan and Urumqi. If we hadn't run away, I am sure my wife would have died. Because we ran away the authorities came to my parent's house and told them to find me. The pressure was too high, my father was crying, so I had no choice but to come home. I came back on around the 15th October 2008. While we were running away my wife got pregnant, [and] by the time we came back my wife was four months pregnant. It was illegal, so to save the baby we decided to get divorced. She gave birth in October. We divorced to save the baby. The first-born, the second-born and the third-born stayed with me. And my wife had the fourth child at her parent's house.<sup>21</sup>

## Shemsinur Abdighafur: *“After 15 minutes the mother and both the unborn babies were dead”*

In May 2013 my sister-in-law who was Uyghur had two children and was pregnant with twins. As it was her third pregnancy it was considered illegal. Because her pregnancy was due, and she couldn't give birth in her own village she went to Karakax Town to give birth without being noticed back home. When she came to Karakax County Hospital to give birth she thought her secret would not be discovered. But she was little and naïve. When she showed her national registration number the doctor and the nurse from that hospital immediately understood she had another two kids. Then when she came to the hospital, they took her in and gave a syringe. After 15 minutes the mother and both the unborn babies were dead. I didn't witness this, but my husband told me because he was her brother. When my sister-in-law was taken to the hospital my husband was with them. My sister-in-law was very healthy and had no medical condition and just died like that. My husband waited together with my sister-in-law's husband and just after 15 minutes, less than half an hour a dead body came out. The hospital said she had a heart condition, but I am a Doctor, my sister-in-law was thirty years old, and I know she didn't have a medical condition. The family took the body and they buried her and had a funeral.<sup>22</sup>



## Bumeryem Rozi – “I had no choice but to say yes to the abortion”

In August 2008, I was pregnant with my 5th child. This was illegal by the state. We were prepared to pay the 10,000 Yuan penalty for that, but the authorities refused our offer. The authorities said that if you deliver this baby, we will seal your house and you will be taken to a “People’s Gathering” and we will send your husband to a different “People’s Gathering”. I was planning to run away to somewhere else to give birth to my baby. My husband said if you run away, they will come to me and what will happen? My husband agreed to the abortion in order to avoid this. I had no choice but to say yes to the abortion.

The authorities came to my house 3 days before the procedure to tell me they were going to abort my baby. Four individuals; two from the local Birth Control authority and two from the local police station took me from my house and placed me in a civilian car. Three other women travelled with me. The three women belonged to the same Collective, which differed from mine. They took us to Kashgar, where we changed to another car which went to the hospital. The police followed us in a separate car. My husband and the husbands of the other women also followed us in another car. The hospital was the Mother and Baby Hospital of Kashgar.

When we arrived in the hospital there were many other Uyghur women from different villages. All of the patients I saw were Uyghur. They put the four women I had travelled with and me into four different rooms, at almost the same time. In all rooms, there was one bed inside. It was there the abortion was carried out. They gave me a tablet. Then 2 hours later they injected my stomach. A further 2 hours later the dead baby came out. I was not allowed to leave the room until the baby came out. I passed out from the pain and I stayed there another half an hour after the abortion. I was 5 months pregnant. In other rooms, I saw aborted babies that were a few days short of being born.<sup>23</sup>



# Ma Jian – investigating China’s barbaric One Child Policy

In a small village in remote Guangdong, a contact took me to her local family planning centre, and told the director that I was a state reporter from Beijing. He took me to his office and we talked for hours. Backlit by a dusty window, he leaned over his desk and showed me the record book that meticulously charted the menstrual cycles and pelvic examination results of every woman of childbearing age in the village. He said 98% of the 280 women were fitted with IUDs. Every three months, he broadcasts an announcement through the village summoning every woman for a mandatory ultrasound to check that her IUD is still in place.

*“How do you know when a woman is menstruating?”* I asked him.

*“She has to report her cycles to the family planning monitor assigned to her street”,* he said, his silhouette now black against the bright window.

*“And how do they know she isn’t lying?”*

*“If the monitors suspect anything, they’ll rummage through the woman’s bins to check for soiled sanitary towels.”*

*“And what if you discover she’s fallen pregnant without permission?”*

*“We set to work on her.”*

*“What do you mean?”*

*“We persuade her to have an abortion. If she refuses, she must pay a fine – three times her annual salary. A few years ago, the county authorities insisted we meet our targets, so we couldn’t let anyone off. We had to round up every woman who was pregnant without permission and bring her here for a termination.”*

*“What if they refused to come?”*

*“There were four of us – they didn’t stand a chance!”* He grinned and sucked on his cigarette; then his face dropped, and he fell silent. *“My cousin was six months pregnant at the time. I had to drag her here myself and oversee the termination. She won’t speak to me, even to this day ...”*

Before I left, he took me to the adjoining room and showed me the ultrasound machine and the steel table on which abortions are performed. I stared for a while at the stirrups hanging loosely on either side and at the large plastic bucket on the ground. In the far corner of the room was a faded poster proclaiming: “Girls are as good as boys.”<sup>24</sup>



sterilizations and abortions, most of which were coerced by family-planning officials. "In those days, women were abducted by government officials, tied up and dragged to us like pigs", she recalled.<sup>28</sup> Yuan said she had performed 60,000 forced abortions and sterilizations.<sup>29</sup> "I counted this out of guilt because I aborted and killed babies", she said. "Many I induced alive and killed. My hands trembled doing it. But I had no choice, it was the Government's policy."

It is clear that this account could be replicated across China. A vivid illustration of how the policy was enforced is the "Childless Hundred Days" campaign launched by authorities in Guan and Shen counties in Shandong Province in 1991. In 100 days from May to August that year, all pregnancies in the two counties were forcibly aborted, regardless of whether the birth would have been in compliance with the One Child Policy.<sup>30</sup>

Such brutal crackdowns continued into the twenty-first century. In 2007, riots broke out in Bobai County in China's south-western Guangxi Province. Under pressure from higher authorities to meet birth targets, local officials had launched a vicious crackdown on family-planning violators. Squads had rounded up 17,000 women and subjected them to sterilisations and abortions and had extracted 7.8m Yuan (£800,000) in fines for "illegal births", ransacking the homes of families who refused to pay. In the largest outbreak of popular unrest since the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square, tens of thousands of peasants occupied Bobai County town and set fire to government buildings in protest.<sup>31</sup>

If a second or subsequent child survived to birth, a family's struggle was not over. Authorities often levied enormous fines on families who violated the policy, forcing them into destitution. Children who were born outside of the One Child Policy were denied legal documentation. As a result, until the hefty fine was paid, these children were unable to obtain an education, health care, or other forms of public services.<sup>32</sup> The writer Ma Jian recounts families fleeing to live on the river with their "illegal" daughters.<sup>33</sup>

Women who suffered from complications relating to forced contraception, sterilization, or abortions were never properly treated or compensated.<sup>34</sup>

This assault on women did not end with those forced into abortions. The brutal birth control policy, coupled with a traditional preference for sons, led to mass gender-selective abortions and female infanticide. Consequently, the percentage of the population of China who are women has fallen every year since 1987.<sup>35</sup> While the difference in gender at birth has been decreasing in the country over the past decade, China still boasts the world's most skewed sex ratio at birth at around 110 males born for every 100 females as of 2021. That means there are about 34 million more men in the country than women.<sup>36</sup> The organisation Human Rights Watch says:

The Chinese Communist Party also owes a fervent apology – and full reparations – to the women who have been trafficked to fill the female shortage caused by the One Child Policy. Coupled with China's traditional preference for boys, the One Child Policy created an estimated 30 to 40 million "missing women" and fueled a demand for trafficked women and girls, spurring a business in selling humans in countries across Asia and within China.

One of the most pernicious examples of this is Xiahuimei, a mother of eight who had been found thinly clad and chained in a shed. Many in China were shocked to see such medieval conditions on the eve of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, at a time when authorities could employ high-tech means to make snow, survey crowds and censor dissent. Authorities initially tried to cover up the issue, but in the face of public outrage, arrested several people, including her husband, for trafficking. Authorities said Xiahuimei had been bought and sold several times since 1998, but she is just one of many. Human Rights Watch has documented survivors who were sold for between US\$3,000-13,000, repeatedly raped, and often forced to

leave behind children fathered by their buyers, a source of great pain.<sup>37</sup>

When PRC ended the One Child Policy in 2015, many commentators saw it as the end of an era. However, the state did not end its control over the population's reproductive choices. Instead, a universal Two Child Policy was introduced. To mark the first anniversary of the announcement, BBC journalist John Sudworth set out to investigate what the new policy really meant in practice.<sup>38</sup>

"[What] we have discovered suggests that the brutal machinery of enforcement is still in place along with the Chinese state's insistence on the right of control over women's wombs", he concluded. In one of the country's notorious family planning centres, a family planning official would only say that "very few" forced abortions took place there.

To get a sense of the wider reality, I ask a female colleague to telephone a number of family planning centres at random.

Pretending to be a mother, pregnant with her third baby but wanting to keep it, she asks the officials what her options are.

According to Chinese law the only legal sanction available to the state for a woman violating the family planning laws is a large fine.

And, as all the officials we speak to on the phone make clear, with the change in policy from one to two children, the fine remains firmly in place.

Levied at up to 10 times annual average income, these fines are often enough in themselves to act as a powerful disincentive to continue with the pregnancy.

But our research shows officials going further, engaging in coercive home visits with the aim of "persuading" women to have abortions.

"If you're reported to us, then we'll find you and we'll persuade you not to give birth to that baby", one said.

"We'll definitely find you and persuade you to do an abortion", said another.

When asked whether our hypothetical mother might actually face physical force, rather than just heavy persuasion, one official said it was still possible "in principle".

Another, in answer to the same question, said: "It's hard to say."

And when asked if a woman could just have the baby and pay the fine yet another official answered: "No. You just can't."<sup>39</sup>

Investigations by the Population Research Institute also revealed that in certain locales the Two Child Policy was being just as rigorously enforced as the One Child Policy was.<sup>40</sup>

Couples who exceed their government-mandated birth limit continue to be punished with crushing fines equal to *two to ten times* their annual household income, according to the Planned Birth ordinances of Hunan, Liaoning, Hainan, and Henan provinces. Under certain circumstances, these fines can climb even higher. The only exception is Heilongjiang province, where the fine is only pegged to a single year's income – still a steep fine by anyone's standards.

Such fines are euphemistically referred to as "social compensation fees", even though most of the money collected winds up in the pockets of the same officials who collect them.

Planned Birth ordinances in many provinces mandate abortion for women pregnant with an unauthorized child. Regulations in Hunan, Liaoning, Hainan, and Henan provinces explicitly state that women who violate the policy must terminate their pregnancies. The Planned Birth rules for Hainan province, for instance, proclaim:

*Article 23: Those whose pregnancies do not conform to these Regulations, must promptly*

*terminate their pregnancy. Those who still refuse to terminate their pregnancies after “persuasive education” will be dealt with according to the relevant provisions of these Regulations.*<sup>41</sup>

It is apparent that moving to a Two Child Policy did not end the brutal state interference in family life. The evidence since 2021, when it was announced that each couple would be allowed to have three children, is less clear, at least for the majority Han population. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in its country report on China, said it “is not aware of any recent reports of people being imprisoned for failure to pay fees and is not aware of recent examples of forced abortions, but understands that they are theoretically possible (see Uyghurs, who are not covered in this assessment). While punishment for out-of-plan children is still possible, it is much less likely than it was in the past.”

However, Women’s Rights Without Frontiers, an organisation that campaigns against gendercide in China, says that despite China’s public stance on boosting birth rates, the issue of forced abortions is still a major problem.

“The thing that people don’t understand is that all of the brutality of the One Child Policy is still legal under the Three Child Policy”, founder Reggie Littlejohn said. “So the new rule is every married couple is allowed to have three children, which makes it still legal for them to forcibly abort unmarried women and also

fourth children and they are still carrying on forced abortions among the Uyghurs and the Tibetans.”<sup>42</sup>

The Three Child Policy has not ended the danger for baby girls. “The families are still selectively aborting and abandoning baby girls because even under the Three Child Policy, there’s some preference, people prefer baby boys”, Littlejohn told CBN News.

“If they have two daughters first and they’re coming up for a third child, some families will just abort baby girls until they finally get a baby boy for that third child...”

Even if the state is now employing less coercive methods to limit births, there is evidence that these tactics have shifted to employers. Human Rights Watch reports that:

“After the Two Child Policy went into effect, a majority of women surveyed by various Chinese companies and women’s groups reported they had been subjected to gender and pregnancy-based discrimination in pursuit of employment. Countless job ads specify a preference or requirement for men, or for women who have already had children. Numerous women have described, on social media, to the Chinese media, or in court documents, their experiences being asked about their childbearing status during job interviews, being forced to sign contracts pledging not to get pregnant, and being demoted or fired for being pregnant.”<sup>43</sup>





## “THEY WANT TO DESTROY US AS A PEOPLE.” THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UYGHURS

We have seen that state control over reproduction has long been a common part of the birth control regime in the People's Republic of China. But while the majority Han population may now be spared the brutalities of the One Child Policy, there is now abundant evidence of a concerted campaign to suppress birth rates among minorities, especially the Uyghurs of Xinjiang.

The Uyghurs are a predominantly Turkic Muslim group, who speak their own language and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations. There are about 12 million Uyghurs, mostly Muslim, living in Xinjiang, which is officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). For decades, under China's One Child Policy, urban minorities were instead allowed two children, or three for rural families.

In contrast to a drop in the Han population in Xinjiang, between 2005 and 2015 the Uyghur population grew rapidly. This led to a debate within PRC Government and academic circles which consistently described Uyghur and other minority population growth as “excessive”, and between 2015 and 2019 conflated religious extremism and population growth. A May 2015 Government teaching broadcast noted that “religious extremism begets re-marriages and illegal extra births”, and in an academic paper Liao Zhaoyu wrote that “the imbalance of the ethnic minority and Han population composition in Southern Xinjiang has reached an unbelievably serious degree”.<sup>44</sup>

The Chinese state had already been facing widespread criticism for holding Uyghurs in detention camps, when a report by China scholar Adrian Zenz alleged that Uyghur women and other ethnic minorities were being threatened with internment in the camps for refusing to abort pregnancies that exceed birth quotas.<sup>45</sup> The report also says that Uyghur women with more than the legally permitted number of children – but also many women who had not exceeded birth quotas<sup>45</sup> – were involuntarily fitted with intra-uterine devices (IUDs), while others were coerced into receiving sterilisation surgery.

“Since a sweeping crackdown starting in late 2016 transformed Xinjiang into a draconian police state, witness accounts of intrusive state interference into reproductive autonomy have become ubiquitous”, the report says.<sup>46</sup>

Zenz’s report was obtained by the Associated Press (AP) in advance of publication. Their 2020 investigation, “based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor”, concluded that the Chinese “state regularly subjects minority

women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show”.

AP commented on the “climate of terror around having children, as seen in interview after interview” :

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to get an IUD inserted. Two years later, in January 2018, four officials in military camouflage came knocking at her door anyway. They gave Omirzakh, the penniless wife of a detained vegetable trader, three days to pay a \$2,685 fine for having more than two children.

If she didn’t, they warned, she would join her husband and a million other ethnic minorities locked up in internment camps – often for having too many children.

“God bequeaths children on you. To prevent people from having children is wrong”, said Omirzakh, who tears up even now thinking back to that day. “They want to destroy us as a people.”<sup>47</sup>

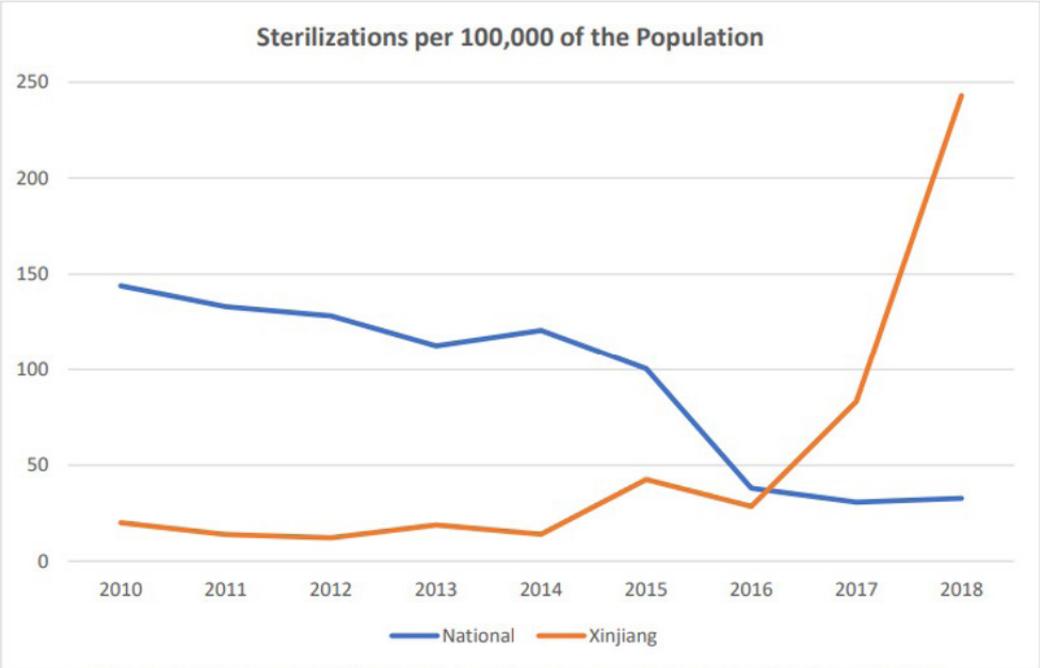


Figure 9. Source: 2011-2019 Health and Hygiene Statistical Yearbooks, table 8-8-2.

The evidence collected was not just anecdotal. The statistics paint a bleak picture.

- Birth rates in the mostly Uyghur regions of Hotan and Kashgar plunged by more than 60% from 2015 to 2018, the latest year available in government statistics. Across the Xinjiang region, birth rates continue to plummet, falling nearly 24% last year alone – compared to just 4.2% nationwide.<sup>48</sup>
- Natural population growth in Xinjiang has declined dramatically; growth rates fell by 84% in the two largest Uyghur prefectures between 2015 and 2018, and declined further in several minority regions in 2019. For 2020, one Uyghur region set an unprecedented near-zero birth rate target: a mere 1.05 per thousand, compared to 19.66 per thousand in 2018. This was intended to be achieved through “family planning work”.
- By 2019, Xinjiang planned to subject at least 80% of women of childbearing age in the rural southern four minority prefectures to intrusive birth prevention surgeries (IUDs or sterilizations), with actual figures likely being much higher. In 2018, 80% of all net added IUD placements in China (calculated as placements minus removals) were performed in Xinjiang, despite the fact that the region only makes up 1.8% of the nation's population.<sup>49</sup>

Chinese health statistics also show a sterilization boom in Xinjiang. Budget documents obtained by Zenz show that, starting in 2016, the Xinjiang government began pumping tens of millions of dollars into a birth control surgery program and cash incentives for women to get sterilized. While sterilization rates plunged in the rest of the country, they surged seven-fold in Xinjiang from 2016 to 2018, to more than 60,000 procedures. The Uyghur-majority city of Hotan budgeted for 14,872 sterilizations in 2019 – over 34% of all married women of childbearing age.<sup>50</sup>

Zenz concluded that “these findings raise serious concerns as to whether Beijing's policies in Xinjiang represent, in fundamental respects, what might be

characterized as a demographic campaign of genocide per the text of Section D, Article II of the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”.<sup>51</sup>

A few months after the Zenz/AP findings were published, in September 2020, an Uyghur doctor spoke to ITV News about her participation in at least 500 to 600 operations on Uyghur women that involved forced abortion, forced contraception, forced sterilisation and forced removal of wombs.

The doctor said that on one occasion a baby discarded in a rubbish bin was still moving.<sup>52</sup>

The Uyghur Tribunal, an unofficial body assessing claims of human rights abuses and claims of genocide against Uyghurs in China, “established beyond reasonable doubt” in December 2021 that the People's Republic of China had committed crimes against humanity, including forced sterilisations and abortions. The Tribunal heard evidence from multiple witnesses who had been forced into abortions themselves or, as in the case of one witness, who, when working in a hospital, witnessed the forced abortion of near-term babies. In a 2021 report to the Tribunal, the Uyghur Transitional Justice Data quoted a hospital employee who worked as an obstetrician and witnessed the killing of babies immediately after being born.<sup>53</sup>

The Tribunal was also satisfied that such crimes, including measures preventing births in order to reduce the size of the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, met the criteria for genocide.

Crimes reported were stated to include forced abortions, the killing of babies “born alive”, enforced sterilisations, including IUDs, and removal of wombs.<sup>54</sup>

The Tribunal concluded that “policies resulted in a marked reduction in birth rates and a decline in population growth, a reversal of trends evident in the recent past - reducing Han births and increasing Uyghur births”.<sup>55</sup> They quoted research by Nathan Ruser and Dr James Leibold that in comparison to stable birth rates among the Han-majority population “almost all indigenous-majority counties had



decreases in the number of children born, totalling 162,700 fewer children in 2018 than would have been expected before to the crackdown. In 2019, at least 186,400 fewer children were born in Xinjiang compared to what would have been expected if birth-rates had remained static at the pre-2017 baseline.”<sup>56</sup>

The Tribunal ruling carried no legal force but gained significant media attention worldwide, including in the UK. While the UK Government has held the position that determining genocide is for “competent national and international courts”, MPs voted in April 2022 to declare that China is committing genocide against the Uyghur people in Xinjiang Province.<sup>57</sup>

In August 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published an “Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China”. It concluded that there were “serious human rights violations” against Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province, including “credible” accounts of forced birth control by several women interviewed by the OHCHR, reporting:

“[...] forced IUD placements and possible forced sterilisations with respect to Uyghur and ethnic Kazakh women. Some women spoke of the risk of harsh punishments including ‘internment’ or ‘imprisonment’ for violations of the family planning policy. Among these, OHCHR interviewed some women who said they were forced to have abortions or forced to have IUDs inserted, after having reached the permitted number of children under the family planning policy. These first-hand accounts, although limited in number, are considered credible.”<sup>58</sup>

Following the report, in October 2022, the UK joined fifty countries in the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee in signing a joint statement on the human rights situation in Xinjiang.



## UK AID TO CHINA

The previous sections have detailed the extent of China's coercive birth control practises. But how do these horror stories of forced abortion, sterilisation and repression relate to the UK?

That the UK has contributed to these policies through the provision of aid money is not a new contention. In a debate in June 1995, David Alton MP (now Lord Alton of Liverpool), said that in the previous year "the United Kingdom Government gave £8.5 million to the UNFPA and £7.5 million to the IPPF. British taxpayers have been underwriting forced abortion, forced sterilisation and forcible fitting of IUCDs and even infanticide for more than 20 years. Successive ministers have defended one of the greatest scandals of overseas aid that I have ever come across."<sup>59</sup> He has continued to raise the issue over the succeeding decades.

UK aid money sent to IPPF and UNFPA is in addition to direct funding sent to China.

### How much direct foreign aid goes to China?

In 2011, in view of China's rapid economic growth and rising global power status, the then Department for International Development (DFID) ended its UK bilateral aid in support of China's development.<sup>60</sup> However, other aid-spending departments have taken a different path. Since 2015, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Prosperity Fund and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have all initiated new aid partnerships with China, in areas such as research and innovation, health, climate change and mutual prosperity.<sup>61</sup> In a Parliamentary evidence session, Sir Hugh Bayley (Commissioner at Independent Commission for Aid Impact) summed up the situation, saying, "In a nutshell, aid to China fell from about £40 million a year in the early 2000s to £15 million in 2011, which was the point at which DFID

announced that it was ending its bilateral aid to China. It then rose again to £68 million, as I said, in 2019, because other Government Departments started building aid relationships with China.”<sup>62</sup>

According to the ICAI information note on aid spending in China:

The result is a complex mosaic of UK aid spent engaging China, in order to support its development (which we refer to as aid “to” China), UK-China partnerships on global development challenges (aid “with” China), and working with third countries on their engagement with China (aid “on” China). It is difficult for the public to gain a full picture of this relationship from information currently in the public domain. The lack of clear information has heightened the concerns of those who believe that the UK should not provide aid to China or who fear that the aid is not contributing to poverty reduction, which is the statutory purpose of UK aid.<sup>63</sup>

In recent years, the Government has come under pressure to cut UK aid to China. In 2021, the Foreign Secretary submitted a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament in which he committed to reducing UK aid to China by 95%. However, this figure, which the Government continues to quote, is misleading at best. ICAI concluded that “it is clear that the description of a 95% reduction applies to two funding channels provided by FCDO which are considered ‘programme delivery... in China’, and therefore only a portion of total ODA spent by the government on engaging with China.”<sup>64</sup>

The Commission calculated that UK bilateral aid engaging China totalled around £82 million in 2019, with a further £4.4 million provided through core funding to multilateral organisations.<sup>65</sup> Despite the promised 95% cut, Dr Tamsyn Barton, the chief commissioner of the ICAI, told The Telegraph that millions were still being sent to the country, but the UK Government would not reveal how much.

Dr Barton said the latest published figures from 2020-21 suggested more than £60 million was being sent to China each year – but said ministers had not yet revealed the figure from 2021-22.<sup>66</sup>

## UK aid through multinationals

According to ICAI, imputed UK multilateral ODA to China in 2019 was £4.4 million. Most of this ODA was channelled through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), but it also included (declining levels of) aid spent through EU institutions and some modest spending through the UN system.

## International Family Planning Agencies

We have seen that considerable aid funding still goes directly to China, despite Government promises to make huge cuts. However, another way that UK taxpayers’ money goes to China, and one that is especially relevant in the context of birth control policies, is through funding international family planning agencies which operate in China.

As Lord Alton and others have consistently pointed out, the UK has for decades given aid funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), both of which have a long history of operations in China.

### IPPF

The China Family Planning Association (CFPA), the body responsible for ensuring China’s birth control policies, has been an IPPF member since 1983, the year commonly regarded as the worst year for coercion. CFPA is a state-run body: none of its top leaders have been ordinary citizens unaffiliated with government or the Party.<sup>67</sup> Quin Zinzhong, one of the Ministers who has overseen that policy, said: “The size of the family is far too important to be left to the couple. Births are a matter of state planning.” In one province the slogan, “It is better to have more graves than one more child”, has been used.<sup>68</sup>

IPPF still lists the CFPA as a member organisation on its website, saying that it “plays an important role in

providing information and education and promoting voluntary family planning in China".<sup>69</sup> Given what has been detailed in this report about the long history of non-voluntary "family planning" initiatives, this is a worrying whitewashing. It seems that IPPF is no more willing to admit its complicity in the horrors of the CFPA's policies than it was in 2001 when its representative, Laura Barclay, wrote that to "accuse the Chinese government of enforcing heinous practices officially at a national policy level" was "a gross untruth".<sup>70</sup>

In 2019, ministers came under fire for awarding £132 million of aid money to IPPF amid an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct and corruption at the organisation. Internal documents referred to claims of sexual harassment, bullying, abusive conduct and intimidation of whistleblowers at one of the charity's largest overseas offices. A female executive was allegedly sent a pornographic video in an attempt to intimidate her.<sup>71</sup> IPPF's director general, Alvaro Bermejo, briefly tendered his resignation over allegations that his charity employed sex workers.<sup>72</sup>

MPs across the House were deeply critical of the then DFID minister's decision to continue funding IPPF. "IPPF appears to be falling short and I would expect DFID to be more rigorous in its approach", Pauline Latham, a Conservative member of the international Development Committee, said, while Dan Carden, the shadow secretary for international development, said it was "truly shameful that Penny Mordaunt has pumped millions of pounds into an organisation while there was an ongoing investigation into sexual misconduct".<sup>73</sup>

Today, the Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) 2 programme that the £132 million was allocated to, is still actively listed on the FCDO's development tracker.<sup>74</sup> Despite some reductions in aid funding (which IPPF threatened to sue the UK Government for<sup>75</sup>) the UK Government gave £55.3 million to IPPF in 2020.<sup>76</sup>

## UNFPA

Like IPPF, the UNFPA has a history of denying the truth of China's coercive population policies. The former executive director of the UNFPA, Nafis Sadiq, said:

*"China has every reason to feel proud and pleased with its remarkable achievements in family planning policy ... Now China could offer its experiences and special experts to other countries."*<sup>77</sup>

Decades of evidence suggest that UNFPA (along with IPPF) not only failed to prevent coercive population control but is implicated in the coercive practices of the Chinese state family planning organisations. In 2001, the United States Congress International Relations Committee held a hearing into "Coercive Population Control in China: New Evidence of Forced Abortion and Forced Sterilisation". After hearing first-hand testimonies, Henry Hyde, the chairman of the House of Congress International Relations Committee, concluded that an agreement the UNFPA signed with Beijing to operate in 32 counties on the understanding that there would be no coercion and no birth quotas and that abortion would not be promoted as a method of family planning, was "not working". Investigative journalist Josephine Guy told the congressional hearing of the persistence of coercive population control in areas in China where the UNFPA operated, and, indeed, the collusion of the UNFPA in such coercion.

We visited a county where the UNFPA was active. Our investigation lasted a total of 4 days. During this time, we had the opportunity to interview many women about methods of family planning which are enforced in their county. Some choked back tears as they told of the abuse they suffer as a result of coercive policies of family planning, while others flocked to tell us their stories of coercion.

The interviews we conducted were reported in notebooks, on audio and videotape, and additional photographic evidence was obtained. The abuses we documented during

this investigation are recent, ongoing, rampant and unrelenting. And they exist in a county with the UNFPA claims that women are free to determine the timing and spacing of their pregnancies.

On the first day of our investigation we interviewed women in a family planning clinic about a mile from the county office of the UNFPA. We saw a 19-year-old and learned that she was too young to be pregnant according to unbending family planning policy. While she was receiving a non-voluntary abortion in an adjacent room, her friends told us that she, indeed, desired to keep her baby, but she had no choice, since the law forbids it.<sup>78</sup>

She concluded: "In this county where UNFPA operates – where UNFPA insists that only voluntarism exists – we were told by victims of coercion themselves that there is, in fact, no trace of voluntarism. There is only coercion, in abundant supply, in this county where UNFPA operates – from within the Office of Family Planning."

Concerns that the UNFPA's country program in the PRC engaged in or provided funding for abortion or coercive family planning programs has at times resulted in the withholding of U.S. funding from UNFPA.<sup>79</sup>

UNFPA's total spending in China in 2021 was \$2,461,064. The UK's total contribution to UNFPA in 2021 was \$28.8m (£23.7m).<sup>80</sup>

### **"Time to change policy"**

Many senior MPs have called on the Government to stop sending aid money to China. Iain Duncan Smith, the former Conservative Party leader, who has been sanctioned by China for raising the situation in Xinjiang, has called it "madness" for the UK to pay out aid to China.<sup>81</sup>

Another senior Conservative MP said the payments needed to be phased out "as soon as possible, not in some gradual way".

"The problem is if people try to defend things which are, in the eyes of most British voters, indefensible, all they do is damage the credibility of overseas aid, which many people think is too high already", said the MP.<sup>82</sup>

This is a cross-party concern. Sarah Champion, the Labour MP who chairs the House of Commons International Development Committee, told POLITICO: "Amid sweeping aid cuts to some of the world's poorest nations, it is astounding that the UK still gives any ODA to China.

"I expect UK taxpayers would much rather see aid going to countries that are on the brink of humanitarian crises rather than to the second-largest economy in the world."<sup>83</sup>

There are similar views among the public. Recent polling found that almost two-thirds of people (60%) believe the UK should cut abortion funding in countries such as China where concerns exist about women being coerced into abortion.<sup>84</sup>

There was also widespread support for attaching clear strings to any aid given by the UK to countries where problematic abortion policies are practised: 76% overall, including almost four in five women (78%), support making it clear to China and other countries in receipt of UK aid that gender-selective abortion should be explicitly banned. The same proportion, 76%, take the view that abortion on the grounds of a child's ethnicity should also be banned.

The British public and numerous MPs have made their voice clear: that aid should not be sent to a nation that engages in such heinous discriminatory practices. Abortion and other coercive means of population control as part of a deliberate policy of genocide in China have been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Not only was this determined by the Uyghur Tribunal, but this was also the conclusion of British MPs in April 2022.

In light of the overwhelming evidence provided, showing the true extent of the crimes committed against Uyghurs, which continues, the Government's current

refusal to officially recognise this ongoing genocide is unsustainable. Moreover, by continuing to send millions in aid to China, Britain is increasingly complicit in those crimes.

As Iain Duncan Smith said last May:

“The UK government has said endlessly – and I understand this – that only a competent court can declare genocide, that is absolutely the original plan. But the problem is that getting to a competent court is impossible.

“At the United Nations it is impossible to get through to the International Court of Justice, it is impossible to get through to the International Criminal Court as China is not a signatory to that and therefore will not obey that.”<sup>85</sup>

The Government can and should cut funding to China, not only sending a message to China, but vitally, ensuring that British taxpayers are not funding, directly or indirectly, methods of genocide against Uyghurs that include forced abortion.

As opinion polls have shown, the British public has no desire to provide such funding. The Government must act now to make sure the will of the British people is upheld. This would also mean an end to sending aid to China via multinationals and international family planning agencies.

As well as withdrawing aid to China, the UK should act consistently with other nations where such state-enforced coercion, including forced abortions, is shown to take place. In late 2022, for example, a Reuters investigation presented evidence that the Nigerian military had “conducted a secret, systematic and illegal abortion programme in the country’s northeast, ending at least 10,000 pregnancies among women and girls”.<sup>86</sup>

Any British government has a responsibility to ensure that British taxpayer money does not in any way underwrite such programmes. Accordingly, the Government must take all such accusations seriously

and be transparent regarding the true extent of aid being sent to nations, especially those with questionable human rights records.

So far, as this report has shown, British governments have failed on all these points. SPUC therefore recommends that the UK Government take the following actions with immediate effect.

- **Ends UK aid going to China**
- **Stops funding multinational organisations which collaborate with the China Family Planning Association (CFPA)**
- **Provides full transparency on funding that has gone to China up to this point**
- **Officially calls on the CCP to end all coercive reproductive programmes, with special reference to Xinjiang**
- **Commits to end funding abortion programmes in countries where concerns exist about women being coerced into abortion**
- **Insists that in any country in receipt of UK ODA there should be robust safeguards against women being coerced into abortion**

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