



Uyghur Association of Victoria Inc. Est. 2006
ABN: 38 148 753 655

30 July 2020

Submission to the inquiry into the issues facing diaspora communities in Australia

The Uyghur Association of Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2006 to promote the legitimate interests of the Uyghur community in Victoria, and to promote goodwill, unity in diversity, and integrity both within the Uyghur community and between the Uyghur community and the other communities which make up our great state.

The Association makes this submission on behalf of the Uyghur diaspora community in Victoria.

The greatest challenge facing the Uyghur people today is the campaign of atrocities being waged by the Chinese government against our people in the Uyghur region which is under Chinese Communist Party rule. The actions of the Chinese government are increasingly being understood to meet the UN definition of genocide.

The policies and actions of the Chinese government also have flow-on effects on the safety, wellbeing and full participation of the Uyghur diaspora in Australia. Here are some of the related and other issues we would like to bring to the attention of this Committee:

1. The timely processing of the claims of Uyghur asylum seekers in Australia and the possibility of safe haven for Uyghurs caught in third countries not abiding by international standards on non-refoulement.
2. The Chinese government's practice of arbitrarily preventing the return to Australia of family members of Uyghur Australians, especially those who are Australian citizens or residents.
3. The intimidation and harassment of Uyghurs in Australia by local authorities in China. This typically takes the form of WeChat calls from family members back in China (often in the presence of local law enforcement personnel) warning Uyghurs in Australia not to say anything unfavourable to the Chinese government lest something happen to these family members.
4. It is apparent to us that some Uyghur and Chinese folk have been offered inducements to disseminate Chinese government propaganda in the Uyghur community and/or keep tabs on the activities of Uyghur people in Australia. United Front organisations are also used to influence Uyghur Australians to either tow the Chinese Communist Party line or keep their heads down and their mouths shut.
5. There is a need for culturally appropriate trauma and related counselling for Uyghurs in Australia who have directly experienced atrocities or have family members who are suffering from atrocities.
6. Hand in hand with the oppression of our people in the Uyghur homeland is the erosion and loss of our distinctive social, physical and literary culture. It is increasingly up to Uyghurs of the diaspora including those of

us in Australia to preserve, develop and pass on elements of culture that are not only precious to Uyghurs but make an important contribution to the world community. We would like to see some support for Uyghur as a spoken and literary language, translation between Uyghur and English, traditional arts including music and dance, religious and cultural festivals and so on.

7. Uyghur community centre as a focal point would help build identity and resilience.

8. Many older and middle-aged Uyghurs still have poor to average English-speaking skills, even after having been in Australia for long time. This remains a barrier to full participation in Australian institutions.

Sincerely,

Alim Osman (President)

On behalf of the Committee and the Victorian Uyghur community.