Truth emerges about Chinese repression of Uyghurs — no thanks to the U.N.

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[A consortium of U.S., European and Japanese media organizations](https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/select-media-reporting/) has published an extraordinary cache of leaked photographs and documents from inside China’s vast system of “reeducation” internment centers, making plain beyond any doubt that millions of Muslim Uyghurs — including children and elderly people — have been oppressed since Beijing launched its program, officially labeled genocide by the United States, in 2017. The Xinjiang Police Files, as the cache is known, prove that, in a single Xinjiang county, 22,762 residents, more than 12 percent of the adult population, were interned in a camp or prison during 2017 and 2018. The files include the [text of a speech](https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/features/public-security-ministers-speech-describes-xi-jinpings-direction-of-mass)in which the official in charge of the crackdown mentions President Xi Jinping’s detailed knowledge of the repression, and his orders to continue it. This devastating material, especially the images of clearly bewildered, even tearful, detainees, "blows apart the Chinese propaganda veneer,” as Adrian Zenz, a scholar at the U.S.-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation who received, authenticated and collated the material, told the BBC.

Yet Beijing insists on its coverup, with the Chinese Embassy in Washington declaring, in response to the Xinjiang Police Files revelations, that the critics are disseminating “lies and disinformation.” Which brings us to the just-completed six-day visit to China by Michelle Bachelet, the former president of Chile and current U.N. high commissioner for human rights. Billed as the first such trip to China by an occupant of her office since 2005, it comes roughly three years since [Ms. Bachelet first proposed](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-un/bachelet-presses-china-for-u-n-access-to-xinjiangs-uighurs-idUSKCN1QN12B) a fact-finding mission related to the Uyghurs and six months since her office announced it was about to release a highly critical report on their plight. That report has still not been published, however. The timing of her visit, permission for which Beijing announced in March, creates an appearance that the document was withheld in return for access to China for Ms. Bachelet.

If so, it wasn’t worth it. It’s absurd on its face to suppose that Ms. Bachelet could conduct any sort of serious inquiry while being guided through what the Chinese foreign ministry itself has described as a “closed loop” of contacts, ostensibly necessitated by the covid-19 pandemic. What was highly foreseeable were attempts by Beijing to exploit a distinguished U.N. envoy’s presence for propaganda purposes. Mr. Xi lectured the visitor in their one meeting — on Wednesday, via video link. “There is no need for ‘preachers’ to boss around other countries, still less should they politicize the issue, practice double standards or use it as an excuse to interfere in other countries’ internal affairs,” [he told her](https://kesq.com/news/national-world/cnn-asia-pacific/2022/05/25/no-need-for-preachers-chinese-leader-xi-jinping-tells-un-human-rights-chief/). Adding injury to this insult, the official Xinhua News Agency reported that Ms. Bachelet had told Mr. Xi that she “admire[d]” China’s efforts to protect human rights, an apparent fabrication that Ms. Bachelet was obliged to deny hours later.

The State Department labeled Ms. Bachelet’s trip “a mistake,” which is an understatement. Heavily influenced by China, a permanent member of the Security Council, the United Nations is poorly positioned to hold the communist dictatorship accountable. That takes people such as the courageous — and necessarily anonymous — whistleblower in China who leaked the Xinjiang Police Files, and Mr. Zenz, who made sure that they would be available for all the world to see.