



## Open Letter from the Jewish Community to President Biden on the Uyghur Genocide

We are a group of Jewish community leaders, rabbis, organizations, and synagogues who have come together to condemn China's policies toward Uyghurs and to call on your administration to prioritize human rights in U.S. policy toward China.

As a community that acutely remembers times when we were persecuted and unable to teach our traditions to our children, and as we painfully recall the genocide that we suffered under Nazi rule, we know that we can and must speak out against this persecution and in support of the Uyghur community.

The horror stories we are hearing of Uyghurs taken in the night, separated from their families, and put on trains to forced labor camps are all too familiar to the Jewish community. As part of its crackdown on Uyghurs, a primarily Muslim ethnic minority from the Xinjiang region, China is sterilizing women and carrying out forced abortions, torturing Uyghurs under the guise of "re-education" and "poverty alleviation," and preventing Uyghur parents from passing on their customs and traditions. These targeted actions are meant to eliminate the Uyghur people as an ethnic and religious group.

The Chinese government has razed mosques and religious schools. It has [destroyed](#) parts of homes that Uyghurs dedicate to prayer: platforms called *supa* and niches called *mehrab* that indicate the direction of prayer. Like some Jews, many Muslims do not cut their beards. But China has criminalized long beards. The government [forcibly separated](#) more than 500,000 children from their parents in order to "break the impact of the religious atmosphere on children at home." It has forced Uyghurs to consume pork, designated it as an "[ethnic unity food](#)," and compelled inmates in internment camps to eat it, all in violation of Islamic dietary laws. These policies have a single purpose, a purpose that one Chinese official [described](#) as "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins."

The U.S. government has taken critical first steps by determining that the persecution of Uyghurs is a genocide and implementing sanctions on some perpetrators and facilitators of these abuses. But such a serious designation requires the U.S. to do more, both unilaterally and with our allies. We therefore urge you and your administration to take the concrete steps [recommended by](#) a coalition of leading human rights organizations (such as countering Chinese government propaganda and strengthening sanctions) and to increase the number of Uyghurs admitted to the U.S. as refugees.

Some governments, companies, and organizations believe working with China requires leaving their values at the door. Some believe that private advocacy with the Chinese government is more effective than public condemnation and accountability. We disagree – both are necessary. Our country's interactions with China must embody international norms of freedom and democracy, not underwrite repression. As Jews we know what happens when people remain silent amid such atrocities. And let us be clear: the Chinese government is also targeting other ethnic and religious minorities, including Jews, Christians, Tibetans, and Mongols. Nothing parallels the persecution of Uyghurs – yet. We must speak out, and we must act now.



**Organizations**

Academy for Jewish Religion (New York, NY)  
American Jewish Committee  
The Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island  
Greater Miami Jewish Community Relations Council  
Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio  
Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council  
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Cincinnati  
Jewish Community Relations Council/American Jewish Committee of Detroit  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New Orleans  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington  
Jewish Community Relations Council of San Antonio  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Southern New Jersey Jewish Federation  
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County  
Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor  
Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans  
Jewish Movement for Uyghur Freedom  
Jewish World Watch  
Lighthouse Kosher  
Mitzvah Matzos  
Rabbinical Assembly  
Society for Humanistic Judaism  
T'ruah  
Uri L'Tzedek: Orthodox Social Justice  
Women of Reform Judaism  
The Workers Circle

**Synagogues/Congregations**

Adas Israel Congregation (Washington, DC)  
Agudas Achim Congregation (Alexandria, VA)  
Beth Adam (Delray Beach, FL)  
Beth Tikvah (Richmond, British Columbia, Canada)  
Bethesda Jewish Congregation (Bethesda, MD)  
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation (Baltimore, MD)  
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (New York, NY)  
Congregation Beth Shalom (Providence, RI)  
Congregation Kol Shofar (Tiburon, CA)  
Havurat Shalom (Andover, MD)  
Hebrew Congregation of Somers (Shenorock, NY)  
Hill Havurah (Washington, DC)  
Kol Hadash of Northern California (Berkeley, CA)  
Machar: The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism (Washington, DC)  
Shaare Tefila Congregation (Olney, MD)  
Sixth & I Historic Synagogue (Washington, DC)  
Temple Emanuel (Cherry Hill, NJ)  
Temple Micah (Washington, DC)  
Temple Shalom (Chevy Chase, MD)  
Tifereth Israel Congregation (New Bedford, MA)  
Tikkun Olam Chavurah (Philadelphia, PA)

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Rabbi Melanie Aron, Rabbi Emerita, Congregation Shir Hadash (Los Gatos, CA)  
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Rabbi Rena Blumenthal  
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Rabbi Carol Caine, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association  
Rabbi Howard A Cohen, Congregation Shirat Hayam (Marshfield, MA)  
Rabbi Kenneth L Cohen, Beth Israel Congregation (Lexington Park, MD)  
Rabbi Meryl Crean, RRA/Mishkan Shalom Congregation (Philadelphia, PA)  
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Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, Women of Reform Judaism  
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Rabbi Jeremy Fineberg, Temple Emanu-El (Closter, NJ)  
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Rav Natan Freller, Congregation Etz Hayim (Arlington, VA)  
Rabbi Gordon Fuller, Myfamilyrabbi.com  
Rabbi Jordan T. Gerson, Silk Foundation Campus Rabbi, Hillel at Washington University in St. Louis (St. Louis, MO)  
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Rabbi Laurie Green, Kehila Chadasha (Bethesda, MD)  
Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, JJ Greenberg Institute for the Advancement of Jewish Life  
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