

His Excellency Mr Liu Xiaoming
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China
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20th July 2020

Your Excellency,

This year, we commemorated 75 years since the end of the Holocaust of Jews by Nazi Germany. Every year, on the 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army, the World remembers how one of the mightiest, most advanced nations in the world sought to commit genocide against a religious and ethnic minority in its midst.

For some time now we have been gravely concerned about the treatment of the Muslim Uyghur people and other religious minorities in the People's Republic of China. Earlier this year, we hosted a number of events with the World Uyghur Congress and Muslim partners to highlight this issue and we have made a number of interventions with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the subject.

Nobody could watch the segment of the BBC's Andrew Marr Show on which you appeared yesterday and fail to notice the similarities between what is alleged to be happening in the People's Republic of China today and what happened in Nazi Germany 75 years ago: People being forcibly loaded on to trains; beards of religious men being trimmed; women being sterilised; and the grim spectre of concentration camps.

Germany has rightly paid a heavy price for its persecution of the Jewish people. Its historic guilt rests heavily on it and, 75 years on, its leaders and representatives continue to do all they can to make amends for the sins of their forebears. Germany has physically marked the atrocity with a moving memorial in the centre of its capital city and across the country individual paving stones bear the names of the people who were taken and murdered.

China's rise is impressive. A proud culture over millennia, we know that China has faced its own persecution and humiliation by other countries over a number of centuries. And yet China is achieving tremendous progress, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in recent decades and taking its rightful place in a position of leadership in the family of nations.

But China risks squandering its achievements and sabotaging its own legacy if it fails to learn the lessons of history. The World will neither forgive nor forget a genocide against the Uyghur people.

Mr Ambassador, we urge China today to release the Uyghur people and other minorities from all ethnic and religious oppression; throw open the doors of the camps to a full and impartial international investigation; take action against the perpetrators of any human rights abuses; and ensure justice for the victims and their families. This must begin immediately.

The world is watching. The hand of history is poised. For its future, China has a choice between great glory and eternal shame. Let it choose the former.

Yours sincerely,



Marie van der Zyl
President