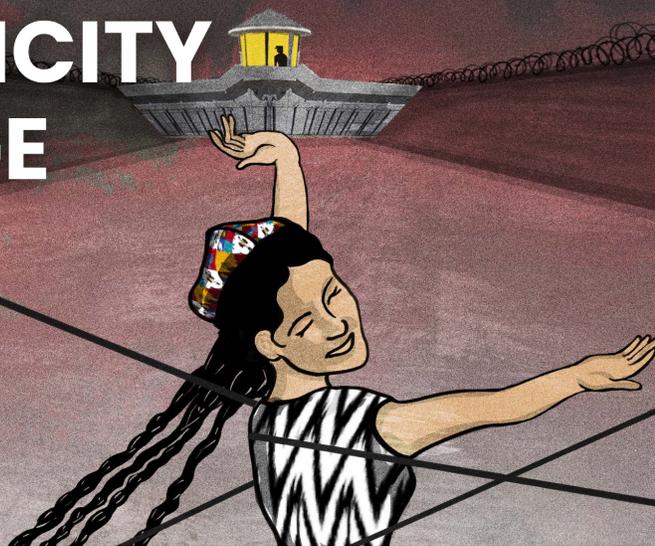


THE COMPLICITY OF HERITAGE

Cultural Heritage & Genocide in the Uyghur Region



UHRP

The Complicity of Heritage: Cultural Heritage and Genocide in the Uyghur Region highlights how China’s actions in East Turkistan constitute what UNESCO calls “strategic cultural cleansing”: the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups based on their cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation, combined with the intentional and systematic destruction of their cultural heritage.

Key Takeaways

- China’s actions in the Uyghur region constitute what UNESCO calls “strategic cultural cleansing”: the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups on the basis of their cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation, combined with the intentional and systematic destruction of their cultural heritage
- UNESCO continues to acknowledge China as a protector of Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz heritage in the Uyghur region through the inclusion of Muqam, Manas, Meshrep, the Tengritagh mountain range, and Karez
- Heritage in the Uyghur region is co-opted and used to promote new and revisionist understandings of history that tie the region and its inhabitants more tightly into the Chinese sphere—this process contributes directly to the wider project of cultural erasure
- China’s actions in the Uyghur region form part of the wave of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in the 21st century

Recommendations

- The Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and High Commissioner for Human Rights should advocate for a stronger and more effective UNESCO response to abuses in the Uyghur region
- States Parties to the ICH Convention should bring this information to the attention of the ICH Committee at its 18th Session in 2023 and request that the Committee address a specific request to China for additional information on implementation
- States Parties to the World Heritage Convention should bring to the attention of the World Heritage Center their concerns that Tengritagh mountain range has seriously deteriorated and its Outstanding Universal Value is threatened

Full report:
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