**Facts Veto Uyghur Narrative**

**There is little need for manual harvesting, let alone coercing someone into picking cotton.**

[Yasir Habib Khan](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/yasir-habib-khan)

May 05, 2024

[Newspaper](https://www.nation.com.pk/newspaper), [Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

The US and the West are eventually losing fifth-generation warfare against China as their fallacy about “Uyghur forced labor” in Xinjiang is completely exposed in the world of realities and tangible facts.

Following the misguided narrative building, the US also weaponised the enactment of “The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act” on December 23, 2021, later supported by EU in a bid to kick products and industries related to Xinjiang out of the global supply chain while tarnishing the image of China.

Unsurprisingly this absurd legislation and concocted narrative of forced labor did not receive recognition from the international community.

It seems funny that the smear campaign is going full-throttle that the Chinese government has subjected to Muslim community of Uyghur, Xinjiang (an autonomous region of northwest part of China) to forced labor in the cotton industry of Xinjiang. But the fact is that mechanised labor has replaced human labor to a great extent in the Xinjiang cotton industry.

[IHC orders authorities to transfer Bushra Bibi to Adiala jail](https://www.nation.com.pk/08-May-2024/ihc-orders-authorities-to-transfer-bushra-bibi-to-adiala-jail)

When the cotton harvest season starts in October, the vast cotton fields in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region see humming cotton-picking machines instead of farmers. Yan Zhimin, a cotton farmer in Puhui Township, Korla City, said in a media interview that automated machines such as cotton pickers and drone sprayers operate in most cotton production in Xinjiang, elevating farming efficiency and saving production costs.

The current fact is that the mechanisation rate of cotton planting and harvesting in Xinjiang has now reached 94 percent. So, there is little need for manual harvesting, let alone coercing someone into picking cotton.

Even deputies of the Xinjiang delegation during an open panel discussion at the second session of the 14th National People’s Congress (NPC) in April current year debunked the “forced labor” mantra in Xinjiang. Akram Memtimin, an official of Saymahalla Village in Xinjiang’s Luntai County, said when responding to a related media question that in recent years, certain foreign media outlets have been promoting the fallacy of “forced labor” in Xinjiang’s cotton industry, and the United States has imposed sanctions on Xinjiang cotton products.

[Uzbek foreign minister arrives in Pakistan on two-day official visit](https://www.nation.com.pk/08-May-2024/uzbek-foreign-minister-arrives-in-pakistan-on-two-day-official-visit)

He said that cotton farming has become more convenient as a result of technological advancements, such as the use of drones to spray pesticides and the installation of satellite navigation systems in cotton seeders. “Picking 1 kilogram of cotton manually costs 2 yuan (about 28 U.S. cents), and for a 1-hectare field with a yield of 4,500 kilograms, that would be 9,000 yuan. In comparison, mechanised cotton picking costs only 2,250 yuan per hectare,” he said. With figures like these, Akram Memtimin feels he is reasonable in questioning the need for coercion. “This snow-white cotton is our source of income. We make a good living. We purchase cars and move into modern houses by growing cotton. Do we need to be forced to do so?” he asked.

US media accused Chinese seafood processors of using so-called “forced Uygur labor” sourced from Xinjiang, some importers from the U.S. and Europe terminated cooperation with fisheries companies in China’s coastal regions, while some Western politicians demanded the ban on market entry of relevant seafood. According to SeafoodSource, a news website for the seafood industry, most of the initial internal investigations by both Chinese seafood processors and their international clients “turned up no evidence” that Uygur labor was being employed. Furthermore, their audit results showed “absence of forced labor” and “compliance with social standards.” After conducting a statistical analysis of over 30,000 Xinjiang-related stories from media outlets in 15 countries and regions, Tuersun Aibai, a scholar at Xinjiang University, noticed an evolving strategy employed by some Western anti-China forces to manipulate public opinion and frame the transfer of employment as so-called “forced labor.”

[Delegation of PFUJ, PUJ visits Jinnah House](https://www.nation.com.pk/08-May-2024/delegation-of-pfuj-puj-visits-jinnah-house)

German carmaker Volkswagen said in a media statement that external auditors hired by the company found no evidence of forced labor at the company’s plant in Xinjiang. According to Volkswagen, a report by MSCI ESG containing allegations of human rights violations in Xinjiang is “factually incorrect and wholly misleading.”

Volkswagen said the employees have a low work intensity and are being remunerated above average rates. The rebuttal is just another slap in the face for the manufacturers of the “forced labor” lies, who want to suppress the development of industries in Xinjiang and undermine its participation in global industrial chain cooperation.

Over the past several years, many foreign diplomats, media persons, and representatives from international organizations visited Xinjiang. None of them saw any truth to the claim of “forced labor”. They all shared the view that Uyghurs and people of other ethnic groups in Xinjiang lead a happy life. Maxime Vivas, a French writer, and journalist who wrote a book titled Ouïghours, pour en finir avec les fake news (Uyghurs, to put an end to the fake news) based on his two visits to Xinjiang, proved that the so-called “forced labor” is nothing but a lie.

[PM for strict departmental proceedings against negligent officials over T&T system](https://www.nation.com.pk/08-May-2024/pm-for-strict-departmental-proceedings-against-negligent-officials-over-t-t-system)

**Yasir Habib Khan**  
The writer is the president of Institute of International Relations and Media Research (IIRMR). He tweets at @yaseerkhan.