

Human Rights in China: UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet Visits Xinjiang

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It was the first visit to China by a UN human rights chief in 17 years. For years, governments and human rights organisations have accused China of many kinds of human rights violations – and a series of them calls what has happened in Xinjiang “genocide” in line, one could add, with former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s “determination” that that was the correct label to put on it while not publishing one word of documentation to back up that grave accusation against China and its president.

After years of meticulous preparations, [Mme Michelle Bachelet](#) – a former President of Chile, a physician who has studied military strategy and who has served as both Health Minister and Defense Minister and has a significant personal experience with Pinochet’s reign of terror – sent an advance team, then went to China herself, had a zoom conversation with **President Xi Jinping** and then visited Xinjiang.

Here is [what the UN](#) has to say about it – including a link to her [virtual press conference](#) at the end of her mission.

What should be obvious is that here is a highly professional, no-nonsense diplomat doing her job with respect for the host country and knowing how to establish confidence with people in a culture different from her own. In other words, in the best tradition of diplomacy and how a UN official should go about it.

And one may add, particularly taking into account, that the whole issue of Xinjiang is controversial and a central conflict point between the US/West and China.

Above all, she makes clear what her mission was and was not.



The HR High Commissioner in Xinjiang May 2022 (Source: The Transnational)

China's vice foreign minister, **Ma Zhaoxu**, told state media that Bachelet's visit had "provided an opportunity to observe and experience first-hand the real Xinjiang." This means, one can assume, that China has considered her mission an expression of respect and, most probably, a starting point for more dialogue about these fundamental human rights issues.

But - I had nearly said, of course - the UN human rights chief must be criticised.

Here follow a few examples of how that is being done:

According to [The Guardian's reporter in Taipei](#) - who takes the US perspective already in the headline - US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken says that "We are concerned the conditions Beijing authorities imposed on the visit did not enable a complete and independent assessment of the human rights environment in the PRC, including in Xinjiang, where genocide and crimes against humanity are ongoing."

Blinken is sure he knows what has happened years ago and that it is "ongoing." He knows it is genocide. As mentioned, the US has still to back up that accusation made by his predecessor. However, some kind of factual knowledge and documentation is irrelevant to him; the purpose is to cast doubt on Michelle Bachelet and - of no less importance - the United Nations itself.

It's worth pointing out that the US State Department tried to manipulate the UN Human Rights Office even before visiting. According to [Reuters on May 20, 2022](#):

"We're deeply concerned about the upcoming visit," State Department spokesman Ned Price told a press briefing, adding that the United States had "no expectation that the PRC (People's Republic of China) will grant the necessary access required to conduct a complete, unmanipulated assessment of the human rights environment in Xinjiang."

Price said the United States had made its concerns known to China and to Bachelet, who he said for months had not heeded repeated calls by the United States and other countries to release a report by her staff on the situation in Xinjiang."

"Despite frequent assurances by her office that the report would be released in short order, it remains unavailable to us," Price said.

What's argued here seems to be that the UN human rights body should publish the report about Xinjiang before the High Commissioner goes there! Because that is what everybody else in the West has done?

The [China director of Human Rights Watch, Sophie Richardson](#) – who, of course, also knows that China is committing crimes against humanity – states that it would have been better if Bachelet had not gone and, incredibly, adds that her visit will “enable the Chinese government to commit even worse crimes than it has in the past.”

Richardson probably has to say this because, as [Reuters reported on May 20, 2022](#) – “Human Rights Watch said on Friday that it and other rights groups had expressed concerns that the Chinese government would “manipulate the visit as a public relations stunt.” So better repeat: What was it we said than learning something new.

The [Washington Post](#) considers this an appropriate headline “How the UN became a tool of China’s genocidal propaganda.” But, of course, sitting at a desk at the Amazon Jeff Bezos-bought (US\$ 250 million) newspaper, you know what the truth is on the ground in a province far away in China, and you also know that it is US policy to demonise China and make the UN as irrelevant as possible.

Here is an extraordinarily biased, nasty, and suspicious-creating report passed by the Sydney Morning Herald as “analysis” but a 100% opinion piece. It starts, “A farce, a charade, a sham. The response from human rights groups to the United Nations interrogation of allegations of human rights abuse in China has been visceral and swift” – so do not doubt what follows.

If this was not enough, you might listen to all to [Wion](#) and [Al-Jazeera](#): Don’t tell your audience what happened matter-of-factly – start with the US perspective and find someone willing to attack Mme Bachelet for not being “aggressively” enough and *thereby* also the United Nations.

So why does the UN Human Rights Commissioner have to be criticised – for going to China, for what she did and for what she achieved?

- First of all, she has not taken over the US-led Cold War rhetoric and policy in which the Xinjiang genocide accusation plays a significant – deceptive – role. But, courageously, she has insisted on going there and seeing for herself.
- She has managed what Western governments and organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, etc., could never achieve with their accusation approach lacking every respect for China, its culture and problems.
- She has listened to China’s views and perspectives – including the terrorist problem it has (had) in Xinjiang with those few among the Yuighur people who want to carve out Xinjiang from China and create, in its place, a new state called East Turkestan (the exile government of which has been in Washington since 2004).
- She has achieved something crucial for the future – stated towards the end of her summary, which these critical voices hardly bothered to read: “The Government has also stated that it will invite senior officials from the Office to visit China in the future.”

Most likely, she has found that the US and other reports supposed to back up the accusation

of genocide are generally of low quality and politicised. And that she needs her own office's fact-finding and analysis.

The US government and its NGO - *Near-Governmental Organisation*/partners in the new Cold War - such as Human Rights Watch - this is no less than catastrophic.

The UN's Michelle Bachelet has achieved - with a completely different approach based on intelligent diplomacy, a long-term perspective and respect - what they do not even bother to achieve. The success of her visit also proves that you *can* dialogue meaningfully with the Chinese even about sensitive issues and that they pay back with respect and a will to cooperate if you do.

All that, of course, has no place on a Cold War agenda.

And that is why they must cast doubt on Michelle Bachelet's visit and - beyond a doubt - will try to replace her. Her - not their - approach, that of the UN, is simply better and could potentially lead to mutual understanding and resolution of the problems in Xinjiang.

To her, human rights are essential. But to them, it is primarily a political tool in a Cold War Agenda.

And the latter is precisely what TFF has shown in its two major research reports from 2021:

- [Behind the Smokescreen. Behind the West's Destructive China Cold War Agenda and Why It Must Stop](#);
- [The Xinjiang Genocide Determination as Agenda](#).

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