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## **CHINA | Human Rights Policy Act Signed**

Uyghur groups welcomed the signing into law of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 by US President Donald Trump on June 17. The Act authorizes sanctions against Chinese officials deemed responsible for the mass arbitrary detention of ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

President Trump signed the Act into law after it was passed by the US House of Representatives on May 27 by a vote of 413 to one. The Act is a bipartisan effort, introduced by Republican Senator Marco Rubio and New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez, who is a Democrat.

The Act is the first in the world to address the human rights situation in the XUAR, where over one million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and members of other ethnic groups have been detained without charge in political re-education camps. Recent estimates are as high as three million. As previously reported by CSW, the strength of the evidence leaves no doubt that mass detentions are taking place in the XUAR which violate domestic and international law.

Grounds for detention include having the messaging service WhatsApp on one's phone, having relatives living abroad, and accessing religious materials online. Witnesses say detainees are subject to torture and mistreatment. According to the Chinese authorities, the camps offer vocational training to "save" people from extremism.

The implementation of the Act falls to the US' executive branch, which must identify officials it deems should be subjected to sanctions. The new law also requires regular monitoring of the situation by government bodies. In a statement issued on June 17, President Trump said, "The Act holds accountable perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses such as the systematic use of indoctrination camps, forced labor, and intrusive surveillance to eradicate the ethnic identity and religious beliefs of Uyghurs and other minorities in China." The statement also said that the administration would treat as advisory and non-binding section 6(g) of the Act, which requires advance notice to several congressional committees for the termination of sanctions by the President, "to the extent that it interferes with the President's conduct of diplomacy."

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW welcomes the signing into law of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, which has the potential to facilitate greater scrutiny of the

ongoing human rights crisis in the XUAR. The situation in the region is a horrific example of China's extensive and flagrant violation of human rights. The US must take this opportunity to hold to account those responsible for egregious human rights violations in the XUAR. We urge other members of the international community to also take steps to apply pressure on China and stand up for Uyghurs and other victims of violations of human rights in the country."