

A new leak of highly classified Chinese government documents has uncovered the operations manual for running the mass detention camps in Xinjiang and exposed the mechanics of the region's Orwellian system of mass surveillance and "predictive policing."

The *China Cables*, obtained by the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)*, include a classified list of guidelines, personally approved by the region's top security chief, that effectively serves as a manual for operating the camps now holding hundreds of thousands of Muslim Uighurs and other minorities.

The leak also features previously undisclosed intelligence briefings that reveal, in the government's own words, how Chinese police are guided by a massive data collection and analysis system that uses artificial intelligence to select entire categories of Xinjiang residents for detention.

The manual, called a "telegram," instructs camp personnel on such matters as how to prevent escapes, how to maintain total secrecy about the camps' existence, methods of forced indoctrination, how to control disease outbreaks, and when to let detainees see relatives or even use the toilet. The document, dating to 2017, lays bare a behavior-modification "points" system to mete out punishments and rewards to inmates.

### **Industrial-scale human rights abuses**

The manual reveals the minimum duration of detention: one year — though accounts from ex-detainees suggest that some are released sooner.

The classified intelligence briefings reveal the scope and ambition of the government's artificial-intelligence-powered policing platform, which purports to predict crimes based on these computer-generated findings alone. Experts say the platform, which is used in both policing and military contexts, demonstrates the power of technology to help drive industrial-scale human rights abuses.

The China Cables reveal how the system is able to amass vast amounts of intimate personal data through warrantless manual searches, facial recognition cameras, and other means to identify candidates for detention, flagging for investigation hundreds of thousands merely for using certain popular mobile phone apps.

The documents detail explicit directives to arrest Uyghurs with foreign citizenship and to track Xinjiang Uyghurs living abroad, some of whom have been deported back to China by authoritarian governments. Among those implicated as taking part in the global dragnet: China's embassies and consulates.

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