

After the Holocaust we said, “Never again”, but this was nothing but empty words.

Earlier this year, I got the opportunity to work with an amazing holocaust educational charity in the UK, and this involved writing an essay about why it still important to remember the events at the holocaust. Honestly, I found it quite hard to think of reasons beyond remembering those who were tragically murdered and imprisoned. However, after doing some research, I found that since 1945 experts believe that there have been 37 incidents of genocide since. There are several that everyone can universally agree upon. In other words, we have agreed that at least 3.5million people have been murdered without serious consequence for those responsible. For example, in East Timor, Indonesia we know that the UN peacekeepers witnessed thousands of unlawful murders, yet they did nothing. After the Holocaust we said, “Never Again”, but it has happened 37 times since and it is even happening right now!

Uyghur Muslims are being forced into these “optional re-education camps”, Chinese authorities claim these camps are training centres and the people there are students rather than detainees. If anyone has seen the film ‘The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’ there is a scene where Bruno sees the Nazi propaganda video for concentration camps, but when he gets inside the camp its completely different. This feels all too similar to the propaganda videos coming out of China, showing the Uyghur Muslim camps to be fun, activity centres but when you see secret filmed footage, the people are blindfolded, shaved and being forced onto trains. We do not know exactly what is happening in China, but it has been reported that detainees are abused, tortured, raped, and killed. As well as this, survivors report electrocution, sterilisation, and injections of unknown substances. Human rights groups believe there are at least 465 of these camps throughout Xinjiang – the region in China where Uyghur Muslims live. The Uyghur Muslims are also being made to manufacture products, and they are being shipped to the West and being used by us. Amazon, Ford, HP and at least 500 other companies just like them operate in the region of Xinjiang. They may not be directly operating in Uyghur Muslim camps; however, the whole region of Xinjiang is seeing worsening violations of human rights and it is extremely unlikely that workers have anything like appropriate working conditions. We are all benefiting from this genocide and this makes it so much harder to stop it.

Personally, I feel so powerless in trying to help, I have found dozens of UK government petitions that all ended and were debated in 2018, yet the camps still exist! In fact, the situation is getting worse. So, what to do now? I encourage you to do your own research and find petitions to sign; it is quick and easy to do. As well as this, you can also try to check the products you are buying do not come from Xinjiang. However, I think we can and should do more. Alex Burghart is our local MP in Brentwood, imagine if he received a few emails over the next week about why he needs to educate himself, speak out on the human rights violations and targeted persecution faced by the Uyghurs, and do everything in his power to stop this genocide. Further educating yourself is something you can easily do right now because we need to keep talking about this until the situation has drastically improved.

Grace Middleditch