



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Why is Canberra boosting Islamist terrorism apologists?

On 18 September 2015, knife-wielding terrorists killed 50 off-duty workers at a coal mine. “Nearly all the workers who were not on shift at the time were killed or injured”, said police officer Ekber Hashim, according to Reuters. “Some workers were sleeping while others were preparing to work when the attackers raided the building after killing the security guards.”

Eighteen months earlier, terrorists with machetes and clad in black robes hacked to death 31 people and injured 140 others at a train station.

These attacks were part of a wave of deadly terrorism in China; the train station attack was in Kunming, in Yunnan province, and the coal mine attack was at the Sogan colliery in Aksu, Xinjiang, where most of the terrorist attacks in China have occurred. The Global Terrorism Database maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, College Park in the United States, records that in the 10 years to 2017 China suffered 112 terrorist attacks which killed 796 people and injured 999 others—again, mostly in Xinjiang. (By comparison, the wave of terrorism in France in this period, which was the worst in the Western world, killed 282 people.)

The perpetrators of these attacks, and the source of the ongoing terrorism threat, overwhelmingly are radical Uyghur Muslims who are also “East Turkistan” separatists, their name for Xinjiang; many of their victims are fellow Uyghurs in Xinjiang. The most well-known terrorist group is the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, also called the Turkistan Islamic Party. The US State Department listed the ETIM as a terrorist organisation in 2002. In a 7 February 2018 briefing from Kabul in Afghanistan, US Air Force Major-General James Hecker, Commander, 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force—Afghanistan, revealed that on the previous weekend the USAF had bombed Taliban and ETIM training facilities. “The destruction of these training facilities prevent terrorist from planning any acts near the border with China and Tajikistan”, he said, adding: “One brief note on ETIM, which I just mentioned. They are a terrorist organisation that operates in China and the border regions of Afghanistan. ETIM enjoys support from the Taliban in the mountains of Badakhshan.” In 2019 the US Department of Defence identified ETIM as one of the three greatest threat groups to US and allied forces in Afghanistan.

Yet on 6 November 2020, three days after the US Presidential election, then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo fired a diplomatic improvised explosive device at China by removing ETIM from the State Department’s list of terrorist organisations. “ETIM was removed from the list because, for more than a decade, there has been no credible evidence that ETIM continues to exist,” the 7 November 2020 *Guardian* quoted a State Department spokesperson saying. Proving that this was a cynical exercise to send a message to China that terrorism against Chinese people doesn’t matter to Pompeo and his fellow China-haters, neither the State Department nor the *Guardian* commented on the Pentagon’s insistence that ETIM does exist, because—hello?—US forces were fighting it in Afghanistan.

Pompeo’s claim that ETIM doesn’t exist echoed the “Prime Minister” of the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE) in Washington, Salih Hudayar, who had declared in a press release two months earlier, on the anniversary of 9/11: “China deliberately fabricated the so-called ‘East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)’ in an effort to confuse the world.... There is no evidence whatsoever of a group calling itself the ‘East Turkistan Islamic Movement’.” Hudayar added: “However, a terrorist group called the ‘Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP)’ which operates in Syria and Afghanistan does exist. The TIP has direct allegiance to the Taliban who are in turn very close with China, leading many Uyghurs to think that the TIP could be a Chinese intelligence front created to mislead Uyghurs and radicalise them in order to justify China’s claims that Uyghurs are ‘terrorists’.”

Putting aside Hudayar’s conspiracy theory, his acknowledgement that TIP—which the UK lists as a terrorist organisation alongside ETIM, as they are one and the same—is a terrorist organisation is shockingly revealing, because on 16 December 2017 Hudayar had commented on a Turkish journalist’s tweet about TIP in Syria, where as many as 20,000 members fight alongside al-Qaeda and ISIS, saying this: “It’s quite sad to see the majority of the Uyghur fighters are naïve and think they are fighting in the path of Allah when in reality they are fighting for interests of foreign governments that supply them with the funding and arms, *whereas their real enemy lies in East Turkistan* [i.e. China].” (Emphasis added.)

The latest issue of the Citizens Party’s *Australian Alert Service* magazine has reported Hudayar’s views

in an article entitled, "[Australian politicians back East Turkistan terrorism apologists](#)". It reveals that Hidayar, as "Prime Minister" of the self-proclaimed East Turkistan Government in Exile, is closely associated with the Adelaide-based East Turkistan Australian Association (ETAA), and is heavily promoted on the ETAA's website, alongside known Islamist extremists, including radical preachers banned from the UK and many other countries. Yet the ETAA is the go-to source in Australia for the media and politicians to claim that China's counter-terrorism efforts in Xinjiang—not to drop bombs like the USA is doing over the border, but to deradicalise through education and poverty-reduction—amount to "genocide". Unlike the scrutiny applied to every other Islamic-ethnic group in Australia, nobody questions whether the legal problems ETAA members claim they and their families in China experience relates to their extremist links—they are given a free pass because they are anti-China. Despite its extremist links, the article documents how politicians including independent South Australian Senator Rex Patrick, and Morrison government Minister Andrew Hastie, promote the ETAA and its claims, to further their own anti-China agenda. It is especially ironic from Hastie, given he served in the ADF in Afghanistan against the Islamist jihadist forces that include the TIP, and his own demand in the 30 November 2015 *Herald Sun* that sounds like the agenda China is accused of pursuing: "Modern Islam needs to cohere with the Australian way of life, our values and institutions", he said. "Insofar as it doesn't, it needs reform."

Terrorism is *never* OK—so what message are we sending to the Chinese people—our biggest trading partners—when our politicians promote a group associated with extremists who excuse terrorism if it's against China, and call for violent al-Qaeda/ISIS-allied Islamists to wage their jihad in China?

[Click here to read "Australian politicians back East Turkistan terrorism apologists"](#).