

Beat: Local

## ZHAO XINWEI, EDITOR OF THE XINJIANG DAILY NEWSPAPER SACKED & WILL BE PROSECUTED

### CRITICISING POLICY ON WAR ON TERROR

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**USPA NEWS** - Zhao Xinwei, the editor of the state-run Xinjiang Daily newspaper, was removed from his job and expelled from the party after an investigation found him guilty of "improperly" discussing, and publicly opposing, government policy in China's violence-stricken west....

Zhao Xinwei, the editor of the state-run Xinjiang Daily newspaper, was removed from his job and expelled from the party after an investigation found him guilty of "improperly" discussing, and publicly opposing, government policy in China's violence-stricken west.

The former editor's "words and deeds" had gone against government attempts to rein in religious extremism and terrorism, the official China News Service agency reported on Monday.

China will prosecute the former editor-in-chief of the official Communist Party publication in the violence-prone far western region of Xinjiang on charges of corruption after he queried ethnic and security policies, the paper said on Monday.

Hundreds of people have died in the last few years in Xinjiang unrest blamed by the government on Islamist militants. Rights groups and exiles say controls on the religion and culture of the Muslim Uighur people who call the region home are more to blame for the violent outbreaks. China denies any such repression takes place. (Reuters)

An investigation has found that Zhao "improperly discussed" party policies in Xinjiang and 'publicly made comments in opposition' to how the party conducted itself in the region, the newspaper said in a terse front page report. New discipline rules unveiled last month ban "baseless comments" on major policies.

Zhao's case underscores China's tough media controls in Xinjiang, said Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for exile group the World Uyghur Congress. 'The media has to push China's hostile propaganda against the Uighurs and make excuses for repression,' he added.

According to his official biography, Zhao Xinwei, 58, had worked in Xinjiang for most of his career, arriving in 1986 in its far southern city of Kashgar, deep in the Uighur heartland, where he eventually became propaganda chief. Zhao Xinwei, a Han Chinese, ran the Xinjiang Daily from January 2011 and is one of only a handful of regional officials to be ensnared in President Xi Jinping's war on corruption.

Those who 'irresponsibly make comments about national policies' or who 'defame the nation, the Party and State leaders or distort the history of the nation and the Party' will be punished, the state-controlled Global Times tabloid newspaper reported.

In May last year Beijing launched a 'people's war on terror' in Xinjiang following a series of deadly attacks on civilians. In September, Ilham Tohti, a respected academic who dared to speak out against Beijing's treatment of Xinjiang's Uighur ethnic minority, was jailed for life for 'inciting separatism'.... Particularly taboo was criticism of Beijing's repressive security tactics or debate about how the Uighurs' social and economic exclusion was helping fuel repeated outbreaks of ethnic violence between Uighurs and Han Chinese migrants.' (The Guardian)

Ruby BIRD

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