



Hikvision Hired Attorney Admits Its Police Contracts Target Uyghurs

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While Hikvision has kept its human rights investigation report secret for 2 years, IPVM has obtained speeches from a Hikvision partner event where the company's own hired attorney admits its police contracts targeted Uyghurs.



[- YouTube](#)

The remarks were made by Pierre-Richard Prosper, the attorney hired by Hikvision to investigate its Xinjiang activities. This is the first time details of Prosper's report are made public beyond its conclusion that [Hikvision Did Not](#)

"Knowingly" Commit Rights Abuses.

Prosper did not address the fact that the contracts are ongoing and some of them also included cameras for Xinjiang's concentration camps. In this post, IPVM examines Prosper's comments and what they show about Hikvision.

Hikvision has not responded to IPVM's multiple requests for comment, which we first issued over three weeks ago. [Axios has covered our findings and this report.](#)

Prosper ESG Conference Speech

On March 15, Hikvision [held an ESG](#) (Environment, Social, Governance) Conference to "glean more insight into the legal landscape that Hikvision operates in and its global responsibilities that Hikvision is committed to fulfilling":



The conference included a speech by [Pierre-Richard Prosper](#), on the topic of "human rights compliance":

| | | |
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| 10:20am - 10:25am | Welcome Speech | Evan Liu, Managing Director, Hikvision Oceania |
| 10:25am - 10:40am | ESG Overview | Jeffrey He, Vice President, Global Affairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is currently happening globally and locally that is of relevance to Hikvision? • Hikvision's overall global affairs strategy |
| 10:40am - 11:10am | Session 1 - Human Rights | Introduction to human rights compliance with Amb Prosper (The US Human Rights Ambassador) |
| 11:10am - 11:40am | Session 2 - Security | Introduction to Cybersecurity and Vulnerability Disclosure with Chuck Davis (Vice President, Global Information Security) |

Prosper & Xinjiang Report Background

[Pierre-Richard Prosper](#), an attorney for legal and lobbying firm [ArentFox Schiff](#), served as the US State Department's Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues until 2005 and also served as a War Crimes prosecutor at the United Nations in the late 1990s.

Hikvision [announced](#) hiring Prosper in 2019 to conduct "an internal review of our operations" and to "help ensure human rights compliance going forward." Specifically, Prosper was tasked with investigating Hikvision's [five Xinjiang police projects](#).

Hikvision [released the conclusion](#) of Prosper's report in 2021, stating that Hikvision did not "knowingly" commit human rights abuses, but has not released any other details.

"This Is A Problem"

In his speech, Prosper said his investigation did not "absolve Hikvision" since some of the contracts had "concerning language" targeting Uyghurs, noting "this is a problem":

we said **we are not going to absolve the company**. And I'll explain why. We said that in the **contracts we saw some concerning language where it said Uyghurs, [unintelligible], and this-and-that, which would appear that the contracts were looking at groups and not isolated to a criminal, let's say. So it was very general**. And we said, '**this is a problem**'. And we said [this] to the company [Hikvision] and with the company we had very honest conversations.



We said, '**you gotta look at these contracts closely because [...] this is a problem, at least in the Western world when you have a group that is being targeted**.' [emphasis added]

Prosper stood by his conclusion that Hikvision [Hikvision Did Not "Knowingly Commit Human Rights Abuses](#), stating he was "very, very comfortable" with it.

Can't Just Say, "We Wanted To Monitor The Uyghur Population"

Prosper said that naming entire ethnic groups and targeting them for surveillance is problematic but Hikvision had limited awareness of such conventions as a PRC company:

[Chinese companies like Hikvision] were given the first half [of the story], that there was terrorism [in Xinjiang]. But they were not hearing about the international community's complaints about potential abuses or whatever it may be. **It was a blind spot**. So a company would just go in and see or respond to the security [demand], here you go. So we said to them, 'while we understand that there's a blind spot

there, **because you use limited information that you're getting in China**, through the internet, because of [fire]walls, and so on, what we want you to do as a company is **we want you to be sensitive to language that may cause you to raise an eyebrow. You know, saying 'we wanted to monitor the Uyghur population'. By itself is maybe, [you] should say, 'well, wait a minute, not the population as a whole but there's criminal elements.'** So this is where this all comes in and we decide when we finished the report we said, 'we don't think you were responsible, but there **were some failings in the system where there's some flags you should have looked at**. And we want to help you address this point in the future so that you can overcome these problems if they were to happen again.' [emphasis added]

Prosper said he advised Hikvision to be more sensitive to language used in contracts, improve internal human rights compliance, and improve internal communications to be more aware of such issues in the first place.

Moyu Contract "Most Concerning"

Prosper said the "most concerning" police project won by Hikvision's was its deal in the overwhelmingly Uyghur county of [Moyu](#), since it explicitly identified Uyghurs:

So we decided to take a look at this and then look at the various [Xinjiang police] projects. Some of them were very innocuous. And it was a regular run-of-the-mill security system. The **most concerning on paper was the Moyu Project** which was down in the southern part of Xinjiang, as you get closer to Afghanistan, the border in that direction. And it was the most concerning because of the language in the contract. And **the language [in the contract]** identified terrorism, **identified Uyghurs**, and then basically explained that they [authorities] want to look at various facilities and all that, religious facilities. [emphasis added]

Indeed, as IPVM [previously reported](#), the [Moyu project](#) mentions and targets Uyghurs for "prevention and control" due to their perceived "strong religious" beliefs.

The Moyu project also [includes panoramic cameras for a re-education camp](#), however Prosper did not directly mention the camps in his speech.

Blames "Cultural Divide" About Human Rights

Prosper blamed a "cultural divide" between "the West" and "China or any Communist-based societies" when it comes to the concept of "human rights":

But then one thing that was interesting, as we began to have a conversation, what became clear to me is when you start taking in the cultural divide that was taking place. And here's what I mean by that. **We in the West, instinctively or initially, everything is [all about] human rights, individual rights, and that's the first thing that you're looking at. But we realized quickly that in China, this is not the first point [...]** So we had to go through [this] with the company to give them human rights instruments and talk to them. This is why the international community is expressing concerns because of these instruments, and they **want to protect individual rights and it should be at the front of your mind, as opposed to collective rights as we find in China or any Communist-based societies**. So we began to raise this [with Hikvision]: 'Look, there's a difference and you have to be aware.' And if you - Hikvision - want to be a globally respected company, you need to understand that the West or others are thinking this as well. And you cannot just look at it in the isolated form that you're looking at this. [emphasis added]

Similarly, Hikvision argued that [In China, We Obey PRC Human Rights Law](#) in 2019.

Confirms Hikvision Deals Target Uyghurs

Prosper's remarks confirm that at least some of these projects are not run-of-the-mill security deals, but target an entire ethnic group, the Uyghurs, that the [UN itself says](#) is subject to "serious human rights violations" by the PRC.

Unmentioned: Projects Ongoing, Include Concentration Camps

Unmentioned by Prosper is that the five Xinjiang police projects are ongoing, including the ones that target Uyghurs, and are regularly disclosed in Hikvision's

[annual reports](#). Also unmentioned is that [two of the five projects](#) (in Moyu and Pishan counties) explicitly mention cameras for concentration camps. The UN [has recommended](#) the PRC take "prompt steps" to release "all individuals arbitrarily imprisoned" in these camps and said the treatment of Uyghurs amounts to possible crimes against humanity.

Hikvision No Response Despite Multiple Attempts

IPVM has requested comment on this from Hikvision multiple times starting on March 24 - over three weeks ago - but they have not responded.

Comments (0)