

U.S., U.K., EU and Canada sanction Chinese officials over Uyghur abuses

U.S., U.K., European Union and Canada all announced sanctions on Monday against Chinese officials involved in human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims.

Why it matters: It's a coordinated Western effort to hold Beijing accountable for its sweeping campaign of arbitrary detention, forced labor and forced sterilization against ethnic minorities in the far west region of Xinjiang, which the U.S. State Department and several legislative bodies have recognized as genocide.

Driving the news: The sanctions come on the heels of a frosty first high-level U.S.-China meeting in Alaska last week, which saw Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan clash with their Chinese counterparts over human rights and other issues.

- All three sets of sanctions announced on Monday target officials associated with the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) and Xinjiang Public Security Bureau (XPSB).
- The XPCC is a paramilitary organization that controls vast swaths of the economy in Xinjiang. The Trump administration last summer sanctioned both the XPCC and XPSB, which has contracted with numerous major Chinese companies to build mass detention camps and surveillance systems.

Zoom in: The EU measures are part of a sweeping new human rights sanctions regime that includes asset freezes and a travel ban, modeled after the Global Magnitsky Act in the U.S.

- **This marks the first time the EU has sanctioned China for human rights abuses since the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown.**

What they're saying: "Acting together sends the clearest possible signal that the international community is united in its condemnation of China's human rights violations in Xinjiang and the need for Beijing to end its discriminatory and oppressive practices in the region," the U.K. government said in a statement.

The other side: China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it would retaliate on Monday with sanctions against 10 EU individuals and four entities, including European lawmakers and scholars.