

Report: US company to stop sales of genetic tech in Xinjiang

21 February 2019



This April 26, 2007, file photo, shows the exterior of Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., of Waltham, Mass. The Wall Street Journal reports Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. will no longer sell or service genetic sequencers in China's Xinjiang region following criticism that they were used for surveillance that enabled human rights abuses. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia, File)

Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. says it will no longer sell or service genetic sequencers in China's mostly Muslim region of Xinjiang following criticism that they were used for surveillance that enabled human rights abuses, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The company in Waltham, Massachusetts, cited its "values, ethics code and policies," according to the Journal. The company said it recognized the importance of considering how products "are used—or may be used—by our customers."

Thermo Fisher faced criticism from [human rights groups](#) and American lawmakers for supplying the equipment used to identify individuals in Xinjiang. The region is under intense security measures as part of what the government says is an effort to stop extremism and separatist movements.

Thermo Fisher didn't immediately respond to a request for comment left on the company website.

As many as 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and other Muslim minorities are detained in political education camps in Xinjiang, according to U.S. officials and UN experts. The government says those camps are vocational training centers designed to rid the region of extremism.

The United States and other governments have criticized the crackdown. In May, a U.S. congressional commission on China wrote a letter asking the Commerce Department to prevent American technology from being misused by Chinese police.

© 2019 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

APA citation: Report: US company to stop sales of genetic tech in Xinjiang (2019, February 21) retrieved 16 June 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-02-company-sales-genetic-tech-xinjiang.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.