

## U.S. SLAMS CHINESE SANCTIONS

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U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned on Saturday that China's tit-for-tat sanctions against two Americans in the growing dispute over Beijing's treatment of Uighurs were "baseless" and would only shine a harsh spotlight on the "genocide" in Xinjiang.

"Beijing's attempts to intimidate and silence those speaking out for human rights and fundamental freedoms only contribute to the growing international scrutiny of the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang," Mr. Blinken said.

He spoke out after China announced sanctions against two Americans, a Canadian and a rights advocacy body, in response to sanctions imposed this week by the two countries over Beijing's treatment of the Uighur minority. At least one million Uighurs and people from other mostly Muslim groups have been held in camps in China's Xinjiang region, according to rights groups, who accuse authorities of forcibly sterilising women and imposing forced labour.

Mr. Blinken called the sanctions on the two members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom "baseless."

**END**

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