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Foreign stories on Urumqi misleading

By Cui Jia (China Daily)
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Many Chinese citizens, including residents in Urumqi, have expressed their anger over inaccurate reports by the foreign media of the July 5 riots in the capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

"Although the key July 5 reports by foreign media have improved to some extent, bias in the reporting still exists," said Phoenix Satellite Television commentator Lawrence Ho, who has been following the situation in Urumqi.

A number of foreign media agencies such as the BBC have "cleverly cut" and edited footage and information from State-run CCTV and Xinhua News Agency to create the "wrong impression" about what really happened in the riots, misleading the public as a result, state media reported.

Similarly, foreign newspapers such as the New York Times were found to be using real pictures with inaccurate captions.

More than 25 Urumqi residents also released a press statement of a letter they signed aimed at the BBC to protest its false reporting.

In the letter, residents expressed their anger over the British news agency's "twisting of the facts" about the riots, even though Chinese authorities gave foreign journalists the freedom to report the incident.

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"You could only see bias or even hatred toward China in the BBC's report, anything but facts," the letter said. The residents urged the BBC to "stop lying" and present what really happened in Urumqi to Britons and people around the world.

"I was so angry when my Russian friends told me that the Moscow-based Star TV station claimed more than a thousand Uygurs were killed by Han people during the riot," Urumqi resident Yina said in her own letter protesting foreign media coverage of the riot.

Yina then told her Russian friends that the TV station's report was untrue. "It's not responsible for a TV station to spread rumors without getting the basic facts checked."

More than 150 reporters from more than 60 foreign media agencies have arrived in the region. Journalists are given free rein to conduct interviews, officials said.

As such, a number of foreign media agencies reported the Chinese government has been very open in dealing with the incident, compared with reports on the riots in Tibet last year.

A New York citizen named Janet who grew up in Xinjiang commented in response to a New York Times report describing a "peaceful demonstration."

"Does this mean lives are not important? If your wife or husband was killed, could you still call it "peaceful demonstrations?" she said.

The New York Times should do more research and not release this kind of false report, Janet said.

Xinhua contributed to the story

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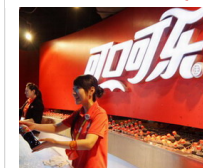
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