

Separatists blamed for China knife attack

Authorities have blamed a mass knife attack that killed 29 people and wounded 143 at a railway station in southern China, on separatists from the northwestern Xinjiang region

CHINA'S XINJIANG PROVINCE

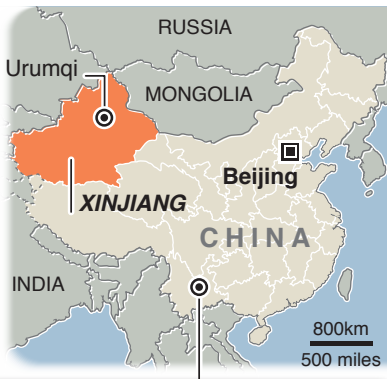
■ **Area:** 1,660,000 sq km (about one-sixth of China's total land area)

■ **Population:** 22 million (2011)

■ **Ethnic divide:** 45 percent Uighur – Turkic-speaking, mainly Muslim group. 40 percent Han Chinese

■ **Economy:** Oil and petrochemicals account for 60 percent of local GDP. Region rich in coal and natural gas

■ **Background:** Area controlled by China since 18th century. Xinjiang Autonomous Region established in 1955. Influx of Han Chinese settlers leads to tensions with Uighurs, who fear erosion of their culture



Mar 1, Kunming: Total of 33 people killed in mass knife attack, including four assailants shot by police

■ **Recent violence:** Xinjiang gains international attention in July 2009 when around 200 people die in ethnic rioting in region's main city, Urumqi. More than 100 people reportedly killed in renewed protests in 2013. Authorities blame Xinjiang separatists for Oct 2013 car crash which kills five people in Beijing's Tiananmen Square

■ **Separatism:** Uighur resentment fuelled by security crackdowns and religious restrictions, including government-approved Koran and state-managed mosques. Separatists who seek full independence from China call Xinjiang "East Turkestan"

Protester with East Turkestan flag during demonstrations outside Chinese embassy in Berlin in 2009

