

China to invest \$17bn in Xinjiang projects

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BEIJING: China plans to invest about \$17 billion in 100 projects in the violence-prone far western region of Xinjiang, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Hundreds have died in recent years in unrest in Xinjiang, blamed by Beijing on Islamist militants who want to establish an independent state called East Turkestan.

But the government has recognised the economic roots of some of the problems and has poured money in to develop the region.

The funds will cover projects spanning employment, housing, agriculture, poverty-relief among other things, according to the Standing Committee of the regional Party Committee.

The committee said about 10,000 Xinjiang villages will receive 500,000 yuan each to "improve livelihood," with 600 million yuan being used for poverty relief in 1,200 villages, while 24 billion yuan will go to build housing for 300,000 rural herdsmen.

About 600 billion yuan has been invested in the last six years, said Xinhua.

In February, China's ruling Communist Party expelled two senior officials in Xinjiang for corruption and transferred them to prosecutors.

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