

Drones will help Xinjiang fight terror



Border guards in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region direct a drone to patrol border areas in the region recently.

The Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region plans to deploy drones to patrol its borders as it further tightens security this year, a senior official said.

“Xinjiang will deploy drones, set up barbed wire and install surveillance cameras along the border to prevent people crossing the border illegally,” Jerla Isamudin, deputy chairman of the region, said in an interview. Xinjiang needs to further enhance cooperation in exchanging terrorism-related intelligence with neighboring countries, he said.

The region has been working on connecting People’s Liberation Army border control units to the power grids since 2014 to provide an efficient electrical supply to high-tech equipment. In 2017, 29 more frontier defense companies in Xinjiang will have electricity and will not have to rely on unstable solar energy and diesel generators, PLA Daily reported in March.

Northwest China’s Xinjiang neighbors eight countries, including Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it has a border of more than 5,600 kilometers. It has been China’s main battleground in the fight against terrorism.

Many terrorists who carried out attacks in the region in recent years received training abroad and then entered illegally, and some also fled across the border, according to the regional police authority. Chinese authorities believe the penetration of religious extremism from abroad has prompted people to carry out violent attacks in Xinjiang and other parts of the country in recent years.

Shohrat Zakir, the region's chairman, said in January that Xinjiang would impose tighter entry-exit measures in 2017.

In 2016, the regional legislature passed a regulation on border control, which took effect in December. The regulation requires people living along border areas to report strangers to public security authorities within 24 hours. Also, those who damage surveillance equipment along the borders will be punished in accordance with the regulation.

Nayim Yassen, director of the Xinjiang People's Congress Standing Committee, the regional legislature, said the committee will examine the works on border control and give suggestions for improvements later this year. Xinjiang sees keeping the region stable as a priority.

Chen Quanguo, the region's Party chief, has said the local security situation is an important index in evaluating officials.