

Joint Statement March 16, 2026

Request to Mark Up the Transnational Repression Policy Act

Dear Chairman Mast, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Meeks, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

We, the 35 undersigned diaspora, human rights, faith-based, and civil society organizations are writing to request that Congress prioritize preventing and addressing the pressing threat of transnational repression, or efforts by foreign governments or their proxies to silence, harm, or intimidate dissidents, members of minority diaspora communities, and others beyond their borders. With incidents of transnational repression on the rise globally, it is imperative that Congress acts now to protect the lives and liberties of those targeted by foreign powers.

Specifically, we kindly request that the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee hold markup sessions for the bipartisan and bicameral Transnational Repression Policy Act (H.R. 4829/S.2525).

Between 2014 and 2024, Freedom House recorded a total of 1,219 direct, physical incidents of transnational repression committed by 48 governments reaching across the borders of 103 countries.¹ In 2025, the Council on Foreign Relations found that incidents of transnational repression increased worldwide that year, with perpetrating states becoming more sophisticated in their intimidation and harm.² U.S. persons have not been exempt from this alarming trend: In recent years, journalists and activists in the United States—including naturalized American citizens—have been targeted with threats³ and murder-for-hire schemes by foreign governments.⁴ Nor is transnational repression limited to adversarial regimes. In 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced charges against an Indian government employee in connection with his role in directing a plot to assassinate a Sikh American in New York City, which the DOJ has characterized as “one of a series of murders that the conspirators planned of Sikh dissidents,”⁵ despite India’s economic and strategic partnership with the United States. Saudi Arabia, with whom the United States allegedly has “a strong relationship based on upon mutual respect,”⁶ has continued to engage in transnational repression⁷ in the years following

the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a resident of Virginia, at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2018.⁸

In addition to implicating civil and human rights, efforts to transgress our borders to unlawfully target individuals on U.S. soil are a flagrant violation of our national security and sovereignty.

Addressing transnational repression has bipartisan and bicameral interest, and this issue impacts diaspora communities across all parts of the United States. While much has been done by the U.S. government to date, addressing transnational repression requires a common definition of the problem, and the lack of such a definition represents a recurring gap in our government's strategy. Without a common definition, interagency collaboration is hampered, efforts across departments are needlessly duplicated, and training, reporting, and outreach are made more complicated. **Codifying a definition into law would address this problem, and our community feels that moving the Transnational Repression Policy Act to markup would be an important first step towards doing so.** By passing this bill, Congress can also help promote robust interagency coordination, and provide critical outreach to impacted communities—both of which are essential to effectively deterring this threat.

With transnational repression on the rise around the world, and with communities in the United States under continued and documented threat, it is imperative that our government respond with a comprehensive, coordinated approach that includes outreach to affected communities and increased reporting and interagency coordination. Establishing a formal definition of transnational repression is an essential step to any policy solution aimed at combatting the issue, and Congress has both a crucial role to play.

Once again, we reiterate our **request that the Transnational Repression Policy Act be marked up this spring, and we encourage members to consider co-sponsoring this important bill.**

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and your attention to this pressing matter.

Respectfully,

1. Alliance for Citizens Rights
2. American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER)
3. China Aid

4. Coalition to Change U.S. Policy on Pakistan
5. Committee For Freedom in Hong Kong (CFHK) Foundation
6. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
7. Dr. Iqtidar Karamat Cheema, in his personal capacity
8. Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)
9. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
10. EgyptWide for Human Rights
11. Freedom House
12. Friends of Falun Gong USA
13. Hindus for Human Rights
14. Hong Kong Watch
15. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
16. Human Rights First
17. Human Rights Foundation
18. Human Rights in China
19. JF Books
20. Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)
21. Lawyers Against Transnational Repression (LATR)
22. MENA Rights Group
23. New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy
24. No Business With Genocide
25. PEN America
26. Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
27. South Asian Network
28. Start Point
29. Students for a Free Tibet
30. The Sikh Coalition
31. True North Strategies LLC
32. Uyghur American Association
33. Uyghur Human Rights Project
34. Wild Pigeon Collective
35. World Uyghur Congress

Footnotes

- **1**
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Joshua Kurlantzick, *Transnational Repression Grew in 2025—and It Will Only Get Worse*, Council on Foreign Relations, Dec. 19, 2025,
<https://www.cfr.org/articles/transnational-repression-grew-2025-and-it-will-only-get-worse>
- **3**
Unsafe in America: Transnational Repression in the United States, Freedom House, 2022,
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- **4**
U.S. Attorney Announces Extradition Of Organized Crime Leader Charged With A Murder Plot Directed From Iran Targeting A Journalist, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of New York, Feb. 21, 2024,
<https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/us-attorney-announces-extradition-organized-crime-leader-charged-murder-plot-directed>; *Justice Department Announces Charges Against Indian Government Employee in Connection with Foiled Plot to Assassinate U.S. Citizen in New York City*, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, Oct. 17, 2024,
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The Government’s Motion in Limine (ECF No. 109), *United States v. Gupta*, 1:23-cr-00289, (S.D.N.Y.), Sept. 22, 2025,
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- **6**
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- **7**
2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Saudi Arabia, U.S. Department of State,
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/saudi-arabia>.
- **8**
Annex to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions: Investigation into the unlawful death of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi, United Nations Human Rights Council, 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3809582?ln=en&v=pdf>.