



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement & Intelligence Subcommittee Ranking Member Seth Magaziner (D-RI)

Safeguarding Dissident Voices: Addressing Transnational Repression Threats to Homeland Security

January 17, 2024

To our distinguished panel of witnesses, I recognize that it takes incredible courage for you to come before us and speak out against governments who seek to silence and even kill those who dissent. So, thank you for your willingness to share your experiences and expertise with us today.

The purpose of today's hearing is to explore how to prevent and protect against nation states' efforts to harass and intimidate their own citizens and critics of their government living in the U.S. Foreign governments are increasingly and more aggressively disregarding U.S. laws to threaten, harass, surveil, stalk, and even plot to physically harm people in our homeland.

At our October Full Committee hearing examining threats to the homeland posed by Iran, we heard from Ms. Masih Alinejad, an Iranian-American activist who has been the target of kidnapping and assassination plots directed by the Iranian regime. One month later, an unsealed DOJ indictment alleged that an Indian government employee had directed a plot to murder a Sikh leader here in the U.S., Mr. Gurpatwant Pannun.

The plots against Ms. Alinejad and Mr. Pannun are horrific and unacceptable. However, they are unfortunately not the only examples of transnational repression on U.S. soil. Transnational repression can involve physical violence, as well as coercing someone to return to their home country, or threatening and detaining family members back home.

Religious- or ethnic- minority groups like Muslims, Sikhs, and Uyghurs face threats from the governments of India and China respectively. While the government of Turkey practices enforced disappearances of its political and religious opponents living abroad. Political and human rights activists and journalists face smear campaigns and other attacks by tyrannical regimes seeking to squash opposition and prevent truthful reporting.

Intimidation and violence toward any community in the United States by any nation-state is intolerable.

That's why I was pleased to see President Biden directly address the Pannun murder plot by the Indian government at the G20 Summit in September with Prime Minister Modi. And to see the Biden Administration take action to combat transnational repression including:

- arresting and prosecuting many individuals in the U.S. for conspiring to act as agents of the Chinese Communist Party in connection with operating illegal police stations in the U.S. to monitor and intimidate dissidents and those critical of the CCP.

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency launched its High-Risk Community Protection initiative to combat digital transnational repression.
- And, the State and Treasury departments sanctioning perpetrators of transnational repression for their involvement in repressive acts against individuals residing in the United States.

We must remain focused on preserving America's reputation as the beacon of hope and freedom to the world, and condemn all forms of transnational repression. Holding perpetrators accountable is of strategic importance as it ensures America stays true to its values, ensures the safety of all U.S.-based persons, and protects the sovereignty and security of our Homeland.

I am looking forward to today's bipartisan discussion and am particularly eager to hear how the U.S. government can leverage bilateral partnerships to deter and mitigate transnational repression.

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