



Opening Statement for CTI Subcommittee Hearing  
on  
*Safeguarding Dissident Voices: Addressing  
Transnational Repression Threats to Homeland Security*

January 17, 2024

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- Good afternoon, and welcome to the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence.
- We are holding this important hearing to examine and discuss the rising threats posed by foreign nations that engage in hostile acts known as transnational repression—a term that may not be well-known but absolutely should be.
- Transnational repression is the act of a foreign government targeting an individual or community in another country and using violence, assassinations, the threat of violence, digital threats, family intimidation, smear campaigns, or the manipulation of legal processes to harass and intimidate individuals that are critical of the nation acting as the aggressor.



- Simply put, transnational repression is when authoritarian regimes like the Chinese Communist Party or Iran or others go beyond their borders to harass and silence their citizens and others who defend human rights and advocate for free speech.
- Transnational repression is not exclusive to any specific country.
- We have seen these oppressive tactics employed by nations that are hostile to the United States, and those who our nation views as strategic partners and allies.
- Regardless of our nation's relationship with the perpetrating nation, using violence or harassment to silence dissident voices in our nation is illegal and should not be tolerated by our government.
- Although this issue is not new, the threat of transnational repression has grown significantly in the last few years.
- Specific events include:



- In 2016, individuals associated with the Turkish government were charged with and convicted of crimes related to acting as covert agents to negatively influence U.S. politicians and the public's opinion of Turkish dissident, Fethullah Gulen.
- In January 2023, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced charges on individuals associated with Eastern European transnational criminal organizations who were directed by Iran to carry out an assassination plot on a U.S. citizen who spoke out against the regime's human rights abuses.
- In April 2023, 40 Officers of China's National Police were charged by the Department of Justice in transnational repression schemes targeting U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, including operating an illegal police station in lower Manhattan.
- In November 2023, the DOJ charged official within the Indian government, Nikhil Gupta, with murder-for-hire charges in connection with



a foiled assassination plot of a U.S. citizen who is a prominent Sikh activist in New York City.

- These are just a few of the many acts of transnational repression that have taken place on U.S. soil in the last few years.
- Foreign governments that engage in transnational repression continue to utilize new and innovative tactics to silence victims, such as using U.S.-based individuals and groups to unwittingly help these foreign government commit acts of transnational repression.
- These actions have included hiring U.S.-based private investigators, co-opting law enforcement officers or employees of social media companies, and recruiting members of local diaspora communities.
- Transnational repression will continue to be used as a tool to silence views that run afoul to those of autocratic governments if all branches of our government do not step up and work to solve this challenge.



- We must find a way to effectively deter nation states from engaging in transnational repression. I hope that today's testimony will inspire members of this subcommittee to take action and work in a bipartisan manner to find solutions.
- The United States must remain a bastion for every person to freely express their views without fear of persecution from foreign actors. As Chairman of this subcommittee, I am committed to working with anyone to uphold that commitment.
- This committee has led multiple initiatives to conduct vigorous oversight on the government's actions in combatting transnational repression.
- Last year, the committee held a hearing with a government panel that examined the threats posed by the CCP to the homeland. In that hearing, the witnesses discussed how the CCP's acts of transnational repression, including the use of illegal police stations across the country.



- The committee has also heard from Masih Alinejad about her experience being targeted by the Iranian regime.
- Lastly, the committee recently sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas and Director Wray highlighting the threats posed by transnational repression and requesting a classified briefing to discuss the threat.
- These are just some of the many ongoing efforts this committee has taken to ensure that we effectively combat this threat.
- I am delighted to have an esteemed panel join us today to discuss this pressing national security threat.
- We will hear perspectives from two victims of transnational repression and two different experts that are working to address this issue. I know all their insight will have a profound impact on this committee.
- I look forward to today's conversation and look forward to working with the Ranking Member and other members of this committee on this issue.