# House Foreign Affairs Committee Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing on 'Transnational Repression: Trends and Policy Approaches'

June 24, 2025, 2:00 PM

**Longworth House Office Building** 

#### STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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The Sikh Coalition respectfully submits this statement for the record in connection with the above-referenced hearing before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission ("the Commission").¹ As the nation's largest Sikh civil rights organization, we write to express concern about the threats Sikhs in the U.S. face from transnational repression (TNR) by the Government of India (GOI).

To address the safety and human rights concerns of the Sikh community, the Commission has the ability to support legislation and propose new recommendations to hold foreign governments accountable for their actions. While we cannot fully represent the diverse lived experiences of all communities impacted by TNR, we can confidently corroborate and amplify credible concerns regarding the GOI's role in targeting the Sikh diaspora. These concerns are part of a growing body of evidence pointing to India's troubling shift toward religious intolerance and authoritarianism in recent years, and recent events have confirmed long-standing community concerns about attempts to instill fear and silence Sikhs beyond India's borders—including in the United States.

Specifically, concerns over Indian TNR escalated in 2023. In November, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) indicted an Indian national for plotting to assassinate a Sikh American activist under the direction of an unnamed Indian official<sup>2</sup>—later revealed in a subsequent indictment in 2024 to be an Indian intelligence officer at the time of the conspiracy.<sup>3</sup> The indictment linked the plot to a broader campaign targeting Sikh activists across North America, including the June

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> By way of background, the Sikh Coalition is the largest Sikh American civil rights organization in the United States. Our organization was founded in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, in response to a torrent of hate crimes and acts of discrimination against Sikhs throughout the United States. In the more than 20 years since, our mission has been to work towards a world where Sikhs and other religious minorities in America can freely practice their faith without bias, bigotry, and backlash.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. "U.S. Attorney Announces Charges Justice Department Announces Charges in Connection with Foiled Plot to Assassinate U.S. Citizen in New York City." *U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York*, November 29, 2023, <a href="https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-charges-connection-foiled-plot-assassinate-us-citizen-new.">https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-charges-connection-foiled-plot-assassinate-us-citizen-new.</a>

<sup>3</sup> United States of America v. Vikash Yadav and Nikhil Gupta, S2 23 Cr. 289 (VM), Sealed Superseding Indictment, <a href="https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1373831/dl">https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1373831/dl</a>.

2023 murder of Canadian Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar by Indian agents.<sup>4</sup> These developments exposed a coordinated effort by the GOI to violently silence dissent abroad. In light of ongoing threats—including plots against Sikh individuals and institutions—the United States, and the Commission in particular, must respond decisively to protect civil rights, American sovereignty, and democratic values.

# I. Recent Developments in Indian TNR and the Targeting of Sikh Americans

Since the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's last hearing on TNR in February 2024, a series of new and disturbing developments have further validated the long-standing concerns of U.S.-based Sikhs with regard to this subject. These events provide additional evidence of the GOI's involvement in targeting Sikh individuals and organizations, both within the United States and abroad. These acts are not isolated, but are part of a systematic and organized campaign of intimidation led by foreign actors.

# A. Department of Justice's Indictment Against Indian Government Official

The U.S. government's ongoing investigation into the 2023 assassination plot targeting a Sikh American activist has revealed disturbing evidence of possible involvement by senior Indian officials, marking a serious escalation in concerns over TNR. On June 14, 2024, Indian national Nikhil Gupta was extradited to the United States to face charges in a foiled murder-for-hire plot targeting a New York-based Sikh activist. Then-U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland stated that the extradition demonstrated that the United States "will not tolerate attempts to silence or harm American citizens." In October 2024, the DOJ unsealed an additional indictment formally charging Vikash Yadav, a former GOI employee—specifically an officer of India's foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)—for allegedly directing the plot. The specifics of the indictment revealed that Yadav both coordinated with individuals in New York tracking his intended victim and reported to a higher-level figure, referred to only as "boss," who appeared to be overseeing the operation. These findings echoed reporting by *The Washington Post*, which stated that U.S. intelligence agencies at the time had assessed that RAW chief Samant Goel authorized the assassination campaign while high-ranking Indian officials like National Security Advisor Ajit Doval were presumably aware of the plot.

In January 2025, after over a year of denying involvement in the targeting of Sikhs abroad—as outlined in two DOJ indictments—India's Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) released a convoluted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Larry Neumeister, "US prosecutors say plots to assassinate Sikh leaders were part of a campaign of planned killings," *AP News*, November 30, 2023.

https://apnews.com/article/india-us-sikh-canada-assassination-separatist-leader-a178b912babc8d53d7c87c986623528a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, "Justice Department Announces Extradition of Indian National Charged in Connection with Foiled Plot to Assassinate U.S. Citizen in New York City." U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York, Jun. 17, 2024, <a href="https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/us-attorney-announces-extradition-indian-national-charged-connection-foiled-plot-assassi.">https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/us-attorney-announces-extradition-indian-national-charged-connection-foiled-plot-assassi.</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> United States of America v. Vikash Yadav and Nikhil Gupta, S2 23 Cr. 289 (VM), Sealed Superseding Indictment, <a href="https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1373831/dl">https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1373831/dl</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Greg Miller & Gerry Shih, "An Assassination Plot on American Soil Reveals a Darker Side of Modi's India," *The Washington Post,* Apr. 29, 2024, <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/29/india-assassination-raw-sikhs-modi/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/29/india-assassination-raw-sikhs-modi/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Editorial Board, "A murder plot that cannot be ignored: India must come clean at last," *The Washington Post,* Apr. 30, 2024, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/04/30/india-murder-assassination-plot-investigation/.

statement announcing the findings of its internal inquiry into the attempted assassination in New York.9 The statement vaguely acknowledged that "the security interests of both India and the U.S." had been "undermined," and recommended ambiguous legal action and procedural improvements. Then-White House National Security Council spokesperson Sean Savett called the statement "[a] constructive first step" and said that the United States "looks forward to seeing legal action taken in the Indian system." To date, we are unaware of any such legal action, and in its absence (as well as the absence of follow-up statements from the U.S. government), we view the MHA's statement as a superficial attempt to avoid real accountability or follow-through. The claim that the 2023 plot was the work of a single roque actor directly contradicts mounting evidence—presented by the DOJ and Canadian officials (see section II below)—indicating a broader, coordinated campaign of TNR against the Sikh diaspora. It is simply implausible that one officer orchestrated such a complex international operation, and the evidence strongly suggests that high-ranking Indian officials played a central role. Letting India deflect responsibility by scapegoating a lone actor and relying on vague language sets a dangerous precedent. This concern is echoed by organizations like Human Rights Watch, which have warned about the Indian government's lack of meaningful self-accountability.11

## B. India's Violations of Religious Freedom Noted in USCIRF Reports

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has repeatedly raised alarm over India's escalating violations of religious freedom, including transnational repression. In its 2024 Annual Report, USCIRF explicitly recommended that India be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for engaging in severe religious freedom violations, noting that the GOI's TNR targets U.S.-based Sikhs. 12 This recommendation was reaffirmed in March 2025, marking the sixth consecutive year that USCIRF called for the CPC designation. The 2025 report cited ongoing, systemic abuses both within India and abroad, and in addition to the CPC designation recommendation also advised sanctions against RAW for its alleged role in assassination plots targeting Sikh activists. 13 As detailed in the 2025 USCIRF Report, actions of TNR extend well beyond isolated rogue actors, implicating senior officers in coordinated campaigns against religious minorities abroad. Designating India as a CPC, as recommended by USCIRF, would enable targeted sanctions and bolster diplomatic efforts to curb Indian state-sponsored transgressions on U.S. soil.

# C. Ongoing Incidents in the United States of Indian TNR

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "High Powered Enquiry Committee submits its report to the Government," *Ministry of Home Affairs*, Jan. 15, 2025, <a href="https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2093056">https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2093056</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> "India panel calls for legal action against individual after US accusations in foiled murder plot," Reuters, January 15, 2025, <a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-panel-calls-legal-action-against-individual-after-us-accusations-foiled-2025-01-15/">https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-panel-calls-legal-action-against-individual-after-us-accusations-foiled-2025-01-15/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch, "India: Investigate Alleged Overseas Murder Plots," Dec. 15, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/15/india-investigate-alleged-overseas-murder-plots.

nttps://www.nrw.org/news/2023/12/15/india-investigate-aireged-overseas-murder-piots.

12 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "2024 Annual Report,"

https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/USCIRF%202024%20Annual%20Report.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "2025 Annual Report," https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/2025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf.

Sikhs in the U.S. increasingly face surveillance, intimidation, threats, immigration pressure, and other punitive actions linked to Indian consulates.<sup>14</sup> These concerns have only grown following the DOJ's indictments. Several Sikh Americans report heightened online harassment, violent threats, surveillance of homes and places of worship, doxxing, and even "swatting"—false police reports triggering aggressive law enforcement.<sup>15</sup> Reflecting on the seriousness of these developments, Nate Schenkkan, former Senior Research Director at Freedom House, described India's campaign as "a kind of worst-case scenario for TNR—when a major state acts completely outside the law using all the tools at its disposal to silence dissent."<sup>16</sup>

# 1. Physical Intimidation

In August 2024, *Reuters* interviewed 19 Sikh community leaders—including 3 U.S. elected officials—who reported ongoing threats and harassment in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>17</sup> Among them was California State Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Kaur Bains, who was threatened by four individuals of Indian origin in August 2023, warning they would "do whatever it takes to go after you." Following Mr. Nijjar's murder, Assm. Dr. Bains was among several Sikh Americans who were warned by the FBI about threats to their safety. Assm. Dr. Bains also reported surveillance—photos of her home, mailbox tampering—and over a hundred threatening texts, including death threats, between 2023 and 2024. Another Sikh American activist repeatedly warned by the FBI about a threat to his life was Dr. Pritpal Singh, founder of the American Sikh Caucus Committee. Dr. Singh emphasized that threats of violence and surveillance attempts, like those described by Assm. Dr. Bains, persisted even after the release of the above-mentioned DOJ indictments. In a further troubling case, a California Sikh activist and associate of Mr. Nijjar survived a drive-by shooting near Sacramento in August 2024. We and others believe that this may have been an act of TNR linked to the Indian government and must be investigated as such.

## 2. Targeted Harassment

U.S.-based Sikhs continue to face targeted harassment—including visa denials, threats, and pressure on family members—aimed at silencing dissent against the Indian government. Indian

<sup>18</sup> Jenny Huh, "Sikh lawmakers, threatened over ethnicity in recent weeks, highlight nationwide safety concerns," *KGET*, Oct. 19, 2023, <a href="https://www.kget.com/news/local-news/local-sikh-lawmakers-threatened-over-ethnicity-in-recent-weeks-highlight">https://www.kget.com/news/local-news/local-news/local-sikh-lawmakers-threatened-over-ethnicity-in-recent-weeks-highlight</a>.

The Sikh Coalition, "So Many Targets: Contextualizing Modern Indian Transnational Repression Against the Sikh Community,"
 Nov. 2024, <a href="https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2.0-So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf">https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2.0-So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf</a>.
 Sarah Lynch and Wa Lone, "Sikh activists in US, Canada face threats a year after Trudeau linked leader's killing to India,"
 Reuters, Aug. 13, 2024,

https://www.reuters.com/world/some-us-sikhs-fear-modi-government-is-threatening-surveilling-doxxing-them-2024-08-12/. 

16 lbid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Stephanie Kirchgaessner, "FBI warned prominent US Sikhs of threats after murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada," *The Guardian*, Sep. 26, 2023,

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/26/indian-government-sikh-activist-hardeep-singh-nijjar-murder-canada-fbi-warning.

The Sikh Coalition, "So Many Targets: Contextualizing Modern Indian Transnational Repression Against the Sikh Community," Nov. 2024, https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2.0-So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf.

Murtaza Hussain, "As Modi Visits D.C., Sikh Americans Say Surveillance and Threats Continue," *Drop Site*, Feb. 14, 2025, https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/as-modi-visits-dc-sikh-americans.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Joe Rubin, "In the shadow of a freeway shooting lurks the fear of Sikhs threatened in California," *The Sacramento Bee,* Oct. 5, 2024, https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article292803139.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The Sikh Coalition's Letter to Deputy Assistant Attorney General Argentieri, Aug. 27, 2024, *The Sikh Coalition*, <a href="https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Letter-from-the-Sikh-Coalition-to-the-DOJ-Criminal-Division-8 24.pdf">https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Letter-from-the-Sikh-Coalition-to-the-DOJ-Criminal-Division-8 24.pdf</a>.

consulates reportedly monitor government critics, including those active on social media or at peaceful protests. We have documented several cases in which Indian authorities have also targeted families of U.S.-based Sikhs involved in political advocacy.<sup>24</sup> A notable example of such behavior is the case of Swaranjit Singh, a city councilor in Norwich, Connecticut, whose efforts to commemorate the 1984 Sikh Genocide through city and state-level political engagement have been met with an incredible level of scrutiny and hostility from the Indian Consulate in New York.<sup>25</sup> The weaponized use of visa denials is another form of targeted pressure employed by the GOI's representatives, given that Sikhs across North America—from activists to elected officials—are routinely barred from India for speaking out for human rights,<sup>26</sup> such as the U.S.-based Emmy-nominated journalist Angad Singh, refused entry to India in 2022 for allegedly portraying the country "in a negative manner" in his documentaries.<sup>27</sup>

#### 3. Misinformation

Misinformation and disinformation further fuel the GOI's campaign of TNR. Sikh individuals and institutions have been targeted by coordinated Indian disinformation campaigns that are aligned with Hindu nationalist extremism. In October 2024, the Sikh community raised alarms over public reports detailing a secretive October 2023 meeting in Fresno between city and police officials and a group of activists with ambiguous affiliations. During the meeting, prominent local Sikh leaders were falsely accused of ties to terrorism and recommended for surveillance—despite any evidence of wrongdoing; in an interview with the *Sacramento Bee*, former Canadian intelligence operative Dan Stanton described similar instances of this sort of advocacy as "soft transnational repression." Furthermore, there are other such cases that reflect a broader transnational pattern of Indian misinformation networks that allegedly work under the direction of Indian intelligence officers.

# II. Indian TNR Developments in Canada: Alarming Implications for the U.S.

Developments in Canada reveal that India has also been conducting an organized campaign of TNR targeting the Sikh Canadian community. When viewed together with the DOJ indictments, these incidents expose an escalating pattern of targeted violence that demands urgent attention.

After then-Prime Minister Trudeau announced in September 2023 that Canada had "credible evidence" of India's involvement in Mr. Nijjar's death, Ottawa expelled the head of RAW's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Zack Beauchamp, "Everyone is absolutely terrified": Inside a US ally's secret war on its American critics," *Vox*, May 22, 2024, <a href="https://www.vox.com/world-politics/24160779/inside-indias-secret-campaign-to-threaten-and-harass-americans">https://www.vox.com/world-politics/24160779/inside-indias-secret-campaign-to-threaten-and-harass-americans</a>.

The Sikh Coalition, "So Many Targets: Contextualizing Modern Indian Transnational Repression Against the Sikh Community,"
 Nov. 2024, <a href="https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2.0-So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf">https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2.0-So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf</a>.
 Stewart Bell & Jeff Sample, "Investigation: Visas have become an Indian foreign interference tool," *Global News*, Dec. 10, 2024, <a href="https://globalnews.ca/news/10850080/india-visas-foreign-interference-canada/">https://globalnews.ca/news/10850080/india-visas-foreign-interference-canada/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Scroll Staff, "US journalist was deported as his documentary portrays negative view of India, Centre tells Delhi HC," *Scroll,* Jan. 28, 2023, <a href="https://scroll.in/latest/1042745/us-journalist-was-deported-as-his-documentary-portrays-negative-view-of-india">https://scroll.in/latest/1042745/us-journalist-was-deported-as-his-documentary-portrays-negative-view-of-india</a>.

<sup>28</sup> The Sikh Coalition, "Press Release: Joint Sikh Organizational Statement on Anti-Sikh Sentiments and Narratives in California," Oct. 2, 2024, <a href="https://www.sikhcoalition.org/press-release/joint-sikh-organizational-statement-on-anti-sikh">https://www.sikhcoalition.org/press-release/joint-sikh-organizational-statement-on-anti-sikh</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Joe Rubin, "In the shadow of a freeway shooting lurks the fear of Sikhs threatened in California," *The Sacramento Bee,* Oct. 5, 2024, <a href="https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article292803139.html">https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article292803139.html</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Gerry Shih, Clara Ence Morse & Pranshu Verma, "Covert Indian operation seeks to discredit Modi's critics in the U.S.," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 10, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/10/india-the-disinfo-lab-discredit-critics/#.

Canadian branch, Pavan Kumar Rai.<sup>31</sup> A year later, Canada expelled six more Indian diplomats after uncovering their illegal intelligence gathering on Sikh Canadians, some later threatened or killed, including Mr. Nijjar.<sup>32</sup> Canadian intelligence confirmed the direct roles of Indian diplomats in these and other crimes; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) called the "breadth and depth" of criminal activity orchestrated by Indian agents an ongoing public safety threat to Canada.<sup>33</sup> Around the time of the expulsions, then-Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly stressed that this is not an isolated issue, saying, "I hope our actions are sending a strong message to other Western democracies... because this is not only happening in Canada.<sup>34</sup> India's operations in Canada, however, have continued beyond Nijjar's murder. Over a dozen Canadian Sikhs have received active assassination threats, <sup>35</sup> including the former leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, Jagmeet Singh.<sup>36</sup> The RCMP has since confirmed that such targeted plots on Canadian soil are carried out by gang members recruited by Indian intelligence.<sup>37</sup>

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service warned in its annual report that India's influence extends beyond cultural communities and into Canada's political system.<sup>38</sup> Canada's Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference named India the second most active foreign government—after China—in covert operations targeting Canadian democratic institutions.<sup>39</sup> In October 2024, Canadian officials went on to directly accuse senior members of the Indian government of involvement in the assassination plots targeting Sikh activists in North America.<sup>40</sup> Despite this mounting scrutiny, Indian authorities have continued to obstruct investigations in Canada and have denied any role in Nijjar's killing. The implications for the United States are serious as India's TNR threatens international norms across allied nations.

## III. Conclusion

India's involvement in the recent killing of a Canadian citizen and its foiled assassination plot in the United States signals a deeply alarming effort to export authoritarian practices beyond its borders. Beyond these assassinations, an escalating pattern of various forms of repression specifically targets Sikhs and violates international human rights norms that must not be ignored, especially on U.S. soil.

<sup>31</sup> Kyle Duggan, "Canada expels diplomat amid allegations India involved in killing Canadian," *Politico*, Sep. 18, 2023, <a href="https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/18/canada-expels-diplomat-amid-allegations-india-involved-in-killing-canadian-00116602">https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/18/canada-expels-diplomat-amid-allegations-india-involved-in-killing-canadian-00116602</a>.

32 Associated Procs. "Indian diplomate put 'on notice' in Canada after links to anti Sith activity upgrovered." The Guardian Oct. 15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Associated Press, "Indian diplomats put 'on notice' in Canada after links to anti-Sikh activity uncovered," *The Guardian*, Oct. 18, 2024, <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/18/canada-india-diplomats-warned-anti-sikh">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/18/canada-india-diplomats-warned-anti-sikh</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "RCMP statement on violent criminal activity occurring in Canada with connections to agents of the Government of India," *RCMP*, Oct. 14, 2024,

https://rcmp.ca/en/news/2024/10/rcmp-statement-violent-criminal-activity-occurring-canada-connections-agents-government-india.

34 lbid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Raffy Boudjikanian, "More than a dozen Canadian Sikhs face active assassination threats, organization warns," *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, Jun. 12, 2025, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/sikh-activists-targeted-1.7559679.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Stewart Bell & Mercedes Stephenson, "Indian agent had Jagmeet Singh under close surveillance," *Global News*, Jun. 12, 2025, <a href="https://globalnews.ca/news/11229198/jagmeet-singh-indian-agent-surveillance/">https://globalnews.ca/news/11229198/jagmeet-singh-indian-agent-surveillance/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Leyland Cecco, "Canadian intelligence accuses India over Sikh's killing as Carney meets Modi," *The Guardian,* Jun. 18, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/18/canada-india-assassination-carney-modi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Darren Major, "Canada 'must remain vigilant' about Indian foreign interference, CSIS report cautions," *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, Jun. 18, 2025, <a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/india-foreign-interference-csis-report-1.7564710">https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/india-foreign-interference-csis-report-1.7564710</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Government of Canada, "Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. Final Report, Volume 1," Jan. 28, 2025, https://foreigninterferencecommission.ca/fileadmin/report\_volume\_1.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Rajesh Roy, "Canada Accuses Powerful Indian Minister and Modi Ally of Authorizing Anti-Sikh Attacks," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 30, 2024, <a href="https://www.wsj.com/world/india/canada-accuses-powerful-indian-minister-and-modi-ally-of-authorizing">https://www.wsj.com/world/india/canada-accuses-powerful-indian-minister-and-modi-ally-of-authorizing</a>.

Prosecuting individual operatives is not enough to hold the GOI accountable or deter future transnational targeting of U.S.-based Sikhs. Our federal government must address all acts of TNR through diplomatic strategies that hold perpetrator countries, including strategic partners, accountable. Until the United States takes unequivocal action to address Indian TNR, concerns over the safety of Sikh Americans will remain unresolved. We urge the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and Congress to ensure that the United States remains free from foreign interference that undermines the safety of American citizens. A strong, coordinated response is essential, and we stand ready to support efforts that protect our democracy.

We appreciate your attention to these urgent matters and are available for any further questions.

#### IV. Recommendations

In light of the growing body of evidence and credible reports of transnational repression propagated by the government of India, the Sikh Coalition recommends the following actions:

## • Congress: Pass legislation and enforce existing laws to address the threat of TNR.

- Push for the reintroduction of the Transnational Repression Policy Act (H.R. 3654/S. 831 in the 118th Congress). This bill would mandate the President to sanction foreign actors involved in TNR, and direct the Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies to create a U.S. strategy to address TNR, prioritizing training and intelligence efforts.<sup>42</sup>
- Push for the reintroduction of the Transnational Repression Reporting Act (H.R. 9707 in the 118th Congress).<sup>43</sup> This bill would direct the Attorney General to submit annual reports and ensure that the federal government tracks and publicly reports TNR cases within a given time frame.
- Of note, both of these bills were supported by Human Rights Watch and reflect their policy recommendations regarding TNR.<sup>44</sup>
- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to hold offenders of TNR responsible beyond visa restrictions. The Khashoggi Ban permits visa bans and is the only federal statute that addresses TNR directly. However, Congress could do more to explicitly authorize sanctions against individuals and entities engaged in TNR.
- Note that there is further legal precedent through the Global Magnitsky Act,<sup>45</sup> the Child Soldiers Accountability Act, and the Khashoggi Ban to deny visas to foreign officials implicated in human rights abuses. These should be applied to Indian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> The Sikh Coalition, "Letter to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, House Committee on Homeland Security, and Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission from The Sikh Coalition," Mar. 25, 2023,

https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Letter-on-TNR-from-the-Sikh-Coalition-andOther-AAPI-Organizations.pdf. 42 Congress.gov. "H.R.3654 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Transnational Repression Policy Act." May 24, 2023. https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3654/text.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Congress.gov. "Text - H.R.9707 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Transnational Repression Reporting Act of 2024." September 19, 2024. <a href="https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/9707/text">https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/9707/text</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Human Rights Watch, "We Will Find You": A Global Look at How Governments Repress Nationals Abroad, February 22, 2024, <a href="https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/02/2/we-will-find-you/global-look-how-governments-repress-nationals-abroad">https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/02/2/we-will-find-you/global-look-how-governments-repress-nationals-abroad</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Congress.gov. "Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Sanctions: The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act." May 10, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10576.

officials credibly linked to TNR, including senior diplomats expelled by Canada in October 2024.

## • Congress: Provide institutional support and oversight to effectively combat TNR.

- Support the documentation efforts of USCIRF by permanently reauthorizing the congressional body and passing legislation to reduce presidential authority to waive taking action against CPCs based on longstanding human rights concerns.
- Ensure greater congressional oversight into TNR by amending Section 6 of the Arms Export Control Act to include a reporting requirement of any instances where the President declines to enforce the law that would prohibit arms transfers to any country determined to be engaged in a consistent pattern of acts of intimidation against individuals in the United States.

# Congress: Prioritize measures that protect all Americans against TNR and limit foreign government interference.

- Craft legislation that prohibits a government from employing a registered lobbyist if its country has been designated as a CPC and/or has engaged in TNR to intimidate or harass individuals in the United States.
- Provide rights-based asylum pathways for permanent legal status for individuals targeted for translational repression.
- Provide greater protections for Americans who are targeted for TNR but have not yet obtained citizenship. (This loophole leaves Americans who are targeted by TNR while abroad with little assistance from the U.S. State Department, which could force them to seek assistance from the state that is perpetrating TNR.)
- Improve and clarify public grant resources to authorize use for defending against acts of translational repression, including the Nonprofit Security Grant Program and other federal victim support services.

# Congress and the Administration: Hold offenders of TNR accountable through multilateral actions.

- Provide public assurances to a thorough and complete investigation into India's alleged covert activities against Sikhs to address the safety and security concerns of Sikhs, other Indian diaspora communities, journalists, human rights advocates, dissidents, and religious minorities in the United States.
- Congress and the Administration: Urge the Department of State to designate India as a CPC, and take appropriate follow-up action after designation.
  - Impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for severe violations of religious freedom, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities.
  - Establish a screening process to block diplomatic visas for individuals with a record of targeting the Sikh diaspora. Diplomats already in the U.S. who engage in TNR should be expelled or held legally accountable.