



The Honorable James P. McGovern
U.S. House of Representatives
370 Cannon Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chris Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Submission to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing on the
Ongoing Political Repression in Pakistan**

Dear Representatives McGovern and Smith:

On June 18, 2025, President Donald J. Trump hosted Pakistan's military chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, at the White House to discuss bilateral relations. This unprecedented meeting—bypassing Pakistan's civilian leadership—was a stark departure from diplomatic norms and followed a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that averted war between India and Pakistan in May 2025¹. While framed as strategic engagement, this meeting reflects a troubling pattern: successive U.S. administrations have prioritized short-term security interests by empowering Pakistan's military, and in the process, have undermined human rights, democratic norms, and the rule of law.

For 78 years, Pakistan's military has wielded unconstitutional influence, manipulating politics and orchestrating coups². It has suppressed dissent through enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings, particularly targeting Baloch, Sindhi, and Pashtun communities³. Compliant judges, journalists, and parliamentarians historically shielded the military from

¹Reuters. "India Will Not Accept Third-Party Mediation of Relations with Pakistan, Modi Tells Trump." *Reuters*, 18 June 2025, www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/india-will-not-accept-third-party-mediation-relations-with-pakistan-mo-di-tells-2025-06-18/.

²Hussain, Abid. "Can Pakistan's Politicians Break the Military's Stranglehold?" *Al Jazeera*, 30 Jan. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/30/can-pakistans-politicians-break-the-militarys-stranglehold

³Congressional Research Service. *Pakistan: Civilian-Military Relations*. 19 Sept. 2022, https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/2022-09-19_IF12215_a2c34b6c15e2aafe91a600c0861a2ef9bca744ee.pdf

accountability, but public awareness surged after the April 2022 ouster of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, widely perceived as a military-orchestrated move.

Khan's removal, followed by his 2023 arrest on questionable charges, sparked unprecedented protests, some targeting military installations. The military responded with brutal force, cracking down on pro-democracy activists, muzzling the media⁴, intimidating judges⁵, trying civilians in military courts⁶, and using lethal weapons against unarmed protesters⁷. The 26th Constitutional Amendment passed in October 2024 further eroded judicial independence, leaving citizens without legal recourse, as condemned by the International Commission of Jurists⁸.

Pakistan's human rights record is dire. Freedom House's 2025 report scores Pakistan 32/100 for global freedom and 27/100 for internet freedom, classifying it as "not free."⁹ The World Press Freedom Index ranks Pakistan 158 out of 180 countries, underscoring dangers for journalists¹⁰. Transnational repression has escalated, with Pakistani authorities targeting Pakistani-American journalists and activists through threats, family harassment, asset seizures, and bank account freezes in Pakistan. These actions violate U.S. citizens' free speech rights and set a dangerous precedent for foreign interference. The 2023 U.S. State Department Human Rights Report and Freedom House confirm Pakistan's role among 26 governments engaging in transnational repression.¹¹

Diaspora Activism and Congressional Response

⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists. "Pakistani Journalist Sami Abraham 'Abducted,' Imran Riaz Khan Missing." *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 25 May 2023, cpj.org/2023/05/pakistani-journalist-sami-abraham-abducted-imran-riaz-khan-missing/

⁵ Hussain, Abid. "Judges vs Spies: Pakistan's Jurists Accuse Intel Agency ISI of Intimidation." *Al Jazeera*, 27 Mar. 2024, [aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/27/judges-vs-spies-pakistan-jurists-accuse-intel-agency-isi-of-intimidation/](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/27/judges-vs-spies-pakistan-jurists-accuse-intel-agency-isi-of-intimidation/)

⁶ May 9 and Military Courts: What the SC Decision Means for Civilians." *Dawn*, 9 May 2025, [dawn.com/news/1909718](https://www.dawn.com/news/1909718)

⁷ Amnesty International. "Pakistan: Urgent and Transparent Investigation Needed into Deadly Crackdown on Opposition Protesters." *Amnesty International*, 27 Nov. 2024, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/urgent-and-transparent-investigation-needed-into-deadly-crackdown-on-opposition-protesters

⁸ International Commission of Jurists. "Pakistan: 26th Constitutional Amendment Is a Blow to the Independence of the Judiciary." *International Commission of Jurists*, 21 Oct. 2024, www.icj.org/pakistan-26th-constitutional-amendment-is-a-blow-to-the-independence-of-the-judiciary/

⁹ Freedom House. "Pakistan: Freedom in the World 2025." *Freedom House*, 2025, freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-world/2025

¹⁰ Reporters Without Borders. *Index – World Press Freedom Index*. RSF, 2025, rsf.org/en/index

¹¹ U.S. Department of State. "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, U.S. Department of State, 22 Apr. 2024, www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/pakistan/

The Pakistani-American diaspora has mobilized against this repression and has actively engaged with its congressional representatives. Following the rigged February 2024 parliamentary elections, 368 bipartisan members of Congress passed House Resolution 901, demanding an investigation¹². Over 100 representatives called for the release of Imran Khan and thousands of political prisoners, echoing UN and Amnesty International demands¹³. In October 2024, 62 congressional Democrats urged then-President Biden to impose targeted sanctions on Pakistani officials, including General Asim Munir¹⁴. In June 2025, 59 members of Congress reiterated calls for sanctions against those implicated in human rights abuses¹⁵.

Despite this congressional momentum, the United States' failure to publicly condemn these human rights violations or impose consequences has functioned as a greenlight for further repression, reinforcing the Munir regime's sense of impunity. President Trump's June 2025 meeting with Munir once again reinforced the notion that the U.S. is all too willing to sacrifice human rights on the altar of strategic interest.

And yet, it can be argued it is in America's long-term interest to prioritize the rule of law, democratic norms, and human rights in Pakistan, which provide the foundation for sustainable economic and security cooperation. The Trump administration's economic interests, such as rare minerals and cryptocurrency cannot advance in a sociopolitical climate where investments are vulnerable to corruption, mismanagement, and social unrest. Similarly, sustainable security cooperation requires engagement with a stable, democratically elected government that reflects the will of Pakistan's 240 million citizens, particularly its youth, who largely favor democracy. Disregarding these aspirations risks alienating a critical demographic, threatening long-term stability.

U.S. Leverage and Policy Recommendations

The U.S. holds significant leverage over Pakistan through programs like the International Military Education and Training (IMET), maintenance support for Pakistan's F-16 fleet, and influence over IMF loans and financial systems access. An unstable nuclear-armed Pakistan, the

¹² United States, Congress, House. *H. Res. 901: Expressing Support for Democracy and Human Rights in Pakistan*. 118th Cong., 1st sess., introduced 30 Nov. 2023, adopted by House 25 June 2024, House of Representatives, Washington, DC. PDF file

¹³ Amnesty International. "Pakistan: Authorities Must Immediately Release Imran Khan from Arbitrary Detention." *Amnesty International*, 11 Sept. 2024, www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ASA3385072024ENGLISH.pdf

¹⁴ Casar, Greg. "Casar Leads 60+ Members of Congress Calling for the Release of Political Prisoners in Pakistan, Including Former Prime Minister Imran Khan." *Press Releases*, U.S. House of Representatives, 23 Oct. 2024, casar.house.gov/media/press-releases/news-casar-leads-60-members-congress-calling-release-political-prisoners.

¹⁵ Pakistani-American Public Affairs Committee [@PAKPAC]. "Democracy and human rights are being violated in Pakistan! Please remember when you meet with the Pakistan's military leader. @realDonaldTrump." *X (formerly Twitter)*, 17 June 2025, www.x.com/PAKPAC/status/1935191586712994118.

world's fifth most populous nation, threatens regional and global security. The U.S. must realign its policy to prioritize human rights, civilian supremacy, and democratic accountability.

To this end, Congress should:

1. **Impose Targeted Sanctions:** Utilize the Global Magnitsky Act to impose visa bans and asset freezes on senior Pakistani officials, including Field Marshal Asim Munir, credibly accused of human rights violations.
2. **Demand Release of Political Prisoners:** Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Imran Khan, Dr. Mahrang Baloch, and all political prisoners detained without due process.
3. **Recalibrate Military Cooperation:** Suspend IMET and other military-to-military engagements until Pakistan restores civilian oversight and judicial independence.
4. **Protect the Diaspora:** Strengthen measures to shield Pakistani-American activists from transnational repression, ensuring their constitutional rights.
5. **Increase Oversight:** Hold regular hearings and briefings to monitor Pakistan's human rights record and U.S. policy impacts.
6. **Commission a Democracy Study:** Mandate a comprehensive study to assess the systemic barriers preventing Pakistan from achieving democratic governance. The study should outline specific legal, institutional, and policy recommendations to advance civilian supremacy, protect civil liberties, and promote long-term democratic development.

A principled U.S. policy will protect American citizens, uphold human rights, and foster a stable, democratic Pakistan—advancing mutual respect and long-term regional peace.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY:

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

JULY 17th, 2025