

**House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

**Hearing on India: Recent Human  
Rights Reporting**

**March 21, 2024, 10:00 AM**

**Rayburn House Office Building**

**STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE  
RECORD**

**Submitted by: Harman Singh, Co-  
Interim Executive Director, The Sikh  
Coalition**

The Sikh Coalition<sup>1</sup> respectfully submits this statement for the record in connection with the above-referenced hearing before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. We write to address our concern about the threats Sikhs face from the government of India (GOI), and to ensure that religious freedom and democracy are mutually advanced in the United States and abroad.

Last month, the Sikh Coalition sent a letter to President Biden regarding the need for the United States to take a principled stand in support of the human rights of protesting farmers in India. Shortly after, we received a “notice of withholding” from social media company X, formerly Twitter. The notice explained that “X has received a legal removal demand from the Government of India,” alleging that our post about our letter to the president “violate[d] India’s Information Technology Act, 2000.” As per X’s policy, the post in question is currently censored in India. This act of censorship is just one recent example of an alarming pattern of the GOI silencing the voices of activists, religious minorities, and political dissidents within its own borders and abroad. We are deeply concerned about the authoritarian turn underway in India, which is both ostensibly the world’s largest democracy and home to the vast majority of the global Sikh population. Most Sikhs in South Asia, who live in the state of Punjab, India, have faced systemic oppression such as restrictions on religious practices, economic marginalization, and suppression of political dissent—including extra-judicial punishment, violence<sup>2</sup> and a

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<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, both individual and institutional, 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> “Protecting the Killers: A Policy of Impunity in Punjab, India.” *Human Rights Watch*, 2007, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/10/17/protecting-killers/policy-impunity-punjab-india>; “Dead Silence: the legacy of human rights abuses in Punjab.” *Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights*, May 1, 1994, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/India0594.pdf>.



decade of enforced “disappearances.”<sup>3</sup> The historical experience of our community in India<sup>4</sup> has left Sikhs all too aware of how authoritarianism, discrimination, and prejudice can lead to tragedy on the scale of genocidal violence.<sup>5</sup> India’s decline in press freedom,<sup>6</sup> willingness to use excessive force against peaceful protestors,<sup>7</sup> arrest and detention of dissidents,<sup>8</sup> and efforts to curtail the free flow of information<sup>9</sup> all directly affect Sikhs and other minority communities in India.

Several events in 2023 confirmed long-standing concerns that India is also reaching beyond its own borders to suppress diaspora voices abroad, including in the United States. Most notably, the Department of Justice indicted an Indian national who allegedly attempted to coordinate the assassination of a Sikh American activist on U.S. soil at the direction of an unnamed employee of the government of India in November.<sup>10</sup> That indictment also alleges that the government of India had a list of additional Sikhs—in the words of one conspirator, “so many targets”—they planned to kill between the United States and Canada.

In light of the alarming news of India’s alleged involvement in multiple assassinations and other recent events indicating attempts to target Sikh Americans in our nation, along with declining religious freedom conditions in India, it is imperative that the U.S. government take bold action to protect the fundamental rights of freedom speech and freedom of religion at home and abroad.

## I. Alarming Trend of Authoritarianism and Targeting of Sikhs

In recent years, numerous Sikh civil rights organizations around the world, including the Sikh Coalition, have been concerned at the increasing frequency with which Sikhs are being targeted in India. When Sikhs and other religious minorities peacefully dissent, the response from the

<sup>3</sup> Romesh Silva, Jasmine Marwaha, and Jeff Klingner, “Violent Deaths and Enforced Disappearances During the Counterinsurgency in Punjab, India A Preliminary Quantitative Analysis”, *Ensaaf* (January 2009), available at <https://ensaaf.org/publications/reports/descriptiveanalysis/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Well-Founded Fear: Understanding Legal Challenges and Best Practices for Sikh Asylum Applicants and Their Attorneys.” *The Sikh Coalition*, Nov. 1, 2021, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021.11.01-asylum-report.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Remembering 1984.” *The Sikh Coalition*, Jun. 1, 2023, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2023/remembering-1984-4>.

<sup>6</sup> “With raids, arrests and hostile takeovers, India press freedom continues to decline.” *NPR*, Apr. 3, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/03/1167041720/india-press-freedom-journalists-modi-bbc-documentary>.

<sup>7</sup> “India: Excessive use of force, arbitrary detention and punitive measures against protesters must end immediately.” *Amnesty International*, Jun. 14, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/india-excessive-use-of-force-arbitrary-detention-and-punitive-measures-against-protesters-must-end-immediately/>.

<sup>8</sup> “Indian activist’s arrest spotlights crackdown on dissent.” *The Associated Press*, Mar. 9, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/india-media-social-media-crime-arrests-f9331e556a1faf26eced6c05c40a71de>.

<sup>9</sup> “Five years in a row: India is 2022’s biggest internet shutdowns offender.” *Access Now*, Mar. 20, 2023, <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/keepit-on-internet-shutdowns-2022-india/>.

<sup>10</sup> United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.



Indian government has too often been marked by attempts to suppress freedoms of expression through internet shutdowns, media censorship, intimidation, arbitrary arrests, escalation of violence, and characterizations of peaceful dissidents as terrorists. In March 2023, Indian authorities executed weeks-long massive mobilizations of paramilitary and police forces, conducted multiple coordinated arbitrary arrests with brutal violence, imposed mobile internet data blackouts, blocked SMS services, censored media, and disproportionately targeted Sikhs and political dissenters across Punjab.<sup>11</sup> Similar oppressive tactics were also displayed during the Farmers' Protests that began in September 2020.<sup>12</sup> Since the resurgence of the Farmers' Protests this February, Indian authorities have already begun using internet shutdowns, threats, and excessive force, including using drones and tear gas shells to disperse protesters' medical camps.<sup>13</sup> On February 21, a 24-year old farmer named Shubhkaran Singh died of a bullet wound to the head after police repeatedly fired on protesting farmers.<sup>14</sup>

2024 is the sixth year in a row that India has chosen to rely on internet shutdowns to control largely peaceful protests and create a shield of impunity.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the Indian government and its intelligence services have demonstrated a pattern of suppressing and intimidating dissidents and aid organizations by issuing indiscriminate and vague legal notices, auditing financials, and even arresting individuals on artificial charges and detaining them for unreasonably long periods.<sup>16</sup> Since 2020, India has regressed further down the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index. It is now ranked among the worst for global press freedom with the likes of Russia, China, and Iran.<sup>17</sup> India has expelled foreign journalists due to work critical of Mr. Modi,<sup>18</sup> and imprisoned a growing number of journalists in-country for their reporting.<sup>19</sup> Recent

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<sup>11</sup> Anisha Singh [Letter to U.S. Sec. of State Antony Blinken Re: Support for Sikhs and Democratic Norms in India during March 2023 civil unrest]. Mar. 21, 2023, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Support-for-Sikhs-and-Democratic-Norms-in-India-March-21-2023.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> "Modi's Response to Farmer Protests in India Stirs Fears of a Pattern." *New York Times*, Feb. 3, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/03/world/asia/india-modi-farmer-protest-censorship.html>; "India: Government must stop crushing farmers' protests and demonizing dissenters." *Amnesty International*, Feb. 9, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/02/india-government-must-stop-crushing-farmers-protests-and-demonizing-dissenters/>.

<sup>13</sup> "India: Protect Farmers' Right to Peaceful Protest," Human Rights Watch, Feb. 29, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/29/india-protect-farmers-right-peaceful-protest>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*, and "Five years in a row: India is 2022's biggest internet shutdowns offender." *Access Now*, Feb. 28, 2023, <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/keepit-on-internet-shutdowns-2022-india/>.

<sup>16</sup> "As Farm Law Protests Continue, NIA Sees 'Anti-National' Plot, Summons Activists." *The Wire*, Jan. 16, 2021, <https://thewire.in/rights/nia-summons-activists-linked-to-farm-law-protests-%20suspects-conspiracy-against-india>.

<sup>17</sup> "India: Media freedom under threat." *Reporters Without Borders*, Mar. 5, 2023, <https://rsf.org/en/india-media-freedom-under-threat>.

<sup>18</sup> "VICE journalist Angad Singh deported from Delhi." *The Hindu*, Aug. 25, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/vice-journalist-angad-singh-deported-from-delhi/article65810246.ece>.

<sup>19</sup> "They Can Target Anybody': India's War on Free Press Is in High Gear." *TIME*, Aug. 1, 2022, <https://time.com/6202430/zubair-modi-muslims-target-media-free-press/>.



reporting also indicates that the Government of India has suspended upwards of 100 Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards since 2014 to silence critics abroad.<sup>20</sup>

Broader actions by the Indian government to censor certain aspects of the country's national conversation evoke grave concerns of fostering a climate that could lead to mass violence against Muslims, Sikhs, and other minorities,<sup>21</sup> especially given that India is considered a country at high risk for mass killings.<sup>22</sup> Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Amnesty International, which monitor human rights conditions worldwide, were forced to shut offices across India after being financially paralyzed by the Indian government.<sup>23</sup> Oxfam and Khalsa Aid have also been subjected to raids by the Indian government.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the offices of BBC and other media organizations were subject to government raids.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, social media users critical of India's draconian policies routinely have their accounts restricted at the request of the government.<sup>26</sup> Any criticism of the Modi government can lead to bans and attacks by trolls. Individual users have been targeted for something as trivial as sharing a BBC documentary that is critical of Mr. Modi;<sup>27</sup> there have also been coordinated campaigns to restrict trending topics that peacefully acknowledge India's genocidal violence against Sikhs in 1984.<sup>28</sup> When American social media companies such as Meta and Twitter do not comply with takedown requests, their employees risk arrests and raids in India.<sup>29</sup> Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey alleged that the Indian government threatened to "shut Twitter

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<sup>20</sup> Vijayta Lalwani, "How The Modi Govt Is Trying To Silence Critics In The Diaspora By Banning Them From India," Article 14, Feb. 12, 2024, <https://article-14.com/post/how-the-modi-govt-is-trying-to-silence-critics-in-the-diaspora-by-banning-them-from-india-65c98c934673f>.

<sup>21</sup> "India's Muslims: An Increasingly Marginalized Population." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Jul. 14, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/india-muslims-marginalized-population-bjp-modi>.

<sup>22</sup> "Rising Mass Atrocity Risks in India." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, Mar. 30, 2022, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/rising-mass-atrocity-risks-in-india>; "India: 2022-23 Statistical Risk."

<sup>23</sup> "Amnesty to halt work in India due to government 'witch-hunt'." *The Guardian*, Sep. 29, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/29/amnesty-to-halt-work-in-india-due-to-government-witch-hunt>.

<sup>24</sup> "How the Indian Government Uses Raids to Silence Critics". *Time*, Feb. 14, 2023, <https://time.com/6255425/india-raid-bbc-modi-documentary/>.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> "Twitter accused of censorship in India as it blocks Modi critics." *The Guardian*, Apr. 4, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/05/twitter-accused-of-censorship-in-india-as-it-blocks-modi-critics-elon-musk>.

<sup>27</sup> "India bans BBC documentary on PM Modi's role in Gujarat riots." *CNN*, Jan. 23, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/23/business-india/india-modi-bbc-documentary-twitter-youtube-censorship-intl-hnk/index.html>.

<sup>28</sup> "Sites Blocked, Hashtags Banned: Are Sikhs Being Silenced Online?" *The Quint World*, Jun. 12, 2020, <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/sikh-banned-social-media-siyasat-punjab-operation-bluestar-ghallughara-facebook-instagram>.

<sup>29</sup> "Elon Musk's Twitter Widens Its Censorship of Modi's Critics." *The Intercept*, Mar. 28, 2023, <https://theintercept.com/2023/03/28/twitter-modi-india-punjab-amritpal-singh/>.



down” if they did not censor accounts commenting on the Farmers Protest.<sup>30</sup> We are deeply alarmed by the attempts by India’s attempts to silence journalists, advocates, and nonprofits around the world.

## **II. Credible Allegations of India’s Plot to Murder Americans and Instill Fear Against a Religious Diaspora**

On November 29, 2023, the Department of Justice (DOJ) unsealed an indictment of Indian national Nikhil Gupta, who was allegedly recruited by an employee of the Indian government to work with others to assassinate Sikh Americans and Canadians.<sup>31</sup> The indictment indicates that Mr. Gupta, along with his collaborators, dedicated extensive time, international coordination, and \$100,000 to a murder-for-hire scheme targeting a Sikh American in New York, and that the plot had involved “so many [other] targets,” including at least one other American in California. The indictment contains allegations that corroborate India’s alleged role in the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen who was murdered in British Columbia, Canada, in June 2023. According to reports from earlier this week, at least one person directly involved in the assassination attempt alleged by the DOJ is no longer working for India’s main spy agency, but is still employed by the GOI and is not currently facing any criminal action.<sup>32</sup>

Subsequent events have lent further credence to the likelihood that the GOI is directly responsible for attempts to target Sikhs in the United States and abroad: Reports of a leaked memo originally issued by India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in April indicate that the MEA “instructed its consulates in North America to launch a ‘sophisticated crackdown scheme’ against Sikh diaspora organizations,” including organizations in the United States.<sup>33</sup> The MEA memo lists the names of several Sikh dissidents, including Mr. Nijjar,<sup>34</sup> who was assassinated two months after the memo was issued. The MEA memo conflated Sikhs’ expressions of free speech and political dissent with extremism and terrorism, and mischaracterized its targeting of Sikhs abroad as a fight against Sikh separatist, or Khalistani, “extremism.” It also recommended the cultivation of a “force in the street” for confrontation with “Sikh extremists.”<sup>35</sup>

Such claims about Khalistan are the common thread that connects the MEA memo to the assassination of Mr. Nijjar, and the assassination plot alleged by the DOJ. Pursuant to laws on international human rights,<sup>36</sup> communities have the right to determine if they want to be a part of

<sup>30</sup> “Jack Dorsey: India threatened to shut Twitter and raid employees.” *BBC*, Jun. 13, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-65886825>.

<sup>31</sup> United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.

<sup>32</sup> Sudhi Ranjan Sen and Anto Antony, “India’s Probe Finds Rogue Officials Involved in US Murder Plot,” *Bloomberg*, Mar. 20, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> Murtaza Hussain and Ryan Grim, “Secret Indian Memo Ordered ‘Concrete Measures’ Against Hardeep Singh Nijjar Two Months Before His Assassination in Canada,” *The Intercept*, Dec. 10, 2023, <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/10/india-sikhs-leaked-memo-us-canada/>.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

<sup>36</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI), December 16, 1996, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>; Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514





a nation-state or not, and that right should not be infringed upon.<sup>37</sup> Regrettably, India has criminalized the right of self-determination for Sikhs and overbroadly deems any expression in support of this political belief as terroristic.<sup>38</sup> In democracies like the United States and Canada, individuals have the right to peacefully express their political beliefs without fear of retribution. The freedom of speech and expression of our citizens is a fundamental cornerstone that cannot be violated by any domestic law, much less by a foreign government.

Following the murder of Mr. Nijjar, the FBI warned several Sikh Americans of threats against them.<sup>39</sup> And in December 2023, Human Rights Watch raised concerns about India's "systemic failures to prosecute security force personnel for extrajudicial killings" and questioned India's willingness to address transnational repression.<sup>40</sup>

Concerns of transnational repression, and specifically the targeting of Sikhs, extends beyond these events in Canada and New York. USCIRF has also found that Jagtar "Jaggi" Singh Johal, a British Sikh man, remains "detained [in India] for his religious belief and for documenting religious freedom violations."<sup>41</sup> Additionally, members of the Sikh American community, including elected officials,<sup>42</sup> have courageously spoken out about threats that could be traced back to the

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(XV), Dec. 14, 1960, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-granting-independence-colonial-countries-and-peoples>.

<sup>37</sup> The demand for self-determination by Sikhs to create a homeland called Khalistan has roots in the historical and cultural differences between the Punjabi Sikhs and the Indian state. Sikhs have a distinct identity and many believe that their rights and interests have been ignored or suppressed by the Indian state for more than four decades. Therefore, the demand for self-determination is not just a political issue, but also a cultural and social one. Genocidal violence by India targeting the Sikh community also plays a significant role in legitimate requests for self-determination.

<sup>38</sup> "Support for self-determination with respect to Khalistan is outlawed in India and considered a national security threat by the government – a number of groups associated with the movement are listed as 'terrorist organizations' under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)," Paula Newton and Rhea Mogul, "India expels Canadian diplomat in tit-for-tat move as spat over assassinated Sikh activist deepens," CNN, Updated Sept. 19, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/18/americas/canada-hardeep-singh-nijjar-india-intl/index.html#>; "Since June 2020, hundreds of Sikhs have been detained and interrogated in India due to their social media activities and some have been charged with offences related to support for Khalistan under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act ('UAPA')," "Enforcing silence: India's War on Sikh Social Media," World Sikh Organization, July 2020, [https://assets.nationbuilder.com/worldsikh/pages/2479/attachments/original/1680541803/WSO\\_Social\\_Media\\_Crackdown\\_Report.pdf?1680541803](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/worldsikh/pages/2479/attachments/original/1680541803/WSO_Social_Media_Crackdown_Report.pdf?1680541803); "In a chilling throwback McCarthyism in the United States, India's Parliament has passed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 which will allow the Central government to designate individuals as 'terrorists' without the exercise of due process of law," Rongeeet Poddar, "Constitutionality of India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019: India's McCarthyism Moment," Oxford Human Rights Hub Blog, August 14, 2019, <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/constitutionality-of-indias-unlawful-activities-prevention-amendment-bill-2019-indias-mccarthyism-moment>.

<sup>39</sup> Murtaza Hussain, "FBI Warned Sikhs in the U.S. About Death Threats After Killing of Canadian Activist, The Intercept, Sept. 23, 2023, <https://theintercept.com/2023/09/23/sikhs-fbi-canada-india-nijjar/>.

<sup>40</sup> "India: Investigate Alleged Overseas Murder Plots," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/15/india-investigate-alleged-overseas-murder-plots>.

<sup>41</sup> "Jagtar Singh Johal," United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, <https://www.uscifr.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/forb-victims-database/jagtar-singh-johal>.

<sup>42</sup> Jenny Huh, "Sikh lawmakers, threatened over ethnicity in recent weeks, highlight nationwide safety concerns," KGET, Oct. 19, 2023, <https://www.kget.com/news/local-news/local-sikh-lawmakers->



government of India or may be the result of India's cultivated "street force" here in the United States or radicalized Hindu nationalist extremists<sup>43</sup> stoked by India's industrial-scale disinformation campaigns<sup>44</sup> and open calls for the assassination of dissidents, including individuals in the United States. Included as targets of these threats are Sikh American gurdwaras (houses of worship), including one in California where an individual claiming to represent the Indian government attempted to use travel visas as a tool of coercion against Americans.<sup>45</sup>

Taken together, these disturbing reports highlight that Sikh Americans of all walks of life are being targeted by Indian transnational repression, whether they are dissidents, elected officials, or simply attending houses of worship across the country. This pattern of intimidation and harassment against a religious minority community is deeply troubling and poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of our nation and the rights of Americans.

### III. Recommendations

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

#### **Congress:**

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[threatened-over-ethnicity-in-recent-weeks-highlight-nationwide-safety-concerns/](https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article282490123.html); Joe Rubin, "Sikh activists in California fear being targeted in alleged assassination plot," The Sacramento Bee, Dec. 1, 2023, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article282490123.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Hindu Nationalists and White Supremacists are also worryingly becoming further aligned to advance their respective agendas of prejudice in establishing racially pure societies. Supporters have embraced the Aryan race mythology as well as fascism, while White Supremacists have admired Hindu Nationalists promoting Islamophobia and the ideals of a caste system. See Aadita Chaudhury, "Why white supremacists and Hindu nationalists are so alike" Al Jazeera, Dec. 13, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/12/13/why-white-supremacists-and-hindu-nationalists-are-so-alike>; and Audrey Truschke, "Hindu Supremacists in a White World," Oxford Academic, Jun. 23, 2023, <https://academic.oup.com/jaar/article/90/4/805/7205783>. The cross-pollination of extremist ideologies to inspire bigoted acts of hatred has become a growing threat for religious minorities around the world. See Joe Heim and James McAuley, "New Zealand attacks offer the latest evidence of a web of supremacist extremism," The Washington Post, Mar. 15, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/new-zealand-suspect-inspired-by-far-right-french-intellectual-who-feared-nonwhite-immigration/2019/03/15/8c39fba4-6201-4a8d-99c6-aa42db53d6d3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/new-zealand-suspect-inspired-by-far-right-french-intellectual-who-feared-nonwhite-immigration/2019/03/15/8c39fba4-6201-4a8d-99c6-aa42db53d6d3_story.html). The importation of extremist Hindu nationalist ideology into the United States has the potential to spur more violence and unrest against Sikh and Muslim communities, which according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Hate Crime Statistics Program are already among the most targeted religious communities for hate violence in the United States.

<sup>44</sup> Recent reporting indicates that a complex web of misinformation has sought to discredit foreign critics of the Modi government, and was set up and is run by an Indian intelligence officer. Reports from this entity, Disinfo Lab, have been cited by Indian officials on television and presented on Capitol Hill. Disinfo Lab often perpetuates "unsubstantiated claims to paint U.S. government figures, researchers, humanitarian groups and Indian American rights activists" as part of a global conspiracy. Gerry Shih, Clara Ence Morse and Pranshu Verma, "Covert Indian operation seeks to discredit Modi's critics in the U.S.," The Washington Post, December 10, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/10/india-the-disinfo-lab-discredit-critics/#>.

<sup>45</sup> Joe Rubin, "California Sikhs report threats, troubling incidents to FBI following assassination in Canada," The Sacramento Bee, Oct. 19, 2023, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article280306154.html>.



- Protect the rights and safety of all individuals, especially those targeted by the malicious behavior of foreign governments, by passing the Transnational Repression Policy Act (H.R. 3654/S.831).
- Support the documentation efforts of USCIRF by permanently reauthorizing the congressional body and passing legislation to reduce presidential authority to waive taking action against Countries of Particular Concern based on longstanding human rights concerns.
- Provide greater protections for Americans who are targeted for transnational repression but have not yet obtained citizenship. This loophole leaves Americans who are targeted by transnational repression while traveling abroad left with reduced assistance from the U.S. State Department and may require the individual to seek assistance from the nation that is perpetrating the transnational repression.

**Administration:**

- Adopt the recommendation that USCIRF has made for at least the past four years to designate India as a Country of Particular Concern.
- Provide public assurances 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.
- Similar to actions already taken by Canada, hold India accountable and suspend trade pending a thorough and complete investigation into all of India's alleged covert activities against Sikhs in the United States.

