

**Statement for the Record from
The Sikh Coalition**

**United States Senate Committee on Foreign
Relations**

**Transnational Repression: Authoritarians
Targeting Dissenters Abroad**

December 6, 2023

The Sikh Coalition respectfully submits this statement for the record in connection with the above-referenced hearing before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As a civil rights organization that represents the Sikh community in the United States, we write to address our concern about the threats that Sikhs in the United States face from the government of India.

By way of background, the Sikh Coalition is the largest Sikh American civil rights organization in the United States. We were founded in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, in response to a torrent of hate crimes against Sikhs throughout the United States. Our mission since then has been to work towards a world where Sikhs and other religious minorities in America can freely practice their faith without bias and discrimination.

Transnational repression is being used to silence dissidents, human rights advocates, journalists, and minorities around the world — including American citizens. This is an area of concern that impacts diaspora communities targeted by Russia, Iran, India, China, Turkey, North Korea, and other countries.¹ To address the safety concerns and civil rights of our communities, the Committee has the ability to pass existing bills and identify additional recommendations that responsibly hold countries accountable for their actions while also ensuring that no community in the United States is scapegoated for the acts of one nation.

While the Sikh Coalition cannot comment on all of the lived experiences of every community targeted by transnational repression, we write to share with you credible concerns that the government of India has engaged in such behavior. Recent events have confirmed longstanding

¹ Mike Abramowitz and Nate Schenkkan, “The long arm of the authoritarian state,” The Washington Post, Feb. 3, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/03/freedom-house-transnational-repression-authoritarian-dissidents/>; and Yana Gorokhovskaia, Nate Schenkkan, and Grady Vaughan, “Still Not Safe: Transnational Repression in 2022,” Freedom House, Apr. 6, 2023, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/FH_TransnationalRepression2023_0.pdf



community concerns about efforts to instill fear and silence within Sikhs in the United States. Most recently, the Department of Justice indicted an Indian national who allegedly collaborated with an employee of the government of India to assassinate a Sikh American on U.S. soil. Information in that indictment also suggests that the government of India had a list of more Sikhs to target between the United States and Canada. Moreover, the Sikh Coalition is also concerned that India is exporting hate-fueled propaganda to further target religious minority communities with Islamophobic and anti-Sikh disinformation to incite community unrest and violence within the diaspora. In light of the alarming news of India's alleged involvement in multiple assassinations and other recent events indicating attempts to target Sikh Americans and houses of worship in our nation, it is imperative that Congress take bold action to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans and defend our nation from such challenges to our nation's democratic and pluralistic ideals.

The United States should not tolerate attempts to intimidate, harass, and threaten its people, and must hold accountable not only the individual actors but also those involved in the architecting and supporting such plots. Indeed, our commitment to democracy must be even stronger when foreign nations are actively propagating fear in our nation and seeking to restrict the freedom of our citizens. We appreciate the Biden-Harris Administration prioritizing initiatives to address transnational repression in 2021. However, this new and developing area of national security requires greater multi-agency resource coordination to streamline current processes. Additionally, the United States government must ensure there is neutral application of existing political tools to avoid favoritism with specific countries.

I. Credible Allegations of India's Plot to Murder Americans and Instill Fear Against a Religious Diaspora

On November 29, the Department of Justice unsealed an indictment² 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. 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 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 Canada. Moreover, the facts alleged in the indictment indicate that there is an ongoing threat of assassination against an unknown number of U.S. Sikhs,

² United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.



and that there is an international network of individuals, including an employee of the Government of India, who are coordinating and financing these illegal activities.

Pursuant to laws on international human rights,³ communities have the right to determine if they want to be a part of a nation-state or not, and that right should not be infringed upon.⁴ Regrettably, India has criminalized the right of self-determination for Sikhs and overbroadly deems any expression in support of this political belief as terroristic. In a democracy like the United States, 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. The assassination plots by India undermine these principles by targeting individuals, including Canadians and Americans, who are prominently involved in the establishment of an unofficial and non-binding referendum vote to gather consensus among Sikh communities worldwide on the establishment of Khalistan, an independent Sikh state in the Punjab region of Southeast Asia.⁵

Beyond India ignoring the rules-based international order by attempting to use criminal means to kill Americans, it is alarming to note that India's targeting of the Sikh diaspora appears to be politically motivated leading up to India's elections.⁶ Nor are India's claims justified in any way that is proportionate to the alleged threat. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, between 2000 and 2022, allegedly Khalistan⁷-related violence accounted for only 33 fatal incidents, significantly lower than any other ideology. In the same time period, there were 11,892 fatal activities of a different ideology in Jammu and Kashmir, and 5,247 involving Maoists.⁸

³ 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 (XV), Dec. 14, 1960, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-granting-independence-colonial-countries-and-peoples>.

⁴ 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.

⁵ The Sikh Coalition does not take an institutional position on Khalistan, but firmly believes that all people have a right to free speech and a right to lawfully advocate for their beliefs.

⁶ C. Christine Fair, "India's Spat With Canada Is a Win-Win Situation for Modi," FP, Oct. 20, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/20/india-modi-canada-trudeau-nijjar-khalistan-sikh-separatism/>.

⁷ The Sikhs that India is targeting through transnational repression are often advocates for Khalistan—an independent Sikh state.

⁸ See footnote 6.



Further undermining the legitimacy of India's claims of combating fatal threats is the alleged strategic timing of India's assassination plot: The indictment specifically identifies that the Indian agent requested action that would not coincide with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the United States.⁹ These allegations suggest a misuse of diplomatic relations to target political dissenters abroad, including Americans.¹⁰ This information also raises serious concerns about India's commitment to democratic principles, its reliability as a strategic partner,¹¹ and its commitment to bilateral agreements with our nation. The 2005 New Framework Agreement focused on upholding democratic institutions and the rule of law; similarly, the recent 2023 U.S.-India Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership affirms that the rules-based international order must be respected. These actions of India, however, run contrary to such agreements and demonstrate that India is using its geopolitical standing with the United States to exploit human rights abuses against not only the United States, but also other five-eyes nations.

Finally, it is deeply concerning that India appears to be actively financing and promoting criminal enterprise activity in the United States. We are alarmed by the government of India using criminal elements—including but not limited to recruiting an international narcotics trafficker¹²—to target Sikhs in the United States, a clear violation of democratic principles, due process, and respect for the rule of law. The use of criminal elements to kill individuals on India's hitlist further lends concern that the targets were selected not to enact justice but to send a message of fear to specific communities in the United States and intent to avoid culpability for the murder of Americans.

II. Concerning Pattern of Transnational Repression by India and Indian Nationalists Targeting Religious Minorities in the United States

In September, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau confirmed that "Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link" between the Indian state and the arbitrary extra-judicial killing of Sikh Canadian Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British

⁹"Gupta also specifically instructed the UC not to commit the murder around the time of anticipated engagements scheduled to occur in the ensuing weeks between high-level U.S. and Indian government officials." United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.

¹⁰ See footnote 6.

¹¹"On foreign policy, India is reliably unreliable," The Economist, Nov. 24, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2022/11/24/on-foreign-policy-india-is-reliably-unreliable>.

¹²"In or about May 2023, CC-1 recruited GUPTA to orchestrate the assassination of the Victim in the United States. GUPTA, an Indian national who also resides in India, is an associate of CC-1 and has described his involvement in international narcotics and weapons trafficking in his communications with CC-1 and others." United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.



Columbia in June.¹³ Prime Minister Trudeau's national security advisor previously named India as a "top source of foreign interference in Canada,"¹⁴ and these concerns were publicly raised by Prime Minister Trudeau at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September.¹⁵

Concerns of transnational repression, and specifically the targeting of Sikhs, extends beyond these events in Canada. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (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."¹⁶ And in May 2022, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared Johal's detention arbitrary and called for his immediate release.¹⁷

Members of the Sikh American community, including elected officials,¹⁸ have courageously spoken out about threats that could be traced back to the government of India or may be the result of Hindu nationalist extremism¹⁹ stoked by India's industrial-scale disinformation campaigns and

¹³ Paula Newton and Rhea Mogul, "India expels Canadian diplomat in tit-for-tat move as spat over assassinated Sikh activist deepens." CNN, Sep. 19, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/18/americas/canada-hardeep-singh-nijjar-india-intl/index.html>.

¹⁴ "India among top actors for foreign interference in Canada: national security adviser." CTV News, Jun. 5, 2023, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/india-among-top-actors-for-foreign-interference-in-canada-national-security-adviser-1.6428213#:~:text=Prime%20Minister%20Justin%20Trudeau's%20national,of%20foreign%20interference%20in%20Canada>.

¹⁵ "Trudeau leaves India after aircraft issues delayed departure from rocky G20: Canadian prime minister's time at G20 summit in New Delhi highlights growing tensions between India and Canada." Al Jazeera, Sep. 12, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/12/trudeau-leaves-india-after-aircraft-issues-delayed-departure-from-rocky-g20#:~:text=Canadian%20prime%20minister's%20time%20at,tensions%20between%20India%20and%20Canada.&text=Canadian%20Prime%20Minister%20Justin%20Trudeau,between%20Ottawa%20and%20New%20Delhi>.

¹⁶ "Jagtar Singh Johal," United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, <https://www.uscirf.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/forb-victims-database/jagtar-singh-johal>.

¹⁷ Calum McKay and Katie Hunter, "UN group: No legal basis for Jagtar Singh Johal's detention in India." BBC News, May 8, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-61371846>.

¹⁸ 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-threatened-over-ethnicity-in-recent-weeks-highlight-nationwide-safety-concerns/>; 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>.

¹⁹ 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->



open calls for the assassination of dissidents, including individuals in the United States. It should be very alarming that the government of India appears also to be targeting gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship), including one in California, using travel visas as a tool of coercion against Americans.²⁰ Similarly, India has also been repeatedly implicated in infiltrating gurdwaras in Canada²¹ and Germany.²² Many Sikhs, including current²³ and former elected officials in Canada, have also been denied visas to visit India as a result of speaking out about human rights abuses in India.

The Sikh Coalition has also received reports from individuals in the United States receiving threatening messages after attending peaceful protests critical of the Indian government. We are also aware of instances of Indian government agents stopping individuals arbitrarily and with false charges to elicit information about Sikh communities in the United States. And finally, we have been notified of situations in which individuals in the United States who have expressed criticism of the Indian government have had their family members in India face harassment at the hands of Indian authorities. Regrettably, many individuals are understandably reluctant to come forward due to the very real fear of reprisal against themselves or their loved ones abroad. Community reporting of incidents faces challenges due to a lack of awareness in recognizing signs of transnational repression. These challenges are exacerbated by insufficient community involvement and a lack of awareness among law enforcement agencies, including federal authorities.

[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/news/immigration/wp/2019/03/15/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.

²⁰ 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>.

²¹ "WSO Expresses Concern over Indian Interference in Canada," World Sikh Organization, April 17, 2019, https://www.worldsikh.org/wso_expresses_concern_over_indian_interference_in_canada.

²² Germany has charged individuals linked to Indian intelligence services at least three times. "Germany charges man with spying for Indian intelligence," Al Jazeera, May 13, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/5/13/germany-charges-man-with-spying-for-indian-intelligence>; IP Singh, "Second case of Germany going after Sikhs spying on their community," Times of India, April 12, 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ludhiana/second-case-of-germany-going-after-sikhs-spying-on-their-community/articleshow/68841351.cms>; "German official charged with spying on Sikhs for India," The Local, Sept. 20, 2016, <https://www.thelocal.de/20160920/german-official-charged-with-spying-on-sikhs-for-india>.

²³ IP Singh, "Canadian Sikh MLA alleges India denied visa to him," Times of India, Updated Dec. 27, 2013, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/us-canada-news/canadian-sikh-mla-alleges-india-denied-visa-to-him/articleshow/28001791.cms>; and A Singh, "India denies ex-MP visa," Asian Pacific Post, Oct. 25, 2011, <https://asianpacificpost.com/article/4732-india-denies-ex-mp-visa.html>.



These disturbing reports highlight that Sikh Americans of all walks of life are being targeted, whether they are dissidents, elected officials, or houses of worship within the country. This pattern of intimidation and harassment is deeply troubling and poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of our nation and the rights of Americans.

III. The History of Religious Oppression by the Indian Government Indicates a Move Towards Authoritarianism with International Aspirations

These egregious actions by India attempting to murder Americans not only violate our democratic ideals but are part of a broader pattern of suppressing religious minorities domestically and abroad. When Sikhs and other religious minorities peacefully dissent, the response from the 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. Actions like these contradict fundamental human rights and risk exacerbating civil unrest and alienation of an entire religious minority community.

In March of this year, 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.²⁴ Similar oppressive tactics were also displayed during the historic Farmers' Protests that began in September 2020.²⁵ These 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, especially given that India is considered a country at high risk for mass killings.²⁶ The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) Chair Abraham Cooper also reiterated that "Religious freedom conditions in India have notably declined in recent years. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Dalits, and Adivasis are experiencing increased levels of attacks and acts of intimidation."²⁷

²⁴ Letter to Secretary Antony Blinken, The Sikh Coalition, March 21, 2023, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Support-for-Sikhs-and-Democratic-Norms-in-India-March-21-2023.pdf>.

²⁵ Mujib Mashal and Sameer Yasir, "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>.

²⁶ "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."

²⁷ "USCIRF Reiterates Concerns on Religious Freedom in India, Calls for Release of Religious Prisoners of Conscience," United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Oct. 3, 2023, <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscifr-reiterates-concerns-religious-freedom-india-calls->



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.²⁸ Oxfam and Khalsa Aid have also been subjected to raids by the Indian government.²⁹ Similarly, the offices of BBC and other media organizations were subject to government raids.³⁰

The Indian Government's control and manipulation of the media to advance their ideological purposes is also no secret. 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.³¹ India has expelled foreign journalists due to work critical of Mr. Modi,³² and imprisoned a growing number of journalists in-country for their reporting.³³ Additionally, even U.S.-based journalists who ask simple questions about India's human rights record face online threats and harassment.³⁴

Additionally, social media users critical of India's draconian policies routinely have their accounts restricted at the request of the government.³⁵ 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,³⁶ there have also been coordinated campaigns to restrict trending topics that peacefully acknowledge India's genocidal violence against Sikhs in

[release#:~:text=%22Religious%20freedom%20conditions%20in%20India,attacks%20and%20acts%20of%20intimidation.](#)

²⁸ Hannah Ellis-Petersen and Ben Doherty, "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>.

²⁹ Astha Rajvanshi, "How the Indian Government Uses Raids to Silence Critics," TIME, Feb. 14, 2023, <https://time.com/6255425/india-raid-bbc-modi-documentary/>.

³⁰ Id.

³¹ "India: Media freedom under threat." Reporters Without Borders, Mar. 5, 2023, <https://rsf.org/en/india-media-freedom-under-threat>.

³² "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>.

³³ Kavitha Iyer, "'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/>.

³⁴ Amy B Wang, "White House defends WSJ reporter facing harassment over Modi question," Washington Post, June 28, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/06/28/white-house-modi-reporter-wall-street-journal/>.

³⁵ Yashraj Sharma, "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>.

³⁶ Rhea Mogul, "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>.



1984.³⁷ When American social media companies such as Meta and Twitter do not comply with takedown requests, their employees risk arrests and raids in India.³⁸ Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey alleged that the Indian government threatened to “shut Twitter down” if they did not censor accounts commenting on the Farmers Protest.³⁹ The Sikh Coalition is also aware of media from India that improperly attempts to label Sikhs as terrorists for their peaceful political views. Such segments are then immediately followed by commentators who advocate for the global extrajudicial murder of “terrorists.” We are deeply alarmed by India’s attempts to silence journalists, advocates, and nonprofits around the world who are critical of the Indian government.

It is not only international NGOs and media suppression that indicate India has embraced and continued to permit authoritarianism for a significant period of time that should be concerning to the United States. Prior human rights reports on India from the Department of State, spanning at least a decade, indicate longstanding concerns regarding India’s major human rights issues concerning “police and security force misconduct, such as extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape.”⁴⁰ USCIRF has also detailed religious freedom violations by India and made persistent recommendations in the past four years that India should be designated as a Country of Particular Concern.⁴¹ Recommendations made by USCIRF must be adopted without political favoritism to ensure that countries such as India are put on notice that they cannot operate with impunity. Despite these warning signs, the United States is permitting the most egregious violators of religious persecution to disregard human rights and democratic ideals that promote stability and security in the world.

India’s credibly suspected role in the recent unjustified killing of a Canadian citizen without legal process, along with the thwarted scheme to eliminate more Sikhs, including those in the United States, through illicit methods, suggests that India is attempting to extend its authoritarian and religious oppression practices worldwide. This alarming trend of disproportionately targeting Sikhs is further substantiated by historical and recent reports indicating India’s active involvement in establishing similar oppressive networks in other countries (such as Canada, the United Kingdom,

³⁷ “India attempts to censor tweets commemorating ‘1984 Genocide of Sikhs,’” Tamil Guardian, Sept. 20, 2020, <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/india-attempts-censor-tweets-commemorating-%E2%80%991984-genocide-sikhs%E2%80%9999>.

³⁸ Ryan Grim and Murtaza Hussain, “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/>.

³⁹ Zoya Mateen, “Jack Dorsey: India threatened to shut Twitter and raid employees.” BBC, Jun. 13, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-65886825>.

⁴⁰ “India 2011 Human Rights and Labor Report: India.” U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, May 24, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/186675.pdf>.

⁴¹ “USCIRF Reiterates Concerns on Religious Freedom in India, Calls for Release of Religious Prisoners of Conscience,” U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Oct. 3, 2023, <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscifr-reiterates-concerns-religious-freedom-india-calls-release>.



and Germany). It is a clear violation of international norms and human rights that cannot be overlooked or tolerated, especially within the United States.

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:

1. 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).
2. Similar to actions already taken by Canada, hold India accountable and suspend trade pending a thorough and complete investigation into India's alleged covert activities against Sikhs in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
3. Publicly condemn India's hostile actions and flagrant violations of human rights, the rule of law, and the sovereignty of our nation. It is also critically important that public assurances are made to help address the safety and security concerns of Sikhs and Indian diaspora communities in the United States targeted by India.
4. Ensure greater congressional oversight into transnational repression 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 or harassment against individuals in the United States.
5. Provide greater resources that better address transnational repression that targets religious-based institutions, such as gurdwaras. Grant programs like the Non-Profit Security Grant must provide greater support and access to communities that are now also being targeted by foreign nation-states and their criminal proxies.
6. 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.
7. Pass legislation prohibiting a government from employing a registered lobbyist if its country has been designated as a Country of Particular Concern or has engaged in transnational repression to intimidate or harass individuals in the United States.



It is imperative that the U.S. government take a strong stand against India's escalating violations of human rights and sovereignty. Congress' leadership in this matter is crucial to safeguarding not only the Sikh community but also the foundational values of our nation.

