



The Lord Alton of Liverpool
Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

04 July 2025

Dear Lord Alton,

Joint Committee on Human Rights' (JCHR) Inquiry into Transnational Repression

I would firstly like to thank the JCHR for undertaking its important inquiry on transnational repression (TNR) and I look forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations in due course. In line with the issues raised during the 21 May evidence session, I am writing to submit additional information as agreed.

The JCHR asked whether the Government will address Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), beyond those related to economic crime.

This Government recognises the profound financial and psychological impact of SLAPPs on our legal system and society. They curtail free speech, have a chilling effect on public interest journalism and pose a threat to our democracy. The Ministry of Justice holds overall policy responsibility for SLAPPs, including oversight of future reforms.

Most SLAPP cases relate to economic crime. As such, anti-economic crime SLAPP measures were introduced in the Economic Crime & Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA). The Act brought in a statutory definition, early dismissal mechanism and costs protection for SLAPP defendants. The Government has decided to prioritise the implementation of these ECCTA provisions. However, their operation will inform our approach for comprehensively tackling all SLAPPs, not just those related to economic crime.

As such, this Government understands the need for further action on SLAPPs outside of the economic crime space and proactive steps are being taken to prevent SLAPPs from being used as a tool of TNR, including through engagement with the EU Anti-SLAPPs Directive and work actively being driven forward through the SLAPP's Taskforce. This Taskforce sits within the framework of the National Committee for Safety of Journalists, which helps to ensure journalists can carry out their work free from physical threats, attacks and violence within the UK. To summarise, the Government is actively advancing efforts in this area, with ongoing work aimed at ensuring that SLAPPs are comprehensively addressed through a robust and coordinated approach.

The JCHR also inquired about the steps the Government is taking to ensure that INTERPOL Red Notices do not adversely affect immigration and asylum decisions.

INTERPOL has strict processes to ensure that notices and diffusions comply with its Constitution and Rules of Processing Data. The UK supports these efforts, particularly Article 3 of the Constitution, which prohibits political, military, religious, or racial interference. All Red Notices are reviewed by INTERPOL's Notices and Diffusions Task Force (NDTF) to ensure legal compliance and prevent misuse. The UK has recently provided funding to support this work.

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) check all visa and asylum applications against a wide range of information. Each is investigated thoroughly, on a case-by-case basis, with decisions made based on its specific circumstances. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that INTERPOL notices do not unfairly influence immigration decisions.

Notices are identified and reviewed by a small number of authorised staff within Asylum and Human Right's Operations. Where an asylum claim is refused and the Notice comes from the applicant's country of origin, the case may be referred to the National Crime Agency (NCA) or extradition authorities. If asylum is granted, no action is taken on Notices from the individual's country of origin.

The Committee asked whether the Government could introduce a checking mechanism to allow individuals or authorities to determine in advance whether someone is likely to be stopped when attempting to travel.

Individuals can request access to or removal of their data via INTERPOL's independent oversight body – the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF) – which ensures compliance with data rules and resolves disputes as to the legitimacy of Notices or Diffusions. This service is freely available on INTERPOL's website. It is right that this process is carried out via INTERPOL as we cannot intervene in the judicial processes of other sovereign nations.

In this regard, the UK takes any misuse of INTERPOL seriously and we firmly believe that members have a responsibility to uphold the rules of the organisation. It would not be appropriate for the UK to check and inform individuals if they are wanted by other states. However, if we were made aware of confirmed cases of INTERPOL misuse, we would not hesitate to raise it with INTERPOL.

The JCHR noted that it has received reports of states falsely reporting passports as stolen, resulting in individuals being arrested. The Committee has asked what measures the Government has taken to address this issue.

The Home Office continues to work with INTERPOL and the NCA, which acts as the UK's National Central Bureau (NCB) for INTERPOL, to monitor the effectiveness of existing safeguards, including for the Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database (SLTD). The SLTD holds over 138 million records and is searched over 3 billion times a year. Only member countries that issue a travel document can add it to the database. We encourage INTERPOL to uphold international human rights obligations in this area, and we would not hesitate to recommend further reforms to INTERPOL as necessary.

Thank you again for undertaking this important inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dan Jarvis', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Security Minister