

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

8 December 2025

Dear Lord Alton,

Response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' Follow-up on Transnational Repression

Thank you for your letter dated 29 October following the publication of the Government's response to the Joint Committee of Human Rights' (JCHR) report on Transnational Repression (TNR). I am replying as the Minister responsible for addressing this threat. As set out in detail in that response, this Government is committed to ensuring the UK's strategic, legislative, and operational framework for countering TNR is robust.

The cornerstone of our approach is a threat-informed, evidence-based, and proportionate response to TNR; one that safeguards national security, national sovereignty, and the rights and freedoms of individuals. At the same time, we are mindful that overstating the scale of TNR risks giving repressive regimes the visibility they seek and may inadvertently amplify their efforts. It is therefore essential that our response is effective, measured, and avoids fuelling unnecessary alarm.

The Defending Democracy Taskforce's TNR Review found that the UK maintains a hard operating environment for those states seeking to intimidate, harass, or harm individuals on our soil and that we have robust tools and system-wide safeguards in place to counter this threat, including the National Security Act 2023. That Review made recommendations to strengthen the UK's response even further. The Government is doing so, in line with the JCHR's recommendations, and I set out more detail below:

- 1. Given that engagement with communities directly and in multiple languages could improve the visibility of guidance and support for those affected by TNR, what assessment has the Government made of the possibility that omitting such engagement will lead to a systematic underestimation of the reach of TNR in Government data collection activities?**
- 6. Which communities would the Government identify as being at higher risk from the threat of TNR and what steps the Government is taking to monitor threats to these communities?**

The Government recognises the importance of robust data and evidence in shaping an effective response to transnational repression. The Government assesses potential threats and their scale using a multi-source model including intelligence, police data, engagement with international partners, and insights from civil society and affected individuals. Attribution is taken very seriously and based on robust evidence, which this multi-source model provides. We will continue to refine our approach and keep data collection under review to ensure it remains proportionate and effective.

Our engagement strategy follows the principle of “be alert but not afraid.” TNR in the UK is not directed at entire communities, but is targeted and specific, typically directed at individuals whom a foreign state perceives as a threat, or otherwise wishes to control, such as vocal critics, dissidents, or activists. That said, while TNR does not affect large numbers of people across the UK, its impacts can be severe. Engagement is therefore focussed on those directly affected by TNR, trusted networks, civil society organisations, and professional bodies, ensuring information reaches those most at risk, without inadvertently suggesting entire communities are under threat, which could create unnecessary fear or division.

The Government has published clear, accessible guidance on GOV.UK. This includes practical steps to improve physical and online safety, signposts reporting routes (999, 101, and local police stations), and links to wider protective security resources, including cybersecurity advice from the National Cyber Security Centre.

- 2. Similarly, what assessment has the Government made of likely underreporting of TNR in the absence of a hotline, given victims’ well documented reticence to approach local police?**
- 3. Since the Government does not wish to establish a TNR hotline, what other steps does the Government propose to offer direct and specific support to victims of TNR?**
- 4. Furthermore, as the hotline could have been another useful point of data collection to assess the scale of TNR, for what reason does the Government consider that other methods will provide data as clear as that which would be afforded by a hotline? Please provide detail on how other data currently collected could serve as proxies to replicate the data that could have been collected through a hotline.**

The Government and Counter Terrorism Policing have assessed that a dedicated hotline is neither necessary nor proportionate. Existing mechanisms (999, 101, and local police stations) remain the most effective and widely recognised routes for reporting. These channels are well established, operate 24/7, and allow immediate escalation to Counter Terrorism Policing specialists when required.

To address concerns about victims’ reluctance to approach local police, Counter Terrorism Policing has rolled out training and awareness modules across all 45 territorial police forces, supported by bespoke briefings, to improve identification and escalation of state-directed crimes. Any allegations of unlawful activity will be handled

sensitively, taken seriously by the police, and will be swiftly investigated in line with UK law.

Where specific threats are identified, tailored protective security advice is provided, including enhanced cybersecurity measures, access to broader public resources, and signposting to psychological support services. This ensures proportionate, threat-based support without duplicating existing systems or creating unnecessary fear.

On data collection, policing introduced a new recording system in 2024 to capture reports that may include foreign interference, including TNR. These reports are reviewed and actioned by specialist teams, ensuring integration within the wider state threats framework. Alongside police data, the Government draws on intelligence assessments, civil society engagement, and international data-sharing to build a comprehensive picture of the threat. This multi-source approach provides a more robust and accurate understanding of scale than a single hotline could achieve.

The Government believes this proportionate, multi-layered approach - combining established reporting routes, tailored guidance, enhanced data systems, and intelligence-led assessments, provides the most effective means of supporting victims and understanding the scale of TNR, while maintaining clarity and public confidence.

5. What data is available from police forces that provide statistics that estimates the number of TNR and TNR-related offences from the past 12 months ending October 2025? This is in reference to point 6 in response to Recommendation 2.2 We request that you provide this data to us in order to help establish scale and trends. Please also provide your assessment of the extent to which this is sufficient to build a comprehensive picture of the threat to TNR.

The Home Office is developing official statistics for the National Security Act, which will include relevant offences. Our approach to transparency must be balanced against national security considerations; Government data would undoubtedly be of interest to states known to perpetrate TNR. For this reason, we will not publish or share figures that could compromise operational effectiveness or individual safety.

7. How many languages are spoken by the staff operating 999 and 101 lines, broken down by the number of operators who are able to respond to calls in each language?

8. Is the number of calls inwards to 999 and 101 lines in foreign languages logged? If so, we request that you provide this data to us.

9. What provisions are in place to enable domestic callers to 999 and 101 lines speaking a foreign language to access interpreters? Please provide a picture of the current system, and the time taken to access translators to assist callers from the time of request.

All police forces have access to live interpreting services to support callers who speak a foreign language. These services are provided through established contractual

frameworks and local arrangements, ensuring connection to interpreters in a wide range of languages. Typically, callers are connected to an interpreter within minutes of the request, enabling timely and accurate assistance. Forces are also exploring innovative solutions, including AI-based language identification and interpretation, to further enhance service delivery in the future.

10. Does the Government believe that conducting large scale TNR activity is a significant threat to the safety or interests of the UK that could justify specification under the enhanced tier?

12. How important does the Government consider the appropriate specification of countries under FIRS to be in the context of managing TNR?

The Review found that the UK maintains a hard operating environment for those states wishing to conduct TNR. We have robust tools and system-wide safeguards in place that we can use to counter the threat, including legal powers, operational tools, international partnerships, and targeted engagement conducted in a proportionate and considered manner. We keep potential threats to the UK under constant review and, where necessary, we use all the tools at our disposal to mitigate these.

The enhanced tier of FIRS (Foreign Influence Registration Scheme) provides greater assurance around the activities of the foreign powers or entities that pose the greatest risk to the UK. The Government recognises TNR as a threat, and it would form part of any consideration of whether a country should be specified under this tier. The Secretary of State may specify a whole of state, where they consider this reasonably necessary to protect the safety or interests of the UK. The scheme is designed to encourage transparency, deter harmful covert state activity and increase opportunities for earlier disruption.

13. What assessment has the Government made of the ability of the police and security agencies to address problems associated with the United Front, especially as it relates to TNR, in the absence of China being specified under the enhanced tier of the scheme?

The Government takes national security extremely seriously, and where appropriate, robustly acts upon allegations of state-directed and state-linked activity. Where the Government, police and security agencies encounter foreign interference, espionage, or transnational repression, whether this stems from the United Front or any other actor, we have well-established processes, tools, and system-wide levers designed to counter the threat.

This approach is underpinned by the National Security Act 2023, which has overhauled our legislation to strengthen operational partners' powers to protect the UK, including to respond to activity which amounts to transnational repression. Within this act, those convicted of Foreign Interference, which captures TNR when activity is attributed to the direction of a state, could face up to 14 years in prison. This is central to our protection against those states which seek to conduct hostile acts. Training and guidance that has been rolled out by CTP will further improve identification and escalation of TNR activity.

11. How effective does the Government believe sanctions are in tackling TNR?

The Government considers sanctions an important and effective tool in tackling transnational repression when deployed as part of a response to state-directed crimes. UK sanctions are proportionate, rigorous and carefully targeted to maximise impact on perpetrators while minimising unintended consequences. They are designed with implementation and enforcement in mind, assessed against clear objectives, and adapted as circumstances evolve.

The Economic Deterrence Initiative (EDI) has been central to improving the effectiveness and deterrent effect of UK sanctions. It strengthens implementation by ensuring those who seek to comply have clear guidance and accessible information, while reinforcing enforcement by closing opportunities for breaches and applying robust measures against non-compliance. EDI also reinforces other key elements of the UK's sanctions system to mitigate wider risks and prepare for future hostile acts. Alongside this, the new Office of Trade Sanctions Implementation, launched in October 2024, introduced enhanced civil penalties to maximise compliance. Sanctions' effectiveness is reviewed against original objectives and emerging evidence, ensuring agility and impact. The Government remains committed to working with international partners to raise the cost of TNR and protect those at risk.

14. We note that no decision has been taken by the Government on whether China should be specified on the enhanced tier of the scheme. We urge the Government to reconsider China's status under the FIRS scheme, and to come to a conclusion quickly. When the Government does so, how much weight will be given to China's TNR operations in the UK?

The Government is aware of repeated calls to add China to the enhanced tier of FIRS. As we have set out previously, no decision has yet been made in relation to specifying China on the enhanced tier of the scheme.

The Government continues to consider whether and how the enhanced tier can be used to provide greater protection for areas where China and other countries pose significant threats.

As set out above, adding countries to the enhanced tier requires the consideration of a broad range of interests. We will not rush this decision, and any decisions will be brought before parliament in the usual way.

15. Provide a copy of the information it supplies to the CPRC in June 2026 to the Committee, and at that point also update the Committee on the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the ECCTA provisions with a more specific time than at an 'appropriate juncture'.

The Government acknowledges the Committee's emphasis on the importance of a timely and transparent review of the Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) provisions under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA). The ECCTA measures will empower individuals to stand up to powerful entities, whether individuals or companies, who use legal threats or actions to silence criticism or suppress information that serves the public interest.

In line with our commitment, we will share with the Committee the information submitted to the Civil Procedure Rule Committee in June 2026, as part of the

scheduled review process. The review, however, will remain contingent on the availability of sufficient ECCTA-related claims to enable a meaningful evaluation. We will also provide an update at that time on the criteria being used to assess the effectiveness of the SLAPPs provisions.

In line with the TNR Review and the Committee's recommendations, the Government will keep its approach to transnational repression under regular review. As the threat evolves, so too will our responses, ensuring that our systems are constantly improving to remain effective at countering this activity.

I hope the above provides reassurance that we have undertaken diligent consideration of your questions and concerns. Thank you again for your interest and commitment in this area.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dan Jarvis MBE MP

**Security Minister
Cabinet Office and Home Office**