



June 10, 2026

Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Chair, Congressional-Executive
Commission on China

Representative Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ)
Co-Chair, Congressional-Executive
Commission on China

Re: Congressional-Executive Commission on China Hearing, June 4, 2026: “The PRC’s Threats to Americans: Transnational Repression & State-Level Responses”

Dear Chairman Sullivan and Co-Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), I submit this written statement in regards to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China’s (CECC) June 4, 2026 hearing, “The PRC’s Threats to Americans: Transnational Repression & State-Level Responses.” UHRP welcomes the Commission’s continued examination of the Chinese government’s transnational repression and commends its sustained attention to the threats the PRC poses to United States citizens and legal permanent residents.

As the Commission’s June 2026 “Report on the PRC’s Transnational Repression and Malign Influence in 2025” documents, China’s targeting of dissidents, diaspora communities, researchers, politicians, and civil society organizations in the United States pose a growing challenge to human rights, free expression, and national sovereignty. The threats against family members in China, online harassment, and disinformation campaigns aimed at silencing criticism and shaping narratives favorable to the Chinese Communist Party noted in CECC’s report calls for a coordinated U.S. government response to counter transnational repression and protect affected communities.¹ Further, the Commission’s findings substantiate earlier reporting from Freedom House regarding the extent of Chinese transnational repression in the United States.²

Along with other human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Foundation and World Without Genocide,³ UHRP has long documented China’s transnational repression of Uyghur Americans. In “The Fifth Poison: The Harassment of Uyghurs Overseas,” published in November 2017, we first presented evidence of how the Chinese government monitors,

¹ Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *Report on the PRC’s Transnational Repression and Malign Influence in 2025* (Washington, DC: Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2026), https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/long-arm-report-cecc_0.pdf.

² Freedom House, *Unsafe in America: Transnational Repression in the United States* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/united-states>.

³ Human Rights Foundation, “Beyond Borders: China’s Transnational Repression of Uyghurs,” accessed June 10, 2026, <https://hrf.org/latest/beyond-borders-chinas-transnational-repression-of-uyghurs/>; World Without Genocide, “Transnational Repression: A Global Problem,” accessed June 10, 2026, <https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/transnational-repression-a-global-problem>.

harasses, and intimidates Uyghurs living abroad, including in the U.S., through threats to their family members in China, pressure to act as informants, and surveillance of communications.⁴

In “Repression Across Borders: The CCP’s Illegal Harassment and Coercion of Uyghur Americans,” published in 2019, UHRP focused on threats, surveillance, and coercive messaging (via WeChat and other channels) aimed at U.S.-resident Uyghurs. We concluded these measures China impeded Uyghur Americans’ rights to free speech and activism by leveraging fear for relatives in the Uyghur Region. Furthermore, in 2021, UHRP reported on the continuing pattern of transnational pressure through digital communications, noting China’s use of “proof-of-life” videos between family members as a means of transmitting misinformation and fear.⁵ In a joint report published in 2022 with the Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs, UHRP highlighted the Chinese state’s broader digital transnational repression, which combines digital surveillance with cyberattacks against Uyghurs in liberal democracies, like the U.S., undermining the liberty and security of diaspora communities.

Our most recent report, published in February 2026, [“Fading Ties: Uyghur Family Separation as a Tool of Transnational Repression”](#) uncovered how the Chinese government has transformed family separation into a deliberate mechanism of transnational repression, severing communication between Uyghurs in the United States and their relatives in the Uyghur homeland in order to silence advocacy and deter public criticism of Beijing’s policies.

Drawing on testimonies from members of the Uyghur diaspora, the report shows how the threat of retaliation against family members, combined with surveillance, intimidation, and arbitrary detention, has left many Uyghur Americans unable to contact parents, siblings, or extended family for years, creating psychological distress while weakening community networks and political activism. Our report concludes that the disruption of family ties is not merely a byproduct of repression in the Uyghur Region, but an intentional strategy that extends the reach of the Chinese state into the United States by leveraging concern for loved ones to constrain the exercise of fundamental rights.

One of the most significant impacts of China’s transnational repression on Uyghurs in the United States is the psychological and emotional harm caused by the loss of contact with family members in the Uyghur Region. The report finds that many Uyghur Americans live with persistent uncertainty about the fate of loved ones. This family separation generates anxiety, depression, grief, and feelings of helplessness, while also discouraging some Uyghurs from engaging in activism, public advocacy, or even ordinary expressions of identity out of concern that their actions could endanger loved ones in China. By weaponizing family relationships, the Chinese government extends its coercive power beyond its borders, weakening community

⁴ Nicole Morgret, *The Fifth Poison: The Harassment of Uyghurs Overseas* (Washington, DC: Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2017), <https://uhrp.org/report/the-fifth-poison-the-harassment-of-uyghur-overseas/>.

⁵ Emily Upton, “*The Government Never Oppresses Us*”: *China’s proof-of-life videos as intimidation and a violation of Uyghur family unity* (Washington, DC: Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021), https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/POLVReportFinal_2021-01-29.pdf.

cohesion and undermining the ability of Uyghur Americans to fully participate in civic and political life.

When a foreign government intimidates, surveils, harasses, or coerces people on U.S. soil, it is effectively attempting to exercise power within the United States. Whether through threats to diaspora communities, cyber harassment, or pressure campaigns, transnational repression challenges the principle that only U.S. laws and institutions should govern people living in the United States. When people in the United States cannot freely speak, organize, or advocate for human rights without fear of foreign retaliation, core constitutional freedoms are undermined. It creates a precedent that endangers all Americans and democratic institutions.

China's transnational repression is not limited to the Uyghur community. The measures used against Uyghurs can be deployed against journalists, academics, elected officials, researchers, and other diaspora groups. Allowing foreign governments to operate with impunity inside the United States weakens democratic institutions and encourages interference in American public life.

While federal efforts to contain transnational repression in the United States remain ongoing,⁶ state-level actions lag far behind the threat China poses to citizens and legal permanent residents. Beyond Texas Executive Order No. GA-47, which addresses the transnational harassment of Texans,⁷ state measures relevant to Uyghurs predominately focus on procurement policies.⁸ As such, the Uyghur Human Rights Project proposes the following recommendations for U.S. state governments.

Advocate for Family Protection and Communication: State governments that maintain economic and cultural relations with Chinese counterparts should work to ensure Uyghur Americans can safely communicate with and, where possible, reunite with family members.

Monitor and Document Transnational Repression: State-level offices should systematically track cases of harassment, surveillance, and coercion targeting Uyghur Americans, including threats to relatives abroad, cyberattacks, and intimidation through proxies. Data collected should inform public reporting, legal action, and intergovernmental coordination to identify and disrupt PRC operations.

Support Diaspora Mental Health and Cultural Continuity: Provide funding for mental health services, counseling, and culturally competent community support for Uyghur Americans experiencing trauma from threats, family separation, or harassment. Support programs that

⁶ Uyghur Human Rights Project, "Transnational Repression Policy Act (H.R. 4829 / S. 2525)," accessed June 10, 2026, <https://uhrp.org/bill-summary/transnational-repression-policy-act-h-r-4829-s-2525/>.

⁷ Office of the Texas Governor, "Governor Abbott Issues Executive Order Targeting Chinese Communist Party's Harassment of Texans," November 18, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-order-targeting-chinese-communist-partys-harassment-of-texans>.

⁸ Michigan House of Representatives, House Bill 5288 (2025), accessed June 10, 2026, <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-5288>.

preserve Uyghur language and intergenerational connections to strengthen resilience against transnational repression.

Counter State Propaganda and Disinformation: State governments should support independent media, research institutions, advocacy groups, and educational programs that expose PRC disinformation campaigns targeting Uyghurs. This includes amplifying credible reporting on forced family separation, harassment, and other forms of transnational repression, while promoting public awareness campaigns to counter misinformation.

UHRP supports the views expressed by Co-Chair Smith and Commissioner McGovern at the June 4 hearing and believes that subnational governments in the United States should take bolder steps towards protecting U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents from China's transnational repression.

Sincerely,

Henryk Szadziewski

Dr. Henryk Szadziewski, Director of Research.