

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to express urgent concern over the escalating campaign of transnational repression and worsening human rights crisis in Pakistan under the military-backed government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir. In recent years, U.S. citizens and residents who have spoken out against authoritarian abuses in Pakistan have faced threats, intimidation, and harassment—often extending to their families in Pakistan.¹ These tactics include arbitrary detentions, coercion, and retaliatory violence, targeting diaspora individuals and their relatives.² These actions infringe upon the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which both Pakistan and the United States are party.³ Further, they set a dangerous precedent for foreign interference on U.S. soil. While we recognize that the U.S.-Pakistan partnership on counterterrorism and other issues is vital to U.S. national security interests, these partnerships must be grounded in a mutual commitment to human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law. We urge you to swiftly impose targeted measures, including visa bans and asset freezes, against officials responsible for transnational repression, widespread human rights violations, and systematic repression in Pakistan. We have called out transnational repression in other countries before and will continue to do so; the same principled approach must be applied here.

Transnational repression has impacted individuals from a wide range of professional and personal backgrounds. Virginia-based investigative journalist Ahmed Noorani, known for reporting on military corruption, has faced persistent threats. After Mr. Noorani published an investigative article earlier this year, his brothers were abducted from their home in Islamabad, beaten, and detained for over a month.⁴ His case has been publicly highlighted as an illustrative

¹ TNR Watch: The Extraterritorial Impact of Pakistan’s Political Crisis.” 2023. Freedom House. 2023. <https://freedomhouse.org/article/TNRWatch/extraterritorial-impact-pakistans-political-crisis>.

² Grim, Ryan, and Murtaza Hussain. 2024. “AUDIO: Harrowing Phone Calls Expose Global Campaign of Repression.” Dropsitenews.com. Drop Site News. August 23, 2024. <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/audio-pakistan-global-critics>.

³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19. 1966.

⁴ Noorani, Ahmad. 2025. “Testimony of Ahmad Noorani.” <https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/humanrightscommission.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/testimony-of-ahmadnoorani.pdf>.

of such repression by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission⁵, Committee to Protect Journalists, and Amnesty International.⁶

Similarly, musician Salman Ahmad faced direct intimidation from the military, including threats to his family in both the United States and Pakistan. His brother-in-law was abducted and held without charge until the State Department and FBI intervened.⁷

This authoritarian system in Pakistan is sustained through relentless repression. Opposition leaders are held without charge, denied fair trial, and kept in indefinite pretrial detention. Independent journalists are harassed, abducted, or forced into exile.⁸ Ordinary citizens are arrested for social media posts, while women, religious minorities, and marginalized ethnic groups—particularly in Balochistan—face disproportionate violence and surveillance. These are not isolated violations; they reflect a calculated campaign to crush civil society and extinguish all challenges to military rule.⁹

Pakistan is facing an escalating crisis of authoritarianism, where democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms are being systematically dismantled. The 2024 elections—widely condemned for irregularities and documented in the Pattan Report, an independent Pakistani civil society study monitoring election irregularities—installed a pliant civilian façade.¹⁰ The U.S. State Department echoed these concerns, publicly expressing alarm over reported irregularities and called for a full investigation into the electoral process.¹¹ These developments are emblematic of a broader authoritarian crackdown. Under military pressure, Pakistan’s Supreme Court authorized civilians to be tried in military courts, erasing judicial independence and institutionalizing impunity.¹² Peaceful dissent has been transformed into a punishable offense under military rule—with no hope of judicial justice or relief.¹³

⁵ X (Formerly Twitter). 2025. <https://x.com/TLHumanRights/status/1909715417112940896>.

⁶ Pakistan: RSF Demands Immediate Release of Journalist Ahmad Noorani’s Brothers, Forcibly Disappeared in Reprisal for His Reporting.” 2025. Rsf.org. March 21, 2025. <https://rsf.org/en/pakistan-rsf-demands-immediate-release-journalist-ahmad-noorani-s-brothers-forcibly-disappeared>.

⁷ McGovern, James. n.d. “The Honorable RE: Submission to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing on Transnational Repression Targeting Pakistani Americans.” Accessed September 25, 2025. https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/humanrightscommission.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/20250624_capj_sfr_final.pdf.

⁸ Amnesty International. 2023. “Pakistan 2020 Archives.” Amnesty International. 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/pakistan/report-pakistan/>.

⁹ Pakistan: New Government Cracks down on Free Expression.” 2025. Human Rights Watch. January 16, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/16/pakistan-new-government-cracks-down-free-expression>.

¹⁰ Ikram Junaidi. 2025. “Pattan Says Its Offices Sealed for ‘Exposing Poll Rigging.’” Dawn. February 23, 2025. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1893738>.

¹¹ Miller, Matthew. “Elections in Pakistan.” United States Department of State. February 9, 2024. <https://2021-2025.state.gov/elections-in-pakistan/>

¹² Presse, France. 2025. “Pakistan’s Supreme Court Allows Civilians to Be Tried by Military.” Barrons. Barrons. May 7, 2025. <https://www.barrons.com/news/pakistan-s-supreme-court-allows-civilians-to-be-tried-by-military-4fad87c8>.

¹³ Asia. 2025. “Pakistan: Military ‘Justice’ System Reflects a Glaring Surrender of Human Rights | ICJ.” International Commission of Jurists. May 6, 2025. <https://www.icj.org/pakistan-military-justice-system-reflects-a-glaring-surrender-of-human-rights/>.

The United States has the responsibility and tools to hold Pakistan's military leadership accountable. We urge the Administration to swiftly impose measures, such as visa bans and asset freezes, against officials credibly perpetrating systematic repression, transnational repression, and undermining judicial independence. Such steps, alongside calls for the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and other political prisoners, would reinforce U.S. commitment to human rights, protect American citizens from transnational repression, and promote regional stability.¹⁴

To better inform congressional oversight of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, we request that you respond to the following questions in writing no later than December 17, 2025:

1. In light of Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir's central role in driving Pakistan's crackdown on dissent and other authoritarian abuses, has the Department of State imposed Global Magnitsky sanctions or visa bans on Pakistani military officials—such as Munir—given credible documentation of transnational repression, serious human rights violations, and election rigging? If not, what factors have informed that decision?
2. What specific conditions would lead to the application of targeted sanctions against Pakistan's military government?
3. What steps is the U.S. government taking to respond to Pakistan's transnational repression of U.S. citizens and residents, including threats, harassment, and coercion directed at their family members in Pakistan?
4. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's private meeting with President Trump on September 25, 2025, and General Asim Munir's meeting on July 18, 2025, did President Trump raise concerns regarding democratic governance, transnational repression, human rights, and political freedoms in Pakistan? How is the Administration ensuring these priorities are reflected in U.S. policy toward Pakistan and what follow-up actions is the Administration taking to ensure these concerns are addressed in practice?
5. How will the Administration ensure that engagement with General Munir and Pakistan's military leadership is conducted in a manner that advances U.S. commitments to democracy and human rights, while avoiding perceptions of endorsing actions that undermine these principles?

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and await your prompt response.

Sincerely,

¹⁴ Pakistan: Authorities Must Immediately Release Imran Khan from Arbitrary Detention - Amnesty International." 2024. Amnesty International. September 11, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/8507/2024/en/>, Pakistan: UN Experts Demand Release of Baloch Human Rights Defenders, and an End to Crackdown on Peaceful Protest." 2025. OHCHR. 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/pakistan-un-experts-demand-release-baloch-human-rights-defenders-and-end>, UNPO Member Communities Nominated for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize -. " 2025. UNPO. March 17, 2025. <https://unpo.org/unpo-member-communitiesnominated-for-the-2025-nobel-peace-prize/>.



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



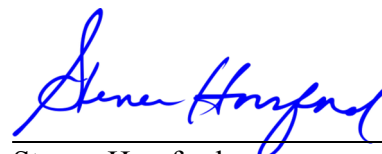
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Yvette D. Clarke
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Rashida Tlaib
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Steven Horsford
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Ro Khanna
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Maxine Waters
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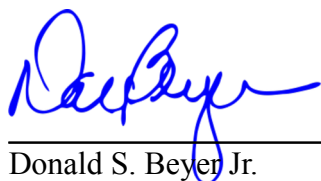
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Zoe Lofgren
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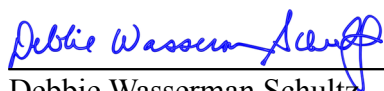
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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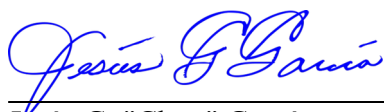
Bonnie Watson Coleman
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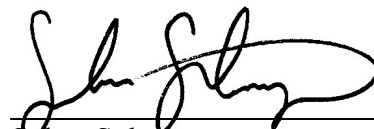
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
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Suhas Subramanyam
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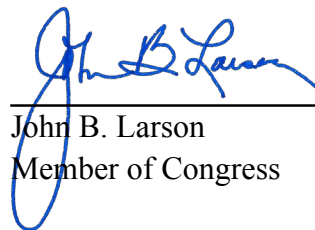
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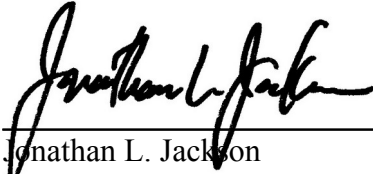
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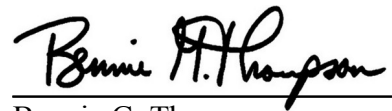
Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



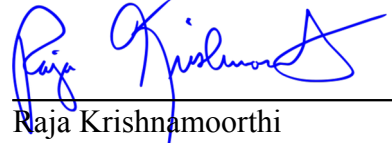
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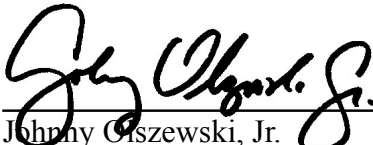
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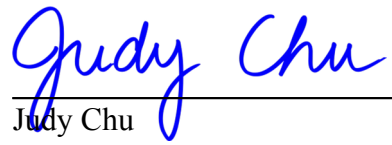
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