

George C. Landrith
President & CEO



Senator Malcolm Wallop
(1933 - 2011)
Founder

August 24, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable James Risch
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Distinguished Senators and Representatives:

Today, I write to raise concerns about the abuse of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) and Interpol by foreign governments, and I ask for your support in strengthening the oversight of and tools for the U.S. government to ensure they are not being used to unjustly target American citizens.

Abuse of these legal processes and institutions is classified by many as “transnational repression”, an action that is prohibited under U.S. law. In a recent report, Freedom House discovered there has been an alarming uptick in instances of this abuse worldwide and identified 85 new cases of “*public, direct, physical incidents of transnational repression*” last year alone.¹

¹ Freedom House, [Defending Democracy in Exile](#), 2022

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The abuse of MLATs and Interpol as part of foreign governments' campaigns of transnational repression has become all too prevalent and has often times included the targeting and harassment of businesspersons who are involved in international disputes.

These governments manufacture allegations or claims, such as tax evasion and money laundering, which they use as justification to deploy their local law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate, pursue, and punish their opponents.²

The results of these investigations lead to the filing of MLAT and Red Notice requests that are based on the governments' wholly manufactured claims and are intended solely to advance their own domestic agendas. This targeting, especially as it pertains to American businesspersons, is unlawful in the U.S. and violates Interpol's own rules and procedures that strictly prohibit the request of Red Notices in cases that involve private contractual disputes or political motives.

Autocratic regimes like Russia, China, India and Turkey have engaged in these lawless transnational repression campaigns targeting Americans. They have threatened the integrity of international legal processes and procedures.³

In a recent letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland, Senator Grassley highlighted India's "significant misuse" of the Red Notice process. Moreover, the Senator's letter raised concerns with abuse of the MLAT process, and urged the Department of Justice to ensure their MLAT requests to the U.S. "met the minimum standards of evidence required under U.S. law."⁴

An alarming and ongoing example of India's actions involves Indian-American entrepreneur Ramachandran Viswanathan, co-founder of Devas Multimedia, who has become the victim of a transnational repression campaign being perpetrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian government. Mr. Viswanathan is being targeted for attempting to exercise his rights to enforce billions in arbitral awards against the state. My organization, Frontiers of Freedom, recently filed a Global Magnitsky Act petition on his behalf in hopes of exposing the behavior of the Indian government, and the behavior of other autocratic regimes, so that the U.S. government can help ensure that these abuses do not occur in the United States.⁵

Today, I am asking for Congress' support in strengthening oversight of the MLAT and Interpol Red Notice processes and to urge you to ensure that U.S. authorities have the necessary tools to protect American citizens from being unjustly targeted by autocratic regimes. Your support would help

² Scroll.In, [How the Modi government has weaponised the ED to go after India's Opposition](#), July 5, 2022

³ Freedom House, [Defending Democracy in Exile](#), 2022

⁴ Sen. Chuck Grassley, [Letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland](#), July 19, 2022

⁵ Frontiers of Freedom, [Global Magnitsky Act Petition](#), August 3, 2022

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make certain the U.S. government is not hoodwinked into obliging the unlawful requests of these regimes, and that cases of transnational repression do not go unnoticed.

Thank you for your attention and please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss these issues further. I look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George Landrith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

George Landrith
President
Frontiers of Freedom