

## UK Human Rights Committee Report Sparks Diplomatic Tensions Over Alleged Foreign Interference

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A recent report by the UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights has reignited concerns over foreign interference on British soil, prompting a sharp response from India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The committee's investigation into transnational repression (TNR), defined as efforts by foreign governments to intimidate, silence, or target

individuals beyond their borders, identified 12 countries allegedly involved in such activities in the UK. Among those named were Russia, China, Iran, and, controversially, India.

The report, titled *Transnational Repression in the UK*, was released on Wednesday and draws upon written submissions from various individuals and advocacy groups. It claims that multiple countries have used surveillance, harassment, and even threats against dissidents, journalists, and activists who have sought refuge or are residing in the UK. While China, Russia, and Iran are labelled as the most egregious actors, the inclusion of India has stirred diplomatic pushback.

The UK-based inquiry received evidence from groups including Sikhs for Justice, the Sikh Federation UK, Dhal Khalsa UK, and the Sikh Press Association, organisations with known opposition to the Indian government. These groups accused Indian authorities of targeting Sikh activists in Britain, a claim India has firmly denied. Responding to the report, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the accusations against India as “baseless” and said they were “predominantly” sourced from proscribed or discredited organisations with documented anti-India agendas. “The deliberate reliance on discredited sources calls into question the credibility of the report itself,” Jaiswal said on Friday.

The Joint Committee on Human Rights, comprising Members of Parliament and members of the House of Lords, including British-Indian peer Lord Dholakia, examines the protection and promotion of human rights in the UK. The committee’s report noted a 48% increase in state threat investigations by MI5, the UK’s domestic intelligence agency, over the past year. It is recommended that the UK government take stronger action against foreign TNR operations, including diplomatic expulsions, targeted sanctions, and a human rights review of international trade partnerships.

Despite India’s sharp rebuke, UK officials have sought to clarify the nature of the report. Former Security Minister Tom Tugendhat told *The Times of India* that the document does not explicitly accuse India of wrongdoing. “It merely records that evidence was given by a group that has long been hostile to India,” he said. Tugendhat added that in his official capacity, TNR related to India was never a subject of concern or discussion with Indian authorities.

Other sources close to the committee emphasised that inclusion in the report reflects submitted evidence, not a definitive conclusion. “The report does not suggest that India is doing it. It just states they received evidence about India. That doesn’t mean the committee

believes it,” one source told TOI, noting that groups like Sikhs for Justice are not banned in the UK, despite being proscribed in India.