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## Chinese Government Transnational Repression Violates US Laws and US-based Uyghurs' Rights

### Threat overview:

The FBI assesses Chinese government officials are almost certainly employing transnational repression<sup>a</sup> techniques to target US-based Uyghurs and other Chinese diaspora members in the United States. These officials target US-based Uyghurs through in-person and digital means to silence dissent, issue instructions, collect information, and compel compliance. Threatened consequences for non-compliance routinely include detainment of a US-based person's family or friends in China, seizure of China-based assets, sustained digital and in-person harassment, Chinese government attempts to force repatriation, computer hacking and digital attacks, and false representation online.

The Chinese government continues to conduct this activity, even as the US government (USG) has sanctioned Chinese officials and increased public and diplomatic messaging to counter China's human rights and democratic abuses in Xinjiang over the past year. This transnational repression activity violates US laws and individual rights.<sup>i, ii, iii</sup>



### Examples:

- As of June 2021, the Chinese government had imprisoned dozens of family members of six US-based Uyghur journalists in retaliation for their continued reporting on China and Uyghur matters for the USG-funded news service *Radio Free Asia*.<sup>iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix</sup>
- Between 2019 and March 2021, Chinese officials routinely used WeChat to call and text a US-based Uyghur to discourage her from publicly discussing Uyghur mistreatment, to obtain information about US-based Uyghur-related

<sup>a</sup> **Transnational repression** refers to foreign government transgression of national borders through physical and digital means to intimidate, silence, coerce, harass, or harm members of diaspora and exile communities.

organizations and individuals, and to threaten her family members' safety for non-compliance. After the Uyghur met with a senior USG official in January 2021, these intimidation efforts escalated; as of April 2021, Chinese officials had detained several of the US-based Uyghur's family members in Xinjiang detention camps.<sup>x, xi</sup>

- In March 2021, Facebook announced Chinese hackers had used fake personas to target approximately 500 Uyghurs abroad, including in the United States.<sup>xii, xiii</sup>
- In March 2019, a Uyghur-American met with the US Secretary of State to discuss Chinese government-backed targeting of US-based Uyghurs and the incarceration of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including his mother, whom Chinese authorities had detained in an internment camp. In reprisal for his public meeting, Chinese authorities arrested his aunt and uncle.<sup>xiv, xv</sup>
- Since 2017, Chinese authorities have detained more than 1.8 million Uyghurs in Chinese re-education camps where they are subjected to a variety of abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, forced labor, forced sterilization, political indoctrination, sexual violence, and disappearance.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Considerations for US law enforcement and the public:**

US law enforcement personnel who encounter individuals reporting Chinese government harassment – to include in-person, digital, and harassment by proxy – should contact the FBI. Law enforcement should remain particularly vigilant for Chinese government-backed targeting of US-based Uyghurs, as well as US-based Tibetans, Falun Gong members, Taiwan and Hong Kong advocates, and Fox Hunt targets<sup>b</sup>.

Members of the public are similarly encouraged to report suspected Chinese government-backed transnational repression activity of any kind to the FBI.

To report Chinese government-backed threats and harassment, contact your local FBI field office (details available at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)) or submit a tip via 1-800-CALL-FBI (or 1-800-225-5324) or via [www.fbi.gov/tips](http://www.fbi.gov/tips). You can also make an anonymous tip to the FBI by phone or online.

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<sup>b</sup> **(Operation) Fox Hunt** refers to the Chinese government's global, extralegal campaign to forcibly repatriate overseas Chinese individuals for alleged crimes committed under Chinese law to face charges in China.

### Publicly-available source references:

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