

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3854

To combat transnational repression abroad, to strengthen tools to combat authoritarianism, corruption, and kleptocracy, to invest in democracy research and development, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To combat transnational repression abroad, to strengthen tools to combat authoritarianism, corruption, and kleptocracy, to invest in democracy research and development, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
5 “International Freedom Protection Act”.

6 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.

- Sec. 4. Combating transnational repression abroad.
- Sec. 5. Strengthening tools to combat authoritarianism.
- Sec. 6. Combating corruption and kleptocracy.
- Sec. 7. Investing in democracy research and development.
- Sec. 8. Addressing authoritarians in the multilateral system.
- Sec. 9. Confronting digital authoritarianism.
- Sec. 10. Protecting political prisoners.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) According to Freedom House’s 2023 report,
 4 “Freedom in the World”, democracy experienced a
 5 worldwide decline for 17 consecutive years and has
 6 been weakened by factors, such as attacks on demo-
 7 cratic institutions, impunity, corruption,
 8 disinformation, human rights violations, and conflict.

9 (2) Since 2006, autocratic forces and illiberal
 10 forces have been on the rise, with emboldened auto-
 11 crats from China, Russia, and Iran—

12 (A) refining their tactics to undermine de-
 13 mocracy globally;

14 (B) suppressing dissent to sustain their
 15 own regimes; and

16 (C) frequently collaborating with each an-
 17 other in such efforts.

18 (3) The rise of authoritarianism—

19 (A) undermines the national security of the
 20 United States and the security of our demo-
 21 cratic allies and partners;

22 (B) creates instability;

1 (C) weakens the rule of law; and

2 (D) increases the risk of war.

3 (4) Democracies are ill-prepared to fight back
4 against the growing complexity and emerging chal-
5 lenges posed by autocratic and illiberal forces.

6 (5) There is an urgent need to update the
7 United States Government’s approach to countering
8 authoritarianism by strengthening and revitalizing
9 the relevant tools, strategies, and institutions.

10 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act:

12 (1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-**
13 **TEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional com-
14 mittees” means—

15 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
16 the Senate;

17 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
18 the Senate;

19 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
20 the House of Representatives; and

21 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
22 the House of Representatives.

23 (2) **RELEVANT FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—The term
24 “relevant Federal agencies” means—

25 (A) the Department of State;

1 (B) the United States Agency for Inter-
2 national Development; and

3 (C) other Federal agencies that are rel-
4 evant for purposes of this Act.

5 (3) TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION.—The term
6 “transnational repression”—

7 (A) means acts by governments (either di-
8 rectly or through others) to silence, intimidate,
9 or exact reprisal against individuals outside
10 their sovereign borders, including members of
11 diaspora populations, political opponents, civil
12 society activists, human rights defenders, jour-
13 nalists, and members of ethnic or religious mi-
14 nority groups; and

15 (B) may include—

16 (i) extrajudicial killings;

17 (ii) physical assaults and intimidation;

18 (iii) arbitrary detentions;

19 (iv) renditions;

20 (v) deportations;

21 (vi) unexplained or enforced dis-
22 appearances;

23 (vii) physical or online surveillance or
24 stalking;

1 (viii) unwarranted passport cancella-
2 tion or control over other identification
3 documents;

4 (ix) abuse of international law en-
5 forcement systems;

6 (x) unlawful asset freezes;

7 (xi) digital threats, such as
8 cyberattacks, targeted surveillance and
9 spyware, online harassment, and intimidat-
10 ion; and

11 (xii) coercion by proxy, such as har-
12 assment of, or threats or harm to, family
13 and associates of private individuals who
14 remain in their country of origin.

15 **SEC. 4. COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**
16 **ABROAD.**

17 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
18 ings:

19 (1) Amidst a backdrop of global democratic de-
20 cline, authoritarian governments are increasingly col-
21 laborating and employing aggressive tactics across
22 borders to silence, coerce, harass, or harm individ-
23 uals for peacefully exercising their rights and funda-
24 mental freedoms.

1 (2) Governments commit transnational repres-
2 sion through physical and digital means. The ad-
3 vancement of digital technology provides new tools
4 for censoring, surveilling, harassing, and targeting
5 individuals deemed to be threats across international
6 borders. This is particularly significant for dis-
7 sidents and journalists forced abroad who rely on
8 communications technology to amplify their mes-
9 sages and communicate with their professional and
10 personal support networks.

11 (3) Since 2014, Freedom House has docu-
12 mented 854 direct physical incidents of
13 transnational repression committed by 38 govern-
14 ments in 91 countries. Nonphysical acts of
15 transnational repression are occurring even more
16 frequently. The combined effect of these direct
17 threats produces a chilling effect that compels count-
18 less more people to modify their behavior due to fear
19 of transnational repression.

20 (4) In 2023, the countries whose governments
21 are committing the highest number of direct physical
22 acts of transnational repression are China, Turkey,
23 Tajikistan, Russia, and Egypt.

24 (5) Transnational repression is used by govern-
25 ments to target perceived critics, who may include

1 human rights defenders, democracy activists, polit-
2 ical opponents, members of diaspora groups, and the
3 family members of such individuals.

4 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY ON TRANSNATIONAL RE-
5 PRESSION.—It is the policy of the United States—

6 (1) to regard transnational repression as a di-
7 rect threat to the United States national interests of
8 upholding and promoting democratic values and
9 human rights;

10 (2) to address transnational repression, includ-
11 ing by protecting targeted individuals and groups;

12 (3) to strengthen the actions of United States
13 embassy and mission staff in countering
14 transnational repression, including by—

15 (A) monitoring and documenting instances
16 of transnational repression;

17 (B) conducting regular outreach with at-
18 risk or affected populations to provide informa-
19 tion regarding available resources without put-
20 ting such people at further risk; and

21 (C) working with local and national law
22 enforcement, as appropriate, to support victims
23 of transnational repression;

24 (4) to develop policy and programmatic re-
25 sponses based on input from—

1 (A) vulnerable populations who are at risk
2 of, or are experiencing, transnational repres-
3 sion;

4 (B) nongovernmental organizations work-
5 ing on issues of transnational repression; and

6 (C) the private sector;

7 (5) to provide training to relevant Federal per-
8 sonnel—

9 (A) to enhance their understanding of
10 transnational repression; and

11 (B) to identify and combat threats of
12 transnational repression;

13 (6) to strengthen documentation and moni-
14 toring by the United States Government of
15 transnational repression in foreign countries and
16 within international organizations; and

17 (7) to seek to hold perpetrators of transnational
18 repression accountable, including through the use of
19 targeted sanctions and visa restrictions.

20 (c) REPORT ON TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
22 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
23 every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of State, in
24 consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal
25 agencies, shall submit a report to the appropriate

1 congressional committees that assesses the efforts of
2 the United States Government to implement the pol-
3 icy objectives described in subsection (b).

4 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required under
5 paragraph (1) shall include—

6 (A) a detailed description and assessment
7 of United States Government efforts to mon-
8 itor, prevent, and respond to transnational re-
9 pression abroad;

10 (B) a detailed accounting, disaggregated
11 by country, of the most common tactics of
12 transnational repression;

13 (C) instances of transnational repression
14 occurring within international organizations;

15 (D) a list of countries perpetrating acts of
16 transnational repression;

17 (E) a list of countries whose governments
18 are known to frequently cooperate with other
19 governments in committing transnational re-
20 pression;

21 (F) a description of—

22 (i) efforts by personnel at United
23 States embassies and missions to support
24 victims of or those at risk of transnational
25 repression; and

1 (ii) resources provided to United
2 States embassies and missions to support
3 such efforts; and

4 (G) a strategy to strengthen interagency
5 efforts and coordination to combat
6 transnational repression, which shall include—

7 (i) a plan, developed in consultation
8 with partner governments, civil society, the
9 business community, and other entities, to
10 promote respect for rule of law and human
11 rights in surveillance technology use, which
12 shall include—

13 (I) improving export licensing
14 policy, including by applying addi-
15 tional scrutiny to export licensing ap-
16 plications for products exported to
17 perpetrators;

18 (II) protecting personal digital
19 data from being used for the purposes
20 of transnational repression;

21 (III) establishing safeguards to
22 prevent the misuse of surveillance
23 technology, including elements such as
24 appropriate legal protections, a prohi-
25 bition on discrimination, oversight and

1 accountability mechanisms, trans-
2 parency on the applicable legal frame-
3 work, limiting biometric tools for sur-
4 veillance to what is lawful and appro-
5 priate, testing and evaluation, and
6 training;

7 (IV) working to ensure, as appli-
8 cable, that such technologies are de-
9 signed, developed, and deployed with
10 safeguards to protect human rights
11 (including privacy), consistent with
12 the United Nations Guiding Principles
13 on Business and Human Rights;

14 (ii) public diplomacy efforts and plans
15 for, including the use of the voice, vote,
16 and influence of the United States at inter-
17 national organizations, to promote aware-
18 ness of and oppose acts of transnational
19 repression;

20 (iii) a plan to develop or enhance glob-
21 al coalitions to monitor cases of
22 transnational repression at international
23 organizations and to strengthen alert
24 mechanisms for key stakeholders world-
25 wide;

1 (iv) a description, as appropriate, of
2 how the United States Government has
3 previously provided, and will continue to
4 provide, support to civil society organiza-
5 tions in foreign countries in which
6 transnational repression occurs—

7 (I) to improve the documenta-
8 tion, investigation, and research of
9 cases, trends, and tactics of
10 transnational repression; and

11 (II) to promote accountability
12 and transparency in government ac-
13 tions impacting victims of
14 transnational repression; and

15 (v) a description of new or existing
16 emergency assistance mechanisms, to aid
17 at-risk groups, communities, and individ-
18 uals in countries abroad in which
19 transnational repression occurs.

20 (3) FORM OF REPORT.—The report required
21 under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassi-
22 fied form, but may include a classified annex.

23 (d) TRAINING OF UNITED STATES PERSONNEL.—

24 The Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of
25 other relevant Federal agencies, shall provide personnel of

1 the Department of State and other relevant Federal agen-
2 cies, whether serving in the United States or overseas,
3 with training regarding—

4 (1) identifying physical and nonphysical threats
5 of transnational repression;

6 (2) foreign governments that are most fre-
7 quently involved in transnational repression;

8 (3) foreign governments that are known to fre-
9 quently cooperate with other governments in com-
10 mitting transnational repression;

11 (4) digital surveillance and cyber tools com-
12 monly used in transnational repression;

13 (5) safe outreach methods for vulnerable popu-
14 lations at risk of transnational repression; and

15 (6) tools to respond to transnational repression
16 threats, including relevant authorities which may be
17 invoked.

18 (e) TRAINING OF FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS AND
19 PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES.—Section 708(a)(1) of the
20 Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4028(a)(1)) is
21 amended—

22 (1) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and” at
23 the end;

24 (2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period
25 at the end and inserting “; and”; and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(E) for Foreign Service Officers and
3 Presidential appointees, including chiefs of mis-
4 sion, in missions abroad who work on political,
5 economic, public diplomacy, security, or devel-
6 opment issues, a dedicated module of instruc-
7 tion on transnational repression (as such term
8 is defined in section 3(3) of the International
9 Freedom Protection Act), including—

10 “(i) how to recognize threats of
11 transnational repression;

12 “(ii) an overview of relevant laws that
13 can be invoked to combat such threats;
14 and

15 “(iii) how to support individuals expe-
16 riencing transnational repression.”.

17 **SEC. 5. STRENGTHENING TOOLS TO COMBAT**
18 **AUTHORITARIANISM.**

19 (a) **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION.**—The President
20 shall consider the use of transnational repression by a for-
21 eign person in determining whether to impose sanctions
22 with respect to such foreign person under—

23 (1) the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Ac-
24 countability Act (22 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.);

1 (2) section 7031(c) of the Department of State,
2 Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appro-
3 priations Act, 2023 (division K of Public Law 117-
4 328; 8 U.S.C. 1182 note); or

5 (3) any other relevant statutory provision
6 granting human rights-related sanctions authority
7 under which a foreign person has been sanctioned.

8 (b) MODIFICATIONS TO THE GLOBAL MAGNITSKY
9 HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.—Section 1263 of
10 the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act
11 (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114–328; 22 U.S.C.
12 2656 note) is amended—

13 (1) in subsection (a)—

14 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “or” at
15 the end;

16 (B) by striking paragraph (4); and

17 (C) by inserting after paragraph (3) the
18 following:

19 “(4) is responsible for or complicit in, or has di-
20 rectly or indirectly engaged in, significant actions or
21 policies that undermine democratic processes or in-
22 stitutions; or

23 “(5) has materially assisted, sponsored, or pro-
24 vided financial, material, or technological support

1 for, or goods or services in support of, an activity
2 described in this subsection.”; and

3 (2) in subsection (d)(2), by striking subpara-
4 graph (B) and inserting the following:

5 “(B) REQUESTS RELATING TO CORRUP-
6 TION.—A request described in paragraph (1)
7 with respect to whether a foreign person has
8 engaged in an activity described in paragraph
9 (3) or (5) of subsection (a) shall be submitted
10 to the President in writing jointly by the chair-
11 person and the ranking member of—

12 “(i) any of the appropriate congres-
13 sional committees of the Senate; and

14 “(ii) any of the appropriate congres-
15 sional committees of the House of Rep-
16 resentatives.

17 “(C) REQUESTS RELATING TO UNDER-
18 MINING DEMOCRACY.—A request described in
19 paragraph (1) with respect to whether a foreign
20 person has engaged in an activity described in
21 subsection (a)(4) shall be submitted in writing
22 to the President jointly by the chairperson and
23 ranking member of any of the appropriate con-
24 gressional committees.”.

1 (c) ANTI-KLEPTOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS INELI-
2 GIBILITY.—

3 (1) INELIGIBILITY.—

4 (A) SIGNIFICANT CORRUPTION OR HUMAN
5 RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.—Except as provided in
6 paragraphs (2) and (3), a foreign government
7 official shall be ineligible for entry into the
8 United States if the Secretary of State deter-
9 mines that such official was knowingly directly
10 or indirectly involved in—

11 (i) significant corruption, including
12 corruption related to the extraction of nat-
13 ural resources; or

14 (ii) a gross violation of human rights,
15 including the wrongful detention of—

16 (I) locally employed staff of a
17 United States diplomatic mission; or

18 (II) a United States citizen or
19 national.

20 (B) UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC GOVERN-
21 ANCE.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2)
22 and (3), a foreign government official may be
23 ineligible for entry into the United States if the
24 Secretary of State determines that such official
25 was knowingly directly or indirectly involved in

1 significant actions that undermine democratic
2 governance.

3 (C) IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS.—The
4 immediate family members of an official de-
5 scribed in subparagraph (A) or (B) may be sub-
6 ject to the same restriction on entry into the
7 United States as such official.

8 (D) REFERRAL.—The Secretary of State,
9 in implementing this subsection, shall, as ap-
10 propriate, provide information regarding the ac-
11 tions of officials described in subparagraphs (A)
12 and (B) to the Office of Foreign Assets Control
13 of the Department of the Treasury, which shall
14 determine whether to impose sanctions author-
15 ized under Federal law to block the transfer of
16 property and interests in property, and all fi-
17 nancial transactions, in the United States in-
18 volving any such official.

19 (E) DESIGNATION OR DETERMINATION.—
20 The Secretary of State shall publicly or pri-
21 vately designate or make the determination that
22 the foreign government officials or party mem-
23 bers about whom the Secretary has made such
24 designation or determination regarding signifi-
25 cant corruption or gross violations of human

1 rights, and their immediate family members,
2 without regard to whether any such individual
3 has applied for a visa.

4 (2) EXCEPTIONS.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—Individuals are not in-
6 eligible for entry into the United States pursu-
7 ant to paragraph (1) if such entry—

8 (i) would further important United
9 States law enforcement objectives; or

10 (ii) is necessary to permit the United
11 States to fulfill its obligations under the
12 Agreement regarding the Headquarters of
13 the United Nations, signed at Lake Suc-
14 cess June 26, 1947, and entered into force
15 November 21, 1947, between the United
16 Nations and the United States or under
17 other international obligations of the
18 United States.

19 (B) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in
20 paragraph (1) may be construed to derogate
21 from United States Government obligations
22 under applicable international agreements or
23 obligations.

1 (3) WAIVER.—The Secretary of State may
2 waive the application of paragraph (1) with respect
3 to any individual if the Secretary determines that—

4 (A) such waiver would serve a compelling
5 national interest of the United States; or

6 (B) the circumstances that caused such in-
7 dividual to be ineligible for entry into the
8 United States have sufficiently changed.

9 (4) SEMIANNUAL REPORT.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days
11 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
12 every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of
13 State shall submit a report, including a classi-
14 fied annex if necessary, to the Committee on
15 Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Com-
16 mittee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
17 resentatives. Each such report shall include—

18 (i) all relevant information relating to
19 corruption, human rights violations, or un-
20 dermining democratic governance that was
21 a factor in identifying, during the most re-
22 cent 12-month period—

23 (I) individuals who are ineligible
24 for entry into the United States under
25 paragraph (1)(A);

1 (II) individuals about whom the
2 Secretary has made a designation or
3 determination pursuant to paragraph
4 (1)(E); and

5 (III) individuals who would be in-
6 eligible for entry into the United
7 States under paragraph (1)(A), but
8 were excluded from such restriction
9 pursuant to paragraph (2);

10 (ii) a list of any waivers granted by
11 the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (3);
12 and

13 (iii) a description of the justification
14 for each such waiver.

15 (B) POSTING OF REPORT.—The unclassi-
16 fied portion of each report required under sub-
17 paragraph (A) shall be posted on a publicly ac-
18 cessible website of the Department of State.

19 (5) CLARIFICATION.—For purposes of para-
20 graphs (1) and (4), the records of the Department
21 of State and of diplomatic and consular offices of
22 the United States pertaining to the issuance or re-
23 fusal of visas or permits to enter the United States
24 shall not be considered confidential.

1 (d) RESTRICTION ON ASSISTANCE IN THE WAKE OF
2 A COUP D'ÉTAT.—Chapter 1 of part III of the Foreign
3 Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.) is amend-
4 ed by adding at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 620N. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE IN THE WAKE OF**
6 **A COUP D'ÉTAT.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under sub-
8 sections (b) and (d), no assistance may be furnished under
9 this Act or under the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C.
10 2751) to the central government of any country in which
11 the duly elected head of government was deposed by a
12 military coup d'état or decree or a coup d'état or decree
13 in which the military played a decisive role.

14 “(b) EXEMPTION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY.—The
15 Secretary of State, after consultation with the heads of
16 relevant Federal agencies, may waive the restriction on as-
17 sistance described in subsection (a) if the Secretary cer-
18 tifies and reports to the appropriate congressional commit-
19 tees, not later than 30 days before the provision of such
20 assistance to such government, that such waiver is in the
21 national security interest of the United States.

22 “(c) RESUMPTION OF ASSISTANCE.—Assistance to a
23 foreign government that is subject to the restriction de-
24 scribed in subsection (a) may be resumed if the Secretary
25 of State certifies and reports to the appropriate congres-

1 sional committees, not fewer than 30 days before the re-
 2 sumption of such assistance, that a democratically elected
 3 government has taken office subsequent to the termination
 4 of assistance pursuant to subsection (a).

5 “(d) EXCEPTION FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMANI-
 6 TARIAN ASSISTANCE.—The restriction under subsection
 7 (a) shall not apply to any assistance used—

8 “(1) to promote democratic elections or public
 9 participation in the democratic processes;

10 “(2) to support a democratic transition; or

11 “(3) for humanitarian purposes.

12 “(e) DEFINED TERM.—In this section, the term ‘ap-
 13 propriate congressional committees’ means—

14 “(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
 15 Senate;

16 “(2) the Committee on Appropriations of the
 17 Senate;

18 “(3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
 19 House of Representatives; and

20 “(4) the Committee on Appropriations of the
 21 House of Representatives.”.

22 **SEC. 6. COMBATING CORRUPTION AND KLEPTOCRACY.**

23 (a) PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretary of State and
 24 the Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
 25 national Development shall combat authoritarianism by

1 prioritizing governance and anti-corruption activities and
2 programs that—

3 (1) enhance the transparency, accountability,
4 and responsiveness of governments across relevant
5 sectors;

6 (2)(A) improve the detection and exposure of
7 corruption crimes, including crimes that cross bor-
8 ders;

9 (B) improve citizen oversight and advocacy;

10 (C) protect free expression and civic activism;

11 and

12 (D) support investigative journalism and media
13 independence;

14 (3)(A) expand the investigation and prosecution
15 of corrupt acts;

16 (B) hold corrupt actors accountable;

17 (C) promote the adoption and implementation
18 of anticorruption preventive measures; and

19 (D) promote good governance, public adminis-
20 tration, and impartial judiciaries;

21 (4) address corruption in key sectors, whether
22 at the level of—

23 (A) delivery of services to citizens;

24 (B) important governmental processes,
25 such as procurement; or

1 (C) priority economic sectors;

2 (5) strengthen democratic norms and standards
3 at the local, national, regional, and international lev-
4 els;

5 (6) augment cooperation with the private sector
6 and key industries to root out corruption that—

7 (A) harms competitiveness, economic
8 growth, and development; and

9 (B) taints critical supply chains;

10 (7) address corrosive capital and the strategic
11 use of corruption by authoritarian states to under-
12 mine democracy and good governance; and

13 (8) provide essential skills and resources to civil
14 society and media—

15 (A) to counter corruption; and

16 (B) to address the weak governance and
17 poor human rights conditions that cultivate cor-
18 ruption.

19 (b) KLEPTOCRACY ASSET RECOVERY REWARDS PRO-
20 GRAM.—Section 36(b) of the State Department Basic Au-
21 thorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(b)) is amended—

22 (1) in paragraph (13), by striking “or” at the
23 end;

24 (2) in paragraph (14), by striking the period at
25 the end and inserting “; or”; and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(15) the restraining, seizing, forfeiting, or re-
3 patriating of stolen assets linked to foreign govern-
4 ment corruption and the proceeds of such corrup-
5 tion.”.

6 **SEC. 7. INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY RESEARCH AND DEVEL-**
7 **OPMENT.**

8 (a) PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRACY RESEARCH AND DE-
9 VELOPMENT.—The Secretary of State, in consultation
10 with the Administrator of the United States Agency for
11 International Development, shall establish a program for
12 democracy research and development that—

13 (1) supports research and development by the
14 Department of State, the United States Agency for
15 International Development, and the National En-
16 dowment for Democracy on policies and programs
17 relating to democracy efforts;

18 (2) drives innovation within such agencies re-
19 garding the response to complex, multidimensional
20 challenges to democracy, including—

21 (A) combating transnational kleptocracy;

22 (B) mitigating hyperpolarization;

23 (C) countering malign authoritarian influ-
24 ence; and

1 (D) leveraging emerging technology for de-
2 mocracy;

3 (3) incentivizes collaboration among govern-
4 ments, nongovernmental organizations, and the pri-
5 vate sector to identify and mitigate threats to global
6 democracy;

7 (4) identifies lessons learned and best practices
8 for democracy programs and diplomatic approaches
9 to create feedback loops and shape future evidence-
10 based programming and diplomacy;

11 (5) encourages private sector actors to establish
12 and implement business practices that will—

13 (A) strengthen democratic institutions;

14 (B) bolster democratic processes; and

15 (C) support democracy activists and
16 human rights defenders; and

17 (6) strengthens the resilience of democratic ac-
18 tors and institutions.

19 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
20 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in
21 consultation with the Administrator of the United States
22 Agency for International Development, shall submit a re-
23 port to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate
24 and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of

1 Representatives that describes the efforts and results of
2 the program established pursuant to subsection (a).

3 **SEC. 8. ADDRESSING AUTHORITARIANS IN THE MULTILAT-**
4 **ERAL SYSTEM.**

5 It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State
6 and the United States Permanent Representative to the
7 United Nations should use the voice, vote, and influence
8 of the United States at the United Nations and with other
9 multilateral bodies—

10 (1)(A) to promote the full participation of civil
11 society actors within the United National Human
12 Rights Council and other multilateral bodies;

13 (B) to closely monitor instances of reprisals
14 against such actors; and

15 (C) to support the use of targeted sanctions,
16 censure of member states, and other diplomatic
17 measures to hold responsible any person who en-
18 gages in reprisals against human rights defenders
19 and civil society within such multilateral bodies;

20 (2) to reform the process for suspending the
21 rights of membership in the United Nations Human
22 Rights Council for member states that commit gross
23 and systemic violations of human rights, including—

24 (A) ensuring information detailing the
25 member state's human rights record is publicly

1 available before a vote for membership or a vote
2 on suspending the rights of membership of such
3 member state; and

4 (B) making publicly available the vote of
5 each member state on the suspension of rights
6 of membership from the United Nations
7 Human Rights Council;

8 (3) to reform the rules for electing members to
9 the United Nations Human Rights Council to seek
10 to ensure that member states that have committed
11 gross and systemic violations of human rights are
12 not elected to the Human Rights Council; and

13 (4) to oppose the election to the United Nations
14 Human Rights Council of any member state—

15 (A) that engages in a consistent pattern of
16 gross violations of internationally recognized
17 human rights, as determined pursuant to sec-
18 tion 116 or 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act
19 of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n and 2304);

20 (B) the government of which has repeat-
21 edly provided support for acts of international
22 terrorism, as determined pursuant to section
23 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
24 (22 U.S.C. 2371);

1 (C) that is designated as a Tier 3 country
2 under section 110(b)(1)(C) of the Trafficking
3 Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C.
4 7107(b)(1)(C));

5 (D) that is included on the list published
6 by the Secretary of State pursuant to section
7 404(b)(1) of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act
8 of 2008 (22 U.S.C. 2370c–1(b)(1)) as a govern-
9 ment that recruits and uses child soldiers; or

10 (E) the government of which the United
11 States determines to have committed genocide,
12 crimes against humanity, war crimes, or ethnic
13 cleansing.

14 **SEC. 9. CONFRONTING DIGITAL AUTHORITARIANISM.**

15 (a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the
16 United States—

17 (1) to combat digital authoritarianism, includ-
18 ing the use of digital technologies, that—

19 (A) restricts the exercise of civil and polit-
20 ical rights;

21 (B) weakens democratic processes and in-
22 stitutions, including elections; or

23 (C) surveils, censors, or represses human
24 rights defenders, democracy activists, civil soci-

1 ety actors, independent media, or political oppo-
2 nents;

3 (2) to counter misinformation and
4 disinformation, especially in the digital domain;

5 (3) to promote internet freedom and elevate the
6 protection of human rights and democratic principles
7 in the design and deployment of current and emerg-
8 ing technologies; and

9 (4) to support efforts to counter government
10 censorship and surveillance, including efforts—

11 (A) to bypass internet shutdowns and
12 other forms of censorship, including blocks on
13 services through circumvention technologies;
14 and

15 (B) to provide digital security and digital
16 activism support and training for democracy ac-
17 tivists, human rights defenders, journalists, and
18 other at-risk groups.

19 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date
20 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in
21 coordination with the Administrator of the United States
22 Agency for International Development, shall submit a re-
23 port to the appropriate congressional committees that de-
24 scribes the Department of State’s efforts to implement the
25 policy objectives described in subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 10. PROTECTING POLITICAL PRISONERS.**

2 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date
3 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall
4 submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations
5 of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
6 the House of Representatives that includes, with respect
7 to unjustly detained political prisoners worldwide—

8 (1) a description of existing Department of
9 State processes and efforts to carry out the political
10 prisoner-related activities described in subsection
11 (b);

12 (2) an assessment of any resource gaps or insti-
13 tutional deficiencies that adversely impact the De-
14 partment of State’s ability to engage in the activities
15 described in subsection (b) in order to respond to in-
16 creasing numbers of unjustly detained political pris-
17 oners; and

18 (3) a strategy for enhancing the efforts of the
19 Department of State and other Federal agencies to
20 carry out the political prisoner-related activities de-
21 scribed in subsection (b).

22 (b) POLITICAL PRISONER-RELATED ACTIVITIES.—
23 The report required under subsection (a) shall include a
24 description of the Department of State’s efforts—

1 (1) to monitor regional and global trends con-
2 cerning unjustly detained political prisoners and
3 maintain information regarding individual cases;

4 (2) to consistently raise concerns regarding un-
5 justly detained political prisoners, including specific
6 individuals, through public and private engagement
7 with foreign governments, public reporting, and mul-
8 tilateral engagement;

9 (3) to routinely—

10 (A) attend the trials of political prisoners;

11 (B) conduct wellness visits of political pris-
12 oners, to the extent practicable and pending ap-
13 proval from political prisoners or their legal
14 counsel;

15 (C) visit political prisoners incarcerated
16 under home arrest, subject to a travel ban, or
17 confined in detention; and

18 (D) report on the well-being of such polit-
19 ical prisoners;

20 (4) to regularly request information and specific
21 actions related to individual prisoners' medical con-
22 ditions, treatment, access to legal counsel, location,
23 and family visits;

1 (5) to identify cases in which an imminent ar-
2 rest, a potential re-arrest, or physical violence poses
3 a risk to an at-risk individual;

4 (6) to utilize foreign assistance resources to
5 provide support to civil society and others advocating
6 for the release of unjustly detained political pris-
7 oners;

8 (7) to utilize embassy resources to provide shel-
9 ter or facilitate the safe evacuation of willing individ-
10 uals and their families, whenever feasible; and

11 (8) to use sanctions and other accountability
12 mechanisms to encourage the release of unjustly de-
13 tained political prisoners.

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