



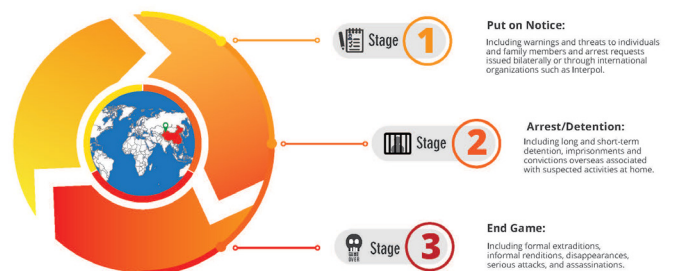
The Great Wall of Steel: China's Use of Transnational Repression to Target Uyghurs

Background

The People's Republic of China has engaged in transnational repression in 44 countries since 1997. During this period, there have been 1,574 publicly reported cases of detentions and refolements of Uyghurs to China, where they faced imprisonment and torture in police custody. Furthermore, the latest dataset accompanying Bradley Jardine's [full report](#) contains **5,532 cases of Uyghurs facing intimidation, 1,150 cases of Uyghurs detained in their host country and 424 cases of Uyghurs deported, extradited, or rendered back to China**. However, these figures may be just the tip of the iceberg, and it is likely that the scale of repression is far more comprehensive than previously indicated.

China's Actions

There is a uniformity to China's repressive practices in multiple cultural contexts, with more incidents against Uyghurs living overseas logged than is typically understood. China's government employs a broad range of techniques, including asset freezes; passport controls; cyberattacks and malware; intimidation and surveillance from its embassies and consulates; pressure on families and coercion-by-proxy; spying through informants; smear campaigns; abuse of Interpol; abuse of extradition treaties; and use of partner security services to detain Uyghurs wherever they reside. Modern communications technology is rapidly increasing instances of China's repression against Uyghurs. Cyberattacks and other forms of online harassment are an increasingly common means of targeting and surveilling members of the Uyghur diaspora, particularly those residing in democratic countries. The most common form of physical transnational repression involves exploiting domestic and international institutions to detain or deport Uyghurs unlawfully at China's request.





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FIGURE 1: Map of China's Transnational Repression of Uyghurs, stages 2 and 3 throughout **phase one** (1997–2007). Created by Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

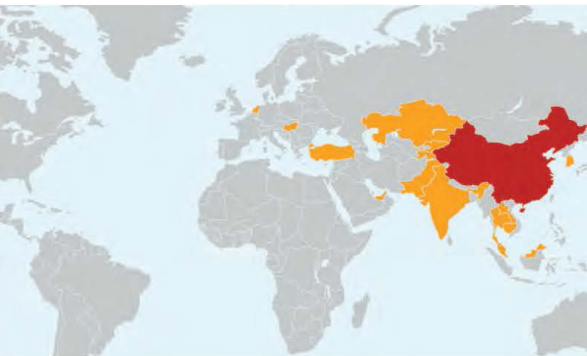


FIGURE 2: Map of China's Transnational Repression of Uyghurs, stages 2 and 3 throughout **phase two** (2008–2013). Created by Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

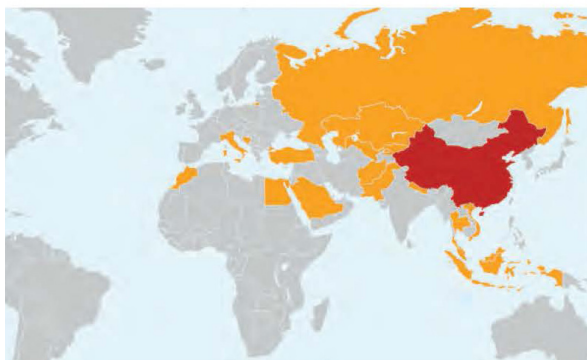


FIGURE 3: Map of China's Transnational Repression of Uyghurs, stages 2 and 3 throughout **phase three** (2014–present). Created by Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

Policy Recommendations for the United States

In general, the United States should strengthen its refugee resettlement programs by increasing quotas and streamlining procedures, and require reports on China's transnational repression to legislative bodies. Specific to protecting the Uyghur population, the government should create an avenue to report harassment and intimidation to domestic security services. Finally, given the array of powerful surveillance tools on the international market (including malware, cameras, software, etc.) which can be used as a mechanism for repression, it is crucial that the West prevent the sale of these tools to illiberal regimes, including China.

Take a Deeper Dive!

Read Bradley Jardine's full report, [*Great Wall of Steel: China's Global Campaign to Suppress the Uyghurs*](#) for additional expertise and analysis.

For more insight and analysis visit the [Kissinger Institute's website](#)

