



*Sent Electronically*

**The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP**

Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

6th March 2026

**Subject: Transnational Repression Threats linked to Iran affecting individuals & communities in the United Kingdom**

Dear Home Secretary,

We write as the Tackling Transnational Repression (TNR) in the UK Working Group members to express grave concern regarding escalating TNR linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the growing risks now faced by individuals and communities within the UK.

Recent developments have further heightened concerns. Following escalating military confrontation involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, and reported strikes resulting in the deaths of senior Iranian state and security figures, the situation inside Iran remains highly unstable. Reports indicate that large numbers of Iranians have taken to the streets in several cities following news of Ayatollah Khamenei's death.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, there are widespread fears that the regime could again open fire on its own citizens at any moment, as witnessed during the mass killings of 8–9 January 2026.<sup>2,3</sup> Reporting since February, had already documented mass arrests, enforced disappearances, and allegations of torture prior to the current conflict. Renewed internet shutdowns and disruption of phone communications are also now being reported, raising serious concern that repression may intensify.<sup>4,5</sup> Periods of such instability increase the likelihood that individuals connected to Iranian state institutions, including networks associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) may seek to relocate families, assets, and activities abroad.

These developments now have visible consequences within the UK. Iranian dissidents, journalists, and activists report renewed threats, surveillance, intimidation of family members in Iran, and digital targeting.<sup>6,7</sup> Peaceful demonstrations in London following the January killings were met by coordinated violent attacks in late January and early February near the Iranian Embassy, Trafalgar Square, and other locations where the protests took place.<sup>8</sup> Additional confrontations connected to institutions widely believed to be linked to the Iranian state, have sought to mischaracterise political protest as religious hostility and have attempted to restrict lawful protests.<sup>9</sup> Taken together, these developments are consistent with patterns of organised TNR extending onto UK soil.

Individual testimony further illustrates the human impact: following public human rights advocacy in international forums in January 2026, the 21-year-old son of UK-based Baloch human rights defender, Fariba Balouch, was abducted in Iran, tortured, and released with reported threats to both him and his wife.<sup>10,11</sup> Targeting relatives to silence activists outside the country is a documented tactic of Iranian state repression and demonstrates the continuing vulnerability of individuals residing in the United Kingdom.

Parallel pressure has also affected media in the UK. Following threats against journalists linked to Iran International, independent Persian language broadcaster Manoto has faced reported coercive pressure and intimidation linked to the Iranian regime.<sup>12</sup> Members of the Steering Committee have additionally received anecdotal reports of threats and harassment of UK-based journalists covering Iran-related stories, including threats against non-Iranian journalists. These incidents raise significant concerns that journalists working in the UK to serve both local and international audiences are being targeted by the Iranian regime for carrying out their work. This also highlights the wider threat that TNR can present to individuals beyond the diaspora community, simply due to their professions.

Despite sustained cross-party concern, the IRGC has not been proscribed in the UK. Existing measures, including sanctions and regulatory frameworks, do not appear to have provided sufficient deterrence or protection and risk signalling that foreign state coercive activity directed at individuals in the United Kingdom can occur without meaningful consequence.

During the House of Lords debate on TNR on 26 February 2026, peers from across different parties highlighted the increasing risks posed by Iranian state activity and emphasised the growing need to consider stronger deterrent measures, including IRGC proscription, within the UK's broader international response.

Given the seriousness of these developments, we urge the Home Office to take the following actions:

- Proscribe the IRGC under the Terrorism Act, recognising its role in activities associated with TNR and hostile state intimidation affecting UK residents, and noting that international partners including the United States, Canada, Australia and the European Union have already taken comparable action.
- Assess recent Iran-linked incidents affecting protesters and activists in the UK within the framework of TNR.
- Clarify and strengthen protection mechanisms available to individuals facing TNR and foreign state intimidation, including enhanced victim protection pathways.
- Address intimidation and coordinated disruption targeting media organisations and lawful reporting activities, as well as peaceful protest, within the UK.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence, including incident documentation, testimony, and community reporting, to support the Government's response.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Baillie, *Iran International*

Andrew Chubb, *School of Global Affairs, Lancaster University*

Ahad Ghanbary, *Iranian-British Civil Society Advocate*

Felicity Garvey, *Reporters Without Borders UK*

Izzy Cutts, *Chair of the Tackling TNR in the UK Steering Group*

John McDaniel, *School of Law, Lancaster University*

Lucia Ardovini, *Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University*

Nik Williams, *Index on Censorship*

Omid Shams, *Jurist's Council for Democratic Iran*

Shideh H, *Impact Shift*

## References

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2026/03/01/anti-regime-protesters-celebrate-ali-khamenei-death-tehran/>
2. [Iran International, Over 36,500 killed in Iran's deadliest massacre, 25Jan26](#)
3. [UN experts demand transparency and accountability from Iran following nationwide protests, 20Feb26](#)
4. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/02/24/iran-tsunami-of-arbitrary-arrests-enforced-disappearances>
5. <https://mastodon.social/@netblocks/116155598882436782>
6. [The Telegraph, Pro Iran Regime protesters march in london 28Feb26](#)
7. [The Telegraph: Death threats sent to Iranian dissidents in Britain, 24Jan26](#)
8. [The Guardian : UK-based pair behind messaging app accused of giving data to Iranian regime, 29Jan26](#)
9. [Footage Attacks on Iran pro democracy protests\\_London 01Feb26](#)
10. [Hengaw: Iran arrests son of Fariba Baloch, 01Feb26](#)
11. [Hannah Neumann MEP X: son of human rights defender Fariba Balouch abducted](#)
12. [The National News, Farsi language channel Manoto halts UK broadcasts after threats from Iran, 24Feb26](#)



*Sent Electronically*

**The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP**

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London, SW1A 2AH

6th March

2026

**Subject: Transnational Repression linked to Iran and Implications for UK Residents and International Policy Response**

Dear Foreign Secretary,

We write as the Tackling Transnational Repression in the UK Working Group members to express grave concern regarding escalating TNR linked to Iran and its implications for both the safety of individuals in the UK and UK foreign policy.

Recent developments have further heightened concern. Following escalating military confrontation involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, and reported strikes resulting in the deaths of senior Iranian state and security figures, the situation inside Iran remains highly unstable. Reports indicate that large numbers of Iranians have taken to the streets in several cities following news of Ayatollah Khamenei's death.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, there are widespread fears that the regime could again open fire on its own citizens at any moment, as witnessed during the mass killings of 8–9 January 2026.<sup>2,3</sup> Reporting since February, had already documented mass arrests, enforced disappearances, and allegations of torture prior to the current conflict, and renewed internet shutdowns and disruption of phone communications are now being reported, raising serious concern that repression may intensify.<sup>4,5</sup> Periods of such instability increase the likelihood that individuals connected to Iranian state institutions, including networks associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) may seek to relocate families, assets, and activities abroad.

These events now have visible consequences within the UK. Iranian dissidents, journalists, and activists report renewed threats, surveillance, intimidation of family members in Iran, and digital targeting.<sup>6,7</sup> Peaceful demonstrations in London following the January killings were met by coordinated violent attacks in late January and early February near the Iranian Embassy, Trafalgar Square, and associated protest routes.<sup>8</sup> Additional confrontations connected to institutions widely viewed by affected communities as linked to the Iranian state, have sought to mischaracterise political protest as religious hostility and restrict lawful assembly.<sup>9</sup> Taken together, these developments are consistent with patterns of organised TNR extending onto UK soil.

Individual testimony further illustrates the human impact; following public human rights advocacy in international forums in January 2026, the 21-year-old son of UK-based Baloch human rights defender, Fariba Balouch, was abducted in Iran, tortured, and released with reported threats to both his life and Ms Balouch's life.<sup>10,11</sup> Targeting relatives to silence activists outside the country is a documented tactic of Iranian state repression and demonstrates the continuing vulnerability of individuals residing in the United Kingdom.

Parallel pressure has also affected media in the UK. Following threats against journalists linked to Iran International, independent Persian language broadcaster Manoto has faced reported coercive pressure and intimidation linked to the Iranian regime.<sup>12</sup> Members of the Steering Committee have additionally received anecdotal reports of threats and harassment of UK-based journalists covering Iran-related stories, including threats against non-Iranian journalists. These incidents raise significant concerns that journalists working in the UK to serve both local and international audiences are being targeted by the Iranian regime for carrying out their work. This also highlights the wider threat that TNR can present to individuals beyond the diaspora community, simply due to their professions.

Despite sustained cross-party concern, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has not been proscribed in the UK. Existing measures, including sanctions and regulatory frameworks, do not appear to have provided sufficient deterrence or protection and risk signaling that foreign state coercive activity directed at individuals in the United Kingdom can occur without meaningful consequence.

During the House of Lords debate on TNR on 26 February 2026, peers from across different parties highlighted the increasing risks posed by Iranian state activity and emphasised the growing need to consider stronger deterrent measures, including IRGC proscription, within the UK's broader international response.

In light of these developments, we respectfully urge the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to:

- Align UK policy with partners that have already proscribed or designated the IRGC by supporting coordinated action toward IRGC proscription, recognising that measures short of proscription have not provided effective deterrence.
- Reassess whether current diplomatic engagement and sanctions are adequately addressing escalating Iran-linked TNR affecting individuals in the UK.
- Raise documented cases of Iran-linked intimidation and retaliation against activists and journalists within multilateral forums, including the UN Human Rights Council.
- Strengthen international coordination to protect diaspora communities and independent media facing intimidation linked to Iranian state activity.
- Support international measures to safeguard secure communications where internet shutdowns are used as tools of repression.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence, including incident documentation, testimony, and community reporting, to support the Government's ongoing assessment and international response.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Baillie, *Iran International*

Andrew Chubb, *School of Global Affairs, Lancaster University*

Ahad Ghanbary, *Iranian-British Civil Society Advocate*

Felicity Garvey, *Reporters Without Borders UK*

Izzy Cutts, *Chair of the Tackling TNR in the UK Steering Group*

John McDaniel, *School of Law, Lancaster University*

Lucia Ardovini, *Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University*

Nik Williams, *Index on Censorship*

Omid Shams, *Jurist's Council for Democratic Iran*

Shideh H, *Impact Shift*

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2. [Iran International, Over 36,500 killed in Iran's deadliest massacre, 25Jan26](#)
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