

**Question for written answer E-005697/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Third country reprisals against human rights defenders in Europe

Recent reports show that third country actors such as China, Iran, Russia and Turkey, either directly or through proxies, regularly engage in criminal activity in the EU, including unlawful surveillance, intimidation, threats, attacks and murders¹. This poses a serious threat to those who have sought refuge in Europe and to the EU's fundamental values and internal security.

Coordinated efforts are needed to investigate and prosecute these crimes and support the victims. The EU has a range of tools at its disposal and its role is of particular importance as the nature of these threats are such that no Member State, acting alone, can respond effectively.

1. Is the Commission aware of the extent of this criminal activity and if so, what practical steps have been taken in response?
2. Has the Commission studied the extent to which EU legislation is being implemented by Member States in response to this criminal activity and any legislative gaps that could be filled to respond better? If not, is it willing to initiate such a study as a matter of urgency?

¹ See Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, *Compromised Space: Foreign State Reprisals against Unrepresented Diplomats in Europe*, April 2021 (<https://unpo.org/downloads/2701.pdf>) and 'The Long Arm of Transnational Repression in Europe', *Green European Journal*, 29 November 2021 (<https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/the-long-arm-of-transnational-repression-in-europe/>).