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Fighting back against transnational repression

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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As documented by the Parliamentary Assembly in Resolution 2509 (2023), there has been an increase in the number and intensity of acts of transnational repression orchestrated by foreign States through State agents, armed groups or organised crime against exiled individuals, opposition groups, media, private companies and strategic infrastructure on the territory of Council of Europe member States. Non-physical acts of transnational repression are also committed through online activities.

In addition, human rights defenders and political opposition are often harassed judicially, politically and personally, including through politically-motivated international arrest warrants and targeted law enforcement action. At the same time, anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism measures are reportedly being "weaponised" by authoritarian regimes for purposes of depriving dissidents abroad of bank accounts and assets. Many students and researchers in European academic institutions are unable to freely criticise their home countries' authoritarian regimes.

Such transnational repression is intended to have a severe chilling effect on public debate, particularly on criticism from diaspora populations against the government in their former home State. Meanwhile, transnational repression also threatens the public at large and ultimately undermines democratic security and the rule of law in member States.

Given the severity of this growing problem, there must be a significant response from governments and international institutions. The Assembly should highlight examples of transnational repression and continue to monitor the response by relevant bodies, including national governments, the European Union, INTERPOL, relevant United Nations agencies, and the Council of Europe itself. Due to the international dimension of the problem, member and observer States should reinforce their legal co-operation in the field of transnational criminal justice, taking due account of the acquis and standards of the Council of Europe.