

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

November 22, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20520

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20530

Dear Secretary Blinken and Attorney General Garland:

With the 89th International Criminal Police Organization General Assembly scheduled to open November 23, I write to raise my profound concern over the potential election of Hu Binchen, a senior official in the People's Republic of China Ministry of Public Security, to Interpol's Executive Committee.

Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the Chinese Communist Party has adopted increasingly ruthless tactics to silence dissidents, human rights lawyers, religious leaders, and most recently, prominent athletes, who protest and expose the rot at the CCP's core. PRC security officials are cracking down on democracy activists in Hong Kong, repressing Tibetans, and committing genocide against Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang.

The PRC's repressive tactics extend beyond its borders. China exports the surveillance technology that undergirds its techno-totalitarian model of governance. The CCP harasses and surveils dissidents and other human rights activists outside of China. In some cases, the government has punished these activists' families in China for their criticism of Xi Jinping and the CCP.

The election of a PRC security official to Interpol's Executive Committee would present a grave threat to the organization's integrity and threaten to turn legitimate inter-governmental law enforcement cooperation into another tool of CCP transnational repression.

The PRC has a history of abusing its influence with Interpol by using "red notice" alerts – alerts to police about internationally wanted fugitives – to target political opponents. In 1997, Interpol issued a red notice for the arrest of World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa, which it only rescinded in 2018. In 2017, Interpol issued a red notice for the arrest of Idris Hasan, a Uyghur man living in Turkey, which it rescinded following Hasan's arrest in Morocco earlier

this year. In both cases, Interpol only withdrew the red notices following international public pressure.

Hu's potential election to the Interpol Executive Committee threatens to yet again draw Interpol into the CCP's domestic politics. After he was elected President of Interpol in 2016, then-PRC Vice Minister of Public Security Meng Hongwei disappeared in 2018 on a trip to China, depriving the organization of its senior leadership. While he was convicted of corruption and sentenced to 13 years in prison, his wife (Grace Meng) has dismissed the accusations as a "political disagreement being turned into a criminal affair." Regardless of the truth of these allegations, Interpol, like most international organizations, would be better served by minimizing the effect that the CCP's internal politics could have on its leadership and operations.

Given China's increasingly authoritarian policies at home, transnational repression abroad, and the potential for Xi Jinping's murky and opaque domestic politics to affect the organization's integrity, I hope that Interpol member countries see the wisdom in looking elsewhere for leadership. In the event that they do not, I have several questions:

- How are the Department of State and Department of Justice working to minimize the CCP's damaging and destabilizing influence at Interpol, including the specific damage that a PRC security official on Interpol's Executive Committee could cause?
- What steps are the Department of State and Department of Justice taking to ensure that Interpol's resources are not abused by authoritarian governments, including the PRC, to advance transnational repression and harass and surveil dissidents overseas?
- As one of Interpol's largest contributors, is the U.S. government considering withholding or reducing U.S. voluntary contributions to ensure that U.S. taxpayers are not inadvertently funding transnational repression and to more effectively communicate that the United States will not accept Interpol's endorsement and facilitation of CCP harassment and surveillance of dissidents in the U.S. and across the globe? If not, why not?

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Sasse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" and last name "Sasse" clearly legible.

Ben Sasse
U.S. Senator