



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S OVERSEAS POLICE SERVICE STATIONS**

**Interim Report of the Special Committee on the Canada-  
People's Republic of China Relationship**

**Ken Hardie, Chair**

**NOVEMBER 2023  
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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**THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
THE CANADA–PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
RELATIONSHIP**

has the honour to present its

**FOURTH REPORT**

Pursuant to Order of Reference of Monday, May 16, 2022, the committee has studied the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relations and has agreed to report the following:





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## THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S OVERSEAS POLICE SERVICE STATIONS

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In September and December 2022, the non-governmental organization Safeguard Defenders published two reports alleging that public security authorities from four jurisdictions in the People's Republic of China (PRC) had established over 100 “overseas police service centres” in at least 53 countries.<sup>1</sup> The reports claimed that the centres, also known as stations, monitor Chinese diaspora communities and play a role in coercing individuals to return to the PRC to face criminal proceedings. They also indicated that at least five such stations exist in Canada.

Concerned about the issue, on 18 October 2022, the Special Committee on the Canada–People's Republic of China Relationship (Special Committee) decided to study the matter.<sup>2</sup> Over two meetings, the Special Committee heard from the Minister of Public Safety, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), government officials, academics, as well as representatives of NGOs, including Safeguard Defenders.

The following describes what the Special Committee heard about the prevalence and purpose of the PRC overseas police service stations, what Canada has been doing to address the issue, and what additional actions may be taken.

### PREVALENCE AND PURPOSE OF OVERSEAS POLICE SERVICE STATIONS

Witnesses, subnational PRC governments, organizations and the media have used a variety of expressions to describe the centres identified by Safeguard Defenders, including “police linkage centers,” “overseas police service centers,” and “overseas police service stations.”<sup>3</sup> Brenda Lucki, then Commissioner of the RCMP, clarified that the characterization of these centres as police stations is not entirely accurate. According to her, the service centres can be any location where interference, intimidation, or

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1 House of Commons, Special Committee on the Canada–People's Republic of China Relationship (CACN), Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1845](#) (Laura Harth, Campaign Director, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders). See [110 Overseas – Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild](#), Safeguard Defenders, September 2022 and [Patrol and Persuade – A follow-up investigation to 110 Overseas](#), Safeguard Defenders, December 2022.

2 CACN, [Minutes](#), 18 October 2022.

3 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1855](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).



harassment occurs, regardless of their physical appearance, which could be as minimal as “a room behind a commercial retail store.”<sup>4</sup> Concerning the alleged activities occurring at these locations, Weldon Epp, Director General at Global Affairs Canada, stated, that it “would be entirely illegal and totally inappropriate, and it would be the subject of very serious representations and follow-up diplomatically.”<sup>5</sup>

During testimony to the Special Committee, Laura Harth, Campaign Director at Safeguard Defenders, explained that open-source statements by PRC authorities and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) media reports reveal that at least five overseas police service stations had listed addresses in Canada, with three in the Greater Toronto Area and two in the Vancouver area. She added that her organization also noted the existence of two other such stations located in the Montreal area.<sup>6</sup> Ms. Harth emphasized that overseas police service stations are present in all Group of Seven countries and highlighted that their presence has been particularly pronounced in democratic countries.

Although the CCP portrays the overseas police service stations as facilities providing administrative and consular services, witnesses emphasized that they also monitor diaspora communities, collect civil intelligence, harass and intimidate individuals who are critical of PRC policies, and assist PRC public security authorities with coerced return operations.<sup>7</sup> Notably, several witnesses stated that the individuals and associations operating the stations have been found to have direct links to the United Front Work Department (UFWD), the CCP’s primary foreign interference tool.<sup>8</sup> Ms. Harth also revealed that the vast majority of individuals involved in operating the stations are regular residents of the countries where the stations operate, have long-standing

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4 CACN, Evidence, 6 February 2023, [1955](#) (Brenda Lucki, Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

5 CACN, Evidence, 4 October 2023, [1920](#) (Weldon Epp, Director General, North East Asia, Global Affairs Canada).

6 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1845](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders); On 9 March 2023, *Le Journal de Montréal* reported that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Integrated National Security Enforcement Team in Quebec had launched an investigation into the possible presence of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) overseas police service stations in Montreal and Brossard, Quebec. See Sarah-Maude Lefebvre and Yves Levesque, “[La GRC enquête sur deux présumés «postes de police» chinois au Québec,](#)” *Le Journal de Montréal*, 9 March 2023.

7 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [2010](#) (Gloria Fung, Canada–Hong Kong Link); [1855](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).

8 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [2015](#) (Henry Chan, Co-Director, Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong); [2010](#) (Gloria Fung, Canada–Hong Kong Link); [1855](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders). Established in 1979, the United Front Work Department (UFWD) is a CCP body that has been significantly revitalized and reorganized under President Xi Jinping. The UFWD is the main CCP body responsible for coordinating the implementation of influence operations, both domestically and abroad.

involvement in influence operations, and have established connections within their respective communities.<sup>9</sup>

Ms. Harth drew attention to parallels between the overseas police service stations and other transnational repression and coerced return operations undertaken by the UFWD, such as Operation Fox Hunt and Sky Net.<sup>10</sup> She detailed some of the methods used by PRC authorities to coerce individuals abroad to return to the PRC. The methods include targeting family members of overseas individuals, who are in the PRC, as well as various tactics to directly threaten and harass individuals overseas. According to Ms. Harth, the pressure comes from PRC consular or embassy personnel, CCP proxies, private investigators, or through covert agents abroad.<sup>11</sup> She noted that figures from PRC authorities indicate 11,000 successful persuasion to return operations between 2014 and October 2022.<sup>12</sup> She specified that anecdotal evidence from three jurisdictions indicates that at least 83 coerced returns were conducted through or with the assistance of overseas police service stations.<sup>13</sup> Although not linked to service stations, Ms. Harth confirmed that at least three coerced return operations have taken place in Canada.<sup>14</sup> She added, “There's likely many more, but those are the numbers we can get from the evidence.”<sup>15</sup>

While witnesses noted that transnational repression by the PRC has been ongoing for decades, they also observed a significant increase in such oppression since the rise of Xi Jinping to power. Gloria Fung, president of Canada–Hong Kong Link, stated that concerns of civil society organizations have gone unheeded by governments and have permitted

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9 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1920](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).

10 Launched in 2014, Operation Fox Hunt is a purported anti-corruption campaign aimed at locating and repatriating Chinese citizens who have fled abroad, particularly officials wanted on charges of corruption and economic fugitives. The PRC's Operation Skynet, announced in 2015, is a related anti-corruption campaign that involves more PRC government departments and, in addition to arresting individuals who have fled abroad, attempts to prevent their departure from the PRC. During testimony to CACN on 31 May 2021, the Honourable David McGuinty, Chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, stated that Operation Fox Hunt involves “clandestine and coercive repatriation activities targeting apparent economic fugitives and corrupt officials, including in Canada.” See CACN, Evidence, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, 31 May 2021, [2040](#) (Honourable David McGuinty, PC, MP, Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians).

11 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1845](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).

12 Ibid., [1855](#).

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., [1950](#). This number is in addition to the return of three individuals in Canada to the PRC documented in the Safeguard Defenders report *Involuntary Returns: China's covert operation to force 'fugitives' overseas back home*, Safeguard Defenders, January 2022.

15 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1950](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).



the spread of a comprehensive UFWD network in Canada.<sup>16</sup> Both she and Henry Chan, co-director of Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong, stated that the Chinese-Canadian community is the group that suffers the most due to foreign interference in Canada. Mr. Chan added that the overseas police service stations provide an indication of how far the CCP will go to assert its influence on foreign soil and warned that “the CCP is testing our resolve, and we must take these threats very seriously.”<sup>17</sup>

## ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

Witnesses outlined the responses to the allegations of overseas police service stations operated by CCP authorities in Canada. An official from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) informed the Special Committee that GAC had “several engagements” with the PRC ambassador to Canada about the issue and had formally insisted that the PRC government cease and desist any activities that fall outside of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.<sup>18</sup> The Honourable Marco Mendicino, then Minister of Public Safety, stressed that all foreign government representatives have a duty to respect Canada’s laws and that any foreign state that threatens, harasses or intimidates Canadians and Canadian residents is in violation of these international agreements.<sup>19</sup>

On 27 October 2022, the RCMP stated that it was “investigating reports of criminal activity in relation to the so-called ‘police’ stations.”<sup>20</sup> Then Commissioner Lucki outlined that the RCMP response included purposely overt actions such as visits to the sites of the service stations by uniformed officers in marked police cars. She noted that a visible presence encouraged individuals to come forward to provide information and helped community members see that action was being taken on the issue.<sup>21</sup> To encourage reporting of any concerns related to the service stations, the RCMP has disseminated its

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16 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [2010](#) (Gloria Fung, Canada–Hong Kong Link).

17 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [2015](#) (Henry Chan, Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong).

18 CACN, Evidence, 29 November 2022, [1905](#) (Weldon Epp, North East Asia, Global Affairs Canada).

19 CACN, Evidence, 6 February 2023, [1835](#) (Hon. Marco Mendicino, Minister, Public Safety Canada).

20 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), *Reports of criminal activity in relation to foreign “police” stations in Canada*, Statement, 27 October 2022. The then Commissioner, Brenda Lucki, noted that as of 6 February 2023, the RCMP was looking into three police stations in Toronto and one in Vancouver. Media reported on 9 March 2023 that the RCMP’s Integrated National Security Enforcement Team in Quebec had launched an investigation into the possible presence of PRC police service stations in Montreal and Brossard. See Sarah-Maude Lefebvre and Yves Levesque, “[La GRC enquête sur deux présumés «postes de police» chinois au Québec](#),” *Le Journal de Montréal*, 9 March 2023.

21 CACN, Evidence, 6 February 2023, [1840](#) (Brenda Lucki, Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

contact information within Chinese diaspora communities, including local community groups and through various non-government organizations. Any information received by the RCMP would be used “if necessary to lay charges when we get to that point in our investigation.”<sup>22</sup>

For her part, Ms. Harth contended that Canada, like other democracies, has for far too long ignored the issue of transnational oppression since Xi Jinping came to power, allowing operations such as the overseas police service stations to grow. However, she highlighted that the RCMP’s response to those stations “has definitely been among the best in democracies across the world.”<sup>23</sup>

To date, no individuals have been arrested or had their diplomatic credentials removed in relation to the overseas police service stations. The then Commissioner of the RCMP noted that these types of investigations are normally “very lengthy.”<sup>24</sup>

## **ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE**

The Special Committee received valuable insights from witnesses regarding potential steps that Canada and other democratic nations could take to address the issue of CCP overseas police service stations and, more broadly, PRC transnational repression.

Although, as noted above, efforts have been made to disseminate information among Chinese diaspora communities about available law enforcement services, witnesses emphasized the importance of ongoing community engagement to build trust and encourage individuals to come forward with information. Ms. Harth specified that increased community engagement could also provide timely updates on new developments related to police service stations and individuals involved.<sup>25</sup> Witnesses also stressed the need to conduct thorough investigations into all activities of the UFWD to effectively disrupt their networks, beyond simply focusing on police service stations. Ms. Harth specifically cautioned against narrow approaches to investigations, as they

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22 Ibid., [1935](#).

23 CACN, *Evidence*, 20 March 2023, [1910](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).

24 CACN, *Evidence*, 6 February 2023, [1835](#) (Brenda Lucki, Royal Canadian Mounted Police). In a written response to the Special Committee, the Honourable Marco Mendicino explained that under the Vienna Conventions, countries do not have to provide a reason for expelling a diplomat, accordingly, Canada does not disclose data on the reasons or number of diplomatic personnel from other countries that Canada has expelled.

25 CACN, *Evidence*, 20 March 2023, [1845](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).



may overlook other organizations that carry out similar operations but under different names or without official affiliation to an overseas police service station.<sup>26</sup>

Witnesses spoke of the importance of a coordinated framework among allied democracies to address the issue of transnational repression, including the establishment of a definition of the term, shared intelligence, and best counter-practices.<sup>27</sup> Ms. Harth pointed out that a bipartisan proposal for a legislative framework on transnational repression was recently put forward in the United States in order to adopt the kind of criminal clauses and legal framework that may be necessary to counter that repression.<sup>28</sup> Noting that Canada has enacted the [\*Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act\*](#) (Sergei Magnitsky Law), she added that sanctions on PRC institutions and officials responsible for transnational repression should also be considered, specifically for the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Ministry for Public Security.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, David Vigneault, the Director of CSIS, suggested that the [\*Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act\*](#), which dates back to 1984, should be modernized.<sup>30</sup>

Witnesses agreed that a foreign agents registry should be among the tools to address the issue of foreign interference. Canada–Hong Kong Link, Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong and Christian Leuprecht, professor at Royal Military College, strongly advocated for the implementation of such a registry, adding that it would not contribute to anti-Asian racism.<sup>31</sup> Considering it a first step to addressing the issue, Gloria Fung stressed that a registry would apply to individuals and entities working on behalf of any foreign country, not just the PRC, and emphasized that such a registry should be linked to the [\*Criminal Code\*](#) to have teeth.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, then Minister Mendicino warned that, due to a negative historic context between some diverse communities and law

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26 Ibid., [1955](#).

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., [2000](#).

30 CACN, *Evidence*, 6 February 2023, [1920](#) (David Vigneault, Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service).

31 CACN, *Evidence*, 20 March 2023, [1920](#) (Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, As an individual); [2010](#) (Gloria Fung, Canada–Hong Kong Link); and [2015](#) (Henry Chan, Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong).

32 CACN, *Evidence*, 20 March 2023, [2045](#) (Gloria Fung, Canada–Hong Kong Link).



enforcement, implementing such a tool would require diligence, inclusivity and thoughtfulness.<sup>33</sup>

Ms. Harth and Roromme Chantal, associate professor of political science at Université de Moncton, stressed the complexity of such a registry, with Ms. Harth acknowledging that while a registry alone would not be a solution to foreign interference, it could serve as a first step towards addressing the issue. Ms. Harth also expressed concerns that those who work in police service stations might not register as foreign agents.<sup>34</sup>

On 10 March 2023, the Government of Canada announced that it was beginning public consultations on a foreign influence transparency registry in Canada.<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Special Committee would like to extend its gratitude to the witnesses who provided insights into the matter of the CCP's overseas police service stations and the larger system of PRC transnational repression and foreign interference. The testimony provided has contributed to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this complex issue.

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33 CACN, Evidence, 6 February 2023, [1915](#) (Hon. Marco Mendicino, Public Safety Canada).

34 CACN, Evidence, 20 March 2023, [1920](#) (Laura Harth, Fundacion Safeguard Defenders).

35 Public Safety Canada, [Government of Canada launches public consultations on a Foreign Influence Transparency Registry in Canada](#), News release, 10 March 2023.



## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p><b>Canadian Security Intelligence Service</b></p> <p>Adam Fisher, Director General, Intelligence Assessments</p> <p>David Vigneault, Director</p>	2023/02/06	12
<p><b>Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness</b></p> <p>Sébastien Aubertin-Giguère, Assistant Deputy Minister</p> <p>Tricia Geddes, Associate Deputy Minister</p> <p>Hon. Marco Mendicino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety</p> <p>Lesley Soper, Director General, National Security Policy</p>	2023/02/06	12
<p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b></p> <p>Brigitte Gauvin, Acting Director General, Federal Policing, National Security</p> <p>Brenda Lucki, Commissioner</p> <p>Matt Peggs, Chief Superintendent, Criminal Operations Officer, O Division (Ontario)</p>	2023/02/06	12
<p><b>As an individual</b></p> <p>Dr. Roromme Chantal, Associate Professor of Political Science, Université de Moncton</p> <p>Dr. Christian Leuprecht, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada</p>	2023/03/20	15
<p><b>Canada-Hong Kong Link</b></p> <p>Gloria Y. Fung, President</p>	2023/03/20	15

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<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Fundacion Safeguard Defenders</b> Laura Harth, Campaign Director	2023/03/20	15
<b>Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong</b> Henry Chan, Co-Director	2023/03/20	15

## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 12, 15, 21 and 24](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Hardie  
Chair

