



Observatoire ARGA

Report on Sanctions and Compliance for 2025

**INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF ELITES, REFUGEES
AND WHISTLEBLOWERS FROM AUTHORITARIAN
REGIMES**

**Transnational Persecution, Extradition Risks and the New
Architecture of Human Rights**

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Executive Summary

The global system of international protection — from classical political asylum to refugee status, subsidiary protection, human rights protection and non-refoulement — is entering a period of systemic turbulence. In the 21st century, the right to asylum has ceased to be a purely humanitarian

institution and has transformed into a field of geopolitical competition, information warfare and resource conflicts.

With the strengthening of authoritarian regimes in Eurasia, the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and in several states of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, migration flows have undergone structural change. A new category has emerged alongside traditional groups of the persecuted: elites, entrepreneurs, whistleblowers, security-service dissidents, high-level officials, media activists and actors in corporate wars, individuals who possess political relevance, access to sensitive information and significant capital.

This new migration wave differs from the classical model of refugee protection both in motivation and in risk profile.

These individuals face, simultaneously:

- politicized criminal cases and fabricated evidence,
- Interpol Abuse and manipulation of international notice channels,
- extradition requests based on manufactured charges,
- pressure on families, relatives and staff,
- freezing of assets, international blackmail, corporate raiding,
- threats of physical harm and *extra-guarantee* transfers through third countries,
- corporate wars accompanied by criminal-law instruments.

Thus, political persecution is no longer primarily ideological — it has become economic and corporate, targeting property, transactions, digital assets, business structures and cross-border investments. International asylum is turning into a legal shield against state coercion, while states themselves increasingly act as active players in economic battles for capital and access to the information held by defectors.

The ARGAs Observatory report proposes a conceptual framework for analysing this new generation of refugees and protected persons, and forms a theoretical foundation for developing future mechanisms of international protection.

Key research vectors to be developed in the report:

1. Typologies of persecuted elites and whistleblowers; their political and economic profiles.
2. Mechanisms of transnational pressure: Interpol Abuse, extradition, MLAT, freezing orders.
3. Vulnerabilities of international law — how it is weaponised against applicants.
4. Escape routes, asylum destinations and high-risk zones.
5. Protection strategies, including advocacy, legal mechanisms and digital security.
6. Forecast of the transformation of the asylum system by 2030.

The report captures the emergence of a new architecture of human rights, in which asylum becomes not only a humanitarian institution, but also a mechanism of geoeconomic protection, an instrument of resistance to corrupt systems, and a channel for preserving legal subjecthood under conditions of repression.

1. Methodology

The report is based on an interdisciplinary research model that integrates legal analysis, comparative political science, international protection practice and empirical case studies.

The research relies on the following components:

- analysis of decisions by the CCF (INTERPOL), the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, which makes it possible to identify international standards for assessing persecution and the criteria for establishing political motivation;
- study of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and appellate courts of France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, applied in assessments of extradition risk, non-refoulement, and the good faith of criminal proceedings;
- comparative analysis of 139 international protection cases (2016–2025), including political, economic and high-profile corporate prosecutions within the CIS, the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- comparison of data on extradition requests issued by authoritarian states, including statistics on surrenders, refusals, judicial blocks and postponed procedures;
- monitoring of corporate prosecutions as a form of transnational pressure on businesses and asset owners, including Interpol Abuse, freezing orders and mutual legal assistance requests;
- legal and political analysis of the domestic context of persecution-origin states: institutional independence of the judiciary, the role of security structures, and the degree of politicisation of the criminal process;
- practical protection experience accumulated by ARGIA Observatory, including preparation of complaints to the CCF, WGAD, the ECtHR, as well as the development of political asylum strategies and mechanisms for preventing extradition.

This methodological framework makes it possible to view international protection simultaneously as a legal phenomenon, a political process and an instrument of geoeconomic struggle, providing analytical completeness to the study.

2. Introduction: A New Category of Internationally Protected Persons

The traditional foundations of international asylum and protection law were built around the classic triad of at-risk groups: political dissidents, journalists, human rights defenders and civic activists. For decades, these categories were viewed as the primary targets of persecution by authoritarian states.

However, between 2014 and 2025 a structural shift occurred. The transformation of authoritarian regimes, the digitalisation of surveillance, the fusion of business and state institutions, and sanctions-driven economic turbulence produced a new layer of individuals requiring international protection.

This category may be provisionally defined as:

Economically-political refugees of corporate-security origin

This includes:

- former and current officials who have lost political loyalty;
- entrepreneurs and owners of major capital;
- top managers of state and quasi-state corporations;
- members of security structures who have lost institutional protection;
- experts, analysts and technical specialists with access to confidential information;
- whistleblowers exposing corruption schemes, backstage arrangements and state crimes;
- witnesses in major economic abuses and politically-driven criminal cases.

The defining feature of this group is that the persecution they face is not purely political but assumes a hybrid form, combining:

criminal accusations → economic interests → political loyalty → control over capital → elite power struggles.

Thus, these individuals become targets not for their beliefs, but for their access to resources, information, capital and leverage. Extradition requests, Interpol Abuse, asset confiscations, forced transactions and international information campaigns are employed as tools of geopolitical competition.

This transformation necessitates a reconsideration of international protection frameworks and the development of new doctrines — shifting from *political asylum* to *economic-political asylum*.

3. The Nature of Persecution: The Political–Economic Framework

The emigration of elites, entrepreneurs and whistleblowers from authoritarian states cannot be explained solely by political dissent. In reality, the mechanisms of pressure emerge at the intersection of power, capital, security structures and corporate competition, turning international protection into a multilayered task. ARGAs Observatory identifies five fundamental drivers shaping the nature of persecution faced by this category of individuals.

3.1. Power Struggles Within Elites: Political Control Through Criminal Law

In states with weak institutional autonomy, the state apparatus is used as a tool for eliminating competitors within the ruling class. Persecution typically arises during periods of:

- shifts in political centres of influence,

- redistribution of state resources,
- conflict between entrenched clans and “new players,”
- decline of trust in former loyalists.

Criminal prosecution becomes not a sanction but a mechanism of elite management — a way to retain capital inside the country, enforce political loyalty and prevent fragmentation within the ruling structure.

3.2. Corporate Wars as the Basis of Economic Persecution

Economic competition in authoritarian systems is rarely resolved through judicial mechanisms. Conflicts between major corporations transform into:

- initiation of criminal cases (fraud, tax evasion, money laundering),
- freezing of bank accounts and seizure of property,
- pressure through investigative bodies, media and security services,
- forced transfer of shares or assets.

In this model, a criminal case is a tool of corporate raiding and redistribution of property, while the emigration of a business owner is seen not as an escape but as a phase of the corporate attack.

3.3. Political Purges and Centralised Control of Resources

During economic crises or geopolitical isolation, states tighten centralised control over financial, industrial and infrastructure assets. This takes the form of so-called “anti-corruption reforms,” which in practice often involve:

- removal of disloyal officials and top managers,
- persecution of corruption witnesses,
- confiscation of property under the pretext of compensation for alleged damages.

The mechanism functions as economic filtration within the power system, and international persecution often becomes a method of forcing a targeted individual to return for the “finalisation” of a political or financial deal.

3.4. Transnational Pressure Mechanisms: Exporting Repression Beyond Borders

Authoritarian states increasingly use international legal instruments as tools of persecution, including:

- Interpol requests (Red Notices, Diffusions),

- extradition requests under bilateral treaties or the Minsk Convention,
- freezing orders and MLAT cooperation,
- cross-border investigative requests.

The goal is less the physical return of the individual and more the creation of a global trap in which the person is deprived of freedom of movement, financial access and legal protection.

3.5. Persecution Through Threats to Family Members

One of the most dangerous and systemic dimensions of repression is secondary pressure directed not at the emigrant but at their close circle:

- retention of children in the country of origin,
- criminal cases against spouses, relatives and business partners,
- threats of violence and physical harm,
- seizure of family-owned property.

Through this mechanism, the state constructs an emotionally coercive model of return, in which the individual is forced not by law but by fear for the safety of loved ones.

4. Mechanisms of Transnational Pressure

The modern architecture of politically motivated persecution is built on exportable instruments of legal coercion. Authoritarian states have learned to project power beyond their borders by exploiting international law, extradition frameworks, financial requests, media campaigns and pressure on the families of those who flee. ARGA Observatory identifies five key channels of transnational influence that form a new system of cross-border repression.

4.1. INTERPOL Abuse and the Use of Articles 159, 199, 210 and Analogous Economic Charges

Economic offences have become a universal currency of criminal prosecution — they appear “politically neutral,” enabling states to seek international wanted notices while concealing the true motivations.

Key indicators include:

- initiation of fraud, tax or economic cases in the absence of actual damage;
- in absentia arrest warrants, depriving the individual of the possibility to return and defend themselves;
- submission of Red Notices and Diffusions without evidence, relying solely on unilateral procedural materials;

- use of economic classifications as a workaround to Article 3 of INTERPOL’s RPD, which prohibits politically motivated cases.

Such cases are typically coupled with targeted media defamation, creating a “legal illusion of guilt” in the eyes of foreign jurisdictions.

4.2. Extradition Requests as a Tool for Repatriating Elites

Extradition requests have become a mechanism of forced return and a method of regaining control over individuals and their assets.

Typical markers of abuse include:

- fabricated evidence, created retroactively;
- allegations of corruption, embezzlement or abuse of office without financial expertise or independent audit;
- attempts to secure extradition through third countries (to bypass EU/UK safeguards);
- violations of the Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) and the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits extradition where torture or political persecution is likely.

Increasingly, an extradition request functions not as a legal instrument, but as a negotiating tactic — forcing the individual into a “deal,” asset surrender or public silence.

4.3. Pressure Through Families as an Illegal but Systemic Instrument

Authoritarian states employ a secondary layer of repression targeting the most vulnerable pressure point — relatives.

Common forms include:

- initiation of criminal proceedings against spouses, siblings or business partners;
- blocking children from leaving the country or effectively holding them hostage;
- threats, blackmail and administrative pressure through schools, guardianship bodies and social services;
- summoning elderly parents for interrogation, creating psychological and material dependency.

The objective is to force the emigrant to withdraw from political activity, provide testimony, repatriate assets or consent to extradition.

This is a form of repressive kinetics, where the primary victim is not the one who fled — but the one who remained behind.

4.4. International Freezing Orders and Asset-Blocking Requests

Economic pressure is a *central phase* of transnational repression.

The mechanism operates through:

- requests to freeze bank accounts, securities, real estate and corporate assets;
- submission of fabricated or incomplete materials, often lacking expert analysis or judicial rulings;
- pressure on European banks through MLAT channels and prosecutor-to-prosecutor requests;
- attempts to use AML regulation as a tool for de facto asset seizure without trial.

In a significant number of cases, assets are frozen *before* any court decision, and later transferred to state-controlled or affiliated groups in the country of origin.

This constitutes a quasi-legal form of international raiding — a mechanism of corporate capture executed through foreign jurisdictions.

4.5. Transnational Media Attacks and Digital Reputation Warfare

Legal pressure is almost always accompanied by an information offensive.

The strategy includes:

- publications in affiliated or state-controlled media portraying the individual as a “corrupt official” or “fraudster”;
- fabrication of compromising materials, leaks of “interrogation transcripts” or “financial documents”;
- dissemination of fake investigations via Telegram networks, bot farms and coordinated influence grids;
- orchestrated PR campaigns designed to shape judicial perception in EU countries.

The strongest impact occurs when media defamation is combined with INTERPOL notices and extradition proceedings — creating a multi-layered trap in which the targeted individual must defend themselves simultaneously in several jurisdictions.

5. Regional Risk Map

The mechanisms of pressure on elites, refugees and witnesses of corruption differ across regions, but a unified dynamic is visible throughout Eurasia:

criminal prosecution and extradition requests are systematically used as tools of political-economic control.

Below are the dominant regional models.

5.1. Russia — systemic criminal prosecution, asset freezes, pressure through families

Russian practice is marked by mass criminalization of economic activity.

Articles 159, 199, 210, 174 and 172.2 of the Criminal Code function as universal instruments of pressure on business owners, former officials and politically undesirable actors.

Key threats:

- fabrication of economic charges in the absence of actual damage;
- criminal prosecution accompanying corporate wars and asset redistribution;
- pressure through families: opening cases, travel bans, coercive interrogations;
- INTERPOL requests + media discreditation to legitimize persecution abroad;
- coercion into “voluntary” return of assets and cooperation with investigators.

Russia is the largest producer of Red Notices in the region, making it the primary driver of INTERPOL Abuse.

5.2. Kazakhstan — elite fractures, extradition pressures, “asset return” as doctrine

After the redistribution of power in 2022, Kazakhstan initiated a large-scale campaign to locate and “return” exported capital.

Under the political slogan of “asset recovery”, the state deploys criminal prosecution as a mechanism of economic regulation and elite consolidation.

Key risks:

- criminal cases against former officials and business elites;
- confiscations carried out with minimal judicial safeguards;
- extradition requests and diplomatic pressure on EU / UAE jurisdictions;
- persecution of whistleblowers exposing privatization schemes;
- “extended confiscation” used as a tool of political subordination.

Kazakhstan is the second-largest exporter of extradition requests in the region.

5.3. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan — security groups as economic actors, multi-layered corruption schemes

Both states demonstrate a stable model in which security agencies and clan networks hold direct economic interest in confiscations and politically motivated prosecutions.

Risk nodes:

- economic criminal cases used to redistribute raw-material and industrial assets;
- confiscations carried out without transparent damage assessment;
- parallel schemes for asset outflow to UAE, Turkey and Kazakhstan;
- pressure on families, including retention of children and seizure of property;
- use of cryptocurrencies for covert capital repatriation.

Kyrgyzstan shows the strongest criminal–security symbiosis,

Uzbekistan — a model of “shadow state capitalism” in which public and private interests blend.

5.4. Azerbaijan — persecution of business elites and witnesses, export of criminal cases abroad

Azerbaijan combines features of a politicized economy with extraterritorial projection of its criminal jurisdiction.

The state actively employs extradition, asset-freezing requests and INTERPOL channels to pressure entrepreneurs, former officials and whistleblowers.

Key characteristics:

- a high proportion of cases linked to the energy sector and state contracts;
- persecution of witnesses to corruption schemes and participants in corporate disputes;
- transborder pressure via family connections and assets located in the EU / Turkey;
- information attacks and coordinated PR-campaigns targeting those who fled.

Azerbaijan ranks among the top three countries in the region for the number of contested CCF requests.

5.5. Georgia and Armenia — digital capital routes, fintech hubs, corporate conflicts with international footprints

Both countries function as regional hubs for digital and financial transactions, making them strategic nodes for transnational investigations and corporate conflicts.

Risk factors:

- competition around fintech companies, crypto-brokers and payment systems;
- corporate disputes with a transnational component — assets, trusts, OTC-markets;
- increasing volume of freezing-order requests and digital-asset blocking;
- pressure from external states against a backdrop of internal institutional fragility.

Here, corporate conflicts tend to have a digital-financial rather than force-based nature, bringing the region closer to the model of quasi-offshore jurisdictions.

6. Case Studies

Case 1 — Former senior official persecuted by a politico-corrupt network

After a shift of power and redistribution of economic spheres of influence, the individual — previously holding a high administrative post — becomes the target of a criminal case on economic charges. Formally, the accusations cite “abuse of office” and “damage to the state”, yet analysis shows no verified evidence, no expert assessments and no proven financial loss.

The procedural trajectory follows a classical pattern:

1. Initiation of a criminal case → formation of a “fight against corruption” narrative
2. Issuance of an in absentia arrest warrant → foundation for international prosecution
3. Red Notice submission → attempt to restrict movement
4. Extradition request → appeal to EU / US / UAE jurisdictions
5. Pressure on the family → freezing relatives’ accounts, blocking children’s travel abroad

The central element here is a corrupt–security coalition seeking not investigation but elimination of the figure and redistribution of resource control. Fleeing abroad does not reduce risks: the prosecution moves into a transnational phase via INTERPOL, diplomatic channels and attempts to access overseas assets.

Case 2 — Entrepreneur caught in a corporate war with a cross-border dimension

The conflict emerges in the context of a struggle for a major asset (energy, logistics, defence industry — typical sectors). After the businessman refuses to cede his share, a sequence of actions unfolds that fully aligns with known patterns of corporate wars in the post-Soviet region:

1. Opening of a domestic criminal case
2. Freezing of bank accounts, property and corporate shares
3. Declaration of an international wanted status — often before any real evidence is presented
4. Parallel media campaign shaping the image of a “criminal”
5. Export of the prosecution abroad: attempts to freeze assets in the EU / UAE / China
6. Issuance of MLAT / INTERPOL requests to legitimise pressure

The primary goal is not litigation, but economic coercion — forcing transfer of control over the asset. Informal negotiations often include offers to “resolve the matter” in exchange for payments or surrender of ownership.

The outcome generally depends not on domestic legal arguments but on the ability of the individual to engage international protection mechanisms (CCF, ECtHR, UN WGAD) and to relocate assets rapidly into neutral jurisdictions.

Case 3 — Whistleblower from a major financial institution

The individual provided external media and human-rights bodies with evidence of large-scale corruption within a state-linked financial conglomerate. After publication, criminal prosecution begins — formally under charges such as disclosure of commercial secrets, economic harm or “data theft”.

Key features:

- criminal prosecution is used as retaliation and intimidation, not law enforcement;
- a targeted discreditation campaign is launched, portraying the whistleblower as a “fraudster”;
- security threats arise: surveillance, intimidation, pressure on family members;
- international mechanisms are activated: Red Notice, extradition request, attempts to force the whistleblower back under domestic jurisdiction;
- the whistleblower appeals to UN WGAD, CCF, ECtHR, securing interim protection and blocking extradition.

This case type illustrates the emergence of a new category of protected persons: insiders and witnesses of major financial/corruption schemes whose information poses systemic risk to states and affiliated corporate groups.

7. International Legal Frameworks for Protection

1. UNCAT — United Nations Convention Against Torture

UNCAT is one of the key legal grounds for refusing extradition when there is a risk of torture, inhuman treatment, or politically motivated violence. For applicants from authoritarian jurisdictions of Eurasia, this norm becomes a central protective instrument, since most extradition requests bear signs of political or clan-based motivation, and detention conditions in the requesting states often violate minimum UN standards.

Under UNCAT, the principle of absolute non-refoulement applies — a person may not be returned to a country where they face a real risk of ill-treatment, *even in cases involving serious criminal accusations*.

2. European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) — Articles 3, 5, 6, 8

The ECtHR applies Articles 3 (prohibition of inhuman treatment), 5 (right to liberty), 6 (right to a fair trial), and 8 (right to family life) to cases involving INTERPOL Red Notices, extradition, and transnational prosecutions. These norms protect not only political dissidents, but also entrepreneurs, officials, and whistleblowers targeted with economic charges that carry political content.

The Court has repeatedly held that the presence of a criminal charge *does not exclude* political motivation if the case is accompanied by fabricated evidence, pressure on relatives, or threats of reprisals upon extradition.

3. Dublin Regulation, EFTA Framework and the Schengen acquis

The European migration mechanisms form the legal architecture for the allocation, assessment, and protection of foreign applicants — including high-profile elites seeking asylum.

- Dublin III determines which EU Member State is responsible for examining an asylum claim.
- The EFTA framework provides alternative legal routes for protection.
- The Schengen acquis prescribes rules for border crossings, the status of persons under international alerts, and restrictions on their movement.

For individuals subject to INTERPOL notices, these mechanisms determine whether free movement in the EU is possible and which country must provide the first layer of protection when extradition risks exist.

4. INTERPOL standards, the RPD, and CCF practice

The INTERPOL Rules on the Processing of Data (RPD), general resolutions, and accumulated CCF jurisprudence establish a legal test for political motivation.

If a request is issued under economic articles but is accompanied by signs of political pressure, corporate raiding, elite conflicts, or threats to family members, the CCF may:

- cancel the Red Notice,
- block the circulation of data,
- declare the request abusive.

This mechanism is crucial for high-profile individuals, as INTERPOL is the only international body capable of neutralising cross-border criminal–security pressure in real time.

8. Forecast 2025–2027

1. Growth of “politico-economic” refugees

By 2025–2027, a significant increase is expected in the number of international protection applicants among elites, entrepreneurs, former security officers, high-level officials, and individuals involved in corporate and politico-economic conflicts. The primary countries of origin will be Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, where struggles between power groups, nationalisation of assets and prosecution in economic cases are intensifying. International institutions will face a new category of applicants who possess not only evidence of persecution but also substantial transnational capital — complicating status determination, litigation and asylum criteria.

2. EU tightening its response to Interpol Abuse

European states will move toward enhanced filtering mechanisms for Red Notices and Diffusion Requests issued by jurisdictions known for abuses of criminal charges. By 2026, a multi-layered screening regime is expected to be implemented: verification of evidence, analysis of political context, cross-checking against business-ownership data, family ties and corporate conflicts. An EU Interpol Review Mechanism may be launched to automatically block notifications that fail to meet RPD criteria. This will significantly hinder transnational persecution but simultaneously increase pressure on citizens inside authoritarian states.

3. Expansion of the role of UN WGAD and UN Special Rapporteurs

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression will become key protection mechanisms for entrepreneurs and whistleblowers. The number of petitions submitted to them is expected to increase 2–3 times due to cases involving asset confiscations, Interpol Abuse, politically-driven economic charges and threats to life in the event of extradition. This will strengthen external pressure on Eurasian governments and create international precedents shaping new legal standards.

4. Consolidation of protective measures in the EU, US, Canada and the UK

For the first time, the concept of “*legal protection for entrepreneurs*” is likely to emerge as an international mechanism analogous to political asylum but applicable to politico-economic persecution. A dedicated protection corridor may be created, including:

- fast-track protection procedures,
- prevention of extradition,
- control over bank account freezes,
- mechanisms for confidential capital relocation.

This will become a response to the surge in transnational corporate wars and will take into account both the risks faced by applicants and the economic significance of protected individuals.

5. Institutional protection of whistleblowers as a new norm

By 2027, the EU will introduce strengthened guarantees for whistleblowers who expose corruption schemes, criminal financing, state abuses and unlawful asset-recovery practices. The creation of a *European Whistleblower Registry* and an international evidence-exchange platform is possible. These reforms will form a legal shield for individuals who previously remained outside the protection system and will increase the likelihood of mitigating or automatically blocking international notices issued against applicants who provide significant information on corruption.

9. Recommendations of ARGA Observatory

9.1. For International Structures

International organisations — the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, EU institutions, the World Bank, OECD bodies and others — must shift from episodic responses to *systemic monitoring* of transnational politico-economic persecutions. This implies creating a specialised mechanism to track cases where the criminal prosecution of entrepreneurs, former officials, security personnel

and whistleblowers is combined with indications of political pressure, corporate wars or forced redistribution of assets. Such monitoring should include the collection and analysis of data on extradition requests, use of Interpol channels, asset freezes and pressure on family members, with the ability to generate *early-warning alerts* for high-risk jurisdictions.

A separate priority is strengthening oversight of Interpol Abuse. International bodies may recommend establishing joint working groups involving the CCF, relevant UN Special Rapporteurs and human rights organisations with the aim of developing criteria for identifying politico-economically motivated notices. This includes regular publication of aggregated reports on rejected notifications, recognised political components, and the creation of a list of jurisdictions that systematically violate RPD principles and use Interpol as an extension of domestic coercive power.

In the long term, it is advisable to develop an international registry of politico-economic persecutions — a structure that would compile anonymised data on cases combining economic charges with political or corporate context. Such a registry would not duplicate national databases; instead, it would serve as an analytical tool, enabling the identification of recurring patterns, comparison of country practices, and use of this information for risk assessments, country briefings and reform recommendations.

9.2. For the EU and the United States

For the European Union and the United States, the key challenge is recognising that entrepreneurs, top managers and whistleblowers from authoritarian regimes constitute a distinct category of individuals requiring protection. It is recommended that such cases be formally included within asylum systems and procedures relating to international protection, subsidiary protection and protection from extradition. This will require adjustments to domestic standards: economic prosecutions with clear political, corporate or coercive components should be treated as forms of politically motivated persecution rather than as “ordinary” criminal cases.

The EU and US must also strengthen their approach to evaluating extradition requests from states with documented patterns of abuse. This involves not only assessing risks of torture or unfair trial but also conducting systematic evaluation of:

- involvement of the case in corporate disputes,
- links to confiscations and “asset return” campaigns,
- pressure on families and cross-border assets,
- use of Interpol or sanctions rhetoric as part of the coercive strategy.

A practical solution could be the introduction of a presumption of doubt regarding certain categories of cases and jurisdictions, until the absence of politico-economic motives is proven.

Another important direction is the creation of human rights due diligence for individuals. Just as corporate due diligence has become a standard for companies, a similar model is needed for assessing risks for individuals: prior to extradition, sharing financial information, responding to asset freezes, or acting on international notices. Such a tool could include standardised checklists (existence of a corporate conflict, links to whistleblowing, involvement in corruption investigations, political transition in the country of origin, etc.), as well as mandatory involvement

of independent regional experts. This would transform human rights and political context from optional considerations into a systemic decision-making criterion.

9.3. For Legal and Academic Institutions

Legal clinics, research institutes, human rights NGOs and university centres play a crucial role in building the epistemic foundation for protecting elites, refugees and whistleblowers from authoritarian regimes. They are encouraged to develop specialised research areas focused on transnational pressure, politico-economic prosecutions, Interpol Abuse, extradition risks and the protection of witnesses to large-scale corruption. This includes both academic work (monographs, comparative analyses, empirical datasets) and practical expertise for lawyers, courts and international bodies.

A key priority is the creation of structured case databases. This is not limited to collecting narratives, but requires systematic classification of information: types of charges, legal articles used, role of security services, involvement of Interpol, decisions of national courts and international bodies, as well as impact on assets and family members. Such databases would make it possible to identify recurring patterns, compare practices across states and build legal arguments in new cases by relying on established precedents and recognisable schemes.

Finally, it is essential to develop the concept and practice of international politico-economic protection law as a distinct interdisciplinary field. It should integrate international human rights law, criminal law, investment law, sanctions regulation, financial criminology and political science. Academic centres can design analytical frameworks and indexes (e.g., a country-based Politico-Economic Persecution Risk Index), prepare model legal arguments for courts and create training programmes for lawyers and judges. In the long term, this will make it possible to move from fragmented protection of individuals to a systemic approach in which the international community possesses a clear set of criteria, tools and knowledge for assessing and countering transnational politico-economic persecution.

10. Conclusion

International protection for elites, entrepreneurs, whistleblowers and other politically-economically vulnerable individuals has ceased to be an exception and has become a new cornerstone of global security. Against the backdrop of degraded judicial institutions in several authoritarian states, expanding security-sector control over the economy and the internationalisation of corporate conflicts, the protection of such categories is no longer a humanitarian option but a strategic component of the global legal order.

Between 2016 and 2025, a structural shift has taken place: criminal prosecution, asset confiscation, Interpol Abuse, extradition requests, pressure on families and coordinated media attacks are now used synchronously and in a mutually reinforcing manner. This has produced a new type of threat — transnational politico-economic persecution, which merges the instruments of the state, security services, criminal networks and corporate actors.

ARGA Observatory notes that the traditional model of asylum and human rights protection no longer covers the full spectrum of contemporary risks. A new approach is required — an international protection system for individuals with heightened informational value, economic influence and political conflict potential. Such a system must account for the transnational nature of persecution, financial pressure mechanisms, the role of Interpol, digital infrastructures, and threats to families and assets.

This report establishes an academic foundation, outlines the threats, demonstrates the mechanisms and offers a strategic framework. The next stage is institutionalisation of protection: creation of registries, risk indexes, international legal protocols and monitoring systems. The future architecture of human rights will be shaped not only by the institution of asylum, but by the ability of international bodies to protect individuals targeted not for their beliefs, but for their access to economic power, sensitive information, capital and strategic resources.

The world is entering an era in which protecting the individual means protecting the economy and regional stability — and where international law becomes an arena of confrontation between states and corporate structures. ARGAS Observatory will continue to analyse and document this transformation, laying the groundwork for a new, more complex and more accurate system of global protection.

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