

**Statement by MP Michael Chong on The Globe and Mail report regarding a diplomat of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Canada**

May 1, 2023

"I am profoundly disappointed to find out through a Globe and Mail report that the Trudeau government knew two years ago a PRC diplomat, working out of the consulate in Toronto, was targeting my family in Hong Kong.

"The government did not inform me that a diplomat was targeting my family, nor did the government take any action to expel the diplomat responsible for orchestrating this intimidation campaign.

"In fact, the latest diplomatic and consular list of accredited diplomats provided by Global Affairs Canada shows that this diplomat, Mr. Wei Zhao, is still approved by the government to work in Canada. It is obvious and dumbfounding that the government continues to turn a blind eye to the threat of foreign interference.

"While I have been briefed by CSIS about foreign interference threat activities, these briefings did not provide any information about this individual and specific threats to me or my family. In light of the information reported by The Globe, my conclusion is that the PMO did not authorize CSIS to inform me of this specific threat.

"When the government became aware an elected MP was being targeted for an intimidation campaign by a PRC diplomat here in Canada, they should have taken two actions. First, they should have informed me. Second, they should have declared the diplomat persona non grata. While Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were still wrongfully detained by the PRC at the time this information came to the government's attention, they were released several weeks later on September 24, 2021. Any serious government would have acted after their release to expel this diplomat. The fact that the government neither informed me nor took any action is indicative of its ongoing laissez-faire attitude toward the PRC's intimidation tactics.

"Like many Canadians, I have family abroad. The PRC's targeting of family abroad to intimidate and coerce Canadians here at home is a serious, national threat. It undermines social cohesion, and our cherished fundamental rights and freedoms. The Trudeau government continuing to accredit and allow a PRC diplomat to remain in Canada to target my family abroad demonstrates a complete lack of leadership and common decency.

"The government's ongoing failure to act leaves all Canadians vulnerable to the foreign interference threat activities of the PRC and other authoritarian states bent on undermining our democracy.

“What happened should be a wake-up call for the whole of government. An authoritarian state targeted the family of an elected MP to try to change the course of a domestic debate about our country’s foreign policy, and the government knew this and did nothing.

“The Trudeau government’s inaction suggests they will not protect Canadians of differing political viewpoints from the threat activities of authoritarian states.

“These political calculations cannot and should not trump our values, our national security and duty of protection the Canadian state owes every citizen from foreign coercion exercised within our own borders.”