

RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Confronting Transnational Repression: Building Knowledge and Solidarities Across Communities, Civil Society, and Academia

Date: 2–3 July 2026

Venue: University of Zurich

Workshop Room: SOC-F-101, [Rämistrasse 69, 8001 Zürich](#)

Public Event: KOL-G-201 (Aula), [Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zürich](#)

Language: English

Organizers:

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Registration:

Interested participants are welcome to attend workshop sessions and the public event.

Registration is required and can be completed [here](#)

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Transnational repression has emerged as an increasingly important area of scholarly, policy, and public concern. This workshop brings together researchers from different disciplines, community representatives, and civil society actors to examine the conceptual, empirical, and legal dimensions of transnational repression across different contexts.

Through academic panels, discussions, and a public event, the workshop seeks to advance scholarly and practical understanding of the mechanisms, consequences, and responses associated with transnational repression. Particular attention will be paid to questions of democratic resilience, human rights protection, and diaspora agency.. Beyond fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and cross-sector collaboration, the workshop aims to contribute to developing a joint statement and shared agenda that outline key priorities and future directions for research, policy, and practice.

PROGRAM

Thursday, 2 July 2026 - Understanding Transnational Repression

09:00 – 09:15 Welcome and Opening Remarks

09:15 – 10:45 **Panel I: Conceptualizing Transnational Repression: Emerging Forms, Everyday Effects, and Diasporic Responses**

- **Dien Luong (University of Michigan)**

Fear Without Borders: How Transnational Repression Produces Diaspora Self-Censorship

- **Shivender Rahul (Maharashtra National Law University)***

The Problem of Silence: Studying Self-Censorship Among Politically Exposed Diaspora Communities

- **Rahel Jud (University of Fribourg)**

Imagined but not Imaginary: Conceptualizing Transnational Repression as Affective Presence in Diasporic Life

- **Philippa Osim Inyang (Nigerian Institute of International Affairs)***

Beyond the Border: AI-Driven Migration Surveillance as a New Form of Transnational Repression

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:45 **Roundtable: Community and Civil Society Perspectives on Transnational Repression**

- **Zumretak Akin**, Vice-President and Chair of the Women's Committee at the World Uyghur Congress (WUC)

- **Navashna Gajathar**, Legal and Policy Officer at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)

- **Selina Morell**, Head of the China Programme at Voices (former Society for Threatened Peoples)

- **Sabah Bandouie**, UN representative of the Balochistan Human Rights Group

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 **Panel II: Intelligence, Surveillance, and the Global Reach of Authoritarianism**

- **Bahar Baser and Clive Jones (Durham University)**

Between Homelands and Host States: Diasporic Agency and Intelligence and Surveillance Regimes

- **Ariane Knüsel (University of Fribourg)**

"The suitable and willing informant" – Early forms of Chinese transnational repression in Switzerland (1950s-1970s)

- **Jerome Gapany (Military Academy at ETH Zurich)**

Bridging the Knowledge-to-Action Gap: Chinese Party-State Influence, Hometown Associations, and Institutional Coordination in Switzerland

- **Franziska Keller (University of Bern)**, Daniela Stockmann (Hertie School)
Increasing constraints on knowledge production on China

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00 **Workshop I: Research Ethics and Good Practices**

18:00 – 19:30 **Public Event: Safe in a Democracy? Transnational Repression, Diaspora Experiences, and Democratic Resilience**

followed by an Apéro and Networking Reception, KOL-G-201 (Aula)

Panelists: Zumretay Akin, Fabian Krause, Bahar Baser, Selina Morell, Ralph Weber

Friday, 3 July 2026 - Responding to Transnational Repression

09:00 – 10:30 **Panel III: Diaspora Agency, Mobilization, and Consequences**

- **Driss El Ghazouani (Mohammed V University of Rabat)**

Between Surveillance and Silence: Transnational Repression and Its Effects on Moroccan Diaspora Mobilization in Europe

- **Palmo Brunner (University of Zurich)**

China's Rise and Global Reach: Reconfiguring Tibetan Diaspora Mobilization

- **Laura Sparascio (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)**

'If it happened to them, could it happen to me?' A survey experiment on the signalling effects of transnational repression on diaspora collective action and social dynamics

- **Noura Aljizawi (University of Toronto's Citizen Lab)***

Security Without Safety: Queering Cybersecurity in the Age of Digital Transnational Repression

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 **Panel IV: Protection, Legal Challenges, and Democratic Responses**

- **Fabian Krause (Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg)**

Legal Gap or Legal Trap? Tackling Transnational Repression in Germany

- **Rawnak Miraj Ul Azam (American International University-Bangladesh), Afroza Begum, Kamrull Hasan**

The Epistemic Dimension of Transnational Repression: How Authoritarian States Manufacture Credibility Deficits in Diaspora Testimony

- **Ralph Weber (University of Basel)**

Transnational Repression and the Issue of State Attribution

- **Irene Gallina (Sapienza University of Rome)**

Transnational Repression as a Tool of Legal Sabotage: Diaspora Resistance and the Limits of Universal Jurisdiction

12:30 – 13:30 Brown Bag Lunch

13:30 – 14:45 **Workshop II: Strengthening Cross-Sector Collaboration**

14:45 – 15:15 Coffee Break

15:15 – 16:00 **Conclusion: Towards a Joint Statement and Shared Agenda**