



CHREN HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC PROJECT ON „ADDRESSING TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION“

A Project in Collaboration with the German Institute for Human Rights (Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte e.V., Zimmerstraße 26/27, 10969 Berlin)

Call for Applications

Addressing Transnational Repression: an assessment of Germany's human rights responsibilities and options as a host state under domestic and international (including European Union) law

I Project description

State intimidation and persecution across state borders (‘transnational repression’) is a growing problem targeting, inter alia, diaspora communities and dissident and oppositional figures who have left the perpetrator state due to domestic persecution. The strategies of ‘transnational repression’ can take the form of direct threats, surveillance, harassment, or even physical violence – often targeting exiled journalists, human rights defenders, or diaspora activists. This form of repression usually involves human rights violations by the perpetrator state. It may also trigger human rights responsibilities on the part of the state and – potentially – other actors in the legal system where targeted individuals reside. It thus poses significant legal and political challenges to liberal democracies taking their human rights responsibilities seriously and threatens to undermine the protective framework of international human rights.

In recent years, Germany has become an increasingly significant transnational repression host country. At the same time, incidents of transnational repression – ranging from the misuse of international law enforcement tools (e.g., Interpol Red Notices) to threats and digital surveillance – have intensified across Europe. These practices raise urgent questions about the **responsibilities and legal obligations** of democratic host states under national, and international human rights law.

Against this backdrop, the **German Institute for Human Rights** – Germany's national human rights institution – has been working to monitor, report on, and advise German state actors regarding the protection of human rights domestically and internationally. As part of its mandate, the Institute engages with the legal and policy dimensions of transnational repression, seeking to investigate what duties Germany has toward those at risk within its sphere of responsibility, and to understand different actors' options for honouring their obligations.

This CHREN Human Rights Clinic Project provides students with the opportunity to engage in applied legal research at the intersection of international human rights law, constitutional law, and

asylum/refugee law. In close exchange with the German Institute for Human Rights, students will explore how German legal and administrative frameworks respond – or fail to respond – to the challenges posed by transnational repression.

The **core objective** of this project is to **produce a concise report** (expected word count range: tbd) that:

- Identifies transnational repression host states' human rights obligations under domestic (German) and international (including European Union) law
- Takes stock of available laws and mechanisms to protect transnational repression targets in Germany both on an international and national level
- Identifies potential gaps and shortcomings in the laws, mechanisms, institutions
- Explores options for improvement, also drawing on best practices in other democratic jurisdictions
- Tentatively articulates policy recommendations (with a focus on German state actors, business enterprises and universities)

Through this project, students will strengthen their **research** and **analytical skills** (e.g., report drafting, legal analysis), deepen their **understanding of human rights protection** in practice, and **contribute** meaningfully to an emerging and critically important field of legal policy. Additionally, **teamwork** and **presentation skills** will be developed. In addition, a potential **excursion to the DIMR** is currently being discussed.

Estimated project time commitment from students:

- **5-6 hours per week** (research, writing and student team coordination). This time commitment for students is an estimate. The work for the Clinic project can be arranged flexibly, and scheduling constraints of students due to exams can be taken into account during project implementation.

- **1-hour weekly meetings** with project supervisors in person or online

Upon completion of the project, students will receive a letter of recommendation from the project supervisors of the CHREN Human Rights Clinic, as well as from the Clinic Director. Participation in the project might also count towards internship hours depending on student's principal course of study at FAU, students from the Law School can be credited with 2 SWS as an optional course in "Schwerpunktbereich 11: Grund- und Menschenrechte", "Schwerpunktbereich 5: Internationales und Europäisches Öffentliches Recht" and as "Schlüsselqualifikation" (§ 2 I JAPO).

Timeline:

May 2025: Selection of the student team

Summer term 2025 (June – 30 September 2025): Kick-off meeting, getting acquainted with transnational repression, analysis of forms and methods of TR, literature review and beginning to write on different parts of the policy report

Winter term 2025/26 (1 October 2025 – 31 March 2026): Deepening knowledge and contextualisation of previous findings, conducting independent empirical research, exchange with various stakeholders, continuation of the policy report

February/March 2026: final drafting of the written submission, presentation of the certificates

II. Desired student profile

We welcome students from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, specifically those enrolled in the Law School, MA Human Rights, MA Development Economics and International Studies, the Economic and Management School, as well as Master's level students from other departments with at least a basic understanding of human rights, such as those in political science, philosophy, or geography programs.

We seek individuals with a strong dedication to human rights.

Proficiency in English, both written and spoken, is mandatory.

We expect one student to take on the role of “**student project manager**”. This person will be in charge of organizing communication among the student team and ensuring deadlines set by the project supervisors are met. We also expect another student to take responsibility for the **consistent form of the text**. Furthermore, one person should take responsibility for correct and consistent **citation**.

Please indicate your willingness to fulfil one of these roles in your application.

III. Application process

Interested students are kindly requested to provide the following documents:

- **Curriculum vitae**
- a **motivation letter** (maximum 500 words) detailing their relevant academic and/or professional background for the project, their current field of study, and instances of prior teamwork experiences (and most importantly: their motivation for the project).
- although not mandatory, including **samples** (such as reports, papers etc.) that prove your interest in the law clinic would strengthen your application.

It's important to note that the project leaders do not expect applicants to possess prior professional experience in the field. The aim of CHREN Human Rights Clinic is to offer

participants an opportunity to gain valuable experience with human rights projects. Therefore, examples of academic work completed during your bachelor's and master's degrees are also acceptable.

We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment and especially welcome applications from individuals who identify with underrepresented communities in the legal profession, including but not limited to those based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic background, or first-generation university students.

Application materials should be sent both to Daniela Kolland (daniela.kolland@fau.de) and Fabian Krause (fabian.krause@fau.de) **by 25 May 2025**.

Interviews will be held in person **on 28 May 2025**.

Be prepared, in your interview, to address any potential concern about being targeted by transnational repression.

Project supervision:

The Clinic Director is Professor Dr. Dr. Patricia Wiater.

The Project will be supervised by a human rights Research Associate and doctoral candidate at FAU, Fabian Krause. Additional supervision will be provided as needed by Professor Eva Pils.

IV. About the CHREN Human Rights Clinic

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* is an initiative launched by the Chair for Public Law, Public International Law and Human Rights (Professor Patricia Wiater) and the Center for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN) in the winter semester 2024. The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* continues the work of the former *FAU Human Rights Clinic* that was founded in 2021 and led by Professor Anuscheh Farahat in cooperation with Professor Katrin Kinzelbach and Professor Patricia Wiater, as well as of the former *Human Rights & Business Clinic* that started working in 2022 and was led by doctoral researchers from the International Doctoral Program Business & Human Rights.

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* has two primary objectives:

Firstly, the Clinic is an innovative teaching format that offers talented students the opportunity to develop their skills by working on real-life cases and projects relating to International Human Rights Law. Under the supervision of experts from human rights practice and human rights researchers at FAU, students will conduct interdisciplinary research to help partner organizations tackle cutting-edge human rights questions.



Secondly, the Clinic seeks to provide high-quality advice on complex human rights questions to NGOs, lawyers, international organizations and other partners from the field of human rights. To this end, practitioners can contact the clinic for advice on their advocacy work, research gaps and pro bono work. The Clinic does not act as the legal representative of a victim of human rights violations and does not initiate proceedings before courts or other human rights institutions. For more information, see '[For Clients](#)'.