

Call for papers: Conflict, democratic backsliding, and diaspora politics in Canada

Dr. Bantayehu Chanie, Dr. Christina Clark-Kazak, and Dr. Philippe M. Frowd, researchers at the Center for International Policy Studies (CIPS) at the University of Ottawa, are seeking paper submissions from interested academics and researchers in Canada and internationally for a new project titled “Conflict, Democratic Backsliding, and Diaspora Politics.” The topic of the papers should fall under the general theme of diaspora groups in Canada and their links to transnational movements for peace and conflict, as well as democracy or democratic backsliding. We are particularly interested in contributions that focus on diaspora groups originally from conflict-affected states.

According to the 2021 census, the number of immigrants in Canada is 8,361,505, constituting 23% of the country’s population (Statistics Canada, 2024). These immigrant communities have, over time, organized and become influential diaspora groups (Olyan & Smith, 2011). For many years, Canadian political parties have engaged in diaspora politics to secure votes (Gurzu, 2011). On the other hand, diaspora groups in Canada have increasingly shaped Canada’s foreign policy (Ibid). At the same time, they have participated in activities that serve their homeland (Ramachandran & Crush, 2021). However, the extent and impact of diaspora politics in Canada on countries experiencing conflict and democratic backsliding need further exploration.

In recent years, a surge in political instability and violent intra- and inter-state conflicts has been witnessed across various parts of the world, including Sudan, DRC, Ethiopia, Gaza, Ukraine, and Yemen. Conflicts are often intertwined with democratic backsliding. The world has witnessed the deterioration of democratic records (Freedom House 2024, Arriola et al., 2023; Haggard & Kaufman, 2021). This development has affected a fifth of the world’s population (Freedom House 2024).

Against the backdrop of this, accepted papers should address one or more of the following research questions:

- How does diaspora politics in Canada impact peace, conflict, and democratic movements overseas, or vice versa?
- How do diaspora groups organize themselves and influence their host governments to act toward conflict resolution, peace, and democratic transition in their country of origin?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for diaspora groups to impact peace and democratic transition in their homeland?

Submission deadline

We invite interested applicants to submit an abstract of their paper, with a maximum word limit of 500 words, by **May 31, 2025**, by completing this [MS Teams Form](#).

Accepted abstracts and next steps

- Accepted abstracts will be notified by **June 15, 2025**, and authors will be invited to participate in the **first workshop** virtually in **September 2025**, to present a paper outline with fellow contributors and organizers and discuss the next steps.
- Participants of the first workshop will be required to submit their draft paper manuscripts by **April 15, 2026**. Those who successfully submitted their papers by the deadline will be invited to participate in the **second in-person workshop** on **May 14, 2026**, at the University of Ottawa. In this workshop, the authors of the draft papers will present their work before faculty, graduate students, and policymakers who will be invited to attend.
- After the successful completion of the second workshop, the authors will submit their final revised manuscripts for a special issue publication by **June 15, 2026**.

Should you have any questions about this call for papers, please feel free to reach out to one of the organizers: Dr. [Bantayehu Chanie](#), Dr. [Christina Clark-Kazak](#), or Dr. [Philippe M. Frowd](#).

References

- Arriola, L. R., Rakner, L., & Van de Walle, N. (Eds.). (2023). *Democratic backsliding in Africa? Autocratization, resilience, and contention*. Oxford University Press.
- Gurzu, A. (2011). *How diaspora politics are beginning to drive Canada's foreign policy*. <https://carleton.ca/cifp/wp-content/uploads/1346.pdf>
- Freedom House. 2024. Freedom in the world 2024. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW_2024_DigitalBooklet.pdf
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. (2021). The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 32(4), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2021.0050>
- Olyan, H., & Smith, P. (2011). *Diasporas: A Policy Review Prepared for the Privy Council Office*.
- Ramachandran, S., & Crush, J. (2021). Sustainable Development and Diaspora Engagement in Canada. In Y. Samy & H. Duncan (Eds.), *International Affairs and Canadian Migration Policy* (pp. 153–182). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46754-8_8
- Statistics Canada. (2024). *Immigration and ethnocultural diversity statistics*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/immigration_and_ethnocultural_diversity