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CHINA'S "TRANSNATIONAL OPPRESSION"

Actual Conditions and Challenges

Symposium
24 August 2025

China's "Transnational Oppression"

Actual Conditions and Challenges

Report

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1. Opening Address - Retepu Afumetto (Chairman, Japan Uyghur Association)

Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for gathering here in such large numbers today, despite it being a holiday.

When we speak of the Uyghur issue, there are many problems, but "oppression that crosses borders" is one of them. For us Uyghurs, this oppression follows us across borders, whether to Japan or the United States. We used to believe that going abroad, especially to a free and democratic country like Japan, meant freedom and safety were guaranteed—it was heaven. However, upon actually arriving, especially since 2017, we have been tormented daily by fear almost indistinguishable from that back home, with psychological torture constantly lurking nearby. In some cases, the days of suffering from psychological torture are even worse than those back home.

We have raised and appealed this issue through various opportunities until now. Today, we have invited not only us, the affected individuals, but also scholar Maiko Ichihara and human rights expert Teppei Kasai to focus on this problem from different perspectives.

Through this, we hope the media will pick up on the information, proposals, and recommendations issued from legal and human rights perspectives, and that these will reach the political sphere. We believe today's event can be the catalyst for creating such an opportunity.

2. Guest Address - Keitaro Ide (Amnesty International Japan)

Today's theme is "China's Transnational Oppression." At Amnesty, we are currently concerned about surveillance by Chinese authorities targeting universities and other higher education institutions in Western societies, including Japan. I would like to share several cases here.

For example, a Chinese student studying in a Western country participated in an online memorial event for the Tiananmen Square incident. Suddenly, their parents in China contacted them, warning them not to engage in political activities. As you understand, there is no way their parents in China could have known about their participation in an online memorial gathering. In this case, it appears Chinese authorities contacted the parents and pressured them to stop their child.

A growing awareness among Chinese students abroad is that expressing topics or opinions unfavourable to China risks provoking resentment from pro-regime individuals.

Even without personal experiences of harassment, the mere circulation of such rumours within the Chinese community can stifle free speech.

Moreover, there have been cases where China's involvement was publicly revealed in judicial proceedings. One such instance involved an individual who participated in a counter-demonstration organised by Chinese authorities during a Hong Kong democracy protest in Boston. US authorities indicted this person for acting as an agent of the Chinese government. The indictment revealed that the defendant had sent participant information, names, photos, and videos to the Chinese Consulate General in New York.

Similar incidents have occurred in Japan. A Hong Kong student studying in Japan was imprisoned upon returning home because the content he posted on social media was deemed inflammatory. Even overseas, one cannot escape the reach of online censorship. Instilled with this fear, many Chinese students now self-censor before posting on social media.

Amidst these developments, actual infringements on academic freedom are becoming apparent. For instance, fear of being reported to Chinese authorities for voicing opinions in class is increasingly stifling free speech on university campuses. Students also worry about reports or papers leaking outside, forcing them to be cautious even about their research topics.

According to a university professor I know, at their institution, pro-Chinese Communist Party students are said to be monitoring other Chinese students. In Japan, academic freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly are guaranteed for all people, including foreigners. For the sake of the courageous international students working for China's future, and to resolutely defend our democratic and free society, we absolutely cannot tolerate oppression that crosses borders. In this sense, holding this rally in Japan now is profoundly meaningful.

3. Lecture: "Japan Facing Transnational Oppression" - Maiko Ichihara (Professor, Graduate School of Law, Hitotsubashi University)

Introduction

My research focuses on the intersection between democracy and international politics. From this perspective, I examine, for example, overseas support for civil society actors seeking to promote democratisation, or conversely, the influence operations and suppression that authoritarian states impose on democracy activists. Today, from this viewpoint, I wish to outline how "transnational suppression" is encroaching upon Japan.

The Global Expansion of "Transnational Oppression"

The current situation is deeply troubling. Transnational oppression is, in fact, expanding dramatically worldwide. The number of countries engaging in transnational oppression has increased significantly, and the number of countries actually experiencing such oppression has grown to staggering levels.

According to a 2023 survey by Freedom House, 44+6 countries—meaning 50 countries in total—were identified as perpetrators of transnational oppression. Most were authoritarian states, though some democratic governments were also involved. This survey revealed that these 50 countries were persecuting activists and journalists who had fled to various locations in roughly 100 countries, both democratic and authoritarian. The number of people facing persecution was estimated at 3.5 million in 2023—a staggering figure.

The following diagram colour-codes the perpetrators of oppression and the countries where oppression occurs. Red indicates countries perpetrating oppression. Lighter shades indicate countries experiencing oppression from that particular state. Orange indicates countries experiencing oppression from both sides.

In Japan, too, there is a very well-known case of transnational oppression originating from Thailand. A few years ago, a Thai activist at Kyoto University who criticised the Thai monarchy was nearly assassinated in Japan. This case was likely cited as evidence that transnational oppression also occurs in Japan.

As will be introduced in this symposium, there are a significant number of cases of transnational oppression originating from China occurring in Japan. Oppression is also being directed at activists and journalists coming to Japan from various countries, such as Cambodia and India. Considering these factors, Freedom House's data indicating 3.5 million people are subjected to oppression may actually represent a considerably low figure, and the reality is likely much higher.

China's "Transnational Oppression"

China is conducting transnational oppression in numerous countries worldwide. China's operations are the largest in scale globally. The number of targets is vast, the methods are extensive, and the scale is overwhelming. At least millions of Chinese nationals and minority groups residing in 36 countries are targets of this oppression.

Earlier, Mr Afumetto mentioned that the situation has worsened since 2017. The situation has indeed worsened year by year. In fact, some argue that it began to worsen after 2014. Internal leaks revealed that in 2014, the Xi Jinping administration explicitly prioritised "struggles against enemies of the Chinese Communist Party." This information is also available online for verification. Consequently, transnational oppression surged dramatically in 2014, with annual expansion thereafter, and further escalations in 2017 and 2022.

To carry out transnational suppression, China seeks to mobilise friendly nations. For instance, if it wants to suppress Chinese nationals or members of Chinese minority groups living in Japan, it expects the Japanese government to assist as much as possible. If it wants to suppress people in Thailand, it expects the Thai government to help. Therefore, mobilising support from such friendly nations is a common practice. For example, approximately 40 Uyghurs were forcibly repatriated from Thailand. This represents the Thai government's support for the Chinese government. This is how oppression becomes possible.

Even with countries unwilling to collaborate directly in suppression, China uses diplomatic channels or leverages various domestic laws to exert pressure. This ensures, for instance, that protests don't erupt when Chinese Communist Party officials visit overseas. Of course, that's not the only objective.

The Facade of the Rule of Law

I mentioned utilising related laws, but the related laws used to disguise the rule of law are quite troublesome. For example, among the laws China has been developing since 2014 are the Data Security Law and the National Intelligence Law. The Data Security Law requires Chinese companies to store customer data accumulated through overseas transactions within data centres located on the Chinese mainland. This means that Japanese companies, for example, doing business with Chinese firms should assume that customer data generated from those transactions is stored within China.

Furthermore, the National Intelligence Law stipulates that the Chinese government can access data stored in Chinese data centres. This means that data from various services provided by Chinese companies we use, or services from Japanese companies

doing business with Chinese firms, is located within mainland China and is accessible to the Chinese Communist Party. It's best to assume significant information is being extracted.

Additionally, there is the Hong Kong National Security Law. Enacted in 2020 following the 2019 Fugitive Offenders Bill controversy, this law allows the Chinese Communist Party and the Hong Kong government to punish individuals for activities deemed to undermine Hong Kong's sovereignty, even if those activities occurred outside of China or Hong Kong. There have been cases, such as that of a Hong Kong student who was arrested upon temporarily returning to Hong Kong after making social media posts in Japan.

In this way, they are establishing a legal foundation to create a legal basis for suppressing people outside China. We often use the term "rule of law." The idea is that governance and rule should be based on law. However, this concept of the rule of law contains two essential elements. First, the government or parliament that creates laws must also be bound by those laws. Second, for it to be called the "rule of law," the laws must be crafted to guarantee civil liberties. However, the laws being enacted by the Chinese government and Hong Kong authorities infringe upon citizens' freedoms and are being used by the government to suppress and control people. While it may appear to be the "rule of law," it is actually "rule by law."

This challenges the very concept of the rule of law, posing a threat to the liberal international order. Simultaneously, it represents a significant challenge to Japan's sovereignty. For instance, when Hong Kong authorities enforce laws like the Hong Kong National Security Law over matters occurring within Japan, it constitutes an infringement on Japan's sovereignty at that very moment. Japan must speak out more forcefully against the extraterritorial application of Chinese domestic laws.

Targets of "Transnational Oppression"

The people targeted by China's transnational suppression can be divided into the following groups. One is minority groups. Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Southern Mongolians have been targets of transnational suppression since well before 2014. However, following the protests against the Fugitive Offenders Bill, the scope expanded to include Hong Kongers as well. Even those not belonging to minority groups can become targets if they engage in anti-establishment movements, are human rights activists, or are journalists who write critically about the government or engage in critical speech.

Former government officials are also targeted. China is conducting a large-scale anti-corruption campaign. This campaign is fundamentally used as a tool in political

struggles to oust political rivals. When political rivals flee abroad, China uses the pretext of anti-corruption to target them for suppression. Furthermore, Taiwanese individuals have become increasingly targeted for suppression in recent years. The reach of suppression has also extended to foreigners, such as Japanese researchers and journalists, who conduct critical analyses of the Chinese Communist Party.

The methods employed are varied, but espionage activities are indeed occurring. There are also instances of people being followed. Furthermore, threats and physical assaults are used. While overt assault cases are still relatively rare in Japan, there have been recent cases of Hong Kongers being assaulted in the UK. Threats are a daily occurrence. There are also cases of individuals being detained and transferred to China.

Digital oppression also exists. The prevalence of harassment in cyberspace has increased significantly in recent years. Moreover, targeted cyberattacks are frequently launched against activists and others.

What causes immense suffering for many is the intimidation of family members. Family members remaining in China are threatened with demands like, "Make your family stop their activities." This oppression by the Chinese Communist Party isn't limited to visible, targeted actions against specific activists. It must be understood as part of broader, systematic influence operations conducted by the Chinese government. China's influence operations fundamentally create the conditions that facilitate such oppression.

In this influence operation, China has spent years building an information ecosystem where its propaganda and disinformation dominate. It spreads propaganda, enforces censorship, and simultaneously promotes digital authoritarianism in other countries. China provides other nations with technologies to monitor activists in cyberspace.

It also exploits international organisations and bilateral partnerships as leverage to disseminate information aligned with the Chinese government's agenda. Similarly, it seeks collusion or exerts pressure on other nations. This targets not only governments but also companies and organisations. Control over Chinese-language media is also exercised with great precision.

Departments Responsible for "Transnational Oppression"

Within China, the departments responsible for "transnational suppression" vary depending on the target, but the three most central are as follows:

The Ministry of State Security, an intelligence agency, handles the suppression of minorities and dissidents. The Ministry of Public Security, a police agency, threatens the families of activists within China. The People's Liberation Army's cyber units also carry

out cyberattacks. This division of labour enables suppression to be conducted on a vast scale.

Additionally, overseas police units exist. This was revealed in a September 2022 report by the Spanish NGO Safeguard Defenders, which received significant coverage in Japanese media at the time. The report revealed that China maintains overseas police units in countries worldwide. A revised version released in December updated the numbers, confirming that at least 102 to 110 overseas police units are operating in 53 countries worldwide.

The dark green areas in the diagram indicate countries where overseas police stations have been confirmed to exist. Unfortunately, Japan is also listed, with stations reportedly located in Tokyo and Nagoya. These serve as bases for conducting suppression activities.

Oppression in the Cyber Domain

Cyberspace is another critical area requiring significant vigilance, as hacking and phishing attacks targeting activists have expanded dramatically. The frequency varies by individual, but some receive hacking attempts or phishing emails multiple times daily. These tactics aim to extract information, impersonate targets, or carry out various other malicious actions.

Even if you're not a core activist, what we must be wary of is WeChat and WeiXin. Since data is stored in mainland China's data centres, we must be particularly cautious not to have our private data extracted by Chinese companies, especially IT firms. That said, for people of Chinese descent, WeChat is overwhelmingly the dominant messaging app, and it also offers financial services. People inevitably end up using WeChat. Surveillance and information gathering by the Chinese government are conducted through WeChat and WeiXin, targeting Chinese users worldwide.

As an example of hacking and cyberattacks, Safeguard Defenders reported that over 1,000 pro-China accounts attacked them in 2022 following their September report on foreign police forces. This was revealed by the Global Engagement Centre within the US Department of State. Thus, they also engage in relentless attacks against organisations analysing China.

Censorship systems are sometimes built into various Chinese products, including smartphones, by default. In September 2021, it was discovered that mobile phones manufactured by Xiaomi had a default list of at least 449 censored words, including terms sensitive to China such as "Free Tibet," "Long Live Taiwan Independence," and "democracy movement." Lithuania's National Cyber Security Centre uncovered this.

Phones are being sold where users cannot express themselves or obtain the information they need, even without taking any action.

ByteDance, which operates TikTok, has been noted for regularly updating lists to block content critical of the Chinese Communist Party. While ByteDance draws attention due to TikTok's significant influence, other IT companies are likely doing the same.

Two laws form the legal foundation: the National Intelligence Law and the Cybersecurity Law. These laws require Chinese companies operating overseas to locate their data centres within China and grant the Chinese government access to the data. Chinese companies cannot refuse this. Consequently, the Chinese government can access and monitor information about individuals and organisations. Indeed, it has been confirmed that information about Western journalists was extracted from TikTok. Furthermore, various researchers have pointed out the possibility that infrastructure, mobile phones, and network equipment installed or manufactured by Chinese companies are being used to monitor criticism of China overseas.

The Hidden Dangers of Smart Cities

Currently, smart city projects are underway in numerous countries. China often signs agreements to support these projects, providing the necessary equipment, such as surveillance cameras. Beyond the potential for China to extract information itself, this also creates an environment where other governments can easily extract information. For example, China is collaborating on smart city projects in Singapore and Malaysia. While supporting and cooperating with smart city projects in various countries, it enables these nations to intercept electronic communications and mobile phone location data. Regardless of actual usage, the capability itself is dangerous and could potentially be exploited for suppression through bilateral international cooperation.

How is the expansion of Chinese cyber domain networks progressing in Japan? While this is only part of the picture, China Telecom operates in Japan, and some Japanese companies sell Huawei or ZTE products. When we buy or rent smartphones or routers, we rarely check which country made them or which company owns them. Sometimes, after renting one, we discover it was actually ZTE. We need to look more closely.

In 2020, SenseTime's camera technology was trialled by NEXCO Central Japan. Nomura Research Institute and the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology conducted joint research on smart cities. SoftBank of Japan participated in the Asia Direct Cable (ADC) project, which also involved Chinese companies. Furthermore, Japan's West Holdings and China's DJI are collaborating on drone-based maintenance and management services for solar power facilities.

While none of these developments necessarily pose an immediate threat, the data obtained through them must be stored in mainland China's data centres. It is worth noting that all this data is vulnerable.

Expansion of Pro-China Networks

We must also be mindful of the expansion of pro-China networks in the real world, beyond cyberspace. This is an extremely difficult point to pinpoint, as not all individuals coming from China are necessarily co-opted by the Chinese government. However, the Chinese Communist Party is attempting to co-opt us, or the Chinese people, in various ways and turn us into pawns. We must be extremely sensitive in discerning this.

For example, Confucius Institutes have been established at 15 universities in Japan. These institutes aim to provide a warm image of China and teach Chinese using simplified characters. There is also the Belt and Road Research Network. This is a global network affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party, and within Japan, there is the Belt and Road Japan Research Centre. Furthermore, Waseda University and Chuo University are members of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road University Consortium. Not just these two, but numerous universities receive massive appeals in various forms: "Let's sign agreements with us," "Let's engage in international exchange."

Ten universities are also part of the Huawei Innovation Program, which provides financial and material support. Furthermore, a 2021 report revealed that 44 Japanese researchers had travelled to China to participate in the Thousand Days Program, aimed at cultivating valuable research talent.

Chinese student associations and scholar associations exist at various universities. The Chinese Embassy and the United Front Work Department view these as highly valuable assets, utilising them to monitor Chinese students or to oversee events held both on and off campus.

I included this entire list because I was surprised to see it myself. In May of this year, 280 various overseas Chinese organisations in Japan jointly issued a statement opposing Taiwan's independence and separatist activities, as well as external interference. This many organisations endorsed the statement. All are based in Japan. While there may be overlapping members, we must bear in mind the possibility that organisations with strong ties to the Chinese government have expanded to this extent.

Measures We Should Take

Amidst this significant expansion of China's transnational suppression into Japan, several actions should be taken. First, we must understand the reality that the Chinese

Communist Party is forming an influence network to suppress minorities, activists, and journalists. Diverse individuals must seize various opportunities to raise awareness about this. Furthermore, we must voice concerns about how China's domestic laws violate personal information protection in Japan. This issue should be raised by the Japanese government and various individuals, pushing for countermeasures at the international, bilateral, and domestic levels.

Furthermore, we must recognise that when perspectives aligned with the Chinese government or the Chinese Communist Party emerge as mainstream discourse, they often carry a political agenda. We should not rely solely on government-affiliated viewpoints. Instead, we must gather diverse information from minorities, activists, and independent journalists. By synthesising these perspectives, we can form a comprehensive understanding of China's actions and the circumstances facing its people.

Therefore, we must be wary of perception hacking that exploits anti-China sentiment. Information operations will emerge claiming, "You dislike China, but these groups are working with us." They will spread disinformation suggesting that so-called leftists are connected to China. The aim is to create a Japanese right wing that counters these leftists, pitting them against each other to divide Japan internally.

Therefore, simply raising anti-China as a banner remains dangerous. Instead, we must act while constantly considering the specific circumstances these people face, their human rights, and how to prevent the fragmentation of our society.

Ultimately, we must expand international networks to support people facing various forms of oppression. Last year, I personally established the Democracy Advocates at Risk Program to support democracy activists whose lives are threatened. This program, led by Asian researchers, aims to rescue those suffering such oppression. We need to expand genuine networks like this. Since governments often cannot do everything, I would like to work with all of you to expand the circle of support. (End)

Q&A

Q: Human rights issues like transnational suppression are rarely covered by Japan's major media outlets. Is this itself due to some form of Chinese influence, causing the media to show little interest in such matters?

Ichihara: In other countries, Chinese government funds have infiltrated media outlets through acquisitions and mergers, and an increasing number are being fully utilised for Chinese influence operations. Hong Kong and Taiwan are particularly severe, but

similar issues are also occurring in other countries. However, Japan has not yet reached that stage.

Instead, the reason Japanese society hasn't focused on these issues is fundamentally because very few people were researching them. I began studying this issue around 2019, and at that time, the international community still understood that China's influence operations hadn't reached Japan. However, upon researching, I discovered that they had actually been occurring since at least the 2010s, and likely much earlier. We need to scrutinise the information itself more closely.

Q: I've heard that both Japan and China agreed to spread positive narratives about China within Japan, and that the Japanese media isn't reporting this fact. What is your understanding of this?

Ichihara: Personally, I have never heard of any backroom deal to avoid reporting unfavourable news about China. While I cannot be entirely sure, China's approach may have been subtle. Rather than explicitly telling the Japanese government what to do or not to do, they may be attempting to co-opt the Japanese government by offering various rewards, aiming to keep Japan from distancing itself too much from China. China tends to use this tactic especially when its relations with the United States deteriorate.

Q: iPhones are supposedly made in China, but are any devices being embedded into the chips? Also, how is the US government responding to this?

Ichihara: Regarding iPhones being manufactured in China, I'm afraid I don't know the specifics. However, it's undeniable that iPhones are significantly more secure than Android devices, so I assume they consider that during production. Still, I'm not entirely sure.

4. Lecture: "Transnational Human Rights Oppression" - Teppei Kasai (Program Officer, Asia Division, HRW)

About Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is the world's largest international human rights NGO, investigating human rights situations in 102 countries, including Japan. It employs approximately 500 staff members representing 82 nationalities. Its mission is to protect and promote human rights in times of war and peace, publishing around 80 reports annually. All funding for its activities comes from private donations; it does not accept government funding.

Definition of "Transnational Oppression"

In June this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published its first briefing paper on transnational oppression, defining it as "acts by a state and its proxies to deter, silence, or punish dissent, criticism, and human rights advocacy outside their territory." The Office also noted that "human rights defenders, journalists, whistleblowers, and their families and associates are particularly vulnerable to targeting." Furthermore, it highlighted that private companies, technology firms, criminal organisations, militias or paramilitary groups, and media organisations may also be directly or indirectly complicit in transnational oppression.

Types of Transnational Oppression

What specific forms does transnational oppression take? The most blatant form is murder. For example, there was the case where a Washington Post reporter was summoned to the Saudi Arabian Embassy, assaulted, and killed upon arrival. This is a clear example of transnational oppression. Deportation is another form. This refers to the forced repatriation or expulsion of relatives of individuals facing oppression from their country of origin. Other forms include abduction (enforced disappearance), targeting relatives, and the misuse of consular services.

During its investigation in Japan, HRW interviewed one person who was told, when trying to renew their passport, "You must return to your home country to renew it; we cannot process it here." Because returning carries the risk of detention, they have not gone back. They remain unable to renew their passports and continue to be unable to see their family.

Other forms include digital surveillance and harassment. Furthermore, although less widely known, the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), an

international police body with which Japanese police collaborate, issues international warrants known as Red Notices. There are actual cases where governments abuse this system. They provide incorrect or deliberately misleading information to INTERPOL to trigger a Red Notice, then use it to arrest activists or alleged offenders abroad.

The Effects of Transnational Oppression

What effects does transnational oppression have? The most significant impact is the risk of suppressing fundamental human rights—freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly—that are guaranteed as a matter of course for Japanese citizens living in Japan.

Furthermore, it breeds fear within communities that individuals might be targeted next, or that relatives back in their home country could be targeted, leading to negative impacts on mental health. It also causes isolation from family and community. People fear that associating with someone facing transnational oppression might make them a target too, so they distance themselves, leaving that person isolated within the community. These are some of the effects.

Furthermore, individuals may begin to self-censor or refrain from human rights activities. There is a real fear that attending such events and speaking out could lead to further persecution or make them a target. As a result, there are actual cases where people avoid attending events, or if they do attend, they keep a low profile or refrain from posting on social media.

HRW investigates various cases of transnational oppression worldwide. Regarding Japan, we conducted interviews with 25 individuals from Hong Kong and mainland China residing in Japan between June and August last year. This group included people from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia.

All 25 individuals have engaged in what we consider peaceful activities, such as criticising the Chinese Communist Party's one-party system. What specific activities do they involve? Activities to educate citizens about crimes against humanity in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the human rights violations currently being committed by the Chinese government. Some activities might not even be considered human rights activism *per se*. For example, spreading awareness about Tibetan culture and culinary traditions. Book clubs discussing works by Inner Mongolian activists. We also confirmed cases where individuals were targeted simply for attempting to hold book clubs among friends about works by Inner Mongolian activists active in Japan. Furthermore, we verified cases where individuals involved in organising the White

Paper Movement near Shinjuku Station in late 2022 faced pressure from the Chinese Embassy in Japan.

The majority of interviewees testified that Chinese police contacted them or their relatives in China, pressuring them to cease activities in Japan. Multiple individuals provided supporting evidence—WeChat records, video call recordings, and security camera footage—which lends credibility to these testimonies.

One individual stated that after being contacted by Chinese authorities in 2024, they refrained from activities perceived as politically sensitive. The majority said they would not cease their activities due to such pressure. However, this one person decided not to participate in such political or human rights activities because they actually experienced harassment and felt afraid.

Among those who testified, some were asked not only to cease activities in Japan but also to provide information about their affiliated organisations and communities. We understand this as a tactic to use victims of transnational oppression to gather more comprehensive information about their communities. Some reported being told by embassy staff that they would need to return to China to renew their passports.

When asked if they had consulted with the Japanese police, many stated that the Japanese police could do little in the first place, and out of fear of retaliation by Chinese authorities, they did not seek help from the Japanese police or authorities.

We sent these HRW findings to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Police Agency, requesting a response. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to answer, and the National Police Agency returned the letter unanswered.

We also sent a letter of inquiry to the Chinese Embassy in Japan. We sent it because it was essential to allow the Chinese government to respond, but there was no reply.

However, later, when the media asked China's spokesperson at a press conference for comment on HRW's report, the spokesperson responded that they hadn't seen the report but stated that China does not engage in transnational oppression. As a result, the Chinese government responded. Additionally, the Chinese Consul General in Osaka posted an angry tweet, citing a Kyodo News article, and asked what Kyodo meant by reporting such HRW disinformation. As a result, these kinds of reactions have emerged.

Transnational Oppression Beyond China

Today's symposium focuses on China's cross-border oppression, but it's crucial to remember that China isn't the only country engaging in this practice. HRW released a report last February on global cross-border oppression. It documented over 75 cases involving 24 governments.

The situation in Cambodia is unfolding in Japan right now. HRW is also investigating this. Currently, Cambodia is experiencing a significant shift, as Hun Manet, the son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has held the position for over 30 years, has recently assumed the role of Prime Minister. Under the Hun Sen and Hun Manet administrations, severe human rights abuses have continued. This includes the dissolution of the largest opposition party and oppression on government critics and independent media.

Last May, Sun Chanthy, leader of the opposition party "People's Power," visited Japan and addressed Cambodian opposition supporters residing there. She called for freedom of political activity in Cambodia. Upon her return, she was arrested, convicted of defamation, and fined.

Two months later, in July, Teav Wan Nor, leader of the opposition Candlelight Party, was fined after returning to Cambodia for making critical comments about the human rights situation in an interview with Nikkei Asia.

In August, the brother of Hai Vannar, representative of the Cambodia National Rescue Party in Japan, was forcibly disappeared by Cambodian authorities. The Cambodia National Rescue Party was originally Cambodia's largest opposition party, but was dissolved by the ruling party several years ago. Hai Vannar, the representative of a support group for that opposition party, was active in Japan when his brother was forcibly disappeared in Cambodia. Subsequently, two close associates of former Prime Minister Hun Sen visited Japan, apologised to Hai Vannar, and pressured him to switch allegiance to Cambodia's ruling party. Mr Hai Vannar was forced into a situation where he had no choice but to accept this, as his brother was being held in Cambodia and used as a bargaining chip. He apologised and announced his defection to the Cambodian ruling party. On the very day that former Prime Minister Hun Sen posted this video on his Facebook, a local court approved the release of his brother.

What should the Japanese government do?

The fundamental question is whether the Japanese government is even aware of these cross-border oppression and their total number. The best way to grasp this is through self-reporting, so it is necessary to establish a consultation window where victims themselves can seek help while their privacy is protected.

Furthermore, Japan's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister must protest publicly to governments like China and Cambodia that engage in transnational oppression. While diplomacy often operates behind the scenes, this protest must be made public as a message to activists within Japan.

In fact, after the HRW report was released, a journalist questioned the Foreign Minister. The response was that Japan would respond appropriately if cases violating domestic law were confirmed. While this is a fundamental necessity, Japan's legal system also has its own human rights issues, such as the practice of hostage justice. Therefore, it is crucial to handle such cases strictly while also protecting the rights of suspects.

There is one actual case where an attempt was made to address the issue using domestic law. Last November, it was discovered that a Chinese graduate student had registered under a false name for an event organised by the Japan Uyghur Association. He was referred to prosecutors on suspicion of falsifying and using false electronic records. Although he was subsequently not prosecuted in December, such attempts have indeed been made. (End)

Q&A

Q: If someone cannot renew their passport without returning to their home country, would they be considered an illegal resident and subject to deportation if they remain after their passport expires?

Kasai: If the passport and visa expire, that possibility exists. The person mentioned earlier was informed that the Chinese Embassy issues documents serving as a substitute for a passport for returning home, so a way to return is available. However, they did not go because there was a risk of arrest upon return.

Q: What about applying for refugee status?

Kasai: Applying for refugee status in Japan takes years, and you're detained by immigration authorities, after which you become subject to forced repatriation. There are numerous documented cases where individuals who would likely qualify as refugees internationally have been forcibly returned. They find themselves caught between the Japanese authorities and those of their home country. They're afraid to seek help from Japanese police, and they face persecution if returned to their home country, not just China. Many people are stuck in this limbo.

Afumetto: A woman in her 30s who graduated from the University of Tokyo was pressured by her parents to return home. Immediately upon her return, she was detained and died in detention a year later. When such cases occur, is there nothing the professor who had her in their lab just a short time before can do?

One Uyghur who earned a doctorate in Japan served as president of Xinjiang University for many years and conducted joint research with a Japanese university for nearly a decade. However, he disappeared in 2017 and was later executed. Could the Japanese university he researched do nothing?

Ichihara: Such incidents are occurring even around me, and Hitotsubashi University is responding. Through this process, we discovered that neither the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor JICA has accumulated any information on such cases. When I reported it, they said it was the first they'd heard of it. Even university authorities lack information about the possibility of such sensitive cases occurring or that they are actually happening. That's why we are now gradually sharing information with faculty members at Hitotsubashi University.

Faculty members also don't fully grasp the sensitivity of this issue or that each individual must take action. There are some misunderstandings about fairness, so we are gradually spreading the understanding that responding appropriately to the situation is true fairness. Hitotsubashi University is now allowing students who require protection to conduct research under pseudonyms. Furthermore, we are providing separate research guidance for these students and taking all necessary steps.

We are gradually disseminating this information at both the University of Tokyo and Hitotsubashi University; however, it needs to be shared among universities in some form.

Kasai: The Japanese government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must take decisive action. Recently, the G7 issued a joint statement opposing transnational suppression. Since Japan signed it, action must follow.

Japan and China previously held Japan-China Human Rights Dialogues. They haven't been held for the past decade, so they should be resumed. In such a forum, Japan should publicly state, "We are aware of these cases and want them to stop." That is the first step.

Fundamentally, information gathering is insufficient. We must establish a reporting channel where victims can come forward; otherwise, we cannot grasp the whole picture.

5. Report: Transnational Oppression Against Uyghurs - Retepu Afumetto (Chairman, Japan Uyghur Association)

Family Members Held Hostage

Why does this transnational oppression control us? Because our families remain behind in our homeland. Our families are being held hostage to manipulate us. Consequently, some people feel they have no choice but to obey whatever the Chinese government orders. Others make the difficult decision to sever ties with their families, cutting off all contact.

Several years ago, pressure was exerted through family members demanding that all Uyghurs abroad return to their homeland. Most Uyghurs come to Japan to study, so their passports expire after three or five years. Previously, it was standard practice to submit an application at the Embassy and receive a new passport within days. However, since the large-scale forced internment campaigns began in 2017, the Chinese Embassy in Japan has refused to renew Uyghurs' passports. Instead, they issue something akin to a one-way travel permit that allows departure but not re-entry, telling them to return home and renew their passport locally.

When a passport renewal is denied and the passport expires, the visa linked to it also expires. This means they can no longer remain in Japan legally. Students are expelled from school, and those working are fired. They then become illegal residents. If caught by the police as illegal residents, they can be detained.

This is a serious problem. Most people have their passports expire after 3 or 5 years. If they return as instructed, they often disappear without a trace, and some even die. In such circumstances, it's very difficult to leave. Consequently, to avoid illegal residency, they are forced to apply for refugee status. They become refugees against their will. They are then forced to cut off contact with their families. If they don't, they face various forms of pressure, such as demands to provide information about people active in Japan.

Reported worldwide

Such situations are not limited to Japan; they are occurring and being reported worldwide. In 2020, Amnesty International published a report concluding that there is no longer a safe place in the world for Uyghurs. A report published by the American organisation "Uyghur Human Rights Project" can also be found on the Japan Uyghur Association's website, so please take a look if you can. A research institute at a British university has also published a similar report.

Every year, a report is published, raising awareness of the issue, yet concrete countermeasures remain elusive. In fact, there are documented cases where individuals, pressured by their parents into returning, have subsequently gone missing, been detained, or died in detention facilities. The photo on the top left shows a woman who died in a detention camp after returning from Japan. The man visible in the top left of the photo on the top right returned from the United States and died in a detention camp. The bottom left shows people who died after returning from Turkey, and the bottom right shows those who died after returning from Egypt. Individuals pressured by their parents to return from various countries have been detained and have died.

Transnational Oppression Within Japan

In Japan's case, various people faced oppression in different forms, as reported in an NHK special. Most cases involved Chinese police demanding information, cooperation, or collaboration. There were also instances where individuals who provided family information went missing. They blatantly demonstrate that if you leak any information, this is what will happen to you. This is fundamentally no different from terrorists taking hostages, sending videos or photos threatening that the hostages will be harmed if demands aren't met, and coercing compliance.

The Japan Uyghur Association has published a book compiling the experiences of 34 Uyghurs living in Japan who faced transnational persecution. We strongly encourage you to refer to it.

We have been raising awareness about these issues through various channels, but our biggest concern is the lack of places to turn for help. Whether approaching the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or consulting politicians, we must rely on personal connections, which often involve searching through acquaintances of acquaintances. Many people don't know where to seek advice, end up carrying their burdens alone, and are on the verge of depression.

Even if we report it to the Japanese police, there's nothing they can do within the existing legal framework. Honestly, we do not know what to do. There was one case where the police referred a suspicious Chinese individual who attended a Uyghur gathering for prosecution. However, that was solely because they had come to such a gathering to take photos and recordings secretly. This causes our allies, who come to help us and keep their faces hidden, to flee. And we become isolated. As a result, our activities stagnate. China is aiming for this. Their goal is to silence us. While this is an issue directly affecting us, it also constitutes a challenge and infringement upon Japan's sovereignty, rule of law, and values. We strongly urge the advancement of countermeasures.

6. Report: Transnational Oppression Against Tibetans - Tserin Dorje (Representative, Students for a Free Tibet, Japan)

Tibetans in Japan Who Cannot Speak Out

Eighty to ninety per cent of Tibetans abroad have relatives in Tibet. Naturally, pressure comes through those relatives. But we cannot speak loudly about such things happening in Japan. There are only about 150 Tibetans in Japan. If we say anything, someone will be exposed immediately, and they will face truly dire consequences.

Last year, we released a report from the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy on transnational oppression. Tibetans themselves investigated, examining transnational oppression in various locations. But what we discovered during that process was that many Tibetans are in a situation where they cannot speak out. Especially in Japan, where there are only 150 Tibetans, once a name is mentioned, their identity is immediately known.

Oppression in Japan

The oppression is already underway. Even within the community of 150 Tibetans in Japan, sometimes the elected chairperson cannot show their face. There have also been cases where someone elected chairperson resigned after just two or three months due to opposition from their family.

Oppression Occurring Worldwide

The worst case occurred this past May in Vietnam, where local authorities and the Chinese Public Security Bureau killed a prominent Tibetan Buddhist monk. This truly transnational oppression is occurring worldwide.

Areas with large Tibetan populations require more investigation moving forward. For example, in New York, a Tibetan became a police officer and obstructed the activities of the local Tibetan community. The FBI arrested him, and it was revealed that he had been passing all information about Tibetans living in New York to China. Similar incidents are occurring in Europe, where the names of all individuals belonging to Tibetan communities are being systematically tracked.

Numerous suspicious emails

From my own experience, this year, the 9th World Parliamentarians' Conference on Tibet was held in Japan. Around that time, I received a vast number of suspicious emails. There were also many suspicious emails around the Dalai Lama's birthday. Since the

Tibetan government-in-exile has a specialised IT department, we had them handle such matters.

I want to bring to your attention the current situation. I hope the people of Japan will understand, even a little, the harsh situation Tibetans are facing.

7. Report: Transnational Oppression Against Hong Kongers - Alic Lee (Representative Director, Lady Liberty HK)

A New Form of Transnational Oppression for Hong Kongers

Cross-border oppression are new for many Hong Kongers. Activists fleeing Hong Kong to overseas emerged only after 2020. Before that, most Hong Kongers couldn't imagine being targeted overseas like Tibetan, Uyghur, or mainland Chinese activists. Before 2020, Hong Kong still had freedom of speech, assembly, and demonstration. Therefore, many Hong Kongers believed at that time there was no need to flee overseas.

So why are Hong Kong activists now being targeted overseas? The Chinese government still seeks to maintain the façade of Hong Kong's "one country, two systems." It aims to demonstrate to the world that freedom and democracy still prevail in Hong Kong, thereby maintaining China's image as a nation that keeps its promises. However, as Hong Kong activists who have sought asylum abroad continue to report on the reality in Hong Kong, the world is beginning to think China cannot be trusted. As a result, distrust is also spreading toward the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects the Chinese government is promoting overseas.

Cross-Border Oppression on Hong Kong Activists

What exactly is the cross-border oppression on Hong Kong activists occurring in recent years? What lies behind it, and who are the people active overseas? How is the Hong Kong government using laws to oppression on activists, restricting passport issuance and freedom of movement? Furthermore, I wish to discuss threats, harassment, and pressure on family members, as well as the specific methods employed to address these issues. Activists and supporters face isolation, arrest, and the risk of criminal charges merely for watching YouTube. Finally, we will cover the reactions and condemnations from the G7 and the international community, as well as the actual difficulties faced by activists living abroad.

From 2019 to 2020, large demonstrations took place in Hong Kong to protest a law that would allow Hong Kong residents to be extradited to mainland China. These were demonstrations and assemblies aimed at defending freedom and democracy. Subsequently, the Chinese government enacted the National Security Law in 2019 and the National Security Ordinance in 2020. These stringent laws apply to actions deemed threatening to national security, including those of individuals residing outside Hong Kong. This means the Hong Kong government can theoretically prosecute Hong Kong activists and even foreigners living overseas.

So who exactly are these Hong Kong activists now living abroad? They include former legislators, student leaders, journalists, staff of civic groups, and ordinary young people. Some are well-known, others are not. They mainly reside in the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia, though some live in Taiwan or South America. Many fled abroad, fearing arrest or persecution in Hong Kong.

Why do they continue their activism? They believe that by speaking out for freedom from abroad and informing the world about the current situation, their activities become beyond the control of the Hong Kong government. Starting in 2023, the Hong Kong government can use laws to suppress Hong Kong activists overseas. The National Security Law was enacted in 2020, followed by the National Security Ordinance in 2024. These two laws criminalise various actions and statements under the pretext of safeguarding national security.

Crucially, these laws apply beyond Hong Kong. Not only Hong Kong residents living in Hong Kong, but also Hong Kongers living abroad, and even citizens of those countries, can be prosecuted if deemed a threat to China's security. Hong Kong police have already used these laws to issue arrest warrants for activists living overseas and place them on wanted lists. By the end of 2024, bounties of up to 1 million Hong Kong dollars were placed on 19 overseas activists. The Hong Kong government is using the law to suppress the voices of the Hong Kong people wherever they are.

Specific Oppression

Furthermore, the Hong Kong government is verifying the passports of Hong Kong residents abroad. Hong Kong activists who managed to leave the territory still use their Hong Kong passports. These passport checks make it difficult for activists to travel internationally. Even if they can reach the UK, leaving the UK for other countries becomes challenging.

The harassment extends beyond the activists themselves overseas to include pressure and intimidation against family members remaining in Hong Kong. My own parents have been threatened. This is an attempt to force them to cease overseas activities and advocacy work. The government is also pressuring people living near activists.

The father and brother of Anna Quark, an activist living in the US, were arrested in Hong Kong on charges related to managing Anna's funds. Anna is wanted by the Hong Kong police for violating the Hong Kong National Security Law due to her involvement in the 2019 Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. There have also been cases where threatening letters were sent to activists living in the UK, as well as to their neighbours.

There is also harassment involving disinformation. Footage was circulated showing three Hong Kong activists living in the UK discussing how to flee the UK during an online meeting. However, this was entirely deepfake footage; such a meeting never actually took place. They are disseminating this type of disinformation to undermine the credibility of many activists living abroad.

Furthermore, letters have been sent to the neighbours of Hong Kong activists. These letters contain private and false information, resulting in the activists becoming isolated. It is believed these letters were intended to create such a situation.

Strategies to isolate activists primarily target gathering places for overseas activists and the networks they build.

Supporters in Hong Kong are also being arrested. Watching a YouTube video by an overseas activist in Hong Kong could be a crime.

Support for activists

G7 leaders have also strongly criticised the Hong Kong government for its oppression. In June this year, the G7 issued a statement strongly condemning the Hong Kong police for issuing arrest warrants against overseas activists.

Hong Kong activists living abroad now face tremendous hardship. They struggle with language barriers, job searches, and finding housing. The constant psychological pressure exerted by the Hong Kong government is also immense. Even their families are under surveillance, leaving them feeling isolated and vulnerable. This is precisely why we democracy activists overseas must continue to share the reality of Hong Kong's situation.

In Hong Kong today, the free exchange of opinions and political activities has become nearly impossible. The freedoms Hong Kong once enjoyed have been lost. Since then, we have heard no voices acknowledging Hong Kong's freedom and democracy. We want the people of Japan to understand the current reality of Hong Kong.

8. Report: Transnational Oppression Against Southern Mongolians - Orkhonod Daichin (Standing Vice Chairman, Southern Mongolian Kurultai)

Transnational Oppression Extending to Mongolia

The situation of cross-border human rights suppression against Mongolians is mainly similar to that against other ethnic groups, and the methods can be categorised as follows:

1. Digital Surveillance and Online Disinformation
2. Pressure via Family Members and "Forced Repatriation"
3. "Chinese Police Bases" Overseas
4. Threats using legal measures
5. Direct intimidation

Around 2009, a Southern Mongolian who had fled to Mongolia and served as principal of the Mongolian-Tibetan Medical School was forced to close the school due to pressure from China. Fearing for his life, he sought protection at the UN Human Rights Office in Mongolia. Upon leaving after applying for protection, he was arrested by police, handed over to Chinese police, and immediately taken to Inner Mongolia.

Mr Hada, founder of the Southern Mongolian People's Alliance, spent 15 years in prison, totalling 19 years of incarceration. His wife was under police surveillance, enduring harsh conditions. At the time, we attempted to support their livelihood but were unable to send money. His bank account was frozen. Then, online rumours spread that Southern Mongolians living in Taiwan were using my name to collect donations for their own purposes. This caused suspicion and mistrust among Mongolians, damaging relationships. China was orchestrating this behind the scenes. Our website was also cyberattacked and rendered inoperable, which was reported at the time. China attacks using every means possible.

Investigating the China-affiliated newspaper published in Japan, the Japan China News (headquartered in Osaka), revealed that it partners with the People's Daily. This newspaper has consistently criticised the activities of the Southern Mongolian Kurultai overseas. It reported on demonstrations opposing the Kurultai held in front of the House of Councillors Members' Office Building when the Kurultai was formed. The participants likely went there at the behest of the Chinese Embassy. They chanted, "Don't destroy Japan-China friendship."

The primary form of suppression against Southern Mongolians overseas is forced repatriation, mainly from Mongolia. A Mongolian citizen who had greatly supported us on Southern Mongolian human rights issues was sentenced to 10 years in prison in

Mongolia. The reason given for the sentence was that he had damaged Mongolia's friendly relations with China.

As for actual cases in Japan, as reported by the Sankei Shimbun, Chinese police officials visited the home of Kurultai executive Alisa, residing in Japan, claiming they had brought souvenirs from his homeland. When Alisa threatened to report them to the police, they fled. Subsequently, they told Alisa's family in Southern Mongolia that they had visited Alisa's home in Japan.

In 2020, they staged counter-protests against our demonstration outside the Chinese Embassy. They initiate these kinds of activities.

Two days ago, a Mongolian citizen was detained during a layover in China while en route to an international conference in Malaysia, where he intended to support Southern Mongolia. He was forcibly repatriated to Mongolia.

We want the Japanese public to be aware of such cases.

9. Panel Discussion

Moderator: Chikako Kodama (PhD candidate, Hitotsubashi University)

Panellists: Afumetto, Dorj, Lee, Daichin

Kodama: Are there specific areas we should focus on for advocacy, deepening understanding, or conducting investigations?

Lee: Numerous issues require attention. When I first came to Japan to start my activities, my concern was that if someone from Hong Kong participated in our group's activities and had their photo taken, and that photo was sent to the Chinese government, they could be arrested upon returning to Hong Kong.

On the other hand, there are also concerns about the Japanese government. Many Hong Kongers live in Japan, but they typically hold student or work visas. If they participate in such political activities, it's unclear if it would cause problems renewing their visas. The Japanese Immigration Bureau does not provide any explanation whatsoever. As a result, people become reluctant to participate in such political activities, burdened by anxieties about both China and Japan. While the Chinese government is certainly frightening, we also want the Japanese government to provide explanations so that Hong Kongers and supporters of various ethnic groups living in Japan can participate in these activities with peace of mind.

Kodama: What specific forms of suppression exist, and what impact do they have?

Daichin: Activists from various ethnic groups overseas share similar experiences, although their tactics are diverse. Even if you naturalise in Japan, family members remain behind in China. China uses those family members as hostages to threaten you. For example, my sister was a university professor there, and her children had completed doctoral programs. They told her that if I didn't stop this activism, they wouldn't give me a job at the university. Worse than that, they said I'd be sent to prison. They also threaten employment. Bank accounts can be frozen.

A friend of mine had a daughter who should have gotten into a very prestigious high school. But they told him, "Because your brother is involved in this kind of activism, we won't let your daughter attend that school." So, she had to attend a local school. When they do things like this, it really paralyses you.

Then, there is a passport renewal issue. I know people around me who've tried renewing at the consulate about 17 times and been rejected each time. They were told they wouldn't renew it unless I returned to China.

They also try to divide people within the autonomous region from those abroad. If you get even slightly involved in activities here, pressure is immediately put on your family, and they start calling you. That kind of pressure is immense.

Afumetto: The impact is widespread. For example, they pressure Uyghurs living in Japan, demanding their families send all personal information—where they live in Japan, where they work, and which school their children attend. If you reluctantly send the information, they now demand proof, such as a photo showing the school sign where your child attends.

The impact is that they naturally start to feel like they're constantly being followed or watched. This causes significant mental distress.

Already struggling with various problems while living in a foreign land, and having difficulty even contacting family over the past few years, being subjected to this makes you even more mentally unstable, affecting various aspects of your life. Then, the Chinese police demand your cooperation.

Occasionally, they contact you through family members, asking them to add someone as a friend on WeChat or another social media platform. When you ask who this person is, they say it's someone from the government who really needs to talk to you, so please add them to your list. If you refuse, your family will naturally face various forms of harassment, so some people feel they have no choice but to add them. Once added, the police start gently, suggesting they become friends, but gradually begin demanding all sorts of information. For example, they request details about the Uyghur Association or about groups and individuals in Japan who support Uyghurs. Essentially, it amounts to coercion into spying. Once you start down that path, it's obvious it will only escalate.

Accepting or refusing both leads to hell. You could say this is psychological torture. One day, I received a message sent by the Chinese police to a Uyghur living in Japan. The police stated that simply participating in activities with Uyghur Association members, or even just having tea together, constitutes a violation of China's major laws. They warned, "Absolutely do not get close to them." This is an attempt to isolate and silence those who speak out about China's actions and work to inform others of the reality.

To continue our work, we inevitably need people. Isolating us prevents us from engaging in more active and socially impactful activities. That's the effect it has. In fact, there have been cases where Uyghurs who came to help at places like this were secretly

photographed, and when those photos were sent to the authorities, pressure was immediately applied through their families, causing them to leave.

There have been cases where suspicious individuals were apprehended on-site and handed over to the police. Yet, they would confess on the spot, claiming they were hired as part-time workers, showing no sense of guilt. They openly use every possible tactic to order people to take photos of Uyghurs. Even if they confess this in front of the police, the Japanese police can do nothing beyond listening to the circumstances and making a record of them. Why can they act so brazenly? Because there are no penalties or sanctions.

Some people have nowhere to turn, internalising the stress to the point of depression, while others have no choice but to cut off contact with their families. The impact extends to these areas.

One crucial point is that many of those pressured in various ways to obey China have already acquired Japanese citizenship. Since neither China nor Japan recognises dual citizenship, obtaining Japanese citizenship requires complete renunciation of Chinese citizenship. Legally, China should have no jurisdiction over them. Yet China still holds the belief that, simply because someone was born Uyghur, it is their inherent right to manipulate them however they please, anytime, anywhere.

Dorje: China targets Tibetan organisations to weaken them. For example, they instigate financial or relationship issues to cause internal conflicts. Since the 1980s, China has conducted transnational suppression against Tibetans. In the past, they staged protests and disruptions wherever the Dalai Lama went. Now they employ specialists, and assassination attempts have occurred.

Participant: Specifically, what can we do to urge the Japanese government to enact laws addressing transnational suppression? What laws exist in other countries? Isn't there a need for a network where victims and refugees can support each other, and for consultation services?

Afumetto: This transnational oppression is recognised as a problem worldwide. To the best of my current knowledge, a bill has already been submitted to the US Congress advocating for its regulation, although it has not yet become law. Europe may follow suit in the future. While we can't expect much from countries like those in Central Asia, where China's influence is strong, we hope the US, Europe, and countries in Asia, such as Japan and Australia, will firmly advance countermeasures.

I agree that ethnic groups should strengthen their networks to support each other. What we seek isn't so much "please help us," but instead for Japan to clearly state, "This is illegal in Japan, so we cannot do it." That would make even Chinese workers coming for part-time jobs hesitate. Whether Chinese, Uyghur, or Japanese, everyone must adhere to this rule. The Japanese government must clearly communicate that crossing this line is unacceptable.

Kodama: Hearing directly from all the speakers today has made the background of "transnational oppression" and the challenges involved very clear. I have learned a great deal myself.

To everyone, thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking the time to spend with us today.

10. Biographies

ICHIHARA Maiko

Professor at Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of Law and Graduate School of International and Public Policy. After graduating from Dokkyo University, she earned a Master's degree from Sophia University and another from Columbia University in the United States. She received his PhD in Political Science from George Washington University in 2012. She served as an Associate Professor at Kansai Gaidai University and at the Graduate School of Law and the Graduate School of International and Public Policy at Hitotsubashi University before assuming her current position. She has also served as a Visiting Scholar at the Stanford University Centre on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law and a Visiting Scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program.

Specialises in international politics, democratisation assistance, Japanese diplomacy, and influence operations. He directs the Democracy and Human Rights Program at the Institute for Global Governance Research (GGR), Hitotsubashi University. In December 2024, he launched the Democracy Advocates at Risk (DAR) program, which supports the overseas relocation of democracy activists from Asian countries and regions who are at risk, facilitating their acceptance as researchers or international students.

KASAI Teppei

Program Officer, Asia Division, Human Rights Watch (HRW). Graduated from Waseda University's School of International Liberal Studies. Studied at the University of California, Berkeley for one year during his undergraduate studies, focusing on international relations and journalism.

After working as a reporter for Reuters for four years, he joined Human Rights Watch in 2018. At Human Rights Watch, he investigates human rights issues both domestically and internationally and makes policy recommendations to the Japanese government.

KODAMA Chikako

Doctoral candidate at Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of Law. Graduated from the Department of Sociology (majoring in Economics), First Faculty of Arts, University of Tsukuba. Earned a Master's degree from Carleton University's Graduate School of International Relations in Canada.

After joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she served at the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, the Embassy of Japan in Afghanistan, and the United Nations Mine Action

Centre in Afghanistan. She then joined the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where she worked as a field specialist in development and peacebuilding support.

RETEPU Afumetto

Chairman of the NPO Japan Uyghur Association. Born in Keriqin County, southern East Turkestan (so-called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region). Came to Japan in 2002 and enrolled in the Graduate School of Science, University of Tokyo. Completed the Master's program in 2005. Currently works at an IT company in Tokyo.

TSERING Dorjee

Representative of Student For a Free Tibet Japan (SFT Japan). Born in India as a second-generation Tibetan refugee. Studied at a boarding school in the suburbs of Dharamsala, northern India. After gaining work experience in India, he came to Japan in 1999. Since then, he has continued activities for Tibet based in Japan.

Alric LEE

Representative Director of Lady Liberty HK. Came to Japan in 2015 to pursue graduate studies at the University of Tokyo, earning a Master of Engineering degree in 2017. He founded Lady Liberty HK during the 2019 Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. Since 2023, he has actively engaged in activities in Japan as an Executive Director of the Japan-Hong Kong Democracy Alliance (now integrated into Lady Liberty HK).

OLHUNUD Daichin

Standing Vice President of the Southern Mongolian Kurultai (World Southern Mongolian Congress). He came to Japan in 2000. He formed the Mongolian Freedom League Party in 2006 and became its representative. He participated in the formation of the Southern Mongolian Kurultai in 2016 and assumed the position of Standing Vice President. He continues to appeal to the world about the realities of Southern Mongolia (the so-called Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region) under Chinese oppression.

11. Media Coverage

Multiple media outlets have reported on this symposium, with articles available online. Links to each article are as follows:

"China's Hand Will Chase You to the End of the Earth": The Plight of Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, and Others Facing "Transnational Oppression" (*The Sankei Shimbun*, 26 August 2025)

<https://www.sankei.com/article/20250826-I2RKQ2XRPFA2TP6EEYBEPDVDCI/>

China's Transnational Oppression of Democracy Activists "Growing More Fierce Each Year" - Hitotsubashi University Professor Maiko Ichihara: "Japan Must Speak Out More" (*The Sankei Shimbun*, 28 August 2025)

<https://www.sankei.com/article/20250828-HXNYJIG6MRDGBOIIGVYUYY7TSQ/>

Shadow of CCP's "Transnational Oppression" Spreads to Japan: Warning Issued at International Symposium (*The Epoch Times Japan*, 9 September 2025)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBrJ-Wg20eY>