

Global Partnership

Sat. Jul 18, 2026 4:50 PM - 6:20 PM JST | Sat. Jul 18, 2026 7:50 AM - 9:20 AM UTC | Main Hall(Main Conference Hall in Kojin Kaikan)

Science Exile

Chair: Encieh Erfani(International Science Council, Fellow)

4:50 PM - 5:00 PM JST | 7:50 AM - 8:00 AM UTC

[ScwNXsLf-01] **Science in Exile: Protecting At Risk Scholars**

Dr. Encieh Erfani (Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, Canada)

Background / Context

Around the world, growing numbers of scholars are forced to leave their countries because of war, political repression, violations of academic freedom, and attacks on higher education. While international attention often focuses on humanitarian crises, the displacement of researchers receives far less attention despite its profound impact on scientific progress, education, and innovation. At the same time, universities, scientific organizations, and international networks have developed initiatives to support scholars at risk, yet many institutions remain unfamiliar with available mechanisms or the long-term challenges these scholars face after relocation.

Key Issues or Challenges

This panel explores the growing global challenge of science in exile. It addresses the risks faced by scholars under authoritarian regimes and in conflict-affected regions, the barriers encountered after displacement, and the responsibilities of universities, governments, and international organizations in protecting academic freedom. Particular attention will be given to the gap between emergency assistance and long-term academic integration.

Approach / Perspective

The panel brings together complementary perspectives from academia, international scholar protection, and civil society. Drawing on historical, institutional, and practical experiences, the discussion will examine the evolution of academic freedom, current global threats to researchers, institutional support mechanisms, and practical experiences supporting scholars forced into exile. The session will also reflect on lessons learned from international scientific organizations and initiatives working to protect displaced academics.

Key Messages

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by scholars at risk, existing international support mechanisms, and the role universities can play in protecting academic freedom. The discussion will emphasize that supporting scholars extends beyond relocation and requires sustained institutional commitment, inclusion, and international cooperation.

Implications for Science and Society

Protecting scholars at risk is essential for protecting scientific knowledge, international collaboration, and the integrity of higher education. By strengthening global partnerships and expanding institutional support, universities and scientific organizations can contribute to a more resilient, inclusive, and internationally connected research community while safeguarding academic freedom as a fundamental condition for scientific progress.