

Call for Papers: International Workshop Constitutional Recovery: The Problem of Authoritarian Holdover Appointments

Global Centre for Democratic Constitutionalism

Faculty of Laws, University College London (UCL)

25-26 June 2026, London

The Global Centre for Democratic Constitutionalism (GCDC) at UCL invites expressions of interest from scholars proposing country case studies on the problem of authoritarian holdover appointments during processes of democratic or constitutional recovery.

Selected participants will present a 5,000-word draft paper at an international workshop hosted at UCL on 25-26 June 2026, with the expectation that revised papers will be considered for inclusion in a planned edited volume with a leading university press. Travel costs and accommodation will be provided.

Project Background

This workshop forms part of an ongoing research project under the [Constitutional Recovery](#) stream of [the Global Centre for Democratic Constitutionalism \(GCDC\)](#), a research centre based at the Faculty of Laws at University College London dedicated to the study of democracy, constitutional governance, and the rule of law worldwide.

The project examines the challenges of constitutional recovery following periods of democratic backsliding, with particular focus on authoritarian holdover appointments to institutionally embedded offices.

Authoritarian holdover appointments arise where officials appointed during periods of democratic erosion remain in office after a democratic transition. These appointments may pose significant challenges for newly elected governments seeking to restore constitutional democracy.

The project focuses specifically on institutionally embedded offices—positions that are designed by law or constitutional convention to be insulated from executive control. Because such offices typically enjoy strong protections against dismissal, governments pursuing democratic recovery may face serious institutional obstacles when attempting to reform or replace authoritarian holdovers.

These situations generate complex constitutional dilemmas. While removal may be politically desirable, aggressive institutional strategies may provoke constitutional hardball and retaliatory institutional conflict, potentially undermining long-term constitutional stability.

The project is convened by [Professor Jeff King](#) (Deputy Director of the Global Centre of Democratic Constitutionalism and Professor of Law, UCL Laws) and [Professor Erin Delaney](#) (Director of the Global Centre of Democratic Constitutionalism and Leverhulme Professor of Comparative Constitutional Law, UCL Laws).

June 2026 Workshop

The research group will reconvene at **UCL Laws on 25–26 June 2026**.

This conference will build on prior engagement with legal and policy experts from Brazil, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Poland, Serbia, and South Africa. We aim to expand the comparative scope by adding **two to three new and additional country case studies** that illustrate the problem of authoritarian holdover appointments during processes of democratic or constitutional recovery.

Selected scholars will present a **5,000-word draft paper** at the workshop. These papers will then be revised over the summer of 2026 for submission to the planned edited volume with a leading university press.

Topic and case study requirements

We invite proposals for **country case studies** addressing the role of authoritarian holdover appointments during processes of constitutional recovery.

Proposed case studies should ideally:

- Analyse a country that has experienced **democratic backsliding followed by a recovery attempt**, and
- Examine how **authoritarian holdover appointments to institutionally embedded offices** created obstacles or dilemmas during that process.

Contributions should engage with the broader conceptual questions developed in the project's framework.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Hold a **full-time research-active position** at a university, research institute, think tank, or public body
- Demonstrate **national-level scholarly expertise** on the proposed country case
- Have a **credible record of research publications**

Competence in English is required, although **language editing assistance can be provided**.

Funding

Successful applicants will receive **full funding for participation**, including travel and accommodation. The project team is also prepared to coordinate travel arrangements for participants who wish to attend the International Society of Public Law Annual Conference (ICON-S) in Dublin the following week.

Application Process

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Interested scholars should submit an expression of interest by email including:

1. Cover email
 - Briefly outlining your interest in the project
 - Confirming that participation in the June 2026 workshop is feasible
2. One-page case study outline
 - The proposed country-case
 - Why the case is relevant to the project
 - Your expertise on the topic
3. Short academic CV

Expression of interest deadline: 10 April 2026

Stage 2: Shortlisted Applications

- A shortlist will be drawn from the expressions of interest.
- Shortlisted applicants will receive further information about the project framework and will be invited to submit a follow-up proposal on a quick turnaround.

The selection process will be concluded by the end of April.

Contact

Expressions of interest should be sent to Dr Natalia Morales Cerda (natalia.morales.21@ucl.ac.uk). Please indicate “**AHA Workshop 2026 – Expression of Interest**” in the subject line.