

CALL FOR PAPERS

BRI in the Shadow of Covid19: Central Asian Perspectives

2, 9, 16, 23, 30 June 2021, 1-4pm (GMT) on Zoom

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was launched in Central Asia (Kazakhstan). It is heralded as one of the biggest investment and infrastructure projects the globe has ever seen. After more than seven years, this conference simply asks: what impact has BRI had on Central Asia and, most recently, how has Covid-19 affected this?

This online conference jointly organised by University of Westminster and Westminster International University in Tashkent will provide a forum to explore the economic, political, linguistic and cultural issues, challenges and responses to the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia. It aims to bring together academics, policy makers, and members of the general public to share the newest research on the Belt Road Initiative in the context of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Taking Central Asia—a key part of the ancient Eurasian Silk Road and the place where Xi Jinping formally launched BRI in 2013—as empirical focus, the conference examines impacts of the BRI in the areas of trade, investment, migration and Chinese education in Central Asia. Furthermore, we will investigate how the Covid-19 outbreak has challenged the goals of BRI. We ask what new issues arise in Central Asia from this unprecedented situation, such as the dilemma between national and international cooperation, the question of border and trust, the im/possibility of capital, social and cultural movement, economic development and wellbeing, and so on.

We welcome contributions exploring any aspect of the challenges and responses related to the issues outlined above. Please send your **proposals** to briuzbekistan@gmail.com by **15 January 2021**. Please use "BRI Conference" as the subject of your email. Submissions should include an extended abstract (500 words), all authors' full names, their affiliations, and contact details. Please also direct any questions about this call for papers to the same address.

Full papers will be required by **15 April 2021**.

Following the conference, we are planning to publish a special issue or edited volume of selected papers. More details to follow.

The conference is part of a joint research project between the [University of Westminster](http://www.westminster.ac.uk) and [Westminster International University in Tashkent](http://www.westminster-tashkent.com).

Organising Committee:

Gerda Wielander (UoW), Karen Jackson (UoW), Cangbai Wang (UoW)

Bakhrom Mirkasimov (WIUT), Nozima Yusupova (WIUT), Khamid Inomkhodjaev (WIUT)