

DeZIM-Fellow Lecture

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## **Refugees' Right to Work – Why so Elusive?**

26 September 2019, 5 to 7 pm

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB)  
Berlin Social Science Center  
– Raum B 002/003 –  
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Article 23(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that ‘Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.’ In international human rights law, and many national constitutions, the right to work, just and decent conditions of work and free choice of employment are effectively merged. This talk examines the protection afforded to this ‘merged’ right to work in international human rights law, with particular reference to the position of asylum seekers and refugees. Taking this strong normative backdrop into account, as well as relevant empirical studies, the widespread prohibitions on and barriers to refugees and asylum-seekers working will be problematized. A selection of attempts by refugees and asylum seekers to claim the right to work will also be examined, through case studies on strategic litigation on work rights, in selected states within Europe and beyond. In contrast to these efforts 'from below', the talk also considers attempts to leverage work opportunities for refugees, in light of the increasing attention on refugee self-reliance in the Global Compact on Refugees, and other state led initiatives to leverage work rights, such as the Jordan Compact and EU-Turkey cooperation, which will be cast as both an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the right to work and a threat to access to decent work.

To register for the event, please e-mail [katrin.ludwig@wzb.eu](mailto:katrin.ludwig@wzb.eu) by September 19, 2019 at the latest.

This lecture is part of the [DeZIM Kolleg](#) project, coordinated by the [Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies \(IMIS\)](#), University of Osnabrück for the [German Center for Integration and Migration Research – DeZIM Research Community](#).