dean Salehyan, assistant professor of political science at University of North Texas, and Cullen Hendrix, assistant professor of international relations at College of William & Mary, will present "A House Divided: Threat Perception, Regime Factionalism and Repression in Africa" on Monday, March 4 at 3 p.m. at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies.

Why do governments in Africa repress certain contentious challenges but not others? This presentation adopts a blended approach to studying repression by taking seriously both the characteristics of contentious events as well as the nature of the regime in power. Salehyan and Hendrix will argue that the more threatening a movement is – as measured by the use of violence, opposition demands and targets – the more likely the state is to use repressive force. They will also, however, relax the assumption that the state is a unitary actor, and allow for the preferences of state leaders and of the security forces to diverge when it comes to carrying out repressive policies.

Countries with a history of factionalism in their security forces face an additional challenge: orders to crack down on protestors, rioters, strikers, etc., may not be followed, or could even cause police and military forces to defect. Salehyan and Hendrix will argue that this potential is greatest when the challenge has ethnoreligious aims, and will test these propositions using the Social Conflict in Africa Database, finding significant support for their core theoretical conjecture: regimes with a history of part military factionalism are generally less likely to use repression. Such regimes are especially unwilling to repress ethnoreligiously based, ascriptive movements. These findings demonstrate the benefits of a blended, event-based approach to studying state repression.

To register for this event, please RSVP by Saturday, March 2. For more information or to ask any questions or concerns, please contact Ann Powers.
Idean Salehyan

Idean Salehyan is assistant professor of political science at University of North Texas. He is also affiliated with the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at University of Texas at Austin, the John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies at Southern Methodist University and the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway. His research interests include civil and international conflict, forced migration and the relationship between natural resources and armed conflict.

He is the author of Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics (Cornell University Press, 2009). In addition, he has published numerous articles in journals such as the American Journal of Political Science, International Organization, the Journal of Conflict Resolution, the Journal of Peace Research, the Journal of Politics, and World Politics. Currently, he is part of a research project which examines the relationship between climate change, resource scarcity and political unrest in Africa.

He holds a PhD in political science from University of California, San Diego.

Cullen Hendrix

Cullen Hendrix is assistant professor of international relations at the College of William & Mary. He has research affiliations with the Centre for the Study of Civil War at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at University of Texas at Austin and the Peterson Institute for International Economics. He is a data-driven educator and researcher with interests in the global security and economic implications of climate change, civil conflict, food security and non-state actors in international politics.

Currently, he is working on Natural Resources and Development, a book project with Marcus Noland, Peterson Institute for International Economics. He is author of several articles in journals such as the Journal of Peace Research, the British Journal of Political Science, Political Geography and Biological Reviews.

He holds a PhD in political science from the University of California, San Diego.