

COALITION CALENDAR

REGISTER NOW! October 23-25: Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

The Coalition's tenth anniversary conference will be held in Washington, DC, at AAAS headquarters. Join us for three days of engaging sessions with human rights leaders, academic researchers, scientists and engineers, members of impacted and vulnerable communities, and much more.

- Keynote speaker Alfred Brownell, a 2019 recipient of the Goldman Environmental Award (often referred to as the "Green Nobel Peace Prize") will share his insights on the impact of scientists on human rights from his work in Liberia defending the environment.
- Sessions and workshops topics include advocacy at the United Nations, measuring academic freedom, AI and human rights, and the role of scientists and engineers in human rights advocacy in Latin America, India, and West Africa.
- The inaugural Science and Human Rights Innovator recognition will be presented.
- Receptions, networking sessions, and more opportunities to connect with colleagues across scientific disciplines and meet practitioners from human rights organizations.

Register today! [Learn more »](#)

Webinar: Scientific Collaborations with Human Rights Organizations

On October 17, the Coalition's Scientific Collaborations with Human Rights Organizations Project Team hosted its fourth webinar of its [2019 series](#). Anne Sprinkel, Program Director of Tipping Point at [CARE](#), a global nonprofit dedicated to ending poverty worldwide, discussed the role of scientific collaboration in their work regarding [Tipping Point](#). The recorded webinar is available [here](#).

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

AAG Calls for Support for Uyghur Scholar and Geographer

The American Association of Geographers (AAG) has issued an [open letter](#) to Chinese President Xi Jinping demanding more information and the release of Tashpolat Tiyp, a geographer and former President of Xinjiang University in Ürümqi, China, who disappeared in 2017 and who reportedly was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve, now nearing its end, for crimes related to alleged separatism. His disappearance is part of larger crackdown by the Chinese government on mostly-Muslim minorities, including the Uyghur ethnic group, and was highlighted in a recent [article](#) in *Science*. The letter from AAG is signed by more than 1,300 geographers and academics from more than 400 institutions. In an [op-ed](#) in the *Los Angeles Times*, AAG Executive Director Gary Langham urged the US government to demand accountability from China on this case. Other groups such as [Amnesty International](#) and [Scholars at Risk](#) are also calling for support.

ASA Updates Case of Former Head of the Greek National Statistics Office

The American Statistical Association (ASA) has [posted](#) an update to what has now become an eight-year case involving Andreas Georgiou, former head of the Greek national statistics office, the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), who was charged with falsification of Greece's official deficit and debt statistic; an action that was widely condemned with official statements of protest from the ASA and International Statistical Institute. The ASA notes that persecution of Georgiou continues today, with two criminal investigations still open and an appeals court date to consider a 2017 civil court decision that found him liable for slander set for January 2020. The ASA notes that observers of the situation have raised concerns a change

in leadership in Greece, through the election of new prime minister and ruling party, may lead to renewed persecution of Georgiou.

CALLS FOR INPUT

UN Seeks Input on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation

On October 22, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation will hold the first in a series of three [consultations](#) on the meaning of progressive realization in the context of the human right to water and sanitation. More background is available [here](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Oct. 31: Call for Papers: Human Rights and Climate Change

UCLA's Promise Institute for Human Rights, Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, and the Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs will host a day-long conference at the UCLA School of Law on Friday, February 28, 2020, and has issued a call for papers for the conference. The deadline for abstracts is October 31, 2019. Please direct questions to jilfa@lawnet.ucla.edu.

Nov 1: Applications for Doctorial Consortium on Fairness, Accountability, Transparency

As part of the [Association for Computing Machinery's Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency](#) (ACM FAT*), the ACM is [inviting](#) PhD students in all disciplines, including computer science, statistics, law, social sciences, the humanities, and education, to apply for the FAT* Doctoral Consortium (DC), which will be held January 27, 2020 in Barcelona. The FAT* DC offers PhD students doing research on fairness, accountability and transparency in relation to socio-technical systems with an opportunity to engage in substantive interaction with experienced researchers regarding their proposed dissertation research and career objectives. Applications are due November 1.

Nov. 1: Open Source Investigation Course

The University of California Berkeley Human Rights Center and the Institute for International Criminal Investigation (IICI) have partnered to offer a new [course in open source investigation](#). This course brings together trainers working at the cutting edge of technology, law and fact-finding to cover topics such as privacy and data-protection regimes, security and risk assessments, and advanced search and monitoring techniques and tools. The course begins December 9 in The Hague, The Netherlands. Applications are due November 1.

Nov. 12: An Update on Strengthening Forensic Science in the US: A Decade of Development

AAAS will hold on November 12 at AAAS headquarters in Washington, DC, a one-day conference commemorating the tenth anniversary of the pathbreaking report, "[Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward](#)" that challenged the way forensic science is conducted and the way it is presented in the courts. [Register now »](#)

Opportunity: Student Advocacy Seminars (Scholars at Risk)

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is offering Student Advocacy Seminars to provide university and college students with the opportunity to develop human rights research and advocacy skills through direct engagement on behalf of threatened members of the global higher education community in cooperation with SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project and Scholars in Prison Project. Student Advocacy Seminars are available to all SAR member institutions. SAR and Student Advocacy Coordinators at Roger Williams University assist faculty members and students to create an opportunity that fits their curricular needs and interests. Further information may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

Bill Introduced in Congress Addresses Due Process Concerns in Forensic Algorithms

Last month, US Congressman Mark Takano (D–CA) [introduced](#) legislation that would make it easier for defendants facing federal criminal charges to gain access to forensic algorithms and to further require the makers of computational forensic software to meet minimum standards set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The proposed legislation seeks to address concerns in due process relating to the increasingly use of probabilistic genotyping software, which is used to estimate the likelihood that a suspect's DNA matches DNA at a crime scene.

Forensic Anthropologists Investigate Possible Mass Graves in 1921 Racial Massacre

Scientists and forensic anthropologists began [investigating](#) sites in Tulsa, Oklahoma earlier this month for evidence that victims of a 1921 race massacre were buried in mass graves. The process is being led by the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, based at the University of Oklahoma, through the use of ground-penetrating radar at four identified sites: Oaklawn Cemetery, Newblock Park, an additional area near Newblock Park, and Rolling Oaks Memorial Gardens. The results from the scanning phase are expected to be completed and presented at a public oversight meeting in December or January.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Human Rights Head Highlights Climate Change in Human Rights Priorities

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet [spoke](#) earlier this month before the UN Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), which held a [series of dialogues](#) with UN experts on human rights topics ranging from the rights of migrants and safety of journalists, to the prevention of torture and assessing the work of treaty bodies tasked with monitoring state behavior. Bachelet spoke of both the progress and setbacks in human rights worldwide. Among the issues she highlighted was assisting countries in mitigating the effects of global warming by helping them implement climate-change adaptation strategies with human rights-based policies. In August, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [signed](#) a new cooperation agreement to protect environmental and human rights. Bachelet also highlighted that in 2020, the human rights treaty body review will take place, a benchmark of a six-year reform agenda to strengthen and enhance the human rights treaty body system.

Recent Research Highlights Scientific and Ethical Concerns in Genetic Data Collection

A recent [study](#) published in *Nature Genetics* highlights ethical and scientific challenges in the clinical implementation of polygenic risk scores, which predict complex traits on the basis of genetic data. The study showed that the lack of genetic information on certain populations reduced the accuracy of polygenic risk assessments in both Asian and black populations by two and five times, respectively. The study [raises](#) larger issue of the ethics of collecting genetic data and Eurocentric biases in genome-wide association studies.

Turkish Food Engineer and Human Rights Activist Jailed for Publishing Study

A Turkish food engineer and human rights activist was [sentenced](#) last month to 15 months in jail after publishing the results of a study he and other scientists had done that linked toxic pollution to a high incidence of cancer in western Turkey. Bülent Şık, former Deputy Director of the Food Safety and Agricultural Research Center at Akdeniz University, was convicted of disclosing classified information after he published the results as a four-part series in a Turkish newspaper in April 2018. Şık, who lost his university position in 2016 after signing a petition calling for peace between Turkish forces and Kurdish militants in southeast Turkey, remains free pending an appeal.

US Bans Chinese AI Companies for Human Rights Violations

Earlier this month, the US government [banned](#) several [Chinese companies](#) that work on artificial intelligence

(AI) from doing business with US firms, saying the companies had been implicated in human rights violations against Uyghurs and other members of Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang, China. Four of the companies, SenseTime, Megvii, iFLYTEK, and Yitu, make software for facial recognition and voice transcription, and the other companies, Hikvision and Dahua Technology, make surveillance equipment such as cameras that incorporates AI. The companies were among 28 Chinese governmental and commercial organizations [added](#) to the US Department of Commerce's Entity List for engaging in or enabling activities contrary to the foreign policy interests of US.

UN Raises Dialogue on Bioethics and Human Rights

The [UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics \(UNIACB\)](#) held this month Global Ethics and Bioethics Week (GEBW) to address critical issues around bioethics and to facilitate dialogue and awareness between participants from multiple and diverse backgrounds and sectors. The GEBW, which was held October 14 to October 18, addressed the important role of bioethics and ethical reflection in research and technological applications to promote human well-being and respect for human rights. A series of videos examining different issues can be found [here](#).

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

New Reports Examines the Human Rights Implications of Global Surrogacy

The International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School has published a [report](#), the *Human Rights Implications of Global Surrogacy*, and submitted it to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report aims to advance an understanding of the human rights impact of laws, policies and practices around surrogacy and considers the practice of surrogacy at a global level, as well as in the domestic country context, using Cambodia as a case study. The report examines the intersections between women's rights, gender equality, and the rights of children and intended parent(s) and shows both the ways that surrogacy can protect and promote the rights of those involved in the practice, as well as the ways that surrogacy can threaten the rights of those same parties.

Scholars at Risk Issues New Report on Academic Freedom and China

Scholars at Risk (SAR) has issued a new [report](#), *Obstacles to Excellence: Academic Freedom and China's Quest for World Class Universities*, highlighting threats to academic freedom that jeopardize China's higher education ambitions. The report draws on academic literature, legislative and regulatory texts, media, human rights reports, interviews with Chinese and foreign experts, and data from SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project to identify pressures and threats to academic freedom in China and where China has extraterritorial academic connections.

Journal Publishes Special Issue on Psychology and Human Rights

The *European Psychologist*, the official journal of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA)—has granted free access to its current [special issue](#) focusing on psychology and human rights.

The Right to Science Examined in International Environmental Law

An [upcoming article](#) in the *European Journal of International Law* explores the potential contribution of international human rights law, specifically the right to science, to the interpretation, operation, and progressive development of international environmental law.

PEOPLE

New Leadership at the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)

Marty Zaslow, SRCD's representative to the Coalition Council and a key advisor on the Coalition's 2013 meeting on children's rights, has retired. SRCD's new Policy Director is Kelly Fisher. Dr. Fisher previously served as the

Executive Director of the Science of Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins University. While at the Institute, she worked to foster innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to translating science into evidence-informed policies and practices. Dr. Fisher is a former SRCD U.S. Executive Branch Policy Fellow and she served as the Vice President and Director of Research for the Global Abilities Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps individuals with disabilities become independent, productive members of society.

Mary Gray Named Distinguished Professor

American Statistical Association (ASA) representative Mary Gray has been promoted to Distinguished Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at American University. A statistician and lawyer, her areas of research include applications of statistics to human rights, economic equity, legal issues, and education. She is the founder of the Association for Women in Mathematics, a fellow of the ASA and AAAS, and is a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Engineering and Mathematics Mentoring as well as honorary degrees from three institutions. The author of two books and over eighty articles, she has lectured throughout the United States, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Professor Gray serves as the chair of the Board of Directors of AMIDEAST and is a member of Statistics without Borders.

Publisher: AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program

Editor: Patricia Van Arnum

Associate Editor: Mary Cate Carroll

Contributors: Joel Ericson, Theresa Harris, Nate Weisenberg, Jessica Wyndham