
Note: AAAS continues to monitor the developments related to COVID-19. All staff based at AAAS headquarters are working from home until at least June 22. AAAS conference facilities are closed, and all meetings through July 1 are canceled, postponed, or held remotely. The Coalition Secretariat will advise members of any future changes to the Coalition's calendar. Stay safe and well!

COALITION CALENDAR

May 28: Student Essay Competition

Know an undergraduate or graduate student passionate about science and human rights? The Coalition's annual Student Essay Competition deadline has been extended to May 28. Winners will receive a year of membership in AAAS and a one-year subscription to *Science*. To learn more, visit <https://www.aaas.org/shr2020essay> and check out the [Rules and Regulations](#).

October 22-23: Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

The Coalition's annual conference is going virtual! All sessions will be held online, including keynote speakers, panels, workshops, and "ask me anything" sessions. More details will be announced in the coming weeks.

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

COVID-19 Resources

The Coalition Secretariat continues to update the COVID-19 and human rights [resources page](#) on the Coalition website. In response to feedback from Coalition members, we will soon publish a series of video interviews with experts responding to frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and its human rights implications. AAAS has [also compiled](#) coverage from the *Science* family of journals, science policy updates, human rights resources from the Coalition, and more to support everyone addressing the many social challenges arising from the pandemic.

Coalition Work on the Right to Science Highlighted

Jessica Wyndham, Director of the AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program, participated in a recent [webinar](#), "The Right to Science and Why it Matters," hosted by [Science for Democracy](#), a group that promotes the right to science through dialogue with the scientific community and decision-makers at the national, regional and international levels. AAAS is working closely with scientific and human rights organizations to implement the human right to science that the UN recently defined through a process that articulates the right's scope and serves as a tool to monitor its implementation.

The webinar examined the March 6 adoption by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of General Comment No. 25, an authoritative interpretation of the right to science as laid out in Article 15 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and first recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Webinar on COVID-19 Ethics and Care

To offer perspective on the ethics behind COVID-19 care, Case Western Reserve University's Science and Human Rights Coalition co-hosted a webinar with the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization. Watch the [recording here](#).

CALLS FOR INPUT

May 29: UN Questionnaire on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation is [seeking input](#) on a questionnaire on various issues concerning the ways in which different types of services are delivered and the extent to which governments oversee these services as a means to evaluate the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Online Course by Scholars at Risk: Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters

Scholars at Risk, an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom, is holding an online course, *Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters*. Further information, including how to register and start dates, may be found [here](#).

May 2020: Call for Suggestions: GeOnG Forum on Humanitarian and Development Data

CartONG, a non-governmental organization specialized in information management, has launched an Open Call for Suggestions for the [GeOnG Forum](#) on Humanitarian and Development Data, which will take place from November 2 to 4, 2020 in Chambéry, France. Held every two years, GeOnG is dedicated to addressing issues related to data in the humanitarian and development sectors, including topics related to mapping, GIS, data collection and information management. The Open Call for Suggestions will remain open until the end of May 2020.

June 8: Scholars at Risk Europe's Inspireurope 2020 Virtual Stakeholder Forum

Scholars at Risk Europe, hosted by Maynooth University in Ireland, is holding a virtual stakeholder forum, Inspireurope 2020, on June 8. The event aims to facilitate exchange between key actors in research and innovation in Europe, including individual researchers, higher education networks, research funding agencies, and policy makers, to explore the challenges and opportunities in Europe for researchers at risk, including the implications of the global health pandemic on the lives and work of researchers at risk. Information on how to register and access the program may be found [here](#).

June 30: Nominations for 2021 AAAS Award for Scientific Freedom and Responsibility

AAAS is [accepting nominations](#) for the AAAS Award for Scientific Freedom and Responsibility, which honors scientists, engineers, and their organizations whose exemplary actions have demonstrated scientific freedom and/or responsibility in challenging circumstances. The types of actions worthy of this award include: acting to protect the public's health, safety or welfare; focusing public attention on important potential impacts of science and technology on society by their responsible participation in public policy debates; or providing an exemplary model in carrying out the social responsibilities of scientists and engineers or in defending the professional freedom of scientists and engineers. Nominations are due June 30.

July 1: Nominations for Edward O'Brien Human Rights Education Awards

Human Rights Educators USA (HRE USA) is now accepting nominations for the Edward O'Brien Human Rights Education Awards. The awards are bestowed annually on one individual and one organization who have made significant contributions to human rights education in the United States. Any member of HRE USA or its organizational affiliates can submit a nomination. More information is [available here](#).

Job: June 1: Program Manager for Natural Resources and Human Rights

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, an international non-profit organization tracking the human rights impacts of over 9,000 companies worldwide, is [seeking](#) a Program Manager to help implement and expand its work on responsible use of natural resources and climate justice. The successful candidate will lead on several projects to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy by advancing human rights in the renewable energy and broader natural resources sector. Applications are due June 1.

Opportunity: Scholars at Risk's Practitioners at Risk Program

[Scholars at Risk](#) (SAR) is seeking to establish a new program to explore increased on-campus support for practitioners at risk. SAR's work arranging temporary positions for at-risk individuals focuses on university scholars and researchers but has always included a wide range of others targeted for their ideas, including journalists, writers, democracy/human rights advocates, lawyers, and artists. Information about this new "practitioners at risk" program is outlined [in this flyer](#), which describes the developing affinity group of individuals interested in supporting practitioners at risk, including through inviting them for short visits on campus. Among other activities, affinity group members may provide advice and pose questions about supporting practitioners at risk; seek review of candidates for positions on their campus; nominate candidates for any available temporary positions elsewhere; and apply for co-funding for temporary positions, whenever such funds might be available. SAR has initiated a listserv for all group members. To join the affinity group and listserv, fill out [this survey](#).

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

Senators Seek Info on Amazon Employee Firings and COVID-19 Safety and Health Protection

A recent [article](#) in *The Guardian* outlines several employee firings by Amazon shortly after the employees protested and advocated for safer COVID-19 protections in the workplace. Two corporate employees and at least four warehouse workers were fired. Nine U.S. senators, including Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), wrote a [letter](#) to Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, to seek information on four of these firings with a reply requested by May 20, 2020. In a [company blog](#) post on May 22, 2020, Amazon highlighted measures it has taken to ensure safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

US Lawmakers, Privacy Rights Groups Address Technology for COVID-19 Contact Tracing

The American Civil Liberties Union has released a [set of principles](#) to inform federal, state, and local policies and procedures governing the use of Bluetooth-enabled contact tracing technologies for COVID-19 and has issued white papers on government safeguards for technology-assisted contact tracing and general technology principles for contact tracing. The guidelines follow the announcement last month by Apple and Google of a partnership to develop opt-in contact tracing technology for COVID-19. Earlier this month, the companies [launched](#) the digital technology, Exposure Notifications, to enable public health agencies to incorporate the application programming interface into their apps that can be used for contact tracing. The companies said that they worked with public health officials, scientists, privacy groups, and government leaders to get their input and guidance and incorporated privacy protections into the technology. A recent [article](#) examines input by US lawmakers and others on how they will be monitoring privacy rights concerns in COVID-19 contact tracing.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Secretary-General Stresses Science in Initiative to Address COVID-19 Misinformation

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has [launched](#) a new initiative, Verified, to create a cadre of “digital first responders” to increase the volume and reach of trusted, accurate information surrounding the novel coronavirus. “Misinformation spreads online, in messaging apps and person to person. Its creators use savvy production and distribution methods. To counter it, scientists and institutions like the United Nations need to reach people with accurate information they can trust,” he said in a May 21, 2020 statement. Under Verified, information will be provided around three themes: science – to save lives; solidarity – to promote local and global cooperation; and solutions – to advocate for support for populations that have been impacted by COVID-19. The initiative will also promote recovery packages that tackle the climate crisis and address the root causes of poverty, inequality, and hunger. Verified will partner with UN agencies and others, including influencers, civil society, and business and media organizations, to distribute trusted, accurate content while also working with social media platforms to root out hate and harmful information about COVID-19.

UN Human Rights High Commissioner Highlights Risks When Removing COVID-19 Lockdowns

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet [warned](#) of potential risks as more countries move to lift lockdown measures put in place to contain COVID-19 spread. “Balancing the economic imperatives with the health and human rights imperatives during the COVID-19 pandemic is going to be one of the most delicate, daunting and defining experiences for all leaders and all governments,” she said in a May 14 statement. She pointed to the need for governments to consult with citizens in decisions that affect their lives, including how to lift emergency measures. She further stressed the need for authorities to ensure safe transportation and workplace standards for employees when they return to their jobs and the need to have access to safety measures, such as masks, sanitizers, and shielding materials.

UK Parliamentary Committee Seeks Human Rights Protection in COVID-19 Contact Tracing

The Joint Committee on Human Rights of the UK Parliament has published a [report](#) on the UK’s contact tracing app for COVID-19 to raise concerns regarding surveillance and the impact on other human rights. The report is part of a broader review, launched last month by the Committee, into the UK government’s response to COVID-19’s human rights implications. The report outlines the key actions the UK government must take to ensure that the app respects human rights, including the right to privacy and non-discrimination, while enabling individuals to move around more freely and helping to prevent the spread of the virus. The Committee also [has drafted and presented a bill](#) to protect the personal privacy of data gathered by the COVID-19 contact tracing app and is calling on the UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to adopt it as a government bill and bring it to the UK Parliament.

UN Expert Highlights Increased Risks of Modern-Day Slavery Due to COVID-19

Tomoya Obokata, the UN Special Rapporteur on the contemporary forms of slavery, is [urging](#) governments to step up anti-slavery efforts and protect the most vulnerable amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Obokata warns that “[t]he severe socio-economic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase the scourge of modern-day slavery.” He points out that the financial downturn caused by COVID-19 is strongly felt for those working in the informal economy, day laborers, non-contract workers, temporary employees, and all those without social protection coverage. He added that a lack of governmental support will, in particular, increase exploitative labor among women, migrants, and children. As Special Rapporteur for the next three years, Obokata says he will explore a range of thematic issues, including increased risks of contemporary forms of slavery linked to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

Human Rights Experts Examine COVID-19 Powers Used in Uganda Against LGBT Persons

UN human rights experts issued a [statement](#) to raise concerns that Uganda may be using the enforcement of COVID-19 protocols to target the LGBT community in that country. They reported on a government raid in

March of a shelter in Kyengera and the arrest of 19 people perceived to be members of the LGBT community. The UN experts raised concerns in this case of the government using its COVID-19 emergency powers for other purposes, such as targeting particular groups. They also highlighted concerns that the detainees in this case allegedly have no access to their lawyer due to the COVID-19 measures and are being exposed to a greater risk of violence and discrimination because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The UN experts called on Uganda to include the detainees in the planned release of about 2,000 inmates being made to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 cases in prisons.

Facebook Releases Human Rights Assessments in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia

Facebook [has released](#) the findings of three independent human rights impact assessments it commissioned in 2018 to evaluate the role of its services in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia, along with details on how the company responded to the recommendations in each assessment. The company commissioned the assessment following the use of its platform and services by certain groups to promote violence and discord in those countries. The company said the assessments examine the role its services play not only in promoting public discourse and civic and political engagement, but also in raising human rights issues and abuses. A recent [article](#) from Bloomberg further examines the company's role and actions taken with respect to human rights issues.

Roma Minority Groups in Europe Impacted Differentially by COVID-19

A recent [article](#) in *The Guardian* examines the impact of COVID-19 on Europe's largest minority, the Roma people, which have been affected by higher infection rates due to pre-existing health risks associated with poverty, overcrowded living conditions, limited access to running water, and the difficulty, because of these conditions, to follow recommended social distancing protocols. A recent Reuters [report](#) further highlights enforcement measures, such as checkpoints, used against the Roma people by authorities in COVID-19-related actions.

Research Examines Impact of Metals Mining and Birth Defects in Africa

Research recently published in *The Lancet* found that people who work in copper and cobalt mining areas in regions spanning from Zambia to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are at "significant risk" of having children born with serious birth defects. Researchers from the University of Lubumbashi in the DRC and the University of Leuven and Ghent University in Belgium examined possible contribution of parental and antenatal exposure to trace metals to the occurrence of visible birth defects among neonates. Dr Daan Van Brusselen, a pediatrician at Ghent University who worked on the study, [noted](#) that this is the first study that investigates the effects of mining on newborns in Sub-Saharan Africa. The research raises broader issues on mining and ethical sourcing practices. The impact of metals mining on children is the subject of a recent [lawsuit](#) filed in the US by the Washington D.C.-based human rights firm, International Rights Advocates, on behalf of 14 parents and children who claim that technology companies that use metals in their products exposed children in mines to dangerous working conditions.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Proceedings Examining Human Rights and Digital Technologies Issued

The Committee on Human Rights of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has issued *Human Rights and Digital Technologies: Proceedings of a Symposium of Scholars and Practitioners - in Brief*, which offered input from experts in the fields of human rights and digital technology who examined the challenges and ways of leveraging digital innovations in a manner that protects internationally recognized human rights. A written summary of those proceedings may be found [here](#) and a video of the proceedings [here](#).

ISHR Launches Bilingual Explainer on Rights of Workers Exposed to Toxic Substances

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), an independent, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, has published a bilingual (English and Chinese) [guide](#) on the rights of workers exposed to toxic substances to explain the 15 principles developed by the UN on human rights and hazardous substances.

Protecting Rights of Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People in Wake of COVID-19

The Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility at The New School, Columbia University's Program on Forced Migration and Health, and Cornell Law School's Migration and Human Rights Program have issued a [set of principles](#), *Human Mobility and Human Rights in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Principles of Protection for Migrants, Refugees, and Other Displaced Persons*, to inform and guide state action, to assist international organizations, and to provide a basis for advocacy and education. Additional details may also be found [here](#).

UN, African Union Offer Action Items To Protect Women's Rights in Wake of COVID-19

In response to the rise of COVID-19 in Africa, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the African Union's Commission on Women, Gender & Development have issued an [information sheet](#), *7 Possible Actions: Women's Rights and COVID-19*. The information sheet provides guidance on possible actions that could be taken to reduce the risk of women and girls being left behind as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, minimize the impact of measures on women, recognize the critical role of women in response and prevention efforts, and ensure gender analysis informs government actions and responses. This information sheet also outlines states' human rights obligations in addressing the impact of COVID-19 at the national level.

Guidance for Protecting Prisoners' Rights in Medical Isolation from COVID-19 Issued

The Amend program at the University of California at San Francisco, which seeks to transform correctional culture inside prisons and jails and reduce the debilitating health effects of those environments, has issued a [policy brief](#) to provide guidance to departments of correction, prison and jail residents, advocates, and other key stakeholders to help ensure that using medical isolation or quarantine to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in correctional facilities follows standards of medical ethics.

PEOPLE

In Memoriam: Mark Frezzo

Dr. Mark V. Frezzo passed away on May 11, 2020. An Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Mississippi, Frezzo was a leading scholar in the sociology of human rights. His critical thinking and enthusiastic approach to science and human rights are well known to many within the Coalition, for which he served as a member of the Council and Steering Committee. Jessica Wyndham, Coalition Coordinator, says of Frezzo, "Mark embodied the Coalition's vision for a future in which individual scientists, personally committed to human rights, engage their discipline in the pursuit of human rights for all, and invest in the next generation of young scientists who will carry the mantle. He will be missed." Dr. Brian Gran, Frezzo's frequent co-author and co-founder of the American Sociological Association (ASA) Section on the Sociology of Human Rights, shares these reflections:

"Mark was a brilliant scholar. He was a good, generous person who cared about other people and their well-being. Mark had a dry sense of humor that often revealed ironies of what we do and about our world. More than once, while winding up a meeting, he would make an observation that was spot on and hilarious. Mark was committed to scholarship and practice of the human right to science and cared a great deal about the work of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition."

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to the ASA Section on the Sociology of Human Rights. His family has provided more information at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/san-jose-ca/mark-frezzo-9180688>.

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