
Note: AAAS continues to monitor the developments related to COVID-19. All staff based at AAAS headquarters are working from home until at least July 31. AAAS conference facilities are closed, and all meetings through December 31 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

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

Coalition Member Organizations Speak Out on Murder of George Floyd & Systemic Racism

Members of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition have made public statements expressing horror and sadness at the killing of George Floyd and so many others before him, condemning systemic racism, reaffirming their commitment to diversity and inclusion in the sciences and recognizing that we still have a long way to go, calling for the application of science to redress historic inequalities, emphasizing advocacy for marginalized groups, and acknowledging the responsibility of citizen-scholars to bring data-driven evidence to the oversight of law enforcement and criminal justice. Links to the statements are below.

- [Acoustical Society of America](#)
- [American Anthropological Association](#)
- [American Association of Geographers](#)
- [American Chemical Society](#)
- [American Educational Research Association](#)
- [American Mathematical Society](#)
- [American Philosophical Association](#)
- [American Physical Society](#)
- [American Political Science Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [American Sociological Association](#)
- [American Statistical Association](#)
- [Council on Undergraduate Research](#)
- [Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice](#)
- [Linguistic Society of America](#)
- [Sigma Xi: The Scientific Research Honor Society](#)
- [Society for Research in Child Development](#)
- [The Society for the Study of Social Problems](#)
- [Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences](#)
- [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#)

If you are a member of a Coalition member organization and do not see your association's statement included here, please let us know and we will add it to the list. On Wednesday, June 10, [AAAS](#) and numerous Coalition organizations also participated in [#ShutDownSTEM](#), a day to commit to action to eradicate anti-Black racism in STEM and academia. For more information, visit [shutdownstem.com](#).

Recommended Resources from Past Coalition Meetings

If you are looking for ways to learn more about the connections between STEM and racism in the USA, in addition to the list at [shutdownstem.com](#), the following videos from past [AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition](#) conferences are available online. (Note: you may have to scroll down to find the videos).

- Dr. Shirley Malcom on systemic racism and bias in STEM, and evidence-based ways for dismantling those institutional structures: [Higher Education and Human Rights Symposium](#)
- Dr. Marcia Chatelain on how Georgetown University acknowledged its role in the slave trade and moved toward reparations, and the work still to be done: [Higher Education and Human Rights Symposium](#)
- Dr. Robert Bullard on the disparate impacts of climate change on Black communities: [Science and Human Rights Coalition Meeting: Climate Change and Human Rights](#)
- Dr. Juan Gilbert on computer science research to address community needs and on supporting Black students and professionals in computer science: [AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Meeting: Human Rights in STEM Education](#)
- Dr. Sacoby Wilson on the role of community-led scientific research in addressing systemic harms to Black communities: [Science and Human Rights Coalition Meeting: The Human Right to Water](#)

Updates to COVID-19 Resources

The first of a series of interviews with experts on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic is now available [on the Coalition's website](#). These video clips include Francella Ochillo, who was a featured speaker at the 2019 AAAS Science, Technology, and Human Rights Conference, on how the pandemic's disparities reveal broader societal issues such as lack of broadband access; Dr. Ranit Mishori of Physicians for Human Rights on health professionals' human rights; and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on counterterrorism and human rights, on challenges to democratic institutions and what scientists can do about them. To watch the videos and browse other resources, please visit the COVID-19 and human rights [resources page](#) on the Coalition website.

American Statistical Association Releases Statement on Government Data Experts

The American Statistical Association released a [statement](#) to US state governors and public health officials on the role of data experts in state and local governments during the COVID-19 pandemic. "To make good decisions, policymakers need timely, accurate, and clear reports based on the best available data and science," said the statement. "Professionals in statistics, data science, epidemiology, and other fields are ideally suited to produce accurate and objective information to fuel evidence-based decision-making."

Global Alliance Resolution Against Conversion Therapy, Film Screening, and Panel Discussion

Coalition member Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice published a resolution supporting legislation that protects LGBTQ+ children, adolescents and young adults from being subject to conversion therapy by licensed professionals. The resolution is available [here](#). On June 25, the Alliance will host a screening of the documentary film "UNSETTLED," which tells the stories of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers who have fled persecution in their home countries to resettle in the U.S. On June 29, the Alliance will convene a virtual panel of lawyers, psychologists, and health professionals who will discuss the film and how their respective disciplines work with refugee and LGBTQ+ communities. To register for both events, [click here](#).

Society for the Study of Social Problems Publishes New Website Section on Human Rights

Coalition member organization The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) has launched a new website section on [human rights and social justice](#). The site includes an anti-racism statement, information about the Science and Human Rights Coalition, and resources for individuals and organizations. Visit [the website here](#).

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](#).

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](#).

July 1: Introduction to Human Rights Online Course

GVI USA, in partnership with the University of Richmond and the University of North Carolina Charlotte, is offering an [Introduction to Human Rights](#) online course as part of its Foundations in Sustainable Development Program. Enrollment closes on July 1, and the course begins on July 6. More information is [available here](#).

July 12: Senior Program Officer, Human Rights and Public Services, and West Africa Lead

The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, an NGO seeking to address social and economic injustice through a human rights lens, is seeking a Senior Program Officer, Human Rights and Public Services, and West Africa Lead in Dakar, Senegal. Applications are due July 12. Further information may be found [here](#).

July 27-31: RightsCon Launches Virtual Edition

Access Now, a policy and advocacy group for technology and human rights, is holding a virtual edition of RightsCon, its annual conference on technology and human rights. The event brings together business leaders, policymakers, technologists, advocates, academics, government representatives, and journalists to address pressing issues at the intersection of human rights and technology. Further information may be found [here](#).

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

CHR Endorses Call for Human Rights-Based Approach to COVID-19

The Committee on Human Rights (CHR) of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has [fully endorsed](#) the [Call for a Human Rights-Based Approach to COVID-19](#), issued by the Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, an alliance of more than 90 national academies. "The global scale of the human rights crackdown that we are currently witnessing in response to COVID-19 is unprecedented in the committee's history," said the CHR in issuing its endorsement. "Increasingly, overbroad and open-ended emergency powers are being used to threaten disfavored individuals and groups and to punish peaceful forms of dissent. Many of our colleagues—including scientists and health professionals—have experienced retaliation for providing information to the public about COVID-19 that runs counter to official narratives." The CHR recently completed a web-based resource, [Confronting Rights Abuse: A Guide for Supporting Scientists, Engineers, and Health Professionals Under Threat](#), for scientists and other professionals who find themselves the target of governmental abuse.

Impact of COVID-19 Racial Disparities Examined at AAAS Briefing

More than 80 journalists from across the U.S. attended a [virtual media briefing](#) last month, hosted by SciLine, a free service based at the AAAS that helps reporters incorporate research-based evidence into their stories, to learn about how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting the country's most vulnerable populations. During the online session, four researchers presented the latest data showing COVID-19's disproportionate impact on racial minorities, homeless people, incarcerated populations, and rural communities. The panelists also discussed interventions needed to protect those at highest risk of both becoming infected and dying from the disease.

Human Rights Watch Testifies in Congress on Impacts of COVID-19 Racial Disparities

Human Rights Watch (HRW) submitted [written testimony](#) to the Ways and Means Committee of the US House of Representatives to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color in the U.S. The Committee held a [virtual hearing](#) in late May. HRW is recommending that the Committee "address this crisis by recognizing that racial disparities in illness and death from COVID-19 are inextricably linked to failures at all levels of government in the United States to fully protect the human rights of black and brown people, as well as government policies over generations that have directly contributed to racial disparities

across multiple systems—health, education, housing, and criminal justice, among others. These disparities compound each other in ways that exacerbate the vulnerability of people of color to COVID-19.”

Public Interest, Civil Rights Groups Call on Congress to Address COVID-19 Disparities

More than [80 public interest and civil rights organizations](#) issued a [letter](#) to the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee to ensure COVID-19 response technology, if deployed, abides by a number of principles to protect civil rights and privacy. [The letter](#) points out that the health and economic effects of COVID-19 disproportionately impact people from historically disadvantaged communities, including Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders and as result of “historical systemic discrimination and related policy choices, people of color today are more likely to be essential workers without paid sick leave, more likely to live in densely populated areas or living quarters, less likely to have health insurance or access to healthcare, and more likely to suffer from inequities in the healthcare system, resulting in a disproportionate impact of the disease on these communities.” The letter also highlights that digital tools should be implemented only to augment, not replace, traditional manual contact tracing and that widely available COVID-19 testing, supported isolation, partnerships with vulnerable communities, and other supportive public health measures, such as equitable access to healthcare, are needed.

UN Human Rights Council Addresses Human Rights, Racism and Policing in the U.S.

The United Nations Human Rights Council [concluded](#) on June 18 what it termed an “urgent” debate on current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and violence against peaceful protests in the wake of the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed the Council to urge action. “Now we need decisive action across the world—not only to reform or re-imagine specific institutions and law enforcement agencies, important though that is, but to address the pervasive racism that corrodes institutions of government, entrenches inequality and underlies so many violations of human rights,” [she said](#). Other speakers urged the Council to retain the focus of a proposed commission of inquiry specifically on the killing of George Floyd, police brutality and institutional racial discrimination within US police forces. The creation of a second thematic international commission of inquiry to investigate systemic racism and police brutality globally was also encouraged. The [debate](#) was called for by a group of African countries led by Burkina Faso and included input from Philonise Floyd, brother of George Floyd, who also requested the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate police killings in the U.S. and violence used against peaceful protesters.

Amazon, IBM, Microsoft Make Announcements on Facial Recognition

IBM, Amazon, and Microsoft have issued statements either agreeing not to sell or to limit the sale of facial recognition technology to law enforcement agencies in the U.S. in the wake of increased scrutiny of policing following mass protests in the US over police practices. In a [blog post](#) on June 8, IBM CEO Arvind Krishna highlighted a letter sent to Congress outlining policy proposals to advance racial equity, addressing responsible use of technology by law enforcement, outlining practices that IBM follows by no longer offering general purpose facial recognition or analysis software products, and calling for dialogue on whether and how facial recognition technology should be employed by domestic law enforcement agencies. Also in a [blog post](#) on June 10, Amazon said that it is implementing a one-year moratorium on police use of Amazon’s facial recognition technology, Rekognition, to provide Congress time to implement appropriate rules on its use. In a virtual conference hosted by the *Washington Post*, Microsoft President Brad Smith [said](#) the company will not sell facial recognition technology to police departments in the U.S. at least until there is a federal law to regulate the technology and that any legislation on facial recognition should be grounded in human rights.

A Civil Rights Expert Offers a Social Science View of Racism, Law Enforcement

A recent [Q&A](#) in *Scientific American* with civil rights attorney Alexis J. Hoag, the inaugural practitioner in residence at the Eric H. Holder, Jr., Initiative for Civil and Political Rights at Columbia University, provides her perspective on the history of race, law enforcement, and the judiciary and ideas for how to make substantive improvements and the role social scientists can play.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Calls on Indian Gov't To Assist Internal Migrant Workers in COVID-19 Compliance

UN human rights experts [are calling](#) on the Indian government to comply with a Supreme Court order to ensure the well-being of more than 100 million internal migrant workers suffering hardship after COVID-19 measures, including lockdown measures, forced them to travel long distances from their homes. The Indian Supreme Court has ordered the government to register them, ensure that they can board a train or a bus free of cost, and provide them with shelter, food and water until they reach their homes. The experts' call has been endorsed by UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri; the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to physical and mental health, Dainius Pūras; and the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes.

COVID-19 Pandemic Reveals States' Failure to Address Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a UN body of experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), issued [a statement](#) to express "its grave concern at the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities." The Committee said that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the CRPD has not been comprehensively implemented by states parties and further highlights "the vulnerability and risks to persons with disabilities that is underpinned by entrenched discrimination and inequality." To address those issues, the Committee has endorsed several UN measures, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' [guidance](#), and the UN policy brief, [A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19](#). It also points to a joint statement, [Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19](#), issued by the Committee's Chair and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility and an [appeal](#) by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. A recent [article](#) highlighting Rosemary Kayess, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities who is disabled through a spinal cord injury, details her personal experience in Australia with COVID-19 measures that lacked accessible information and resources for disabled people.

Columbian Court Rules with Human Rights Groups Over Aerial Spraying Amidst COVID-19

Late last month, a Colombian court ruled that the spraying of the herbicide glyphosate, which some studies have linked to human health and environmental problems, cannot resume until the government informs and consults with affected communities, and takes into account limitations to such consultation due to the COVID-19 outbreak, outlines a recent [article](#) in *Science*. The government had planned to hold virtual meetings with the communities, but environmental and human rights groups went to court to challenge that plan, arguing that Colombia's rural communities often lack reliable Internet, cellphone, or radio service. In a May 27 ruling, the court sided with the groups and ordered the government to rethink its consultation plan.

UN Stresses Human Rights in Plan for Nuclear Waste Disposal in Japan Amidst COVID-19

UN human rights experts [are calling](#) on the Japanese government to delay any decision on the ocean-dumping of nuclear waste water from reactors in Fukushima Daiichi, Japan until after the COVID-19 crisis has passed and proper international consultations can be held. They said the government's short extension for current public consultation was "grossly insufficient" while COVID-19 measures limited opportunities for input from all affected communities in Japan and neighboring countries, including indigenous peoples. They are calling on the Japanese government to respect the right of indigenous peoples to free prior and informed consent and to respect their right to assemble and associate to form such a consent.

Scientific, Human Rights Groups Support Venezuela’s ACFIMAN Over COVID-19 Data

Scientific and human rights groups in Venezuela and others are defending the Venezuelan Academy of Physical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences (ACFIMAN) after a high-level government official in Venezuela suggested raids or arrests to punish the academy for “causing alarm” over an ACFIMAN [report](#) that estimated the current and future size of the epidemic in the country, outlines a recent [article](#) in *Science*. Six Venezuelan research academies—including those focused on medicine and political and social sciences—called such government statements “unacceptable intimidation” of ACFIMAN members. At least 13 other Venezuelan and international organizations have condemned the government, including the Venezuelan Association for the Advancement of Science and the InterAmerican Network of Academies of Sciences, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also stressed the “fundamental role of scientific knowledge and progress in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Scientists Participate in Move to Address Racial Equality in STEM, Society at Large

Numerous university laboratories, scientific societies, technical journals, and others pledged to participate to pause work on June 10 to support the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement and efforts against racism in the scientific community and society at large, outlines a recent [article](#) in *Science*. The call for racial equity and inclusiveness in science and academia was highlighted in several online forums, including [Strike For Black Lives](#), [#ShutDownSTEM](#), and [#ShutDownAcademia](#).

Human Rights Watch Calls on Nepal To Address Online Gender Violence

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is [calling](#) on the government of Nepal to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to online gender-based violence. This approach should include aiding victims by providing legal assistance, counseling, and assistance removing images, often intimate, posted online without consent, and developing practices respectful of the rights of women and girls. HRW is calling for such action due to what it says is inadequate protection of the rights of women and girls under which existing law does not address online gender-based violence and consent around distribution of images.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Guidance for Governments for Human Rights in Technology-COVID-19 Responses

The [World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council on Human Rights and the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), which provides strategic intelligence and foresight around technology and human rights, has specified [four rules](#) for governments to ensure that technology-driven responses to COVID-19 respect human rights.

Article Examines Inequalities in Digital Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Exposure

A recent [article](#) in *Just Security*, an online journal based at the Reiss Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law, examines the inequalities and access issues relating to digital contact tracing to trace exposure to COVID-19. The article outlines how exposure notification apps and other forms of tech-assisted contact tracing do not yet address systemic inequalities in how people access technology.

Data for Black Lives Issues COVID-19 Roundtable Report

Data for Black Lives, a movement of activists, organizers, and mathematicians using data science to create concrete and measurable change for African Americans, has issued a [report](#) on a recent roundtable that discussed how COVID-19 data are being collected, released, analyzed and interpreted and how such data may be used as a tool for social change, including in government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report on Use-of-Force Policies and Human Rights Launched

The International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School has issued a [report](#), *Deadly Discretion: The Failure of Police Use of Force Policies to Meet Fundamental International Human Rights Law and Standards*, which reviewed and analyzed law enforcement policies to better understand how and whether police departments provide meaningful and effective direction to officers on the use of lethal force in

a manner that respects the rights of the people they are charged to protect and serve. To evaluate the-use-of-force policies, the authors developed and applied a grading system based on international law and standards on police lethal use of force. Through this evaluation, the authors found that the policies in 20 large cities in the U.S. failed to meet international human rights law and standards and failed to establish sufficient accountability mechanisms.

Amnesty International, SITU Research Issue Primer on Tear Gas Use

SITU Research, a New York-based applied research group involving architecture, urbanism, policy and human rights, and Amnesty International have issued a [primer](#), *Choking Dissent: How Tear Gas is Used to Crush Protests*, which explains the basic mechanics of a typical tear gas canister and documents how it is used in ways that amplify its risks and facilitate its abuse. The material is part of a worldwide investigation into tear gas use conducted by Amnesty International. A video analysis is available [here](#).

ELAW Produces Video on Importance of Technical Support in Environmental Advocacy

The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW), a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and other advocates helping communities achieve clean air, clean water and sustainability, has published a video, “Why Technical Support Matters to Protect Peoples and Communities,” which features ELAW Staff Scientist Dr. Meche Lu and ELAW partner Laura Palmese from Honduras, who participated in the AAAS Coalition meeting last October. The video highlights ELAW’s work in Peru that is bridging gaps between authorities and communities to ensure that citizens impacted by proposed dredging of the four largest rivers of the Peruvian Amazon have their voices heard. The video may be found in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

New Report Examines Practices Used in Online Content Moderation

The New York University Stern Center for Business and Human Rights has issued a [report](#), *Who Moderates the Social Media Giants? A Call to End Outsourcing*, which examines three main problems caused by the outsourcing of content moderation to third-party vendors by social media and online platforms and provides recommendations to mitigate problematic use, such as hate speech and misinformation.

Perspective from Journalist Covering Science-Related Issues in the COVID-19 Pandemic

A [Q&A](#) posted on the AAAS website with Sarah Zhang, a staff writer for *The Atlantic* and winner of the 2018 AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Silver Award, offers her perspective on covering the COVID-19 pandemic, including on science-related issues and her perspective as a Chinese American journalist.

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