

Note: AAAS continues to monitor the developments related to COVID-19. All staff based at AAAS headquarters are working from home. AAAS conference facilities are closed, and all meetings through December 31 are held remotely, postponed, or canceled. The Coalition Secretariat will advise members of any future changes to the Coalition's calendar. Stay safe and well!

COALITION CALENDAR

Nov. 19: "Equity Flattens the Curve: The Importance of Diverse Populations in Combating COVID-19"

Join us on November 19 at 1:00 PM Eastern for a webinar highlighting Coalition member the American Psychological Association (APA)'s initiative, [Equity Flattens the Curve](#) (EFtC). EFtC aims to mitigate COVID-19's disproportionate impacts on marginalized populations around the world, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, older people, and other groups who are vulnerable due to bias. The webinar is organized by the Coalition's [Scientific Collaborations with Human Rights Organizations](#) project team. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

2020 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference (Online)

Thank you to everyone who participated in last week's virtual Coalition conference! The event featured engaging discussions about protecting human rights during the pandemic, dynamic keynote addresses from Lesley Iaukea and Angela Saini, an online student meet-up, and much more. Recordings will be posted on the conference website for all registrants later this week and will also be available on the AAAS YouTube channel. Attendees, please check your inboxes this week for the conference evaluation survey.

Student Essay Competition Winners Recognized

Congratulations to Malwina Wójcik, Morgan Steelman, and Abigail Kleiman, the winners of this year's Coalition Student Essay Competition! Wójcik (graduate winner) wrote about how the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications should guide the search for a COVID-19 vaccine; Steelman (undergraduate winner) focused on genetic surveillance of Uighurs in China; and Kleiman (undergraduate honorable mention) discussed the lack of protection for climate refugees in international law. More information [is available here](#) and [here](#).

COVID-19 & Human Rights Resources

The Coalition Secretariat continues to update the COVID-19 and human rights [resources page](#) on the Coalition website. Please feel free to share additional resources you have found helpful, or information about what your organization is doing to respond to the pandemic. In addition, we continue to share video interviews from our [Responding to COVID-19: Science and Human Rights](#) series. All of the videos can be watched on [AAAS' YouTube channel](#).

CALLS FOR INPUT

Nov. 10: Call for Input: Global Water Crisis and Human Rights

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment is seeking consultation and input on the topic of human rights, the environment, and the associated obligations related to water pollution, water scarcity and floods. He is seeking input by November 10 on the topic from states and stakeholders through responses to a brief questionnaire, which will inform the Special Rapporteur's analysis and contribute to his report, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2021. Further information may be found [here](#).

Nov. 30: Call for Input: UN Human Rights Report: Child Rights & Sustainable Development

The UN Human Rights Office is seeking input for a report on children's rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be presented to the High Level Political Forum of the UN in 2021. The report will highlight risks and challenges to children's rights and good practices toward addressing them in relation to sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Submitters are requested to address the most urgent challenges and noteworthy good practices in this regard. Deadline for submission is November 30, and further information may be found [here](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

On-Demand: Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

The Public Summit of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine held an open forum, *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*, for those in the higher education ecosystem to collaboratively identify, discuss, and elevate innovative and effective approaches for addressing and preventing sexual harassment. This forum, held on October 19 and 20, brought together members of the Action Collaborative, the broader higher education community, sexual violence and harassment researchers, sexual harassment response practitioners, grassroots and nonprofit organizations, public and private foundations, and federal and state policy makers. Video recordings of all sessions as well slides of all presentations are available with registration. See [here](#) for further information.

Nov 2-3: GeOnG Form 2020 (Online): The Humanitarian and Data Forum

CartONG, an NGO putting data, in particular geographical data, at the service of humanitarian, development and social action projects, is holding an online conference, *GeOnG Forum 2020: The Humanitarian and Data Forum* on November 2–3. The forum brings organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions to discuss data practices in the humanitarian and development sectors. Further information may be found [here](#).

Nov. 12: Responsible AI Facebook Live: Medical Triage during COVID-19 and Beyond

The next installment of AAAS' "Responsible AI" virtual series, supported by [Hitachi](#), will examine the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool by hospitals for the purposes of triage during the pandemic. Medical personnel have used an AI-based algorithm to assign ventilators to patients, determine recovery probability, or calculate a prognosis score. These techniques raise many technical, ethical and moral questions. Join us on November 12, 2020, at 2:00 PM Eastern for a discussion between two experts in medical triage on using AI both during and after COVID-19. More information [is available here](#).

Opportunity: ISPP's Twinning Program for Threatened Scholars

The International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) is seeking applications to participate in its new Twinning Program, which has been set up to facilitate scholarly collaborations between threatened political psychologists and program partners. These collaborations can offer the opportunity for scholars under threat to continue their academic activities, maintain and advance their careers, and integrate into the international political psychology community. ISPP sets up partnerships based on a match in scholarly interests. Further information may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

Recent Study Shows Sexual, Gender Minorities Much Likelier to be Crime Victims

A [study](#), published in *Science Advances*, a multidisciplinary journal, found that people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or gender non-conforming are nearly four times as likely to be victims of violent crime than those outside those communities. The national US study, which examined data since 2016, found that members of such communities experienced a rate of 71.1 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons a year, compared with 19.2 per 1,000 a year among non-sexual and gender minorities. The findings raise the importance of further considering sexual orientation and gender identity in victimization and interventions.

Privacy, Civil Rights Groups Seek Transparency on Amazon-Provided Election Services

More than 15 privacy and civil rights organizations issued a [letter](#) to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos criticizing Amazon's failure to secure election data and are calling that Amazon disclose all instances of security breaches related to election data, the implications of such breaches, and the actions the company took to address them. The groups assert that Amazon provides one or more election services to more than 40 states and to both major political parties; these election services include running election websites, storing voter registration information and ballot data, and helping to provide live results on election night. The company provides these services through Amazon Web Services, its cloud-computing platform. The groups said that because Amazon holds so much voter and election information, "a single breach could have catastrophic consequences for election integrity in dozens of states."

COVID Clinical Trials and Incarcerated People: Ethics and Public Health Factors Examined

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines the public health benefits and ethical considerations in having incarcerated people participate in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. The article includes an interview with George Annas, a lawyer and bioethicist at Boston University, whose research addresses ethics and human rights in clinical trials, and Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein, a sociologist and epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who studies management of infectious disease and substance abuse in incarcerated people.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Expert Outlines Priorities for Protecting Human Rights Defenders

Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, who was appointed to the post in May, outlined her priorities in her first presentation to the UN General Assembly earlier this month. "Hundreds of human rights defenders are killed every year because of their work, but these murders are not inevitable or normal," [she said](#). "It is a grave injustice that so many human rights defenders are sentenced to long terms in prison for their peaceful human rights work, and I will focus on this issue in the coming years." She emphasized that governments and businesses must do more to protect human rights defenders and that she intends to focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable defenders and those targeted for reprisals after cooperating with the United Nations. "Isolated defenders in rural and remote areas, environmental defenders, women rights defenders, children who are defenders, defenders with disabilities and those defending the human rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons will be a priority during my tenure," she said.

UN Report Stresses Human Rights Impact of Unilateral Sanctions on COVID-19 Responses

Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, issued a [report](#) to the UN General Assembly on the impact of unilateral sanctions on countries' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to end such sanctions despite exemptions for humanitarian aid. "I welcome every effort to provide humanitarian relief, but I underscore that humanitarian exemptions remain ineffective and inadequate," Douhan said. "The impossibility to obtain medicine, medical care, food, electricity and fuel results in the violation of the right to life of those who are infected by COVID-19, and also those who cannot get medical help and medication while suffering from other diseases or are

unable to get to hospitals. She further outlined other human rights violated with unilateral sanctions in the wake of COVID-19. “In the long-term perspective, unilateral sanctions hinder targeted countries’ ability to respond to COVID-19, to implement national response plans; result in breaches of existing regional and bilateral cooperation/integration mechanisms; make populations dependent on humanitarian aid and prevent the economic recovery of the targeted countries through the development and maintenance of necessary infrastructure,” [her report says](#). “This violates labor rights, right to education, access to information, right to food, and right to health of their populations.”

UN Expert Calls on Protecting Rights of Indigenous People in COVID-19 Responses

Francisco Calí Tzay, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, said in a [report](#) to the UN General Assembly this month that indigenous peoples have largely been left out of COVID-19 responses globally and the pandemic is likely to worsen inequalities and racism. He called for pandemic emergency protocols to be developed jointly with indigenous peoples, consistent with their individual and collective rights, and to recognize and incorporate traditional indigenous knowledge. “One of the trends I observed is that those indigenous peoples who are able to decide how best to protect their communities and to use their collective lands, including for subsistence farming, are the least affected by the virus and the disruption of the global economy,” he said. The report highlights how resilience to the pandemic is increased when indigenous peoples can exercise their right to administer their own health and community programs, complemented by accessible and non-discriminatory national health and education systems.

Proposed Mine in Papua New Guinea Raises Human Rights Concerns

A [report](#) in *The Guardian* highlights a letter by UN special rapporteurs and the chair of the UN Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations sent to the governments of Papua New Guinea, Australia and China over concerns of human rights violations with respect to a proposed mine by Frieda River Ltd. on the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. The mine, if approved and built, would be the largest in Papua New Guinea’s history and be one of the largest in the world, covering 16,000 hectares. The UN officials raised concerns over “serious risks” to the human rights of affected populations with respect to a proposed tailings dam and the associated infrastructure of the project, including the rights to life, health, bodily integrity, water and food, and the right to free, prior, and informed consent. They also raised concerns over threats against human rights defenders who have opposed the project. The Environmental Defenders Office, a private environmental legal center, through its legal advocacy partner, CELCOR (Center for Environmental Law and Community Rights) and its client, Project Sepik, have [called](#) for the rejection of the Sepik Development Project, which includes the Frieda River mine.

Russia Expands Use of Facial Recognition Technology Despite Privacy Concerns

Human Rights Watch [reports](#) that Russian authorities are planning to expand the use of CCTV cameras with facial recognition software despite concerns by privacy rights groups, digital rights lawyers, and human rights groups about the lack of regulation, oversight, and data protection. Human Rights Watch cited a report by a Russian publication that CCTV cameras with facial recognition software, already used in Moscow, will be installed by the regional authorities in public spaces and at the entryway of apartment buildings in 10 pilot cities across Russia. Authorities in Moscow are also planning to install CCTV cameras with facial recognition software in trams and on 25% of all underground trains. “The authorities’ intention to expand the use of invasive technology across the country causes serious concern over the potential threat to privacy,” said Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “Russia’s track record of rights violations means that the authorities should be prepared to answer tough questions to prove they are not undermining people’s rights by pretending to protect public safety.”

UN Expert Cites Human Rights Violations at Colombian Mining Site

David R. Boyd, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, is [calling](#) on the Colombian government to protect indigenous peoples’ rights to life, health, water, sanitation, and a safe, clean, healthy

and sustainable environment by halting mining at the El Cerrejón open-pit mine, which borders protected communal lands of the Wayúu community in the La Guajira Department in northeast Colombia. A court order last December directed Colombian authorities and the owners of the El Cerrejón mine to improve air quality and reduce the mine's harm to residents. The court found the company had damaged the health of residents in the Provincial reserve by contaminating the air, water and vegetation and through noise and vibration from mining.

Yuri Orlov, Renowned Physicist, Human Rights Advocate, Passes Away

[Yuri Orlov](#), an internationally renowned physicist, human rights advocate, and Professor Emeritus of physics in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, passed away on September 27, 2020 at the age of 96. For his “anti-Soviet” political dissent, Orlov spent nearly a decade imprisoned in Siberia, during which time he gained international attention and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He worked for more than 20 years in the Laboratory of Nuclear Studies at Cornell before being appointed Professor of Physics and Government in 2008. His many honors included the American Physical Society Nicholson Medal and the first [American Physical Society Andrei Sakharov Prize](#), in 2006, as well as the Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize. He was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Physical Society. Shortly before his death, he was awarded the American Physical Society's 2021 Wilson Prize, an esteemed award in the field of particle accelerator physics.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Physicians for Human Rights Report: Unlawful Use of Force in Recent Racial Protests

Physicians for Human Rights has issued a [report](#), *Now They Just Want to Hurt Us: Dangerous Use of Crowd-control Weapons against Protestors and Medics in Portland, Oregon*, to documents unlawful use of force by law enforcement officers during Black Lives Matter protests in June and July 2020 in Portland, Oregon. The report is based on attacks against volunteer protest medics and the medics' own experiences treating injured protestors. The report also examines whether there was interference with emergency medical assistance and whether medics were specifically targeted.

New UN Special Rapporteur Report: Cultural Rights and Climate Change

The UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights has issued a [report](#) that addresses the cultural and cultural rights dimensions of the current climate emergency. The report examines the negative impact of climate change on human cultures and on the enjoyment of cultural rights and the positive potential of cultures and the exercise of cultural rights to serve as critical tools in responding to the climate emergency.

IIE Recognizes 100 Years of Scholar Rescue with New Report

The Institute of International Education (IIE), which focuses on international student exchange and aid, foreign affairs, and international peace and security, has issued a [publication](#), *A Beacon of Hope: IIE's First 100 Years of Scholar Rescue*, to provide an in-depth look at IIE's efforts to support threatened and displaced university students and professionals, from its earliest years, when IIE worked to save academics fleeing fascism in Europe, to the 21st century, when IIE established programs such as the [Emergency Student Fund](#) and the [Scholar Rescue Fund](#).

U.S. State Department Issues Guidance on Surveillance Products/Services and Human Rights

The U.S State Department has issued [guidance](#) to provide practical and accessible human rights guidance to U.S. businesses seeking to prevent their products or services with surveillance capabilities from being misused by government end-users to commit human rights abuses. The guidance is in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and guidelines from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for assessing the human rights impacts of these products or services and their use before engaging in transactions with governments. The guidance also recommends human rights

safeguards if a U.S. business considers proceeding with a transaction, such as developing a grievance mechanism, and publicly reporting on sales practices.

New Video Reconstruction Analyzes Police Tactics and Peaceful Protests

Human Rights Watch and SITU Research, an interdisciplinary applied-research division of SITU, an architectural practice, focused on architecture, urbanism, policy, and human rights, have launched "The Trap," a [video reconstruction](#) analyzing the nature and impact of police tactics during a peaceful public demonstration to protest police violence and systemic racism in The Bronx on June 4, 2020. The video examines the relationship between the protest, the city's curfew, and the police tactic of "kettling," which was used to trap and arrest protesters.

National Academies Issues *Conversations on COVID-19: Impacts on Communities of Color*

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine have published [Conversations on COVID-19: Impacts on Communities of Color](#), which includes interviews with experts on a variety of topics related to minority health and COVID-19 as well as information and resources from the National Academies on topics related to health equity.

Amnesty International Report Examines Business and Human Rights

Amnesty International has issued a [report](#), *Failing to Do Right: The Urgent Need for Palantir to Respect Human Rights*, to examine the human rights record of Palantir Technologies, a U.S.-based software company known for its work with various U.S. agencies though it also contracts with private clients. The report examines Palantir's contracts with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for products and services for Immigration and Customs Enforcement that Amnesty International says raise questions about the company's actions to uphold its responsibility to respect human rights.

Amnesty International Report on Mass Surveillance & Policing in the Netherlands

Amnesty International has issued a [report](#), *We Sense Trouble: Automated Discrimination and Mass Surveillance in Predictive Policing in the Netherlands*, to examine the human rights implications of mass surveillance practices by police in the city of Roermond. Through cameras and other sensors, the police collect information about vehicles and movement patterns of all people driving in and around Roermond and then process such data in an algorithmic risk model to assign a risk score on the probability that given persons are to pickpocket or shoplift. The risk score factors in increased risk to people of Eastern European nationalities. The report offers recommendations to governmental officials to stop such practices and align police practices with human rights.

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