
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

October 22-23: 2020 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference (Online)

[Agenda now available!](#) The 2020 Conference will be entirely virtual and will include:

- Featured speakers including science journalist [Angela Saini](#) and University of Hawai'i researcher [Lesley Iaukea](#)
- Panels and workshops on the right to science, the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights and scientific responsibility, advocating for the rights of scientists, and more
- "Ask Me Anything" sessions with thought leaders in science, technology and human rights
- Showcase flash presentations
- [Student e-poster presentations](#) (deadline for abstracts is September 30!)

Members of Coalition organizations are eligible for a reduced registration rate, so please let your members know about the conference.

Interested in sponsoring the conference or a specific session? Information about sponsorship or contact Theresa Harris, tharris@aaas.org.

September 25: Coalition Council Meeting

The Coalition Council will meet on September 25. Details have been sent by email to all Council members. Please contact the Secretariat if you are a member of the Council and have not received the agenda.

September 30: Student E-Poster Abstracts Due

The AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition is encouraging graduate and undergraduate students to submit e-poster abstracts for the October Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference. Abstracts are due September 30. Additional information may be found [here](#).

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

On-Demand Webinar: Mental Health: Policy and Practice through a Human Rights Lens

The first of the three special online sessions that explore health and human rights, hosted by the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice and the Coming Together for Action Conference, is available on-demand. The panel of this first session examines mental health priorities that address policy and practice, focus on disparities that exist globally, and prioritize meaningful systemic change with a focus on the long-term mental health impact on COVID-19, particularly in light of the significant health and economic disparities and racial injustices experienced by communities of color. Further information may be found [here](#).

SPSSI Leads Call for UN to Integrate Anti-Discrimination into the SDGs

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) has issued a [statement](#) calling on the United Nations to incorporate the elimination of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination into global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (also known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs). The statement was endorsed by the [US Human Rights Network](#) among other NGOs.

IIE-SRF Launches New Partners Alliance

AAAS and Coalition members are partners in the new IIE-SRF Alliance, a global network of partners who offer practical support to threatened and displaced scholars, such as temporary academic positions, professional development and career advancement opportunities, and other critical assistance. to support threatened scholars. The IIE-SRF Alliance website provides information on how scientific organizations and individuals can join; the Alliance welcomes individuals and institutions from across the higher education, scientific, non-profit, corporate, and governmental sectors. Further information may be found [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](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sept. 30: Call for Nominations: Constellation Prize

The organizers of the Constellation Prize, which recognizes engineers in the US who have used their engineering training to promote social justice, human rights, peace, and/or environmental protection, are seeking nominations for this year's award, which will be announced in the fall 2020. Engineers can be engineers from academia, non-profits, government, industry, small business, or civil society. Applications are due Sept. 30, and additional information may be found [here](#).

Sept. 30: Western Union Foundation COVID-19 Emergence Response Fund

The Western Union Foundation, the Western Union Company's philanthropic arm, [has announced](#) a commitment of \$250,000 to provide aid for international students struggling to fund tuition and basic needs such as healthcare, wellness, food, and housing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nominations from accredited post-secondary higher education institutions in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K, the U.S., or France may be submitted. The Foundation will work with the Institute of International Education (IIE) to deliver the grants. IIE is accepting [nominations](#) for the WU Scholars grants through September 30, 2020. Students can be nominated by their universities or other higher education institutions or sourced through the Western Union Business Solutions education network, as well as IIE's partner institution network. Applications may be found [here](#).

Oct. 13-14: AAAS Forum on Science and Technology Policy

2020 marks the 45th anniversary of the AAAS Forum on Science & Technology Policy, which will be held virtually October 13 to October 14 to discuss major current challenges affecting science, policy, and society and their intersectionality. This year's program will examine two important topical issues: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and structural racism. The program will feature discussions on the current research and innovation system's performance during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, including examining how researchers, institutions and facilitators of science have worked to address the pandemic, how they have been affected by the pandemic, and what lessons can be learned. The program will also analyze structural racism in the scientific enterprise, the consequences of systemic racism in science for scientific progress and public trust in science, and how the scientific community can work to dismantle systemic racism and transform science. Further information, including how to register, may be found [here](#).

Oct. 19: ASTC Virtual 2020 Annual Conference

The Association of Science and Technology Centers 2020 Annual Conference will be held virtually October 19 through October 21 with the theme of “New Frontiers in Science, Technology, Learning, and Community Engagement Toward a More Equitable Tomorrow.” The conference provides content and participatory experiences for professionals at the executive and staff levels in science and technology centers and museums as well as in the broader science, technology, and learning ecosystems across North America and globally. Further information may be found [here](#).

Oct. 19: Call for Submissions: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Migrants

Forced Migration Review, a publication examining issues relating to forced migration, is calling for papers for a special issue, to be published in February 2021, on the mental health needs and related access to support services for refugees and internally displaced people, who may have unique challenges: a lack of awareness of the treatment that is available and their rights to access it; language barriers; lack of mental health literacy; difficulties introduced by culturally specific modes of expressing mental ill health; concerns around stigma; and doubts about confidentiality. This special issue will provide a forum for affected communities, practitioners, advocates, policymakers and researchers to share experience and good practice, debate perspectives, and offer recommendations. In particular, the editors of *FMR* are seeking practice-oriented submissions to reflect a diverse range of experience and opinions. Submissions are due October 19 and further information may be found [here](#).

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](#).

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](#).

Job: Research Manager, Center for Democracy & Technology

The Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT) is seeking a research manager to work on issues at the intersection of technology and human rights. Responsibilities include designing and implementing research projects to inform the development of CDT’s policy positions and contributing to U.S. and international dialogue about key issues in technology policy. Further information, including how to apply, may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

National Academies’ Committee on Human Rights Condemns Attacks on Medics in the U.S.

The Committee on Human Rights of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has endorsed a [statement](#) of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) condemning attacks on medics and medical facilities during protests against systemic racism and

injustice in the U.S. The Committee on Human Rights of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine with the IHRN's Executive Committee is [calling](#) on authorities to carry out a prompt, independent, and transparent investigation into all allegations of human rights abuses connected to the protests and to hold accountable those found responsible.

Data Scientist Faces Repercussions for Questioning COVID-19 Statistics in Florida

A recent [article](#) in *The Guardian* outlines the situation of a former employee and data scientist of the state of Florida, who created and served as manager of the state's official coronavirus database. She was terminated in that role in May after she said that she had been asked to censor information to make it align with the governor's re-opening plan and the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since her dismissal, she has set up a rival coronavirus information portal featuring more detail than the state database; filed a whistleblower complaint; and most recently launched a state and national reporting database for teachers, parents and students to report on schools reopening plans and related information. An interview with her by NPR may be found [here](#).

UN Seeks Info To Protect Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Drilling Plan in Alaska

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination under the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights [is calling](#) on the US government to provide further information on its proposal to allow for the drilling of oil and gas in the Coastal Plain in Alaska as well as on measures that are being taken to protect the human rights of the Gwich'in indigenous peoples. Specifically, the Committee is seeking information on the plan with respect to the following measures: (1) ensuring the free, prior and informed consent of the Gwich'in indigenous peoples with respect to the plan; (2) ensuring protection of sacred sites of indigenous peoples, in particular in the Coastal Plain; (3) preventing and combating violence against indigenous women, in particular in Alaska, and in specially within the context of the extractive industry; (4) assessing and mitigating the impact on climate change of the proposal for oil and gas development in the Coastal Plain, in particular on indigenous peoples in Alaska; and (5) ensuring effective remedies against instances of racial discrimination, including in the context of extractive industries. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

COVID-19 Risks to Global Food Security

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global food security. The article points out that although no major food shortages have emerged as yet, agricultural and food markets are facing disruptions because of labor shortages created by restrictions on movements of people and shifts in food demand resulting from closures of restaurants and schools as well as from income losses. Export restrictions imposed by some countries have disrupted trade flows for staple foods such as wheat and rice. The article outlines the main threats COVID-19 poses to food security and suggests critical responses that policy makers should consider to prevent a global food crisis.

UK Court Rules Certain Uses of Facial Recognition Violate Human Rights

A UK court [ruled](#) last month that facial recognition technology violates human rights in a case involving a resident of Cardiff, Wales, whose facial image was recorded on two separate occasions while participating in peaceful protests. The ruling stated that facial recognition technology violates human rights and that better parameters need to be in place to allow for its use.

Peking University's Restrictions on Online Conferences Raises Human Rights Concerns

Peking University, one of China's top universities, [has announced](#) new rules for attending online conferences organized overseas, including in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau, which requires academics and researchers seeking to participate to be vetted by university authorities in advance. The new requirements, issued last

month, follows recent moves to restrict the number of academics and researchers allowed to physically attend conferences overseas. The rules have now been extended to online conferences, with all applications to attend having to be submitted for approval at least 15 days before the event starts. Human Rights in China, a nongovernmental organization, [says](#) the requirements raise serious concerns about restrictions on academic freedom and, more specifically, about noncompliance with a wide range of international human rights standards, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, and the right to access and disseminate information. In addition, the NGO says the requirements directly implicate a fundamental right to education under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which the People's Republic of China is a party.

UN, WHO Urge Action To End Misinformation, Rely on Science in COVID-19 Pandemic

The United Nations and partners [are urging](#) countries to take “urgent action” to address what they have described as the “infodemic,” referring to misinformation that has surfaced in tandem with the COVID-19 pandemic both in the real world and online. “We call on Member States to develop and implement action plans to manage the infodemic by promoting the timely dissemination of accurate information, based on science and evidence, to all communities, and in particular high-risk groups; and preventing the spread, and combating, mis- and disinformation while respecting freedom of expression,” said the UN, the World Health Organization, and other partners in a [joint statement](#). In April, the UN Secretary-General launched the United Nations Communications Response initiative to combat the spread of mis- and disinformation, and in May, the UN also issued a guidance note to address and counter COVID-19-related hate speech. In May, the World Health Assembly issued a resolution that recognized that managing the infodemic is a critical part of controlling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Emphasizes Science for Climate Justice

Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, former President of Ireland, and a renowned global climate justice campaigner, gave a keynote address earlier this month at [the launch](#) of the Transition to Zero Pollution initiative, a new effort organized by Imperial College London. The initiative seeks to build new partnerships between research, industry and government—from fundamental science and engineering, systems thinking, human health, new business models, and policymaking—to realize a sustainable zero pollution future. She emphasized the need for climate justice and drew comparisons between the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic as both being transnational threats that have exacerbated inequalities and emphasizing that gender equality and parity of decision-making must be at the core of recovery from the pandemic and economic crisis. “Our recovery must bend towards the science and justice,” she said in her address, referencing the need to take climate scientists as seriously as health scientists during the pandemic.

Young People File Climate Lawsuit in Europe over Human Rights Violations

Six Portuguese young people [have filed](#) a legal action with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg, France against 33 countries for violating their human rights by not adequately addressing the climate crisis. If admissible, the case could set an important precedent for other climate lawsuits based on human rights arguments. Their case is supported by the Global Legal Action Network, a non-profit legal advocacy organization for human rights. The complaint alleges that the governments being sued are failing to enact emissions reductions required to safeguard the futures of the youth-applicants. Their lawyers cite the Climate Action Tracker, which provides ratings of countries’ emissions-reduction policies, which include the European Union, the UK, Switzerland, Norway, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine and which covers the 33 countries name in the lawsuit. “One of our key aims in bringing this case is to persuade the European Court of Human Rights to provide an urgently needed direction to the Member States of the Council of Europe that the human right to a safe and healthy environment requires them to take all necessary steps to address the climate emergency,” said Marc Willers QC of London’s Garden Court Chambers and the lead counsel in the case, in a statement. “If the ECtHR issues such a direction then that will further empower individuals who bring cases

in domestic courts throughout Europe, seeking decisions which force their governments to tackle the climate crisis.”

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Analyzing the Role of Virtuous Violence and Punitiveness in Policy-Making

A recent [article](#) in the *Proceedings on the National Academy of Sciences* examines the significance of two recent surveys of public opinion in the U.S. that showed support for killing enemy civilians and combatants with nuclear or conventional weapons was divided along partisan political lines. The authors examine the significance of these findings overall and how such support further guides views on other issues, such as immigration policy, reproductive rights, and gun policy. The authors assert that a common thread of punitiveness underlying and connecting these issues needs to be recognized, understood, and confronted by any society that professes to value fundamental human rights and wishes to prevent important decisions from being affected by sociocultural and political biases.

Network of Concerned Historians Issue Annual Report

The Network of Concerned Historians, which serves as a link between concerned historians and human rights organizations, has released its [Annual Report 2020](#), which contains news about the domain where history and human rights intersect, especially about the censorship of history and the persecution of historians, archivists, and archaeologists around the globe, as reported by various human rights organizations and other sources. It mainly covers events from 2019 and 2020.

New Report Provides Guide for Human Rights Due Diligence in Occupied Territories

The Global Legal Action Network, a non-profit legal advocacy organization for human rights, and Al-Haq, a Palestinian human-rights organization, have issued a [report](#), *Business and Human Rights in Occupied Territory: Guidance for Upholding Human Rights*, which examines the economies of three situations of occupation: Russian-annexed Crimea, Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara, and Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory. It analyzes the supply chains and administrative and legal framework for the activities of businesses of the occupying state and of foreign companies in these territories. It aims to draw lessons and recommendations for businesses when conducting enhanced human rights due diligence for operations in or relationships connected to occupied territories. The report was submitted to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights under its recent consultation on the challenges of business in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

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