

COALITION CALENDAR

June 4: 2021 Coalition Student Essay Competition

Spread the word to undergraduate and graduate students in your networks: The Coalition's annual Student Essay Competition is accepting submissions through June 4! Students may write on any topic at the intersection of science and/or technology with human rights. Each winner will receive a year of membership in AAAS, a one-year subscription to *Science*, and a \$1,500 cash prize, generously provided by the AAAS-Andrew M. Sessler Fund for Science, Education, and Human Rights. More information is available at <https://www.aaas.org/shr2021essay>.

June 16: Apply to be a FutureGen Scholar!

The Coalition invites applications from undergraduate and graduate students to become SciTech and Human Rights FutureGen Scholars. This new initiative aims to support students who present a well-defined goal and innovative plan of action for addressing the intersection of science, technology, and human rights on their campus or in their community during the 2021-2022 academic year. More information about the FutureGen initiative and how to apply is [available here](#). Applications are due by June 16.

October 21-22: 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference (Online)

Mark your calendars: the 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference will take place virtually October 21-22. Thank you to everyone who responded to the Call for Proposals. The proposals are currently being reviewed by the Conference Host Committee. Registration will open in July, and a preliminary agenda will be posted on the [Coalition website](#) in early August.

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

American Statistical Association, International Community Support Greek Statistician

The American Statistical Association (ASA) continues to [speak out](#) against the persecution of Andreas Georgiou, the former head of the Hellenic Statistical Authority, who took the helm of the agency in 2010 and who oversaw a recalculation of Greece's public finance statistics during the Greek debt crisis. Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, could not validate Greece's statistics from 2006–2009, but fully corrected public finance figures produced under Georgiou's leadership were later accepted by Eurostat and allowed Greece to qualify for European Union and International Monetary Fund loans. Georgiou, however, was blamed for increased austerity measures that accompanied the accurate reporting of Greece's financial situation. Criminal investigations were initiated against him in 2011, and slander allegations were first brought against him in 2014. Earlier this year (2021), a Greek appeals court upheld a lower court decision finding him liable for slander. Georgiou says he plans to appeal the decision to the Greek Supreme Court, and the ASA is joining with other international partners to support him. "Persecuting a scientific government official for doing his job with rigor and integrity to produce official statistics is deeply concerning," said ASA President Robert Santos in a May 1 [statement](#).

Webinar Recording: Community Science—Local Knowledge and Scientific Tools Joining Forces to Document Urban Health Hazards

On May 4, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition's Scientific Collaborations with Human Rights Organizations organized the webinar [Community Science: Local Knowledge & Scientific Tools Joining Forces to Document Urban Health Hazards](#). The event highlighted the work of the [Claiborne Avenue](#)

[Alliance](#), a coalition of New Orleans, Louisiana residents who came together in 2017 to raise awareness of the ongoing negative impact of the Claiborne Expressway (part of Interstate I-10) and to advocate for change. Working with the Alliance, scientists joined with community members to document the effects of the highway and to share their expertise with community members, including local public-school students, so that strong evidence of the toxicity brought by the expressway would be made available to the public and to New Orleans officials. You can [watch the recording here](#).

Recordings from 2020 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

Looking forward to the 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference October 21-22? Registration will be available this summer. While you wait, be sure to check out the recordings of sessions from the 2020 conference, available on AAAS' [YouTube channel here](#).

COVID-19 & Human Rights Resources

The COVID-19 and human rights [resources page](#) on the Coalition website features resources on [privacy and digital security](#), the rights of [vulnerable and marginalized people](#), and more. Please feel free to share additional resources you have found helpful or information about what your organization is doing to respond to the pandemic.

CALLS FOR INPUT

June 30: UN Survey: Good Practices To Support Environmental Human Rights Defenders

The Universal Rights Group, the United Nations Environment Program, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the support of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, Professor David Boyd, are seeking input for a project designed to support and protect environmental human rights defenders, their communities, and work by participation in a survey to gather information on good practices supporting the work of environmental human rights defenders. Participation in the survey is due by June 30, and may be downloaded [here](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

June 1: Call for Proposals: Social Practice of Human Rights Conference

The Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton is calling for proposals, roundtables, and workshops for its conference, the *Social Practice of Human Rights*, to be held in December 2021. The conference's theme is "Between Peril and Potential: Human Rights Advocacy in the Wake of a Global Pandemic." It will address the challenges and opportunities the pandemic has created for human rights advocacy and whether current human rights methods, strategies, and approaches are comprehensive, deep, and robust enough to achieve improved human rights outcomes. Submissions are due June 1; further information may be found [here](#).

June 29: Call for Papers: Conference: Technological Stewardship & Responsible Innovation

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) is calling for papers for the International Symposium on Technology and Society (ISTAS), the flagship conference of the IEEE's Society on Social Implications of Technology, to be held October 28 to October 31, 2021. ISTAS is a multi/inter/trans-disciplinary forum for engineers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, philosophers, researchers, social scientists, technologists, and polymaths to collaborate, exchange experiences, and discuss the social implications of technology. Hosted by the University of Waterloo and the University of Guelph (Ontario, Canada), ISTAS21 will take place primarily online; select in-person, live-streamed events will be held in Waterloo, COVID-19 permitting. The ISTAS21 theme, *Technological Stewardship and Responsible Innovation*, invites participation from academics and practitioners who are engaged in current debates about the status, future, and significance of technology in today's society, and who are interested in topics related to ethics, sustainability, equity, and social values within the tech industry. The program includes several sub-themes: (1) health systems; (2) privacy & security; (3) technology policy & governance; (4) sustainable cities &

communities; (5) artificial intelligence & automation; and (6) ethical and human values in emerging technology. The deadline for submissions is June 29, and further information may be found [here](#).

June 30: Nominations for 2022 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.

August 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: Director, Innovation Lab, Human Rights First

Human Rights First (HRF) is seeking a Director of its Innovation Lab, which is designed to meet the technology needs of the human rights community. The Director will be responsible for developing and executing the Innovation Lab's strategic plans and priorities, establishing and refining the lab's innovation process and personnel footprint, liaising with the Technology Advisory Board, supporting the development and fielding of technological requirements within HRF, as well as external lab relations to include fundraising and public appearances. Further information may be found [here](#).

Opportunity: USPTO Patents for Humanity: COVID-19

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is expanding its *Patents for Humanity Awards Program* to include a new category for those who are responding rapidly to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by using or developing game-changing technologies. This new award category will provide business incentives for patent applicants, holders, and licensees whose inventions track, prevent, diagnose, or treat COVID-19. Any U.S. patent or patent application that addresses COVID-19 is eligible for this award, including any inventions created to track, diagnose, prevent, or treat the disease. Further information may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

Amazon Extends Moratorium on Facial Recognition Technology to Police Departments

Amazon says it will uphold a moratorium on the sale of its facial recognition technology to police departments on an indefinite basis, according to reports by [Forbes](#) and [NBC News](#). The company had imposed a one-year moratorium on the technology, known as Rekognition, in June 2020 following protests after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. In an open letter addressed to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and incoming CEO Andy Jassy, 44 civil rights groups [had called](#) on Amazon to stop selling facial recognition technology to law enforcement over concerns over its misuse against minority groups. The extension of the ban by Amazon brings it in line with other technology firms. In 2020, IBM stopped its facial recognition technology program, and Microsoft suspended police use of its facial recognition until a federal law is introduced. Amazon had imposed a one-year moratorium to provide Congress time to enact protections against the technology, something that has not yet occurred. The American Civil Liberties Union is [calling](#) on the Biden administration to take further action. At least seven states and nearly two dozen cities have limited government use of the technology over potential abuse of civil rights, racial bias, and violation of privacy rights. Debate over additional bans, limits, and reporting requirements has been underway in about 20 state

capitals this legislative session, according to data compiled by the Electronic Privacy Information Center and reported in a recent [article](#) on the PBS website.

White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council Makes Recommendations

The [White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) (WHEJAC) held a meeting in mid-May [and agreed on recommendations](#) to advance the Biden's administration's environmental justice agenda. Housed within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the WHEJAC was [established](#) by an executive order by President Joe Biden for addressing the climate crisis with the goal of confronting longstanding environmental injustices and ensuring that historically marginalized, polluted, and overburdened communities have greater input on federal policies and decisions. At its mid-May meeting, WHEJAC adopted [recommendations](#) in three areas: (1) on how certain federal investments might be made toward a goal that 40% of the overall benefits flow to disadvantaged communities, the so-called Justice40 initiative; (2) updating a previous executive order issued under the Clinton administration dealing with environmental injustice and environmental protection by defining certain terms and broadening federal agencies' responsibilities; and (3) outlining a range of inputs and metrics to measure environmental justice goals, including two metrics for performance evaluation: the tracking of Justice40 investments and EPA enforcement actions. It also issued recommendations on how to create the geospatial Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool that will annually publish interactive maps highlighting disadvantaged communities. WHEJAC will also form a workgroup to provide recommendations for the development of an environmental scorecard. Full details of the recommendations may be found [here](#).

Members of WHEJAC include Dr. Robert Bullard, who has been described as the father of the environmental justice movement and was a keynote speaker at the July 2016 Coalition meeting on [Climate Change and Human Rights](#), where he highlighted the disparate impacts of climate change on Black communities. He is a member of AAAS and the American Sociological Association, a Coalition member. Another member of WHEJAC is Catherine Flowers, founder of the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice, who spoke at the [2017 Coalition meeting on the human right to water](#).

Sale of the Carnegie's Institution for Science HQ to Qatar Raises Human Rights Concerns

More than 140 scientists, students, and staff members of the Carnegie Institution for Science have criticized the decision of the organization to sell its Washington, D.C. headquarters to the government of Qatar, citing the country's poor human rights record, according to a recent [article](#) in *Science*. In a letter to the Board of Directors, they are urging the organization to find a new buyer for the building. The sale is part of a plan to consolidate the institute's three life-sciences departments into a new, 12,600-square-meter research building in Pasadena, California. The consolidation plan includes a new global ecology-focused collaboration with the California Institute of Technology.

Society for American Archaeology Issues New Statement on Treatment of Human Remains

The Society for American Archaeology's (SAA's) virtual annual meeting held in April caused concerns among its members after they realized the organization had allowed a talk arguing against a key U.S. law giving Native Americans rights to the human remains and cultural artifacts of their ancestors, according to a recent [article](#) in *Science*. Although the presentation was made by a SAA member and anthropologist, members expressed concerns that the organization gave a platform to what they consider anti-Indigenous views, and some members called for the formation of a new organization. In response, the SAA issued a [statement](#) to reflect its policy for working with human remains to reflect principles of stewardship, respect, consultation, and accountability. The SAA's newly revised and adopted *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Human Remains* replaces the prior statement adopted in 1986.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Facebook Addresses Human Rights Issues in Political Speech in Trump Ruling

The Oversight Board of Facebook, responsible for evaluating moderation-content decisions, upheld a previous decision by continuing a suspension of former President Donald Trump on its platform for his role in contributing to violence that occurred during the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol and noted the need for the company to further define its policy in balancing political expression and human rights. “It is Facebook’s role to create necessary and proportionate penalties that respond to severe violations of its content policies,” said the Board [in its statement](#). “The Board’s role is to ensure that Facebook’s rules and processes are consistent with its content policies, its values and its human rights commitments.” Although ruling to continue former President Trump’s suspension from Facebook for the time being, the Board said the suspension is not indefinite and that Facebook needs to review its decision within six months to determine and justify a proportionate response that is consistent with the rules that are applied to other users of its platform. The Board also made policy recommendations for Facebook to implement in developing “clear, necessary, and proportionate policies that promote public safety and respect freedom of expression.” The policy will have implications for how the company evaluates political leaders globally and the use of its platform, particularly in contributing to hate speech and other practices against human rights, according to a [Reuters analysis](#).

UN Condemns Conviction of Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Cambodia

UN experts condemned a decision by a Cambodian court to sentence three environmental human rights defenders to jail terms of up to 20 months and urged the government of Cambodia to release them immediately and unconditionally. The convicted human rights defenders are members of Mother Nature Cambodia, a non-governmental organization that advocates for the protection and preservation of Cambodia's natural environment and supports local communities in defending those rights. “The decision of the Cambodian court sentencing the three human rights defenders to prison terms is disgraceful and only reinforces the Government’s enduring policy to diminish civic space and dissenting voices,” said Mary Lawlor, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in a May 7, 2021 [statement](#).

French Court Dismisses Landmark Agent Orange Case

A French court [dismissed](#) a complaint from a French-Vietnamese woman against a group of multinational companies over the harm caused by the use of Agent Orange by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. The court in the Paris suburb of Evry ruled that it did not have the jurisdiction to judge a case involving the wartime actions of the U.S. government. The companies had argued that they could not be held responsible for the use made by the U.S. military of their product. NGOs estimate that four million people in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were exposed to the 76 million liters (20 million gallons) of Agent Orange sprayed by U.S. forces to destroy ground cover and food sources in its battle with North Vietnamese troops between 1962 and 1971.

Threats, Attacks Against Scientists and Healthcare Workers Due to COVID-19 on the Rise

A recent [article](#) in *Nature Medicine* chronicles the threats and potential harm levied against scientists and healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article provides personal accounts by individual scientists and healthcare workers as well as data from recent studies examining the problem. The Safeguarding Health in Conflict coalition, made up of approximately 40 organizations, launched an [interactive global map](#) of attacks on healthcare workers, including incidents related to the pandemic. Insecurity Insight, a Swiss organization monitoring incidences against healthcare workers, [identified](#) 823 incidents in 66 countries adversely affecting the delivery of healthcare between January 2020 and August 2020 related to COVID-19 and/or conflicts.

Nobel Prize Summit Calls for Global Sustainability, Prosperity, and Equity

Participants in the [Nobel Prize Summit](#), which was held in late April and hosted by the Nobel Foundation and organized by the US National Academy of Sciences in partnership with the Potsdam Institute for Climate

Impact Research and the Stockholm Resilience Center/Beijer Institute, issued a [statement](#) to support continued action to achieve global sustainability, human prosperity, and equity and the role that science plays in those goals. “Global sustainability offers the only viable path to human safety, equity, health, and progress,” said the statement. “Humanity is waking up late to the challenges and opportunities of active planetary stewardship. But we are waking up. Long-term, scientifically based decision-making is always at a disadvantage in the contest with the needs of the present. Politicians and scientists must work together to bridge the divide between expert evidence, short-term politics, and the survival of all life on this planet in the Anthropocene epoch.”

UN Condemns Reported Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria from 2018 Incident

The UN-backed Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) released a report showing that there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that a Syrian military helicopter carried out a chemical attack on the town of Saraqib in 2018. The report states that although nobody was killed, a dozen people were treated for symptoms of chemical poisoning, “The [UN] Secretary-General strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons and reiterates his position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances, is intolerable, and impunity for their use is equally unacceptable,” said a United Nations spokesperson in an April 12, 2021 [statement](#). “It is imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons.”

UN Secretary-General Stresses Role of Science in Achieving Sustainability Development Goals

In [remarks](#) before the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum), UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized how the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the importance of science, technology, and innovation for human well-being and survival, as well as the need for greater global cooperation. The STI Forum, now in its sixth year, is part of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism, an online platform which supports countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by their 2030 deadline. “It is essential that we work together—across borders, sectors and disciplines—to make science and technology work for everyone,” he said. “Multi-stakeholder cooperation will continue to be the key, helping us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, address climate change, end the biodiversity and pollution crises, and rise to our other common challenges.”

UN Calls for Better Environmental Data and Indicators in Sustainability Development Goals

The UN’s Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Environment Program issued a [report](#) to measure the progress of the environmental targets under the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which outlines the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), internationally agreed targets in areas such as poverty, hunger, health, climate action, clean energy, and responsible consumption to be achieved by 2030. The Measuring Progress report reviews data and information about the environmental aspects of each of the 17 goals, and how countries are making headway based on assessment through respective SDG indicators. The authors found there has been an increase in downward trends among more indicators when compared with the previous progress report published in 2019. Gaps were also identified in the diversity and use of environmental data and statistics to inform government policies, particularly “big environmental data” produced through technologies such as remote sensing and artificial intelligence. Furthermore, the report says that many existing data products, statistics, and indicators appear to be under-utilized while governments also have failed to put emphasis on that data in policy formation or decision-making. The report calls for improved data and indicators to understand how to ensure development progresses in a practical way.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

AI Against Modern Slavery Report

Walk Free, an international human rights group focused on the eradication of modern slavery, has issued a [report](#), *AI Against Modern Slavery*, which examines the challenges and opportunities of machine readability

in modern slavery reporting. The report is part of Project AIMS (Artificial Intelligence against Modern Slavery), which uses artificial intelligence (AI) for tackling modern slavery by analyzing modern slavery statements to assess compliance with UK and Australian Modern Slavery Acts in order to prompt business action and policy responses.

Book Launch: Influences of the IEA Civic and Citizenship Education Studies

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), an international cooperative of national research institutions, government research agencies, scholars, and analysts working to evaluate, understand, and improve education worldwide, will be [launching](#) on June 1 and June 2 an open access book, *Influences of the IEA Civic and Citizenship Education Studies: Practice, Policy, and Research Across Countries and Regions*. The book identifies the multiple ways that IEA's studies of civic and citizenship education have contributed to national and international educational discourse, research, policymaking, and practice. [Dr. Judith Torney-Purta](#), Professor Emerita of Human Development in the College of Education at the University of Maryland, is co-author of the book and is a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and a Coalition member.

Policy Brief Addresses Climate-Forced Displacement in the U.S.

The Rising Voices Community Relocation & Site Expansion Working Group and the Legal Justice Coalition, facilitated by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee—a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights—and the Lowlander Center, issued a [policy brief](#), *Addressing Climate-Forced Displacement in the United States: A Just and Equitable Response*, to provide policy guidelines to advance community-led solutions to climate-forced displacement in the U.S. The brief, co-authored by 36 community leaders, legal advocates, researchers, and allies from across the U.S., highlights the inequity and injustices of climate-disaster response and recommends concrete, high-level policy solutions.

The Rising Voices Community Relocation & Site Expansion Working Group is part of the Rising Voices Center for Indigenous and Earth Sciences at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). [Lesley Laukea](#), a member of the Rising Voices Center for Indigenous and Earth Sciences at NCAR, [gave the keynote address](#) at the AAAS Science, Technology, and Human Rights Conference in October 2020. The Rising Voices program is a network of Indigenous, tribal, and community leaders and scientific professionals who assess critical community needs and pursue joint research for developing optimal plans for community action towards sustainability.

Article Examines Human Rights and Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

An [article](#) in *The Lancet*, authored by the recently established International AIDS Society–Lancet Commission on Health and Human Rights, outlined concerns over the lack of attention that has been given to human rights with respect to access to COVID-19 vaccines, in particular, for plans for distributing vaccines in low-income and middle-income countries.

National Academies Launch Virtual Exhibit of Nobel Laureates' Efforts in Human Rights

The Committee on Human Rights of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, in cooperation with Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences, has launched a [virtual exhibition](#) to highlight some of the many efforts by Nobel Laureates to promote and protect human rights as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties.

Physicians for Human Rights Report: Violence Against Health Workers in Myanmar

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) has issued a [research brief](#) on violence against health workers in Myanmar following the February 1, 2021 military coup. The brief is the result of collaboration between PHR, Insecurity Insight, and the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health and Human Rights as part of the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition. It highlights reported incidents of violence against health workers,

facilities, and transport in Myanmar between February 11 and April 12, 2021 and makes recommendations to address the violence under a United Nations framework.

UNITAD/SITU Video Shows Evidence of Crimes against Yazidi in Iraq

The United Nations Investigation Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by ISIS (UNITAD) launched a [video](#) presenting the collection of evidence gathered as part of the team's investigations of crimes committed against the Yazidi community in Sinjar, Iraq. UN Special Adviser Karim Asaad Ahmed Khan, Head of the Investigation Team, gave a briefing to the UN Security Council earlier this month in which he confirmed that the team had clear and convincing evidence that the crimes committed against the Yazidi community constitute the crime of genocide. The video was prepared in collaboration with research firm SITU Research. The [video](#) synthesizes a wide spectrum of data, visual evidence, and survivor testimony to create an account of events between August 4 and August 15, 2014.

Article Examines Measurements for Human Rights Advocacy

A recent [article](#), "Measuring Transformational Impact in Human Rights Advocacy," in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* says that although traditional scientific methods are not well suited for assessing human rights advocacy, evaluation is necessary for making informed decisions about what meaningful and realistic outcomes to seek from human rights advocacy. The author, Zehra Mirza, oversees monitoring, evaluation, and learning initiatives at Amnesty International USA.

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