

## COALITION CALENDAR

### **Register for the 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference!**

Registration for the 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference is now open! The conference will be held online October 21-22. Visit <https://sciencetechhumanrights2021.org/> to register. Early registration is available through September 1. More information is [available here](#). Students: stay tuned for the call for student e-posters, which will be issued soon.

## COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### **Update on the Student Essay Competition**

Thank you to all who submitted entries for the 2021 Coalition Student Essay Competition! This year's essays are currently being reviewed by our panel of judges, who include members of the Coalition and outside experts on science and human rights. The winners of this year's competition will be announced in early September.

### **Mentor a FutureGen Scholar!**

Are you interested in serving as a mentor for one of the Coalition's inaugural FutureGen Scholars? The Secretariat is seeking volunteers who will advise students on how to carry out their projects successfully and support their professional development. More details will be sent by email soon.

### **Human Rights at Your Organization's Annual Meeting? Let Us Know!**

Does your association have sessions or other activities at its annual meeting related to human rights? Please reply to this message and let the Secretariat know. We are happy to highlight these events in this newsletter.

## CALLS FOR INPUT

### **Survey on Authorship in International Collaborations**

Researchers funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, working in partnership with Coalition member Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society, are inviting researchers to participate in a survey on "perceptions and practices of authorship in international collaborations." The survey aims to develop an empirical basis to understand authorship challenges within these collaborations, and will inform the development of educational materials to be published by Sigma Xi on research collaborations and the responsible conduct and reporting of research. More information and a link to the survey are [available here](#).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### **August 2: Applications for the Young Refugee and Displaced Scientists Program for Women**

The World Academy of Sciences (UNESCO-TWAS) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) are seeking nominations for the Young Refugee and Displaced Scientists Program for Women. The program is aimed at supporting talented young female scientists up to around 40 years of age from one of the IsDB member countries who are currently refugees or displaced. The program fosters gender equality and supports the participation of displaced women in science. The deadline for submitting applications is August 2, 2021. Further information may be found [here](#).

### **Job: August 8: Deputy Director, Digital Investigations Lab at Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights Watch is hiring a Deputy Director for its Digital Investigations Lab, which deploys non-qualitative research methodologies, such as data analysis, remote sensing and open source techniques, for their human rights investigations. The candidate should have proven experience in conducting, and ideally leading, investigations that utilize technology and diverse research methodologies. More information is [available here](#).

### **September 15: 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](#).

## **SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA**

### **Use, Repatriation of Ancestral Remains Raises Broader Human Rights Issues**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines the ethical and human rights impact in the field of physical and biological anthropology over how institutions and individual scientists should treat human bone collections. The article provides several examples of human bone collections of enslaved and indigenous people in the U.S. and addresses the larger issue of consent, as the subjects whose remains were in those collections did not agree to be part of the collection and scientists, not descendants, had control over the remains.

A separate [article](#) in the *Mississippi Free Press* addressed the repatriating of ancestors' remains to the Chickasaw Nation. The article details how the state of Mississippi applied the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), a federal law mandating that all institutions and museums receiving federal funds report an inventory of human remains and funerary items. In March 2021, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History announced that it had repatriated 403 Native American remains and 83 lots of burial objects to the Chickasaw Nation, the largest return of human remains in the state's history and the first for the department. The Mississippi state government then launched a new Mississippi NAGPRA website with information to assist those in the repatriation process and gained tribal approval for an initiative to facilitate repatriations of all Mississippians removed from the state.

### **Community-Academic Partnerships Addressed Health Equity in Flint**

A recent [article](#) in *Nature* outlined how community-academic collaborations with local advocates advanced health equity in Flint, Michigan following that city's crisis of lead-based contamination in its water supply. The article outlines that Flint's water crisis came to light because of strong research partnerships between activists, academics, and other specialists and that these partnerships continue to advance address broader issues in health equity. Efforts include identifying neighborhood conditions, including crime levels, asthma rates, and access to healthy food and assessing projects to improve them.

### **National Academies Urge that Science Guide Examination of Origins of COVID-19**

The Presidents of the National Academies of Sciences, Medicine, and Engineering issued a [joint statement](#) to urge that investigations into the origins of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 be guided by scientific principles, including reliance on verifiable data, reproducibility, objectivity, transparency, peer review, international collaboration, minimizing conflicts of interest, findings based on evidence, and clarity regarding uncertainties. "Misinformation, unsubstantiated claims, and personal attacks on scientists surrounding the different theories of how the virus emerged are unacceptable, and are sowing public confusion and risk undermining the public's trust in science and scientists, including those still leading efforts to bring the pandemic under control," they said in the statement.

### **US Supreme Court Ruling Narrows U.S. Corporate Liability in Overseas Human Rights Cases**

A [recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling](#) in *Nestlé USA, Inc. v. Doe* limited U.S. corporate liability for human rights violations overseas. The case involved six citizens of Mali who had sued Nestlé USA and Cargill over claims that the companies profited from child slavery on Côte d'Ivoire cocoa farms. The plaintiffs argued that although the defendant U.S. corporations did not own those farms, they allegedly provided them with resources in the form of training, fertilizer, tools, and cash in exchange for the exclusive right to purchase cocoa, which they then processed and sold in the U.S.

In its ruling, the Court decided on the application of the Alien Tort Statute (ATS), a 1789 federal law that allows foreign nationals to bring civil claims in U.S. federal court against defendants who violated international law or a U.S. treaty. In a setback for human rights, the Court ruled that the ATS does not confer jurisdiction over claims against U.S. corporations that occurred overseas if the only domestic conduct consists of “general corporate activity,” thereby limiting ATS liability. On the positive side for human rights, however, the Court rejected an argument by the defendants that U.S. corporations should be immune from all lawsuits under the ATS, asserting that the ATS does not provide special protections against all lawsuits. An [analysis](#) by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), an organization focused on human rights and constitutional rights in a global digital environment, further explains the case and its human rights implications.

### **Op-Ed Urges Use of Science in Protecting LGBTQ+ Rights**

An [op-ed](#) in *Scientific American* asserts that recent measures in certain states to limit LGBTQ+ rights in the form of legislation that restricts access to gender-affirming healthcare for transgender or transitioning individuals is in contravention with science. At least 35 bills have been proposed or passed in states nationwide that restrict healthcare access, according to the article, which cited a 2020 study in the journal *Pediatrics* that found that trans children who wanted hormone treatments and did not receive them faced greater lifetime odds of suicidal thoughts.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **WHO Director-General Stresses Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccines, Treatments**

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that although countries have made progress in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, more needs to be done to ensure equitable distribution of personal protective equipment, tests, treatments, and vaccines. He [spoke](#) before the Facilitation Council for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, which provides high-level political leadership and enabling advice to facilitate the work of the ACT Accelerator, a partnership launched by WHO and other organizations. He stressed the importance of global initiatives such as COVAX, which seeks to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, and the facilitation of technology transfer. Last month, the UN agency announced it was supporting the establishment in South Africa of the first technology transfer hub for mRNA vaccines, where manufacturers from developing countries will be trained in how to produce these new treatments.

### **UN Expert Addresses Impact of Disinformation on Human Rights**

In a [report](#) presented to the UN Human Rights Council, Irene Khan, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, [examined](#) the threats posed by disinformation to human rights, democratic institutions, and development processes and how the responses by States and companies have been problematic, inadequate and detrimental to human rights. She is calling for multidimensional and multistakeholder responses grounded in an international human rights framework, which includes calling for social media companies to review their business model and States to recalibrate their response to disinformation, enhance the role of free, independent and diverse media, and invest in media and digital literacy.

### **UN To Establish Expert Panel to Examine Human Rights and Police Use of Force**

The UN Human Rights Council [passed a resolution](#) on the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers. The Council decided to establish an international independent expert mechanism for a period of three years, comprising three experts with law enforcement and human rights expertise, to investigate governments' responses to peaceful anti-racism protests and all violations of international human rights law and to contribute to accountability and redress for victims.

### **International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies' Executive Committee Condemns Continuing Repression in Nicaragua**

The Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, an alliance of 90 national academies and scholarly societies, is [calling](#) on Nicaraguan authorities, in line with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, to put an end to repressive measures, including the suppression of peaceful dissent, and facilitate the release of individuals imprisoned as a consequence of their exercise of fundamental rights and electoral freedoms. They are also calling on Nicaraguan authorities to permit access to the country by international human rights mechanisms to monitor, document, and analyze the human rights situation.

### **UN Experts Call for Cleanup of Oil Pollution in Indigenous Communities in Peru**

Francisco Cali Tzay, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, and Marcos Orellana, UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights, [are calling](#) on Peruvian authorities to clean up oil pollution in indigenous communities before allowing more oil drilling in the remote Amazonian Loreto region of northern Peru. Their call comes as the Peruvian government is fast-tracking a consultation process to award a 30-year contract to the company, Pluspetrol Norte S.A., despite the company not honoring prior pledges to clean up damaged areas and compensate the communities.

### **UN, Human Rights Watch Disagree Over UN Practices in Rohingya Refugee Registration**

UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, has contested claims made by Human Rights Watch and other groups that the agency did not properly follow procedure in registration of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Human Rights Watch [asserts](#) that UNHCR improperly collected and shared personal information from ethnic Rohingya refugees with Bangladesh, which shared it with Myanmar to verify people for possible repatriation. It based its findings on interviewing Rohingya refugees about their registration experiences with UNHCR and aid workers, analysts, local activists, journalists, and lawyers who observed or participated in the Rohingya registration process. In response, UNHCR [said](#) that it had followed procedure and had explained all purposes of the data-gathering exercise and obtained consent. The agency said that its data-collection efforts were aimed at finding durable solutions for the refugees and that no Rohingya were put at risk.

### **Scientific Publisher, Editor at Odds Over Response to Human Rights Abuses in China**

Professor David Curtis of University College London's Genetics Institute has resigned as Editor-in-Chief of the *Annals of Human Genetics* in protest after his publisher ruled against his decision not to accept editorial submissions from China due to human rights abuses against the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, according to a [report](#) in *The Guardian*. *The Annals of Human Genetics* was one of five journals, including *The Lancet*, *The BMJ*, and *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, that refused to publish an article suggesting that academic journals should take a stance against China's human rights violations in Xinjiang. Following that decision, Professor Curtis adopted an editorial policy not to accept submissions from China due to what he views as complicity by the Chinese medical and scientific establishment in human rights abuses against the Uyghurs, which have included the mass collections of DNA samples without consent.

### **Legal Strategy, Science, and Human Rights Examined in Climate Litigation in Brazil**

A recent [article](#) in OpenGlobalRights analyzes climate change litigation in Brazil through a human rights framework. It examines a public interest climate civil action filed in October 2020 by the Institute for Amazonian Studies (IEA) seeking to impose climate protection obligations on the Brazilian government. Influenced by previous cases of global climate litigation in Colombia, the Netherlands, and the U.S., the authors say that the IEA climate lawsuit shares two characteristics with these important precedents: the claim to impose climate-related obligations on a national government and a robust constitutional basis for its arguments.

## NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

### **Australian Human Rights Commission Issues Report on Human Rights and Technology**

The Australian Human Rights Commission has issued its [Human Rights and Technology Final Report](#) to provide a human rights framework for the use of new and emerging digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI). The report provides 38 recommendations for the Australian government to ensure human rights compliance in these new technologies.

### **Article Addresses Evidentiary Gap in Climate Litigation**

A recent [article](#) in *Nature Climate Change* assesses the scientific and legal bases for establishing causation and judicial treatment of scientific evidence in 73 climate lawsuits. The study found that the evidence submitted and referenced in these cases lags behind advanced climate science, thereby impeding causation claims. The authors assert that better use of methodologies in attribution science could address obstacles to causation and improve the prospects of climate litigation.

### **Examining Public Mental Health, Human Rights, and Atrocity Prevention**

The *Health and Human Rights Journal* published a [special section](#) in June, *Public and Mental Health, Human Rights, and Atrocity Prevention*, which featured articles that examine public health and mental health rights issues that emerge from prevention efforts related to identity-based violence and mass atrocity crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The authors examine the ways in which rights and health frameworks, methods, research, tools, and practice can be adapted toward a more sophisticated and interdisciplinary understanding and application of atrocity prevention.

### **UN Report Examines the Right to Education as a Cultural Right**

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education presented a [report](#), *The Right to Education as a Cultural Right*, to the UN Human Rights Council that examines the cultural dimensions of the right to education, considered crucial to the realization of the universal right to inclusive and quality education.

### **WHO Issues Guidance on Ethics and Governance of AI for Health**

The World Health Organization issued [guidance](#), *Ethics & Governance of Artificial Intelligence for Health*, to put ethics and human rights at the center of the design, deployment, and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in health-related functions: diagnosis, treatment, health research, drug development, and governments carrying out public health functions, including surveillance and outbreak response.

### **Op-Ed Stresses Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Health Equity Research**

An [op-ed](#) in *The Lancet* asserts that the future of health equity research and policy must be holistic and intersectional and include people with disabilities as subjects. The article explains that people with disabilities can face similar types of systemic barriers to health as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, including stigma and discriminatory policies. Additional challenges exist in access and accessibility that are unique to the disability community, such as physical barriers and gaps in accessibility of communication and information. The article also calls for the inclusion of researchers with disabilities.

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