

## COALITION CALENDAR

### October 17-19, 2022: AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

Mark your calendars! The 2022 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference will be held on October 17-19. Public health conditions permitting, the current plan is for a hybrid event, with some sessions online and other events in person at AAAS headquarters in Washington, DC. More information about this year's conference theme and the call for session proposals coming soon.

## CALLS FOR INPUT

### Mar 7: Call for Input: UN Report on Mercury, Small-Scale Gold Mining, & Human Rights

The Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights is seeking input from States and other stakeholders to inform his thematic report on mercury, artisanal, and small-scale gold mining and human rights. The report will be presented to the 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2022. The deadline to submit input is March 7, and further information may be found [here](#).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Job: Executive Director, OpenAQ

[OpenAQ](#), a tech non-profit whose mission is to fight air inequality with open data and community, is searching for its next Executive Director. To learn more about this opportunity and how to apply, please find a [Prospectus here](#). OpenAQ organized a plenary session at the [AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference](#) held in October.

### Jan 30: Executive Director at EngageMedia

Engage Media is seeking an Executive Director to lead the organization in its mission of promoting digital rights, open and secure technology, and documentation of social issues in the Asia-Pacific. Applications are due January 30, and the expected starting date is in March 2022 or earlier. Further information may be found [here](#).

### Jan 31: Engineering for Change Summer Fellowship

Engineering for Change (E4C), which seeks to prepare, educate, and activate the international engineering workforce to improve the quality of life of underserved communities globally, is seeking applicants for its Summer Fellowship program. The fellowship is a workforce development program at the intersection of technology and social impact to empower early-career engineers, architects, scientists, and technical professionals to solve local and global challenges and advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Applications are due January 31, and additional information may be found [here](#).

### Jan 31: American University's 2022 Human Rights Essay Award Competition

The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at American University Washington College of Law is accepting submissions for the upcoming 2022 Human Rights Essay Award Competition. American University Washington College of Law will award two winners—one for submissions in English and one for submissions in Spanish—with a full scholarship to complete the Certificate of Attendance or Diploma in the 2022 Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which will take place from May 30 to June 17, 2022. The topic of the 2022 Competition is “Climate Change and Human Rights: Impacts, Responsibilities, and Opportunities.” Submissions are due January 31, 2022, and further information may be found [here](#).

### **Feb. 15: Grants under the Institute of International Education’s Scholar Rescue Fund**

The Scholar Rescue Fund of the Institute of International Education (IIE-SRF), an independent not-for-profit organization, has launched the “Vartan Gregorian Research Grants in the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund,” to recognize the late Dr. Gregorian, a member of the IIE Board of Trustees, and his work in promoting global peace, expanding access to international education, and protecting threatened scholars. Approximately four IIE-SRF partners will be selected to receive grants of up to \$25,000 that will help fund original research or other projects that deepen knowledge of the threats faced by academics globally and/or that explore innovative ideas for supporting these scholars. Applications are due February 15, and further information may be found [here](#).

### **Feb. 15: Call for Papers: *Forced Migration Review***

The journal *Forced Migration Review* is seeking articles for an issue, to be published in July 2022, which will focus on voice and representation and response and accountability as it relates to policy and practices stemming from forced migration and displacement. Articles are due February 15, 2022, and further information may be found [here](#).

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

### **D.C. Attorney General Introduces Bill to Ban “Algorithmic Discrimination”**

Last month, the District of Columbia’s Attorney General Karl A. Racine [introduced legislation](#)—said to be the first comprehensive bill of its type across the country—that would hold businesses accountable for preventing biases in their automated decision-making algorithms and require them to report and correct any bias that is detected. The proposal would also increase transparency by requiring companies to inform consumers about what personal information they collect and how that information is used to make decisions. To root out discrimination in automated decision-making tools, Racine’s legislation would make it illegal for businesses and organizations to use discriminatory algorithms in four key areas: education, employment, housing, and public accommodations and services, including credit, healthcare, and insurance.

### **Former Google Researcher Launches New AI Research Institute**

Timnit Gebru, a former Google scientist and co-lead of the company’s Ethical AI research team who was controversially let go in 2020, has launched the [Distributed Artificial Intelligence Research Institute](#) to perform long-term, community-based and interdisciplinary research for developing AI for low-resource settings and language technology for marginalized communities. She is now serving as Executive Director of the Institute. Further information may be found [here](#).

### **Article Provides Research on Impact of Physiological Stress on Undocumented Migration**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* describes a model used to evaluate the physiological stress associated with undocumented migration across a commonly traversed section of the southern border of the U.S. and its impact. The study found that locations of migrant death are disproportionately clustered within regions of greatest predicted physiological stress, such as those areas with evaporative water loss. The authors say that an empirical understanding of the biological stresses associated with these migrations will play a key role in the development of social, political, and medical strategies for alleviating adverse effects and risk of death.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **The European Court of Human Rights Rules on Surveillance Laws in Bulgaria**

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) [ruled](#) earlier this month that Bulgaria’s laws on secret surveillance, including retention and accessing of communications data, violate the right to respect for private life and correspondence under the European Convention on Human Rights. The application was made in October 2012 by two Bulgarian lawyers and two NGOs: the Association for European Integration and Human

Rights and the Access to Information Foundation. They asserted that they were at risk of state surveillance due to the nature of their activities and that Bulgarian laws did not provide sufficient safeguards and remedies against arbitrary or abusive secret surveillance and accessing of communications data. A link to the ruling may be found [here](#).

### **Article Highlights Project to Provide COVID-19 Vaccines to Indigenous Group in Brazil**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* describes an expedition of healthcare workers and NGOs bringing COVID-19 vaccines to the riverine people, riverside dwellers who live in remote areas of Brazil's Amazon rainforest. The Brazilian government views the riverine people as a traditional group—a category that also includes Indigenous tribes and descendants of runaway enslaved Africans. These groups were given priority status to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in a national plan released in December 2020, following pressure from human rights activists and local leaders. Although many Indigenous groups, which receive care from a special federally funded health department, have been vaccinated, the riverine peoples depend on local municipalities, which lack sufficient resources to provide the needed healthcare services.

### **U.S., Australia, Denmark, Norway Launch Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative**

Last month, the governments of the U.S, Australia, Denmark, and Norway launched a new multilateral partnership, the [Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative](#), to curb the use of surveillance tools and other related technologies by authoritarian governments in human rights abuses. Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the UK also expressed support for the initiative. The initiative spells out a series of measures, including working to develop a voluntary written code of conduct intended to guide the application of human rights criteria to export licensing policy and practice. The partnership was announced as part of the Summit for Democracy held at the White House last month.

### **COVAX Says More Support Needed to Improve Access to COVID-19 Vaccines**

COVAX, a global initiative for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, [reported](#) that on January 15, a shipment of 1.1 million COVID-19 vaccines to Rwanda included the billionth dose supplied via COVAX. COVAX, with its partners, is leading what it characterizes as the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history, with deliveries to 144 countries to date. It reports, however, that more work is needed to improve vaccine access, particularly to low-income countries. It reported that of the 194 Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO), 36 WHO Member States have vaccinated less than 10% of their population, and 88 less than 40%. A recent [article](#) in *Science* provided a further update. COVAX initially set a goal of vaccinating 20% of the population in every country. To accomplish this, COVAX said it needed to have 2 billion doses available by the end of 2021. Its recent [forecasting report](#) issued last month shows that it fell short of that goal and that more support from governments and other stakeholders is needed.

### **Facebook Considering Human Rights Assessment in Ethiopia if Data Science Feasible**

Meta Platforms, the parent company of Facebook, said it would assess the feasibility of commissioning an independent human rights assessment into its work in Ethiopia, according to a [Reuters report](#). The company's oversight board, which issues non-binding recommendations on content moderation, had recommended that Meta commission a human rights due diligence assessment, to be completed in six months, which would include a review of Meta's language capabilities in Ethiopia and a review of measures taken to prevent the misuse of its services in the country. The company said not all elements of the recommendation may be feasible in terms of timing, data science, or approach and that it will continue its existing human rights due diligence and update whether it could act on the board's recommendation within the next few months.

## **NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES**

### **UNESCO Report Addresses Right of Freedom for Scientific Researchers**

The Permanent Delegation of Denmark to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a [report](#), *Critical Voices: UNESCO's Instruments in Defense of Freedom of Expression of*

*Artists, Journalists and Scientific Researchers*. The report reviews and analyzes UNESCO's human rights-related legal instruments and presents various options and possible steps to be taken in order to protect and further strengthen the right to freedom of expression for three key professional groups, artists, journalists, and scientific researchers, within the mandate of UNESCO.

### **Physicians for Human Rights Issues Report on Healthcare, Human Rights in Northern Syria**

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) issued a [report](#), *Destruction, Obstruction, and Inaction: The Makings of a Health Crisis in Northern Syria*, which describes how the Syrian government's attacks on health infrastructure in northern Syria and its attempts to impede the delivery of humanitarian aid has produced deep disparities in access to healthcare, thereby effectively denying people's right to health. PHR says understanding this issue is vital in light of the UN Security Council's meeting this month (January 2022), where it reauthorized the last remaining border crossing in northern Syria for UN humanitarian aid, Bab al-Hawa, which provides aid to 3.4 million people in northwest Syria, for another six months.

### **National Institute of Aging Reports on Real-World Research To Address Health Disparities**

The National Institute of Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health, highlights in a recent [blog](#) examples of real-world research NIA supports to analyze and address health disparities. NIA says this focus has become even more urgent since early 2020 when equity gaps based on race or ethnicity, as well as socioeconomic status, were widened by the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic trends.

### **Citizen Lab Releases Findings of Investigation Over Misuse of Spyware in El Salvador**

The Citizen Lab, an interdisciplinary laboratory based at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto, released the [results](#) of a collaborative investigation into the abuse of NSO Group's Pegasus spyware that was used to target members of the press and civil society in El Salvador. The investigation led to the identification of 35 Pegasus-infected individuals (37 devices) among members of El Salvador's media and civil society.

### **Article Highlights Human Rights Implications of Biometrics Used in Counter Terrorism**

Just Security, an online forum for the rigorous analysis of national security, foreign policy, and rights, highlights in a recent [article](#) the human rights implications of the use of biometrics for counter-terrorism purposes and recent policy initiatives in this area.

### **Briefing Details Violence, Other Actions Taken Against Healthcare Workers in Myanmar**

Insecurity Insight, a non-profit that applies data collection and analysis methods to generate insights relevant for aid workers, aid agencies and those concerned with the protection of health workers, educators, and refugees, issued a [briefing](#), *Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Myanmar*, to detail the actions (such as arrests and violence) taken against healthcare workers in Myanmar from February to November 2021 following a military coup in the country in early 2021.

Publisher: AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program

Editor: Patricia Van Arnum

Associate Editor: Mary Cate Carroll

Contributors: Joel Ericson, Theresa Harris, Nate Weisenberg