

## WHAT WE'RE READING

### Confronting Human Rights Abuses in the Scientific Literature

As a new feature in the Coalition newsletter, we are highlighting opinion pieces or other such articles that we found to be thought-provoking in the area of science and human rights. This month, it is David W. Christianson's April 5 piece from *Chemical & Engineering News*, "[Confronting human rights abuses in the scientific literature.](#)"

We are interested in your input as well! To share articles of interest for consideration in future Coalition newsletters, email Nate Weisenberg at [nweisenberg@aaas.org](mailto:nweisenberg@aaas.org).

## COALITION CALENDAR

### May 11: Coalition Webinar: Adapting to Climate Change - Insights from Indigenous Peoples

Join the Coalition's Scientific Collaborations with Human Rights Organizations project team and the American Chemical Society (ACS) on Wednesday, May 11 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time for the webinar [Adapting to Climate Change: Insights from Indigenous Peoples](#). You can [register for the webinar here](#). Many thanks to the ACS team for hosting this event! Please note: you will need to create a free ACS account to register for the webinar.

### May 15: Call for Abstracts: 2022 Coming Together for Action Conference

The Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice is seeking abstracts for presentations to be made at its upcoming conference, to be held October 28-30, 2022. This year's theme is *New Directions for Behavioral Health: Building Socially Connected and Just Communities*. Abstracts are due May 15, and further information may be found [here](#).

### May 20: Proposal Deadline for AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

We are now accepting session proposals for the 2022 AAAS [Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference](#)! The conference will be held virtually and in person in Washington, D.C., from October 17-19, 2022. The theme of this year's conference is *The Human Right to Science and Freedom of Expression*. For more information, please [read the Call for Proposals here](#). Session proposals are due by May 20.

### June 16: Proposal Deadline for 2023 AAAS Annual Meeting

The 2023 AAAS Annual Meeting will be held virtually and in-person in Washington, D.C., from March 2-5, 2023. The theme for the event is "[Science for Humanity](#)." The deadline to submit a proposal is June 16, and more information [is available here](#).

## COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### APA Takes Action to Promote Equity, Inclusion in Psychological Science, Practice

A special [report](#) in the March issue of the American Psychological Association's (APA) monthly publication, *Monitor on Psychology*, highlights action being taken by APA to address issues of equity and inclusion in the field of psychology. The report says that following a call from its members to address critical societal issues amid a reckoning on race in America, APA identified more than 50 recommendations that the association and the discipline as a whole can follow to help dismantle systemic racism within the field. The report says that

APA has undertaken a comprehensive inventory of equity, diversity, and inclusion work in science, education, and clinical practice, and anti-racism work is currently underway to help identify areas where energy is currently focused, where psychology is making the greatest progress, and where there are gaps that need to be addressed.

### **APS Hosts Webinar “In Their Own Words: The Stories of Xiaoxing Xi, Anming Hu, and Gang Chen”**

On April 18, the American Physical Society (APS) [convened a webinar](#) featuring scientists Xiaoxing Xi, Anming Hu, and Gang Chen, who were arrested by the U.S. Department of Justice over alleged research security violations. All three were ultimately absolved of wrongdoing, but the investigations have had a lasting impact on both the researchers themselves and on other international students and scientists in the United States. The recording and related resources [are available here](#).

### **2021 Conference Recordings Online**

Recordings of the majority of sessions from the 2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference are online on the AAAS YouTube channel, including a panel on [incorporating human rights education into science classes](#), a discussion led by psychologists on [health inequities, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the right to science](#), and a workshop on [communication strategies to bolster engagement between scientists and policymakers](#). You can watch the recordings as a playlist [here](#).

## **CALLS FOR INPUT**

### **June 1: Input for National Academies’ Study of Population Descriptors in Genomics Research**

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine are [seeking input](#) on the current use of population descriptors, such as race, ethnicity, and ancestry, in genomics research and how the use of population descriptors could be improved upon in the future. The input will help inform a study that the National Academies are conducting that is reviewing and assessing existing methodologies, benefits, and challenges in the use of race and ethnicity and other population descriptors in genomics research and best practices. Input is due June 1, and can be provided via this [survey](#).

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **May 8: Applications Due for Senior Geospatial Analyst at Human Rights Watch**

The Technology and Human Rights Division of Human Rights Watch is seeking a full-time geospatial analyst to provide remote sensing, GIS, and field data-collection support for research on violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Applications are due May 8, and further information may be found [here](#).

### **June 15: International Council of Psychologists Human Rights Award**

The International Council of Psychologists (ICP), an international professional association of psychologists with the goal of supporting human rights, dignity, justice, and international cooperation for peace and understanding, is accepting nominations for its new [Human Rights Award](#). Nominations are due by June 15, and more information is [available here](#).

### **June 30: 2023 AAAS Award for Scientific Freedom and Responsibility**

AAAS is now accepting nominations for its 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. Nominations are accepted through June 30. For more information, to read about past recipients, and to submit a nomination, [click here](#).

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

### **Chemistry Professor Found Guilty of Not Disclosing Ties to Chinese Research Institute**

Earlier this month, a [federal jury found](#) a former chemistry professor at the University of Kansas guilty of charges brought against him under the China Initiative, a (since-renamed) program launched in 2018 aimed at rooting out intellectual property theft and economic espionage of U.S.-based research to China. The scientist, Franklin Tao, was found guilty of three charges of wire fraud and one count of making a false statement to U.S. government officials about his ties to a Chinese research institution. The China Initiative, which was launched by the Trump administration, had been criticized for having a chilling effect on U.S.-based scientists of Chinese origin and international research collaborations. The program has since been re-focused to a broader “strategy for countering nation-state threats.” Further details of the case and related cases were explained in a recent [article](#) in *Science*; a later *Science* [article](#) examined the grounds on which the ruling could be overturned.

### **U.S. National Academy of Sciences Partners To Support Scientists Forced to Flee Ukraine**

The Breakthrough Prize Foundation, a nonprofit organization recognizing scientists and scientific research, has formed a new [partnership](#) with the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to support humanitarian relief efforts for scientists forced to flee from Ukraine due to the Russian invasion. Part of a \$3-million fund pledged for humanitarian relief, the Foundation will dedicate \$1 million to the NAS’s Scientists and Engineers in Exile and Displaced (SEED) initiative, which helps scientists and engineers maintain their livelihoods during the current upheaval. Under an agreement with the Ukrainian and Polish academies of sciences, the U.S. NAS’ support for scientists and their families will include providing displaced researchers with grants and placements in research institutions for up to six months. The partnership is part of the [U.S. NAS’ work](#) in helping scientists, engineers, and healthcare workers in Ukraine by safeguarding the human rights of researchers whose work is threatened or interrupted because of geopolitical conflict.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Highlighted in Federal FY 2023 Budget**

As part of an [announcement](#) that outlined President Biden’s FY 2023’s Budget for global health initiatives, the Biden administration is seeking \$597 million to continue support for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programs globally, as well as a \$56-million contribution to the United Nations Population Fund. The announcement also highlighted recent policies and actions by the Administration to advance SRHR, including a resumption by the U.S. State Department of reporting on SRHR issues in its Annual Country Reports on Human Rights.

### **Indigenous Tribe in California Using Archaeological, Genetics Research To Establish Identity**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* highlights how archaeological and genetics research is being used to support the efforts of the Ohlone people to gain federal recognition as a tribe. In a new study, researchers have used ancient DNA from two archaeological excavations to identify the Ohlone’s genetic signature and link ancient individuals, some buried nearly 2,000 years ago, to their modern-day descendants. The Ohlones hope the study and others to come will bolster its efforts to be recognized as a tribe by the U.S. federal government, which would provide the tribe with legal sovereignty and access to federal programs designed to support tribes.

### **Citational Justice Emerging as an Issue in Scientific Research**

A recent [article](#) in *Nature* highlights recent studies that show bias in citing research done by women and minority groups and the call by some for “citational justice.” The article says that studies in bibliometrics have revealed persistent biases in citation patterns, and that a number of researchers are calling on academics to acknowledge and address inequities in citational practices.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **UN Secretary-General Outlines Next Steps To Meet Goal of Limiting Global Warming**

Earlier this month, UN Secretary-General António Guterres [outlined](#) what governments, the private sector, and other entities need to do to cut global greenhouse gas emissions in order to reach a target set by the Paris

Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030. His comments came with the release of a new report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, which provides an updated global assessment of climate-change mitigation progress and pledges and examines the sources of global emissions. A summary of the report may be found [here](#), the full report [here](#), and comments from the IPCC chair [here](#). The report is the third report of the IPCC's sixth major assessment on climate change. The IPCC [opened](#) a four-day meeting in Dublin, Ireland, beginning on April 25 to put together a final synthesis report to be presented in September in time to inform the 2023 Global Stocktake by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, when countries will provide their progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement.

### **Human Rights Watch Urges OECD To Prioritize Human, Environmental Rights in Brazil**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is urging the Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ambassadors, and delegates to the OECD's Environmental Policy Committee to provide priority to human rights and environmental rights as the OECD's Environment Policy Committee prepares to review the proposed roadmap for Brazil's potential accession to the OECD Convention. HRW is critical of the Brazilian government for policies and actions that it says have contributed to the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest and to human rights abuses of Indigenous people and environmental defenders. It has issued recommendations, including ways to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and requirements for companies to conduct human rights and environmental due diligence on their supply chains and business relationships. Its letter, recommendations, and a briefing document may be found [here](#).

### **Impasse Arises Over Use of Digital Sequence Information in Int'l Biodiversity Pact**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines the debate over the use of digital sequence information (DSI) that has arisen in negotiations leading up to a meeting later this year on the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD), a multilateral treaty on conservation and biodiversity. The debate centers around equity and public access to biodiversity data and how countries, including developed countries, may potentially benefit from the use of biodiversity in developing countries. Although the Nagoya Protocol under the CBD allow nations to create their own permits and processes for allowing outsiders to access their biodiversity and requires other signatories to enforce those rules, it does not address how nations should handle the genetic sequences and other genomic data that researchers can extract from organisms and place in digital databases. Developing nations have raised concerns that DSI would enable outside parties to make use of organisms without needing to get physical samples by downloading DNA sequences from a publicly available database and using them to engineer bacteria or other organisms. To address that concern, they support new controls on how DSI can be used and shared. Others, however, raise concerns that imposing new regulations on sharing DSI could hamper research and international collaboration in science. The article examines an impasse in negotiations under the CBD on this issue and how it may be resolved by the CBD meeting later this year.

### **Updates on Responses by Scientists, Scientific Organizations to the Ukrainian Crisis**

Publications continue to report on responses of scientists and scientific organizations on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the related impact on educational, research, and other communities. Below are some recent highlights:

- [President of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Calls for Solidarity](#) (*Nature*, March 8, 2022)
- [Do Academic Boycotts Work?](#) (*Inside Higher Ed*, March 10, 2022)
- [SRCF Signs on to Letter on the Invasion of Ukraine and Opportunities to Support Ukrainian Students, Researchers, and Their Families](#) (March 11, 2022; Coalition member activity not included in last issue) – the same letter was also signed by other Coalition members, including [Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society](#)
- [Joint Statement by UNICEF, the World Health Organization \(WHO\) and the United Nations Population Fund: Stop Attacks on Health Care in Ukraine](#) (WHO press statement, March 13, 2022)

- [Researchers Around the World Band Together to Help Fleeing Ukrainian Scientists](#) (*Chemistry World*, March 16, 2022)
- [Russia Bars Academics from International Conferences](#) (*Times Higher Education*, March 22, 2022)
- [Acoustical Society of America Statement on Ukraine](#) (March 24, 2022; Coalition member activity not included in last issue)
- [A Call to International Science Council \(ISC\) Members: How to Assist Displaced Ukrainian Scholars](#) (April 11, 2022)
- [Aid Keeps Researchers Afloat in Ukraine](#) (*Science*, April 14, 2022)
- [American Chemical Society Joins U.S. National Academy of Sciences in Effort to Support Researchers Forced to Flee Ukraine](#) (press release, April 21, 2022) and [ACS Statement on Ukraine](#)
- [Ukraine's Mounting Death Toll Includes a Growing Number of Researchers](#) (*Science*, April 22, 2022)
- [Updates from Science for Ukraine](#) (various dates)
- [ISC: Statements, Offers of Assistance and Resources on the Current War in Ukraine](#) (various dates)

### **Institute of International Education–Scholar Rescue Fund Names Three Fellows**

Three researchers were [named](#) as inaugural fellows of the Vartan Gregorian Research Grants given by the Institute of International Education (IIE)–Scholar Rescue Fund. The grants were named in honor of Vartan Gregorian, former IIE Trustee and former President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, one of IIE's founders, who was recognized for his work in promoting global peace and academic freedom by expanding access to education and international exchange and protecting threatened scholars. The fellows are: Dr. Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Professor of Government and International Affairs and Director of the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech University; Dr. Yasmine Ergas, Director of Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights; and Dr. Nandini Ramanujam, Co-Director and Program Director of the Center for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism at McGill University's Faculty of Law. These grants, each in the amount of \$25,000, will fund original research and projects that deepen knowledge of the threats faced by academics globally and explore innovative ideas for supporting these scholars.

### **Dismissals of Sexual Harassment Cases of Mexican Scientists Raises Human Rights Concerns**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* details the dismissal of sexual harassment cases against a leading plant geneticist at Mexico's National Laboratory of Genomics for Biodiversity (Langebio) due to technicalities. The decision has prompted criticism of Mexico's Internal Control Organ (OIC), the government unit charged with investigating and sanctioning sexual harassment at Mexico's Center for Research and Advanced Studies, which includes Langebio. The OIC said that the events it had investigated had occurred in 2016, but the law it used to classify the offenses as serious was not active until 2017, so it dismissed the charges. Critics of OIC's decision said that IOC could have assessed the 2016 incidents as "serious" under previous law, and that the decision reflects the ineffectiveness of the current system to pursue harassment cases. In 2019, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission found that, between 2016 and 2018, 399 cases of sexual harassment were reported in federal public institutions, but only 1% of them led to a sanction for the harasser due to a lack of effective mechanisms.

### **Increased Government Attacks on Higher Education in Nicaragua**

An [April 26 article in Science](#) highlights increasingly repressive measures to control the Nicaraguan higher education system undertaken by the government of President Daniel Ortega. These includes restrictions on research seen as "political" or related to COVID-19, the closure of eight universities, and curtailment of international scientific collaborations and university autonomy.

## **NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES**

### **Surveys Showed Scientists Faced Harassment for COVID-19 Research, Reporting**

A recent [article](#) in *Science* details the results of a survey of scientists reporting various degrees of harassment after publishing research and other information related to COVID-19. Of 510 who responded to the *Science* survey, 38% reported at least one type of attack, ranging from insults to death threats, delivered on social media, by email or phone, or sometimes in person. The article also cites concerns on harassment for non-COVID-19 topics, such as climate change and animal research. Another *Science* [article](#) examines the problem of misinformation, particularly in social media channels, on science-related topics.

### **British Medical Association Report on Health and Human Rights**

The British Medical Association has issued a new report, [Health and Human Rights in the New World \(Dis\)Order](#) to examine emerging threats in health-related human rights both globally and in the UK. The report says that environmental change and geopolitical reconfigurations are putting renewed and greater stress on human rights in the practice of medicine and wider healthcare. A brief summary of the report may be found [here](#) and the full report [here](#).

### **Human Rights Watch Examines Human Rights Imperative for Access to Low-Cost Insulin**

Human Rights Watch has provided an [analysis](#) exploring the human rights imperative for providing low-cost insulin and insulin analogs to people with diabetes, along with policy recommendations to ensure low-cost access to these products.

### **NAM Recorded Webinar: Impact of Violent Conflict on Public Health & Healthcare**

Late last month, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Public Health Association, and the Committee on Human Rights of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine held a webinar to discuss the impacts of violent conflict on public health and healthcare and strategies to protect frontline workers, ensure access to routine and emergency medical care, and maintain crucial public health infrastructure. A video and the list of speakers may be found [here](#).

### **National Academies Report Recommends NIH Should Standardize Gender Data**

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has issued a new [report](#), which recommends that the National Institutes of Health should standardize questions used to collect sex, gender, and sexual orientation data in studies and surveys. The report, *Measuring Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation* says better measurement will improve data quality, as well as the NIH's ability to identify LGBTQI+ populations and understand the challenges they face. The report also points to a lack of consistency in language used in surveys and studies, complicating data analysis and reporting, and making it difficult to compare data across different programs and studies. Highlights from the report may be found [here](#).

### **Report Highlights Impacts of Attacks on Schools in Palestine**

The [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack](#), comprised of UN agencies and NGOs, has issued a report, *Measuring the Impacts of Attacks on Education in Palestine*, to evaluate the incidence and damage caused by explosives on schools and educational systems between January 2019 and September 2021, with the majority of incidents taking place during fighting between Israeli armed forces and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza. The report was released ahead of the fourth consultation towards a political declaration on the humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which was held in Geneva earlier this month. The [report](#) also makes recommendations on how to mitigate the violence against schools and the policies needed to better protect them. In other news related to education in the region, a [March article in Haaretz](#) described new procedures by the Israeli Defense Ministry that restrict which overseas lecturers can teach at universities in the West Bank.

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