

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

2022 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

Thank you to everyone who made the 2022 [AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference](#) possible, from the Host Committee to the presenters to the Coalition members who took part in this year's event. We had 140 registrants from 8 different countries. The recordings will soon be available to all conference registrants via the conference website. Many of the sessions will also be available in the coming weeks on the [AAAS YouTube channel](#).

SPSSI Issues Statement in Support of Human Rights in Iran

Coalition member the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) issued a [statement](#) to support protesters in Iran following the death of a 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman in government custody following her arrest for allegedly wearing a hijab incorrectly. In its statement, SPSSI explains the relevance of psychological research (e.g., on grassroots movements and intersecting identities) to understanding the protests and expresses that it “stands in solidarity with the women and all people of Iran in their movement for justice, equality, and basic human rights.” One of the authors of the statement is Dr. Mehrgol Tiv, a winner of the 2019 [Coalition Student Essay Competition](#).

CALLS FOR INPUT

Nov. 15: Digital Innovation, Technologies and the Right to Health

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is seeking input for a forthcoming report on digital innovation and technologies and the right to health. The report, to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2023, will consider the benefits of the increased use of digital technologies in the planning and delivery of health information, services and care, as well as the extent to which digital technologies may open or restrict access to specific groups. It will also focus on possible positive and negative effects of artificial intelligence, the effects of the rise of web platforms and social media on access to health information and services, and the role that racism in the global health-care system makes digital health-care solutions susceptible to human rights concerns. Input is due November 15, and further information may be found [here](#).

Jan. 20, 2023: Addressing Inequalities from the COVID-19 Pandemic

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is seeking input for a report on promoting and protecting economic, social, and cultural rights in the context of addressing inequalities in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, OHCHR will convene a three-day workshop on February 6–8, 2023 on that focus. The workshop sessions will encompass focused advocacy on easing economic burdens, vaccine equity, removing structural impediments, and developing technical assistance programs to enhance the capacity-building of States, especially developing and least-developed States. Input is due by January 20, 2022, and further information may be found [here](#).

Feb 3, 2023: New Technologies & Enforced Disappearances

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances is seeking input for a thematic study on new technologies and enforced disappearances. “New technologies” refer to technological innovations that have occurred mostly over the past 20 years, including hardware and software information and communication technologies (e.g., satellite imagery, digital social networks, and online datasets),

artificial intelligence and deep learning, and digital forensic and biodata. Input is due February 3, 2023, and further information may be found [here](#).

WHAT WE'RE READING

Benefits and Ethical Challenges in Data Sharing and Community-Engaged Research

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines the ethical challenges and benefits of data sharing and community-engaged research in the context of health research. The article examines rationales and goals of data sharing in health research and of community-engaged research and highlights three areas of potential tension between these two movements: incentives and benefit sharing; group harm and power structures; and researcher engagement and responsibility sharing. This issue is particularly timely and important in light of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s updated Data Management and Sharing Policy, which will enter into force in January 2023 and establishes expectations for the sharing of scientific data generated from NIH-funded or conducted research. The article is co-authored by [Maya Sabatello](#), a former member of the Coalition's Steering Committee and a professor at Columbia University.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Jobs at University Network for Human Rights

The University Network of Human Rights, which facilitates supervised undergraduate engagement in the practice of human rights at colleges and universities in the U.S. and globally, is seeking applications for two positions. The first position is for a Program & Communications Associate to collaborate with the University Network's human rights practitioners to advance the University Network's mission while developing its institutional profile. It is also seeking full-time and part time Clinical Supervisors with experience in human rights practice and working with students to join a team dedicated to promoting social justice through supervised engagement of university students in the U.S. and abroad. Further information on both positions may be found [here](#).

Oct. 30: MOOC on Science and Human Rights

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Social and Human Sciences Sector and the Global Campus of Human Rights, a network of 100 universities seeking to advance human rights and democracy, is holding a [Massive Online Open Course \(MOOC\) on Science and Human Rights](#). The MOOC offers [30 hours of active learning](#) through readings, videos, and discussions by leading experts that will examine a human rights-based approach to scientific freedom and responsibility. The course is free and open to everyone, but may be of special interest to scientists, university-level science students, researchers, and policymakers. Registration is open through October 30. [Theresa Harris](#), Program Director of the AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program, is one of the instructors. Further information on how to enroll may be found [here](#).

Nov. 10-11: First Regional Congress on Academic Freedom in the Americas (Hybrid)

The Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas is hosting the [First Regional Conference on Academic Freedom in the Americas](#), online and in person at the Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico, November 10-11. The conference will provide an overview of academic freedom concerns in the region, an assessment of available tools to address them, and a session marking the release of *Free to Think 2022*, Scholars at Risk's annual report on attacks on the global higher education sector. Registration for the conference is [available here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

White House Releases Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights

Earlier this month, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released its [Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights](#) to help guide the design, development, and deployment of artificial

intelligence (AI) and other automated systems in keeping with human and civil rights. It outlines five main areas for rights protection: (1) protection from ineffective and unsafe systems; (2) algorithmic discrimination protections; (3) data privacy; (4) notice and explanations of automated systems being used by individuals, so they understand how and why the system contributes to outcomes that impact them; and (5) human alternatives, consideration, and fallback to allow individuals to opt out, where appropriate, and have access to a person who can quickly consider and remedy problems encountered. OSTP held a [press briefing](#) earlier this month to present the Blueprint. The AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference included a breaking session on the Blueprint featuring Dr. Suresh Venkatasubramanian, formerly of OSTP, and Jeffrey Mervis of *Science*. The recording will be available soon for registrants on the conference website.

Environmental Justice Groups Detail Use of Mapping Tool at Superfund Site

A recent [article](#) from the American Geophysical Union's (AGU) Thriving Earth Exchange describes the use of an interactive mapping tool for environmental justice efforts in Oklahoma. The tool, developed by Local Environmental Action Demanded, an environmental justice organization, was used to alert local authorities and residents of the risks of increased flooding at the Tar Creek Superfund Site, a former mining site with unremediated contamination, in Ottawa County, Oklahoma.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Human Rights Groups Call for Release of Digital Rights Defenders in Iran

Earlier this month, four human rights organizations (Access Now, ARTICLE 19, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and Front Line Defenders) [condemned](#) Iranian authorities' persecution and arrest of technologists and digital rights defenders and called for their immediate and unconditional release. "The government of Iran must immediately release detained technologists and all those arbitrarily arrested for exercising their human rights and put an end to this violent protest repression—both online and offline," said the statement. "The Iranian authorities must be independently and criminally investigated for committing—with full impunity—serious crimes under international law and other grave violations of human rights."

Ukrainian Scientific Academy President Seeks To Protect Science as War Escalates

A recent [article](#) in *Science* features an interview with Anatoly Zagorodny, President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU), to describe the work that NASU is doing to keep the organization operating in light of immense challenges stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including repairing its headquarters following bombings by the Russian military. NASU is also facing the challenge of securing funding to support its 160 institutes and 38 R&D enterprises as the Ukrainian government redirects resources to fight the war. NASU also faces electricity, heating, and water outages at its institutes, which threatens instrumentation and research samples. Once the war ends, NASU will face the challenge of attracting hundreds of researchers, who fled the country and are now working abroad, back to Ukraine.

UN Meeting Examines Science-based Solutions to Global Water Issues

Some 1,200 scientists and representatives of the private sector and civil society met at UN headquarters in New York earlier this month to [discuss ideas](#) for water and sustainability in preparation for the UN 2023 Water Conference, taking place in March. Key points emphasized by participants included moving from reactive water management to proactive, science-based solutions to solve global water issues, including access to potable water, and to put into place mechanisms to better evaluate the social, political, and economic impacts from water issues. One topic discussed was the establishment of a mechanism similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the UN body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change, to provide policymakers with science-based knowledge relating to global water issues. Participants also discussed the need for open access to databases and information on water use and

water quality, and the need to create a water and climate information system that would allow assistance for farmers, people living on shorelines, and decisionmakers.

UN Expert Warns Increasing Pesticides Use in Paraguay Compromises Human Rights

Following a visit to Paraguay, Marcos Orellana, the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights, provided [preliminary observations](#) in preparation for a future UN report on human rights and hazardous substances in that country. “Laws that control pesticides are not enforced in Paraguay,” he said. “This generates impunity for human rights violations and abuses of thousands of people exposed to toxic contamination.” He found while there were entities that seek to work the land responsibly, the agro-industrial production model favored by Paraguay’s government has harmed communities, particularly indigenous peoples and peasant communities, through increased aerial and ground spraying of pesticides. He urged authorities in Paraguay to act to ensure immediate compliance with the UN Human Rights Council’s rulings relating to human and environmental rights. He will present a full report to the Human Rights Council in September 2023. The report will also focus on the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste and implementation of international environmental agreements related to industrial chemicals and mercury, among other issues.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

New Report Maps COVID-19 Access Gaps

Matahari Global Solutions, the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, and the People’s Vaccine Alliance have issued a [report](#) to assess progress on access to COVID-19 tools (such as tests and vaccinations) across 14 countries: Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Nepal, Nigeria, Perú, Senegal, Somalia (and de facto state Somaliland), Uganda, and Ukraine.

National Academies Issue Guide for How Scientists Can Counter Misinformation

In light of misinformation on the COVID-19 pandemic and other instances of scientific misinformation, particularly online, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine have produced the [Scientist’s Guide For Countering Misinformation](#) to provide practical steps that scientists can take to assess mis- or disinformation, determine whether and how they should address it, and how to effectively communicate the corrective information they develop. The guide explains that some false claims may be addressed through sound scientific analysis and that scientists can help counter misinformation by providing evidence-based, scientifically defensible information that may discredit or refute these claims.

New Reports on Human Rights Implications from the War in Ukraine

Two recent reports examine human rights implications of the war in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Health Care Center, a health policy think tank based in Kyiv, Ukraine, has issued a report that examines the main patterns of attacks against healthcare facilities in Ukraine during the first phase of Russia’s full-scale invasion. The attacks have included targeted assaults, indiscriminate attacks, abuse of facilities during occupation, and cluster munition use. Healthcare infrastructure, including medical personnel, have special protection under international humanitarian law, and the report provides documentation of hospital attacks that aims to contribute to the legal prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russian military and political leaders. The report may be downloaded [here](#).

Separately, the International Science Council, the All European Academies, Kristiania University College, and Science for Ukraine have published a [report](#) on a conference that they co-hosted earlier this year: *Conference on the Ukraine Crisis: Responses from the European Higher Education and Research Sectors*. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations on how to support the science sector in Ukraine and in other countries affected by conflict and disaster.

Article Examines the Right to Research in Scholarly Publishing

A recent [article](#) in the American University Washington College of Law's Digital Commons examines a more human rights-oriented approach to constructing a "right to research" in scholarly publishing. The article examines copyright law and whether the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications gives rise to a "right to research," and how it may affect the applicability of copyright in the field of science.

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