

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Meet the AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice

The Coalition Secretariat, formerly known as the AAAS' Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program, has a new name to reflect an evolution in its mission: AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice. Under the new banner, the program will leverage its expertise to move beyond building awareness to a new model that empowers scientists and engineers to pursue justice by advancing trustworthy science – science that is conducted and communicated responsibly, upholding the values of scientific freedom and human rights, including the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress. More information [is available here](#).

Celebrating the 2022-23 Coalition FutureGen Scholars

The 2022-23 FutureGen Scholars have been officially announced! The winners and their projects are:

- Julia Bauer and Hana Kamran, undergraduate students at Davidson College, for their project “D4: Data-Driven Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at Davidson College.”
- Zainub Dhanani, a graduate student at Stanford University College of Medicine, for her project “Disability Equity and Inclusion in Healthcare and Medical Education.”
- Amber Mundy, a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, for her project “East Marshall Street Well Project: Crania and Mandible DNA Sequencing.”

Congratulations again to these students! More information about their projects and the FutureGen program [is available here](#).

APSA Reaffirms Opposition to “Divisive Concepts” Legislation

Coalition member the American Political Science Association (APSA) issued a [statement](#) to reaffirm its opposition to “divisive concepts” legislation, referring to U.S. state legislative proposals that seek to restrict teaching and discussions about racism in classrooms and on college campuses. APSA calls such laws and proposals “a direct threat to academic freedom,” and says such measures “can chill the speech of all scholars teaching in these states and place an outsized burden on contingent and junior faculty who lack tenure protections.” APSA issued its statement to reaffirm its strong opposition to these bills and to offer its support for all scholars who may be subjected to them. In June 2021, it [joined](#) 155 organizations and associations to oppose such measures.

FABBS Signs Letter on LGBTQI+ Equity Data Development

In response to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy's request for information for the [Federal Evidence Agenda on LGBTQI+ \(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex\) Equity](#), Coalition affiliated member the Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) [joined](#) sister scientific societies AAAS, the American Educational Research Association, the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, and the Consortium of Social Science Associations in a [community letter](#) urging the development of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) indicators. The letter calls for the National Science Foundation to measure, track, and report sexual orientation and gender identity data (SOGI) in the U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce by 2023. The letter also cites: the disparities faced by LGBTQI+ people in U.S. STEM fields; the feasibility of implementing these measures in surveys; privacy and

confidentiality measures to minimize identifiability risks; and the need for allocating NSF a budget to develop a SOGI data infrastructure.

CALLS FOR INPUT

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, 2023, 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

Article Examines “Weathering” and How to Address Racial Bias in Health Research

A recent [article](#) in *Science* examines a new study from Stanford University that addressed the phenomenon of “weathering,” which refers to the adverse effects caused by continual stress from racial discrimination in minority populations. The new study included minority participation that had been excluded from a long-running analysis of women’s health, the Study of Women’s Health Across the Nation (SWAN), which tracks the health of middle-age and older women to observe how mid-life hormonal changes affected various aspects of their health. The new study enrolled roughly 9,000 women who had been excluded in the previous iteration of the study, which had not accounted for weathering. The results of the new study showed more adverse health effects and earlier display of these health issues in minority women. The new study is an important example on how to address biases in health research.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Job: Jan. 1: Policy Director at Data & Society

Data & Society, a nonprofit research organization studying the social implications of data-centric technologies and automation, is seeking a Policy Director, to work internally to coordinate policy engagement opportunities across its research programs, and externally to represent and position its research and researchers to engage with multiple policy-focused communities on emerging technology and society issues. Applications are due January 1, 2023, and further information may be found [here](#).

Jan 2: Applications Due for IIE-SRF Fellowships for Threatened Scholars

The Institute of International Education’s Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) is [encouraging](#) professors and researchers facing threats to their lives or careers to apply for a fellowship supported by IIE-SRF. Fellowships support temporary academic positions at universities and other higher education institutions anywhere in the world where the scholars can continue their academic work in safety. Applications must be submitted by January 2, 2022 for possible consideration at IIE-SRF’s Selection Committee meeting in March 2023.

Feb. 6: Call for Proposals: SPSSI 2023 Conference (June 25-27, 2023)

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) is calling for presentation proposals for its upcoming annual conference, *Transforming our World: Using Research and Action to Address (In)Visible Wounds*, to be held June 25–27, 2023 in Denver, Colorado. The conference will examine the role of research and social action to better understand and address the impact of a myriad of issues recently confronting society as a whole and on human rights: the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, economic uncertainty, the storming of the U.S. Capitol, damage caused by climate change, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, continued racial injustices and state-sanctioned violence, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. Applications are due February 6, 2023, and further information may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

Meta Oversight Board Issues Advisory Opinion on Facebook, Instagram Program for High-Profile Users and Free Expression Rights

A [report by NPR](#) highlights findings from the Oversight Board of Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, which found that a Facebook and Instagram program that gives celebrities, politicians, and other high-profile users special treatment does more for the parent company's business interests than its stated purpose of protecting users' free-expression rights. [The Oversight Board called](#) for the overhaul of the program in a report that included wide-ranging recommendations to bring the program in line with international principles and Meta's own stated values. Meta said in a statement it would review and respond to the board's recommendations – which are not binding – within 90 days.

U.S. Supreme Court Orders Keeping COVID-19 Era Policy Restricting Asylum Seekers

The U.S. Supreme Court [issued a temporary administrative stay order](#) late this month that delayed the end of a policy that allowed U.S. authorities to restrict asylum seekers from crossing the Mexican border into the U.S. The policy, invoked in the form of a public emergency health order under Title 42 of the Public Health Service Act, was first launched in March 2020 by the Trump Administration to purportedly defend against the spread of COVID-19, but was seen by human rights groups, immigration groups, public health experts, and others as an immigration enforcement tool to limit asylum seekers into the U.S. The Biden Administration had sought to end the policy. The Supreme Court's order delays a lower court order issued last month that would have lifted the expulsion measure on December 21, 2022. The Court's order has created uncertainty, a rise in migrants seeking to cross the border, and concerns for the human rights of those migrants. The Biden Administration has [asked the Court](#) to deny a request by certain states to keep the Title 42 pandemic-era border restrictions in place indefinitely, saying the expulsions of migrants under the policy can no longer be justified on public health grounds. The Administration also requested a delay in ending the policy until December 27 to allow time for the Administration to make further preparations for an influx of migrants. In a separate filing, the American Civil Liberties Union, which secured the lower court ruling that declared Title 42 unlawful, also urged the Supreme Court to reject the states' request to delay the end of the border expulsions. A final ruling by the Court on the states' case is pending (as of December 26, 2022).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Launches Initiative to Mark the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The United Nations is [launching](#) a year-long campaign to promote and recognize the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which will be celebrated on December 10, 2023. The UN made the announcement on this year's Human Rights Day, December 10, 2022. The UDHR was adopted in 1948, and the year-long campaign seeks to further highlight the universality of the UDHR and the activism associated with it.

China's Zero-COVID-19 Policies Raise Human Rights Concerns

COVID-19-related issues continue to have human rights implications in China. Recent crackdowns by authorities against people protesting the country's zero-COVID-19 policy has resulted in violence and arrests and have raised human rights concerns. A recent [commentary](#) by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace outlines the situation in China and the dilemma the country faces in trying to limit COVID-19 infections through its zero-COVID-19 policy despite ensuing social unrest. Another [report](#) describes increased censorship in the country, particularly targeted at social media platforms being used by individuals to protest the lockdowns and other government actions. In addition, human rights defenders are raising concerns over Chinese authorities' use of health codes, designed to protect against the spread of COVID-19, as a means to limit human rights activists' freedom of movement. Under the health codes system, which uses telecommunications network data and PCR COVID-19 test results, individuals are assigned a QR code on their phone that switches between green, yellow or red, depending on factors such as whether they have been in the same spot as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (yellow), they themselves have tested positive (red), or if they are clear to proceed (green). Although the Chinese government announced earlier this month that it would discontinue the national health codes, cities and provinces have their own versions that continue to be used, including in restaurants, offices, hotels, and gyms, which require local codes to enter. A recent AP [report](#) outlines one human rights activist's experience with health codes being used to restrict her movements.

Journalists in El Salvador File Suit Against Tech Company's Use of Surveillance Software

Represented by the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, 15 journalists and other members of *El Faro*, a digital newspaper based in El Salvador, [filed suit](#) in late November in U.S. federal court against NSO Group, an Israel-based technology company, on the grounds that the company's software was used to infiltrate their iPhones and track their communications and movements surreptitiously. The suit alleges that the use of company's surveillance software was part of a broader campaign against the press and civil society in El Salvador, in which at least nine organizations and 35 individuals were targeted.

UN Experts Seek Protection of Indigenous Rights in Rail Project in Mexico

UN experts [have raised concerns](#) that the Train Maya project, a 1,500-kilometer intercity railway in Mexico that will traverse the Yucatán Peninsula, is endangering the rights of Indigenous peoples and other communities to land and natural resources, cultural rights, and the right to a healthy and sustainable environment. The UN experts report that human rights defenders raising concerns on the negative impacts of the project face threats and attacks and very limited safe access to an independent and impartial tribunal. They are calling on the Mexican government to ensure meaningful participation of affected communities and transparency in human rights and environmental impact assessments prior to any future decisions related to the project as key to identify, prevent, and address any further negative impacts. The experts have also expressed concern over the lack of human rights due diligence by companies involved in the project, which is estimated to cost up to \$20 billion.

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Report Provides Guidance for Anti-Discrimination Compliance for Actuaries Using AI

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the Actuaries Institute, a professional body representing the actuarial profession in Australia, have issued a [Guidance Resource](#) to help actuaries and insurers comply with federal anti-discrimination legislation when artificial intelligence (AI) is used in pricing or underwriting insurance products. The guidance was developed after a 2021 report by the AHRC that looked at the human rights impacts of new and emerging technologies, including AI-informed decision-making.

Report Ranks Telecommunications Companies on Digital Rights

Ranking Digital Rights, an independent research program at the policy think tank New America, has

issued a report that evaluates 12 large telecommunication companies' policies and practices relating to digital rights. The evaluation entailed more than 250 aspects of company policies that affect human rights, focusing on corporate governance, freedom of expression, and privacy. An executive summary may be found [here](#).

Paper Examines Ways To Strengthen Data To Protect Healthcare in Conflict Zones

The International Peace Institute has issued a [paper](#), *Strengthening Data to Protect Healthcare in Conflict Zones*, to examine why data on threats to and attacks on healthcare in conflict zones is important to protection, advocacy, and investigation and how it can be improved and harmonized. It provides an overview of existing data collection efforts—namely, the Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care and the database produced by the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition in partnership with Insecurity Insight—and identifies challenges and gaps at both the policy and technical levels.

Human Rights Watch Report Examines Misuse of Personal Data in Hungary's Elections

A [report by Human Rights Watch](#) that evaluated personal data collection practices by the government in Hungary for administering public services, such as registering for the COVID-19 vaccine, administering tax benefits, and mandatory membership in professional associations, found that data was repurposed to spread campaign messages of the ruling Fidesz party. The report says that evidence indicates that the government of Hungary has collaborated with the ruling party in the way it has used personal data in political campaigns. This, combined with the severe weakening of the political institutions responsible for safeguarding people's right to privacy and guaranteeing an even political playing field, raises serious human rights concerns.

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