

COALITION CALENDAR

2023 AAAS Annual Meeting: March 2-5 (Washington, DC and Online)

The 2023 AAAS Annual Meeting will take place in Washington, DC, and online March 2-5. The theme of this year's meeting is "Science for Humanity," and includes numerous sessions relevant to the work of the Coalition. For example, AAAS' Theresa Harris and Nate Weisenberg will facilitate a workshop on "Connecting Your Research and Teaching with the UN Sustainable Development Goals," on Sunday, March 5 from 1:00-2:00pm EST. More information and the meeting program are available at <https://meetings.aaas.org/>.

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

Coalition member 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](#).

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Conference Panel Recordings Available on YouTube

Recordings of the plenary sessions from the 2022 Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference are now available on the [AAAS YouTube channel](#)! These include the opening plenary, organized by the American Chemical Society (ACS), on [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), the late breaking session on the [Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights](#), and much more. Stay tuned for more information about how you can contribute to the annual conference compendium highlighting the takeaways from each session.

COMING SOON

Meet a Coalition Member: The American Chemical Society

Over the course of 2023, in this newsletter and on the AAAS website, we will highlight the human rights activities of four different Coalition member associations. First up: the American Chemical Society (ACS)! Stay tuned for an interview with ACS' Dorothy Phillips and Karen Flores Garcia about the origins of ACS' human rights work, its challenges and satisfactions, and future directions for human rights at ACS.

CALLS FOR INPUT

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

NSF Excludes Gender Identity Question in Major Survey, Draws Criticism

Last month, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) submitted its plans for the 2023 National Survey of College Graduates, a biennial survey of more than 160,000 U.S. bachelor's degree holders with a focus on the science and engineering workforce, to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval and did not include a question on sexual orientation and gender identity after considering one in a pilot test, according to [a recent article in *Science*](#). NSF told OMB that it decided to omit the question because it didn't perform well on a pilot test – taking longer to complete and resulting in more changed answers and respondents exiting the survey. Approximately 1,700 researchers [signed a letter](#) criticizing the omission, saying the NSF has not been transparent about its decision-making process and that the agency could still move forward with a sexual orientation and gender identity question by borrowing methodological approaches that have already tested and vetted by other federal agencies, such as the Department of Education, the Census Bureau, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A [recent editorial in *Nature*](#) outlined the importance of the scientific community amassing data on sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQ+ people) in the U.S. scientific workforce. It calls on the NSF to collect data on how many people from sexual and gender minorities are in the U.S. scientific workforce through its annual surveys. It notes that the NSF's annual surveys of the US STEM workforce are used to shape national policies and determine which groups count as being under-represented and are eligible for federal resources, such as diversity fellowships and funding. The NSF currently does not ask about sexual orientation and gender identity in its surveys although it does ask about race, ethnicity, income, and disability.

Separately, a [recent article in *Inside Higher Ed*](#) highlights key considerations when developing questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in research studies, including why and how such information may be used.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Feb. 12: Job: Head of Natural Resources and Just Transition

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, a global organization serving advocates in the field of business and human rights, is seeking a Head of Natural Resources and Just Transition to lead an expert team on natural resources and the just transition to the clean energy value chain with a focus on human rights. Applications are due February 12, 2023, and further information may be found [here](#).

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USA

New State Body Addresses Native Hawaiians' Rights in Giant Telescope Project

A [recent article in *Science*](#) provides an update on the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. If built, the TMT would be the largest telescope in the Northern Hemisphere. It has been met with opposition by Native Hawaiians who view the project as a desecration of the mountain. A new Hawaiian state body designed to oversee Mauna Kea's future use—for astronomy and other activities—recently held a town hall discussion at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society to address those concerns. Formed by a state law in July 2022, the 11-member Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority (MKSOA) includes observatory representatives, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, local business and education officials, and experts in land management. Over the next five years, MKSOA will take over management of Mauna Kea from the University of Hawaii and the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Partners in the TMT project include the University of California, the California Institute of Technology, and the governments of China, Japan, India, and Canada. TMT is partnering with another large telescope project in Chile, the Giant Magellan Telescope, to seek \$3 billion in funding from

the National Science Foundation in exchange for the wider U.S. astronomical community gaining access to a large slice of both telescopes' observing time.

American Society of Human Genetics Apologizes for Role in Eugenics, Scientific Racism

The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) has issued [a report and apology](#) for the role of some past ASHG leaders in supporting the eugenics movement and for the organization's failure to speak out when genetics has been used to justify discrimination and racism. In response to the report, ASHG is re-evaluating the names of its awards and has vowed to "explicitly integrate equitable values into research endeavors and strive to anticipate and oppose malevolent uses" in the future. More information is available in [this article in Science](#). The organization's statement and report, as well as additional resources, are available [on the ASHG website](#).

White House Launches Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

In late November, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) [launched](#) Version 1.0 of the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST), part of President Joe Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), which has set a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The CEJST will help federal agencies better identify communities that can benefit from the Justice40 Initiative.

U.S. Gov't Makes Case Against Unlawful Algorithm-Based Tenant Screening Practices

The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [have filed a Statement of Interest](#) to explain the Fair Housing Act (FHA)'s application to algorithm-based tenant screening systems. The Statement of Interest was filed in *Louis et al. v. SafeRent et al.*, a lawsuit currently pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts alleging that use of an algorithm-based scoring system to screen tenants discriminates against Black and Hispanic rental applicants in violation of the FHA. Motions to dismiss the case by the defendants are currently pending before the court.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IHRN/National Academies Denounce Afghanistan's Ban of Women in Higher Ed

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine and the Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN), an alliance of more than 90 honorary societies that defends the rights of scholars and academic institutions, issued separate statements to condemn the ban against women's participation in higher education in Afghanistan that was announced last month by the Taliban's Acting Minister of Higher Education.

"We are deeply concerned by the recent decision taken by the leadership of the Taliban to ban women in Afghanistan from participating in university-level education," [said the National Academies](#). "This discriminatory measure is only the latest in a series of highly repressive actions affecting women and girls in the country, including restrictions preventing Afghan girls from attending secondary school."

In its [statement](#), IHRN said: "Denying women access to education is a gross violation of fundamental international human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and is an affront to women's dignity and agency."

A [recent article in Science](#) further addressed another human rights issue in Afghanistan—the Taliban's recent decree barring women from working in national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—and the negative impact it will have on NGOs that rely on women staff, particularly those NGOs providing vital assistance in food, hygiene, and medicines.

Human Rights Groups Condemn Conviction of Turkish Scientist

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is [condemning](#) a Turkish court's sentencing of Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, a forensic pathologist and leader in Turkey's medical and human rights community, to nearly three years of imprisonment for "making terrorist propaganda." Recent articles by the [BBC](#) and [NPR](#) report her conviction followed her call for a probe into the Turkish army's alleged use of chemical weapons against Kurdish militants. She has been released pending an appeal. PHR and other human rights groups say that the conviction is the latest form of intimidation in a broader crackdown against independent physicians and other civil society voices in Turkey. Dr. Korur Fincancı's conviction follows 10 other members of the Executive Council of the Turkish Medical Association, the country's largest medical network, being brought before a court in the capital, Ankara, on similar charges. The Turkish government has claimed that many independent professional associations are "terrorist" organizations as a way to discredit and silence them, according to PHR.

New UN Biodiversity Agreement Addresses Human Rights

188 countries signed a non-binding [agreement](#) at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) held last month in Montreal that puts forth a plan to address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems, and protect indigenous rights. The agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), includes concrete measures to halt and reverse nature loss, including putting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030.

The GBF consists of four overarching global goals to protect nature, including: (1) halting human-induced extinction of threatened species and reducing the rate of extinction of all species tenfold by 2050; (2) sustainable use and management of biodiversity to ensure that nature's contributions to people are valued, maintained and enhanced; (3) fair sharing of the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, and digital sequence information on genetic resources; and (4) ensuring adequate means of implementing the GBF, particularly for least developed countries and small-island developing states.

Although recognizing progress in the new agreement, certain human rights groups say the new framework fell short in recognizing indigenous rights. "This COP15 conference offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set ambitious goals aiming to protect the diversity of flora and fauna on the planet," said Chris Chapman, Amnesty International's Adviser on Indigenous Rights, in a [statement](#). "While the accord contains a number of highly important environmental targets and human rights safeguards, which states will now be held accountable for, it fails to fully protect and uphold Indigenous peoples' rights." He said that the new framework does not wholly incorporate Indigenous peoples' demand for their lands and territories to be fully recognized as a separate category of conserved area, thereby threatening their rights.

A recent [article](#) in *Inside Climate News* examines the human rights implications and the "right to nature" movement, which recognizes that nature (animals, plants) and its ecosystems possess inherent rights similar to those of human beings.

UN Issues Rights-Based Guidance on States' Obligations on Land Use

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has issued a [guidance note](#) to clarify States' obligations regarding access to, use of and control over land, particularly about pressing issues affecting human rights such as eviction of land users, international investment, land-related conflicts, and climate change. "In many parts of the world, land is not only a resource for producing food, generating income, and developing housing; it also constitutes the basis for social, cultural and religious practices and the enjoyment of the right to take part in cultural life," the Committee states in its guidance note, formally known as a General Comment. The guidance may be found [here](#).

NEW REPORTS AND RESOURCES

White House Releases Framework for Strengthening Federal Scientific Integrity

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released [A Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice](#), a roadmap to help strengthen scientific integrity policies and practices across the U.S. federal government. This framework builds on the assessment of federal scientific integrity policies and practices described in the January 2022 report, [Protecting the Integrity of Government Science](#), and draws from input from federal agencies as well as from across sectors, including academia, the scientific community, public interest groups, and industry. It has several key components that federal departments and agencies will use to improve scientific integrity policies and practices.

Commentary Examines Whether There is a Right to be Protected from the Adverse Effects of Scientific Progress and its Applications

A [recent blog post from of the European Journal of International Law](#) examines the question of whether the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications, as recognized by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also guarantees protection from the adverse effects of scientific progress and its applications. The post examines the legal framework and other considerations needed to make that evaluation.

Report Provides Info on Ukraine Researchers in Exile to Guide Support Measures

A [recent report](#) provides first-hand information on the professional challenges and preferences for support measures of Ukrainian researchers who left Ukraine in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of the country. The report surveyed the Ukrainian research community in exile from June to September 2022. The findings provide information helpful for planning support programs by academic institutions and funding institutions by specifying information about the demographic profile, discipline, and career stage of scientists in need, as well as about the particular professional and living challenges they face.

International Science Council Podcast: Science in Times of Crisis

A podcast series from the International Science Council's Committee for Freedom and Responsibility in Science (CFRS) explores what living in a world of crisis and geopolitical instability means for science and scientists. The five-part series provides detailed accounts of the complicated relationship between geopolitics and science, asking what we can learn from the past, the challenges of the present, and what diplomatic solutions we can begin implementing in the future to ensure a more resilient science sector. The podcast episodes may be found [here](#).

UN Issue Brief: Mpox: Effective Science and Rights-Based Responses

The United Nations Development Program and the University of Southern California Institute on Inequalities in Global Health released an issue brief, [Addressing Mpox \(Monkeypox\): Effective Science and Rights-Based Responses](#), which examines and provides recommendations to address mpox (monkeypox) and future outbreaks and pandemics, including the importance of human rights-based science-driven responses, community engagement, health systems strengthening, and global solidarity.

University of California San Francisco Issues Report & Apologizes for Past Research

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) has issued its [first report](#) of its [Program for Historical Reconciliation](#), which responds to questions and ethical concerns raised by the community about UCSF's past biomedical and clinical research. The program's [first report](#) investigates experiments from the 1960s and 1970s involving incarcerated men at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, California, where many of these men were being assessed or treated for psychiatric diagnoses. In response to the report, UCSF's Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost has issued an official apology, and one of the surviving researchers from the experiments has also expressed regret and remorse.

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