

October 2008



## Program News

Science and Human Rights Coalition

From the Science Community

>From the Human Rights Community

About

## Science and Human Rights Program Newsletter

### Program News

#### AAAS Project Completes Satellite Image Analysis of the South Ossetian Villages



"Satellite images captured before and after the 7-8 August clash between Georgia, South Ossetian separatists and Russia reveal that 424 civilian structures near Tskhinvali were damaged [between 10 and 19 August]. Georgia has claimed that Russia fully controlled Tskhinvali by 10 August, according to the [BBC News](#). But Russia has disputed the departure date, and claims that Georgian troops inflicted most of the damage to civilian areas of South Ossetia." [Read more.](#)

#### Unveiling "On-call" Scientists - October 23,

### SHRP EVENTS

*October 23, 2008  
Washington, DC  
[Science Serving Human Rights: Making It Happen](#)*

*January 14-16, 2009  
Washington, DC  
[AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Launch](#)*

### PUBLICATIONS

***Auditing Economic Policy in the Light of Obligations on Economic and Social Rights**  
Radhika Balakrishnan and Diane Elson ([link](#))*

"One of the things we have learned so far is that the realization of human rights, especially economic and social rights, requires resources as well as laws. . This paper considers how concerned citizens might

## 2008

On October 23, 2008, SHRP will unveil "On-call" Scientists, a new SHRP project that will connect scientists interested in volunteering their skills and knowledge with human rights organizations in need of scientific expertise. The unveiling of "On-call" Scientists will coincide with our event titled "Scientists Serving Human Rights: Making It Happen," which will highlight in practice what has been accomplished by teams of scientists and human rights practitioners working together. Find out more about this event and register [here](#).

### SHRP Welcomes New Staff Member

SHRP welcomes Michael Hahn, the Program's new Senior Project Coordinator. Michael joins us from UCLA where he worked for the Department of Physiology at the David Geffen School of Medicine as lab manager and communications specialist. Michael holds a Bachelors degree with honors in Biology and Religious Studies from the University of Redlands. He graduated in 2002 with the completion of his thesis titled "The Ethical and Religious Complexities of Xenotransplantation."

## Science and Human Rights Coalition

### Final Planning Meeting Report

Thanks to the hard work of representatives from over 20 scientific associations, planning for the Coalition is now complete! The report of the sixth and final Coalition planning meeting (September 15th) is available [here](#). The report includes links to the revised recommendations for Organizational Structure, Plan of Action (2009-2011), and the previously reviewed Foundational Documents.

### Launch: January 14-16, 2009

With planning for the Coalition now complete, it's time to set sail! Join us for the launch of the Coalition on January 14-16, 2009, at AAAS Headquarters in Washington, DC.

The Launch is an opportunity to learn about the mission and structure of the Coalition, its areas of activity, and how scientific associations and individual scientists can become a part of this important new initiative. Launch

audit economic policies from a human rights perspective, with a particular focus on economic and social rights. It draws on an ongoing project on economic policy and economic and social rights in Mexico and the USA."

***Practising Public Scholarship: Experiences and Possibilities Beyond the Academy***  
(ed) Katharyne Mitchell  
[\(link\)](#)

"A cross-disciplinary collection of 20 essays describing the journey to public scholarship, exploring the pleasures and perils associated with breaching the town-gown divide. [This book] includes contributions from departments of geography, comparative literature, sociology, communications, history, English, public health, and biology; discusses their efforts to reach beyond the academy and to make their ideas and research broadly accessible to a wider audience; opens the way for a new kind of democratic politics - one based on grounded concepts and meaningful social participation; . provides a broad prescription for social change, both within and outside the university."

**"Military Medical Ethics - Physician First, Last, Always"**

participants will hear about the varied contributions that science and scientists can make to human rights, and have the opportunity to equip their scientific associations with information and tools needed for robust engagement in human rights.

Opening the Launch, on the evening of January 14<sup>th</sup>, will be three distinguished speakers, including Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and former President of Ireland. The following day-and-a-half will be devoted to paving the way forward, preparing the Coalition for its role in contributing to the realization of human rights for all. View the [Launch Agenda](#) to find out more.



### **News from Coalition Members: Association of American Geographers**

"For the past two years, several of us at the AAG have been working together with the American Association for the

Advancement of Science (AAAS) to explore an array of issues, projects, and programs which engage science, geography, and human rights. This collaborative work has resulted in interesting and substantive developments in three areas of human rights activity which intersect with geography: 1) the creation of a new Science and Human Rights Coalition, of which the AAG is a founding member and co-organizer; 2) cooperation around an AAAS project on Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights; and 3) the development of an AAG Geography and Human Rights Clearinghouse." [Read more.](#)

### **Introducing our Members: World Association of Young Scientists**

The World Association of Young Scientists (WAYS), supported by UNESCO and ISCU, is a network of young scientists devoted to facilitating access to science worldwide by empowering young scientists throughout the globe, fostering inter-disciplinary and international cooperation, disseminating scientific knowledge, and enhancing the participation of young scientists in decision-making processes. To achieve these goals, WAYS acts as a global umbrella, to connect people, help grass-roots initiatives to attain a global reach, and adapt know how



George Annas ([link](#))

In this article published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Annas addresses the question of "whether physicians in the US military are physicians first, soldiers first, or physician-soldiers, or whether some other formulation best describes their medical-ethical obligations." With reference to rules of medical ethics and international human rights standards, Annas concludes that "[b]asic human rights violations, including torture, inhumane treatment, and experimentation without consent, can never be justified. Other conflicts should be analyzed as possible exceptions *in extremis* to the rule that medical ethics are universal."

and projects from region to region according to local needs. [Read more.](#)

*For more information about the Coalition and how you or your organization can become involved, please [visit our website](#). To receive the latest information about the Coalition, please sign-up for our [Coalition Listserv](#).*

## From the Science Community

### ***American Psychological Association Members Approve Petition Resolution on Detainee Settings***



The American Psychological Association (APA) has passed a petition resolution stating that psychologists may not work in settings where "persons are held outside of, or in violation of, either International Law (e.g., the UN Convention Against Torture and the Geneva Conventions) or the US Constitution (where appropriate), unless they are working directly for the persons being detained or for an independent third party working to protect human rights." [Read more](#) about the resolution, including a [letter from APA President](#), Alan Kazdin, to US President, George Bush concerning the resolution.

### ***What does a National Health Service mean in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?***

In this article from *The Lancet* Richard Horton reflects on the coincidental confluence of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries - of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Health Organization Constitution, and the UK National Health Service (NHS). "All three anniversaries," he writes, "are a departure point for a single proposition: that amid our sometimes furious debates about health services in the UK, we have a hidden weakness in what are now our four health systems - a weakness that threatens to jeopardize the principle that citizens value most of all about the NHS. That weakness is the slow erosion of the right to health as a core value of our civic culture." [Read more.](#)

## From the Human Rights Community



### ***Building Resilience: A Human Rights Framework for World Food and Nutrition Security***

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Oliver De Schutter, presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council titled "Building Resilience: A Human Rights Framework for World Food and Nutrition Security." In his report De Schutter recommends a range of national and international measures to redress the negative effects of the food crisis on the enjoyment of the right to food, including a recommendation to "encourage the development of an international consensus on agrofuels, based not only on the need to avoid the negative impact of the development of agrofuels on the international price of staple food commodities, but also on the need to ensure that the production of agrofuels respects the full range of human rights and does not result in distorted development in producer countries" [Read the report.](#)

## About the SHRP Newsletter

The Science & Human Rights Newsletter is issued monthly by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Through the newsletter we strive to keep scientists and human rights practitioners informed with news items, program updates, new resources, and upcoming events at the intersection of science and human rights. Submissions to the newsletter are welcome and can be made via our [online submission form](#).

*Please visit our website to learn more about our [programs](#) as well as our [past accomplishments](#).*

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