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Why Ecological Justice and the Right to Health Matter

Human Rights Journal's Special Section Focuses on the Interconnectedness of Humans, Animals, and the Planet

December 7, 2021 (Albuquerque, NM) -- In October 2021, Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted that "the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and nature loss is directly and severely impacting a broad range of rights, including the rights to adequate food, water, education, housing, health, development, and even life itself."

Today, the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental degradation, and numerous patterns of exploitation plainly illustrate how the rights, health, and wellbeing of humans, other animals, and our shared environment are interconnected.

As a result, more public health initiatives are focusing on the importance of ecological justice and the right to health.

These connections between ecological justice and the right to health are the focus of the December 2021 special section of the *Health and Human Rights* journal. Dr. Hope Ferdowsian, [CEO and president of Phoenix Zones Initiative](#), a global nonprofit advancing the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of humans, other animals, and the planet, is the section's guest editor.

Six articles from esteemed scientists and researchers challenge various long-standing assumption about relationships between humans, other animals, and the planet in light of moral, legal, and scientific advancements. They also address issues such as

- how the health and wellbeing of humans and other animals intersect
- whether concepts historically reserved for human rights can be usefully extended to include the rights of nonhuman animals and nature
- how major concepts in human rights should be applied to other animals in ways that benefit both human and nonhuman beings

"I'm honored to have been selected by the *Health and Human Rights* journal to serve as the guest editor of this section," says Ferdowsian. "Our hope is that this section will stimulate greater interest and scholarship in the subject matter, and in the merits of a [Just One Health](#) approach, which places justice, primary prevention

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and the connections between humans, other animals, and the planet at the heart of global and local policy, research, and practice. By doing so, it will enable a more effective and impactful realization of how to build upon the [One Health](#) concept, by freeing human and nonhuman beings to thrive as individuals, families, and communities in clean, healthy, and sustainable environments so that they can claim their right to health.”

The *Health and Human Rights* journal provides an inclusive forum for action-oriented dialogue among human rights practitioners. The upcoming edition featuring the special section, Ecological Justice and the Right to Health, will be published on Thursday, December 9, 2021. It will be available free online at <https://www.hhrjournal.org>.

About Dr. Hope Ferdowsian

Dr. Ferdowsian is president and CEO of Phoenix Zones Initiative and author of *Phoenix Zones: Where Strength Is Born and Resilience Lives*. For more than two decades, as a double board-certified internal medicine and preventive medicine physician, she has worked to address the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of human and nonhuman beings.

Dr. Ferdowsian’s work across six continents has included collaboration with the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States and the development of medical, public health, and educational resources for nongovernmental organizations, national governments, and intergovernmental organizations such as the World Health Organization. She has also served as an invited expert for the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Her work has been featured by *Scientific American*, the Huffington Post, the BBC, Voice of America, and other international media outlets. In 2017, she was named a Humanitarian of the Year in the American College of Physicians. She is also an associate professor at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, a co-director of the Society for Asylum Medicine, and a medical expert for Physicians for Human Rights.

About Phoenix Zones Initiative

Phoenix Zones Initiative is a global nonprofit organization that advances the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet through a [Just One Health](#) approach. Led by physicians and a diverse team, Phoenix Zones Initiative focuses on widespread ethical and structural change. Phoenix Zones Initiative advances legal, economic, and public policy to uplift the most vulnerable and marginalized, including children and animals, and the organization also provides resources so others can do the same. Follow Phoenix Zones Initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and the [Phoenix Zones Initiative](#) website.

About the Health and Human Rights Journal

Health and Human Rights is an international journal dedicated to scholarship and practices that advance health as an issue of fundamental human rights and social justice. It seeks to provide a forum for academics, practitioners, and activists from public health, human rights, and related fields to explore how rights-based approaches to health can be implemented in practice. In so doing, it contributes to fostering a global movement for health and human rights.

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Media Note

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