



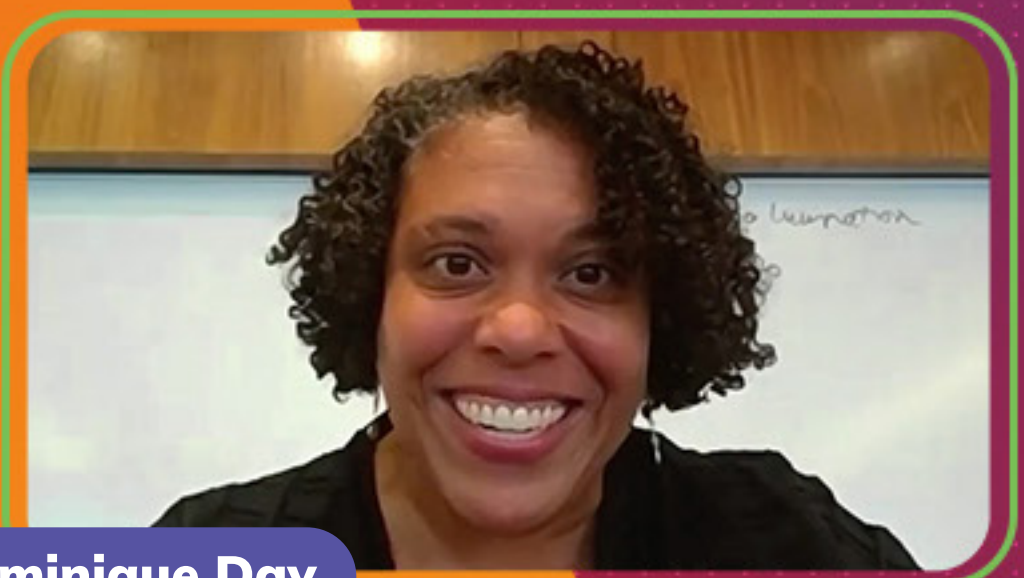
Jacinda Ardern



Samantha Power



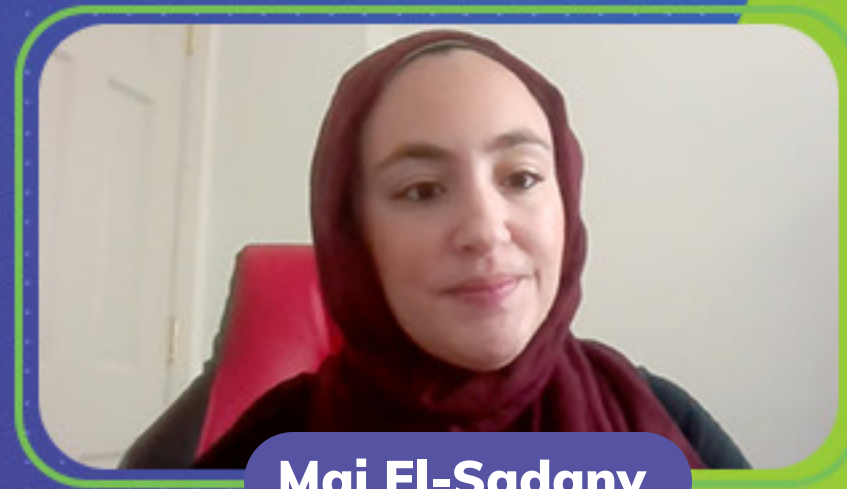
Melissa Chan



Dominique Day



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya



Mai El-Sadany



RightsCon2022

OUTCOMES REPORT

BROUGHT TO YOU BY





Save the date for our first hybrid event!



RightsCon Costa Rica

June 5 - June 9, 2023

San José, Costa Rica & online worldwide

Costa Rica Convention Center

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Reflecting on our 11th summit (and 3 years of online convening)

The 11th edition of RightsCon was held online from **Monday, June 6 to Friday, June 10th, 2022**. Yet another record-breaking summit and our third hosted online, we welcomed **9,352** participants from **162** countries, a continued increase to our community, which has more than tripled since our last fully in-person summit in 2019.

As we begin preparing for our first-ever hybrid summit, to be held on **June 5-9, 2023** in Costa Rica (and online), we're reflecting on the outcomes of this year's summit and the collective experience of our three years of online convening. Understanding how the global RightsCon community has evolved in the virtual environment will help us ensure the 12th edition of RightsCon is a dynamic, diverse, and engaging space for all.

2022 in numbers

 **9,352** participants

 **162** countries

 **560** sessions

 **637** hours of content

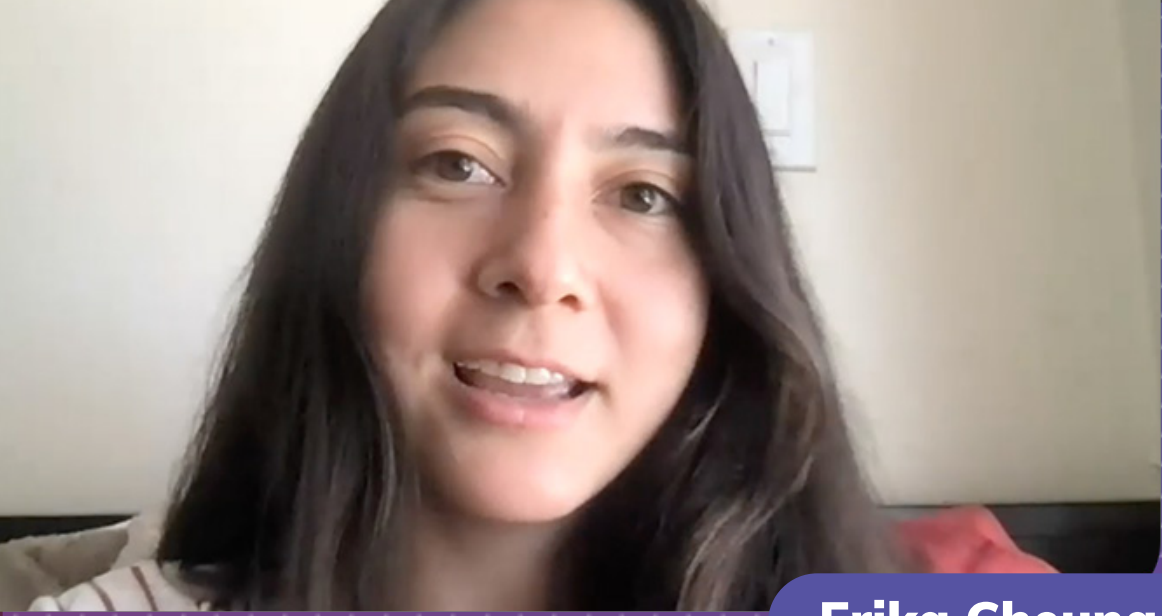
You would need 27 days nonstop to play all sessions back to back!

61% of session organizers identified as women.

56% of participants identified as women.

88% of surveyed participants rated their overall RightsCon experience as excellent or good.

84% of participants surveyed highly agreed or agreed with the statement: "Participating in RightsCon 2022 has substantively supported the advancement of my work."



Erika Cheung



Carlos Martínez

This year, we asked RightsCon participants to tell us how the summit has advanced their work. Here were the most common responses:

Access to funders

Gained knowledge that contributed to my work

Joined or introduced a coalition

Launched a report, project, or campaign

Made connections and/or increased my network

Raised awareness about an issue and showcased my work

Strengthened collaboration that will move my work forward

Participants registered

9,352
2022

9,212 2021
7,680 2020
2,797 2019

Countries represented

162
2022

164 2021
158 2020
122 2019

Sessions hosted

566
2022

570 2021
300 2020
450 2019

Program speakers

1,565
2022

1,689 2021
1,039 2020
1,051 2019

Languages offered

13
2022

4 2021
3 2020
3 2019

Highlights

Over the past three years, we've launched new initiatives and formats to ensure RightsCon remains the space for connection it has always been, while exploring new paths to increase accessibility from a diverse group of multi-stakeholder participants. The RightsCon community played a crucial role in our online iterations, providing valuable feedback and guiding our new initiatives – like the RightsCon Studio, Social Hour, and the Connectivity Fund, which culminated in our most expansive, accessible online summit this year.

1

The RightsCon Studio: Grounding the online experience

The RightsCon Studio, launched this year, acted as a home base for all participants, streaming both live and playback content 24/7 throughout the week of the summit. Hosted by award-winning journalist **Melissa Chan**, the Studio brought critical topics to the community through our opening and closing ceremonies, conversational interviews, as well as program previews and rewinds. It hosted important voices like our first ever head of government, New Zealand Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern**, Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation **Valeriia Ionan**, Cybersecurity expert and Saudi human rights activist **Manal al-Sharif**, and Global Vice President of Trust and Safety at Twitch **Angela Hession**. In 2023, we will reintroduce the RightsCon Studio, which will serve as a bridge between the offline and online elements of the hybrid summit.

Keep reading for our top highlights of the last three years.



“The issues that RightsCon addresses deserve **leader-level attention** ... these are some of the most important issues that we could be talking about today.”

Jacinda Ardern

73%

of RightsCon exit survey respondents found the RightsCon Studio **helpful** in navigating the summit





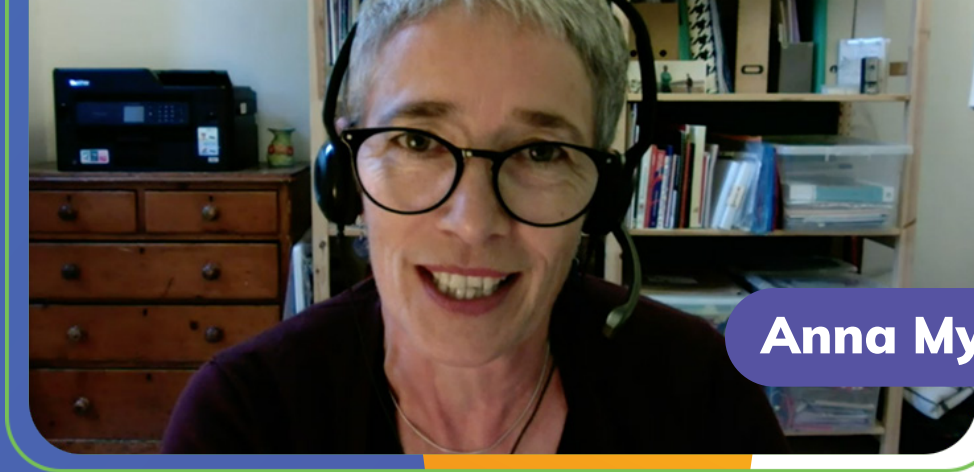
2

Recreating the “hallway” experience: socializing in online spaces

When we first transitioned online, the feedback was overwhelming: participants were missing the organic, unplanned conversations facilitated by hallway spaces at in-person gatherings. Over the past three years, we’ve experimented with different spaces and special formats for unwinding and creating meaningful connections in online settings.

RightsCon Tunis

Surveyed RightsCon participants named Social Hour as one of **the top three most useful tools** in engaging with others



Anna Myers



Zaituni Njovu

Social Hour

A space for informal meetings where our community can reclaim some of the magic of in person events, these sessions ran for 60 minutes and are designed to recreate physical space where participants can rotate between tables, network, discuss ideas on regional or thematic priorities, and learn more about the current efforts and funding opportunities of multiple companies, international institutions, and organizations. In 2022, we introduced Social Hours into our Call for Proposals, and **received 63 proposals, of which 19 were selected.**

After Dark

A space for entertainment featuring a mini film festival, as well as live music and poetry performances designed to bring that groovy nighttime feeling to your screen. This year's performances featured **Desiree Mckenzie**, Canadian spoken word poet, **Kaê Guajajara**, indigenous activist and musician from northern Brazil, and **Kai Mata**, Indonesia's only openly lesbian musician. The film festival, a first at RightsCon and hosted in coordination with **EngageMedia** and **SIMA Awards**, showed short and feature-length projects including **Coded Bias**, **Open Shutters**, and **Do Not Split**.



Kaê Guajajara



Kai Mata



Do Not Split



Coded Bias

Creative Space

A space to rest, reflect, and imagine; this year, we encouraged participants to take breaks from our traditional programming for wellness by stepping away from the computer, experiencing yoga with **Ravi Dixit**, and sound bath meditation sessions with **Michaela Bekenn**. In addition, we featured three open, exploratory digital art exhibits that prompted us to consider programmatic themes from dramatic and futuristic perspectives.

These spaces were curated to provide our community with opportunities to connect with regional partners, meet private sector representatives and funders, and experience the creative work being done in our space. For RightsCon 2023, we plan to adapt the spaces we've created to integrate both offline and online elements, where participants can continue connecting and strategizing within a network of thousands of human rights and technology experts wherever they choose to join us.



Ravi Dixit

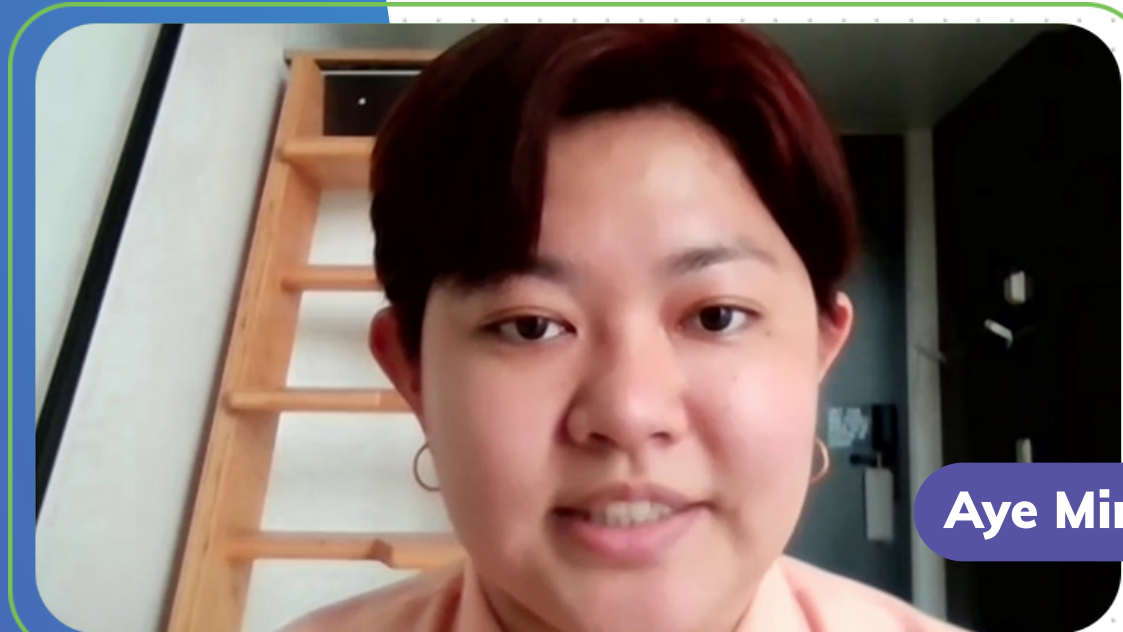


Michaela Bekenn

3

Growing the RightsCon community: accessibility and inclusion

Hosting RightsCon online for the first time in 2020 presented an unparalleled opportunity to expand representation, and we continue to introduce different initiatives to lower barriers to participation, from an inclusive ticket policy, to financial support for connectivity, and increasing language diversity across the program.



Aye Min Thant

Maintaining an inclusive ticket policy

- Since 2020, RightsCon has provided a **free registration** option to ensure access for all
- A total of **24,443** registrants have used this option since 2020, accounting for 94% of all registrations

Language diversity campaign

- The number of languages represented at the summit has grown from **3 in 2019** to **13 in 2022**
- In 2022, we adapted the Connectivity Fund to contribute to **translation and interpreting costs** for session organizers, covering live interpreting and video captioning

Funding connectivity

- Since 2020, we've provided **financial support for participants**, based on what they need to connect and engage, including for data costs, travel, childcare, as well as translation and interpretation
- A total of **390** participants and organizers have benefited from the Fund since 2020, with **78** recipients in 2020, **151** in 2021 and **161** in 2022

- We also continue to offer the option for session organizers to run their session in their **preferred language**
- This year, we increased the availability of content and opportunities for community support through social media channels in various languages including **French, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, and Thai**



Key outcomes

At RightsCon, we value connections and collaboration that go beyond the week of the summit. Our aim is to provide a platform for our session organizers and participants to meet and move forward their work. Across the five days, beyond the immeasurable intangible outcomes that come from shared space, we saw a number of key statements, campaign and program launches, and coalitions form, a few of which you can read about in this section.

Here are six of the top RightsCon 2022 outcomes:



1

For the fourth consecutive year, **United Nations Special Rapporteurs** issued a Joint Statement emphasizing how **digital rights violations** enable and escalate online and offline violence, deepening conflict, systemic discrimination against particular groups, as well as humanitarian, economic, and political crises worldwide.

2

Access Now, ARTICLE 19, and the Center for Human Rights in Iran **laid out recommendations for Meta to protect the rights** of Instagram's Persian speakers.



Antony Blinken

3

U.S. Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** announced that the United States would become the Chair of the Freedom Online Coalition, a partnership of 34 governments working toward internet freedom, **for the first time.**

4



In a session focused on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, participants decided to form a **coalition of Central Asia digital rights experts**, out of the recognition that their governments are using similar methods and legislative initiatives to ramp up censorship.

5



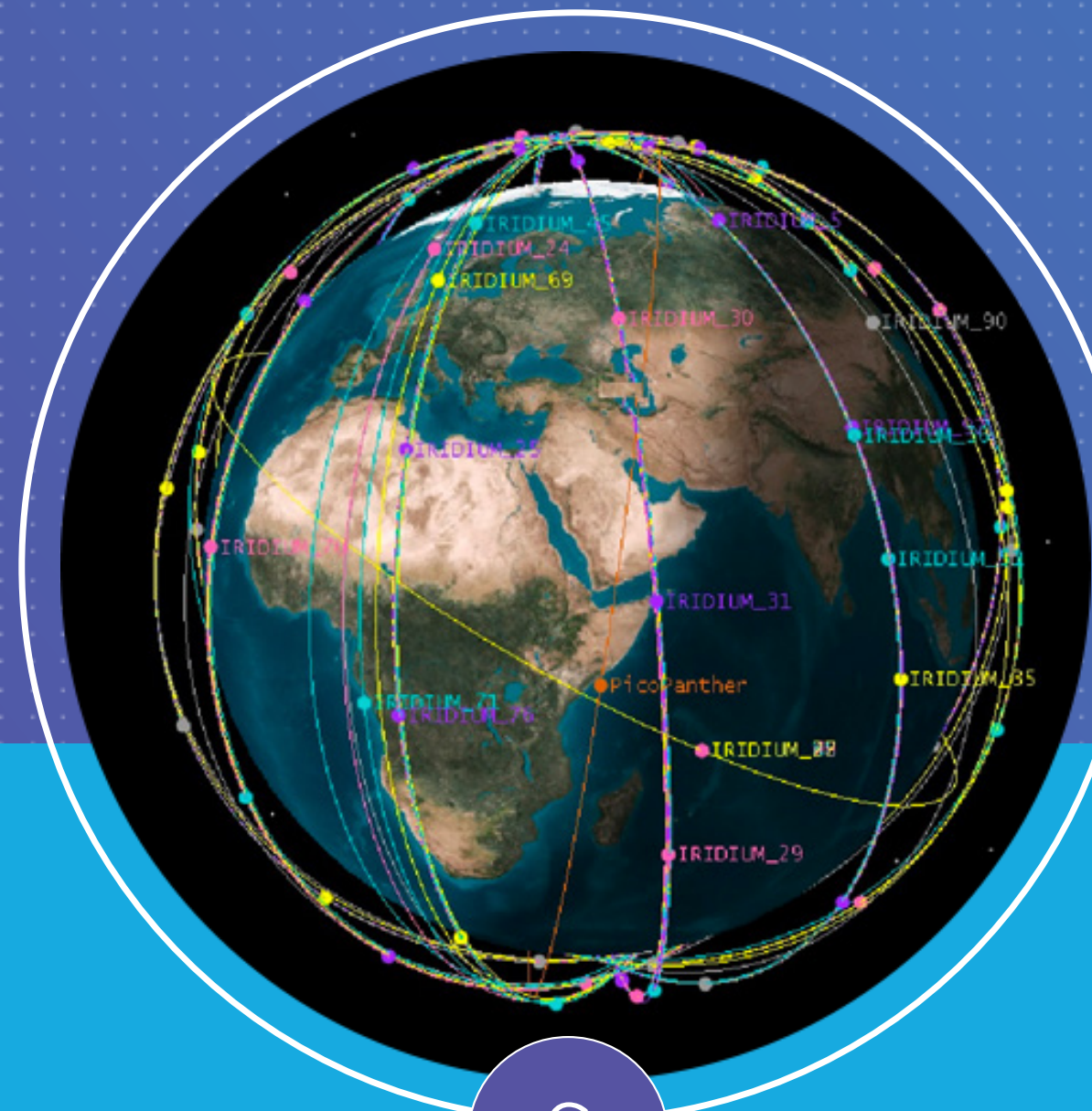
Samantha Power



Anne-Marie Slaughter

United States Agency for International Development Administrator **Samantha Power** and New America Foundation CEO **Anne-Marie Slaughter** launched an initiative to develop a **technologist code of ethics**.

6



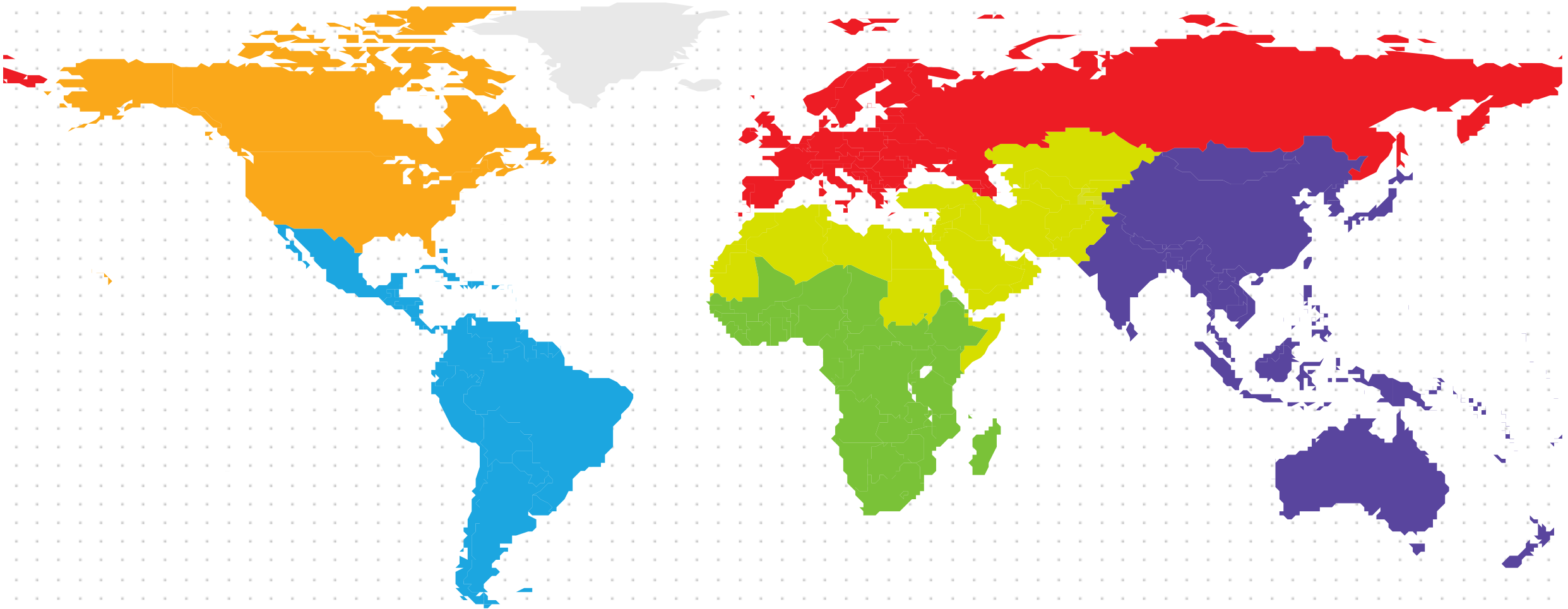
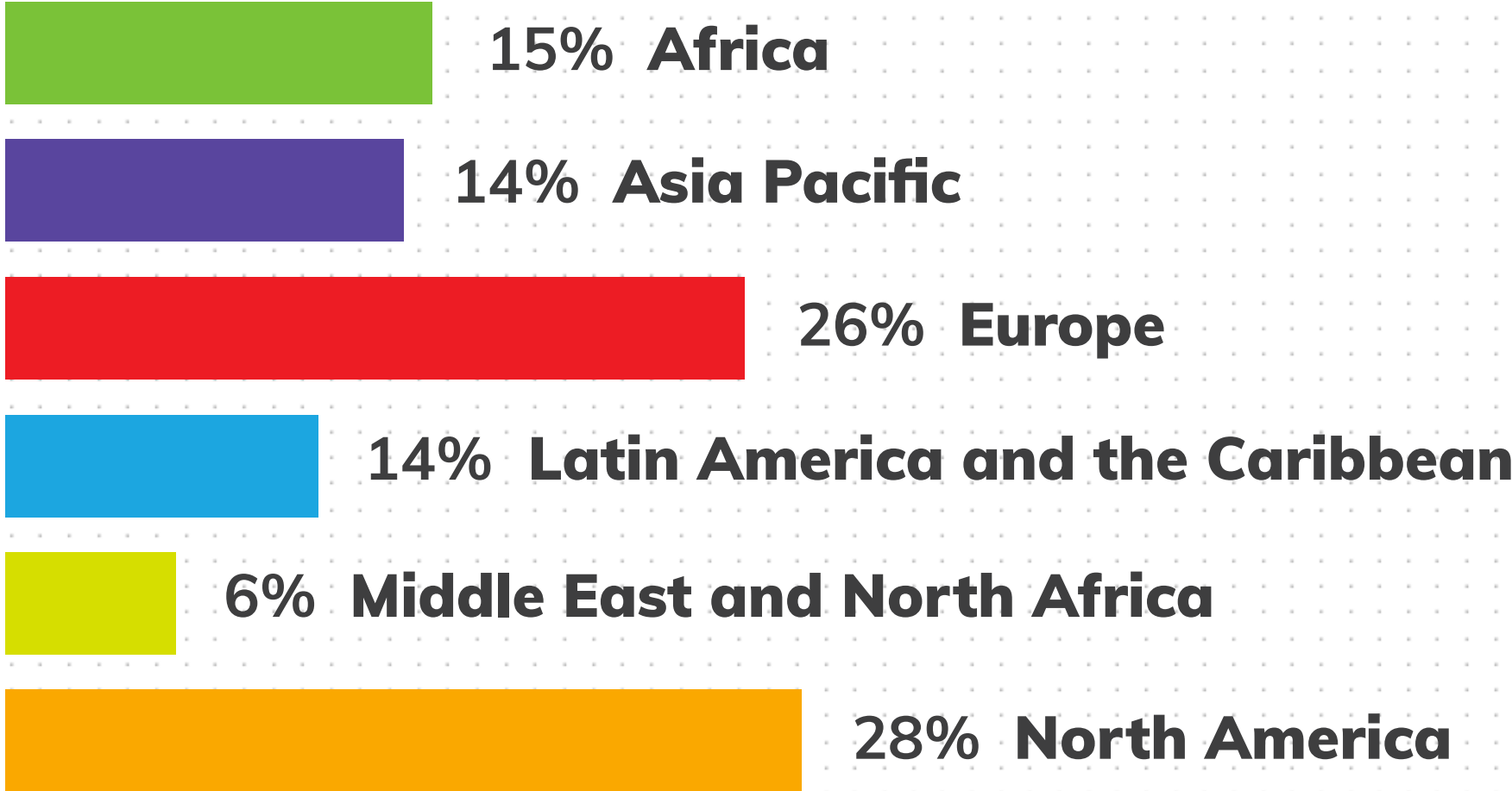
Launch of new **Open Working Group on Satellite Internet and Human Rights** (OWGSHRI), which plans to approach low-earth-orbit (LEO) satellite developers and regulators to promote rights-respecting regulatory approaches to competition, spectrum allocation, and orbit tracking.

Community Experience

RightsCon 2022 saw greater gender diversity, regional parity, and diversification of stakeholder groups. This year's community included participants from 162 countries, 64 governments and 483 companies from around the world, as well as growth in the number of creatives, investors, press, and philanthropy professionals.

Our online iterations have seen growth in registration by women, non-binary people and other gender-diverse audiences, a significant growth in participants from the Global South (or as one of our participants coined it, the Global Majority), most significantly in the African region, followed by a slight but steady growth of those in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East and North Africa regions.

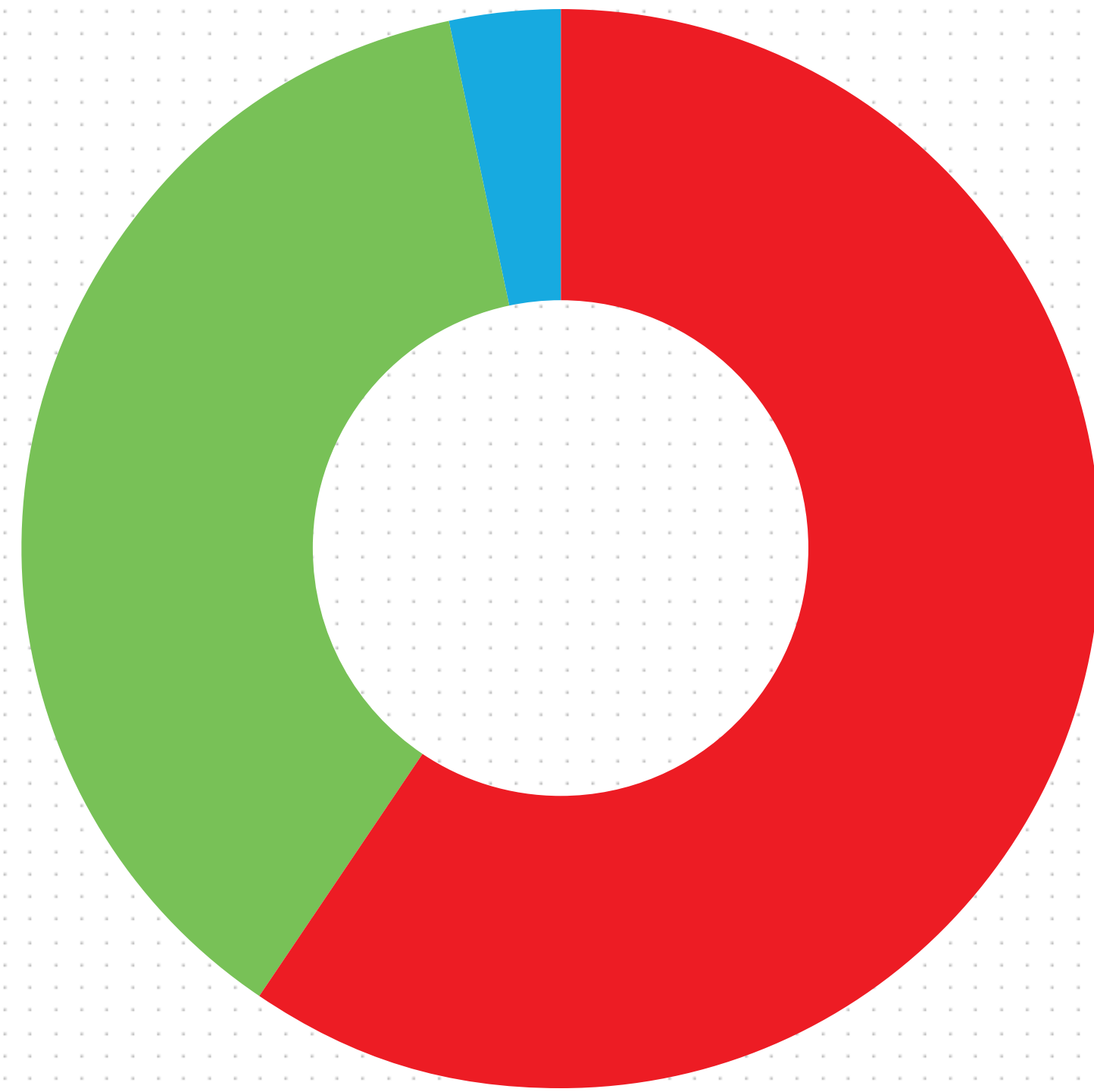
Participant breakdown by region



63% of participants joined us at RightsCon for the first time

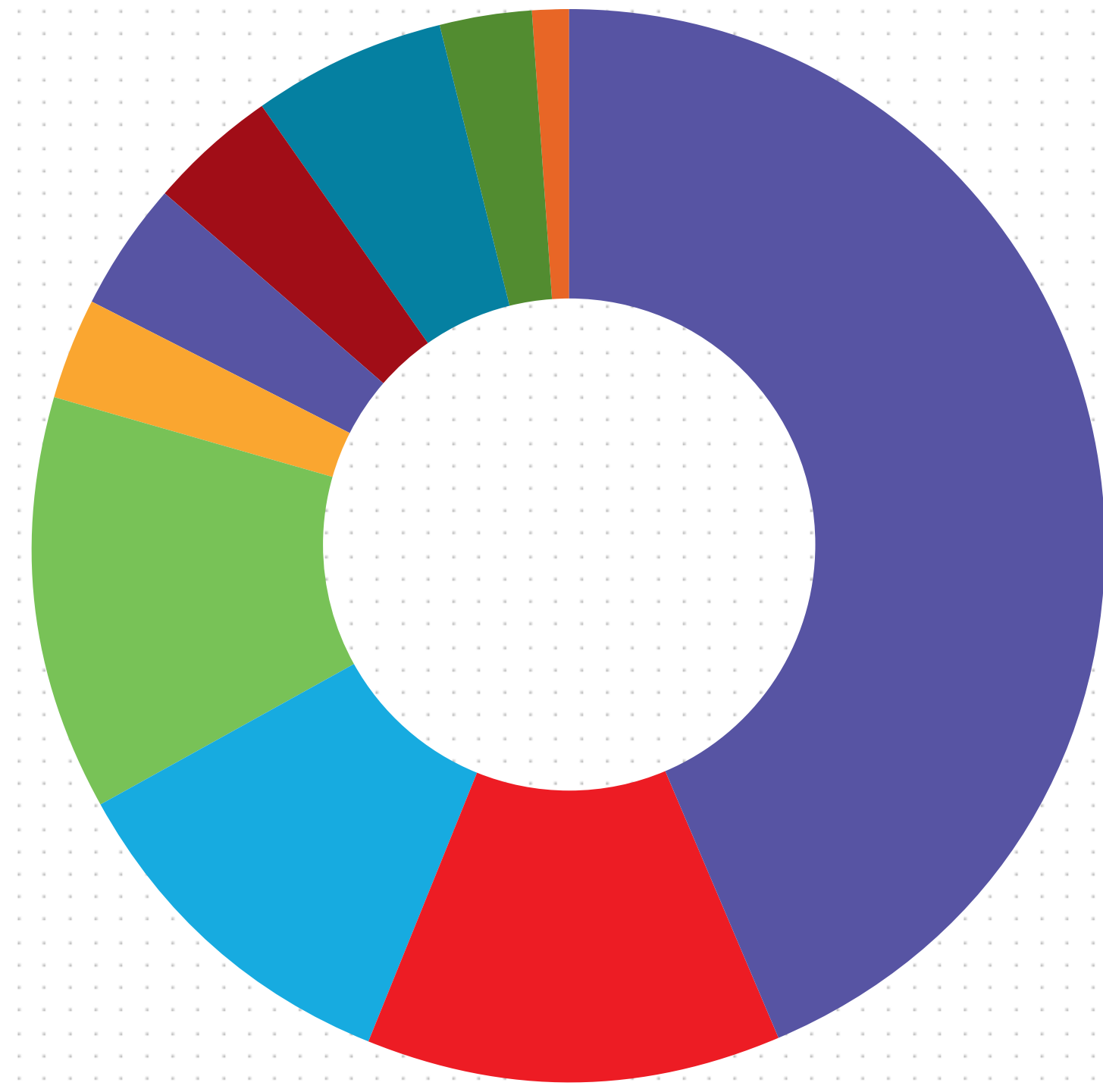


Participant breakdown by gender



Woman 56% **Man 35%**
Non-binary and others 3%

Participant breakdown by stakeholder group



Civil Society 45% **Academia 13%** **Private Sector 11%**
Other 13% **Intergovernmental Institution 3%** **Government 4%**
Philanthropic Sector 4% **Media 6%**
Creative 3% **Investor 1%**

“This was a fantastic conference that truly opened up so many possibilities for someone in the Philippines, where the tendency is to demand of government, instead of finding solutions and ways of circumvention; but also where the tendency is to stick to old tired ways (i.e., fact checking) instead of looking at possibilities for actually doing battle with disinformation in terms of the ways in which we might deliver news and data, but also do propaganda for democracy. Really quite life-changing.”

surveyed participant

Accessibility and inclusion

Every year, we undertake a number of measures to make the summit more accessible including conducting a **diversity audit** and running the **Connectivity Fund**.

The Diversity Audit

This year, the diversity audit was conducted internally by members of the RightsCon team. Once proposals were accepted into the program, the composition of every session was reviewed to ensure all voices – from regional and gender diversity perspectives – were represented.

In 2022, the review identified **two sessions as “manels”** (or an all-male panel), to address this we reached out to the session organizers and worked with them to revise their speaker or facilitator lineups. **Eight sessions were identified as lacking geographical diversity** (meaning that the session’s topic concerned a specific region but speakers from said region were missing), in these cases session organizers were supported to revise their line up to improve regional diversity or amend their session titles to clarify their focus on a specific country or region.



Chung Ching Kwong

“Challenged by a number of competing responsibilities and limited economic means that would have hindered my full participation at RightsCon 2022, the Connectivity Fund Award was used in defraying costs; so that I could benefit from the rich repertoire of programs and sessions at RightsCon.”

Emmanuel C. OGU,
Technology Governance
Researcher & Open Internet
Advocate



The Connectivity Fund

In 2022, we expanded the Connectivity Fund, which was made available to participants and organizers alike. We received over 700 applications to the fund (a 54% increase from 2021), and were able to support 161 applicants from 35 countries on expenses including costs for translation and interpretation, travel, internet access, and childcare. This year’s funds were disbursed to the following populations:

62% First-time applicants **38%** Returning recipients

59% Participants **41%** Organizers

85% from Africa **5%** from Asia-Pacific **5%** from Latin America

13% non-binary and other gender recipients, an **increase in almost 10%** from 2021

79% Civil Society **9%** Academia **6%** Media **3%** Creatives



Dominique Day

Building a better platform

For our third online event, we wanted to make a concrete investment in the virtual home for RightsCon. We partnered with TechChange, our platform host, to take the feedback we received over the two previous years and turn it into tangible feature improvements.

Enhanced program navigation: Participants trying to find new sessions of interest may have had an easier time than in previous virtual years, but not because the size of the program changed. This year, we asked our partners to prioritize both visual developments in the platform, like showcasing sessions that were either live or coming up soon at the front and center of the agenda page, and functional changes that enabled participants to narrow down the full sessions list by language, track, format, date, and more.

Expanded email notifications: We like to use our team’s communications strategically, and that effort requires making every email count. Private meeting invitees received an email from our team that included details about the meeting they were invited to and an automatically generated calendar hold. Opening the invite in Google, Apple, or Outlook Calendar offered invitees the option to join the session directly from the link in the location field of their native calendar.

Improved registration workflow: When we asked you what we needed to do better, we heard feedback about different parts of the registration process that you found challenging or confusing. To address those comments, we invested in several minor functionality changes in the workflow for registration, including enabling participants to change ticket types in the middle of their registration and providing an improved process for late registrations.



Antigone Davis

“I LOVED how easy it was to build a schedule and then view which sessions I’d selected based on the time. I’ve been attending while also working this week, so it’s been super convenient to jump back in and see what’s up next.” - **surveyed participant**

“The platform is quite smooth and flexible - one of the best experiences as a virtual session organizer!” - **surveyed participant**



RightsCon Tunis

Programming

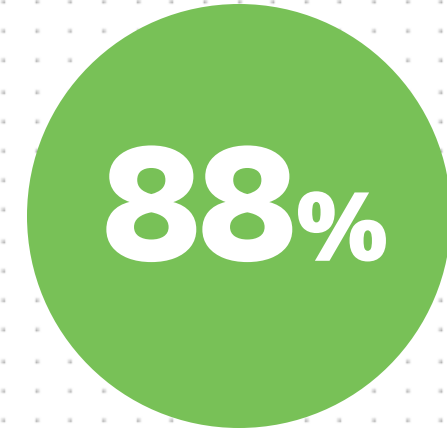
At a glance

RightsCon is home to conversations on key issues on human rights in the digital age, from finding solutions to recently developing crises, to structural issues that need to be addressed long-term. Thanks to our community-built program, shaped by **711 organizers and co-organizers**, we can spot the threats and windows of opportunity for civil society and build the **rights-based future we want**.

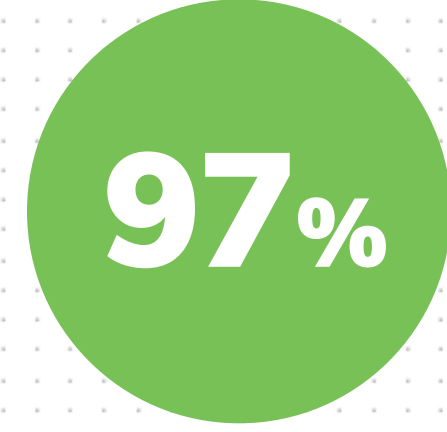


Hounaz Beheshti

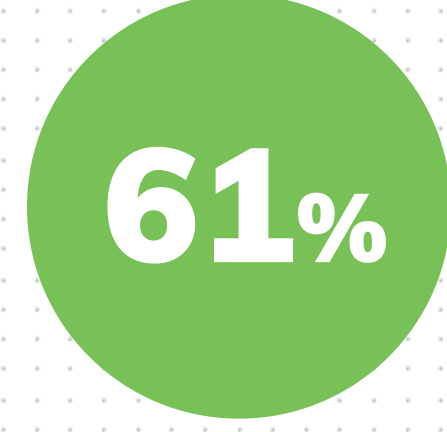
Quick facts about the program



of those responded to the RightsCon exit survey found the program **“Excellent” or “Good”**



of session organizers would **run a session with RightsCon again**



of session organizers **identified as women**



sessions were hosted in total

Program Tracks



Access, Education, and Inclusion



Activism and Authoritarianism



Artificial Intelligence



Business, Labor, and Trade



Campaigns, Capacity, and Resources



Conflict and Humanitarian Action



Content Governance



Cyber Norms and Encryption



Data Protection



Digital Security



Futures, Fictions, and Frontiers



Justice and Jurisdiction



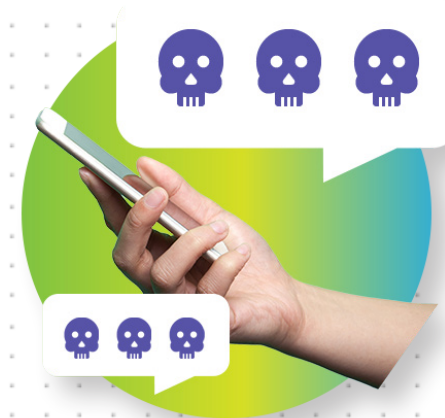
Human Rights-Centered Design



Global Governance, Politics, and Elections



Media and Investigations



Online Hate and Violence



Privacy and Surveillance



Shutdowns and Disruptions

Program Themes

Disability Rights

Environment

Gender Justice

Health

Indigenous Rights

Migration

Racial Justice

Youth and Children's Rights

Key issues

At this year's summit, we identified six key areas of conversation and action:

1

Digital authoritarianism and transnational repression

The intersecting impacts of digital authoritarianism and transnational repression demonstrate the **extensive reach of state authorities** into the activities of activists and dissidents across borders. In pushing back on the use of **foreign agent laws** as a tool of repression or **internet shutdowns** to impede mobilization, the RightsCon community is building networks of resistance in Myanmar, Tunisia, Sudan, Russia, Turkey, and the rest of the world to defend human rights.

Related outcomes or press



[UN Special Rapporteurs Joint Statement “UN experts highlight digital rights in conflict and humanitarian crises at RightsCon”](#) (accompanying [PR here](#))



The #KeepItOn coalition is currently updating the [definition of internet shutdowns](#) after consultations with the RightsCon community



2

Spyware and surveillance technology

The Pegasus Project’s revelations about the proliferation and abuse of NSO Group’s proprietary spyware has drawn attention to the severe human rights impacts of the sale and **spread of surveillance technologies** across borders. At RightsCon, our community addressed the growing threat of spyware and surveillance technology, the MENA surveillance database, and other civil society efforts to seek accountability from public-private sector partnerships.

3

The “metaverse” and its impact on human rights

As companies explore the potential of augmented and virtual reality technology to build immersive worlds, the RightsCon community introduced different sessions to explore what the “metaverse” means for our human rights. From the impacts of **extended reality** on children’s rights to lessons learned from video game technology to deep-dives into **privacy and security in virtual spaces**, the RightsCon program adopted a forward-focused approach and a vision for the metaverse where human rights are placed front and center.

Related outcomes or press



[Human rights in the metaverse \(Politico\)](#)



[The battle to build a child-friendly metaverse \(The Japan Times/AFP\)](#)



4

Online gender-based violence and harassment of activists

The rise of online hate and violence is a particularly worrying trend for our community, especially **women journalists** and **LGBTQ+ activists**. Sessions took an incisive look at the far-reaching consequences of non-consensual intimate image (NCII) abuse in Bangladesh, gender-based violence in video games, anti-gender groups in East Africa, trolls and coordinated harassment campaigns in India, and harmful actors that target women in public life.

Related outcomes or press



EngageMedia in partnership with the Oxen Privacy Tech Foundation (OPTF)

launched [Through The Looking Glass: Digital Safety and Internet Freedom in South and Southeast Asia](#) report

Fernand de Varennes, UN Special Rapporteur on Minorities, launched his **Effective Guidelines on Hate Speech, Social Media & Minorities**

5 Content moderation policies around the globe

In response to trends around **disinformation**, government **ensorship**, and **shadowbanning**, and other ever-present threats to freedom of expression and privacy, RightsCon convened sessions focused on regulation and oversight across different regions and contexts, community-based models of content moderation, tools for algorithmic audits and shadow-ban detection, standards on reporting content removals, and more.

Related outcomes or press



[RightsCon civil society to Meta: protect the rights of Instagram's Persian speakers](#) (Access Now, ARTICLE 19, and Center for Human Rights in Iran)

6 Government regulation of data and company data practices

Human rights actors continue to push back on business models and government initiatives which provide access to troves of personal data without user consent. At RightsCon, participants learned about the role of **open data** in advancing climate justice and women's rights, data science and research practices on platform policies, **privacy by design principles** in product development, abuse of sexual and reproductive health data, "**dark pattern**" techniques used to manipulate users, and more.

Related outcomes or press



[Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network launch I&J Framing Brief: Categories in Electronic Evidence \(REF:22-102\)](#)

Solve My Problem

Since 2019, RightsCon has hosted Solve My Problem, an invite-only closed-door session format designed to facilitate developing a strategy or building a coalition to resolve a specific problem. Over the years, this special format has led to the launch of campaigns including [#WhyID](#) and [#BanBS](#), as well as the infrastructure for a [global database](#) to track violations against land and environmental defenders.

This year, we hosted a total of 4 Solve My Problem sessions on topics ranging from **content governance**, **data protection in humanitarian contexts**, and the **socio-environmental impact of the tech sector**.

2022 4 sessions

Refugees, biometrics, and identity: data protection principles in humanitarian contexts

Hosted by Access Now, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam International, and Privacy International

Knowledge exchange talks: measuring the socio-environmental impact of the tech sector

Hosted by Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Content governance in times of crisis: what should (or shouldn't) platforms do?

Hosted by Access Now

Create a spyware victim handbook for successful legal case filing

2021 2 sessions

2020 3 sessions

2019 6 sessions

Press coverage

Since 2020, the number of press at RightsCon has continued to grow both in numbers and percentages of total participants. By experimenting with different initiatives, such as designating press badges, providing topical and regional briefings, RightsCon's online iterations have been covered in leading outlets from around the world, including AFP, the Economist, and Politico.

Attending as press

2022 **310** (3%)

2021 **226** (2%)

2021 **70** (1%)

Agence Ecofin

Kenya : l'exécutif lance une opération de formation de 20 millions de personnes au numérique

Common Dreams

Calls to 'Stop the Deal' as US Military Contractor Moves to Buy NSO Group

Forbes

Digital Rights And Privacy Are Shifting. Here's How To Be Part Of It.

Global Investigative Journalism Network

Global Lessons from Exposing War Abuses in Yemen

Periodistas

Iniciativa en favor del debate público en Europa

Coda Story

Facing a deluge of bot attacks and takedowns, Iranian feminists and political protesters say Instagram is silencing them

The Economist

The tragedy of Alaa Abd el-Fattah, a relentless revolutionary

France24/AFP

Activists urge Meta to overhaul policies for Iran content

The Japan Times/AFP

The battle to build a child-friendly metaverse

Politico

Tech conferences for grown-ups

Select Outcomes



Announcements

- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the US as next Chair of Freedom Online Coalition.
- At a **panel on preserving a free, open, and interoperable internet**, Meta representative Robyn Greene spoke about the company's efforts on the "democratization of encryption," including plans to make Facebook Messenger encrypted by default instead of leaving it to users, and developing ephemeral messages.



Launches

- The Freedom Online Coalition launched the **#MyDigitalInclusion** campaign
- Fernand de Varennes, the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues at United Nations, launched a draft guideline on Hate Speech online and Minorities
- The Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network launched the **I&J Framing Brief: Categories in Electronic Evidence**
- USAID Administrator Samantha Power launches an initiative to develop a technologist code of ethics in collaboration with New America Foundation.



Coalitions

- Launch of new **Open Working Group on Satellite Internet and Human Rights**
- Civil society representatives agreed to organize around the upcoming **UN Global Digital Compact** to ensure broad and inclusive consultation yields an agreement grounded in human rights.



Meetings and Partnerships

- In a private meeting about Digital ID policy advocacy strategies, advocacy organizations allies agreed that more cross regional collaboration is needed to act proactively and be prepared. Members further agreed to start hosting informal meetings in order to share experiences and build community knowledge.
- The #KeepItOn coalition launched a working group to revise the definition of an internet shutdown, which will be released soon



Statements

- UN experts highlight digital rights in conflict and humanitarian crises
- ARTICLE 19, Access Now and the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) issued recommendations to Meta and Meta's Oversight Board to overhaul Persian-language content moderation on Instagram and to increase transparency in its moderation processes
- EngageMedia in partnership with the Oxen Privacy Tech Foundation (OPTF) launched their report Through The Looking Glass: Digital Safety and Internet Freedom in South and Southeast Asia
- Data4revolution released reports on the analyzing the status of personal data protection in Africa (English/French)

While we celebrate the outcomes above, we also recognize the value of **coalitions, ideas, and future projects** that may currently be in development and have in one way or another benefited from the week of convening. Get in touch with us to share your ongoing outcomes.



Costa Rica Convention Center

Looking ahead: See you in Costa Rica in 2023!

The first event in our second decade of convening has sent a strong message: **our community's work is more important, necessary, and powerful than it has ever been.**

Historically an in-person event, we continue to be in awe of how the community transitioned, adapted, expanded, and found a home in a virtual environment over the last three years. At the same time, as the world manages multiple competing crises, we have heard from many of you, around the world, a desire and readiness to connect in-person again.



55% of surveyed participants told us they would join us **in person.**

23% of surveyed participants told us they would join us **online.**

22% of surveyed participants told us they **didn't know yet.**

The 12th edition of RightsCon will take place in Costa Rica (and online), June 5-9, 2023.

RightsCon Costa Rica will be our first hybrid event, bridging where we started – a vibrant in-person gathering – with where we are now – a dynamic online network. While we will approach our vision for 2023 with the same intentionality we have every summit before, we must acknowledge that our participants have many different realities, have experienced the impact of COVID-19 differently, and are still grappling with vaccine inequity, economic instability, and other hardships that may prevent travel or in-person participation.



When we asked surveyed participants their biggest concerns about joining us in-person, **49.1%** said **cost related concerns**, **22.3%** said **travel or visa challenges**, and **10%** said **COVID-19 related health concerns**

We want to be in conversation with you about how we construct a hybrid event that meets the needs of this diverse and growing community, no matter how you come to this space. Over the next several months, we'll provide opportunities for you to shape our planning for the 12th edition of RightsCon, which is already underway.

Together with you, our team in Costa Rica and our local and regional partners, we will provide a platform to discuss critical issues, from environmental justice to migration and the rise of authoritarianism, amplify the voices of those at risk, and showcase – in-person and online – the extraordinary strength and resiliency of the digital rights community across the Caribbean, the Americas, and the world.

Save the date

We'll see you in Costa Rica (and online) from June 5-9, 2023!

Thank you to our sponsors!

