



'Vaccinate Our World' Campaign - Europe Press Launch

Virtual Press Conference 2-3pm BST, 18 May 2021

[Register Here](#)

Advocates and government leaders to demand faster and greater global vaccine access, better international collaboration and also discuss problems with COVAX, vaccine nationalism, vaccine hesitancy as well as the inequalities of vaccine roll out in poorer nations across Europe and the globe

[AIDS Healthcare Foundation](#) (AHF), the largest provider of HIV/AIDS care and treatment worldwide, will host a London-based virtual Zoom press conference to demand international collaboration to [Vaccinate Our World](#) against COVID-19. The press call will feature public health advocates and government officials from the **UK, Europe, Africa** and the **US** who will issue calls for faster and more widespread global vaccine access as well as call on the UK and EU to follow the Biden administration's lead on the temporary suspension of COVID 19 vaccine patents.

Speakers will also address the inequalities in the European and global vaccine roll out, discuss vaccine nationalism and hesitancy and cite lessons learned from the earliest days of the AIDS pandemic. The London press conference—part of the UK/EU launch of the new **VOW** campaign—is one of four VOW press events held globally throughout May.

- **WHAT:** Virtual Zoom press conference for the UK & Europe Launch of the Vaccinate Our World Campaign
- **WHEN:** 2-3pm BST Tuesday, **18 May 2021**
- **WHO:**
 - AHF Founder and President **Michael Weinstein**
 - **Dr. Tamar Gabunia** First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs Georgia
 - **Baroness Sheehan**, the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vaccinations for All
 - **MEP Dr. Juozas Olekas**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
 - AHF Africa Bureau Chief **Dr. Penninah Iutung**
 - AHF Europe Bureau Chief **Zoya Shabarova**
- **JOIN:** [Register for the virtual press conference here and pre submit questions for the Q&A](#)
- **PRESS ENQUIRES:** Jenny Rose jenny.rose@barleycommunications.co.uk +44 (0) 7957 551697, Ged Kenslea, AHF, ged.kenslea@ahf.org +1.323.791.5526
- **ALL ASSETS:** Available for download from [PA Media Centre](#)

"We are facing a catastrophic moral and public health failure akin to the initial and woefully inadequate global response to the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s and 90s by allowing COVID-19 to rip through the world's poorest populations. We simply cannot make the same mistakes that were made in fighting HIV – there must not be a delay in getting lifesaving vaccines to all corners of the globe," said **AHF Founder and President Michael Weinstein**. "The Biden administration took an unprecedented step in supporting a proposal before the WTO to waive intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic. If we are to have a real shot at ending the COVID-19 pandemic globally, we urge the UK and EU to follow suit. At minimum, waiving patents may motivate drug companies and governments to vastly increase sharing of their vaccines worldwide."

The 'VOW' call to action was first introduced in mid-April with a worldwide social media campaign and a series of 22 full-page newspaper ads in prominent daily papers in eight countries across the globe. The multimedia global advocacy campaign for VOW continued with virtual press events in **Bangkok, Johannesburg, São Paulo** and now **London** - virtually for UK, European and other interested media.

For the UK/Europe event, on 18 May **AHF Europe Bureau Chief Zoya Shabarova** will be joined by **AHF Founder and President Michael Weinstein** and **AHF Africa Bureau Chief Dr. Penninah Iutung**, to discuss patents, vaccine hesitancy, COVAX and inequalities in the European roll out. Joining them will be **Dr. Tamar Gabunia** First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs Georgia, **Baroness Sheehan** from the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vaccinations for All and **MEP Dr. Juozas Olekas**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

As of May 13, more than 1.37 billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide, with 83% going to wealthy countries. Low-income countries have received only 0.3%. – [NYT Vaccine Tracker](#) via [Our World in Data](#) project at the University of Oxford.

Despite public commitment to equity the UK and EU are amongst the worst COVID 19 vaccine hoarders. The UK is the second largest hoarder in the world according to the latest data on vaccine procurement from [Duke Global Health Innovation Centre](#), having purchased enough vaccine to cover more than four times its population. EU is in the top six having purchased enough vaccine to cover more than twice its population. But this short-sighted nationalism is putting the whole of humanity in danger and prolonging the pandemic as outbreaks provide a petri dish for potential vaccine resistant mutations to evolve.

Part of the solution is the suspension of intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines. On 6 May, 140 MEPs issued a letter to the European Commission urging it to adopt the proposal for a temporary 'Waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19'.

"We are tired of endless promises by our governments that one day we will be vaccinated. We do not want to hear explanations of why it's impossible to deliver on earlier promises -- because there is no valid explanation when people's lives are at stake. We want to see real actions from our governments and we want to get our vaccines today! If we are to rid the world of COVID-19 – we must VOW to Vaccinate Our World now", states **Zoya Shabarova, AHF Europe Bureau Chief**.

Eastern European countries such as Ukraine and Georgia are especially struggling to purchase COVID 19 vaccines. **Only 1.9% of the population in Ukraine is currently vaccinated, while in Georgia it is a mere 1.2%.**

“If one nation has COVID-19 and no access to vaccines, all countries remain in danger,” said **AHF Africa Bureau Chief Dr. Penninah Iutung**. “The ‘VOW’ call-to-action is about uniting advocates and government leaders worldwide and shining a spotlight on the immorality of vaccine rationing. While COVAX was established to help lower-income nations – the quantities of vaccines have been inadequate and have forced developing countries in Africa and other parts of the world to fend for themselves in securing enough vaccines to protect their citizens. Legislators and decision-makers must do more to ensure that all countries have the requisite numbers of vaccines to ‘Vaccinate Our World’ and defeat the pandemic.”

About VOW

The ambitious but achievable ‘Vaccinate Our World’ call to action includes five primary tenets:

- The global COVID-19 vaccination effort must secure \$100 billion from G20 countries
- It must produce and provide **seven billion vaccine doses** worldwide within **one year**
- Companies and governments must waive or suspend *ALL* COVID-19 vaccine patents during the pandemic
- Countries must be 100% transparent in sharing information and data
- World leaders *must* also promote far greater international cooperation as the driving force for ending the pandemic, not continue with politics as usual.

Join the digital advocacy campaign to urge world leaders to ensure vaccine equity worldwide:

- Pledge as an [individual](#) or as an [organization](#) to fight for vaccine access across the world.
- [Subscribe](#) to our e-mail list to stay up-to-date and help out when we issue a call to action, such as a global Twitter rally
- Tell your friends, family members and colleagues about the VOW call to action and ask them to join
- Spread the word and encourage others to VOW now to end COVID-19 by tweeting and posting on social media

In addition to the press conferences and events coming up in the following weeks, be on the lookout for #VaccinateOurWorld and #VOWnow actions—join the fight and VOW to protect humanity! For more information on the campaign, please visit www.VaccinateOurWorld.org

Ends.

Notes to editors

AHF Spokespeople and cases studies worldwide available to interview. Op eds, statements and quotes also available.

Speaker Bios

- [Michael Weinstein](#), AHF Founder and President

- [Dr. Tamar Gabunia](#), First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
- [Baroness Sheehan](#), from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vaccinations for All
- [MEP Dr. Juozas Olekas](#) Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- [Dr. Penninah Iutung](#), AHF Africa Bureau Chief
- [Zoya Shabarova](#), AHF Europe Bureau Chief

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the largest global AIDS organization, currently provides medical care and/or services to over 1.5 million clients in 45 countries worldwide in the US, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, the Asia/Pacific Region and Europe. To learn more about AHF, please visit our website: www.aidshealth.org, find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/aidshealth and follow us on Twitter: [@aidshealthcare](https://twitter.com/aidshealthcare) and Instagram: [@aidshealthcare](https://www.instagram.com/aidshealthcare)

The APPG on Vaccinations for All, chaired by Dr Philippa Whitford MP, was set up in 2017 to raise awareness of the importance of routine immunisation programmes. The pandemic has brought the importance of all immunisations into sharp focus, and we continue to ensure the UK Government is held to all of its' commitments to improving access to vaccines worldwide.