

From: GISAID Compliance

Date: Saturday, January 3, 2026 at 21:45 EST

To: [...]

Cc: GISAID Secretariat

Subject: Termination of your Data Connectivity Agreement with GISAID

Dear Mr. [...],

We write on behalf of Freunde von GISAID e.V. (“GISAID”) to confirm with you that the Data Connectivity Agreement you entered into with GISAID on March 17, 2020 has been terminated.

In order to obtain GISAID’s support to accelerate your studies of the evolution and epidemiology of the betacoronavirus responsible for COVID-19, you provided GISAID with assurances that you will safeguard your ‘personalized username and password’ required to access the Data Connectivity (“Feed”) you sought and GISAID agreed to provision for you.

As a member of GISAID’s [...] you were acutely aware of GISAID’s sharing mechanism and its overarching ethos that calls for transparent and traceable access to data shared through GISAID. You were also aware that *any* access credentials issued by GISAID, are issued to individuals *only* and that such access credentials must *never* be shared, no different from any other personal access credentials issued to an individual. You also knew that part of GISAID’s responsibilities as custodians of data that is shared through its licensing mechanism, GISAID has to regularly perform audits and investigate alleged violations, especially activity that might encroach on the rights of data submitters.

Approximately one year ago, GISAID was looking into an allegation that data which was exclusively submitted to GISAID, found its way into the hands of individuals who do not possess GISAID access credentials. An investigation promptly revealed that data with inimitable attributes added to your Feed was in fact the route enabling this data breach. Upon reviewing the access logs of your Feed, it showed that your Feed had been accessed from numerous geographic locations, which prompted an immediate mitigation measure by halting of your Feed without prior notice.

It is noteworthy that after your Feed was halted, you made no attempt to contact GISAID to seek clarification, as though you were unaware of the cessation of your Feed. Instead, GISAID was made aware that staff in [...]’s lab at the University of [...] communicated to others that the (your) Feed was no longer accessible to them. They revealed that they were in possession of your access credentials, i.e., the URL endpoint of your Feed and your personalized username and password. They also referred to your personal access credentials as “our credentials!”

This is of particular concern given that on July 12, 2022, GISAID had responded to a request from [...]’s lab, reiterating they are *not* allowed to store or make available *any* data shared via GISAID in what they described as a ‘trusted research environment’ at the University of [...], as doing so would severely undercut how GISAID ensures transparent and equitable access to data.

GISAID has no choice but to demand that you, your collaborators, staff and contractors, or anyone you have authorized access to contents of your Feed, remove all data obtained from GISAID from any server, whether it is under your control or theirs, including but not limited to your cloud service provider(s), the University of [...] and the University of [...].

GISAID will continue in its [review of data-related complaints](#) involving fraudulent activities in violation of the rights inherent to the owners of that data.

Meanwhile we ask that you confirm with GISAID that you and those you provided access to have deleted all data that was obtained from GISAID.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

GISAID Compliance

From: GISAID Compliance
Date: Saturday, January 3, 2026 at 21:45 EST
To: [...], [...]
Cc: GISAID Secretariat
Subject: Unauthorized use of a GISAID Data Provision

Dear Messrs. [...] and [...],

We write on behalf of Freunde von GISAID e.V. (“GISAID”) regarding the unauthorized use of personalized access credentials that were issued to Mr. [...] as part of a Data Connectivity Agreement he entered into with GISAID on March 17, 2020.

In order to obtain GISAID’s support to accelerate Mr. [...]’s studies of the betacoronavirus responsible for COVID-19, Mr. [...] provided GISAID with assurances that he will safeguard his ‘personalized username and password’ required to access a custom Data Connectivity (“Feed”) he sought and GISAID agreed to provision for him.

Without delving into the specifics surrounding the cessation of Mr. [...]’s data Feed, GISAID learned that you had disclosed in various communications your possession of the access credentials to Mr. [...]’s Feed, i.e., the URL endpoint, username and password. GISAID also learned that you were referring to Mr. [...]’s access credentials as “our credentials” as if these credentials were yours.

To be clear, you have never had the authorization to hold or utilize Mr. [...]’s personal access credentials. This concept of not using someone else’s credentials is no different from your access credentials issued by your institutions, or credentials issued to you in form of a driver’s license, as it helps to ensure safer traffic on public roads, here the data traffic on GISAID’s publicly accessible sharing platform.

You will recall, GISAID confirmed with you on July 12, 2022 that it is not permissible to store or make available any data shared via GISAID in what you described as a ‘trusted research environment’ at the University of [...], as doing so would severely undercut how GISAID ensures transparent and equitable access to data.

GISAID asks that you, your collaborators, staff and contractors, or anyone you have given access to data obtained from GISAID, remove these data from any server, whether it is under your control or theirs, including but not limited to your cloud service provider(s), or the University of [...].

GISAID will continue in its review of data-related complaints involving fraudulent activities in violation of the rights inherent to the owners of that data.

Meanwhile we ask that you confirm with GISAID that you and those you provided access to have deleted all data that was obtained from GISAID.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

GISAID Compliance