

## News of May 2018

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### Commentary.

With a wave of her wand Circe turned Odysseus's sailors into pigs—at least, that's what Homer told us. Circe was a witch. <http://www.theoi.com/Text/HomerOdyssey10.html>

Witches are having a moment in the spotlight right now. U.S. President Trump regularly calls the investigation into Russian actions in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections a “witch hunt.” Any number of men accused of sexual harassment claim to be the victim of a “witch hunt.” A law firm in England is accused of conducting a “witch hunt” against British troops who served in Iraq. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/14/british-soldiers-face-new-witch-hunt-law-firm-lodges-hundreds/> Check today's news feeds and see how many references you find.

While the figure of speech is common, it hides the real problem of harm caused to people today accused of witchcraft. In 2009, Gambia's leader “ordered security forces to round up hundreds of ‘sorcerers’” and over the next seven years, victims told the *Washington Post*, “armed soldiers targeted poor, elderly farmers, forcing them to drink a hallucinogenic liquid before pressuring them into confessing to murders by sorcery,” leading to “a pattern of kidnappings, beatings and forced confessions that have had lasting health implications for survivors and resulted in several deaths.” <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/gambia-still-haunted-by-dictator-jammehs-witch-hunts-15210039> In Cameroon, where the health ministry estimates that sickle-cell disease is responsible for 16% of all deaths of children under five, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* interviewed 19 people with sickle-cell disease, of whom “16 said they were called ‘sorcerers’ and ‘devils’ as children, abandoned by their fathers and subjected to ‘demystification rituals’ that could have killed them.” A woman who murdered her 5-year-old son stricken with sickle-cell disease said she was told by traditional healers that he was a sorcerer who “came into the world to torture you.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180528000119-t2o29/>

The reality is that the ancient belief in witches has never gone away, and European pagan traditions have had a renaissance in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Wicca, a decentralized religion. Prejudices against witches are akin to the religious racism found in persecutions of one or another faith-based group in every geographical location. Mosques are attacked in the U.S.; a synagogue in Sweden was attacked in 2017; in May a family of suicide bombers attacked Christian churches in Indonesia killing 13 and injuring dozens <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/13/asia/indonesia-church-attacks-surabaya/index.html>; a church was attacked in the Central African Republic and in retaliation a mosque was burned; Hindus who were attacked in Pakistan in turn attacked Sikhs; Buddhists attacked Muslims in Sri Lanka: the list goes on and on, not to mention intra-faith conflicts such as that between Sunni and Shia.

While these may be actions by private groups, governments are also complicit. In 2014, the nongovernmental Pew Research Centre found that 18 of the 20 countries of the Middle East and North Africa criminalize blasphemy (lacking reverence for the sacred) and 14 criminalize apostasy (abandoning faith), with legal punishments ranging from fines to death. <http://mpc-journal.org/blog/2018/05/15/atheists-in-muslim-majority-countries-between-inclusion-and-exclusion/> The persecution of Baha'i adherents in Iran was the subject of a February 2018 protest to the government by international legal experts (see *HRWG News* 2018-02). In Russia in May, Jehovah's Witness homes were targeted in 28 new raids leading to “detentions, house arrest, travel restrictions, and criminal charges.” <http://eurasiareview.com/28052018-russia-jehovahs-witness-homes-targeted-in-28-new-raids-now-20-criminal-investigations/> Also last month the Supreme Court in Chad required government members to be sworn in on either the Koran or the Bible, and when one non-Muslim refused to swear on the Bible the Supreme Court fired him. [https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm\\_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm\\_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_06\\_01\\_12\\_45&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_01_12_45&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018)

With this destruction of persons and places comes destruction of the records of faith. Archival associations seem to know very little about the preservation of faith-based records other than those of Christian and Jewish groups. A quick review of the 590 members of the Society of American Archivists' Section of Religious Collections turned up only a few members representing Jewish institutions and one Baha'i, while of the 74 members of the International Council on Archives' Section of Archives of Faith Traditions (where it is much more difficult to identify representation), the overwhelming majority of members represent Christian groups. And yet we know all faith-based organizations and schools and fellowship bodies keep records, of adherents and rituals and rites. How are the records of these bodies preserved? What condition are they in? The professional associations appear not to know. As important as faith is to human society and as much conflict as it sparks, surely we must make sure that the evidences of those faith activities are well and truly preserved, just as we must make sure that the records of religious persecution are available for justice measures.

Meanwhile, I am taking a good look at pigs. You never know: one might turn out to be a sailor.

### **International news.**

**Council of Europe.** The Council of Europe and the European Union reviewed their legal frameworks for the protection of personal data to keep pace with changes in this fast-moving area. As the EU's new data protection rules take effect and the modernised text of the Council of Europe's Convention 108 has been adopted, the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the European Data Protection Supervisor published an update to the popular practical handbook on European data protection law. Thanks to Giulia Barrera for the information. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/data-protection/-/the-new-handbook-on-european-data-protection-law-is-out-get-your-copy->

**European Court of Human Rights.** In decisions on the cases of *Abu Zubaydah v. Lithuania* and *Al Nashiri v. Romania*, the Court held that Lithuania and Romania violated the human rights of persons transported onto their territory by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and held in arbitrary detention where they suffered ill-treatment. Both cases relied on the declassified executive summary of the 2014 U.S. Senate report on CIA torture, testimony given to the International Committee of the Red Cross, "partly declassified transcripts of evidence to the US Military Combatant Status Review Tribunal," as well as reports from experts and "redacted documents released by the CIA." <https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home>

**International Criminal Court.** The Court denied Jean-Pierre Bemba access "to confidential records on his assets and financial status which are in the possession of the Registry" of the Court. For background see *HRWG News* 2018-04. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/05/bemba-denied-access-to-confidential-icc-records-on-his-financial-status/>

**Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT).** MICT opened an information center in Sarajevo, Bosnia, "giving people electronic access" to the archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, *BIRN* reported. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/hague-tribunal-archive-centre-opens-in-sarajevo-05-23-2018>

**United Nations.** The United Nations announced it "will launch a screening system to prevent former employees guilty of sexual misconduct from finding new jobs with its agencies or other charities." It will use an "electronic registry of information" to be managed by the UN Secretariat, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Meanwhile, the *Times* obtained a copy of an 84-page report compiled in 2001 and given to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2002 in which "more than a dozen international aid organizations are implicated in a sex-for-food scandal." <http://news.trust.org/item/20180504185629-hwzq3/>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/6398997/charity-workers-allegedly-offered-refugees-food-in-return-for-sex/>

An opinion piece published by *Thomson Reuters Foundation* argued that the UN Sustainable Development Goals are in danger of failing without better open data. It quoted an official at Canada's International Development Research Centre saying "the huge amount of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals – 232 in total – has placed serious pressure on national statistical systems," with

“even developed countries” unable to measure them well. A software developer added that “governments and civil society not only need tools to gather data, but also an understanding of how to interpret it.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180524172651-1sjk4/>

### **World/general news.**

**Business records.** Purdue Pharma manufactures OxyContin, a painkiller that is a major source of the epidemic of prescription opioid addiction. The *New York Times* obtained a Justice Department report from 2006 that reflected information from “dozens” of company documents that indicate the company “knew about ‘significant’ abuse of OxyContin in the first years after the drug’s introduction in 1996 and concealed that information.” The Department brought a case against the company for “misbranding” the drug’s addiction risk, but settled for a fine of the company in 2007. Even after that, the company marketed the product globally, and today faces lawsuits from U.S. states and cities for its role in facilitating opioid abuse. [https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/29/health/purdue-opioids-oxycontin.html?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=cfd050a18-MR\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-cfd050a18-149736437](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/29/health/purdue-opioids-oxycontin.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=cfd050a18-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-cfd050a18-149736437)

The “tobacco industry has believed since the 1960s that nicotine is addictive,” and in 2000 Philip Morris, a tobacco company, publicly acknowledged that it is. A team of medical researchers “analyzed previously secret, internal Philip Morris documents made available as a result of litigation against the tobacco industry” and compared them to public statements by the company. As reported in *PLOS*, they “found that Philip Morris’s shift from denying to affirming nicotine’s addictiveness was driven by public, regulatory, and legal pressures, not by a substantive change in scientific understanding.” <http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002562>

Canada’s Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that Chevron Canada “cannot be held liable for a US\$9.5 billion award a court in Ecuador ordered against the parent company in favour of Ecuadorian villagers,” *The Canadian Press* reported. The court ordered the villagers to pay Chevron and Chevron Canada’s court costs; the Ecuadorians said they would appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-04. <http://www.canadianbusiness.com/business-news/ecuadorian-villagers-lose-fight-to-have-chevron-canada-pay-us9-5-billion/>

**Climate.** A team of scientists from the U.S. National Air and Space Administration (NASA) analyzed 14 years of data from the U.S./German GRACE spacecraft mission, satellite precipitation data, Landsat imagery, irrigation maps, published reports of “human activities related to agriculture, mining and reservoir operations” and concluded that “wet land areas are getting wetter and dry areas are getting drier,” *Eurasia Review* reported. Further, said one of the authors, “Embedded within the dry areas we see multiple hotspots resulting from groundwater depletion.” Freshwater “is one of the most essential of Earth’s resources, for drinking water and agriculture,” and the scientists said they see “major hydrologic change.” [http://www.eurasiareview.com/17052018-nasa-satellites-reveal-major-shifts-in-global-freshwater/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/17052018-nasa-satellites-reveal-major-shifts-in-global-freshwater/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

**Medical records.** A study at Johns Hopkins University “found that physicians who use stigmatizing language in their patients’ medical records may affect the care those patients get for years to come,” *Eurasia Review* reported, citing the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. “When doctors read notes and descriptions from previous medical visits . . . the language in those notes may play a role in how that patient is treated as well as how aggressively the patient’s pain is managed.” A co-author said, “Medical records are an important and overlooked pathway by which bias may be propagated from one clinician to another, further entrenching health care disparities.” [http://www.eurasiareview.com/10052018-stigmatizing-language-in-medical-records-may-affect-care-a-patient-receives/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/10052018-stigmatizing-language-in-medical-records-may-affect-care-a-patient-receives/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

U.S. *National Public Radio* asked: “If you go to the hospital for medical treatment and scientists there decide to use your medical information to create a commercial product, are you owed anything as part of the bargain?” The program noted that researchers are using “digital data such as CT scans and electronic medical records” to develop artificial intelligence products to help diagnose disease. This points up the difference between the legal ownership of the data and the ethical use of it.

[https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/31/615501659/when-scientists-develop-products-from-personal-medical-data-who-gets-to-profit?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=02efbfe1ea-MR\\_COPY\\_07&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-02efbfe1ea-149736437](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/31/615501659/when-scientists-develop-products-from-personal-medical-data-who-gets-to-profit?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=02efbfe1ea-MR_COPY_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-02efbfe1ea-149736437)

Serbia established an Inquiry Commission to examine the effects on public health and environment of NATO's use of depleted uranium ammunition during the 1999 bombing of Serbia during the Kosovo war, *BIRN* reported. The report is to be completed by the end of 2020. Medical records will be important, but the question of causality will be more difficult to document.

[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-to-examine-depleted-uranium-effects-from-nato-bombing-05-18-2018?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=83ae0b9b95-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-83ae0b9b95-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-to-examine-depleted-uranium-effects-from-nato-bombing-05-18-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=83ae0b9b95-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-83ae0b9b95-319755321);

**Privacy.** The United Kingdom's Information Commissioner ordered Cambridge Analytica "to hand over all the data and personal information it has on an American voter, including details of where it got the data and what it did with it," *The Guardian* reported. During its support of the U.S. presidential campaign of Donald Trump, the company used data from Facebook that it was not authorized to use. Cambridge Analytica announced that it was going out of business. [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/05/cambridge-analytica-uk-regulator-release-data-us-voter-david-carroll?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm\\_term=273966&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/05/cambridge-analytica-uk-regulator-release-data-us-voter-david-carroll?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=273966&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection); [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/06/cambridge-analytica-kept-facebook-data-models-through-us-election?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm\\_term=274048&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/06/cambridge-analytica-kept-facebook-data-models-through-us-election?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=274048&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection)

The security firm 4iQ searched both "visible and underground online sources" and found "more than 3 billion identity records," reported *CSO Online*. This is a "more than 64 percent increase compared with the same exercise in 2016." Alarming, "fully 72% of the discovered records contained emails and passwords, while 40 percent included PII [personally identifiable information]." <https://www.cso.com.au/article/641079/despite-tougher-obligations-mismanaged-corporate-security-has-left-billions-identity-records-exposed/>

Three businesses that supported "genetic genealogy" (DNA searches for relatives)—World Families Network, Ysearch and Mitosearch—announced they were closing due to the "cost of [European Union] GDPR compliance," wrote *DNAExplained.com*. <https://dna-explained.com/2018/05/14/world-families-network-ysearch-and-mitosearch-bite-the-dust-thanks-so-much-gdpr/>

As a result of the publicity about U.S. police arresting suspects based on matching DNA from crime scenes with DNA data on genealogy websites, three bioethicists at the U.S. National Institute of Health published an article in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* on the ethics of using genealogical DNA data for crime solving. They suggested three "interrelated topics: informed consent, privacy, and justice" must be considered. They argued that genealogy sites should warn users that posted data might be used for forensic purposes and that law enforcement should create formal standards and accountability mechanisms for such searches. [http://annals.org/aim/article-abstract/2683001/ethical-use-genealogy-data-solve-crimes?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=664e70a9ea-MR\\_COPY\\_09&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-664e70a9ea-149736437](http://annals.org/aim/article-abstract/2683001/ethical-use-genealogy-data-solve-crimes?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=664e70a9ea-MR_COPY_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-664e70a9ea-149736437)

"Most sequenced genomes are currently stored in strict access-controlled repositories," a team of researchers wrote in *Nature Biotechnology*. "Free access to these data could improve the power of genome-wide association studies . . . to identify disease-causing genetic variants and aid the discovery of new drug targets. However, concerns over genetic data privacy may deter individuals from contributing their genomes to scientific studies and could prevent researchers from sharing data with the scientific community." [https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.4108?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=3a9fd483df-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-3a9fd483df-149736437](https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.4108?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=3a9fd483df-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-3a9fd483df-149736437)

**Technology.** Google announced that it is offering a "self-destruct" feature that allows users to send Gmail messages that expire after a set amount of time. The U.S. National Freedom of Information Coalition wrote to Google opposing the feature, arguing "technology that allows the self-destruction of official, electronic public communications is not promoting transparency, and under most state open government laws, is illegal. We urge you to take steps to assure the 'self-destruct' feature be disabled on government Gmail accounts and on emails directed to a government entity." <https://www.nfoic.org/blogs/nfoic-requests-google-disable-gmail-self-destructing-feature-government-communicues>

Benetech announced that “given current technical requirements” it will cease any further development of Martus, an “end-to-end encrypted software for human rights data collection” launched in 2003.  
<https://benetech.org/martus-sunsets-human-rights-data-collection/>

**World War II.** The *Jerusalem Post* published an article on the Special Archive in Moscow which holds the foreign documents taken by the Soviet Army during World War II. Noting that the archives “contains materials from Jewish and Masonic groups, political parties, various non-governmental organizations and associations, newspapers and unique documentary materials of private origins” including “entire archives of Jewish communities, with records dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century,” the author said the “restitution of Judaica is a question of morals and not business.”  
<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/The-Special-Archive-Moscow-In-search-of-lost-Judaica-554765>

### **Bilateral and multilateral news.**

**Bangladesh/Myanmar.** Negotiations continued through the month of May on the conditions for repatriation of Rohingya people who fled Myanmar in 2017. Myanmar alleged that members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army were among the refugees in Bangladesh (see Myanmar below), but Bangladeshi officials said there was no evidence that members of the group were in the country and urged Myanmar to hand over a “specific list” of the group members, reported *New Age* (Dhaka). On the very last day of May, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Development Program and the government of Myanmar announced they agreed to the terms of a memorandum of understanding regarding repatriation. The following day Bangladesh said Myanmar’s government provided a list of 1,222 Rohingya “who would be allowed to return” without “requiring that they be verified first for repatriation,” *BenarNews* reported. Bangladesh had previously verified “more than 8,000 Rohingya names” under the terms of a November 2017 bilateral agreement. The Xchange Foundation, a migration research nongovernmental organization, said 99% of the 1,700 Rohingya it surveyed said they would only go back to Myanmar on the condition that they are given Myanmar citizenship, freedom of movement and freedom of religion. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-01.  
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/41477/myanmar-wants-repatriation-of-only-1101-verified-rohingyas;>  
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/41537/myanmar-urged-to-send-list-of-arsa-members;>  
<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/rohingya-agreement-06012018161155.html>

**Brazil/United States.** A Brazilian professor posted on his social media account a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency memo to the Secretary of State, written in April 1974 and published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* in 2015, which reported that newly-elected Brazilian President Ernesto Geisel planned to continue his predecessor’s “policy of using extra legal means against subversives but would limit executions to the most dangerous subversives and terrorists.” In response to the professor’s posting, reported *telesur*, “the Brazilian army stated that any classified documents that could prove [the CIA] allegations of the events had been destroyed as it was stipulated by the laws of that period.”  
[https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/CIA-Memo-Shows-Brazilian-Dictator-Authorized-Executions-20180513-0007.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=10;](https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/CIA-Memo-Shows-Brazilian-Dictator-Authorized-Executions-20180513-0007.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10;) for the document, see  
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d99?platform=hootsuite>

**Canada/United States.** The *Toronto Star* “spent 18 months reviewing thousands of pages of doctors’ public disciplinary records to verify those who have been licensed to work on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border.” They found that “almost half of the 159 doctors who were found guilty of professional misconduct in one place went on to commit a second violation that resulted in discipline” and “that 90% of these doctors’ public profiles in Canada failed to report the breadth of sanction against them.” Violations included “incompetence, improper prescribing, sexual misconduct, substance abuse and fraud.” [http://projects.thestar.com/doctor-discipline/index.html?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=b5d0eaec1-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-b5d0eaec1-149736437](http://projects.thestar.com/doctor-discipline/index.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=b5d0eaec1-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-b5d0eaec1-149736437)

The *Guardian* reported on a doctor at the Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal who, beginning in 1957 and continuing into the early 1960s, was partially funded by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to research “mind-control brainwashing . . . as part of a North America-wide project known as MK Ultra.” “A handful” of the former patients and their families have received compensation payments, but “families are still grappling with the effects.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/03/montreal-brainwashing-allan->

El Salvador/United States. *CNN* investigated U.S. funding and equipping of “elite paramilitary police officers in El Salvador who are accused of illegally executing gang members.” The Special Reaction Forces (the unit that started receiving funds in 2003) was “disbanded earlier this year” but “many of its officers have joined a new elite force [the Jaguars] that currently receives U.S. funding.” In its investigation, *CNN* used information from a report to the U.S. Congress and WhatsApp conversations leaked to the Salvadorian news outlet *Factum* “in which officers discuss tactics for hiding extrajudicial executions and which gang members to target.” When asked by *CNN*, “the Salvadoran police did not dispute the authenticity of the messages.” *CNN* also shot footage of the Jaguars.  
<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/05/world/el-salvador-police-int/>

Germany/Poland. Between 21 September 1961 and 7 November 1999 Poland sent 62,937 documents to Germany for use in investigations of World War II crimes. They included “witness interrogation protocols, death certificates, photographs, and exhumation protocols,” reported *JTA*. Poland asked Germany to return those documents to help Poland estimate “the amount of compensation due to Poland from Germany.” <https://www.jta.org/2018/05/21/news-opinion/poland-asks-germany-return-archival-documents-war-crimes-saving-jews>

Ireland/United States. Ireland has a national cervical cancer screening program called CervicalCheck. In a scandal that is still unravelling, between 2008 and 2014 at least 209 women were given “negative” results on their cancer tests when they either had cancer or should have had further testing. Within three years of being told there was no sign of the condition in their tests 128 women developed cancer, reported *Irish Examiner*, and 18 have died. The scandal broke into public view in April when Vicky Phelan, one of the women who received a “false negative,” settled her lawsuit against the government health service and the U.S. laboratory that made the inaccurate analysis. In mid-May the Department of Health released “more than 122 pages” of files that “show senior department officials were fully aware of the scandal two years ago,” although other reports say the errors were found four years ago during a 2014 audit. A 2016 document said the health service sent letters about the inaccurate smear tests “to treating clinicians.” Ms. Phelan’s doctor knew of the “false negative” in 2016 but did not tell her for another 15 months, *BBC News* reported. <https://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/us-lab-involved-in-cervical-cancer-smear-tests-scandal-threatened-legal-action-against-hse-470731.html>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-44082933>

Middle East war. Researchers at the cyber-security firm Flashpoint sampled more than a million web links from “two hidden forums” used by the Islamic State (IS) supporters between the start of 2015 and the end of 2017. *BBC* reported that the researchers believe IS supporters “began deliberately posting links to pages stored by the Internet Archive’s website-recording service in March 2016” because “Twitter and other services [were] becoming faster at removing offending accounts and extremist content.” The Internet Archives “accounted for 14.3% of the harvested links on the larger forum in 2017 and 11.4% of those on the smaller one.” <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-44112431>

*The Intercept* published a perceptive analysis of what it called “A Bitter Dispute Over the Theft of Iraqi History” occasioned by the *New York Times* journalist who took more than 15,000 pages of IS documents out of Iraq. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-04. <https://theintercept.com/2018/05/23/isis-files-podcast-new-york-times-iraq/> On 31 May the *Times* wrote that it is keeping the documents “in a safe and secure location as we wait to finalize a partnership with an institution that will help us digitize them, making them available online,” again ignoring privacy and ownership issues. *Al Jazeera* the same day said it learned that the *Times* will “return the original documents to the Iraqi government via its embassy in Washington, DC.” [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/31/reader-center/isis\\_files\\_questions.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/31/reader-center/isis_files_questions.html); <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/nyt-plans-return-thousands-isis-files-iraq-180531195533156.html>

By contrast to the *Times*’ removal of records, the U.S. government returned to Iraq 450 cuneiform tablets that were illegally imported into the United States. The tablets date between 2100 BC and 1600 BC and seem to come from the city of Irisagrig. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement statement on the return described “most of” the tablets as “legal or administrative texts—meaning that they contain records such as contracts and inventories of goods that made it easier for private citizens

and the city government to run their affairs,” *Live Science* reported. In other words, they are archives, with an uncanny resemblance to the types of records created by IS that are in the *New York Times* haul. <https://www.livescience.com/62437-stolen-sumerian-tablets-from-lost-city.html>

Malaysia/Netherlands/Russia. Prosecutors in the Netherlands announced that their investigation of the shooting down of the Malaysian jet over Ukraine in 2015, killing all 298 people on board, showed that a Russian military missile known as a Buk was used and, further, that the missile belonged to an active duty unit in the Russian military, the 53<sup>rd</sup> Antiaircraft Brigade that was based in Kursk, Ukraine. At the press conference announcing their findings, the prosecutor said “careful analysis of video and photos from social media traced the journey of the Russian missile convoy into Ukraine and identified the launcher system,” the *Associated Press* reported. <https://apnews.com/4b05cd0e43c84e74822ebf1356337cdf>

South Africa/Zimbabwe. South Africa returned 73 boxes of “Cabinet files and other State papers dating back to 1927 that former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith” took to Rhodes University in South Africa and “deposited as his personal documents” after the fall of his government in 1979. Zimbabwean president Emmerson Mnangagwa welcomed the return and called for the repatriation of other documentary materials from the U.K., South Africa and Australia, *New Zimbabwe* reported. <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/south-africa-returns-old-rhodesian-cabinet-files-to-zimbabwe/>

Sri Lanka/United Kingdom. In response to a Freedom of Information request by the *Guardian*, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office “confirmed that it destroyed 195 files on Sri Lanka, dating from 1978 to 1980.” The Tamil Tigers rebel group began its uprising in 1983, meaning “that there is almost no record of the British government’s work with the Sri Lankan authorities at the start of a famously brutal civil war.” The executive secretary of the London-based Tamil Information Centre said, “We are horrified to learn that the UK’s Foreign Office has destroyed vital information on the British government’s training and arming of Sri Lankan security forces, which were involved in widespread human rights violations against the Tamils.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/23/files-on-tamil-tigers-and-mi5-in-sri-lanka-erased-at-foreign-office>

## **National news.**

Afghanistan. Between 1 August 2015 and 31 December 2017 the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan “selected 237 cases of violence against women” that were reported to Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) institutions in 22 provinces “and monitored and documented their progress through the justice system” and also “monitored 280 cases of murder and ‘honour killings’.” They conducted 103 individual interviews and 84 focus group discussions and consulted 1,829 “mediators, representatives of EVAW Law institutions and women’s rights activists.” The UN found that despite the “government’s concrete efforts” to support women, there is “frequent failure of State officials to exercise due-diligence in investigating, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators and providing reparations to survivors” and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms continue to be used. They concluded that there is a “high rate of impunity” and, most shocking, “strengthened . . . normalisation of violence against women.” This investigation again shows the importance of UN records as evidence. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/AF/UNAMA\\_OHCHR\\_EVAW\\_Report2018\\_InjusticeImpunity29May2018.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/AF/UNAMA_OHCHR_EVAW_Report2018_InjusticeImpunity29May2018.pdf)

The government began distributing the controversial electronic National Identity Cards. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani said that “suicide bombers are mostly likely using the fake national identity cards to make it into the areas of their target” and the electronic cards should “strengthen the system,” while a spokesman said the cards will also give Afghanistan “access to an accurate census data,” *Khaama Press* reported. For background see *HRWG News* 2018-03. <https://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-inaugurates-distribution-of-electronic-national-identity-cards-05057/>

Albania. During the years of the Communist regime, prisoners were sent to work in copper and pyrite mines, *BIRN* reported. In December 2014 the government amended the pension law for miners, but when former prisoners applied for pensions, “they were rejected – the authorities said that although there were records of their imprisonment, there were no details of the work they had done while in . . . jail.” The parliament is “expected” to amend the law again to make 264 former prisoner/miners eligible for pensions. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanian-political-prisoners-used-as-miners-win-pension-victory-05-04->

[2018?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=4e6a2322ce-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-4e6a2322ce-319755321](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-17/aboriginal-term-deemed-offensive-births-deaths-marriages/9753430)

Australia. In Perth the legislation governing the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages says, “If, in the Registrar’s opinion, a word or expression appearing on an entry in the Register is, or may be regarded as, offensive, the Registrar may issue a certificate . . . without including the word or expression.” *ABC News* reported that apparently as the Registry digitized its records between 2007 and 2015 it “whited out” information such as the word “aboriginal.” The Registrar said in a statement that many entries made through the 1980s include “observations” which “would be considered exceedingly offensive, inappropriate and hurtful.” Family and academic historians and activists want the redaction practice stopped and reversed. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-17/aboriginal-term-deemed-offensive-births-deaths-marriages/9753430>

Bangladesh. The government and the nongovernmental organization Plan International introduced a new phone app that will allow “matchmakers, priests and officers who register marriages to verify the bride and groom’s ages through a digital database,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. They hope use of the app will help eliminate child marriage. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180507003042-93mdm/>

Canada. In a series of articles, the *Globe and Mail* reported that in June 2017 the Supreme Court of Canada made an agreement with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) that court files “related to the deliberations of the judges” will be restricted for 50 years from the date they rule on a case and the Court can “withdraw the files at any time, and can keep the documents secret forever, without providing a justification.” The agreement covers “Collegial Documents” which are court property (“notes and correspondence between judges as they deliberate on a case, mark up one another’s draft rules or communicate through their clerks”) as distinct from “Chambers Documents,” which are “a judge’s drafts of a decision or notes or communications with law clerks on a case” and remain the personal property of the judge to dispose of as he or she wishes. If a judge wishes to see “Collegial Files” transferred to LAC the chief judge must give permission in writing. The agreement will be reviewed “every seven years or less.” <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-supreme-court-of-canada-places-50-year-embargo-on-public-access-to/>; <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-supreme-court-of-canada-pulled-files-years-before-embargo-deal-was/>; <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-fifty-year-embargo-on-supreme-court-documents-too-long-for-any/>

The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that the transcripts from a case in 2003 were covered by “settlement privilege” and did not have to be given to St. Anne’s Indian Residential School survivors who wanted to use them “to bolster compensation cases,” *CBC News* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-01. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/st-annes-residential-school-appeal-decision-documents-1.4652573>

Democratic Republic of Congo. The International Organisation of La Francophonie audited the voter register and “identified multiple issues, including that 16.6% of voters had been registered without [the required] digital recording of their fingerprints,” *Crisis Watch* reported. [https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm\\_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm\\_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_06\\_01\\_12\\_45&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_01_12_45&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018)

El Salvador. In December 1981, during the civil war, the army killed almost 1000 people in the village of El Mozote and its nearby hamlets. A trial began in 1990, but after the war ended with a peace agreement, the national assembly granted amnesty for war crimes and the case ended. The amnesty was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2016, and the case has resumed, trying 18 former military men. Evidence of the crimes “could lie in the military archives,” reported the *New York Times*, “but the army has told the court that records of the operation do not exist.” Kate Doyle, a human rights specialist with the U.S. nongovernmental National Security Archive, said that because the U.S. supported the Salvadoran military “the U.S. archives are chock-full of information about the El Mozote massacre,” but not all of the records have been declassified. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/26/world/americas/el-salvador-el-mozote-massacre.html>

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security announced a “17% increase in femicides in 2018, totaling 165 as of 15 May.” The government “approved an initiative” to combat gender violence, *Crisis Watch* reported.



[https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm\\_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm\\_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_06\\_01\\_12\\_45&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_01_12_45&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018)

**Gambia.** Human Rights Watch (HRW) and TRIAL International interviewed 30 former Gambian officials about a summary execution of more than 50 Gambian, Nigerian and other West African migrants in July 2005. HRW’s legal counsel said the migrants were murdered “by a paramilitary death squad taking orders from [then] President Jammeh. Jammeh’s subordinates then destroyed key evidence to prevent international investigators from learning the truth.” Jammeh is in exile in Equatorial Guinea. Gambia’s current president suggested he would seek Jammeh’s extradition if his prosecution is recommended by the Gambian Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission which is to begin work “in the next few months.” The information from the interviews would be important for the work of the truth commission. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/16/gambia-ex-president-tied-2005-murders-ghanaian-and-nigerian-migrants>

**Guatemala.** In late April, Velia Muralles of the Guatemala police archives testified in the trial of five retired senior members of the Guatemalan military for crimes against humanity and the enforced disappearance of Marco Antonio Theissen and the torture of his sister Emma. She validated documents seized from the homes of two of the defendants, one about the “capture and registration” of Emma and another about security at Military Zone 17 where she was held. Four of the five were convicted. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-03. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/05/military-expert-senior-military-officials-had-full-knowledge-of-and-responsibility-for-the-crimes-committed-against-the-molina-theissen-family/>; <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/05/four-retired-senior-military-officers-found-guilty-in-molina-theissen-case/>

**Honduras.** In harsh language, the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders listed government failures, among them: “According to official data provided by the Ministry of Security, no disciplinary actions were taken against police officers in 2017, when 52 police officers were under investigation for homicide and 39 for torture.” The footnote to the statement read, “By the end of 2017, the Special Commission on police corruption had screened 10,206 officials and dismissed 4,925.” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23063&LangID=E>

**India.** When British colonial rule ended in 1947, millions of refugees fled across the new border between India and Pakistan. In the province of Maharashtra, refugees were housed in “about 30 government-owned ‘camps’ or colonies across the state.” In late April the state government said “all remaining refugees would get ownership rights” to the property where they have been living for more than six decades, reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180427082423-zyfy0/>

The *Ahmedabad Mirror* warned that “documents piling up has turned the fire station into a tinderbox waiting to go up in flames.” Records more than two years old that could be used to settle insurance claims or as evidence in crimes are “unavailable” or “crumbling.” The director of the All India Fire Mitigation Institute said, “The fire records are very important for vulnerability analysis and gap reports. This is the data that has to be used to plan fire safety for the future and has to be preserved with utmost care.” <http://ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/others/amdavadis-cant-get-documents-they-need-as-termite-infested-files-choke-fire-station/articleshow/64057602.cms>

A study by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis used 2011 census data to estimate “under-5 female mortality across India.” The researchers found “there is an average of 239,000 excess deaths per year of girls under the age of five in India, or 2.4 million in a decade, and excess female child mortality is found in 90% of districts in the country.” The researchers estimated that “around 22% of the overall mortality burden of females under five is . . . due to gender bias.” <http://pure.iiasa.ac.at/id/eprint/15246/>

Eastern Odisha state began distributing “land rights to those living in slums in small towns and property rights to those in city settlements” while Tata Trust will “help map the slums,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The president of a slum dwellers group said “the government must ensure that the identification of all slum dwellers is done properly.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180510110246-c9a6v/>

**Iraq.** Under Iraq’s electoral law, a quarter of parliament’s 329 seats must be held by women. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported that during the ongoing election campaign, women candidates have been abused--for example, by posting sex tapes online “purporting to feature” women members of

parliament, vandalizing posters, making defamatory statements on social media--to the extent that the United Nations has branded the harassment “alarming.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180511112549-mhuma/>

Ireland. In 2016 Tusla, the government’s child protection agency, took over the files of St. Patrick’s Guild, an adoption society run between 1946 and 1969 by the Sister of Charity, and “discovered, while attempting to help adopted children trace their birth parents, that some of the births had been fraudulently registered,” the *New York Times* reported. So far Tusla has identified “at least 126 cases” of babies who were born to unmarried mothers but the adoptive parents’ names were written on the birth certificate. The government said it will “commission on independent inquiry into a broad sample of adoptions arranged by a variety of other societies and institutions, to see if a similar pattern exists there.” An official of a child protection society estimated that the records of as many as 150,000 adoptions might need to be investigated if the practice of falsifying was widespread.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/ireland-apologizes-for-adoptions-that-robbed-children-of-identities/>

Mexico. A new archives law was enacted on 26 April. The blog of the Archivo General de la Nacion said the law includes the responsibility to preserve archives related to grave violations of human rights and to guarantee the right of access to them. [https://www.gob.mx/agn/articulos/el-pleno-de-la-camara-de-diputados-aproba-la-ley-general-de-archivos?idiom=es&utm\\_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=ce77451992-EMAIL\\_Newsletter\\_MAY\\_2018&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_84a7f06290-ce77451992-225732189](https://www.gob.mx/agn/articulos/el-pleno-de-la-camara-de-diputados-aproba-la-ley-general-de-archivos?idiom=es&utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=ce77451992-EMAIL_Newsletter_MAY_2018&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-ce77451992-225732189)

Eight Mexican human rights and law organizations and the U.S.-based Open Society Justice Initiative published a report arguing that there have been “repeated failures” of Mexican authorities to “properly investigate and prosecute atrocity crimes” and urging “the creation of an accountability mechanism based inside the country, but composed of national and international staff.” The report “examines credible evidence that points to collusion between certain public officials and members of the Zetas drug cartel in the perpetration of likely crimes against humanity in the northern state of Coahuila between 2009-2012.” More than 250 endnotes cite court records in Mexico and the U.S., Mexican government reports and statistics, U.S. State Department documents, and reports from international organizations. [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/corruption-kills-why-mexico-needs-international-mechanism-combat-impunity?utm\\_source=news&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=news\\_050518&utm\\_content=PdJCM2q46Zsg2lkQNjYeM02vI83d3yRdPP9\\_BJqjrk](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/corruption-kills-why-mexico-needs-international-mechanism-combat-impunity?utm_source=news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=news_050518&utm_content=PdJCM2q46Zsg2lkQNjYeM02vI83d3yRdPP9_BJqjrk)

Myanmar. Amnesty International said that “based on dozens of interviews conducted [in Myanmar] and across the border in Bangladesh, as well as photographic evidence analyzed by forensic pathologists,” the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), an insurgent group in Rakhine state, “is responsible for at least one, and potentially a second, massacre of up to 99 Hindu women, men, and children as well as additional unlawful killings and abductions of Hindu villagers in August 2017.” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/myanmar-new-evidence-reveals-rohingya-armed-group-massacred-scores-in-rakhine-state/>

Myanmar announced that it is establishing an “independent commission” to “investigate the violation of human rights and related issues following the terrorist attacks by ARSA,” *Eurasia Review* reported. Three commissioners, two national and one international, will be appointed.

[http://www.eurasiareview.com/01062018-myanmar-to-set-up-commission-to-probe-alleged-rights-violations-in-rakhine/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/01062018-myanmar-to-set-up-commission-to-probe-alleged-rights-violations-in-rakhine/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Nicaragua. The National Assembly “appointed, ratified and swore in members of the Commission for Truth, Justice and Peace,” *telesur* reported. The three members will “investigate the death of protesters and other violent acts that took place since April 19, when clashes between protesters and security forces began.” [https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Nicaragua-Creates-Truth-Justice-and-Peace-Commission-20180507-0008.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=10](https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Nicaragua-Creates-Truth-Justice-and-Peace-Commission-20180507-0008.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10)

Nigeria. “Since early 2015, the Nigerian military has . . . recaptured vast swathes of territory that had come under the control of Boko Haram in the north-east of the country. However, instead of ‘freeing’ hundreds of thousands of people who had been trapped in these areas, the military has carried out systematic patterns of violence and abuse against this population, including war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. Women have been affected in disproportionate and gender-specific ways, and continue to face ongoing discrimination and violence,” Amnesty International said. For its report on the situation AI conducted over 250 interviews, reviewed satellite images of displaced persons camps and a

detention facility and used “scores of reports, press statements, meeting minutes and other documents from the military, government and humanitarian actors, and reviewed videos and photos provided by humanitarian workers, journalists, internally displaced people and other contacts.”  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/8415/2018/en/>

South Africa. Mining companies settled a class action lawsuit with mineworkers who suffer from silicosis and tuberculosis, *TimesLive* reported. Different groups of claimants are established; compensation depends on the degree of impairment; dependents of a “deceased silicosis claimant” will also be eligible for compensation. Medical records will be key to obtaining benefits.  
<https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/business/2018-05-03-mining-companies-to-fork-out-about-r5-billion-to-mineworkers-after-silicosis-settlement/>

Spain. The archives in the monastery of Lazkao, in the Basque Autonomous Community, holds “all the pamphlets, posters and other ‘internal bulletins’” of the now-disbanded rebel group ETA, reported *Sud Ouest*.  
<https://www.sudouest.fr/2018/05/10/espagne-soixante-ans-d-histoire-dans-les-archives-d-eta-5048442-754.php>

Sri Lanka. Parliament established a new court dedicated to corruption cases, *Crisis Watch* reported. A good records system for the court will be essential.  
[https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm\\_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm\\_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_06\\_01\\_12\\_45&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=80e70f1737-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_01_12_45&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-80e70f1737-359425329&t=Crisiswatch+May+2018&crisiswatch=6122&date=May+2018)

St. Kitts and Nevis. The legislature passed Data Protection Bill 2018 which, said the attorney general, “seeks to ensure that personal information in the custody or control of an organization” either government or nongovernment “shall not be disclosed, processed or used other than the purpose for which it was collected, except with the consent of the individual or where exemptions are clearly defined.” This could eliminate archival preservation of business and organization records of all kinds.  
<https://www.huntonprivacyblog.com/2018/05/08/st-kitts-nevis-pass-data-protection-bill-2018/>

Tunisia. The president of the Truth and Dignity Commission told *Tunis Afrique Presse* that the commission will transfer its archives to the national archives when the commission ends and “after adapting the archiving software of the National Archives to those used by the Commission.” She added, “We will, of course, contact the victims to request their permission to transfer their records to the National Archives.” That could become an impediment to timely transfer.  
<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/10222363-ivd-will-continue>

United Kingdom. During a “review of the progress of a major NHS [National Health Service] trial designed to find out whether extra screening would protect older women from breast cancer,” the medical team discovered that an estimated 450,000 women “had not been invited for their final routine screenings before their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday” because of a major “computer algorithm failure,” the *Guardian* reported. “As many as 270 women may have died because of the 2009 computer error.”  
[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/02/jeremy-hunt-to-launch-inquiry-into-450000-missed-breast-cancer-screenings?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm\\_term=273554&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/02/jeremy-hunt-to-launch-inquiry-into-450000-missed-breast-cancer-screenings?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=273554&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912)

The government “suspended controversial arrangements under which the NHS shared patients’ details with the Home Office so it could trace people breaking immigration rules,” the *Guardian* reported.  
[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/09/government-to-stop-forcing-nhs-to-share-patients-data-with-home-office?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm\\_term=274308&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/09/government-to-stop-forcing-nhs-to-share-patients-data-with-home-office?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=274308&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912)

IKWRO (Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organization), a nongovernmental organization, sent Freedom of Information requests to every police force in the UK and found “the number of cases of ‘honour’ based violence recorded by the police increased” from 3335 in 2014 to 5105 in 2016. However, “the volume of cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision is the lowest it has been in five years,” with only 256 cases referred in 2016/17, of which 215 were prosecuted and 122 convictions obtained.  
<http://ikwro.org.uk/category/press-release/>

United States. A *Guardian* “review of settlement data and details found in related court records” showed that “the U.S. government has paid out more than \$60 million in legal settlements where [Customs and Border Protection, CBP] agents were involved in death, driving injuries, alleged assaults and wrongful detention.” It also found that “at least 97 people—citizens and non-citizens” have been killed by border agents since 2003, “a count drawn from settlement payment data, court records, use of force logs, incident reports, and news articles.” [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/01/border-patrol-violence-us-paid-60m-to-cover-claims-against-the-agency?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm\\_term=273400&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/01/border-patrol-violence-us-paid-60m-to-cover-claims-against-the-agency?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm_term=273400&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection); [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/02/fatal-encounters-97-deaths-point-to-pattern-of-border-agent-violence-across-america?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm\\_term=273534&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/02/fatal-encounters-97-deaths-point-to-pattern-of-border-agent-violence-across-america?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm_term=273534&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection)

The American Civil Liberties Union issued a report based on “about 30,000 pages of documents,” including emails, complaint forms and investigative reports, it obtained from the CBP “through an open-records lawsuit.” The records “depict a gantlet of alleged mistreatment for the tens of thousands of children who arrived mainly from Central America between 2009 and 2014.”

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/lplnufjbcwi0xn/CBP%20Report%20ACLU\\_IHRC%205.23%20FINAL.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/lplnufjbcwi0xn/CBP%20Report%20ACLU_IHRC%205.23%20FINAL.pdf?dl=0)

Using data originally obtained by the *Guardian*’s investigation into police killings, researchers quantified “years of life lost due to police violence in the U.S. by age and by race” and found that “there were 57,375 and 54,754 years of life lost in total due to police violence in the US in 2015 and 2016, respectively.” They concluded that “police violence disproportionately impacts young people, and the young people affected are disproportionately people of color.”

[https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/09/years-life-lost-us-police-violence-people-of-color?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm\\_term=274272&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/09/years-life-lost-us-police-violence-people-of-color?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm_term=274272&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection)

The annual set of “surveillance-related statistics issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence” showed that in 2017 “the National Security Agency vacuumed up more than 534 million records of phone calls and text messages from American telecommunications providers like AT&T and Verizon . . . more than three times what it collected in 2016.” These records were collected on “40 targets” and that data was queried “using 31,196 search terms,” the *New York Times* reported.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/04/us/politics/nsa-surveillance-2017-annual-report.html>

“In a significant expansion of intelligence record preservation, email from more than 426 Central Intelligence Agency email accounts will now be captured as permanent historical records,” as approved by the National Archives, reported *Secrecy News*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-11.

<https://fas.org/blogs/secrecy/2018/05/cia-email-permanent/>

Using data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, “a nationally representative health interview and examination survey of U.S. adults,” researchers at the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities found “African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely to experience serious depression than Whites, but chronic stress does not seem to explain these differences,” reported *Eurasia Review* quoting *Preventive Medicine*.

[http://www.eurasiareview.com/25052018-african-americans-and-latinos-more-likely-to-be-at-risk-for-depression-than-whites/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/25052018-african-americans-and-latinos-more-likely-to-be-at-risk-for-depression-than-whites/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System led researchers to conclude that African American children aged 5 to 12 are committing suicide at roughly twice the rate of their white counterparts, reported *JAMA*.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2680952>

The Metastatic Breast Cancer Project is building a database to link “cancer patients’ medical records, treatments and outcomes with their genetic background and the genetics of their tumors,” the *New York Times* reported. The director found that patients and advocacy groups are “engaged and excited” but “simply getting the records delivered, in whatever format, has been a nightmare.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/health/medical-records-cancer.html>

The National Institutes of Health opened enrolment in a project called “All of Us,” which seeks to obtain voluntarily the DNA of 1 million U.S. residents. An opinion article in *STAT* argued that until U.S. laws are strengthened to protect participants’ “genetic privacy” people “should decline the invitation to join” unless they “fully understand and accept the risks.” [https://www.statnews.com/2018/05/30/dna-donors-genetic-privacy-nih/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=cdfd050a18-MR\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-cdfd050a18-149736437](https://www.statnews.com/2018/05/30/dna-donors-genetic-privacy-nih/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=cdfd050a18-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-cdfd050a18-149736437)

United States/Puerto Rico. A research team from Harvard University surveyed 3,299 randomly chosen households across the island and asked the occupants about their experiences during Hurricane Maria in September 2017. Using statistical projections, they concluded that between 20 September and 31 December 2017 there were 4,645 “excess deaths” — that is, deaths that would not have occurred except for the disaster following the devastating storm, the *Washington Post* reported. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/harvard-study-estimates-thousands-died-in-puerto-rico-due-to-hurricane-maria/2018/05/29/1a82503a-6070-11e8-a4a4-c070ef53f315\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.696138852bd7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/harvard-study-estimates-thousands-died-in-puerto-rico-due-to-hurricane-maria/2018/05/29/1a82503a-6070-11e8-a4a4-c070ef53f315_story.html?utm_term=.696138852bd7)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a program to assist individuals whose houses were destroyed by Hurricane Maria. In order to be eligible, “applicants need proper documents to provide proof of home ownership,” *NBC News* reported, such as “deeds or leases, mortgage payment booklets and property tax receipts.” Over a million persons applied and over 335,000 were rejected, mostly due to the lack of “appropriate legal documentation and permits.” <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/puerto-rico-crisis/no-deeds-no-aid-rebuild-homes-puerto-rico-s-reconstruction-n868396>

**Publications.** The Sedona Conference published two tools: *Commentary on BYOD: Principles and Guidance for Developing Policies and Meeting Discovery Obligations* (BYOD is “bring your own devices” to work) and *International Investigation Principles* which “addresses cross-border transfers of data in the context of government and internal investigations.” <https://thesedonaconference.org/publications>

Good reads. A discussion of the innovative ways the truth commission in Mali uses to take testimony: [https://www.newsdeeply.com/peacebuilding/community/2018/05/21/how-a-transitional-justice-expert-helped-mali-confront-its-legacy-of-war?utm\\_source=International+Center+for+Transitional+Justice+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=050f2c76f1-World+Report+November+2017+COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2d90950d4d-050f2c76f1-237813513](https://www.newsdeeply.com/peacebuilding/community/2018/05/21/how-a-transitional-justice-expert-helped-mali-confront-its-legacy-of-war?utm_source=International+Center+for+Transitional+Justice+Newsletter&utm_campaign=050f2c76f1-World+Report+November+2017+COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2d90950d4d-050f2c76f1-237813513)

A *Washington Post* story on “voice cloning” done by the Scottish firm CereProc and its implications for authentic records: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/05/10/is-technology-bringing-history-to-life-or-distorting-it/?utm\\_term=.18ef3c181477](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/05/10/is-technology-bringing-history-to-life-or-distorting-it/?utm_term=.18ef3c181477)

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