
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

News from the Section on Archives and Human Rights *Winner of the Premio Internacional Derechos Humanos 2020 de la Asociación pro Derechos Humanos de España*

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Commentary.

In 2010 *Politorbis*, the journal of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, published a chart illustrating a conceptual framework for dealing with the past. It identified four principal issues that must be addressed in a transitional justice period: right to know, right to justice, right to reparation, and a guarantee of non-recurrence. This formulation was so explanatory that ever since it has been used in discussions of the needs of a transitional period. (Jonathan Sisson, “A Conceptual Framework for Dealing with the Past,” *Politorbis* 50, https://www.ihrb.org/pdf/Politorbis_50_Dealing_with_the_Past.pdf)

And now Ukraine. To be sure, it is not yet in a post-conflict transitional period. But we can look at the news coming from that war-torn land and see how this framework might be applied. Here are some examples from April:

Civilian casualties. In an interview with *PassBlue*, the head of the UN’s Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine pointed out that it has been “recording civilian casualties in Ukraine since 2014” when Russia invaded Crimea. The Mission collects “information from a broad range of sources that are evaluated on credibility and reliability, including interviews with victims and witnesses, satellite imagery, official information, open-source information and reports.” It documents “civilian casualties, damage to infrastructure, torture and ill treatment and other grave human rights violations.” As of 28 April at midnight, it had recorded 6,134 civilian casualties, of which 2,899 were killed (including 210 children) and 3,235 injured (including 309 children), *euromaiden* reported.

https://www.passblue.com/2022/04/21/the-un-human-rights-team-in-ukraine-recording-the-hardship-that-people-are-going-through/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=3987795e19-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-3987795e19-55008469; <https://mailchi.mp/c2a5ab98591c/russo-ukrainian-war-day-14973773?e=6aa3678926>

Missing persons. The International Commission of Missing Persons (ICMP) is building a “central database cataloguing evidence and the identities of the missing, *AP* reported. ICMP’s director-general said it wants to make sure the sites are properly excavated “to identify the mortal remains so that evidence can be provided in the future for criminal trial purposes, not only potentially to the ICC, but also potentially within domestic courts in Ukraine,” and “are properly documented, the proper chain of custody is obtained.” ICMP has “an online portal where people . . . can anonymously report locations of bodies, and will help family members of the missing to provide DNA samples to help identify them.” Asked about claims that there have been forced evacuations to the Russian Federation, the UN Monitoring Mission said on 21 April, “So far, OHCHR has not been able to corroborate a factual basis of forced evacuations and will continue to monitor the situation, look into allegations and publish its findings.” https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-business-europe-the-hague-4a3671e63f6ea6a7743a4353f6bf03a4?user_email=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&utm_source=Saithru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Russia-Ukraine&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers

Cyberwar on individuals. On the eve of the 24 February invasion, the electronic systems of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were breached (it oversees the police, national guard, and border patrol), and in January the “national database of automobile insurance policies was raided during a diversionary cyberattack that defaced Ukrainian websites,” *AP* reported. The hacks provided “extensive details on much of Ukraine’s population” which “Russia can use to identify and locate Ukrainians most likely to

resist an occupation, and potentially target them for internment or worse.” Ukraine’s State Service for Special Communications and Information Protection said that just ahead of the invasion “hackers serving Russia’s military [were] increasingly targeting individual Ukrainians.” https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-technology-business-border-patrols-automobiles-fa3f88e07e51bc8f81bac8a40c4da141?user_email=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=April30_Weekend_Reads&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers

Destruction and looting of cultural property. The war has brought massive destruction and damage to housing and infrastructure of all kinds. But damage to cultural property is special because a large part of the justification for the war has been Russian President Putin’s insistence that there is a “historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” there is no separate Ukrainian culture, and that Ukraine must be cleansed of Nazi influences. His rhetoric exposes the cultural dimension of the invasion and fuels the resistance to it. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/On_the_Historical_Unity_of_Russians_and_Ukrainians

In an interview, the director of UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre pointed out that in 2017 the UN Security Council “unanimously adopted resolution 2347 which for the first time made the protection of cultural heritage a security imperative and condemned the deliberate destruction of cultural property as a war crime.” *Geneva Solutions* said that by 20 April, “damage or destruction of nearly 100 culturally important sites in Ukraine have been verified” by UNESCO. However, on 19 April the Ministry of Culture said it had “already recorded 200 damaged cultural heritage sites,” *euromaidan* reported.

https://genevasolutions.news/peace-humanitarian/unesco-deliberate-destruction-of-ukraine-s-cultural-heritage-could-be-considered-a-war-crime?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email; <https://euromaidanpress.com/>

“Ukrainian military intelligence reported on March 24 that Russian occupying troops in the country were confiscating books and other materials that the Russian government has deemed ‘extremist’,” *RFL/RL* wrote on 10 April. The troops “have a whole list of names that cannot be mentioned” in the titles of books. *RFE/RL* also reported that “according to Ukrainian officials, state archive buildings in Kharkiv, Mykolayiv and Lysychanck have been targeted by Russian shelling” and “the SBU (Ukraine’s security agency) archive in Chernihiv burned down after being targeted, with the loss of some 12,000 folders of KGB documents about repressions in Ukraine.”

<https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-destroying-identity-putin-historians/31795956.html>

Writing on Twitter on 22 April, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine said “Russian invaders are looting archives & cultural funds of #Mariupol museums. They take everything to occupied Donetsk, and then, after evaluation, send the most valuable” onward. Thanks to Andras Riedlmayer for this information. <https://twitter.com/EmineDzheppar/status/1518968365347479552?cxt=HHwWgIC9mcbrupQqAAAA>

Many efforts are being made to collect evidence for future use in transitional justice processes. Ukraine’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it has created, with partners, an “online archive of Russian war crimes in Ukraine,” reported *euromaiden*. “The site documents war crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine during the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022. Crimes are divided into 7 categories: (1) Murder of innocents, (2) Attacks on civilians or civilian objects, (3) Destruction of settlements, (4) Hostages and torture, (5) Illegal deportation, (6) Attacks on religion and culture, and (7) Rape.” Meanwhile, investigators from the State Bureau of Investigation are documenting crimes of the Russian occupation, *euromaiden* also reported, including the use of munitions prohibited by the Geneva Convention, unjustified cruelty, and mass extermination of the population. <https://euromaidanpress.com/>

The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court signed an agreement to become part of a joint investigation team with Eurojust, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, and Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine “to facilitate investigations and international judicial cooperation” and “effectively gather evidence on core international crimes committed in Ukraine and bring those responsible to justice.” <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/news/icc-participates-joint-investigation-team-supported-eurojust-alleged-core-international-crimes>

Nongovernmental groups also are actively working to preserve evidence. Mnemonic, an NGO, has software “that downloads social posts from different platforms and generates a cryptographic hash to

show the material has not been altered.” This software is being used by a team of volunteers in western Ukraine “who gather online material and also contact witnesses to alleged atrocities to gather testimony,” *WIRED* reported. Bellingcat, the forensic NGO, is also “feeding links of posts from Ukraine that merit further investigation to Mnemonic.” https://www.wired.com/story/open-source-russia-war-crimes-ukraine/?bxiid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_041122&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_041122&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P6

“Hundreds of historians, librarians and IT specialists from around the world have joined forces . . . to form an online army to backup everything from websites to libraries, before buildings and servers are hit,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* wrote. One of the most active groups is Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online (SUCHO), which is preserving “at-risk websites and digital content, with help from about 1,200 volunteers.” SUCHO pointed out that “these digital records could be used to document potential war crimes, for example, if catalogued items were looted or destroyed.” The American Folklore Society (AFS), a U.S. NGO, is “providing individual cloud storage links” for folk culture materials held by museums, academics, and private individuals in Ukraine. AFS said “the material they receive is often littered with malware, which takes time to clear.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20220425155755-jvh6k/>

Finding the missing, holding perpetrators accountable, demanding reparations for damage and destruction: records on all of these are being created. Preserving the evidence collected and ensuring its validity as legal evidence is essential. This is a war about history, and the history of the war must be preserved.

SAHR News. The next First Tuesday Talk will be on June 7, when Adama Aly Pam will speak about the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Togo: “From the Archives of Terror to the Archives of Pain: an African Experience.” In French, no translation. Previous talks are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLru9FNsjTJG55cSmywZGbUmK62Cb7KmbL>

International news.

Council of Europe. The Council’s Annual Penal Statistics 2021 compiled by the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, said the European countries with the highest incarceration rates were Russia (328 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants) and Turkey (325), compared to a Europe-wide median of 102 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. The data comes from 49 European prison administrations, *BIRN* reported. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/05/after-russia-turkey-is-europes-largest-jailer-report-says/>

European Commission/United States. The Commission and the U.S. announced agreement “in principle on a new Trans-Atlantic Data Privacy Framework, which will foster trans-Atlantic data flows.” The Framework “marks an unprecedented commitment on the U.S. side to implement reforms that will strengthen the privacy and civil liberties protections applicable to U.S. signals intelligence activities.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-07. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2087

European Union. The European Union agreed on a Digital Services Act, which Amnesty International called “a landmark moment in the history of Internet regulation.” The Act requires “Big Tech platforms—including Facebook and Instagram (owned by Meta) and YouTube (owned by Google)—to assess and manage systemic risks posed by their services, such as advocacy of hatred and the spread of disinformation” as well as giving “third-party researchers, including civil society, access to platform data and insights into their algorithmic ‘black boxes’ to ensure greater scrutiny and accountability.” Thanks to Giulia Barrera for the information. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/04/european-union-digital-services-act-agreement-a-watershed-moment-for-internet-regulation/>
https://ec.europa.eu/info/digital-services-act-ensuring-safe-and-accountable-online-environment_en

“The European Union's top court ruled . . . that Germany's consumer protection association could bring a legal challenge against Facebook parent Meta over data privacy. The verdict of the Court of Justice of the European Union “means that the Federation of German Consumer Organisations can seek an injunction against Meta Platforms Ireland in a German court,” the *Economic Times* reported. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/eu-court-rules-against-meta-over-german-consumer-body-challenge/articleshow/91148547.cms?from=mdr>

International Court of Justice. The Court ruled that Colombia violated Nicaragua’s “sovereign rights and jurisdiction” in Nicaragua’s “exclusive” maritime economic zone. The Court had issued a judgment on 19 November 2012 on the Nicaraguan maritime zone; subsequently, Colombia’s President and other high officials said in “various declarations” that they rejected the Court’s judgment. The Court also told both governments to bring the baselines of their maritime areas into “conformity with customary international law.” <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/155/17806.pdf>; <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/155/17806.pdf>

International Criminal Court (ICC). The Abd-Al-Rahman trial opened. He is accused of “31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Darfur, Sudan, between August 2003 and at least April 2004.” This is the first trial at ICC to focus on Darfur, based on a referral to the ICC by the UN Security Council on 31 March 2005. In his opening statement, the prosecutor showed “a montage” of ten video clips, including commercial and UN footage, emphasizing that “they are not being presented for the truth of their content, it is not evidence, it is simply to provide context as to what was in the minds of the members of the Security Council that compelled such an eventful referral to this Court.” <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/abd-al-rahman-trial-opens-international-criminal-court>; <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-qc-opening-trial-case-prosecutor-v-ali-muhammad-ali-abd>

Residual Court for Sierra Leone. The Residual Court, using funds from Global Affairs Canada, “was able to preserve the public archives of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), making them available and accessible to present and future generations in Sierra Leone and to visiting researchers from abroad. The documents are stored at the Sierra Leone Peace Museum at the old Special Court site, and the grant allowed for improvements to the Museum to enhance storage conditions for the SCSL and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) archives.” Thanks to Andreas Nef for the link. <http://www.rscsl.org/Documents/Press/2022/pressrelease-033122.pdf>

United Nations. A file from the French intelligence service (SDECE) dated July 1961, now in France’s Archives nationales, contained a copy of a document calling for the death of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, *PassBlue* reported. It was apparently written by a member of a far-right French dissident paramilitary group opposing Algerian independence and the regime of President Charles de Gaulle. https://www.passblue.com/2022/04/14/the-missing-link-in-a-un-cold-case-a-french-death-warrant-against-dag-hammarskjold-comes-to-light/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=0c39b6929a-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-0c39b6929a-55008469

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification published its second major report. “Underway for five years and written by land-use and ecosystem experts across 21 organizations, the report arrives at some sobering conclusions, including that up to 40% of the planet’s land is already degraded, affecting half of the people alive today,” *Inside Climate News* reported. The report’s author said “the global food system is responsible for 80% of the world’s deforestation, 70% of freshwater use and is the greatest driver of land-based biodiversity loss.” It recommends both land restoration and consumers “shifting away from resource-intensive livestock-based diets that are responsible for higher carbon emissions.” <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/overview>; https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27042022/agriculture-land-report/?utm_source=InsideClimate+News&utm_campaign=d98ae9b59f-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-d98ae9b59f-328765186

World Health Organization (WHO). “In its largest release of data on air quality ever, WHO has found that most of the world’s population are breathing unsafe levels of air pollutant—particularly fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO2)--which cause excess illness and premature death from respiratory disease, as well as from cardiovascular disease and cancers,” *Health Policy Watch* reported. For the assessment, WHO “analyzed air quality data from satellite images and measurements, along with the ground monitoring data collected from 6,000 cities and settlements across the world.” However, the data from India, one of the most polluted regions of the world, was deleted from the newly-released database (it can be found in other sources), while data from Africa “appears dated and patchy” and the Israeli data is seven years old. <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/south-east-asia-africa-and-middle-east-are-air-pollution-hot-spots-whos-largest-ever-data-release/>; <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/exclusive-report-who-deleted-indias-air-pollution-data-from-its-new-air-quality-database-why/>

In a case first filed in 2018 in Miami, Florida, U.S, several Cuban doctors “who escaped the medical mission in Brazil” sued the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), WHO’s arm in the Americas, for facilitating the payments from Brazil to Cuba for their services, the *Miami Herald* reported. “To avoid oversight by Brazil’s Congress, Brazilian officials tapped PAHO to facilitate the payment, Brazilian government documents show,” with 85% of the \$1.3 billion sent to the Cuban government, 10% to the physicians, and 5% to PAHO (about \$75 million). Now the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia (PAHO is located in DC) ruled that the lawsuit may continue, saying PAHO “lost its immunity protections as a foreign entity by allegedly engaging in ‘commercial activities’ in its role as a financial intermediary in an alleged forced-labor scheme in Brazil.” The lawsuit also alleges that “Cuban authorities, and sometimes Cuban government officials working for PAHO, controlled the doctors’ movement and seized their travel documents.”

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article260136885.html>

World/general news.

Business records. Honduras’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment ordered Minerales de Occidente Sociedad Anonima (MINOSA), a subsidiary of Canada’s Aura Minerals, to suspend open-pit gold mining at the San Andres mine. A gold vein “extends to a cemetery where members of Maya Chorti ethnic groups are buried,” and a lawyer representing residents said “MINOSA has exhumed corpses from the almost 200-year-old pantheon.” The Ministry’s order, seen by *Reuters*, not only ordered the suspension of activity but also said “the company must prove it has legal authorization to exhume bodies before resuming activities at the site.” [https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/honduras-orders-aura-minerals-subsidiary-to-suspend-gold-mining-at-indigenous-cemetery/47478742#:~:text=TEGUCIGALPA%20\(Reuters\)%20%2D%20Honduran%20authorities,the%20suspension%20in%20a%20statement](https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/honduras-orders-aura-minerals-subsidiary-to-suspend-gold-mining-at-indigenous-cemetery/47478742#:~:text=TEGUCIGALPA%20(Reuters)%20%2D%20Honduran%20authorities,the%20suspension%20in%20a%20statement)

In March 2020 two Swiss-based NGOs, TRIAL International and Public Eye, published a report alleging that the Zug, Switzerland, company Kolmar Group AG “had purchased . . . smuggled gasoil from Libya in 2014 and 2015, a time period which coincided with the Second Liberian Civil War. TRIAL International analysed the evidence gathered during the investigation and concluded that the Swiss trader may have been complicit in the war crime of pillage.” Evidence included bank transfers, ship tracking data, and certificates of origin, among others. The NGOs filed a “criminal denunciation,” and the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland has opened criminal proceedings. The result is anything but sure: “no State has ever convicted an economic actor of pillage since the Second World War.” <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/plundering-of-libyan-fuel-war-crimes-proceedings-opened-in-case-involving-swiss-trading-company/>

In 2009 the International Tin Association set up the International Tin Supply Chain Initiative (ITSCI), which “aims to provide a reliable chain of custody of minerals that are not linked to child labor or the influence of armed groups or the army.” Global Witness, the U.K.-based NGO, reported that ITSCI instead “appears to facilitate the laundering of minerals” and “is also used to launder huge amounts of minerals that have been smuggled and trafficked.” The report “is based on field research in over 10 mining areas in DRC’s [Democratic Republic of Congo] North and South Kivu provinces, interviews with over 90 individuals from governments, industry, civil society and academia and dozens of videos recorded by local researchers.” Numerous recommendations in the report involve better and more public data on mining supply chains. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/natural-resource-governance/itsci-laundromat/>

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre opened a Transition Minerals Tracker that captures publicly reported allegations since 2010 “of environmental and human rights abuses against companies mining one or more of the following six minerals: cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, nickel and zinc.” https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/transition-minerals-tracker/?utm_source=wu&utm_medium=wuemail&utm_campaign=TMT2021&utm_content=email

Child sexual abuse. “Data from U.K. child safety nonprofit the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) shows 252,194 URLs containing child sexual abuse imagery” were found online in the last 12 months. “That’s up 64% from 2020,” *WIRED* reported. <https://www.wired.com/story/child-abuse-hosting-us-increase/>

Climate change. Researchers for NGO World Weather Attribution said “human-caused global warming intensified the rain” from five tropical storms that ravaged Madagascar and southeastern Africa during February and March 2022, killing at least 310 people, destroying more than 45,000 homes, and displacing about half a million people, *Inside Climate News* reported. The researchers said their “analysis of the storms was hampered by a shortage of weather data for this part of Africa.” One of the authors said, “Madagascar is also a reminder of the negative impacts war can have on climate and the environment, because most of the weather stations that could deliver reliable data on climate extremes were destroyed during that country’s 16-year civil war and have not been replaced.”

https://insideclimatenews.org/news/12042022/global-warming-indian-ocean-tropical-storms-attribution/?utm_source=InsideClimate+News&utm_campaign=c5717f835a-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-c5717f835a-328765186

Human rights. The New Zealand-based NGO Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) issued a report, “The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Human Rights Practices: Findings from the Human Rights Measurement Initiative’s 2021 Practitioner Survey.” Surveying people who work for human rights NGOs or international NGOs (INGOs), human rights lawyers, journalists covering human rights issues, and persons who work for national human rights institutions in 39 countries, the data showed—unsurprisingly—that 2020 was not a good year for civil and political rights. All the data is available on the HRMI website. <https://stephenbagwell.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/pandemic-page-proofs.pdf>

Medical records. “The Wuhan [China] Institute of Virology [WIV] has the right to ask a partnering lab in the U.S. to destroy all records of their work, according to a legal document obtained by U.S. Right to Know,” an NGO. The Wuhan lab has been at the center of questions about the origins of COVID-19. The U.S. partner, Galveston National Laboratory, is part of the University of Texas and receives Federal funding, making the records subject to “applicable public information law obligations, including the preservation of all documentation of its research and findings,” a university spokesman said. The agreement could “undermine claims that the WIV would never delete records.” https://usrtk.org/biohazards-blog/wuhan-iab-can-delete-data/?fbclid=IwAR2ZpE8TodQ4aBYXkXMu6FsJdbdIQYQGtl-zayYrKO_8KRBf4H-3cD46KQ

Pivot Magazine, a publication of Chartered Professional Accountants Canada, said healthcare companies are four times as likely to be targeted for hacking and breaches than any other industry. “According to *Becker’s Hospital Review*, the patient’s medical information can be worth between 10 and 40 times more than a credit card number on the black market.” <https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/news/pivot-magazine/2022-04-25-cybersecurity-risks>

Researchers in the U.K. set out to investigate the relationship between birth weight and exposure to both air and noise pollution from road traffic. They used data from the U.K. Office for National Statistics on 671,509 “singleton births” in the greater London area and National Health Service data on numbers of babies and compared that to 2011 census data and data on emissions from the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, Environmental Noise Directive mapping and Heathrow Airport noise data from the Civil Aviation Authority. They reported in the *British Medical Journal*, “The findings suggest that air pollution from road traffic in London is adversely affecting fetal growth. The results suggest little evidence for an independent exposure-response effect of traffic related noise on birth weight outcomes.” <https://www.bmj.com/content/359/bmj.j5299>

Migration. The NGO Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) opened a database that brings together “more than 200 examples” and “nearly 300 reports from official government sources, NGOs, and media since 2020” of alleged human rights abuses along the U.S.-Mexican border at the hands of U.S. Border Police. <https://borderoversight.org/?emci=df82f316-38c6-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&emdi=8c5b73e9-18c7-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&ceid=8788546>

Technology. *The Irish Times* reported, “The controversial commercial spyware program Pegasus has been found on hacked mobile phones belonging to four human rights defenders in Jordan,” through analysis by the Irish NGO Front Line Defenders and the Canadian digital forensics NGO Citizen Lab. Two of the hacked were women journalists; the NGOs said women are “disproportionately vulnerable to online harms, blackmail and digitally-related acts of violence or technology-facilitated gender-based violence, especially in countries where misogyny is pronounced.” <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/spyware-pegasus-found-on-hacked-mobile-phones-of-four-human-rights-defenders-1.4845068>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Algeria/France. The French magazine *XXI* published testimonials from former members of the French military who fought in the Algerian war (1956-1962) discussing the use of “special weapons,” such as the chemical agent diphenylchloroarsine, against the caves and other underground shelters used by the Algerian Army of National Liberation (ALN). After the publication, historians and the president of the Josette et Maurice the Audin Association called for the release of the records of the French army’s “war of the caves,” *Le Monde* reported. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/04/13/guerre-d-algerie-revelations-sur-l-usage-de-gaz-toxiques-armes-speciales_6122029_3212.html

Australia/New Zealand/Timor-Leste. *Four Corners*, an Australian documentary television program on *ABC TV*, obtained witness statements from eleven members of New Zealand’s Special Air Service who accused an Australian special forces officer of “brutalizing the corpses of two militiamen in the aftermath of a fierce firefight in East Timor in 1999” during peacekeeping operations. *Four Corners* also obtained an internal Australian Federal Police report on the incident and the diary of a New Zealand legal officer from the day after the incident. The case was “investigated as a murder after the Australian Federal Police . . . agreed with military investigators that the wounded men may have been shot at close range in an act of revenge.” The officer was acquitted; the “court records remain suppressed.” <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-04/sas-soldier-east-timor-militia-new-zealand-witness-four-corners/100920254>

Balkan wars. *BIRN* announced the release of its new “database of adjudicated facts on the 1992-5 war in Bosnia” which it “designed as an educational tool that will also counter revisionist narratives and genocide denial.” A *BIRN* journalist said “one of the goals of this database is to gather in one place all the crimes established by the Hague tribunal’s verdicts, but not naming concrete perpetrators.” <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/06/birn-presents-database-as-tool-to-educate-and-counter-revisionism/>

Ethiopia/Netherlands. After the cabal that overthrew Ethiopia’s emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, the Derg military group took power and three years later unleashed the “Red Terror” against rivals. Eshetu Alemu, a member of the Derg, managed to relocate to the Netherlands in 1990 where he was arrested in 2015, tried, and convicted in 2017 to life in prison for “75 murders, 6 cases of torture and 320 arbitrary detentions in cruel and degrading circumstances,” *justiceinfo.net* reported. He appealed. The original trial used photographs from Ethiopia’s Special Prosecutor’s Office file on Alemu (he had been convicted there in absentia in 2000) and copies of death lists, but at the appeal the prosecutors had additional evidence “the case file holds copies of 22 letters, orders, lists and reports, each bearing Alemu’s name and/or autograph.” The appeals hearing concluded in April; the verdict is expected on 8 June. https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/91309-times-ticking-ethiopia-red-terror-trial-netherlands.html#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter-EN-25-04-to-29-04-2022

Finland/Liberia/Sierra Leone. The Finnish court that tried Sierra Leonean Gibril Massaquoi for “murder, aggravated rape, aggravated war crimes and violation of human rights” in Liberia’s 1999-2003 civil war acquitted him of all charges. The judges found the evidence insufficient, the NGO Civitas Maxima reported. Writing for *justiceinfo.net*, Thierry Cruvellier, a journalist specializing in international criminal justice matters, said, “Historical expertise, the intimate knowledge of the context of events is always the Achilles heel of international tribunals and national courts practicing universal jurisdiction. . . . But never has a trial so far departed from the research of historians, from known and documented facts.” Lansanna Gberie, a Sierra Leonean intellectual, wrote in *justiceinfo.net* that although the investigation case file ran to “thousands of pages,” the Finnish chief investigator “had not consulted any expert in Liberia or Sierra Leone.” Now Massaquoi, who Gberie said committed “heinous crimes” in both Sierra Leone and Liberia “before the alleged crimes for which he was charged were committed,” will be financially compensated by Finland for holding him in detention for two years. https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/91464-acquittal-massaquoi-reality-check-finnish-justice.html#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter-EN-25-04-to-29-04-2022; <https://civitas-maxima.org/2022/04/29/reasonable-doubt-gibril-massaquoi-acquitted/>; https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/91667-massaquoi-acquittal-what-has-it-wrought.html?mc_cid=85600bd57a&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter-EN-02-05-au-06-05-2022

Gambia/Germany. The trial of Baboucar “Bai” Lowe, a Gambian and “self-confessed former driver” for the hit squad known as the “Junglers,” went on trial in Celle, Germany. He is charged with three counts of crimes against humanity for allegedly being involved in two murders and one attempted murder. According to *justiceinfo.net*, Gambia’s recently completed truth commission “has also called for Bai Lowe’s prosecution in the murder of 59 West African migrants in 2005—a mass crime on which Lowe gave much details in earlier interviews—and groups have called for German authorities to investigate this massacre.” https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/91253-gambian-dictatorship-crimes-trial-in-germany.html#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter-EN-25-04-to-29-04-2022

Grenada/United Kingdom. A new exhibit, based on research commissioned by the Bank of England, opened in the Bank’s museum, the *Guardian* reported. In the early 1770s the ownership of two plantations and 599 people in Grenada passed to the Bank after a company defaulted on loans; the Bank subsequently sold the plantations and people in 1790. The researcher used the Bank’s archives to uncover the details; an 1788 inventory for one of the plantations showed “a sterling price for how much the person was worth.” The names of the 599 slaves “take a central position in the free exhibition.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/15/bank-of-england-owned-599-slaves-in-1770s-new-exhibition-reveals>

Haiti/United States. Haiti’s President Jovenel Moise was killed in July 2021. Four judges have been, in sequence, appointed to “oversee the probe” into the case, but a month since he was appointed “Judge Merland Belabre has yet to receive the files in the case,” the *Washington Post* reported. The NGO National Human Rights Defense Network said “investigators have been barred from accessing crucial state databases without explanation;” however, the *Post* managed to obtain “a Haitian police dossier” on the case. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/haiti-s-assassination-probe-has-stalled-the-us-one-is-advancing/ar-AAW18dK>

Islamic State/United Kingdom/United States. A U.S. Federal court convicted El Shafee Elsheikh, “a British militant accused of being a member of the Islamic State cell known as the Beatles,” for killing four U.S. citizens in Syria in 2014-2015, the *New York Times* reported. After the then-U.S. Attorney General agreed in 2020 to waive the death penalty, “Britain eventually shared key evidence in the case, including email exchanges between Mr. Elsheikh and his family.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-08, 09. <https://worldnewsra.com/news/science/tardigrades-can-hitch-hike-on-snails-to-travel-longer-distances/>

Israel/Lebanon/Palestine. A lawyer for Mossad, Israel’s intelligence agency, “told the High Court of Justice on Monday that the agency is having difficulty locating historic documents in its archives relating to ties between the agency and Lebanese Christian militias that carried out massacres at two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982,” *Haaretz* reported. The case was brought by “dozens of human rights activists” seeking the records. The court president hearing the case called Mossad’s claim “strange,” pointing out that Mossad is legally required to preserve documents which are to be opened to the public after 90 years. “The assumption is that until the 90 years have elapsed, you need to preserve the material—so what does it mean that it’s difficult for you to locate them?” A second part of the article reported that a recently settled case allows the State Archives to continue to delay the release of records whose restriction expired in 1999 until the records are reviewed by the military censor. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-s-mossad-can-t-find-docs-on-1982-lebanon-massacre-lawyer-tells-court-1.10721596>

Israel/Palestine. Days after Pegasus-enabled hacking of the phones of Palestinian human rights activists was made public, the NGO Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, “a Palestinian organization works to advance the rights of prisoners through documentation, legal assistance, local and international advocacy, and training and awareness raising,” and five other Palestinian civil society organizations were designated as “terrorist organizations” by the Israeli Defense Ministry. At the end of a long interview with the NGO MENA Prison Forum, the director of Addameer explained that its “office has been raided several times,” during which Israeli security forces “stole our computers; our cameras; our files, which is very ridiculous because they are files that we copied from their military courts.” On 25 April the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a press release saying twelve UN human rights experts “called on the international community to take immediate and effective steps to protect and sustain the six Palestinian civil society groups that were designated as ‘terrorist organisations’ by the Government of Israel in October 2021.” The experts said, “Israel’s disturbing designation of these organisations as ‘terrorist organisations’ has not been accompanied by any public concrete and credible evidence.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-11.

https://www.menaprissonforum.org/observer_detail/10/; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/04/israelpalestine-un-experts-call-governments-resume-funding-six-palestinian>

Libya/United States. In November 2018, a U.S. air strike in southwest Libya killed eleven men, whom the U.S. characterized as members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and their families say were not involved. A brother of one victim, a representative of the Tuareg community, and three NGOs (Reprieve, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, and Italy's Rete Italiana Pace e Disarmo) filed a criminal complaint against the then-commander of Italy's Sigonella air base in Sicily, where the U.S. air base is located, asking the Italian prosecutor to determine whether the commander "fulfilled his duty to prevent U.S. military operations contrary to Italian law, or those that clearly endanger life," *The Intercept* reported. https://theintercept.com/2022/04/03/libya-airstrike-civilian-deaths-lawsuit/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Mideast wars. *The Intercept* also reported that when in 2015 the "U.S. military was planning an airstrike on an Islamic State bomb factory in Iraq, it failed to adequately consider the possibility of secondary explosions from munitions stored there," according to "emails and other investigation documents . . . in 73 pages of post-strike assessments of the Hawija attack" that were obtained by the *New York Times* through the Freedom of Information Act. "The bomb factory in the city of Hawija reportedly contained more than 18,000 kilograms of explosive material" and secondary explosions killed at least 85 civilians, may have injured 500 or more people, and reportedly damaged 1,200 businesses and damaged or destroyed 6,000 homes, according to a report by Dutch researchers. The U.S. had "vetted" the attack, but the actual strike "was outsourced to two Dutch F-16s."

https://theintercept.com/2022/04/08/isis-bomb-factory-iraq-pentagon-airstrike/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Rwanda/United Kingdom. Rwanda and the United Kingdom signed an agreement that migrants "arriving by small boat across the Channel would be flown with a one-way ticket to Rwanda" and in return Rwanda will get "an initial 120 million pounds" as an "economic transformation and integration fund," the *Guardian* reported. A U.K. law firm requested the Home Office to disclose "'information regarding the policy,' including documents outlining it, risk assessments and the memorandum of understanding signed by the U.K. and Rwandan governments."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/apr/27/priti-patel-faces-legal-challenge-over-rwanda-asylum-seeker-plan>

Saudi Arabia/Turkey. "With the Turkish Justice Ministry's approval, a court in Istanbul . . . ruled to transfer the trial for the 2018 murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi to Saudi Arabia," *BIRN* reported. Khashoggi was murdered by Saudi agents inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. In 2019 Saudi Arabia convicted eight men for their role in the murder, and "Saudi officials have previously said they consider their trial the final word." Human rights defenders condemned the ruling, saying it ends "all hope of justice in the case." <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/07/turkey-hands-khashoggi-murder-trial-to-saudi-arabia/>

National news.

Afghanistan. NGOs Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which tracks political violence and protest events around the world, and Afghan Peace Watch, a "local conflict observatory," issued a report on "the challenges of sourcing data in Afghanistan in the seven months after the Taliban takeover." <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/14/tracking-disorder-during-taliban-rule-in-afghanistan-a-joint-acledd-and-apw-report/>

Argentina. "On July 19, 1924, some 130 police and ranchers with guns descended on protesting residents of the so-called Napalpi indigenous reservation where Qom and Mqoit people lived in conditions of semi-slavery, forced to work on the cotton fields," *Buenos Aires Times* reported. The massacre killed between 300 and 500 people, but no "traditional trial" was held. Now a "truth trial" is underway, the first time Argentina has brought to trial an act of genocide against indigenous peoples. The purpose, said the presiding judge, "does not seek to apportion criminal liability" but instead has as its purpose "knowing the truth," "to heal wounds," and "to generate an awareness so that these violations of human rights are never repeated." Archivists will provide records from the national archives as evidence. Thanks to Mariana Nazar for information.

<https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/landmark-napalpi-massacre-trial-begins-in-argentina-98-years-after-indigenous-killings.phtml>

Brazil. The Federal Supreme Court ordered released to professor Carlos Fico 10,000 hours of audio recordings from the special military courts of the 1970s, *Merco Press* reported. “Among the audios is that of Army General Rodrigo Octavio, judge of the Supreme Military Court, who on June 24, 1977, admits that the Armed Forces committed torture, especially pointing to a woman who suffered a miscarriage after being subjected to torture sessions.” Responding to the disclosure, Brazil’s Vice President and retired army general Hamilton Mourao “said crimes committed during the country’s military regime (1964-1985) cannot be investigated because ‘all those people are dead’.” <https://en.mercopress.com/2022/04/19/brazilian-vp-says-torturers-of-military-regime-cannot-stand-trial-they-re-dead>

A report by the Hutukara Yanomami Association said wildcat goldmining in the Yanomami reservation increased by 46% in 2021, to 3,272 hectares (8,085 acres), *AFP* reported. The report was based on satellite images and interviews; official figures said “mining destroyed a record 125 sq km (48 sq miles) of the Brazilian Amazon last year.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/11/illegal-mining-abuses-surge-on-indigenous-land-in-brazil-reportv>

Paulo Basta, a senior researcher at the biomedical research center Fiocruz, analyzed data from the Health Ministry’s indigenous health service, SECAI. He found “during a burst of wildcat mining in the 1980s, the number of malaria cases in the country jumped to more than 500,000 per year, compared to about 100,000 per year in the decade prior,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Again, the “malaria cases among Yanomami indigenous people living in the Brazilian Amazon have risen more than 700% over the past decade as illegal gold mining intensifies,” and craters created by deforestation are “ideal conditions for the spread of malaria, a disease carried by mosquitoes that thrive in standing water.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20220401092712-hv3sz/>

NGO MapBiomias, a “network of scientists, nonprofits, universities and technology firms,” uses satellite data to track illegal deforestation and publishes maps showing “forest coverage, water use, mining sites, and more,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. In a partnership between MapBiomias and Banco do Brasil, “the owners of land where tree loss is detected are flagged by the bank as potential deforesters,” sending an alert to all bank branches, and “if a potential deforester later seeks a farming loan,” the farmer “will have to provide a document showing the forest clearance was legal.” https://news.trust.org/item/20220406135051-ut6cr/?utm_campaign=new-climate&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=topPicks&utm_content=link2&utm_contentItemId=20220406135051-ut6cr

MapBiomias also released a study showing that “satellite images leave no doubt that Indigenous peoples are slowing the destruction of the Amazon,” with around 70% of the deforested area lost in the last 30 years on private land and just 1.6% on Indigenous lands, *Al Jazeera* reported. Alarming, according to data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) from “January to March, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon rose 64% from a year ago, to 94,100 hectares (232,526 acres).” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/19/indigenous-lands-block-deforestation-in-brazil-new-study-finds?emci=c906ce3f-b5c0-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&emdi=46cd402b-b6c0-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&ccid=4606001>

Burkina Faso. A military tribunal ruled that former president Blaise Compaore was guilty of an attack on state security, complicity in the murder of his predecessor Thomas Sankara, and the concealment of a corpse, *Reuters* reported. He was sentenced in absentia to life in prison, as were two of his former associates, while another eight defendants were given shorter prison terms and three were declared innocent. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-03. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-fasos-former-president-compaore-sentenced-life-prison-over-sankara-2022-04-06/>

Canada. *CBC News* reported that 200 boxes of records found in Yellowknife and Vancouver storage lockers are now under “separate court and internal federal reviews to determine their connection to residential schools.” The material seems to include records “once held by Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada,” hard copies of residential school records, non-residential school records related to First Nations, and publicly available academic papers. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/records-miller-review-1.6428192>

China. According to a new report from the U.S. Woodrow Wilson Center, “more than 5,500 Uyghurs outside of China have been targeted by Beijing, hit with cyberattacks and threats to family members who remain in China, and more than 1,500 Uyghurs have been detained or forced to return to China to

face imprisonment and torture in police custody,” *NBC News* reported. The “transnational repression” took place in 44 countries. The report is based on a database built by researchers at the NGOs Uyghur Human Rights Project and the Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs, who “culled news reports and government documents and conducted interviews with Uyghurs to compile the comprehensive list of documented instances of persecution outside of China.” https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/chinese-government-hunting-uyghurs-world-help-surprising-countries-re-na24987?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=220425

Colombia. On 27 and 28 April, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), Colombia’s special transitional justice court, held a public hearing in the northern town of Ocana. Ten former members of the military faced the families of the relatives of men murdered by the military during the civil war and falsely claimed as rebels (“false positives” cases). The JEP had found the ten men guilty, and as part of the sentencing procedure they were required to face the families of the victims, *justiceinfo.net* explained. They admitted to 120 extrajudicial executions, 24 forced disappearances and one attempted assassination in 2007-2008. One man described taking documents from those killed “so that they could vanish without a trace,” while another “told how he forged intelligence reports,” a third explained his role was to “draw up documents that gave a veneer of legality to these false operations,” and a fourth said he “only cared that his documentation on military operations, ‘even if it was a lie, looked good’.” https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/91605-colombia-10-army-officials-accused-false-positives-faced-victims.html?mc_cid=85600bd57a&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter-EN-02-05-au-06-05-2022

In an article for *justiceinfo.net*, researcher Adriana Rudling explained the widely conflicting numbers of and the varied purposes of the registers on forced disappearances. She concluded that “public clarification of both registers and numbers in Colombia, as asked by the UN Committee on Forced Disappearance, would reduce historic mistrust in the state by increasing transparency.”

https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/90970-what-behind-numbers-disappeared-colombian-armed-conflict.html?mc_cid=7e5d88e557&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb#utm_source=emailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter-EN-18-04-to-22-04-2022

Egypt. Ayman Hadhoud, a well-known economist, “was researching some politically delicate topics like the military’s role in the economy before he disappeared into the custody of the country’s security forces early February,” the *New York Times* reported. The *Times* obtained photographs of his body in the morgue, taken surreptitiously after the autopsy, which appeared to show “injuries to his upper body that could have been caused by beatings and burning.” The family was given a death certificate with a death date of 5 March, although they were not summoned to collect the body until 9 April and his autopsy report has not been released. <https://banovi.com/questions-over-death-of-ayman-hadhoud-an-egyptian-economist-299262.html>

El Salvador. A police union says there are “daily arrest quotas as part of the government’s crackdown on street gangs,” *AP* reported. A union representative said “commanders are telling officers to give ‘false statements’ against some who have been arrested, but who have nothing to do with gangs.” <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/union-el-salvador-police-pressured-meet-arrest-quotas-84040356?emci=fe03773-32bb-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&emdi=6b974a77-33bb-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&ceid=4606001>

Ethiopia. In an unusual joint report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the organizations “found that since November 2020 in Western Tigray, civilian authorities, and Amhara regional security forces, with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal forces, committed numerous grave abuses as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Tigrayan civilian population that amount to crimes against humanity as well as war crimes.” The report is based on 427 interviews between December 2020 and March 2022, as well as medical reports, forensic analysis, satellite imagery, court documents, official government decisions, government reports, “information collected by other credible experts and independent human rights investigators,” and a few “verifiable” videos. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/04/06/we-will-erase-you-land/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopias#>

As recorded at health facilities across Tigray, between June last year and April 1, excluding Western Tigray which is under Amhara control, at least 1,200 children under 5 have died from malnutrition, *AP* reported. <https://apnews.com/article/health-africa-united-nations-ethiopia->

[1f759673ee7fb86c4a94d3f8dc711437?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=925f379df1-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-925f379df1-149736437](https://www.stat.gov.pl/1f759673ee7fb86c4a94d3f8dc711437?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=925f379df1-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-925f379df1-149736437)

France. The Association of French Archivists (AAF), the Association of Contemporary History (H2C), and the Association Josette et Maurice Audin released their assessment of the impact of the law of 30 July 2021 and the subsequent decree of 21 March 2022 on access to archives. They asserted that writing political history has become very complicated, due to the uncertain duration of the closure of records, while writing the history of security policies and services is now “simply impossible.”

<https://www.archivistes.org/Communique-de-presse-des-paroles-et-des-actes>

Guatemala. When her father disappeared at the age of 32, Ana Isabel Bustamante was not yet born. Now Bustamante and her family have filed a case with the UN Human Rights Committee, asking it to, for the first time, “look into enforced disappearance in Guatemala,” the *Guardian* reported. Bustamante made a film about the disappearance in 2018, in which she “searched for traces” of her father in “photos, videos, letters, her mother’s memories and the old family home.” Some 40,000 people remain disappeared in Guatemala from the civil war that ended in 1996.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/27/emil-bustamante-lopez-disappeared-guatemala-military-dictatorship>

Kosovo. The NGO Humanitarian Law Centre Kosovo issued a report saying only one indictment was filed in 2021 for war crimes committed in the 1998-99 conflict and only two suspects were arrested, with five cases ongoing in the courts, *BIRN* reported. The head of the War Crimes Department at the Kosovo Special Prosecution said that over 1,000 war crimes cases are pending but, although trial in absentia is legal, the prosecutors “cannot file indictments in cases when we do not have the presence of the perpetrator” because “verdicts are almost unenforceable” if the person is absent.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/04/kosovo-criticised-for-slow-progress-in-prosecuting-war-crimes/>

Mexico. Reporting on their November 2021 visit, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances stated, “Organized crime has become a central perpetrator of disappearance in Mexico, with varying degrees of participation, acquiescence or omission by public servants,” with impunity “the norm.” The National Registry of Missing or Unlocated Persons registered over 95,000 people as disappeared at the end of November 2021, of which 40,000 were added in the past five years.

<https://hchr.org.mx/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Informe-de-visita-a-MX-del-Comite-contr-la-Desaparicion-Forzada-abril-2022.pdf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/12/organized-crime-corrupt-officials-mexico-enforced-disappearances-un>

A report by the NGO Article 19 said “attacks against the press in Mexico have increased by 85% since President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took office, making it the most deadly period for journalists since records began,” the *Guardian* reported. “In 2021, there were 664 documented attacks—the equivalent of one every 14 hours;” as of the beginning of April, eight journalists have been killed this year.

<https://articulo19.org/negacion/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/apr/05/attacks-press-mexico-lopez-obrador-presidency-report>

Nicaragua. Repression continued, said *Crisis Watch*: “Mechanism for the Recognition of Political Prisoners of Nicaragua 5 April said at least 181 political opponents still held in prison for political reasons, some since 2018; regional civil society network Voces del Sur 13 April reported at least 103 attacks on press freedom during March; Parliament 20 April cancelled legal credentials of 25 NGOs, at least 164 have been cancelled since November 2018.”

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

Poland. Archivists at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) spent 15 years matching pieces of shredded communist-era secret police files, *Notes from Poland* reported. They have reconstructed “6,714 archival units” from 267 bags, including “125 metres of files and 170 metres of record cards.” “Cross-referencing the reconstructed files with the names of the 470,000 people who have submitted lustration declarations allowed new materials to be contributed to six legal cases,” IPN said.

https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/04/15/like-a-jigsaw-puzzle-polish-archivists-piece-together-shredded-communist-secret-police-files/?fbclid=IwAR1t5WqS4UXX6Bf9aoh2MWAbEGq23zDczPVLvnnIQ_1-CEWM_C6zN90r5zU

Russia. *Reuters* said a government legal information website published a proposal by the Russian defense ministry “that relatives of soldiers killed in Ukraine should have to apply to military rather than civilian authorities for compensation payments, imposing an extra level of secrecy around its war losses.”

Russia already classifies military deaths as state secrets even in times of peace.”

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-defence-ministry-seeks-greater-secrecy-military-deaths-ukraine-2022-04-20/>

“Russia’s justice ministry said . . . it had revoked the registration of 15 foreign organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch,” *Reuters* reported. Nine German organizations, three U.S. and one each from U.K., Poland and Switzerland were included. It is not clear what will happen to their property, including onsite records. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-revokes-registration-amnesty-human-rights-watch-ministry-2022-04-08/>

Rwanda. Ibuka, the principal association of survivors of the 1994 genocide, is sorting and digitizing its archives, in partnership with the French entities Shoah Memorial and EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences). Ibuka is also, in partnership with the U.K. NGO Aegis Trust, recording testimonies of survivors, *RFI* reported. https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/reportage-afrique/20220406-rwanda-les-archives-de-l-association-de-rescap%C3%A9s-du-g%C3%A9nocide-des-tutsis-ibuka-num%C3%A9ris%C3%A9es?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=9deabdc3eb-EMAIL_Newsletter_APR_2022&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-9deabdc3eb-225732189

South Africa. In an effort to combat xenophobia, a group of migration scholars published an article using information from Statistics South Africa to “counter erroneous suggestions that there are tens of millions of undocumented migrants in South Africa.” Of a population of about 60 million in 2021, Stats SA estimated about 3.95 million residents were born outside the country and only about 853,000 people immigrated between 2016 and 2021. https://theconversation.com/xenophobia-is-on-the-rise-in-south-africa-scholars-weigh-in-on-the-migrant-question-181288?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1650010948-1

Syria. The NGO Syria Justice and Accountability Center (SJAC) published a report titled “Unearthing Hope: The Search for the Missing Victims of ISIS” documenting “152 sites in northern Syria that ISIS used to detain people between 2013-2017.” To research the patterns of ISIS arrest and detention, SJAC conducted more than 250 interviews and “analyzed 277 internal ISIS documents that were gathered by an independent local activist from within abandoned ISIS administrative offices in Tabqa, Raqqa Governorate. The majority of these internal documents related directly to ISIS arrest and detention patterns. SJAC also reviewed previous local media reporting and human rights documentation on the ISIS security and judicial apparatus.” SJAC followed the report with a useful article on “lessons learned” when using satellite imagery to investigate mass graves. <https://syriaaccountability.org/unearthing-hope-the-search-for-the-missing-victims-of-isis/>; <https://syriaaccountability.org/mass-graves-using-satellite-imagery/>

A video of a Syria military unit killing 41 men was found on a military laptop by a Syrian “rookie militiaman” and smuggled out of Syria, first to an opposition activist in France and then to two researchers in Amsterdam, the *Guardian* reported. The researchers decided to identify and locate the officer directing the murders. They set up a Facebook page with an alias and began recruiting Syrian security officials for a chat with the female researcher, saying she was a “researcher studying the Syrian regime for her thesis.” After identifying the officer, chatting with and taping him, the researchers “handed over the videos and their notes, comprising thousands of hours of interviews, to prosecutors in the Netherlands, Germany and France.” https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/27/massacre-in-tadamon-how-two-academics-hunted-down-a-syrian-war-criminal?CMP=share_btn_tv

United Kingdom. The National Archives announced it will publish online court and tribunal decisions from the superior courts of record—the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, and Upper Tribunals—in a new service called “Find Case Law.” “The initial collection of judgments and decisions will total 50,000 dating back to 2003 for court judgements and 2015 for Tribunal decisions.” <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/the-national-archives-to-publish-court-judgments/>

In an opinion essay for *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, a university professor, a Labour peer and a Conservative peer who had worked to secure the passage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act of 2022 wrote that “official records that endure for those convicted of, or cautioned for, offences involving same-sex sexual conduct that would today be entirely lawful . . . have continued to harm the lives of people who are still living today and are an insult to the memory of those who have died.” They said the Act will “change the disregard and pardon schemes in England and Wales to encompass the wide range of repealed criminal and service discipline offences that once regulated same-sex sexual

activity that would be lawful today.” What impact the law will have on the records themselves was not clear. <https://news.trust.org/item/20220428123937-w6gc2/>

United States. The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that “scraping data that is publicly accessible on the internet is not a violation.” Expressing the conflicting responses to the ruling, *TechCrunch* wrote, “Without a ruling in place, long-running projects to archive websites no longer online and using publicly accessible data for academic and research studies [would] have been left in legal limbo. But there have been egregious cases of web scraping that have sparked privacy and security concerns.” https://techcrunch.com/2022/04/18/web-scraping-legal-court/?fbclid=IwAR05kxD12FKcfQKCmePVZIJqhoj7bfU6hPb4Glaxkjk_mqv0c6nGqyy7qFE

Harvard University released its report on Harvard and the legacy of slavery. “Through research in the Harvard University Archives and in several Harvard libraries, including the Houghton Library and the Radcliffe Institute’s Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, as well as in collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenaeum, the American Philosophical Society, the University of Michigan Library, and the New York Public Library Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, among other repositories, this report documents now incontestable truths: During the 17th and 18th centuries, the sale and trafficking of human beings—in slavery—and the industries rooted in the labor of enslaved women, men, and children were pervasive around the world, comprised a vital part of the New England economy, and powerfully shaped Harvard University. Harvard leaders, faculty, staff, and benefactors enslaved people, some of whom labored at the University; accrued wealth through the slave trade and slave labor; and defended the institution of slavery.” <https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/report/introduction-and-findings>

Good reads.

Teresa Carr, “Why researchers want broader access to social media data,” *Undark*: https://undark.org/2022/04/18/why-researchers-want-broader-access-to-social-media-data/?utm_source=Undark%3A+News+%26+Updates&utm_campaign=e4c57f9337-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_04_15_07_16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5cee408d66-e4c57f9337-176036617

Larissa Fast, “Data sharing between humanitarian organizations and donors: Toward understanding and articulating responsible practice,” *Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies*: <https://www.humanitarianstudies.no/resource/data-sharing-between-humanitarian-organisations-and-donors/>

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