
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

News from the Section on Archives and Human Rights

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Commentary. “Little pitchers have big ears” was a common saying in my childhood when parents were amazed by what a child had overheard. Now big ears are everywhere, thanks to spyware like Pegasus, manufactured by the NSO Group, an Israeli company. NSO claims that it only sells its software to governments, not to individual or companies. According to the *New York Times*, one of its “main pillars” is that “it would cooperate with Israel’s Defense Export Controls Agency, or DECA, to license every sale.” The program allows surveillance of smartphones, viewing “every email, every photo, every text thread, every personal contact” as well as seeing the phone’s location and allowing the operator to “even take control of its camera and microphone.” <http://www.kashmirtimes.com/newsdet.aspx?q=113781>

But the sales! Mexico and Panama, Poland and Hungary, India and Saudi Arabia and more. And now come reports of the targets of Pegasus surveillance. A sample:

* The *Guardian* reported that the mobile phones of a Bahraini human rights defender and a woman who works with human rights and feminist groups in Jordan had been hacked using NSO’s Pegasus software. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jan/17/two-female-activists-in-bahrain-and-jordan-hacked-with-nso-spyware>

*In El Salvador, the phones of 22 team members of the media group *El Faro* were found to be infected with Pegasus, with “a total of 226 infections . . . detected, as well as evidence of the existence of a Pegasus operator in Salvadoran territory,” and another 13 people from Salvadoran civil society organizations had their phones targeted. https://elfaro.net/en/202201/el_salvador/25936/22-Members-of-El-Faro-Bugged-with-Spyware-Pegasus.htm

*Four Kazakh activists had their phones infected. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/kazakh-activists-phones-infected-with-pegasus-spyware/>

*Phones of French ministers and those of at least nine U.S. State Department officials who were either based in Uganda or involved in matters associated with the African country were infected, too. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/phones-of-five-french-ministers-infected-by-pegasus-malware-report-2552979>; <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/pegasus-spyware-on-state-department-phones-what-you-need-to-know/ar-AAMl60a>

Last December the United States, Australia, Denmark and Norway announced an “Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative to help stem the tide of authoritarian government misuse of technology and promote a positive vision for technologies anchored by democratic values.” Placed on the U.S. “Entity List” of companies whose tools are used for repression is the NSO Group. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/10/fact-sheet-export-controls-and-human-rights-initiative-launched-at-the-summit-for-democracy/>

At the end of January, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, its Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, and the Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean issued a statement expressing “concern at the new findings on the use of malicious Pegasus software, used for illegal surveillance purposes against journalists and civil society organizations in El Salvador.” It said the Special Rapporteur had previously “warned about the use of such software in other countries of the Americas.” “This type of practice not only violates the right of privacy,” the group wrote, “but also has the potential to affect the rights inherent to the exercise of journalism, including confidentiality and integrity of sources.” http://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2022/022.asp

The human rights abuses, the invasion of privacy, the harassment of legitimate civil society organizations and journalists is despicable. But here’s a question: are the governments (or other users who obtained the spyware illegally) keeping these vast amounts of data that the use of Pegasus provides to them? Even a surveillance organization with a well-established records and information management

program would have to think carefully about its retention regulations in the face of the stream of data. So as discussions of export control and due diligence of possible clients go forward, stop and think for a minute about the data already collected, who has access to it, how long is it retained, and what servers hold it all. When people demand to see the data taken from their phone, what will they see? If they ask that data taken from their phone be returned to them, what if anything will they get? If they ask that the data be destroyed, what assurances will be given? We know that when people ask security agencies for records about themselves, they usually get one of four answers: we never had it, we can't find it, we destroyed it, or you can't see it. What will the answers be in this time of flying horse Pegasus who, according to Greek mythology, was born of an act of violence: Perseus beheaded the Gorgon Medusa and Pegasus sprang from her blood?

SAHR News. SAHR prepared the ICA's response to a questionnaire regarding the UN Human Rights Council's resolution 47/24 on human rights and climate change. SAHR also prepared the ICA response to the call by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances for comments on the 30-year-old UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Both of these submissions are found on the ICA website at: <https://www.ica.org/en/sahr-latest-news>

The First Tuesday Talk on February 1 was given by Giles Manceron on access to the French archives of the wars in Indochina and Algeria. The next First Tuesday Talk will be on April 5, with Vitor Fonseca, Claudio Ogass Bilbao and Francisco Gonzalez Villanueva discussing their work on creating a tool kit to help archives identify the risk of climate change.

International news.

European Parliament. The Parliament adopted the Digital Services Act, including provisions "extending the limitation to sensitive personal data such as political and religious beliefs and sexual orientation," making a "24-hour deadline for removal of illegal content," and creating "liability provisions for online marketplaces and centralized enforcement for very large online platforms." <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/meps-adopt-digital-services-act-with-significant-last-minute-changes/>

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The ICAO Fact-Finding Investigation into the "event involving Ryanair Flight FR4978 in Belarus Airspace on 23 May 2021" was issued. The plane, flying from Athens, Greece, to Vilnius, Lithuania, was diverted to the Minsk, Belarus, airport after an email to the plane said there was a bomb threat. Two passengers, a Belorussian opposition activist and his girlfriend, were arrested when the plane landed. The ICAO said "critical information" for the analysis of the incident "was requested but not made available to the Team." Among other requested documents, Belarus did not provide "logs of the email server" used by the airport "nor the email files containing the threat messages saved in their original format including their metadata," which the Belarus authorities said had been erased "in accordance with their data retention policy." Despite these lacks, "as neither a bomb nor evidence of its existence was found during pre-departure screening in Athens, Greece, and after various searches of the aircraft in Belarus and Lithuania, it is considered that the bomb threat was deliberately false." For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-05. https://www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/19/ICAO-Fact-Finding-Investigation-Report_FR497849.pdf

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. A year ago, the Global Legal Action Network filed simultaneous complaints in Australia, Ireland, Switzerland and the U.K. with the National Contact Points (NCPs) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, asking them to investigate "three international mining giants (BHP, Anglo American and Glencore) and Ireland's state-owned energy provider, ESP, over serious human rights abuses and devastating environmental pollution at the Cerrejon mine in Colombia." This January the Swiss, Australian and U.K. NCPs decided that the complaints "deal with a credible issue and should progress," the Network reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-01. <https://www.glanlaw.org/cerrejon-coal>

UNESCO. According to the UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists, 55 journalists and media professionals were killed in 2021, "with nearly 9 of 10 killings since 2006 still unresolved." The Asia-Pacific region accounted for 23 killings and Latin America and the Caribbean for 14. "Two-thirds of

victims in 2021 died in countries where there is no armed conflict . . . a complete reversal of the situation in 2013, when two-thirds of killings took place in countries experiencing conflict.” The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which was adopted in 2012, does not seem to be making enough impact. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1109232>

United Nations. The General Assembly adopted by consensus (without a country-by-country vote) a resolution that “rejects and condemns without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part” and reaffirms “that ignoring the historical facts of those terrible events increases the risk that they will be repeated.” <https://undocs.org/en/A/76/L.30>

Swissinfo published an interview with Swiss judge Daniel Kipfer, who from 2019-2021 was the Ombudsperson for the Security Council’s ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. Individuals or entities seeking to be removed from the Security Council’s ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List can submit a request for delisting to the Ombudsperson who is mandated to gather information, to interact with the petitioner and other parties about the request, and then make a recommendation to the Committee for either removal or retention on the list. The list “provides a basis for what are called ‘targeted sanctions’: those responsible for terrorism should be affected in a targeted manner, rather than having states (and their whole populations) hit with blanket embargoes.” At present, some 400 natural and legal persons are on the sanctions list. <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/politics/refereeing-the-war-on-terror/47242844>

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. An open letter signed by some 460 people, including a former president of the International Criminal Court, former foreign ministers and UN rapporteurs, urged OHCHR to “investigate the 1988 ‘massacre’ of political prisoners in Iran, including the alleged role of its current president, Ebrahim Raisi, at that time,” *Reuters* reported. Raisi is said to be “one of four judges who oversaw the 1988 killings.” Iran has not acknowledged the executions, which Amnesty International in 2018 said killed 5,000 or more persons. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-urged-open-query-into-irans-1988-killings-raisi-role-2022-01-27/>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR said it concluded the “smartcard registration drive” for around 1.4 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The cards hold biometric data and are “technologically compatible with systems used in Pakistan to authenticate the identities of nationals.” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1109062>

In an interview with the Open Knowledge Foundation, Mariann Urban of the UNHCR Global Data Service said, “Pretty much everyone at UNHCR now recognizes that good data is the key to achieving meaningful solutions for displaced people. . . . Data is at the foundation of what UNHCR does.” <https://blog.okfn.org/2022/01/07/working-with-unhcr-to-better-collect-archive-and-re-use-data-about-some-of-the-worlds-most-vulnerable-people/>

World/general news.

Business records. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* published a two-part investigation into the labor practices at Qatar Airways, reporting that pilots said the airline “is undercounting their work hours and ignoring complaints of fatigue—a safety breach that hurts staff health and risks passenger lives.” The pilots said “many did not even file fatigue reports, fearing additional scrutiny from an airline that made thousands of staff redundant in the pandemic. Others said their reports were ignored.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20220127165016-k769t/>

Rio Tinto, the mining giant, was in the news. Serbia’s prime minister announced “the government has abolished all legislation, permits and regulations related to Rio Tinto and the Working Group on Implementation” related to a proposed lithium mine on the Jadar and Drina rivers, *Peoples Dispatch* reported. In Australia, an independent review commissioned by Rio Tinto found “more than 20 women working for Rio Tinto have reported actual or attempted rape or sexual assault in the last five years,” the majority of women interviewed “reported everyday sexism,” “almost half of the roughly 10,300 people who responded as part of the review process reported bullying,” and “11.7% of employees experienced racism in the last five years.” The review “followed a parliamentary inquiry in Western Australia which revealed almost two dozen sexual assaults on mine sites had been investigated by police over a two-year

period,” *ABC News* reported. Rio Tinto promised to adopt all the report’s recommendations. <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/01/24/succumbing-to-protests-serbian-government-revokes-permits-for-rio-tinto-mining-project/>; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-01/women-report-sexual-assault-harassment-to-rio-tinto-review/100795848>

The Chinese mining company Edsabri (Private) Limited was fined \$520,000 by Zimbabwe’s Environmental Management Agency “for conducting gold mining activities at the Inyorka ranch in Matobo district, Matabeleland South province, without an environmental impact assessment certificate,” *Newsday* reported. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2022/01/ema-fines-chinese-miner-520-000/>

A 2002 lawsuit, now apparently ready for trial in the U.S., “alleges that oil and gas giant ExxonMobil was responsible for human rights violations, including sexual assault, battery and wrongful death, committed by members of the Indonesian military” whose soldiers “had been hired to guard the ExxonMobil plant” in Aceh, *Nikkei Asia* reported. One of the lawyers for the plaintiffs said the legal team “has filed over 300 pages of factual findings, approximately 400 exhibits and five expert reports” and conducted around 40 depositions to support the case. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Society/ExxonMobil-Indonesia-lawsuit-heads-for-trial-after-20-years>

A lawsuit on behalf of the families of 1,234 Nicaraguan farmers was filed in France to claim \$1 billion USD from Shell Oil, Dow Chemical and Occidental Chemical, *teleSUR* reported. “United States courts refused to execute the sentences issued in 2002 and 2007 by Nicaraguan courts” which had ordered the companies “to compensate workers who had been affected by a pesticide labelled Nemagon.” The Nicaraguan courts found the companies sold Nemagon in Nicaragua “despite the fact that it had been prohibited in the U.S. since 1977 due to its harmful effects.” <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Nicaraguan-Farmers-Seek-Compensation-from-Chemical-Corporations-20220124-0010.html>

A group of 145 Cameroonians filed suit in France, seeking to force the Bollore group to “produce documents supposedly proving either the control it exercises over Socapalm, or the commercial relations established with it via a Belgian-Luxembourg holding company, the Societe financiere des caoutchoucs (Socfin),” *AFP* reported. The plaintiffs’ lawyers said “the exploitation of the palm groves by the Cameroonian company Socapalm ‘inflicts harm on them on a daily basis’ by blocking access to land and burial sites as well as by polluting the water.” However, the French court dismissed the case, accepting “the arguments of the Bollore group’s defense, namely its minority stake in Socfin ‘up to 38.75%’.” The Cameroonians will appeal. <https://www.farmlandgrab.org/post/view/30711-cameroon-145-local-residents-against-the-bollore-group-dismissed-in-france>

A U.S. federal court in the state of Georgia “ordered the Coca-Cola Company to turn over evidence related to an ongoing class action against Thai sugar giant Mitr Phol in the Thai courts.” Mitr Phol, “a key supplier for Coca-Cola,” is “accused of complicity in the violent eviction of more than 700 families in rural northwestern Cambodia between 2008 and 2009.” Coca-Cola investigated Mitr Phol’s role in the evictions but did not make its findings public; the plaintiffs now will have access to that information. https://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/cambodia/u-s-court-orders-coca-cola-to-turn-over-evidence-in-thai-human-rights-case/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=u-s-court-orders-coca-cola-to-turn-over-evidence-in-thai-human-rights-case

Climate change. A research team used “a trove of more than 5,500 aerial images taken by a Norwegian mapping project in 1936 and 1938” to recreate three-dimensional models of what more than 1,500 glaciers in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard looked like in 1936, *agro-climatic* reported. The photos, now owned by the Norwegian Polar Institute, were digitized to allow the modelling and comparison with the extent and thickness of the glaciers today. The team predicted “that twenty-first century glacier thinning rates will more than double those from 1936 to 2010.” <https://agro-climatic.com/2022/01/19/a-trove-of-old-photos-could-reveal-the-future-of-these-arctic-glaciers/>

Labor rights. In a December 2019 case before the U.S. National Labor Relations Board, seven Google employees and ex-employees alleged retaliation for worker activism and sought access to the Google documents related to Project Vivian, which was “to dissuade employees from unionizing after worker activism began heating up in late 2018,” and documents on Google’s hiring of IRI Consultants, “a consulting firm that advises employers battling unionization efforts.” The judge ordered Google to turn over the documents. <https://www.wired.com/story/document-reveals-more-google-anti-union->

[strategy/?bxid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cnid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_011022&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_011022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P7](https://www.eureporter.co/world/sri-lanka/2021/12/27/new-union-employer-agreement-in-sri-lanka-addresses-key-worker-rights-issues/)

Garment worker unions in Sri Lanka signed “a ground-breaking agreement” with the Joint Apparel Association Forum, an employer association, to improve working conditions, protect workers during the pandemic, end “anti-union harassment” and “respect . . . freedom of association in Sri Lanka’s garment industry,” *EU Reporter* wrote. It includes the establishment of “Bipartite Health Committees and a Bipartite Dispute Resolution mechanism,” but does not “settle the problem of lost wages” during the pandemic. Managing and preserving the records of the Committee and the mechanism will be important for future dispute resolution. <https://www.eureporter.co/world/sri-lanka/2021/12/27/new-union-employer-agreement-in-sri-lanka-addresses-key-worker-rights-issues/>

Medical records. A research team “studied a cohort of 15,198,496 Medicare beneficiaries” in all major U.S. “unconventional oil and gas” exploration (fracking) regions from 2001 to 2015. They compared the medical data with data “from records of more than 2.5 million oil and gas wells,” and “found evidence of a statistically significant higher mortality risk associated with living in proximity to or downwind” of these operations. Publishing in *Nature Energy*, the authors said “it’s the first study to link mortality among those 65 and older with air pollution from fracking wells.”

https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27012022/fracking-air-pollution-health-pennsylvania/?utm_source=InsideClimate+News&utm_campaign=c9f4ae988d-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-c9f4ae988d-328765186

Privacy. The International Committee of the Red Cross discovered that the “servers hosting the personal information of more than 500,000 people receiving services from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were compromised in a sophisticated cyber security attack.” The breach included “personal data such as names, locations, and contact information including about missing persons and their families, unaccompanied or separated children, detainees and other people receiving services.” The servers were taken off line and ICRC hired an “independent audit firm” to confirm that the data on the servers had not been tampered with. ICRC said it presumed the data sets were copied and exported. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/cyber-attack-icrc-what-we-know>

Slavery. “More than 1,700 people who served in the U.S. Congress in the 18th, 19th and even 20th centuries owned human beings at some point in their lives, according to a *Washington Post* investigation of censuses and other historical records,” reported *History News Network*.

<https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/182147>; <https://puffnachrichten.com/opinion/slavery-was-a-terror-beyond-measure/10600/>

World War II. The Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes published digital copies of Soviet secret police files on 1,000 Czechoslovaks who were imprisoned in Soviet Gulag camps during World War II, *Prague Morning* reported. The files include “arrest reports, fingerprints, photographs, interrogation reports, charges, a gulag’s discharge and a rehabilitation decision” as well as “personal photographs and documents of those arrested.” The original files are in the State Archive of Ukraine’s Zakarpatska Oblast, a region that was part of Czechoslovakia during the war. An estimated 8,000 Czechoslovaks were in the camps; then “from January 3, 1942, to the end of 1944 about 5000 citizens of former Czechoslovakia were released during an amnesty in the USSR.” <https://praguemorning.cz/secret-files-of-czechoslovaks-interned-in-soviet-gulags-released/>

During World War II, Indian nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose “sought Japanese help to overthrow British rule in India” and raised an “Indian National Army with Tokyo’s help,” *WION* explained. Marking this 125th anniversary of Bose’s birth, Japan declassified two files relating to him, and Taiwan, which is the last place where he was seen alive after an August 1945 plane crash, “has offered to open its national archives and database” for research on him “and also his legacy, which has huge influence over Taiwan in 1930s, 1940s,” said a Taipei official. <https://www.wionews.com/india-news/taiwan-where-netaji-went-missing-offers-to-open-its-national-archives-to-rediscover-legacy-446843>

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York) announced the completion of its project to reunite digitally the existing parts of the original YIVO Institute’s (Vilnius, Lithuania) books and documents that were divided during the Holocaust. The project partners were YIVO and three Lithuanian institutions: the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of

Lithuania, and the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. The approximately 4.1 million pages include materials from, among others, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Germany, France and the United States. <https://yivo.org/EBYVOCP-Complete>

“The Jehovah’s Witnesses, a pacifist religious group, are pursuing legal action against the German government to claim a family archive that documents the Nazis’ persecution” of the group, the *New York Times* reported. “The archive comprises 31 files of documents relating to the Kusserow family, whose members were arrested, imprisoned and murdered by the Nazi regime because of their faith.” The materials are in Germany’s Museum of Military History, which bought them from one of the surviving sons, against the wishes of his sister who had assembled the materials and in her will designated them for the Witnesses. <https://worldnewsera.com/news/europe/jehovahs-witnesses-sue-german-museum-for-archive-of-nazi-era-abuses/>

A new book, *The Betrayal of Anne Frank*, “hypothesizes” the name of a Jewish man as the person who betrayed the Frank family to the Nazis during World War II, *JTA* reported. First published by HarperCollins, which has the copyright, the Dutch-language translation was printed by Ambo Anthos in Amsterdam. After critics attacked the research, which uses an anonymous letter as a key piece of evidence, Ambo Anthos “apologized for not reviewing the material more critically and ceased printing new copies.” <https://forward.com/fast-forward/481769/dutch-publisher-stops-printing-book-alleging-jew-betrayed-anne-frank/>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/Pakistan/United Kingdom. The Durand Line forms the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It dates from 1893, when Pakistan was part of India and thus part of the British Empire. The location of the Line was agreed upon by Mortimer Durand, acting for the British government, and Abdur Rahman Khan, the emir of Afghanistan, and memorialized in an agreement signed in Kabul. Since at least the Second World War, Afghanistan has called all agreements relating to the Line invalid and refused to recognize the Durand Line as its international border. *Global Strat View* noted, “The Durand Line separates Pashtun families, placing the resource-rich province of Balochistan in Pakistan, thereby depriving Kabul of its historical access to the Arabian Sea.” Now Pakistan and Afghan forces “have been exchanging fire across the Durand Line” and tensions escalated in December “when the Taliban discovered that the Pakistanis were trying to fence the Durand Line.” The continuing power of a pact and a map. <https://www.globalstratview.com/where-are-pakistan-taliban-relations-headed/>

Balkan wars. Bosnia’s state prosecutor charged Milenko Zivanovic, a former general and commander of the Bosnian Serb Army’s Drina Corps, with “directing armed units that attacked Bosniak civilians in the Srebrenica and Zepa areas in 1995,” *BIRN* reported. The records of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia should provide copious evidence for the prosecution. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/01/04/bosnian-serb-general-indicted-for-attack-on-srebrenica/>

In July 2021 a Republika Srpska-backed independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Sufferings of All Peoples in the Srebrenica Region between 1992 and 1995 said the maximum number of Srebrenica victims was 3,715 and the killings of Bosniaks by Bosnian Serb forces did not constitute genocide. Now the Israeli historian who headed the commission said “he will soon produce an addendum to the report . . . to make clear that around 8,000 people from Srebrenica were killed in July 1995,” *BIRN* reported, but there will not be any revision of the finding that it was not genocide. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-07. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/01/20/israeli-historian-will-correct-srebrenica-death-toll-in-bosnian-serb-report/>

The Bosnian Missing Persons Institute said that from January to the end of November 2021 the remains of 80 victims of the war were discovered, compared to 53 in the same period in 2020, and that 71 remains were identified, *BIRN* reported. A member of the Association of Families of the Captured and Missing of Republika Srpska said the “lack of information about hidden grave sites remains a major problem,” and quoted the Ministry of Internal Affairs as saying “they only receive information from people who are on the verge of death.” <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/12/31/bosnia-finds-more-wartime-missing-persons-in-2021/>

Belarus/Russia. The Belarussian press *BelITA* said the “Prosecutor General’s Office has received information about arrays of documents concerning the commitment of crimes by the Nazi and their accomplices against civilians in Belarus during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 and in the post-war period.” The documents are stored in five Russian archives, and Russia’s Federal Archive Agency “has expressed readiness to provide assistance to an investigation team” from the Prosecutor’s Office and to provide copies of documents. <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/russian-archives-to-help-belarusian-investigators-with-genocide-case-147214-2022/>

Canada/Iran. A Canadian court awarded C\$107 million plus interest to the families of six people who died when Iranian Revolutionary Guards shot down a Ukraine International Airlines plane near Tehran in January 2020, killing all on board, *Reuters* reported. Subsequently, the Center for Human Rights in Iran published an interview with a representative of the Fact-Finding Committee of the Association of Families of Flight PS752 Victims, an organization founded by the victims’ families, which had issued a report on the downing of the plane. He discussed the evidence the group has assembled and called for an international body to thoroughly investigate the shooting. For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-02. <https://www.reuters.com/world/canadian-court-awards-c107-million-families-airliner-downed-by-iran-2022-01-03/>; <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2022/01/families-of-victims-in-downed-passenger-plane-refuse-iranian-compensation-no-justice-without-the-truth/>

Caribbean and Latin America. *Insight Crimes* published its annual “Homicide Round-Up” on the Caribbean and Latin America. “Murder rates calculated by *Insight Crimes* are based on available homicide data and the country’s 2020 estimated population total, according to the World Bank.” The highest murder rate in the region was Jamaica, with 49.4 murders per 100,000 people, followed closely by Venezuela at 40.9. Bolivia had no usable data because the government has not published crime statistics for 2019-2021. <https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crimes-2021-homicide-round-up/>

Egypt/Eritrea. Human Rights Watch documented “the months-long arbitrary detention in Egypt in poor conditions of nine Eritrean asylum seekers,” five of whom were deported in late December. None had been “allowed access to UNHCR or to official asylum procedure.” Police had taken the nine to the Eritrean embassy in Cairo, which “issued them travel documents valid only for Eritrea, and pressured them to sign a ‘voluntary’ return agreement, which they refused to do.” Later the five who ultimately were deported were taken “back to the embassy, where officials coerced them into signing documents—in Arabic, which they cannot read—which may have been related to their deportation.” UNHCR said as of November Egypt hosted 20,778 UNHCR-registered Eritrean asylum seekers and refugees” but there clearly are many more unregistered. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/27/egypt-forced-returns-eritrean-asylum-seekers#>

Ethiopia/Turkey. “Photographs of missile fragments provide the first material evidence that Ethiopia used a Turkish drone this month in an attack that killed 58 civilians sheltering in a school.” *Politico* obtained the photographs from “aid workers in the northern Tigray region,” and “military experts from the Dutch nongovernmental organization PAX and Amnesty International identified the weapon used as a MAM-L bomb that is fitted to a Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drone.” Aid workers in Tigray compiled data showing that Ethiopia’s drones have killed more than 300 civilians in the region. <https://www.politico.eu/article/evidence-civilian-bombing-ethiopia-turkish-drone/>

France/Morocco. The Moroccan Association for Historical Research (AMRH) wrote to Morocco’s national archivist Jamaa Baida expressing support for his efforts to persuade France to return to Morocco the original documents of Mohamed Ben Abdelkrim El Khatibi, the leader of a rebellion starting in 1920 against French and Spanish colonial armies in Morocco. The documents were seized by France when he surrendered in 1926. https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/123102/archives-maroc-pour-restitution-france.html?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=510dd81590-EMAIL_Newsletter_JAN_2022&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-510dd81590-225732189

Germany/Syria. The Koblenz, Germany, court found former Syrian colonel Anwar Raslan guilty of 27 counts of murder, rape and sexual assault carried out at the Al-Khatib detention center near Damascus, Syria, in 2011 and 2012, *DW* reported. “The mistreatment had served to coerce confessions and obtain information, the prosecution said.” Human rights groups hailed the verdict as “a truly historic moment” for victims and survivors of torture. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-07 and 09. <https://www.dw.com/en/german-court-finds-syrian-ex-colonel-guilty-of-crimes-against-humanity/a-60407021>

A court in Frankfurt, Germany, began trying a doctor identified only as Alan M for torturing opponents of the Syrian regime “while working as a doctor at a military prison and hospitals in Homs and Damascus in 2011 and 2012,” *Reuters* reported. He “worked at the Mezzeh 601 military hospital in Damascus, whose morgues and courtyard, according to Human Rights Watch, were seen in a cache of photographs which depicted the scale of state-sponsored torture against civilians and were smuggled abroad by a government photographer known as Caesar.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-07.

https://www.reuters.com/world/second-syria-torture-trial-opens-germany-2022-01-18/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=10c820c834-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-10c820c834-90540617

Germany/Vatican. A report commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church in Munich was released, accusing retired Pope Benedict XVI of mishandling at least four cases of sexual abuse by priests when he was the archbishop in Munich, *AP* reported. The 1,900-page report was prepared by the law firm Westpfahl Spilker Wastl to look at abuses between 1945 and 2019. The firm “examined church files and spoke to witnesses” and obtained “extensive written testimony” from Benedict. <https://apnews.com/article/pope-francis-pope-benedict-xvi-reinhard-marx-germany-europe-c75f721f469f969d05348703c093e53d>

Greece/North Macedonia. “North Macedonia’s Interior Ministry said that it would investigate Greek media reports that at least one casino in the southern town of Dojran had been offering fake COVID certificates to Greek gamblers, to incentivize them to visit,” reported *BIRN*, which said it “has seen the fake negative rapid-test certificates” and covert footage from the casino about using the forms.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2022/01/05/north-macedonia-to-check-if-casino-offered-fake-covid-certificates/>

Mexico/United States. *Reveal News* and the U.S. NGO National Security Archive produced a three-part podcast on the 43 students from the teacher-training school at Ayotzinapa, Mexico, who disappeared in 2014 while in the control of Mexican security forces. Part of the story involves drug smuggling from Mexico to the United States. The series provides links to the extensive evidence on the disappearances.

https://revealnews.org/article/after-ayotzinapa/?mc_cid=06474831be&mc_eid=984067ef8d; <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/news/mexico/2022-01-10/after-ayotzinapa-podcast-investigates-horrific-mexican-atrocity>

Mideast war. The *New York Times* “obtained more than 1,300 confidential Pentagon assessments of allegations of civilian casualties in the . . . air war in the Middle East, between September 2014 and January 2018.” The *Times*’ Visual Investigations unit reviewed “80 assessments, including those with high numbers of reported civilian casualties. The *Times* repeatedly found what appeared to be simple mistakes,” leading to inaccurate assessments of casualties. <https://armenianservice.com/documents-reveal-flaws-in-pentagon-dismissals-of-civilian-casualty-claims-in-iraq-and-syria/>

The *New York Times* also reported that although the Tabqa Dam was on the U.S. military’s “no-strike” list of protected civilian sites in Syria, “members of a top secret U.S. Special Operations unit called Task Force 9 had struck the dam using some of the largest conventional bombs in the U.S. arsenal, including at least one BLU-109 bunker-buster bomb designed to destroy thick concrete structures.”

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/01/21/us-risked-killing-thousands-bombing-syria-dam-no-strike-list>

Spain/Catalunya/United Kingdom/Scotland. The parliament of Spain’s Catalan region “formally pardoned hundreds of women executed for witchcraft between the 15th and 18th centuries.” The article did not indicate what research would be done to identify and “to rehabilitate the memory of these persecuted women” (which may number more than 700) as the resolution requires. The Catalan action was inspired by a “Witches of Scotland campaign which is urging the Scottish Government to grant a pardon, apology and memorial to those persecuted as witches in Scotland,” *The Scotsman* reported.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/catalan-campaign-inspired-by-witches-of-scotland-achieves-pardon-for-women-executed-for-witchcraft-3544380>

National news.

Afghanistan. In a report to the UN Security Council, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the UN has received “credible allegations” that more than 100 former members of the Afghan government, its security forces and those who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban took over the country on 15 August. He estimated 22.8 million people are in “crisis” and “emergency” levels

of food insecurity. There was a piece of good news: “Between 19 August and 31 December, the United Nations recorded 985 security-related incidents, a 91 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2020.” <https://undocs.org/S/2022/64>

Argentina. Argentina’s intelligence service, the Agencia Federal de Inteligencia, presented charges at the La Plata federal court accusing former Buenos Aires Province labor minister Marcelo Villegas of “leading a secret scheme to ‘eliminate trade unions’.” The charges are based on a video in which the minister is recorded saying, “Believe me, if I had a Gestapo—and I’m going to deny I ever said this—a shock force to finish off all the trade unions, I would go ahead.” He also “explained that his plan was not only directed against trade unions but also workers in the public sector,” *Buenos Aires Times* reported. <https://batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/afi-denounces-ex-ba-province-minister-after-gestapo-comment-in-video.phtml>

Bangladesh. The Liberation War Affairs Minister “said the government will prepare a list of those involved in anti-state activities living abroad and revoke their passports,” adding that “directives to take steps in this regard have been given,” reported *Bangladesh Post*. <https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/anti-state-activists-abroad-to-lose-bangladesh-passport-77218>

Brazil. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights took two Brazilian cases to the Inter-American Court. One said Brazil had failed to comply with its duty to investigate the 1997 murder of rural laborer Manoel Luiz da Silva, a member of the peasant movement Movimento Sem Terra, “failing to obtain and preserve evidence that was crucial to establish what happened and who was responsible.” The other is the case of Alcantata’s Quilombola communities, which “concerns the impact on the collective property of 152 communities caused by the failure to issue title deeds for their land, by the creation of an aerospace facility without the prior consultation and consent required, by the expropriation of their land and territory, and by the lack of judicial remedies to redress this situation.” https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2022/008.asp; https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2022/013.asp

“Globally, the wood fuel sector is a substantial source of the greenhouse gases heating up the planet and is estimated to account for up to 7% of total emissions from human activity, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. “Since 1995, about 2,830 people have been found working in slavery-like conditions at charcoal production sites in Brazil, with 2,080 of them using wood from native forests, according to data supplied by Mauricio Krepsky, the head of Brazil’s anti-slavery department DETRAE. Beyond being an environmental infraction, deforestation for the charcoal industry is often linked to slave labor, he said. While there is no hard data, at least 1,324 workers have been rescued from slavery while felling wood from native forests since 1995, according to DETRAE data.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20220104115707-i27tx>

Bulgaria. In a case brought by two Bulgarian lawyers and two NGOs, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that “although covert surveillance is legal in Bulgaria,” there is “a lack of proper judicial oversight over decisions to issue warrants for surveillance and a lack of clear regulation over the storage, access and destruction of secret surveillance data. This allowed secret surveillance data to be used for nefarious purposes,” *Jurist* reported. <https://www.jurist.org/news/2022/01/echr-rules-bulgaria-surveillance-laws-violate-human-rights/>

Burundi. *Crisis Watch* reported that at a public forum held 1 January President Ndayishimiye “acknowledged torture cases at [the] hands of intelligence services.” An authentic record of this speech could be important evidence in future judicial proceedings. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch#overview>

Canada. In March 2018 a researcher filed an access request with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) for records on Project Anecdote, a “fraud and corruption investigation” by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the late 1990s and early 2000s, *The Canadian Press* reported. LAC “identified 780,000 pages of paper and microfilm records” and said it would need an extension of 29,200 days to process the request, later modified to 65 years. The researcher has now taken LAC to court over the “extraordinary extension of time” which he said demonstrates why reform of the Access to Information Act “is so badly needed.” <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/man-seeking-rcmp-files-goes-to-court-after-national-archives-takes-80-year-extension-1.5729643>

The federal government and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) signed a memorandum of agreement, under which NCTR will be given “school narratives” on 11 residential schools that had been operated by Catholic entities, *CBC News* reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-12. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/federal-government-documents-nctr-deal-reached-1.6321441>

Williams Lake First Nation of the Secwepemc Nation, located in British Columbia, announced that by using ground-penetrating radar and consulting with survivors, it has detected 93 “reflections” or possible unmarked graves at the St. Joseph’s Mission Residential School grounds and surrounding areas, *VICE News* reported. It said it is “also pursuing archival research and relying on other technologies” to identify unmarked graves. In May 2021 the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc “confirmed hundreds of unmarked graves” at the Kamloops Indian Residential School [KIRS] grounds. The Tk’emlups te Secwepemc chief said the recent release of residential school-related records to the NCTR will be helpful, telling *CBC News*, “Access to the records means not having to re-traumatize . . . residential school survivors to pinpoint information about who attended KIRS and who could possibly be in the unmarked graves.” https://www.vice.com/en/article/3abpdk/93-unmarked-graves-found-at-residential-school-that-targeted-indigenous-children?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=220126

The federal government and representatives of First Nations reached an agreement “in principle” to compensate First Nations children who were taken from their homes and put into foster care between April 1991 and 31 March 2022, reported *The Star*. The final agreement will be submitted to both a federal court and the human rights tribunal for approval before it goes into effect. Cindy Blackstock, the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, said, “Compensation should not be determined by victim interviews about potential traumas, but should rely on metrics like a child’s age when they were taken from their homes, as well as the number of homes they lived in while in foster care.” Archives would be crucial to that determination. <https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2022/01/04/ottawas-new-40-billion-deal-gives-more-compensation-to-indigenous-children-harmed-by-discriminatory-underfunding.html>

Chile. In its first comprehensive assessment in 37 years of the situation of human rights in Chile, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights highlighted the “underlying causes and consequences of the social protests that started on 18 October 2019.” It found “the State’s response to the demonstrations, by law enforcement agencies, was characterized by patterns of violence and excessive use of force, resulting in the loss of 5 human lives by direct action of State agents and 26 deaths . . . as well as hundreds of people injured, particularly with eye injuries.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2019-11 and 12, 2020-10. http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2022/018.asp

Colombia. *Reuters* reported that the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said it received 202 reports of human rights leaders killed in Colombia in 2021, with 78 “confirmed as killed, 39 cases were still being verified, and 85 were inconclusive.” By contrast, Colombia’s human rights ombudsman said in a statement that “at least 145 community leaders and rights activists were killed in 2021, among which were “32 representatives of Indigenous groups, 16 advocates for rural or agricultural communities, and seven trade unionists,” *Al Jazeera* reported. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/about-80-rights-defenders-killed-colombia-2021-un-2022-01-13/>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/18/145-activists-killed-in-colombia-in-2021-govt-rights-monitor>

The Constitutional Court “declared a State of Unconstitutional Affairs due to failure in implementing security guarantees for former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) combatants who signed the 2016 Peace Agreement,” *teleSUR* reported. The judge noted that 303 former FARC members have been murdered since then. As a result of the judgment, “a Special Follow-up Chamber in the Constitutional Court will be established . . . to verify the orders issued to guarantee former combatants’ security,” the ombudsman’s office will “create a mechanism that monitors compliances with policies adopted to protect the lives of former guerrilla fighters,” and “the National Protection Unit (UNP) will also reassess the risks faced” by the former FARC members. Think of the massive records these three initiatives will compile. <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Colombian-Justice-To-Monitor-Compliance-With-2016-Peace-Accord-20220128-0002.html>

Democratic Republic of Congo. A military court sentenced 51 people to death, including 22 in absentia, for involvement in the 2017 murder of two UN investigators in the Kasai region, *AFP* reported. “Capital punishment is frequently pronounced in murder cases in the DRC but is routinely commuted to life imprisonment since the country declared a moratorium on executions in 2003.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-03, 05, 07, 08. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/29/drc-51-people-sentenced-to-death-over-2017-of-two-un-experts>

Egypt. The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, which “documented violations against citizens, journalists and political prisoners in Egypt and the region,” closed, “citing government persecution,” *Associated Press* reported. The item did not indicate what has happened to the sensitive documentation the Network had. The Network’s announcement said that documents seized by police in a 2013 raid on its office have never been returned. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/10/egypt-leading-rights-group-closes-citing-government-persecution>; <https://www.anhri.info/?p=28614&lang=en>

El Salvador. The Supreme Court of Justice ordered the reopening of the criminal case, closed in 2020, against those “identified as possible masterminds of the murders” of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in 1989, *teleSUR* reported. Those to be investigated are former President Alfredo Cristiani, five former generals, and one colonel who had been convicted in Spain of the killings. For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-07, 09. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Salvadoran-Supreme-Court-Reopens-The-Jesuits-Massacre-Case-20220106-0002.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10

The Attorney General opened “an internal investigation into seven current and former prosecutors who oversaw Operation Cathedral, a sweeping corruption probe into acts of corruption committed by administration officials between March 2020 and April 2021,” *El Faro* reported. A San Salvador court signed a warrant to search the office of the Special Anti-Mafia Group prosecutors; *El Faro* “reviewed a copy of the court order authorizing the raids,” which allowed the seizure of “objects (digital information storage devices) used for revealing or disclosing confidential facts, actions, information, or documentation, as well as information obtained in the course of judicially authorized telecommunications surveillance related to the case.” https://elfaro.net/en/202201/el_salvador/25948/El-Salvador-Attorney-General-Raids-Offices-of-Anti-Corruption-Prosecutors.htm?utm_source=DB+El+Faro+English&utm_campaign=755cec7e3f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_22_01_08_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ec9190c89-755cec7e3f-363082696

Guatemala. A three-judge tribunal convicted five men, members of a paramilitary group called the Civil Self-Defense Patrols, for the wartime rape of 36 Indigenous Maya Achi women in the town of Rabinal in the early 1980s during Guatemala’s civil war. The court ordered 12 reparations measures, including incorporating the history of the Maya Achi Women in the national school curriculum and publishing the judgement and a summary translated into the Achi language. <https://ghrcusa.wordpress.com/2022/01/31/maya-achi-women-achieve-justice-after-40-years/>

India. Police said they arrested “three suspects in an investigation into an online app that shared pictures of more than a hundred Muslim women for an ‘auction’,” *Al Jazeera* reported. The women’s pictures were posted to GitHub in an open-source app called Bulli Bai, “a derogatory term to describe Muslim women.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/5/india-police-arrests-bulli-bai-online-auction-muslim-women>

“Between 2014 and 2021, more than 32 million people in Assam were affected by flooding, including nearly 660 deaths, according to data from the state disaster management agency,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The indigenous Mising tribe live along the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries and are directly affected by the floods. “The area’s indigenous communities face yet another problem: the inability to reclaim their land once the flood-waters have receded. With no title deed to prove ownership, the Mising traditionally settle on unused riparian land” which is becoming scarce after riverbank erosion and the region’s population growth. http://news.trust.org/item/20211228115729-po4z5/?utm_campaign=new-climate&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=topPicks&utm_content=link4&utm_contentItemId=20211228115729-po4z5

Ireland. The Land Commission is beginning to digitize “some 200 ‘search aids’ in anticipation of making them available online” as a “critical guide for finding individual documents among the 35,000 separate sets of records” in the Land Commission archives, which “has long been shielded from public

view, off bounds for historians, accessible only rarely to researchers and the subject or persistent demands for transparency,” *The Irish Times* wrote. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/treasure-trove-includes-record-for-almost-all-land-in-ireland-1.4762067>

Mexico. The Interior Ministry announced that during 2021 “the National Migration Institute (INM) and Interpol rescued 7,329 victims of crimes related to human trafficking” and between January and September 2021 Mexico “intercepted over 252,000 undocumented migrants and departed over 100,000,” *teleSur* reported. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/7326-Human-Trafficking-Victims-Were-Rescued-in-Mexico-in-2021-20220113-0001.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

Myanmar. “A *Washington Post* analysis of more than 300 videos and photos, some not previously made public, as well as satellite imagery, eyewitness accounts and military planning documents, reveals a premeditated campaign of arson and killing targeting civilians in Chin state beginning in September. Military planning documents shared exclusively with *The Post* show that the attacks were planned as early as June, and that soldiers were authorized to ‘clear’ the region--similar to orders in the 2017 operation against Rohingya Muslims. The documents, supported by visual evidence, implicate commanders in atrocities for the first time since the coup. The military government did not respond to a request for comment.” https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2021-12-23/myanmar-military-raided-villages-4070402.html

Pakistan. The Sindh High Court, unhappy about “reports filed by police in missing persons’ cases,” ordered the police “to use modern technology to trace out missing persons and to approach the National Database and Registration Authority for blocking the computerized national identity cards of such persons,” *Dawn* reported. It also ordered “provincial authorities to constitute an enforced disappearance task force to exclusively focus on such cases.” <https://www.dawn.com/news/1670385>

A court in Rawalpindi sentenced a woman to death “over allegedly blasphemous messages and images retrieved from her WhatsApp conversations with a man whose unwanted advances she earlier rejected,” *VICE News* reported. A digital rights activist said, “Activists have been warning of the blasphemy law being used to settle personal scores . . . At the intersection of power, religion and gender are combined to punish a woman for refusing to give in to the entitlement of a man and hence this punishment.” https://www.vice.com/en/article/akvjw8/26-year-old-woman-death-sentence-whatsapp-blasphemy-pakistan?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=220124

Russia. International Memorial filed an appeal of the order to close its doors; that appeal is expected to be heard in the appellate court on 28 February. The appeal of the same decision against the sister organization, the Memorial Human Rights Center, is expected to be filed on 11 February, according to Friends of Memorial Australia & New Zealand. But as Masha Gessen wrote in an article on Memorial in *The New Yorker*, “They will probably lose the appeal and face the requirement to shut down sometime in the spring. At that point, they will be in uncharted territory. The archives may be saved and stored elsewhere, but, [Elena] Zhemkova [Memorial’s acting director] said, “An archive is only alive as long as it’s used.” <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-russian-memory-project-that-became-an-enemy-of-the-state>

Serbia. Serbia’s Interior Minister said “a disciplinary procedure has been launched after several policemen were filmed at a private party in Priboj in south-west Serbia celebrating to a song that glorifies the Srebrenica genocide and war crimes committed in Croatia,” *BIRN* reported. The video was published on Facebook and then reported by local press. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/01/05/serbian-policemen-investigated-over-pro-genocide-song/>

Spain. The Catholic Church is to set up local commissions to hear complaints from victims of sexual abuse after allegations of over eight decades of abuse were published in *El Pais* in December, *Reuters* reported. *El Pais* said it “uncovered potential abuse by 251 priests and some lay people from religious institutions against at least 1,237 victims between 1943 and 2018” and that it gave the Pope a “385-page dossier” on the matter. <https://kelo.com/2022/01/14/spains-catholic-dioceses-to-collect-abuse-allegations-after-talks-with-pope/>

Syria. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued a report on the human rights violations committed by Hay’at Tahrir al Sham (HTS), a Sunni Islamist militant group, between January 2012 and the end of 2021. The report “relies mainly” on SNHR’s “continuous daily monitoring and

documentation of violations,” plus interviews of “around 85 people.” It includes a discussion of the HTS judicial system and the “ministerial circulars and instructions” that regulate the work of its courts. <https://sn4hr.org/blog/2022/01/31/57274/>

United Kingdom. The Home Office announced that “anyone convicted of consensual same-sex sexual activity under abolished laws in England and Wales will soon be eligible to be pardoned and have their records wiped,” the *Washington Post* reported. “People must still go through an application process to have their records wiped, and any party involved in the activity in question must have been 16 or older and the sexual activity must be legal today.” It is unclear how the “wipe” will be done and what records will be created of the application and “wiping” process. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/182085>

“Research carried out by Free Movement, a website run by lawyers to provide information for those affected by immigration controls, has found that at least 464 people have had their citizenship removed since the law permitting this practice was relaxed 15 years ago. The government does not routinely publish the total number of people it strips of British citizenship,” the *Guardian* reported. The information was compiled “from historic freedom of information requests and ‘obscure statistical publications’.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/21/hundreds-stripped-british-citizenship-last-15-years-study-finds>

The court of appeal ruled that the U.K. government “acted unlawfully when it stripped a British woman of her citizenship without telling her,” the *Guardian* reported. “The home secretary had argued that notification had been given to D4 [the code for the woman], who has been detained in the Roj camp in Syria since January 2019, by simply placing a note on her Home Office file.” <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jan/26/uk-unlawfully-stripped-woman-of-citizenship-without-telling-her-court>

Jillian Becker founded the Institute for the Study of Terrorism, in London in 1984, compiling a “register of terrorists, names of groups and individuals with details of their affiliations, their objectives and their actions” and obtaining relevant books, documents, photographs and recordings. In 1993 the University of Leicester bought the collection. Writing in *Power Line*, Becker announced that the University has told her “the unpublished archival material cannot be located,” other than “a small amount of correspondence” that is now part of the Archives and Special Collections in the university library. <https://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2022/01/jillian-becker-a-terrorism-archive-lost.php>

United States. “The independent data collection organization Gun Violence Archive counted 1,055 children killed or injured by gunfire in 2021, up from 999 in 2020, and 695 in 2019,” *National Public Radio* reported; as of 28 January the 2022 tally was 74. “The increase clearly coincides with the pandemic, but the causes are debatable. One hypothesis: more guns in more homes, as Americans went on a firearms buying spree” during the pandemic. <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/28/1076396871/gun-violence-rise-killing-children-pandemic>

STAT reported that “emergency medics, which often operate separately from the health care systems they deliver to, are largely locked out of medicine’s vast information architecture. That means they’re often unable to access a patient’s medical history when they arrive on scene, even though that information would help them make time-sensitive, lifesaving decisions.” https://www.statnews.com/2022/01/04/emergency-medics-electronic-health-records/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=879f653eb7-Weekend+Reads+COPY+02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-879f653eb7-149736437

In a study published in *Health Affairs*, researchers analyzed “a sample of 40,113 history and physical notes (January 2019–October 2020) from 18,459 patients” at a large urban academic medical center in Chicago, Illinois, looking for “sentences containing a negative descriptor (for example, resistant or noncompliant) of the patient or the patient’s behavior. . . Compared with White patients, Black patients had 2.54 times the odds of having at least one negative descriptor in the history and physical notes. Our findings raise concerns about stigmatizing language in the EHR [electronic health record] and its potential to exacerbate racial and ethnic health care disparities.” https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01423?utm_term=sun&utm_campaign=february2022issue&utm_medium=press&utm_content=ahead+of+print&utm_source=mediaadvisory

The Nooksack Indian Tribe in Washington State expelled 306 people, cutting off their tribal benefits. “Nooksack leaders have said the expelled people are descended from a tribal band based in Canada and should never have been enrolled” as a member of the Tribe, reported the *New York Times*, and “none of them had direct ancestors who were included in a crucial tribal census that was undertaken in 1942.” <https://www.us.com/2022/01/03/a-tribes-bitter-purge-brings-an-unusual-request-federal-intervention/>

United States/Iowa. “Thousands of state records dealing with child abuse investigations and other matters have been rendered unreadable due to a change in computer software at the Iowa Department of Human Services,” the *Iowa Capital Dispatch* reported. <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2022/01/07/dhs-cant-read-thousands-of-its-own-emails-including-those-about-child-abuse/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=ae7cbf3d-d428-4e15-b3b5-4b35ce03d53d>

United States/Virginia. “Police in Virginia Beach repeatedly used forged documents purporting to be from the state Department of Forensic Science during interrogations, falsely allowing suspects to believe DNA or other forensic evidence had tied them to a crime, the state attorney general revealed . . . in announcing an agreement to ban the practice,” the *Washington Post* reported. <https://scalawagmagazine.org/2022/01/grassroots-reparations/>

Venezuela. President Nicolas Maduro swore in 20 members of a “commission to delve into the truth of European colonialism and its crimes and genocide. It will show the looting that took place in Latin America and will demand justice and reparation from Spain, Portugal and other Europe countries,” *teleSUR* reported. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Venezuela-Sets-Commission-to-Expose-the-Truth-of-Colonialism-20220126-0007.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemned the “extrajudicial killings of young men who live in poverty in Venezuela” and called on the State “to comply with international standards concerning the use of force, as well as to investigate this serious and systematic human rights violation and to try and punish its perpetrators. According to publicly available reports, during the first two weeks of 2022, State law enforcement officers were involved in at least 27 murders. These figures are in line with those recorded by the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and by the Organization of American States. In these cases, all of which happened in law enforcement raid contexts, 80% of all victims were under 25, 99% of them were men who lived in poverty, and 80% of all cases featured some form of threat or harassment against the people who reported the killings.” http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2022/021.asp

Zimbabwe. High Court Judge Joseph Mafusire rejected a claim filed by Chilonga villagers who are being evicted by the government “to pave way for a commercial irrigation venture,” ruling that the act that vested rural land in the President was constitutional, *Zimeye* reported. However, the judge said “that without some sort of Commission of Enquiry on Zimbabwe’s whole agrarian reform especially as it applies to communal lands, the courts may not be sufficiently qualified to provide a wholesome solution to the question of private ownership of communal lands” and “the Executive and the Legislature are better placed than the courts to consider” whether it is “time that private ownership of communal territories is recognized so that individual title deeds can now be granted to the occupiers of such territories.” <https://www.zimeye.net/2022/01/08/chilonga-villagers-lose-court-challenge-fate-now-in-eds-hands/>

Course and publications. Swisspeace, with the University of Basel, is offering the course “Documenting and Archiving from a Dealing with the Past Perspective,” 16-25 May 2022; apply by 31 March: <https://www.swisspeace.ch/continuing-education/postgraduate-courses/documenting-and-archiving-from-a-dealing-with-the-past-perspective>

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Jamie Pringle, Alejandra Baena, Carlos Martin Molina, Kristopher Wisniewski, Vivienne Heaton, “The science that is helping researchers find the ‘disappeared’ in Latin America,” *The Conversation*: <https://theconversation.com/the-science-that-is-helping-researchers-find-the-disappeared-in-latin-america->

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