
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter from the Section on Archives and Human Rights

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SAHR News

- The Truth and Reconciliation Mechanisms Archives Locator (TRMAL) is now live!
<https://trmal.ica.org/>
- In December, Dagmar Hovestadt launched a SAHR LinkedIn page, our first serious step into the world of social media communication! Please follow us here:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ica-section-on-archives-and-human-rights>
- SAHR has submitted its views to the UN on Draft General Comment No. 38 on Article 22 (Freedom of Association) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2025/call-input-draft-general-comment-no-38-article-22-freedom-association>. The text of our submission has been uploaded onto the UN website and is available on our Rights and Records Knowledge base:
<https://rightsandrecords.ica.org/bib/SVJECV68>

Events

[CFP: Seeking Oral Historians for Bloomsbury's Trans Studies Book Series](#). Publishing in the Archives Profession, 2025-10-28.

[Disability and the Archives: Access, Absences and Action](#). Shakespeare's Globe, 2026-01-23.

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Send your suggestions for news items or comments to sahr-newsletter@ica.org.

[ICA SAHR Tuesday Talks - The Archives of the Guatemalan Project Recovery of Historical Memory \(REHMI\)](#). ICA International Council on Archives; Patricia Ogaldes, 2025-12-02.

Would you like to promote your event (conference, webinar, exhibition, etc.) to an international audience? Please submit information, including title, description, date(s) and URL to sahr-newsletter@ica.org for upcoming publication.

Editor's Note

The newsletters and items are added to the Section's "Rights and Records Knowledge Base", available at <https://rightsandrecords.ica.org>.

If you would like to volunteer as a news collector, please send an email to sahr-newsletter@ica.org. We'd love to have you! We're currently looking for collectors who can focus on Latin America, South America, Africa, Oceania and Asia to ensure a more global coverage.

News by topic

Armed Conflict

South Africa: [South African radio host arrested over recruiting fighters for Russia](#). The South African government has warned people to be cautious of campaigns promoted by South African social media influencers promising jobs and study opportunities in Russia. Gavin Blackburn, euronews, 2025-12-01.

Censorship

Palestine (Permanent Observer to the UN): [YouTube and big tech censorship threatens global accountability, Palestinian rights groups say](#). After the U.S. imposed sanctions, YouTube took down over 700 videos from prominent Palestinian human rights groups. Rights advocates say this censorship goes beyond Palestine and affects the future of international justice and accountability. Jawad, Majd, Mondoweiss, 2025-12-09.

Civil Rights

Australia: [A key piece of Port Arthur-era gun reform remains unfinished. Could it have helped prevent the Bondi attack?](#). A national firearms register would have allowed police to better assess risk posed by alleged Bondi shooters before attack. A register, which would track weapons across the country in real time, was a priority for law enforcement and gun control advocates after the 1996 Port Arthur massacre. Almost 30 years later, it remains unfinished, hampered by poor resourcing and poor recordkeeping. Bogle, Ariel, The Guardian, 2025-12-20.

Colonialism

Algeria: [Algeria's parliament approves law declaring France's colonisation a crime](#). Lawmakers unanimously approve a law, which demands an apology and reparations from the former colonial power. Chothia, Farouk, BBC News, 2025-12-24.

United Kingdom/Africa: [Manchester Museum seeks help to uncover hidden histories of African collection](#). New Africa Hub confronts colonial-era silences by asking visitors to share insights on 40,000 objects. Osuh, Chris, The Guardian, 2025-12-21.

Crimes Against Humanity

France/Senegal: [Declassification des Archives Thiaroye 44](#). Invitée de l'émission En Vérité sur Radio Sénégal, l'ambassadrice de France au Sénégal, Mme Christine Fages, est longuement revenue sur la commémoration du massacre de Thiaroye 44 et sur la question sensible de la déclassification des archives réclamées par les historiens sénégalais. RTS Officiel, 2025-12-14.

Syrian Arab Republic: [Leaked photos expose an archive of death in Assad's Syria](#). Photographs of more than 10,000 regime victims capture a campaign of torture and mass murder in haunting, meticulous detail. Nicole Sadek and Karrie Kehoe, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, 2025-12-04.

Detention

Syrian Arab Republic: [Transitional Govt. arrests international law expert](#). The Transitional Government in Syria arrested the international law expert Shamis Mahfouz from his office in Damascus on charges of "conspiring against state security," confiscating his archives and transferring him to Investigation Branch 202. ANHA, ANHA, 2025-12-16.

Disinformation

Germany/Russian Federation: [Germany Accuses Russia of Sabotage, Cyberattacks and Disinformation](#). The German foreign ministry's announcement, which Russia denied, was the latest suggestion of growing Russian aggression in Europe. Schuetze, Christopher F., The New York Times, 2025-12-12.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Kyrgyzstan: [Supporting the voice of documentary filmmakers in Bishkek](#). Like every year, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) supports the independent documentary film festival BIR DUINO, which opens this Saturday, 13 December, in Bishkek. Ilya Nuzov, Director of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Desk at FIDH, will be part of the jury. ., International Federation for Human Rights, 2025-12-11.

Environment

United Kingdom: [Organ-tuning books in English churches provide notes on a warming climate](#). Researchers have realised the records are a 'goldmine' to study changes in environmental conditions. Baraniuk, Chris, The Guardian, 2025-12-22.

Freedom of Information

Germany/Russian Federation: [The Far Right in Germany Keeps Trying to Unseal National Secrets](#). Opponents of AfD lawmakers say that their push to publish sensitive details about national security could benefit Russian military planning. Schuetze, Christopher F., The New York Times, 2025-12-14.

Freedom of the Press

Kazakhstan: [Journalism, Free Expression in Further Peril](#). (London, December 17, 2025) – Authorities in Kazakhstan have targeted independent journalists and media outlets in recent weeks, a coalition of nine human rights groups said today. The authorities have searched the newsroom of an independent news agency, detained media workers, and pressured journalists over their reporting. Human Rights Watch, 2025-12-17.

Human Rights

Worldwide: [SAHR Announces its New Database](#). SAHR Announces its New Database "Truth and Reconciliation Mechanisms Archives Locator" (TRMAL) on International Human Rights Day. Almeras, Clemence, International Council on Archives, 2025-12-09.

Indigenous Matters

Finland: [Finland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes 70 recommendations](#). Finland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has urged sweeping reforms to strengthen Sámi rights and overhaul the country's approach to Indigenous affairs, according to details of the nearly 68 recommendations published on Thursday. The Commission, set up by the Finnish government, spent the pa. Eilís Quinn, Eye on the Arctic, 2025-12-04.

Israel-Gaza Crisis

Palestine (Permanent Observer to the UN): ['If I must die': poetry from Gaza creates an alternative archive of testimony](#). Poetry offers something that news and visual imagery cannot in times of crisis: depth over immediacy and meaning over spectacle. Guerin, Clodagh Philippa, The Conversation, 2025-12-09.

Palestine (Permanent Observer to the UN): [Gazans race to preserve cultural heritage damaged in war](#). Workers are busy with shovels, trying to dig out the few surviving remnants of the past. Elkas, Dawoud Abu; Abed, Ramadan, Reuters, 2025-12-03.

LGBTQ+ Rights

United States of America: [Fighting Anti-Queer Backlash with Citizen Archivists](#). Queer archivist groups like Invisible Histories and the Queer Zine Archive Project are preserving queer history and making it accessible in the face of the federal government's erasure. You can do the same. Lindsay Eanet, In These Times, 2025-12-15.

Migration

United Kingdom/United States of America: [US judge blocks Trump administration from deporting UK anti-disinformation campaigner](#). Imran Ahmed of Center for Countering Digital Hate files complaint against senior Trump allies. Walker, Peter; Crerar, Pippa, The Guardian, 2025-12-26.

Worldwide: [Displacement and Migration through the Magnum Archive](#). On the 75th anniversary of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), we take a look at Magnum's coverage of refugee and displacement crises around the world, from the 1940s to the present day. Philippine Masson, Magnum Photos, 2025-12-15.

Privacy

Azerbaijan: [Azerbaijan's Surveillance Platform Risks Sweeping Privacy Violations](#). On November 21, President Ilham Aliyev signed a decree establishing a new centralized digital platform that dramatically expands state surveillance powers. Giorgi Gogia, Human Rights Watch, 2025-12-15.

Spying

Israel/United States of America: [Israeli surveillance targets US and allies at joint base planning Gaza aid and security, say sources](#). Concerns over recording of meetings at coordination centre excluding Palestinians that was set up to provide support for Trump's Gaza plan. Graham-Harrison, Emma, The Guardian, 2025-12-08.

Technology

Worldwide: ['Low- and Middle-Income Countries Need Better Data, Not Just Better Tech'](#).

Development experts have warned that LMICs were being pushed into digital transformation without the basic statistical systems. Parvaiz, Athar, Inter Press Service, 2025-12-04.

Worldwide: [Symposium on Forensic and Counter-Forensic Approaches to International Law](#). To live in a crisis zone today is to be watched, recorded, and broadcasted—often without one’s knowledge or consent. Digital evidence plays a central role in investigating international crimes and human rights abuses—as has been demonstrated vis-à-vis Israel’s atrocities in Gaza in the UN Special Rapporteur’s report on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Anatomy of a Genocide, and Forensic Architecture’s digital forensic investigation, Cartography of Genocide. Chris Carpenter, Opinio Juris, 2025-12-10.

Worldwide: [The Deepfake Blindspot in AI Governance](#). Deepfakes are no longer just a novelty or disinformation threat — they're reshaping digital trust. Despite mounting evidence of their harms in multiple domains, regulatory responses remain fragmented and misaligned with the actual threats. MSc Development Management candidate Rachel Ntow argues that this governance gap is systematically eroding the accountability and digital credibility that institutions. Patel, Dipa, LSE International Development, 2025-12-04.

Transparency

Russian Federation: [How Thousands of Secret Russian Documents Were Exposed](#). Russian journalists learned that a government office inadvertently made thousands of sensitive complaints viewable online, including accounts of abuse and coercion in the military. Troianovski, Anton; Sonne, Paul, The New York Times, 2025-12-31.

United Kingdom: [Cabinet Office accused of covering up for royal family after blocking release of Andrew documents](#). Minutes of travel expenses of former Duke of York as UK trade envoy withheld from National Archives. Davies, Caroline; Quinn, Ben, The Guardian, 2025-12-30.

United States of America: [Questions Lawmakers Should Ask About Inspector General Report on Signalgate](#). The OIG report on the "Signalgate" incident is far from the “total exoneration” claimed by Hegseth and his aides. Hendrix, Justin, Just Security, 2025-12-10.

Ukraine War

Ukraine: [Ukrainian Armed Forces Use Blue Shield Markings to Protect State Archives](#). Ukrainian Armed Forces apply Blue Shield protective markings to state archive buildings preserving cultural heritage, ensuring their protection under international law during conflict. Mezha.net, 2025-12-16.

War Crimes

Syrian Arab Republic: [The Cover-Up: Inside the Plot to Conceal Assad’s Crimes](#). Thousands of documents and interviews with Assad-era officials reveal how the regime worked to conceal evidence of its atrocities during the Syrian civil war. Goldbaum, Christina; Alnassife, Saad, The New York Times, 2025-12-30.

Women's Rights

Ethiopia: [Ethiopia's Fight Against Anti-Abortion Propaganda](#). How Ethiopians are resisting U.S.-backed disinformation on abortions. Misikir, Maya, Foreign Policy, 2025-12-01.

World War II

Argentina: [Unmasking the "Angel of Death": Newly Declassified Argentine Archives Reveal Josef Mengele's Open, Unpunished Postwar Life in South America](#). By: Fern Sidman – Jewish Voice News For decades, the trail of Josef Mengele—Auschwitz's "Angel of Death," the SS physician whose name became synonymous with the mechanized cruelty of the Nazi killing machine—has remained shrouded in myth, speculation, and scattered intelligence reports that seemed to illuminate his path only dimly. But the recent release of [...]. Fern Sidman, The Jewish Voice, 2025-12-01.

News by country/region

International News

United Kingdom/Africa

Colonialism: [Manchester Museum seeks help to uncover hidden histories of African collection](#). Osuh, Chris, The Guardian, 2025-12-21.

Worldwide

Human Rights: [SAHR Announces its New Database](#). Almeras, Clemence, International Council on Archives, 2025-12-09.

Migration: [Displacement and Migration through the Magnum Archive](#). Philippine Masson, Magnum Photos, 2025-12-15.

Technology: ['Low- and Middle-Income Countries Need Better Data, Not Just Better Tech'](#). Parvaiz, Athar, Inter Press Service, 2025-12-04.

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National News

Algeria

Colonialism: [Algeria's parliament approves law declaring France's colonisation a crime](#). Chothia, Farouk, BBC News, 2025-12-24.

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Azerbaijan

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Finland

Indigenous Matters: [Finland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes 70 recommendations](#). Eilís Quinn, Eye on the Arctic, 2025-12-04.

France

Crimes Against Humanity: [Declassification des Archives Thiaroye 44](#). RTS Officiel, 2025-12-14.

Germany

Disinformation: [Germany Accuses Russia of Sabotage, Cyberattacks and Disinformation](#). Schuetze, Christopher F., The New York Times, 2025-12-12.

Freedom of Information: [The Far Right in Germany Keeps Trying to Unseal National Secrets](#). Schuetze, Christopher F., The New York Times, 2025-12-14.

Israel

Spying: [Israeli surveillance targets US and allies at joint base planning Gaza aid and security, say sources](#). Graham-Harrison, Emma, The Guardian, 2025-12-08.

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Palestine (Permanent Observer to the UN)

Censorship: [YouTube and big tech censorship threatens global accountability, Palestinian rights groups say](#). Jawad, Majd, Mondoweiss, 2025-12-09.

Israel-Gaza Crisis: ['If I must die': poetry from Gaza creates an alternative archive of testimony](#). Guerin, Clodagh Philippa, The Conversation, 2025-12-09.

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Migration: [US judge blocks Trump administration from deporting UK anti-disinformation campaigner](#). Walker, Peter; Crerar, Pippa, The Guardian, 2025-12-26.

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