

**ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**News from the Section on Archives and Human Rights**  
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**Commentary.**

December 10 is Human Rights Day. This year's theme, as designated by the United Nations, is "Recover Better—Stand Up for Human Rights." The UN explains: "This year's Human Rights Day theme relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on the need to build back better by ensuring Human Rights are central to recovery efforts. We will reach our common global goals only if we are able to create equal opportunities for all, address the failures exposed and exploited by COVID-19, and apply human rights standards to tackle entrenched, systematic, and intergenerational inequalities, exclusion and discrimination."

Building back better means facing up to climate change and its impact on us all. And facing up is hard to do: a professor at the University of Kassel, Germany, told *DW*, "In evolutionary terms, we are not built for this kind of danger. We react to a rustling in the bushes with lightning speed. But the threat posed by climate change is abstract." [https://www.dw.com/en/how-can-we-wrap-our-brains-around-the-climate-crisis/a-55497883?maca=en-newsletter\\_en\\_bulletin-2097-xml-newsletter&r=6716266686607715&lid=1668615&pm\\_ln=59965](https://www.dw.com/en/how-can-we-wrap-our-brains-around-the-climate-crisis/a-55497883?maca=en-newsletter_en_bulletin-2097-xml-newsletter&r=6716266686607715&lid=1668615&pm_ln=59965)

One way we may all wake up to the facts of climate change is when it starts affecting our sleep. Sleep, you say? A team of researchers from Denmark, Germany and the U.S. obtained "sleep entries collected over a two-year period from September 2015 through October 2017 from 47,628 anonymous fitness band users who electronically consented for their data to be processed for research purposes." They matched this data to that of the nearest weather stations in 68 countries and obtained local daily meteorological data from 2015 to 2017. They found that "increasing night time temperatures amplify the estimated probability of obtaining a short night of sleep, measured with standard definitions for insufficient sleep." <https://arxiv.org/abs/2011.07161>

So sleepy archivists around the world will have to face the risk to archives from the various effects of climate change. The ICA Section on Archives and Human Rights, concerned about the risk that climate change poses, decided to develop a pilot project as a demonstration of what archivists can do to understand the impact on their institutions and holdings. We believe it will help archivists develop a climate-focused planning process for mitigating the effects of climate change on archives.

The pilot project began with mapping all known archives in one climate danger area. Vitor Fonseca and Silvia Moura, two distinguished Brazilian archivists, used public sources to create a spreadsheet listing all 81 known archives in Rio de Janeiro, recording the information elements of the International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings (ISDIAH) and the latitude and longitude (geophysical coordinates) for each institution. This was meticulous work, for which we thank them most heartily.

The second stage of the project will, with the assistance of a geographer, plot the locations on a map and overlay the maps of predicted sea level rise onto the maps of the archives, using estimates from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. Other overlays could include maps of predicted temperature rise and precipitation change (both drought and deluge). <https://www.ipcc.ch/> Yet another overlay may use the World Bank Global Carbon Atlas map showing the country's emissions, which in turn predicts the rapidity of the climate crisis. <http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions> Additional maps could be created matching predicted climate change effects to the physical type of materials held (for example, to look at the impact of increased dust on electronic records holdings).

Archives are at risk. Archives—at the heart of the work of institutions, cultural heritage and memory of people—need to be protected from the effects of climate change, whether inundation or increased dust

from desertification. Archivists, wide awake, can begin to take effective steps—if we know where the archives are located and the type of risk climate change brings to them.

**SAHR News.** The Association for Human Rights of Spain announced the winners of the Human Rights 2020 awards in national, international and communication categories. We are delighted to announce that Section on Archives and Human Rights of the International Council on Archives was selected by the jury as the awardee in the international category. The award has no financial prize, only a small statue and a diploma. The award has been given each year since 1982. [https://www.cervantes.es/sobre\\_instituto\\_cervantes/prensa/2020/noticias/convenio\\_asoc\\_derechos\\_humanos.htm](https://www.cervantes.es/sobre_instituto_cervantes/prensa/2020/noticias/convenio_asoc_derechos_humanos.htm)

The Section will hold an open meeting on 26 January 2021, by Zoom. It will begin about 4pm Western European time; look for final time and link in the next issue of *SAHR News*.

### **International news.**

**European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).** The Court announced that it is “fast-tracking” a case brought by four children and two young adults from Portugal against the 33 European countries for failing to take adequate steps to avert devastating climate change. The Court “communicated” the case to the defendant countries, which are to respond by the end of February 2021. According to the Global Legal Action Network, a U.K. NGO which is supporting the case, it is “working with climate experts to mobilise the evidence” need to prosecute the case. <https://youth4climatejustice.org/>

In the case of *Saran v. Romania*, ECtHR unanimously held that Ion Saran, a Muslim, suffered a violation of Article 9 (right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Saran was held in five Romanian prisons between 2016 and 2018, and he said he did not get meals “compatible with the precepts of Islam” in two of them. Those prisons “required him to furnish written proof of his adherence to that religion,” even though the “ethical and religious assistance records” in one of the prisons recorded him as a Muslim and he had declared that he was a Muslim when he entered the prison system. [https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20201130/17/fd/d3/3c/8acbd201a1c5f5618b666cfd3/Judgment\\_Saran\\_v.\\_Romania\\_.pdf](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20201130/17/fd/d3/3c/8acbd201a1c5f5618b666cfd3/Judgment_Saran_v._Romania_.pdf)

**International Criminal Court.** In 2016 the Court “terminated” a case against two Kenyans saying the evidence “was too weak to continue,” *International Justice Monitor* recalled. Prior to that, in 2015 they issued an arrest warrant for two other Kenyan men, Paul Gicheru and Philip Kipkoech Bett, for allegedly bribing or attempting to bribe witnesses in the case. Unexpectedly, Gicheru turned himself in to Dutch authorities on 2 November, who transferred him to the court. The prosecutor must file its list of evidence in the bribery case by 12 February 2021. For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-12, 2015-08, 2016-09. [https://www.ijmonitor.org/2020/11/icc-prosecutor-says-she-had-no-role-in-kenyan-lawyers-surrender/?utm\\_source=International+Justice+Monitor&utm\\_campaign=d1eb0f23b4-kenya-monitor-rss&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_f42ffeffb9-d1eb0f23b4-49700673](https://www.ijmonitor.org/2020/11/icc-prosecutor-says-she-had-no-role-in-kenyan-lawyers-surrender/?utm_source=International+Justice+Monitor&utm_campaign=d1eb0f23b4-kenya-monitor-rss&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f42ffeffb9-d1eb0f23b4-49700673)

**Kosovo Specialist Chambers.** “In mid-November, the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office . . . released documents accusing [former Kosovo president Hashim] Thaci and his co-accused of having tried to interfere with potential prosecution witnesses,” *BIRN* reported. At the end of the month the Chambers published a 200-page “redacted decision by a pre-trial judge confirming an indictment” against Thaci and three former fellow guerrilla commanders “accusing them of crimes against humanity and war crimes during and after the 1998-99 Kosovo war.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-06. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/01/kosovo-chambers-publishes-decision-on-indictment-against-ex-kla-commanders/>

**United Nations.** In what UN human rights Special Rapporteurs termed “a ground-breaking pact to fight pollution and secure a healthy environment,” countries of Latin America and the Caribbean committed to a “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.” Mexico ratified the agreement on 5 November, bringing it into force 90 days after Mexico’s ratification is deposited with the United Nations. Called the Escazu Agreement for the city in Costa Rica where the agreement was concluded in 2018, its Articles 5, Access to environmental information, and 6, Generation and dissemination of environmental information, provide strong language underscoring the importance of archives and access to them in efforts to protect the environment. Article 5 outlines a basic freedom of information act for all government environmental

information. Article 6 says in point 11, “Each Party shall create and keep regularly updated its archiving and document management systems in environmental matters in accordance with its applicable rules with the aim of facilitating access to information at all times,” and in point 12, “Each Party shall take the necessary measures, through legal or administrative frameworks, among others, to promote access to environmental information in the possession of private entities, in particular information on their operations and the possible risks and effects on human health and the environment.”  
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2018/03/20180312%2003-04%20PM/CTC-XXVII-18.pdf> ;  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26488>

In October the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions submitted an impressive report to the General Assembly on mass graves. Noting the obligations of States to search for mass graves, the SR wrote, “Such searches are not limited to a physical search for remains but include interviewing witnesses and examining documents to determine their fate.” She cautioned, “Dental records play a key role in body identification but only if victims could afford routine dental care in life” (I would add if the dental service retained dental records), but “a range of digital technologies are increasingly contributing to the discovery and management of mass graves” including the use of satellite imagery, aerial photogrammetry using drones, light detection and ranging, geospatial analysis and thermal imagery. All these sources need archival preservation. <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/384>

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued General recommendation 38 on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. With 76 recommendations, it is comprehensive. An important focus is the facilitation of trafficking by the use of electronic currencies and the increased recruitment for sexual exploitation on-line. It noted that one of the characteristics of trafficked women and girls is that they are “unregistered or undocumented,” and said States must facilitate “independent attainment of official identification and travel documents for safe passage of women wishing to emigrate without requiring them to obtain permission for a spouse or male guardian.” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077402>

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued General recommendation 36, “Preventing and Combating Racial Profiling by Law Enforcement Officials.” The focus is on the use of artificial intelligence in policing because “increasingly the actions of law enforcement officials are determined or informed by algorithmic profiling, which may include big data, automated decision-making and artificial intelligence tools and methods.” Among the 32 recommendations, 12 focus on States ensuring “full compliance with international human rights law of algorithmic profiling systems used for the purposes of law enforcement.”  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/CERD\\_C\\_GC\\_36\\_9291\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CERD_C_GC_36_9291_E.pdf)

## **World/general news.**

**Artificial intelligence.** Researchers from Denmark and Finland used artificial intelligence to analyze ca. 160,000 photographs taken by 23 Finnish photographers during World War II. They found that “artificial intelligence can recognize the identity of photographers based on the content of photos taken by them.”  
[https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2020-10/au-aid102820.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-10/au-aid102820.php)

**Business records.** In the fall of 2017 “hundreds of farmers suffered from pesticide poisoning in the district of Yavatmal in the Indian state of Maharashtra,” Business and Human Rights Resource Centre reported. The principal product used was Polo, manufactured and marketed by Syngenta, a company headquartered in Basel, Switzerland. “Documenting pesticides poisoning cases in rural India is extremely challenging. Farmers rarely keep purchase bills or records of medical treatment and medication. It is difficult to prove loss of income due to hospitalization or prolonged periods of recovery at home, when income is not documented and payslips are an uncommon practice for daily wage laborers.” Despite the difficulty, three people have now submitted a civil lawsuit in Switzerland, claiming Syngenta did not sufficiently warn of the dangers, while another 51 farmers have submitted a complaint to OECD’s (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Swiss National Contact point, arguing that Syngenta marketed Polo “despite knowing that the majority of farmers in rural India are unaware of the dangers related to pesticide use.” As of 1 January 2020, Switzerland will ban the export of the active ingredient in Polo.  
[https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/blog/pesticide-poisonings-in-yavatmal-those-affected-take-on-agribusiness-giant-syngenta/?utm\\_source=Business+%26+Human+Rights+Resource+Centre+Updates&utm\\_campaign=d07796bf83-](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/blog/pesticide-poisonings-in-yavatmal-those-affected-take-on-agribusiness-giant-syngenta/?utm_source=Business+%26+Human+Rights+Resource+Centre+Updates&utm_campaign=d07796bf83-)

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[https://search.aol.com/click/?ylt=A2KLfSSetcpfw54AAHZpCWVH;ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzIEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Ny/RV=2/RE=1607149086/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.swissinfo.ch%2feng%2fbusiness%2fswiss-ban-export-of-highly-dangerous-pesticides%2f46099090/RK=0/RS=pJI9N6q92bq7pgoe24jWSqHc1s4-](https://www.aol.com/search/click/?ylt=A2KLfSSetcpfw54AAHZpCWVH;ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzIEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Ny/RV=2/RE=1607149086/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.swissinfo.ch%2feng%2fbusiness%2fswiss-ban-export-of-highly-dangerous-pesticides%2f46099090/RK=0/RS=pJI9N6q92bq7pgoe24jWSqHc1s4-182072537&mc_cid=d07796bf83&mc_eid=f1f6556540)

“Kabwe, Zambia, has a long history of lead and zinc mining, centered around the now-closed Broken Hill Mine.” A team of scientists from Hokkaido University and the University of Zambia tested “504 individuals across 40 study areas representative of the Kabwe region” and found that inhabitants “have very high blood levels of the toxic heavy metals lead and cadmium and also show clinical symptoms of lead and cadmium toxicity.” The study is “the first report on the clinical outcomes of individuals affected by multiple metal exposure in Africa.” <https://phys.org/news/2020-11-effects-pollution-kabwe.html>

Business and Human Rights Resource Centre released its 2020 Corporate Human Rights Benchmark, covering 230 companies across five sectors: agricultural products, apparel, extractives, ICT manufacturing and automotive manufacturing. “Only a minority of companies appear to demonstrate commitment to taking human rights seriously and there remains a disconnect between commitments and processes and actual results. In the automotive sector, the results paint a particularly alarming picture, with an average score of just 12% [compliance], the lowest score ever for a CHRB-benchmarked sector.” Further dismal news: “nearly half of the companies assessed” failed to score any points on the measure of human rights due diligence. [https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/corporate-human-rights-benchmark-releases-2020-benchmark-on-human-rights-disclosures-of-230-companies/?utm\\_source=Business+%26+Human+Rights+Resource+Centre+Updates&utm\\_campaign=bbb5895901-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_11\\_16\\_01\\_58&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c0049647eb-bbb5895901-182072537&mc\\_cid=bbb5895901&mc\\_eid=f1f6556540](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/corporate-human-rights-benchmark-releases-2020-benchmark-on-human-rights-disclosures-of-230-companies/?utm_source=Business+%26+Human+Rights+Resource+Centre+Updates&utm_campaign=bbb5895901-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_11_16_01_58&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c0049647eb-bbb5895901-182072537&mc_cid=bbb5895901&mc_eid=f1f6556540)

A High Court judge in Manchester, U.K., threw out a lawsuit against Anglo-Australian mining company BHP filed by 200,000 Brazilians seeking damages from the collapse of the Fundao dam in 2015. The failure of the dam, which was jointly owned by BHP and the Brazilian company Vale, was “Brazil’s worst environmental disaster,” killing 19 people and sending “a torrent of mining waste into communities, the Doce river, and the Atlantic Ocean, 650 kilometres (400 miles) away,” wrote *Reuters*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2015-11, 2017-04. <https://www.reuters.com/article/britain-bhp-court-dam/update-3-english-judge-blocks-66-bl-brazil-lawsuit-against-bhp-over-burst-dam-idUSL1N2HV15N>

The *Associated Press* investigated the treatment of female palm oil workers in Indonesia and Malaysia using “U.S. Customs records, product ingredient lists and the latest published data from producers, traders and buyers to link the laborers’ palm oil and its derivatives from the mills that process it to the supply chains of many big Western brands—including some that source from plantations where women said they were raped.” Not only do women on plantations face sexual abuse, but they “routinely carry out some of the industry’s most punishing jobs, lugging loads so heavy that the uterus collapse and spraying dangerous pesticide wearing no protective gear.” <https://apnews.com/article/palm-oil-abuse-investigation-cosmetics-2a209d60c42bf0e8fcc6f8ea6daa11c7>

*Motherboard* reported on “dozens of leaked documents from Amazon’s Global Security Operations Center” that “reveal the company’s reliance on Pinkerton [detective agency] operatives to spy on warehouse workers and the extensive monitoring of labor unions, environmental activists, and other social movements.” The publication called the documents “an unprecedented look inside the internal security and surveillance apparatus of a company that has vigorously attempted to tamp down employee dissent.” <https://www.vice.com/en/article/5dp3yn/amazon-leaked-reports-expose-spying-warehouse-workers-labor-union-environmental-groups-social-movements>

Two guards employed by a security firm hired by Carrefour Brasil, a branch of France’s Carrefour SA, beat a Black man to death at one of its supermarkets in the city of Porto Alegre. A witness filmed the incident and posted it on line, setting off riots across Brazil. Carrefour fired the security firm. The supervisor of the two men was arrested; the video showed her standing aside and filming the incident, reported *France 24*. <https://www.france24.com/en/americas/20201125-brazil-police-arrest-supervisor-in-deadly-beating-of-black-man-in-carrefour-supermarket>

Church records. The Vatican released a 449-page report on the sexual abuse of minors by ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, *AP* reported. The report revealed “the previously unknown contents of six

anonymous letters accusing him of pedophilia that were sent to U.S. Church leaders in the early 1990s and . . . forwarded to the Holy See” in 1999. Traditionally the Vatican insisted “on receiving signed complaints before initiating any investigation,” and, even more disturbing, “the U.S. Bishops conference had a policy forbidding the use of anonymous allegations as the basis to start abuse investigation, while requiring the information be passed onto the accused prelate.” Earlier this year the Vatican changed that policy to allow anonymous reports “to justify opening a probe.” <https://apnews.com/article/mccarrick-anonymous-letters-vatican-aaaf35410f25b909893add004cc09e3>

Forced labor. *The Guardian* conducted a three-month investigation into the source of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that the U.K. (and other countries) is purchasing from China. After a series of subcontracts, the order went to Dandong Huayang Textiles and Garments Co Ltd, which in its two locations appears to be using “hundreds of North Korean women [who] have been secretly working in conditions of modern slavery.” The United Nations calls “the export of workers to foreign countries by the North Korean regime as state-sponsored forced labour, defined as a form of modern slavery by the International Labour Organization.” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/nov/20/uk-sourced-ppe-from-factories-secretly-using-north-korean-slave-labour>

Land records. The International Land Coalition and Oxfam, both NGOs, published a study of unequal land ownership patterns. It “measured land inequality using traditional census data, as well as tenure, quality of land and other indicators in 17 countries” and found that concentration of land into fewer hands “increased in nearly all regions worldwide since 1980,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The largest 1% of farms operate more than 70% of the world’s farmland, and the poorest half of rural populations control only 3% of the value of farmland. Latin America is the most unequal region according to the data, which excluded data on corporate ownership. The trend threatens “the livelihoods of 2.5 billion people who directly rely on farming and widening disparities in gender, health and climate-change impacts.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201124070431-m9sbr/>

Privacy. In late October the director of the Digital Forensics Initiative at U.S. Columbia University’s Tow Center for Digital Journalism released “the result of his analysis of 493 Covid-related iOS apps across dozens of countries,” *WIRED* reported. Of those, 359 apps handle “contract tracing, exposure notification, screening, reporting workplace monitoring, and Covid information from public health authorities around the globe,” and only 47 of them “use Google and Apple’s more privacy-friendly exposure-notification system, which restricts apps to only Bluetooth data collection.” He found that “more than six out of seven Covid-focused iOS apps worldwide are free to request whatever privacy permissions they want, with 59% asking for a user’s location when in use and 43% tracking location at all times.” It is not clear where that additional data is going. [https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-ios-apps-privacy/?bxiid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT\\_WIR\\_NEWSLETTER\\_0\\_DAILY\\_ZZ&utm\\_brand=wired&utm\\_campaign=aud-dev&utm\\_content=B&utm\\_mailing=WIR\\_Daily\\_111320&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_term=list2\\_p1](https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-ios-apps-privacy/?bxiid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=B&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_111320&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=list2_p1)

Refugees. Reporting in the *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, a research team said it surveyed 1085 refugees resettled in Australia, “of which 23.3% were separated from all of their immediate family,” to look at mental health outcomes of the separated persons. The “majority of participants completed the survey online.” The researchers reported, in a very nuanced conclusion, “that family separation powerfully influences mental health outcomes” negatively and suggests “that efforts to promote family reunification should be an important component of support provided to refugees at all stages of their migration journey.” [Liddell et al 2020 RAS FamSep ANZJP.pdf](https://www.rasjournal.com.au/2020/11/11/liddell-et-al-2020-ras-famsep-anzjp.pdf)

Technology. GitHub, a software development platform, announced it will “reinstate a popular free software tool for downloading videos,” which “means that human rights groups will be able to continue to use the software without interruption to preserve documentation of human rights abuses, Human Rights Watch, Mnemonic, and WITNESS said.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/25/us-archivists-victory-over-overbroad-copyright-claim#>

Terrorism. “Global deaths from terrorism have fallen for a fifth consecutive year, according to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, but far-right attacks have increased by 250% globally” since 2014, *EurActiv* reported. The annual Index is produced by the Australian Institute of Economics and Peace using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) “and other sources.” GTD, located at the U.S. University of

Maryland, contains “systematically and comprehensively coded data for 170,000 terrorist incidents” in 163 countries from 1970 to 2019. <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/>

World War II. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) collaborated to digitize the full sound recordings (775 hours of hearings) and 37 reels of film used as evidence during the International Military Tribunal, commonly known as the Nuremberg trials. ICJ holds the originals; the digitized copies are online at the Holocaust Museum site. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/for-75th-anniversary-of-nuremberg-trials-united-states-holocaust-memorial-museum-makes-available-full-sound-recordings-of-trials-and-film-used-as-evidence-in-war-crimes-proceedings-301178173.html>

“Russian law enforcement agencies have declassified archival fonds in 22 regions across the country for investigating crimes that fascist invaders committed in the years of the Great Patriotic War, Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov said,” *UrduPoint News/Sputnik* reported. He said his office “has initiated civil legal proceedings to establish juridical facts and recognize ‘these atrocities as war crimes against humanity, and genocide of the Soviet people’.” In late October the Soletsk district court “ruled that the mass killings of Soviet citizens in the village of Zhestyanaya Gorka in the northwestern region of Novgorod during World War II were an act of genocide.” <https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/russia-declassified-archives-in-22-regions-to-1091336.html>; <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-court-nazi-genocide-zhestyanaya-gorka/30915672.html>

The Blavatnik Archive in New York City announced that the first materials from its Veteran Testimonies & Ephemera Collection “are fully digitized, catalogued, and accessible online.” The Archives is “the largest collection in the world on the experience of Jews in the ranks of the Soviet armed forces during WWII.” <https://networks.h-net.org/node/3276/discussions/6624006/digital-primary-resources-soviet-jewish-veterans-wwii>

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

Algeria/Morocco/United States. Declassified archives of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) show “that Algeria spent, in a single year, more than \$750 million to destabilize Morocco by funding separatist elements to perpetrate acts of sabotage inside the Moroccan Sahara,” reported *Le Petit Journal Marocain*. It said the CIA believed Algeria “hosts, arms and finances” the Polisario separatists. <https://lepetitjournalmarocain.com/2020/11/01/des-archives-declassifiees-de-la-cia-montrent-que-lalgerie-est-implicuee-dans-le-conflit-du-sahara-marocain/>

Armenia/Azerbaijan/Russia/Turkey. *Crisis Watch* reported on the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, co-signed by Russia, regarding the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In a separate memorandum, Russian and Turkish defense ministers agreed to establish a “joint monitoring centre in Azerbaijan.” Russia deployed peacekeeping troops. “Despite [the] deal only citing Russian peacekeepers,” Azerbaijan “called for stationing of Turkish peacekeepers” in the region and the Turkish parliament “overwhelmingly approved [a] bill to deploy troops to Azerbaijan for peacekeeping mission to monitor” the ceasefire. An inconsistency between text and reality, it seems. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-december-alerts-and-november-trends-2020>

Balkan wars. The Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC), an NGO, issued a dossier on Serbian camps for Croats captured during the war in 1991-1992. “Mental and physical abuse and violence and torture” took place in the camps; HLC pointed out that in May 2008, with the Vukovar 1991 Association, it filed a criminal complaint with the Serbian Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor “stating the names, surnames or nicknames of 54 commanders and guards at camps in Serbia.” In 2010 the deputy prosecutor said “pre-trial proceedings were underway, but to date, only one person has been convicted in Serbia for crimes committed at camps on the territory of Serbia.” The report is based on witness statements, documents used as evidence before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and other courts, and some documents acquired through access to information requests. [http://hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Dosije\\_Logori\\_za\\_Hrvate\\_u\\_Srbiji-eng.pdf](http://hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Dosije_Logori_za_Hrvate_u_Srbiji-eng.pdf)

“The Serbian Interior Ministry again refused to provide information about an international arrest warrant for Rajko Kozlina, who was convicted of war crimes in Kosovo and remains at large, arguing there is no public interest,” *BIRN* reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2020-10. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/11/12/serbian-ministry-again-defends-privacy-of-wanted-war->

[criminal/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=c32558d666-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-c32558d666-319725265](https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/newsletter?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=c32558d666-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-c32558d666-319725265)

Central and Southeast Europe. The SHARE Foundation and *BIRN* jointly monitored digital rights issues in the region and found that from 31 January to 30 September there was “an increase in incidents of censorship, fines and arrests of citizens and journalists, leaks of personal data, privacy violations and the denying of free access to information”--in all, 221 violations of digital rights. During the pandemic, “sensitive health data of citizens was often handled with incompetence, if not ill intentions, while surveillance technologies were rolled out without proper oversight.” <https://bird.tools/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pandemic-for-Digital-Rights-2020-2.pdf>

France/Spain. After a two-year debate with the French Data Protection Authority (CNIL), the Aude Departmental Archives is able to provide online access to the personal data of the Spanish Republicans interned in the camps of Bram, Montolieu and Couiza-Montazels after the end of the Spanish civil war in 1939. The first release is “lists of internees, more than 27,000 individual sheets and some private archives,” with the release of “about 7500 individual files concerning internees of the camp of Bram to follow.” The project was developed with the Pyrénées-Orientales Departmental Archives, which in September launched a database providing access to the individual data of the internees in Rivesaltes and St Cyprien, the so-called “beach camps.” Thanks to Christine Martinez for the information. <https://archivesdepartementales.aude.fr/programme-memoire-de-la-retirada-et-de-lexil-des-republicains-espagnols-dans-laude>; [https://archives-camps.cg66.fr/basescamps/PAGE\\_ACCUEIL/cEAAAAAAAAAAEAA?WD\\_ACTION =REFRESH](https://archives-camps.cg66.fr/basescamps/PAGE_ACCUEIL/cEAAAAAAAAAAEAA?WD_ACTION =REFRESH)

Germany/Syria. At the trial in Germany against two former Syrian secret service officers “confidential documents issued by the Syrian regime” were introduced into evidence by an expert witness from the Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA), which obtained them, *Justice Info* reported. CIJA is an NGO “that collects documents in Syria and takes them out of the country to keep them safe for future criminal investigations. Its work is funded by countries whose police services wish to use the collected documents: these are currently Germany, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.” It says it has 800,000 pages of Syrian government documents as well as 469,000 videos or other digital files. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/tribunaux/tribunaux-nationaux/46096-proces-syrien-alle-magne-ordres-venus-en-haut.html>

At the same trial, the “Caesar files,” photos of dead prisoners in Syria taken by a photographer of the Syrian intelligence service and smuggled out of the country, were introduced as evidence, *Justice Info* reported. The photos were authenticated by a forensic expert who testified at the trial, concluding that the dead bodies showed systematic abuses. This is the first time the Caesar photos have been introduced in court. For background on Caesar, see *HRWG News* 2014-01. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/tribunaux/tribunaux-nationaux/45961-proces-torture-syrie-dossiers-caesar-premiere-devant-cour.html>

Mideast wars. The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry Report, commonly known as the Brereton Report after inquiry leader Paul Brereton, laid out war crimes committed by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016. Released in redacted form on 19 November, it provided “credible evidence of 39 alleged murders” carried out by ADF personnel in Afghanistan, the *Guardian* reported. With the release of the Brereton report, Australia’s Prime Minister appointed a special investigator to “assess and examine the findings,” and the Australian National Archives issued “a Commonwealth-wide records disposal freeze” on any records “that may be required by the special investigator and for any consequent government action.” <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/19/the-alleged-afghanistan-war-crimes-that-shocked-australia> ; <https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/disposing-information/disposal-freezes-and-retention-notices/records-related-afghanistan-inquiry-and-office-special-investigator-address-matters-raised-inquiry>

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued a report on violations against children in Syria during the past nine years of war. Reporting nearly 30,000 children killed “including 179 due to torture in addition to 4,261 forcibly disappeared,” SNHR based the findings on its daily “ongoing monitoring and verification of incidents and news and the collection of evidence and data, as well as analysis of videos and photos posted online.” SNHR also released a report on violations against females, drawing on its monitoring and documentation as well as interviews. It says “at least 28,405 females have been killed in Syria since March 2011, 91 of them by torture, with 8,764 more forcibly disappeared.” These two reports

make grim reading but compel appreciation for the work of documentation.  
<https://sn4hr.org/blog/2020/11/20/55655/>; <https://sn4hr.org/blog/2020/11/25/55660/>

Poland/United States. “Customs officials at Warsaw airport have discovered and seized valuable historical documents and recordings from 1967-68, of Poland’s communist-era security, in two packages destined for the U.S.,” *AP* reported. The deputy prosecutor general said “some 11 sets of written files and over 100 recordings made by the then-dreaded Interior Ministry and regional militia authorities” were confiscated and passed to the Institute of National Remembrance. <https://www.startribune.com/poland-seizes-communist-era-security-files-headed-for-us/572922401/?refresh=true>

Russia/United States. “Russian government-backed social media accounts nurtured the QAnon conspiracy theory in its infancy, earlier than previously reported, according to interviews with current and former Twitter executives and archives of tweets from suspended accounts,” *Reuters* reported. (QAnon is a set of far-right conspiracy theories that began with allegations that a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles is running a global child sex-trafficking ring and plotting against U.S. president Donald Trump, but has now expanded into a variety of conspiracy beliefs.) Twitter’s archives “contain more than 4,000 accounts that Twitter suspended for spreading Russian government disinformation in 2018 and 2019 but preserved for researchers.” [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-qanon-cyber-idUSKBN271181?mc\\_cid=68b3659a5a&mc\\_eid=74dee4aebb](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-qanon-cyber-idUSKBN271181?mc_cid=68b3659a5a&mc_eid=74dee4aebb)

Saudi Arabia/Turkey. Twenty Saudi officials are being tried in absentia in Turkey for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, *BBC* reported. The Turkish intelligence service “bugged the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, where the murder took place, so Turkey possesses the vital audio tape of the journalist’s last minutes.” The trial has been adjourned until March. The *BBC* article contains a link to a late September article, “The secret tapes of Jamal Khashoggi’s murder.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-10, *SAHR News* 2019-02. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55060088>

Sri Lanka/United Kingdom. A journalist is taking the U.K. Foreign Office to the government’s information tribunal for its refusal to release “files relating to its diplomatic support for British mercenaries in Sri Lanka in the 1980s, despite the Metropolitan police launching an unprecedented inquiry into potential war crimes by those individuals,” the *Guardian* reported. The police “launched a scoping exercise in March into allegations of war crimes committed by the firm,” which has the improbable name Keenie Meenie Services, and that initial review “has now been elevated into a fully-fledged inquiry—the first of its kind.” [https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/15/fco-resists-release-of-files-on-support-for-uk-mercenaries-in-sri-lanka?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_E-mail](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/15/fco-resists-release-of-files-on-support-for-uk-mercenaries-in-sri-lanka?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_E-mail)

## **National news.**

Bangladesh. The International Crimes Tribunal was established in 2009 to investigate and prosecute suspects for serious crimes committed in 1971 by the Pakistan Army and their local collaborators during Bangladesh’s war for independence. It began proceedings on 25 March 2010; it has indicted 125, verdicts have been delivered against 95, including 69 who have been sentenced to death and 26 to imprisonment for life, *South Asia Intelligence Review* explained. So far, six of the 69 with death sentences have been hanged. A Parliamentary sub-committee was formed in August 2020 to “prepare lists of those who collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces” during the 1971 war, and the government announced that it was digitizing “38 services of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs,” apparently forms that can be completed electronically. Persons who participated on the side of independence during the war will be able to use the digital platform to “be included in the *Gazette*, receive the freedom fighters’ honorarium, revise information on freedom fighter certificates, and apply for any services related to payment, service progress, submission of required documents and other related activities.” <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-19-No-20#assessment1>

For the first time, Bangladesh has asked Interpol to help locate six “suspected human traffickers.” Other Bangladeshis are on Interpol’s “Red Notice” list, they are not traffickers. The Special Superintendent of Police told *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, “These are traffickers who trick people from Bangladesh by taking money from them with promises of jobs abroad. They then keep them hostage in Libya and torture them for more money.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201110163349->



Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a report laying out the “long-term systemic barriers to legal recourse, protection, and social services” for women and girls. The report drew on 50 interviews in six of the eight divisions of Bangladesh and “reviewed case files and interviewed women’s rights activists, lawyers and academics working on acid [attacks] violence, violence against women and girls, and legal reform in Bangladesh.” HRW cited a 2015 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics survey which found “over 70% of married women and girls have faced some form of intimate partner abuse” and “about half said their partners physically assaulted them.” A local NGO said its collected media reports showed 235 women were reported murdered “by their husband or his family in just the first nine months of 2020.” The police “often refuse to file a report or simply leave a case” of reported violence against a woman “open for years;” the country has a “backlog of some 3.7 million legal cases.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/29/bangladesh-pivotal-moment-stop-violence-against-women#>

Belarus. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe released its rapporteur’s report on “alleged human rights violations related to the presidential elections of 9 August 2020.” Although he was not able to visit Belarus, the rapporteur collected evidence, conducted interviews online, and reviewed “more than 700 submissions with pertinent information . . . from Belarusian citizens and organizations.” He concluded that “the allegations that the presidential elections were not transparent, free or fair were found confirmed” and “major human rights abuses . . . were found to be massive and systematic and proven beyond doubt.” The records of the inquiry, particularly the many submissions, need careful preservation. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/469539>

Bolivia. During demonstrations in November 2019 after President Evo Morales was forced from office, 27 protestors were killed in the city of Sacaba and the Senkata area of El Alto city. This November five experts from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights arrived to begin an investigation into the Sacaba and Senkata killings, *teleSUR* reported. The team will have access to “all the files of the Bolivian Police, Armed Forces, and the Interior Ministry to identify the intellectual and material authors of the violent events.” [https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Bolivia-IACHR-to-Investigate-Crimes-in-Senkata-and-Sacaba-20201116-0005.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=9](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Bolivia-IACHR-to-Investigate-Crimes-in-Senkata-and-Sacaba-20201116-0005.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=9)

Canada. Four historians and archivists published an essay in *The Canadian Press*, deploring the lack of access to the full records about the 1970 October Crisis, when Quebec’s independence movement, the Front de liberation du Quebec, kidnapped two government officials, killing one of them, capping a chain of events that had begun in 1963. Following the kidnappings, the Canadian government used the War Powers Act and deployed troops to Quebec, arresting some hundreds of people. “History requires evidence, but most federal government documents on the October Crisis remain locked up in closed and scattered archives.” <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-october-surprise-lack-of-access-to-historic-documents-leaves/>

Colombia. “A new report by international forensic experts commissioned by Human Rights Watch points to the intentional killing of detainees during a prison riot in March 2020” at La Modelo jail in Bogota. The experts “analyzed the 24 post-mortem examination (autopsy) reports issued by Colombia’s National Institute for Legal Medicine and Forensic Science” and the reports “do not record any signs of gunshot injuries carried out with the intention of solely injuring individuals instead of killing them.” As of mid-November, no charges had been brought against anyone for the deaths and injuries. An official of the Inspector General’s Office said that “one challenge of the investigation . . . is that on the day of the riots, guards did not keep a record of which weapon each officer was using.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/24/colombia-new-evidence-prisoners-were-intentionally-shot>

In a letter to former President Juan Manuel Santos, former FARC guerrilla group commander Rodrigo Londono, also known as Timochenko, said the FARC was responsible for two assassination attempts on former Vice-president German Vargas Lleras, *El Tiempo* reported. <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/timochenko-admitio-que-farc-ejecutaron-atentados-contra-german-vargas-lleras-546750>

Ecuador. In October 2019 demonstrations broke out to protest the government’s decision to cut fuel subsidies. The Ombudsman’s office has a Commission for Truth and Justice investigating “human rights violations committed against the demonstrators,” and its draft report says that public forces “gravely

violated the rights to life, physical and psychological integrity, personal liberty, and the right to free expression, among other rights,” *teleSUR* reported. The Commission “received 519 testimonies, of which 249 revealed human rights violations.” For background, see *SAHR* 2019-11. [https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Truth-Commission-Reports-Human-Rights-Violations-in-Ecuador-20201119-0006.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=9](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Truth-Commission-Reports-Human-Rights-Violations-in-Ecuador-20201119-0006.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=9)

El Salvador. In June the San Francisco Gotera court investigating the El Mozote massacre in 1981 ordered searches for relevant archives at military headquarters and other locations. “But on six different occasions between September and October,” *Reuters* wrote, “soldiers denied Judge Jorge Guzman and a group of experts entry to various facilities.” Now the court “has asked the prosecutor’s office to investigate whether President Nayib Bukele and his defense minister blocked” the inspections and “to investigate the possible theft, destruction, concealment or displacement” of the archives. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-el-salvador-massacre-idUSKBN27Q0AY>

The prosecutor leading the unit against corruption and impunity is investigating contracts for medical supplies for use during the COVID-19 crisis signed with foreign companies with no experience in the medical supplies field or with links to family members or officials of the Ministry of Health, *El Faro* reported. He had a court order that allowed the prosecution team “to stay for more than 72 hours” in the Ministry of Health “to seize documentation.” However, on arrival, police blocked the entrance to the Ministry and, ultimately, arrested the prosecutor briefly and forced him to register with them. [https://elfaro.net/es/202011/el\\_salvador/24990/El-d%C3%ADa-en-que-la-Polic%C3%ADa-obstaculiz%C3%B3-la-investigaci%C3%B3n-del-Fiscal-contra-el-gobierno-Bukele.htm?utm\\_source=DB+El+Faro+English&utm\\_campaign=ff3e073858-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_04\\_22\\_01\\_08\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3ec9190c89-ff3e073858-363082696](https://elfaro.net/es/202011/el_salvador/24990/El-d%C3%ADa-en-que-la-Polic%C3%ADa-obstaculiz%C3%B3-la-investigaci%C3%B3n-del-Fiscal-contra-el-gobierno-Bukele.htm?utm_source=DB+El+Faro+English&utm_campaign=ff3e073858-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_22_01_08_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ec9190c89-ff3e073858-363082696)

Ethiopia. Amnesty International said its “Crime Evidence Lab has examined and digitally verified gruesome photographs and videos of bodies strewn across” Mai-Kadra town “or being carried away on stretchers. It confirmed the images were recent and, using satellite imagery, geolocated them to Mai-Kadra in western Tigray state.” Amnesty believes “scores, and likely hundreds, of people were stabbed or hacked to death in Mai-Kadra . . . on the night of 9 November.” Amnesty spoke to witnesses; “a man who is helping clear the bodies from the streets told Amnesty International that he had looked at the state-issued identification cards of some victims, and most were from Amhara,” in other words, non-Tigrayan. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/ethiopia-investigation-reveals-evidence-that-scores-of-civilians-were-killed-in-massacre-in-tigray-state/>

France. In Paris “prosecutors are investigating the violent arrest of Michel Zecler, who said he was also racially abused by the officers, after CCTV footage of the incident was released,” *Reuters* reported. The beating of the 41-year-old music producer was also captured on a mobile phone, and both videos “circulated widely online.” Demonstrations protesting police brutality were held across France; preliminary charges of assault were filed against the four officers; a draft bill that would have restricted some media coverage of police officers at work was withdrawn. <https://news.trust.org/item/20201126201546-aqd11/>

Germany. A team of criminologists from the University of Bochum issued a report on police brutality and racism. The researchers interviewed more than 3,000 people, *DW* reported, and the man who led the study said its “central conclusion . . . is that people from ethnic minorities are structurally disadvantaged by the police.” Another member of the team pointed out that the official statistics show “that violence by police officers is hardly ever pursued by state prosecutors,” and as a consequence “victims of police brutality lose faith in the rule of law.” [https://www.dw.com/en/study-confirms-racism-and-police-brutality-in-germany/a-55567212?maca=en-newsletter\\_en\\_bulletin-2097-xml-newsletter&r=6716267629607700&lid=1672900&pmln=60983](https://www.dw.com/en/study-confirms-racism-and-police-brutality-in-germany/a-55567212?maca=en-newsletter_en_bulletin-2097-xml-newsletter&r=6716267629607700&lid=1672900&pmln=60983)

Guatemala. *El Faro* published a review of land conflicts in Guatemala, noting that according to the Secretariat of Agrarian Affairs there are 1400 “recognized active land conflicts in the country.” Rural Indigenous families are evicted from their traditional lands to accommodate hydro-electric projects, mines, and palm oil plantations, so Indigenous communities have begun work to obtain land titles. An Indigenous man said, “We as Indigenous Q’eqchi do not need a document to say that we own these lands, but sadly the State said it’s the law . . . We are in this process now so that the State registers our lands in our names.” [https://elfaro.net/en/202011/internacionales/24984/Indigenous-Guatemalans-Face-Epidemic-of-Evictions.htm?utm\\_source=DB+El+Faro+English&utm\\_campaign=ff3e073858-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_04\\_22\\_01\\_08\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3ec9190c89-ff3e073858-363082696](https://elfaro.net/en/202011/internacionales/24984/Indigenous-Guatemalans-Face-Epidemic-of-Evictions.htm?utm_source=DB+El+Faro+English&utm_campaign=ff3e073858-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_22_01_08_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ec9190c89-ff3e073858-363082696)

Guinea. The legislature adopted a bill on “the right of access to public information,” *Kalenews* reported. <https://kalenews.org/adoption-de-la-loi-droit-dacces-a-linformation-publique-les-citoyens-seront-desormais-mieux-informes-sur-lefficacite-et-l/>

India. Equality Now, an NGO, released a report on “the specific barriers to accessing justice faced by Dalit survivors of sexual violence in Haryana” (Dalits are “at the bottom of caste and class hierarchies in India”). It reported that “data from the National Crime Records Bureau in 2019 indicates that 4 women are raped every day in this state alone”—or 40% of the 10 Dalit women and girls raped every day across the entire country. The researchers studied 40 cases of rape in detail and found that in 80% of cases, “their perpetrators were men from dominant castes.” It is difficult to obtain convictions for rape, with “community and social pressure” playing a role in impeding access to justice; “in 57.5% of the cases survivors were forced into compromises or extra-legal settlements.” [https://www.equalitynow.org/justice\\_denied\\_key\\_findings](https://www.equalitynow.org/justice_denied_key_findings)

Iraq. *Ahram online* urged the government to provide access to “Saddam’s intelligence and security files, which were returned recently to Iraq from the United States.” Acknowledging that opening the files “could pose major problems in terms of national healing,” the writer argued that through new legislation “Iraq should establish ad hoc institutions to deal with the records,” make “at least selected records publicly accessible,” allow research by “competent Iraqi scholars,” and preserve the archives “through the use of appropriate expertise and technology.” <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/394025.aspx>

Ireland. An article in *Irish Times* on the proposed archival deposit of the records of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes suggested legislators to look at the operation of Germany’s Stasi archive as a model. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/stasi-archive-shows-way-for-institutional-abuse-record-keeping-1.4398008>

Kazakhstan. Aigul Otepova, a journalist and blogger who posted on Facebook criticism of the government’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, was ordered by a court to be held in a psychiatric clinic for a month to “check her mental sanity.” She had been under house arrest since mid-September, *The Diplomat* added. What evidence the court used was not reported. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/kazakh-blogger-forced-into-psychiatric-clinic/>

Lebanon. In August an explosion at Beirut’s port devastated the city, killing more than 200 people and leaving thousands homeless. Forensic Architecture, an NGO, used open source videos, photographs and documents “to provide a timeline and a precise 3D model to help investigate the events.” It is an astonishing reconstruction that should be a key resource for investigators seeking to determine the cause and responsibilities for the blast. <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/beirut-port-explosion>

Mexico. “Exclusively obtained data from public records requests and interviews with 10 current and former labor ministry officials revealed the system meant to keep workplaces safe and fair has been beset by corruption, bogus inspections, and lack of data,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. “More than 900 workplace deaths were recorded annually from 2016 to 2019” by Mexico’s social security and worker healthcare body, but the labor ministry “received fewer than 200 reports of such deaths each year in that period” (“academics and inspectors” said there is poor data-sharing between the two organizations). “Companies are widely ignoring a legal health and safety obligation to inform the labor ministry of deaths,” and “public records data . . . revealed that about one-third of all workplace inspections recorded between late 2012 and 2018 . . . never actually took place.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201126100409-yr5z6/>

Nigeria. *CNN* laid out the findings of its investigation into the 20-21 October killings of demonstrators protesting police brutality at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos. “Evidence of bullet casings from the scene match those used by the Nigerian army when shooting live rounds, according to current and former Nigerian military officials. Verified video footage—using timestamps and data from the video files—shows soldiers who appear to be shooting in the direction of protesters. And accounts from eyewitnesses establish that after the army withdrew, a second round of shooting happened later in the evening.” According to *BBC*, the government has established a judicial panel that “will sit for six months to investigate claims of police brutality with the aim to bring erring officers to justice and recommend compensations for victims;” it has received over 110 petitions. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/18/africa/lagos-nigeria-lekki-toll-gate-feature-intl/index.html>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55099016>

North Macedonia. *BIRN* published a lengthy discussion of the lack of action to preserve digital media: “The country does not have a single digital archive of printed media outlets, and in the online media sphere, articles appear and disappear almost overnight, with no responsibility.” *BIRN* also says “there is no danger of losing the basic records of when significant official decisions were made, as they are registered in the *Official Gazette*,” an assertion that does not acknowledge the difficulties of preserving the government’s electronic records that lay behind the official decisions. Thanks to Ruben Zeeman for the citation. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/11/30/north-macedonias-digital-paradox-more-information-less-memory/>

Pakistan. A court in Karachi ordered police to free a 13-year-old Christian girl who disappeared on 13 October and two days later “the police put a marriage certificate” in her father’s hand, showing she had been married to a 44-year-old Muslim man, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. At first Sindh’s High Court “accepted statements from the girl that she was 18;” the lawyer for the parents said “he hoped the girl’s school and government records would be enough evidence to prove her age” as a minor. UNICEF data show Pakistan with “the sixth-highest number of child brides in the world at nearly two million,” and an NGO said 21% of girls in Pakistan are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The case also raises the growing problem in Pakistan of “forced conversion and marriage of girls and women from minority religions, including Hindus and Christians.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201103170615-bwo4i/>

The Commission for Inquiry of Enforced Disappearances announced that as of the end of October it had received 6831 cases; it has “disposed of” 4748, leaving 2083 persons to be located, *Daily Times* reported. <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-19-No-20#assessment1>

Serbia. Atina, a Serbian NGO that runs women’s shelters, reported that from interviews with 178 women and girls whom it has helped over the last five years, 42% “of female victims of human trafficking reported also being the target of online abuse, ranging from cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, hacking, catfishing, revenge porn and ‘doxing,’ the online publishing of private information to publicly expose and shame the victim,” *BIRN* reported. The report “highlights the threat from cyber-trafficking in the recruitment of victims for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as the live streaming of forced sexual exploitation.” [https://balkaninsight.com/2020/11/11/study-underscores-link-between-human-trafficking-and-online-abuse/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=ab0fa8d21b-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-ab0fa8d21b-319725265](https://balkaninsight.com/2020/11/11/study-underscores-link-between-human-trafficking-and-online-abuse/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=ab0fa8d21b-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-ab0fa8d21b-319725265)

Spain. The Association of Spanish Archivists in Public Functions (AEFP) proposed amendments to the government’s draft “Democratic Memory” law. AEFP is particularly worried about a proposal to create a Foundation that would manage the files of constitutional presidents, totally outside the Spanish system of archives (Sistema Espanol de Archivos), and that the bill does not facilitate the public’s ability to consult archives that may provide evidence of human rights violations. <https://archiverosaefp.org/consideraciones-previas-y-propuesta-de-reformulacion-de-varios-articulos-del-anteproyecto-de-ley-de-memoria-democratica-en-su-tramite-de-audiencia-e-informacion-publica/>

Syria. Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) explained its focus on the “fates of those who went missing in Northeast Syria due to ISIS crimes as well as anti-ISIS Coalition airstrikes.” In cooperation with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, SJAC is training the First Responders’ Team on the best practice of opening graves and processing the resulting data. SJAC is also collecting documentation on the missing through interviews; all the data is housed in the missing persons section of the SJAC database. [https://syriaaccountability.org/missing-persons/?utm\\_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm\\_campaign=76eb80fcd1-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_01\\_10\\_02\\_56\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0a7405c641-76eb80fcd1-96428969](https://syriaaccountability.org/missing-persons/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=76eb80fcd1-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-76eb80fcd1-96428969)

The Day After, an NGO, issued a report on the types of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) committed against detainees in Syrian prisons. “Pervasive social stigma surrounding SGBV is one of the most significant reasons why there is little documentation of such cases.” To gather data, the researchers “conducted 100 structured interviews with male and female former detainees currently residing in various Turkish and European cities.” It notes that the small sample size means it is not “an exhaustive source of knowledge on SGBV” but the results do “provide a window into the current situation.” <https://tda-sy.org/2020/11/05/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-shared-experiences-among-syrian-detainees/>

Tanzania. In 2018 Zanzibar’s land commission researchers used small drones to capture “high resolution imagery of 500,000 buildings on the archipelago,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Now Spatial Collective, a consulting firm, has used that data to produce “official documentation for about 700 land parcels in a southern town called Shakani.” The firm used drone imagery to locate a home on a map, and a team of “data collectors armed with tablets” took the “landowner’s details, including their name and identification number, and photographs the person or any other necessary documents using the tablet’s camera.” The collectors gathered enough information to issue each owner “a deed to their land in 20 minutes.” The information is stored in a database accessible by the land commission, which “is working to finalize the digitized title deeds after a consultation period and hopes to roll the process out through the whole of the island.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201124111949-p0o3k/>

Thailand. As of June 2020, the government “registered” 480,000 people as stateless, “with about 77,000 estimated to be elderly indigenous people,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Existing laws “largely ignore indigenous people . . . especially elders who often lack documents such as birth certificates and house deeds.” An academic who studied the problem said “systemic discrimination” and “a failure to register minority ethnic groups in census surveys until the 1960s are partly responsible for widespread statelessness in Thailand’s north,” adding, “The state’s own bureaucratic practice and insistence on legal documents ignores the lived experience of stateless persons.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20201102000714-eqo8l/>

Turkey. “Turkish police have decoded the far-left DHKP-C terrorist group’s digital archive, which was encrypted using three different programs, a security source said,” reported *Anadolu Agency*. The police seized the digital material on 14 October; “a memory card that was encrypted using three different programs was among the materials seized.” <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-decodes-far-left-terror-group-s-digital-archive/2056208>

United Kingdom. A collaboration between two researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, the NGO Joint Enterprise: Not Guilty by Association, and women subjected to joint enterprise punishments produced a report, “The criminalization of women convicted under joint enterprise laws.” (Joint enterprise or JE is a set of legal principles that allow multiple individuals to be convicted for one offence “without taking account of the differing roles played.”) The group reported that “at least 109 women (and likely more)” were convicted in England and Wales under JE since 2004, all with lengthy sentences—an average of 15 years—although 90% of the women convicted “engaged in no violence in relation to the events, never used a deadly weapon,” and almost half were “not present at the scene.” The researchers used interviews with the women and the NGO’s documentation, but were able to find legal documents “from trial, sentencing or appeal” for only 16 of the 109 cases. For background on U.K. courts not keeping transcripts or audio records of most criminal cases see *HRWG News* 2016-01. <https://jointenterprise.co/docs/StoriesofInjustice161120.pdf>

United States. Among the records released through an open-records request to the Kentucky State Police was a 33-page slide show used to train police cadets that included three quotes from Adolf Hitler and “encouraged trainees to pursue violence at all costs,” reported the *Washington Post*. An official said that the training materials haven’t been used since 2013 but “it is unacceptable that this material was ever included in the training of law enforcement.” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/11/02/kentucky-state-police-hitler-slideshow/>

Forensic Architecture and Bellingcat, both NGOs, “identified, verified, and archived over 1,000 incidents of police violence against demonstrators across the United States since protests over the death of George Floyd began in May.” They released the data and “visualized it in interactive map form.” <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-9KKfaEDhgeJ8dz8HjsFNBniDCQj-5ADWbuMkw2hNBU/edit#gid=1686998620>

*The Intercept* obtained documents from the security firm TigerSwan that “make clear just how far security companies hired by energy industry firms . . . will go to protect their clients’ business interests against a growing climate movement and how much the energy companies are willing to spend for these aggressive defenses.” The documents “were turned over as discovery material to the North Dakota Private Investigation and Security Board, which had filed an “administrative complaint” against TigerSwan and its former head “for operating without a license in the state.” They include “WhatsApp chats, invoices, operational plans, and organizational charts,” as the company collected “intelligence on the growing anti-

pipeline movement.” [https://theintercept.com/2020/11/15/standing-rock-tigerswan-infiltrator-documents/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter](https://theintercept.com/2020/11/15/standing-rock-tigerswan-infiltrator-documents/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter)

In 2007 Leonard C. Scott, a “former human resource and labor relations executive who also served as a consultant specializing in fighting unions and preventing them from forming,” donated his personal papers to Cornell University. The anti-union files, dating 1966-2013, have been digitized and released. One of the archivists said, “People who are working on union avoidance, or union busting, typically do not let their materials out . . . so it’s very rare to find materials like these available.” <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/10/digitized-files-give-rare-glimpse-anti-union-advocacy>

The Cherokee Nation announced that, having acknowledged that the descendants of former Cherokee slaves are full Cherokee citizens, it will launch a Cherokee Freedmen Art and History Project in January 2021. The project will “include comprehensive research for historical materials, references, documents and images, as well as an assessment of current interpretations at all tribal sites.” <https://anadisgoi.com/index.php/government-stories/455-cherokee-nation-announces-new-plan-to-explore-the-history-of-cherokee-freedmen>

The Trevor Project, an NGO, conducted an online survey between December 2019 and March 2020 of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) youth in the U.S. between ages 13 and 24 to study American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) youth suicide risk. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, AI/AN LGBTQ youth “were 2.5 times more likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year (33%), compared to non-AI/AN LGBTQ youth (14%)” and experienced greater victimization and discrimination. “Family support and LGBTQ-affirming schools reduced suicide risk by more than half among AI/AN LGBTQ youth.” <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2020/11/16/research-brief-american-indian-alaskan-native-youth-suicide-risk/>

Zimbabwe. The Auditor General said inspectors audited 51 mines in 6 provinces and found that “90% . . . had not subjected its workers to examination of pneumoconiosis and had inadequate personal protective clothing” and “not all of them were . . . properly handling explosives, small-scale miners had no licences to store explosives.” *New Zimbabwe* reported that “according to the mining registration cards” as of November 2017 there were 57,998 mines in the country, “though interviews with mines Ministry officials revealed that government had no databases of all mines in the country.” <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/ag-red-flags-mines-exposing-workers-to-occupational-accidents-diseases/>

**Publications.** Julia Crawford, “Restitution of cultural property: Do you have to go to court?” *Justice Info*: <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/reparations/45968-restitution-biens-culturels-faut-il-aller-devant-tribunal.html>

Michael Pisa, Pam Dixon, Benno Ndulu, Center for Global Development, “Governing data for development: Where are we now?”: <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/governing-data-development-trends-challenges-and-opportunities>

Marjoleine Kars, “Reckoning with slavery: What a revolt’s archives tell us about who owns the past,” *The Conversation*: [https://theconversation.com/reckoning-with-slavery-what-a-revolts-archives-tell-us-about-who-owns-the-past-150588?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter%201212020&utm\\_content=Daily%20Newsletter%201212020+CID\\_ea54e171724c437de7b6c17f5770d64f&utm\\_source=campaign\\_monitor\\_us&utm\\_term=Reckoning%20with%20slavery%20What%20a%20revolts%20archives%20tell%20us%20about%20who%20owns%20the%20past](https://theconversation.com/reckoning-with-slavery-what-a-revolts-archives-tell-us-about-who-owns-the-past-150588?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter%201212020&utm_content=Daily%20Newsletter%201212020+CID_ea54e171724c437de7b6c17f5770d64f&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=Reckoning%20with%20slavery%20What%20a%20revolts%20archives%20tell%20us%20about%20who%20owns%20the%20past)

Jill Lepore, “Will Trump burn the evidence?” *The New Yorker*: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/23/will-trump-burn-the-evidence>

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