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Commentary.

Forum shopping? That's not buying food in old Rome. It is, rather, the practice of lawyers choosing the court to hear a case, based on the attorney's belief that a particular court is likely to provide a favorable judgment for the client. Often the "shopping" is within the country, but at other times it involves looking at courts in two or even more nations. For example, the United Kingdom is known to have libel laws that favor the plaintiff, which is why the famous case by Holocaust denier David Irving against U.S. academic Deborah Lipstadt (now the subject of the film "Denial") was brought in the U.K.

Bringing a case in another country does not always mean that the judgment will be enforced at home. In 1995 victims of human rights abuses under the Ferdinand Marcos regime sued Marcos in the District Court in Hawaii, where Marcos was living after he fled Manila in 1986. The court found in favor of the roughly 10,000 plaintiffs and awarded nearly \$2 billion in damages. (The Marcos family is alleged to have stolen up to \$10 billion from the nation during the 21-year rule.) After the Hawaii judgment, five of the victims filed a case in the Philippines, seeking their share of the money. Two decades later, the Philippines Court of Appeals on July 7 said the Hawaii District Court was "without jurisdiction" over the claim and the judgment "did not meet the Philippines' criteria of a valid judgment," *CNN* reported. The court was particularly concerned that the complaint in Hawaii was, first, "erroneously filed as a class suit and second, therein claimants remained unidentified." The court could have obtained the list of complainants in the Hawaii case from the district court records in the U.S. or, logically, from the attorneys that filed the original case, but clearly it chose not to do so. <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/07/18/ca-junks-2-billion-dollar-reparation-for-martial-law-victims.html>

A complex set of cases are those brought against international corporations, often by human rights groups on behalf of victims of environmental and physical damage. Here the lawyers for the plaintiffs can choose to bring the suit where the damage occurred or in the country where the corporation has its offices.

*January's issue of *HRWG News* reported on a lawsuit that began in 1993 when a group of residents of the Ecuadorian rainforest sued Texaco, alleging that the company left behind an environmental and public health disaster from its oil venture in the Amazon between 1972 and 1990. The first suits were filed in the U.S., but were dismissed, so the plaintiffs refiled in Ecuador, where the Ecuadorians won a large financial judgment. Texaco had left Ecuador in 1992, and Texaco became a subsidiary of Chevron in 2001, so the plaintiffs turned to a court in the U.S. where Chevron is headquartered to enforce the payment. The U.S. court refused to force Chevron to pay. The Ecuadorians next turned to a Canadian court which ruled in January 2017 that Chevron Canada is a separate entity from the parent corporation and its Canadian assets cannot be used to pay the judgment against it.

*Also in January, a court in the United Kingdom ruled in a suit against Royal Dutch Shell for its alleged environmental destruction in the Niger Delta. The court held that "Royal Dutch Shell cannot be held responsible for the actions of its Nigeria subsidiary."

*Last month's issue of *HRWG News* had an item about the lawsuit in Canada "brought by several Guatemalan men for injuries they suffered during the violent suppression of a peaceful protest" at Tahoe Resources Inc.'s mine in Guatemala. Tahoe is a Canadian company. Canada's Supreme Court allowed the case to go forward, despite Tahoe's argument that the case should be tried in Guatemala.

Tahoe's argument is often made by international corporations: that the case against them in one country should be heard in another country (a *forum non conveniens* argument, meaning, roughly, to send the case to another jurisdiction that has a stronger link "more convenient" to the case). A judgement for the corporation can mean that the case has to be tried in a less robust legal system or even in one where bribes are routine. And this often results in cases bouncing back and forth with no resolution but draining the money of the plaintiffs. For a particularly egregious example of the use of *forum non conveniens* arguments, see the saga of the lawsuits brought by workers on Dole and Chiquita banana plantations in Central America for health problems linked to the use of the pesticide DBCP manufactured by chemical companies Dow and Shell, as told in the book *Toxic Injustice: A Transnational History of Exposure and Struggle* by Susanna Rankin Bohme.

What does this mean for the archives of courts? Because archivists usually do not describe court records at the case level, relying instead on court-generated indexing that is accessioned with the court records, there is no regular means to link the case in one country to the related case in another. However, the International Standard for Archival Description (General) has free text fields that allow the person doing the description to note that a particular case or group of cases will have related records in another country's archives. These mass cases for human right violations are so important that it is incumbent on archivists to make a special effort to point to them in the body of court case files in archival custody. As we know from cases arising immediately after World War II that have been revived in the last two decades, it is always possible that all the court files everywhere on a violation will ultimately be used to bring justice for victims.

International news.

European Commission. The Commission proposed new rules on the import of cultural goods illicitly exported from their country of origin. This will apply "only to cultural goods which are at least 250 years old at the moment of importation," ruling out most archives except (as the proposal says) "ancient scrolls." The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union for adoption. http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-controls/cultural-goods_en

International Criminal Court (ICC). The trial of Bosco Ntaganda for war crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo continued, with Ntaganda on the witness stand. The *International Justice Monitor* reported that he claimed he only learned of the death of a priest he is accused of killing when "he was reviewing unspecified documents following his arrival at the ICC." The prosecution entered in evidence Ntaganda's log book of communications with his field commanders, his alleged diary, minutes of meetings of the militia, excerpts of an interview with a now deceased commander in Ntaganda's militia and a UN interview with a former child soldier, and a letter from a businessman asking for payment of a bill. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2017/07/in-testimony-at-icc-ntaganda-denies-killing-a-priest/> <https://mail.aol.com/webmail-std/en-us/basic#> <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2017/07/ntaganda-denies-executing-insubordinate-rebel-fighters-in-congo/>

The prosecutor issued "a detailed report" saying that 23 Colombian Army generals and six corporals, including the Armed Forces commander, "must be prosecuted for the execution of more than 1,200 civilians," *Colombia Reports* wrote. "Colombia's prosecution has files on war-related crimes by some 24,400 (former) state officials, including top officials that could be put before the country's impending transitional justice court," but the ICC "made it very clear" that it will monitor the trials in Colombia and "if either normal or transitional justice does not adequately call the suspected state mass murderers to justice, the ICC could indict them for war crimes itself." This is another example of a possible court file in both Colombia and another location relating to the same crime. <https://colombiareports.com/icc-wants-colombias-armed-forces-commander-prosecuted-execution-civilians/>

Fifteen nongovernmental organizations from Mexico submitted a report to the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) detailing crimes in the state of Coahuila and other regions of Mexico that push the situation "past a matter of organized crime and into the field of crimes against humanity." The organizations asked OTP to open a preliminary investigation into the situation. The request is based on 32 cases, two databases, interviews, official statistics from the government, and testimonies by members of the Zetas cartel during judicial hearings in the United States. <http://reliefweb.int/report/mexico/mexico-coahuila-ongoing-crimes-against-humanity-communication-international-criminal>

Interpol. *The Guardian* reported that Interpol circulated a list of 173 Islamic State fighters “it believes could have been trained to mount suicide attacks in Europe.” The list “was drawn up by US intelligence from information captured during the assault on ISIS territories in Syria and Iraq.” https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/21/isis-islamic-state-suicide-brigade-interpol-list?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=236161&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection

NATO. NATO released a brief documentary on the “forest brothers,” groups of partisan units in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that fought for national independence between 1945 and 1953. *The Moscow Times* quoted a Russian foreign ministry spokesman as saying that Western intelligence agencies were behind the partisans: “There is a collection of documents [that prove this]. NATO knows this better than anyone else. There are declassified, albeit edited, CIA materials.” <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russian-spokesperson-slams-nato-film-baltic-resistance-58379>

United Nations. A global treaty banning nuclear weapons was adopted at the United Nations on July 7 by a vote of 122 in favor, 1 against (the Netherlands) and one abstention (Singapore). Japan--“the only country to have suffered atomic attacks in 1945—boycotted the talks as did most NATO countries.” After signature, which will begin on September 20, each State Party “shall submit a report to each meeting of States parties and each review conference on the progress made towards the implementation of its obligations” under the treaty; the International Atomic Energy Agency will be the archives for the reports. https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-07-11/un-adopted-treaty-banning-nuclear-weapons-no-nuclear-armed-nations-are-board;_for_the_treaty <https://www.un.org/disarmament/ptnw/index.html>

The UN Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, promise to reduce inequality among people in each country. The United Kingdom’s Development Finance International and the nongovernmental organization Oxfam have produced an index to the progress governments are making on reducing the gap between rich and poor. The new database has “indicators covering 152 countries, which measures government action on social spending, tax and labour rights.” The database lists the data sources for each indicator. <https://www.inequalityindex.com/>

Although the panel investigating the death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld in a plane crash in 1961 was due to present its report in July, no official news was released. The *New York Times* reported that a senior UN official said that the government archives of the U.S., U.K. and Belgium have more information on the crash than has been released to the inquiry. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/15/world/africa/dag-hammarskjold-united-nations-mohamed-chande-othman.html>

World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. The World Health Organization and UNICEF released a report on safe water, sanitation and hygiene in homes worldwide. It said that 3 of 10 people worldwide “lack access to safe, readily available water at home” and 6 in 10 lack “safely managed sanitation.” The report is based on “4,710 data inputs” with household surveys comprising 42 percent of the database, as well as reports from regional programs of the WHO, the Statistical Office of the European Union, the United Nations Population Division, and others. <http://who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/water-sanitation-hygiene/en/>

World/general news.

Business records. “In one of the largest-ever tobacco industry leaks, internal Philip Morris International documents seen by *Reuters*, combined with reporting in 14 countries, expose a clandestine lobbying operation” that is “a secret campaign to subvert the World Health Organization’s anti-smoking treaty.” The records leaked include emails, PowerPoint presentations, planning papers, policy toolkits, national lobbying plans and market analyses. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pmi-who-fctc-tobacco-exclusive-idUSKBN19Y1DN>

Corruption. A new International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre was launched by police agencies from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States, “with Interpol scheduled to join later this year.” The members “will improve fast-time intelligence sharing, assist countries that have suffered grand corruption and help bring corrupt elites to justice.” It will need good archives management to be effective.

Land title. Global Witness (GW), a nongovernmental organization based in the U.K., issued a report, “Defender of the Earth,” on murders of “people defending their land, forests and rivers against destructive industries.” GW said, “In 2016 we documented 200 killings across 24 countries, compared to 185 across 16 in 2015. Almost 40% of those murdered were indigenous. A lack of prosecutions also makes it hard to identify those responsible, but we found strong evidence that the police and military were behind at least 43 killings, with private actors such as security guards and hitmen linked to 52 deaths.” A methodology section discusses the sources used. https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/environmental-activists/defenders-earth/?utm_source=Supporter+Email+List&utm_campaign=d05d9a273d-Defenders+supporter+email+130717&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2246df3038-d05d9a273d-130032821

Medical records. Using data from Israel’s Bureau for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Ministry of Finance) researchers examined medical information on 152,622 Holocaust survivors, both those who had received compensation for suffering persecution during World War II and those who were denied. Both groups were found to have “a small but consistent increase in cancer development” compared to the general population, *Cancer* reported. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cncr.30783/full>

Using the records of “genetic screens on hundreds of cell lines that represent more than 20 types of cancer,” researchers from the Broad Institute and Dana-Farber found 769 genes “that cancer cells depend on to grow and survive,” *STAT* reported. They then created a catalog of the genetic “vulnerabilities.” <https://www.statnews.com/>

Two doctors proposed in *STAT* that there should be guidelines to clarify when it is okay for patients to video record “clinical encounters” and when it isn’t. They note, “In the rare event litigation arises, an accurate record of good medical care can serve doctors as well as patients.” <https://www.statnews.com/2017/07/10/record-doctors-office-patient-visit/>

A single mother in the Netherlands gave birth to children in 1994 and 1995 by in vitro fertilization. In 2011 one of the children wanted to know who the donor father was, but after asking “organizations that should have been able to get the information” from the clinic the mother used, “The news that came back was worrying: the files were in disarray, records had not been properly kept.” The children and a group of others, all born from services at the same clinic, have turned to DNA testing, the *Guardian* reported. They have also filed a lawsuit to get the DNA of the clinic’s non-deceased director to see if he fathered some of them. The lawyer representing the group said, “The existence of large DNA databases mean it’s getting easier and easier to trace a donor parent—it’s no longer feasible for anyone to say donors have the right to anonymity.” https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/jul/15/the-man-who-may-have-secretly-fathered-200-children?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=235168&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection

Privacy. Companies in Sweden and the United States have implanted a microchip under the skin of employees who agreed to it, reported the *New York Times*. “Once that is done, any task involving RFID technology—swiping into the office building, paying for food in the cafeteria—can be accomplished with a wave of the hand.” Privacy concerns—whether the technology could track employees’ locations without their consent or knowledge—as well as whether there are health risks is worrisome, as is the retention of the data generated by the use of the chips. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/technology/microchips-wisconsin-company-employees.html>

Torture. The nongovernmental organization Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) issued a report, “Nuremberg Betrayed.” In 2010 PHR used “thousands of pages of declassified U.S. government records, reports, and other materials from the CIA, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, and other U.S. agencies” and concluded that the Central Intelligence Agency’s “enhanced interrogation” program on prisoners of war between 2002 and (apparently) 2008 amounted to torture. Now, PHR wrote, “Analysis of new information indicates that the CIA torture program was itself a regime of applied research on detainees and implicitly conceptualized as such by the CIA. This constitutes one of the gravest breaches of medical ethics by U.S. health professionals since the Nuremberg Code was developed to protect individuals from nonconsensual human experimentation following Nazi medical atrocities during World War II.” The lead

author said in an interview, “The documents we looked at show that the CIA collected data derived from torture sessions, clinical interactions, and manipulation of detention conditions. This data was analyzed and used to create conclusions about how to conduct torture in the future.” <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/nuremberg-betrayed-humanex.html> ; <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/blog/the-cias-program-of-human.html>

World War II. “After a two-year search through US archives, researchers from Seoul University uncovered the footage” at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration of a group of “comfort women” in China’s Yunnan province in 1944. The film was made after Chinese and U.S. troops forced the Japanese army out of the area. “The researchers identified the women as Korean by matching their clothes and facial appearance with . . . a set of photos taken by a private in the US Army Signal Corps’ 164th Photographic Unit and rediscovered in 2000.” *China Daily* said the film was particularly important because before it surfaced “the only visual images [of comfort women] had been still photographs and accounts from survivors.” http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-07/12/content_30078629.htm

The National Archives of Australia gave the National Archives of Japan 3300 archival boxes (more than 800 meters) of Japanese trading company records that were seized as enemy property by the Australian Government during World War II. The records, dating from 1899 to 1941, include “ledgers, journals, shipping documents and financial statements, as well as personal records such as photographs.” <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/media/media-releases/2017/10.aspx>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Bosnia/Serbia. The Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), a nongovernmental organization in Belgrade, Serbia, issued a report saying it has identified 30 Bosniak refugees “who crossed the border seeking shelter in Yugoslavia after the July 1995 genocide in Srebrenica, but were handed over to Bosnian Serb forces, who killed at least 15 of them,” *BIRN* reported. An HLC researcher said, “Every man who was caught on Serbian territory was handed over to the Bosnian Serb Army, including those who, according to police records, resorted to self-harm to prevent [themselves] from being returned.” http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-delivered-srebrenica-refugees-to-mladic-report-07-13-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=d7adf1d4d0-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-d7adf1d4d0-319755321

Cyprus/Greece. Between 1986 and 1988 Greece conducted an inquiry into the 1974 coup that overthrew President Makarios of Cyprus. The coup was backed by the military junta then in power in Greece. Now Greece has given Cyprus a copy of the records of the inquiry, including “testimony from 86 witnesses and minutes of its sessions” and “documents from various departments,” reported *Cyprus Mail*. <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/14/greek-coup-invasion-archives-delivered/>

Iran/United States. In 2011 a court in New York ruled that “Iran furnished material and direct support for the 9/11 terrorists’ terrorist travel operation” and documents in that case “revealed” that Iran had a “firsthand” role in perpetrating the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. The judge fined Iran \$10.5 billion, to be paid to the estates and families of people who died in the attacks. Now a jury has decided that the U.S. can “confiscate a skyscraper in Manhattan” owned by an Iranian Foundation and an Iranian bank, and sell it “to pay the families of victims of terrorism linked to Iran’s government,” *Arab News* reported. The judge said that after going through a “massive amount of evidence” she was convinced that the foundation “takes directives from Iranian government officials.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/05072017-us-court-rules-iran-to-pay-for-911-and-terrorism-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Kosovo/Serbia. The Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) issued a report on the “numerous infringements of fundamental human rights that took place in the course of the proceedings” by Serbian prosecutors and courts against Kosovo Albanians in the second half of the 1990s. The Center monitored the trials in 1998-2000, and as it began drafting the report it already had “in its archive 140 indictments filed against Kosovo Albanians across Serbia, 97 judgments of courts of the first instance, 40 appeals . . . 40 judgments on appeal . . . and four decisions of the Federal Court.” In preparing the report the HLC gained access to the case files relating to proceedings against Kosovars in five Higher Courts and scanned all the case files, amounting to more than 10,000 pages of court records. <http://www.hlc-rcd.org/?p=34073&lang=de>

Lebanon/Syria. Human Rights Watch (HRW) called for an “independent, thorough and transparent investigation” into the deaths of Syrians in Lebanese military custody and “allegations of torture and ill-treatment in detention.” The men were captured “following mass raids” in the Aarsal area of northeast Lebanon; the Lebanese military said four Syrians died in custody but HRC “received credible reports that a fifth Syrian detainee had also died in custody.” HRW reviewed “medical reports for three of the deceased” that were “prepared by a forensic doctor at the request of the general prosecutor” who concluded that they had “suffered heart attacks and a stroke and that the bodies did not show marks of violence.” However, HRW “received” 28 photographs of three deceased Syrian men taken at a hospital, all of whom died in Lebanese military custody; a doctor consulted by HRW said the injuries shown in the photos were “consistent with inflicted trauma in the setting of physical torture.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/20/lebanon-deaths-alleged-torture-syrians-army-custody>

Middle East war. *Iran Front Page* reported, “The ISIS terrorist group has burned the biggest archive of its secret documents and data known as ‘The Blue Archive of ISIS’ in Tal Afar, near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.” (The front cover of the records was blue.) The source said “the archive included documents containing secret information about the terrorist group’s accounts as well as judicial and security moves and measures.” <http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/isis-burn-secret-documents-data/>

The Times reported that members of the United Kingdom’s Special Air Service “are alleged to have covered up evidence that they killed unarmed Afghans civilians in cold blood and falsified mission reports.” The allegations were made to a Royal Military Police inquiry. [https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/rogue-sas-unit-accused-of-executing-civilians-in-afghanistan-f2bqlc897?CMP=TNLEmail_118918_2014171&MN=02.07.17%20Best%20of%20ST%20Insight%20\(1\)](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/rogue-sas-unit-accused-of-executing-civilians-in-afghanistan-f2bqlc897?CMP=TNLEmail_118918_2014171&MN=02.07.17%20Best%20of%20ST%20Insight%20(1))

The *Australia Broadcasting Company (ABC)* published a seven-part story based on “hundreds of pages of secret defence force documents leaked to the *ABC* [that] give an unprecedented insight into the clandestine operations of Australia’s elite special forces in Afghanistan, including incidents of troops killing unarmed men and children.” It noted, “Some of the cases detailed in the documents are being investigated as possible unlawful killings.” <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-11/killings-of-unarmed-afghans-by-australian-special-forces/8466642>

Human Rights Watch said “an Iraqi army division trained by the United States government allegedly executed several dozen prisoners in Mosul’s Old City.” The statement was accompanied by photos, one of the dead body of an alleged ISIS fighter with his hands bound behind his back and another of several bodies, also of alleged ISIS fighters, said to have been executed by Iraqi soldiers identified as from the army’s 16th Division. HRW called on the U.S. to “suspend all assistance and support to the 16th Division pending Iraq’s full investigation of the allegations and appropriate prosecutions.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/27/iraq-us-trained-forces-linked-mosul-war-crimes>

Montenegro/Serbia. The Crime and Corruption Reporting Network (KRIK) and Radio Free Europe created a “Black Book” database on 83 mafia-related deaths in Serbia and Montenegro over the past five years. They found that less than 5% (4) of the deaths that appear to be gang related have been solved. <https://www.krik.rs/en/only-four-gang-related-murders-solved-in-five-years/>

Myanmar/Thailand. Myanmar and Thailand labor ministers agreed to “issue official documents to Myanmar workers allowing them to work legally” in Thailand, *Radio Free Asia* reported. “Of the estimated 5 million Myanmar citizens working in Thailand, about 2.2 million have proper documents,” the Myanmar labor minister said. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-and-thailand-agree-to-issue-documents-to-migrant-laborers-07072017160955.html>

South Korea/United States. The Adoptee Rights Campaign (ARC), a nongovernmental organization in the United States, estimates that 350,000 children from abroad have been adopted by U.S. families since the 1940s, many from South Korea after the end of the Korean War. ARC believes that up to 35,000 adult adoptees in the U.S. may lack citizenship. The United States left it to “the parents to secure citizenship for the children,” the *New York Times* explained, and some parents “did not understand that their children did not automatically become citizens when they completed the adoption.” Since 2000 adopted children are granted automatic citizenship by law, but adoptees who were already legal adults in 2000 were not covered.

“This omission left adult adoptees with criminal records but not citizenship . . . vulnerable to deportation.”
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2017/07/02/deportation-death-sentence-adoptees-after-lifetime/nrnFf2K3iFKBDrm8zKgGnK/story.html>

National news.

Afghanistan. A mid-year report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said the number of civilians killed and injured during the first six months of 2017 was a 2% increase on the same period last year, that there was a “worsening toll of suicide attacks,” and that 40% of the civilian casualties were from improvised explosive devices used by anti-government forces. Among the civilians killed, child casualties increased by 1% and females casualties by a horrific 23% over the same period last year. UNAMA said it “obtains information through direct site visits, physical examination of items and evidence gathered at the scene of incidents, visits to hospitals and medical facilities, still and video images,” reports from UN agencies, “information gathered by non-governmental organizations and other third parties” and secondary sources. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21880&LangID=E>

Algeria. The government began a “crackdown” against the Ahmadiyya, a minority Islamic group, *Rabwab Times* reported. The Minister of Religious Affairs said “security forces have succeeded in dismantling their network because they dared to create their headquarters and announce their presence without waiting for the necessary licenses, and documents which proved its existence and its affiliates.”
<https://themuslimtimes.info/2016/07/02/algeria-intensifies-controversial-crackdown-on-ahmadiyya-muslims/comment-page-1/>

Argentina. The *Associated Press* reported that four former federal judges in Argentina were sentenced to life in prison for crimes against humanity committed during the country's last dictatorship. “The men were tried for their failure to investigate petitions of habeas corpus filed by relatives of dissidents who disappeared during the 1976-1983 dictatorship.” <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/Argentina-sentences-4-judges-for-dictatorship-era-11439134.php>

Australia. Batchelor Institute’s Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL) and the Batchelor Library launched a new website with digitized text, audio, video, and eBooks about Australia’s First Nations languages. “The project involves an extensive permission strategy to reach creators, copyright holders, and cultural and community authorities, to find out if they would like their works uploaded on the website.”
https://www.batchelor.edu.au/portfolio/first-nations-digital-language-archive-launched/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_campaign=eafd6b7395-Newsletter_July_2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-eafd6b7395-225732189

Bangladesh. Human Rights Watch issued a report on secret detentions and enforced disappearances in Bangladesh. A Dhaka-based human rights organization, Odhikar, reported 48 disappearances in the first five months of 2017, and in April “Swedish Radio reported on a secretly recorded interview with a senior officer in the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a counterterror unit of police and military, who admitted that the force routinely picks up people, kills them, and disposes of the bodies.” The HRW report discussed the disappearance of over 90 persons during 2016 and 19 at the end of 2013. After interviewing over 100 people, HRW found that in “almost all cases of enforced disappearances . . . police did not allow the families to file a General Diary (GD)—the simplest was to report a crime or incident to the police—if the complaint contained an allegation that law enforcement authorities were involved.” No record, no crime.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/06/we-dont-have-him/secret-detentions-and-enforced-disappearances-bangladesh>

Bosnia. A Srebrenica man named Velid Delic made videotape recordings in the town during the war years and would send the taped messages “abroad via members of UNPROFOR [the UN force stationed there] whose tours of duty ended,” wrote *BIRN*. Delic died in the Srebrenica genocide and his remains have never been found, but the tapes live on, some showing the last days of people who have never been seen again. The article did not provide information on who has custody of these unique, precious tapes.
http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/video-messages-from-the-dead-of-srebrenica-07-07-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=cd1fad6c6-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-cd1fad6c6-319755321

Brazil. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported that violence is rising in rural Amazon “amid bureaucratic mess over land titles.” Land in Brazil must be registered by cartorios, private land registration agents. The

cartorios “maintain property records and transfer deeds in specific regions. There is no single, centralized system for checking who owns what nationwide” and the confusing system is “widely abused by wealthy land owners” who can “bribe cartorios to register someone else’s land.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170706130235-xzkye/>

Cameroon. “Using dozens of testimonies, corroborated with satellite imagery, photographic and video evidence,” Amnesty International issued the report, “Cameroon’s secret torture chambers: human rights violations and war crimes in the fight against Boko Haram.” It “documents 101 cases of incommunicado detention and torture between 2013 and 2017, at over 20 different sites.” The “overwhelming majority of victims were tortured in two unofficial detention sites”: the headquarters of the Rapid Intervention Battalion in Salak and a facility in the capital, Yaoundé. “Using architectural modelling, descriptions from former detainees, videos, satellite images and photos, a team of specialists at Forensic Architecture have created a 3D reconstruction of the site in Salak and a school in Fotokol converted into a military base.” <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/cameroons-secret-torture/>

Canada. The British Columbia Medical Services Plan issued the first official identification card to a baby that does not list its gender. The card reads simply “Sex: U.” According to the *BBC*, Canadian “authorities have refused to issue the birth certificate without a gender designation and so the parent has applied for a judicial review of the case.” <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40480386>

Colombia. The UN mission in Colombia urged the government to release members of the FARC rebel group that are still held in Colombian jails, *telesur* reported. The FARC delivered to the UN “7,132 weapons last month to end decades of armed conflict,” but the UN “still needs to give all the certificates to the former rebels, making their delivery of weapons official.” http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/UN-Asks-Colombia-to-Urgently-Release-FARC-Political-Prisoners-20170714-0009.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8

The Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation, a nongovernmental organization that monitors armed conflict, reported that a “social leader is killed every four days.” <https://colombiareports.com/social-leader-killed-every-4-days-colombia-report/>

A census of FARC combatants showed 10,015 FARC members. The majority have rural backgrounds, nearly a quarter are women, 54% have children, 90% are literate but a little over half have only a primary school education. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/first-farc-census-highlight-challenges-ahead-colombia>

Democratic Republic of Congo. Global Witness (GW) issued a report, “Regime Cash Machine,” showing “how huge amounts are going missing within Congo as a result of corruption and an inefficient tax system.” GW interviewed more than 85 people in Congo’s industrial mining sector and used mining data from the Division des Mines in the former Katanga province, Central Bank and Ministry of Finance statistics, Mines Ministry reports, Gecamines [Congo’s state mining company] accounts, leaked contracts and tax documentation, but found “much of this data on the mining sector was incomplete or inconsistent.” GW decided that data from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was the most reliable, which showed “that over \$750 million of mining sector revenues that flowed into the national tax agencies and state mining companies between 2013 and 2015 did not reach the national treasury.” GW commented on the cruel irony that “Congo is Africa’s top copper producer and the world’s biggest supplier of cobalt, which is used in the lithium-ion batteries that power electric cars. At the same time it is one of the poorest countries in the world.” <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/democratic-republic-congo/regime-cash-machine/>

The International Crisis Group (ICG), a nongovernmental organization based in Brussels, sent an open letter to the UN Secretary-General expressing grave concern over the deep crisis in the country. ICG urged the UN to re-focus the role of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) “on deterring and documenting violence.” It suggested the first priority should be “beefing up the mission’s deployment across the country of integrated, mobile teams” that “can deter, as best as possible, and document violence and human rights violations, including cases of sexual and gender-based violence.” <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republic-congo/open-letter-un-secretary-general-peacekeeping-drc>

Reuters reported that a court convicted seven soldiers for the murder of suspected militia members. “A video of the massacre showed soldiers shooting people, some of them young women, at point blank range and provoked international condemnation when it appeared in February.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-02 and 03. <https://www.voanews.com/a/congo-court-convicts-soldiers-for-massacre-in-disputed-kasai-region-/3931653.html>

Egypt. Although TITAN Cement claims that its APCC subsidiary in Egypt “has a stellar environmental record” and that “no environmental violations were recorded against it,” residents of a nearby town posted a video on Facebook showing “very large emissions coming out of a chimney” at the plant adjacent to their homes. A resident told the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights that it was “one of tens and hundreds of videos we took, and it won’t be the last. We’re being asked to believe the records and doubt our own eyes?” <https://eipr.org/en/press/2017/05/video-wadi-al-qamar-residents-capture-emissions-titan%E2%80%99s-alexandria-portland-cement-and>

El Salvador. The Special Prosecutor for Human Rights released its 2016 report, “citing over 800 cases of human rights abuse involving police and army” and 22 suspected extrajudicial killings, reported *CrisisWatch*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

France. The ministers of justice and culture decided to open for research the archives relating to the prosecution of Klaus Barbie, the chief of the Gestapo in the Lyon region during World War II’s German occupation of France. The Archives nationales, the Archives of the department of the Rhone and the city archives of Lyon hold the material. <http://www.presse.justice.gouv.fr/archives-communiques-10095/ouverture-des-archives-du-proces-de-klaus-barbie-30675.html>

Germany. During the Cold War, East German agents actively engaged in economic espionage. After analyzing 151,627 “dispatches on scientific secrets collected by thousands of spies between 1970 and 1988” in the records of the former East German Ministry for State Security (the Stasi), two researchers concluded: “Stealing can boost economic productivity in the short-term, but it cannibalizes long-term investment in research and development.” *Science* reported that the researchers used data on patent applications as “a key proxy for research and development.” http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/07/cold-war-espionage-paid-until-it-backfired-east-german-spy-records-reveal?utm_campaign=news_daily_2017-07-31&et rid=206152460&et_cid=1468967

In late June the *New York Times* reported that the Interior Ministry released a list of “596 outstanding arrest warrants for 462 right-wing offenders, showing a definite surge in right-wing extremism since Germany accepted nearly one million migrants and refugees in 2015.” A German Police Union spokeswoman pointed out that this is less than 1% of the total outstanding warrants, while an Interior Ministry spokeswoman said the number of outstanding warrants for right-wing extremists “had risen for a variety of reasons, including that the state police have been documenting the political backgrounds of all perpetrators more closely since 2014.” <http://news2read.com/world/Germany-Encounters-Surge-in-Crime-by-the-Far-Right/1023352>

India. The director of Archives for Jammu and Kashmir told *Kashmir Reader* that “it has been 30 years since the Jammu and Kashmir government has archived a single government document, apart from transfer orders.” <http://kashmirreader.com/2017/07/27/last-time-jk-govt-archived-records-not-since-1985/>

The former director of the north Andhra regional archives told *The Times of India*, “The building is crumbling and all the records are in peril. If these land records are wiped out, land grabbers can have an easy time doctoring documents to scam lands.” <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/visakhapatnam/regional-archives-office-lies-in-disrepair/articleshow/59600958.cms>

“The National Archives of India has received 304 declassified records or files related to Subhas Chandra Bose” from four government departments, reported *The Economic Times*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2016-04. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/government-sent-304-declassified-files-on-subhas-chandra-bose-to-archives-culture-minister-mahesh-sharma/articleshow/59742459.cms>

Mexico. With more than 30,000 people having disappeared, most since 2006, families search the country for hidden graves. *Science* reported on a joint project by a human rights organization in California and one in Mexico City that analyzed data “from municipalities where hidden graves were reported in the media from 2013 to 2016.” Using statistical probabilities based on 35 geographic and socioeconomic variables,

they identified 45 municipalities has having a 70% or higher chance of having unreported graves, in addition to the 43 municipalities where hidden graves were publicly reported in 2016. <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/06/mapping-mexico-s-hidden-graves?et rid=35381270&et cid=1414764>

In a sad repeat of May, government statistics showed “more homicides recorded in June than in any month in at least two decades,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported. If the pattern continues, the country will “record more killings in 2017 than in any year since the government began releasing crime data in 1997.” <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-mexico-murders-20170721-story.html#nws=mcnewsletter>

New Zealand. After the Deputy Prime Minister “acknowledged for the first time that abuse in state care had been systemic,” the Prime Minister announced that he “has not ruled out an inquiry into historical state abuse.” Access to records of state care facilities will be crucial for an inquiry. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1707/S00158/truth-and-reconciliation-for-state-abuse-survivors.htm>

Paraguay. A digitized copy of the holdings of the Archive of Terror--police records dating from the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989)--was transferred to the National Archives. Records from the Archive of Terror holdings were used in July to support charges against ten former security officials for alleged torture of an opponent arrested during the dictatorship, *telesur* reported. <http://www.telesurtv.net/news/Disponibles-archivos-de-la-dictadura-de-Stroessner-en-Paraguay-20170629-0077.html>

Russia. “Two new studies, one by the Moscow Institute of Sociology and a second by the Romir Organization, show that Russians know very little about their ancestors beyond two generations back,” wrote a commentator in *Eurasia Review*. “The Romir survey, conducted in June, found that few Russians can name all their relatives three generations back, that two-thirds of Russian households do not have family archives, and that despite a recent uptick in interest in the past the share of Russians focusing on the history of their families remains small.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/13072017-russians-seldom-know-much-about-their-ancestors-before-their-grandparents-generation-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Sri Lanka. The President signed the act creating an Office of Missing Persons. Records will be critical to its success. <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/President-signs-Office-of-Missing-Persons-Act-133187.html>

Sweden. The government hired a contractor (who subcontracted) to move the country’s drivers license register to the cloud. However, the government gave the contractors “the full dataset from the Transport Authority,” which included not only details of the drivers but also information on military personnel, road and bridge weight capacities, and whether a vehicle is armored, *itnews* reported. The government then compounded the problem by sending the contractors “clear text emails” which “listed the full details of the individuals” whose information the government wanted removed. <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/sweden-exposed-sensitive-data-on-citizens-military-personnel-469046>

Turkey. The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, a nongovernmental organization based in the Netherlands, reported that in January the government published a decree “establishing procedures for the arbitrary deprivation of nationality for Turkish citizens living outside Turkey.” Turkish citizens living abroad are experiencing “cancellation and confiscation of passports, the refusal to extend the validity of passports, and the refusal to provide nationality identity cards or passports to children born to Turkish citizens abroad.” http://www.institutesi.org/news/Policy-brief-Turkey-arbitrary-deprivation-of-nationality_2017.php

The International Crisis Group analyzed open source data and found that the ongoing violence between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party has killed almost 3,000 people since the ceasefire collapsed in July 2015. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/turkeys-pkk-conflict-kills-almost-3000-two-years>

United Kingdom. “A National Health Service trust broke data protection laws when it gave Google’s artificial intelligence arm, DeepMind, access to the personal medical records of 1.6m British patients, the UK’s data privacy watchdog has said,” reported the *Financial Times*. <https://business-humanrights.org/en/uk-commission-finds-natl-health-service-trust-broke-data-protection-laws-in-trials-with-google-deepmind>

“South Yorkshire’s Chief Constable has said his force will control the way its archives on the 1984/5 Miners’ Strike are released to the public because he does not want to ‘just empty stuff onto the street and let people pick at it,’” the *Yorkshire Post* reported. The records relating to the strike include information on the “notorious 1984 Battle of Orgreave.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017. <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/i-won-t-just-empty-our-orgreave-archive-onto-the-street-says-south-yorkshire-police-chief-1-8663274>

United States. The Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nongovernmental organization, “collected data from state agencies and the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] for drinking water tests conducted from 2010 to 2015 by 48,712 water utilities in 50 states.” The utilities tested for 500 different contaminants and found 267. The group put its database on line to allow persons to enter their postal code and find out what contaminants are in the water where they live, writing, “EWG believes Americans have an absolute right to know the full story about the water they drink.” <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/state-of-american-drinking-water.php#.WYzJXb5zW1g>

The Trump Administration’s Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity asked all states give it their “‘publicly-available voter roll data,’ including names, addresses, dates of birth, party registrations, partial Social Security numbers and voting, military, felony and overseas histories, among other data,” the *Washington Post* reported. A majority of states are resisting, and a number of nongovernmental organizations have filed suit to block the transfer of the records, fearing the future uses of a massive consolidated database of voter information. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/federal-judge-allows-trump-commissions-nationwide-voter-data-request-to-go-forward/2017/07/24/83fa89c6-635d-11e7-84a1-a26b75ad39fe_story.html?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.dc5a9ce7a451

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child met with U.S. representatives in a formal review under the rules of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As reported by the Human Rights at Home blog in late June, “The Committee reiterated concerns over the “lack of progress on establishing an effective national data collection system on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.” http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/human_rights/2017/06/crc-committee-releases-recommendations-on-us-response-to-child-trafficking.html

The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control issued a report on “Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence” in the United States between 2003 and 2014. The researchers used homicide data from the National Violent Death Reporting System that links three data sources (death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports and law enforcement reports), and population estimates from the National Center for Health Statistics. “Homicide is one of the leading causes of death for women less than 45 years old.” Over half of the female homicides “for which circumstances were known were related to intimate partner violence,” with more than 90% of these women killed by their current or former intimate partner. “By race/ethnicity, non-Hispanic black women had the highest rate of dying by homicide.” https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s_cid=mm6628a1_w

Because “even the largest health surveys generally do not have an adequate NHPI [Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander] sample to calculate reliable” statistics, researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics used data from the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander National Health Interview Survey and the 2014 National Health Interview Survey to look at the health conditions of these islanders. They found differences in health among race groups, with 59.3% of “single-race NHPI persons” having “excellent or very good health” compared with multiple-race NHPI persons (62.7%), single-race white (68.8%) and single-race Asian (68.0%). <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/default.htm>

ProPublica published an important investigation of the Defense Department’s handling of munitions and munitions waste. “Federal records identify nearly 200 sites that have been or are still being used to open-burn hazardous explosives across the country,” and the toxic emissions create “potentially unacceptable health and environmental hazards.” *ProPublica* used Environmental Protection Agency and Defense Department records, “collecting tens of thousands of pages of documents,” and conducted more than 100 interviews. https://www.propublica.org/article/military-pollution-open-burns-radford-virginia?utm_campaign=sprout&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_content=1500531524

Laotians who fought with U.S. forces during the Vietnam War are pressuring the U.S. to officially recognize their service and allow their burial with military honors in a national cemetery, but they are “stymied by the federal government’s refusal to hand over classified documents about its proxy army, or even acknowledge that they exist,” reported the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. A former Central Intelligence Agency employee who served in Laos during the war thinks “the index cards he created in the field that included a photo and name of each Lao soldier who earned base pay” were burned.

<http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-veterans-of-the-cia-s-secret-war-seek-an-honorable-burial/434692633/>

Grants, publications.

The Prince Claus Fund, through its Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programme, and the Whiting Foundation have joined forces to offer assistance for projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean in emergency situations. “CER provides ‘first aid’ to cultural heritage damaged or destroyed by man-made or natural disasters, it also works as an ‘ambulance’ in cases of urgent need.” For further information, see: <http://www.princeclausfund.org/en/programmes/cultural-emergency-response>

The 23rd *Annual Report* of the Network of Concerned Historians is now available in a pdf-version at: <http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content/ar.html> “It contains 145 pages of news about the domain where history and human rights intersect, especially about the censorship of history and the persecution of historians, archivists, and archaeologists around the globe, as reported by various human rights organizations and other sources. It mainly covers events and developments of 2016 and 2017.”

Good reads. The Syrian Justice and Accountability Project published a useful discussion, “The Importance of Protecting Mass Graves in Syria.” <https://webmail.networksolutionsemail.com/appsuite/#!/&app=io.ox/mail/detail&folder=default0/INBOX&id=6438594329656174471>

The International Center for Transitional Justice issued “The Place of Reconciliation in Transitional Justice.” <https://www.ictj.org/publication/reconciliation-transitional-justice>

The Humanitarian Law Center’s “Bulletin” included an article “Anonymisation of victims’ sufferings.” <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?lang=de>

The Atlantic published an interview with an archaeologist on preservation work in Iraq. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/who-gets-to-own-iraqs-religious-heritage/533598/>

Thomson Reuters Foundation offered a disturbing look at the dangers of sand mining in India. <http://news.trust.org/shorthand/drowning-for-sand/>

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The *News* is sent to everyone on the listserve of the International Council on Archives. To join the listserve, write to ica-l-request@mailman.srv.ualberta.ca

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